IGNATIAN
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH
www.icceph.com
ISSN 2984-9942

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION: APPRAISING KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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ABSTRACT

This convergent parallel mixed-methods study examined public elementary school administrators' perceived knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of inclusive education (IE) implementation in the Schools Division of Bohol, Philippines. Stratified random sampling was used for the survey, with 216 school administrators included in the main analyses. Fifteen qualitative participants were selected through stratified purposive sampling. Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, group comparisons, Pearson correlations, and multiple linear regression. Qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis, and both strands were integrated through a joint display. Overall perceived knowledge was Knowledgeable (M = 4.12, SD = .54), and overall attitudes were High (M = 4.45, SD = .51). Roles and Responsibilities had the lowest knowledge mean (M = 3.86, SD = .61), while Perception of overcoming Implementation Challenges had the lowest attitude mean (M = 4.24, SD = .65). Significant differences by position occurred across all knowledge and attitudes domains. School size differences involved all knowledge domains, belief in inclusion, and commitment to inclusive practice. Knowledge-attitude correlations were positive (r = .333-.581, $p < .001$). Final regression models (n = 209-216) explained 29.7%-34.8% of attitude variance, with Conceptual Understanding a significant predictor in all four models. Five qualitative themes concerned values and policy, leadership commitment, school-based strategies, implementation barriers, and capacity and stakeholder support. Integrated findings indicated favorable self-ratings alongside reported practical difficulties. Findings informed Project PRO-INCLUSION, a proposed program addressing role clarity, procedural readiness, collaboration, and school application. Its effectiveness remains to be evaluated.

Keywords: *inclusive education, school administrators, perceived knowledge, attitudes, mixed methods, inclusive leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education (IE) seeks to ensure that learners can access, participate in, and benefit from education without discrimination. The Salamanca Statement emphasized schools that respond to learner diversity, while the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities established inclusive education as a rights-based obligation (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994; United Nations, 2006). In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) strengthened this direction by establishing a policy of inclusion and services for learners with disabilities. These frameworks show that inclusion requires more than admission to regular schools. It also requires appropriate support, participation, and the removal of barriers.

School administrators are central to translating these expectations into school practice. Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 21, s. 2019 places inclusive principles within the K to 12 Basic Education Program, while the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) identify responsibilities related to strategic leadership, school operations, teaching and learning, developing people, and building connections (Department of Education, 2019, 2020). Inclusive leadership therefore involves decisions about teachers, programs, resources, learner support, and stakeholder participation. DeMatthews et al. (2020) showed that preparation for inclusive school leadership involves knowledge, beliefs, expertise, and instructional leadership.

Administrators' knowledge and attitudes are related to this work but should not be treated as the same construct. Nzuza and Sulaimon (2025) described principals' understanding of inclusion through access, diversity, differentiated approaches, support, and accessible environments. Pedaste et al. (2024) found that school leaders' vision of inclusion was strongly associated with attitudes toward inclusive practices, while Rakap (2024) linked administrators' attitudes with values concerning diversity and equity, professional development, and prior inclusive experience. Tsirantonaki and Vlachou (2025) also reported significant relationships among school principals' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and practices.

Positive orientation toward inclusion does not remove implementation difficulties. Studies have identified concerns involving training, resources, staffing, facilities, specialist support, teacher readiness, and collaboration (Almazan, 2025; Balikci et al., 2025; Pov et al., 2026; Wray et al., 2026). In the Philippines, Huliganga (2025) described intervention programs, teacher support, and collaboration, while Marmol-Dado and Carbonell (2024) examined practices involving learner identification, individualized planning, assistance, and reporting. These findings suggest that policy awareness and favorable attitudes may coexist with uncertainty about how to carry out specific responsibilities.

The study was guided by Constructivist Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Constructivist Theory emphasizes knowledge development through prior understanding, new experiences, reflection, and social interaction (Akpan & Beard, 2016; Kouicem, 2020). Piaget's cognitive and Vygotsky's social perspectives provided a framework for interpreting school administrators' perceived knowledge of IE. TPB informed the interpretation of attitudes and perceptions of implementation challenges, particularly how abilities, opportunities, and resources may influence the perceived ease or difficulty of action (Ajzen, 1991). Knowledge scores represented administrators' self-perceived understanding, as measured through self-ratings.

Within the Schools Division of Bohol, localized evidence was needed that combined administrators' perceived knowledge and attitudes with their descriptions of leadership, barriers, strategies, and support needs. This convergent parallel mixed-methods study examined quantitative patterns and qualitative experiences together and used the integrated findings as the basis for an action plan.

Research Questions

This study assessed DepEd school administrators' perceived knowledge of IE, their attitudes toward its implementation, the relationship between these variables, and their experiences and strategies in addressing implementation challenges.

Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
    - 1.1 Age;
    - 1.2 Gender;
    - 1.3 Highest Educational Attainment;
    - 1.4 Position in Schools;
    - 1.5 Number of Years in Administrative Role;
    - 1.6 School Size; and
    - 1.7 Professional Development in Inclusive Education (e.g., training, workshops)?
2. What is the level of perceived knowledge of DepEd school administrators under the Schools Division of Bohol about Inclusive Education in the following areas?
    - 2.1 Conceptual Understanding of IE;
    - 2.2 Policies and Legal Frameworks; and
    - 2.3 Roles and Responsibilities in IE?
3. What is the level of DepEd school administrators' attitudes toward implementing Inclusive Education in terms of:
    - 3.1 Belief in the Value of Inclusive Education;
    - 3.2 Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity;
    - 3.3 Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices; and
    - 3.4 Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges?

4. Is there a significant difference in the level of perceived knowledge and attitudes toward IE among DepEd school administrators when grouped according to age, gender, highest educational attainment, position in schools, number of years in administrative role, and school size?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of perceived knowledge of IE and the attitudes of DepEd school administrators towards its implementation?
6. To what extent do the three areas of perceived knowledge of IE, highest educational attainment, and number of years in the administrative role predict DepEd school administrators' attitudes toward IE implementation?
7. How do DepEd school administrators describe their perceptions, implementation experiences, and strategies for overcoming challenges in IE?
8. How do the qualitative findings regarding school administrators' experiences and strategies match, differ from, or add to the quantitative results about their perceived knowledge and attitude?
9. Based on the integrated findings of the study, what action plan can be developed to support IE implementation in the Schools Division of Bohol?

Null Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of perceived knowledge of Inclusive Education among DepEd school administrators when grouped according to age, gender, highest educational attainment, position in schools, number of years in administrative role, and school size.

2. There is no significant difference in the attitudes toward Inclusive Education implementation among DepEd school administrators when grouped according to age, gender, highest educational attainment, position in schools, number of years in administrative role, and school size.

3. There is no significant relationship between the level of perceived knowledge of IE and the attitudes of DepEd school administrators toward its implementation.

4. The three perceived knowledge domains, highest educational attainment, and years in the administrative role do not significantly predict the four attitude dimensions toward IE implementation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a convergent parallel mixed-method design. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered during the same period from January to March 2026. Each aspect was analyzed separately and then integrated during interpretation to identify convergence, complementarity, divergence, and expansion.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Department of Education Schools Division of Bohol, Region VII-Central Visayas, Philippines. The Division covers 47 municipalities and 58 school districts and includes 935 public elementary schools.

Respondents and Sampling Method

The eligible population comprised 935 public elementary school administrators in the Schools Division of Bohol, serving as Principals, School-in-Charge (SIC) administrators, or Head Teachers. Stratified random sampling used the three congressional districts as the sampling strata. The study targeted 624 survey responses and collected 532. Of these, 300 were reserved for instrument analysis, leaving 232 responses available for the main analyses. Guided by the G*Power sample-size calculation, 216 responses were randomly selected from these 232; the remaining 16 were not selected. The instrument-analysis and main analytical datasets were non-overlapping.

The G*Power 3.1.9.7 configuration specified a fixed-effects omnibus one-way ANOVA with six educational-attainment groups, an effect size of $f = .25$, $\alpha = .05$, and a target power of .80. At $N = 216$, estimated power under these conditions was approximately .811. The six educational-attainment groups were used for this calculation and were separate from the three congressional-district sampling strata. The calculation applied to the specified ANOVA and did not establish adequate power for every analysis.

For the qualitative phase, 15 administrators were selected from among the quantitative respondents through stratified purposive sampling, with participants from each administrative position group. Eligibility required at least one full year in the current administrative role and responsibilities for planning, coordinating, supervising, or implementing programs for diverse learners. Participants also agreed to share their experiences. Administrators on leave or unavailable during data collection were excluded. Codes Admin1–Admin15 were used when reporting qualitative responses.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: a quantitative questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire consisted of three parts:

Part 1. Respondent Profile-Items on age, gender, highest educational attainment, position in schools, number of years in an administrative role, school size, and professional development in IE.

Part 2. Self-Perceived Knowledge of IE. A 23-item scale covering Conceptual Understanding of IE (8 items), Policies and Legal Frameworks (7 items), and Roles and

Responsibilities in IE (8 items). Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1= Not Knowledgeable at All to 5 = Highly Knowledgeable).

Part 3. Attitudes toward IE. The original 36-item attitude scale was reduced to 30 items following the EFA and item review. Six items were excluded: 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.3.2, 3.3.5, 3.3.6, and 3.3.7. The main analyses used four intended content domains: Belief in the Value of IE (12 items), Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity (4 items), Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices (4 items), and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges (10 items). Responses ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. All retained items were favorably keyed. Commitment items concerned reported school support for inclusive practices, while Challenges items concerned reported administrative actions involving resources, training, facilities, coordination, and solutions to implementation difficulties.

The Belief domain comprised items 3.1.1–3.1.10, 3.2.1, and 3.2.4; Openness comprised 3.2.5–3.2.8; Commitment comprised 3.3.1, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, and 3.3.8; and Challenges comprised 3.4.1–3.4.10. These assignments were retained as intended content domains for reporting in the main analyses.

Domain scores were calculated using the simple arithmetic mean of the retained item responses in each domain, with equal weight assigned to each item. The interpretation ranges adopted for this study were informed by the nearest-integer response model of Pornel et al. (2011). Mean scores were classified as follows:

Table 1. Interpretation of Mean Scores

Mean Range	Perceived Knowledge Level	Attitude Level
4.50–5.00	Highly Knowledgeable	Very High
3.50–4.49	Knowledgeable	High
2.50–3.49	Moderately Knowledgeable	Moderate
1.50–2.49	Slightly Knowledgeable	Low
1.00–1.49	Not Knowledgeable at All	Very Low

These classifications describe respondents' self-perceived knowledge and self-reported attitudes toward IE implementation. They do not establish objectively tested knowledge or independently verified implementation performance.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire underwent three rounds of review and content validation. All 59 quantitative items before EFA obtained an item-level content validity index (I-CVI) of 1.00; both the universal-agreement and average scale-level indices (S-CVI/UA and S-CVI/Ave) were 1.00. Pilot testing involved 30 participants in the Schools Division of Tagbilaran City. This pilot was separate from the 300 Schools Division of Bohol responses used for EFA.

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) used the 300 Schools Division of Bohol responses reserved for instrument analysis, with Maximum Likelihood extraction and

Varimax rotation. Parallel analysis supported three factors for the 23-item Knowledge scale (KMO = .964; Bartlett's $\chi^2(253) = 7{,}944$, $p < .001$; variance explained = 76.5%).

The EFA was recalculated for the 30 retained Attitude items using the same 300 responses and Pearson correlations. KMO was .959, and Bartlett's test was significant, $\chi^2(435) = 12{,}758.39$, $p < .001$. A specified four-factor maximum likelihood solution with Varimax rotation explained 81.33% of total variance. Eight items had additional loadings of at least .40.

Common-factor parallel analysis (Horn, 1965), using 1,000 Gaussian simulations and a 95th-percentile criterion, favored three factors; 1,000 within-item permutations gave the same result. A Promax sensitivity analysis (power = 4; Hendrickson & White, 1964) recovered 29 of the 30 intended assignments. Item 3.2.4 favored Openness over its assigned Belief domain, and factor correlations ranged from .573 to .743. These results provide mixed support for four distinct factors. The four domains were retained as intended content categories for reporting.

Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha for the retained scales and domains. Recalculation of the 30-item Attitude scale yielded an overall alpha of .980. High internal consistency does not establish that the four attitude domains are empirically distinct.

Table 2. Internal Consistency of the Retained Knowledge and Attitude Scales

Scale or domain	Items	α
Overall Knowledge	**23**	**.972**
Conceptual Understanding of IE	8	.958
Policies and Legal Frameworks	7	.958
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	8	.964
Overall Attitudes	**30**	**.980**
Belief in the Value of IE	12	.978
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity	4	.962
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices	4	.934
Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges	10	.976

Note. α = Cronbach's alpha; IE = inclusive education. Knowledge coefficients are from the original instrument analysis. Attitude coefficients were recalculated using the 300 instrument-analysis responses and the retained item assignments.

The semi-structured interview guide was reviewed by experts for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the qualitative research questions. The guide was revised based on their recommendations.

Data Gathering Procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Holy Name University Ethics Review Board, and permission was obtained from the Department of Education Schools Division of Bohol before recruitment. Data were collected from January to March 2026. Public Schools District Supervisors (PSDSs) facilitated the distribution of recruitment information, informed-consent forms, and questionnaires. Participants were informed of

the study's purpose and procedures and provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary, and participants could decline or withdraw without penalty. Surveys were completed through Google Forms or printed copies, depending on district arrangements. Qualitative responses were gathered through face-to-face interviews, voice messages, or asynchronous written responses using the same main questions and follow-up prompts where possible. Audio and voice responses were recorded only with permission.

Data Analysis

Main quantitative analyses were processed in SPSS. Frequencies and percentages described respondent profiles. Means and standard deviations summarized overall perceived knowledge and attitudes and their domains. Professional development was reported descriptively and was not included as an inferential grouping variable. Independent-samples *t*-tests examined differences by gender. For comparisons involving three or more groups, one-way ANOVA was used when Levene's test was nonsignificant, while Welch's ANOVA was used when it was significant. Significant omnibus comparisons were followed by Tukey HSD or Games-Howell tests, respectively. The Welch comparison for Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges across years in an administrative role was additionally calculated in Python from the group sample sizes, means, and standard deviations.

Pearson correlations examined associations between the three knowledge domains and four attitude dimensions. Four multiple linear regression models examined the knowledge domains, educational attainment, and years in the administrative role as predictors of each attitude dimension. Educational attainment and years in role were indicator-coded, using a master's degree and 1–5 years as the reference groups.

Regression diagnostics included residual and partial regression plots, Q-Q plots, Durbin-Watson statistics, tolerance, variance inflation factors, leverage, and Cook's distance. Screening was performed separately for each attitude model using studentized deleted residuals outside ±3 as the outlier criterion. One case was excluded from the Belief model, one from Openness, none from Commitment, and seven from Challenges. The final regression samples were therefore 215, 215, 216, and 209, respectively.

Inferential tests were evaluated at $\alpha = .05$. Tukey HSD and Games–Howell comparisons provided adjustment within their respective post-hoc families. No adjustment was reported across the entire set of omnibus tests, correlations, and regression coefficients; findings from these multiple comparisons require cautious interpretation.

Qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis: familiarization, initial coding, theme development, review, definition and naming, and reporting. Peer debriefing, member checking, and comparison across response modes supported trustworthiness. Two validators also reviewed a matrix of selected narratives, codes, and the five themes for representativeness, exclusivity, and interpretative accuracy; both agreed with all five themes. Following separate analyses,

the quantitative and qualitative components were integrated through side-by-side comparison and a joint display to examine convergence, complementarity, divergence, and expansion.

Scope and Limitations

The study was limited to public elementary school administrators in the Schools Division of Bohol. Its self-report measures described perceived knowledge, attitudes, and reported school actions. Implementation performance was not independently observed or verified. The nonexperimental, cross-sectional design identified differences, associations, and statistical predictors without establishing cause-and-effect relationships. Qualitative findings reflected selected participants' experiences and were not intended for statistical generalization to all administrators. The retained 30-item Attitude scale showed high internal consistency, but parallel analysis favored three factors and the specified four-factor solution showed overlap among domains. The four intended domains were retained for reporting. Their structural distinctness requires confirmatory evaluation in an independent sample. The proposed action plan was developed from the integrated findings and was not implemented or evaluated within the study.

RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents

Table 3 presents the profile of the 216 school administrators. Most respondents were female, served in small schools, and reported participation in inclusive education training or workshops.

Table 3. Profile of the Respondents

Characteristic and category	*n*	%
Age		
25–34 years	10	4.6
35–44 years	63	29.2
45–54 years	91	42.1
55 years and above	52	24.1
Gender		
Male	62	28.7
Female	154	71.3
Highest educational attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	59	27.3
Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	69	31.9
CAR Master's Degree	37	17.1
Master's Degree Units	11	5.1
Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	32	14.8
CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	8	3.7
Administrative position		
Principal	83	38.4

Characteristic and category	*n*	%
School-in-Charge (SIC)	89	41.2
Head Teacher	44	20.4
Years in the administrative role		
1–5 years	69	31.9
6–10 years	62	28.7
11–15 years	43	19.9
16 years and above	42	19.4
School size by enrolment		
Very small (99 and below)	51	23.6
Small (100 to 299)	122	56.5
Medium (300 to 499)	29	13.4
Large (500 to 799)	14	6.5
Participation in IE training or workshops		
No	31	14.4
Yes	185	85.6

Note. n= 216; SIC = School-in-Charge; CAR = completed academic requirements; IE = inclusive education. School-size figures refer to enrolment. Percentages may differ slightly from 100 because of rounding. Professional development was reported descriptively.

Perceived Knowledge and Attitudes

Table 4 presents the school administrators' perceived knowledge of IE. Overall perceived knowledge and all three domains were rated Knowledgeable. Conceptual Understanding had the highest mean, while Roles and Responsibilities had the lowest.

Table 4. Perceived Knowledge of Inclusive Education

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
Conceptual Understanding of IE	4.32	.58	Knowledgeable
Policies and Legal Frameworks	4.18	.63	Knowledgeable
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	3.86	.61	Knowledgeable
Overall	**4.12**	**.54**	**Knowledgeable**

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; IE = inclusive education. The Knowledgeable range was 3.50–4.49. Scores represent self-perceived knowledge.

Attitudes toward Inclusive Education

Table 5 presents the school administrators' attitudes toward IE. Overall attitudes were rated High. Belief in the Value of IE and Openness to addressing Learner Diversity were Very High, while Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges were High. Challenges had the lowest mean and greatest variation.

Table 5. Attitudes toward Inclusive Education

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
Belief in the Value of IE	4.58	.53	Very High
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity	4.51	.57	Very High
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices	4.46	.53	High
Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges	4.24	.65	High
Overall	**4.45**	**.51**	**High**

Note. n= 216; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; IE = inclusive education. High = 3.50–4.49; Very High = 4.50–5.00. Scores reflect agreement with the retained attitude statements.

Differences in Perceived Knowledge and Attitudes

Tables 6-11 present group means, standard deviations, and tests of differences for 216 school administrators.

Gender. Comparisons between female and male administrators were nonsignificant in all three knowledge domains and all four attitude domains (Table 6; all $p > .05$)

Table 6. Perceived Knowledge and Attitude Differences by Gender

Domain	Gender	n	M	SD	t	df	p	Interpretation
I. Perceived Knowledge								
Conceptual Understanding of IE	Female	154	4.30	0.59	-0.763	214	.446	Not significant
	Male	62	4.36	0.55				
Policies and Legal Frameworks	Female	154	4.17	0.61	-0.513	214	.608	Not significant
	Male	62	4.21	0.69				
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	Female	154	3.84	0.60	-0.735	214	.463	Not significant
	Male	62	3.91	0.64				
II. Attitudes								
Belief in the Value of IE	Female	154	4.60	0.53	0.798	214	.426	Not significant
	Male	62	4.53	0.54				
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity	Female	154	4.53	0.58	0.893	214	.373	Not significant
	Male	62	4.46	0.56				
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices	Female	154	4.48	0.54	0.722	214	.471	Not significant
	Male	62	4.42	0.50				
Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges	Female	154	4.26	0.58	0.674[a]	88	.502	Not significant
	Male	62	4.19	0.80				

Note. N = 216. n = group sample size; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom. Tests were two-tailed at α = .05. t represents the female mean minus the male mean. For the domain marked a, Welch's t-test was used (Levene's p = .035); other comparisons assumed equal variances.

Age. None of the seven domain comparisons was significant across the four age groups (Table 7). The p values ranged from .097 to .968.

Table 7. Perceived Knowledge and Attitude Differences by Age

Domain	Age Group (years)	M	SD	df	F	p	Interpretation
I. Perceived Knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of IE	25–34	4.12	0.56	3, 212	0.632	.595	Not significant
	35–44	4.30	0.56				
	45–54	4.31	0.58				
	55 and above	4.38	0.61				
Policies and Legal Frameworks	25–34	3.83	0.66	3, 212	1.567	.198	Not significant
	35–44	4.15	0.63				
	45–54	4.18	0.67				
	55 and above	4.29	0.56				
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	25–34	3.51	0.51	3, 212	2.135	.097	Not significant
	35–44	3.81	0.67				
	45–54	3.86	0.56				
	55 and above	4.00	0.61				
II. Attitudes							
Belief in the Value of IE	25–34	4.50	0.53	3, 212	0.085	.968	Not significant
	35–44	4.58	0.59				
	45–54	4.58	0.51				
	55 and above	4.59	0.50				
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity	25–34	4.55	0.50	3, 212	0.105	.957	Not significant
	35–44	4.54	0.62				
	45–54	4.49	0.56				
	55 and above	4.50	0.56				
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices	25–34	4.38	0.46	3, 212	0.724	.539	Not significant
	35–44	4.39	0.57				
	45–54	4.50	0.52				
	55 and above	4.50	0.49				
Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges	25–34	4.40	0.52	3, 212	0.900	.442	Not significant
	35–44	4.28	0.67				
	45–54	4.16	0.68				
	55 and above	4.31	0.59				

Note. N = 216. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom. Statistical significance was assessed at α = .05. df is shown as numerator, denominator. One-way ANOVA was used for all domains. Levene's tests were nonsignificant. Group sample sizes, in the order shown, were 10, 63, 91, and 52.

Highest educational attainment. Mean scores varied across the six educational-attainment groups, but the analyses found no significant differences in perceived knowledge or attitudes (Table 8). All p values exceeded .05.

Table 8. Perceived Knowledge and Attitude Differences by Highest Educational Attainment

Variable	Highest Educational Attainment	*M*	*SD*	df	*F*	*p*	Interpretation
Perceived Knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of Inclusive Education	Bachelor's Degree	4.24	.66	5, 210	.784	.562	Not Significant
	Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	4.27	.57				
	CAR Master's Degree	4.37	.50				
	Master's Degree Units	4.48	.52				
	Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	4.43	.58				
	CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	4.33	.49				
Policies and Legal Frameworks	Bachelor's Degree	4.02	.69	5, 210	2.011	.078	Not Significant
	Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	4.18	.63				
	CAR Master's Degree	4.15	.61				
	Master's Degree Units	4.38	.43				
	Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	4.35	.58				
	CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	4.54	.55				
Roles and Responsibilities in Inclusive Education	Bachelor's Degree	3.76	.65	5, 210	1.533	.181	Not Significant
	Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	3.79	.58				
	CAR Master's Degree	3.93	.59				

Variable	Highest Educational Attainment	*M*	*SD*	df	*F*	*p*	Interpretation
	Master's Degree Units	4.02	.51				
	Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	4.00	.65				
	CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	4.16	.54				
Attitudes							
Belief in the Value of Inclusive Education	Bachelor's Degree	4.52	.58	5, 210	.964	.441	Not Significant
	Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	4.55	.53				
	CAR Master's Degree	4.56	.55				
	Master's Degree Units	4.55	.54				
	Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	4.72	.43				
	CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	4.81	.37				
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity	Bachelor's Degree	4.39	.62	5, 210	1.527	.183	Not Significant
	Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	4.49	.59				
	CAR Master's Degree	4.58	.55				
	Master's Degree Units	4.48	.61				
	Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	4.62	.46				
	CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	4.88	.35				

Variable	Highest Educational Attainment	*M*	*SD*	df	*F*	*p*	Interpretation
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices	Bachelor's Degree	4.42	.51	5, 210	.699	.625	Not Significant
	Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	4.43	.55				
	CAR Master's Degree	4.55	.49				
	Master's Degree Units	4.39	.60				
	Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	4.50	.55				
	CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	4.69	.44				
Perception of overcoming implementation challenges	Bachelor's Degree	4.21	.69	5, 210	.594	.704	Not Significant
	Master's Degree (MAEd/MS/Other)	4.18	.71				
	CAR Master's Degree	4.31	.55				
	Master's Degree Units	4.37	.55				
	Doctoral Degree (EdD/PhD)	4.27	.64				
	CAR Doctoral Degree/Doctoral Degree Units/Others	4.50	.43				

Note. N = 216. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom. Statistical significance was assessed at α = .05. df is shown as numerator, denominator. One-way ANOVA was used for all domains. Levene's tests were nonsignificant. The educational-attainment categories follow the statistical output.

Years in an administrative role. Comparisons across the four groups showed no significant differences in any perceived knowledge or attitude domain (Table 9). The summary-based Welch's ANOVA for Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges was also nonsignificant, $F(3, 107.219) = 0.005$, $p > .999$.

Table 9. Perceived Knowledge and Attitude Differences by Years in the Administrative Role

Domain	Years in role	M	SD	df	F	p	Interpretation
I. Perceived Knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of Inclusive Education	1–5 y	4.27	0.51	3, 212	0.512	.675	Not significant
	6–10	4.33	0.55				
	11–15	4.29	0.64				
	16 and above	4.40	0.67				
Policies and Legal Frameworks	1–5 y	4.11	0.57	3, 212	0.441	.724	Not significant
	6–10	4.22	0.62				
	11–15	4.18	0.67				
	16 and above	4.22	0.73				
Roles and Responsibilities in Inclusive Education	1–5 y	3.81	0.55	3, 212	0.392	.759	Not significant
	6–10	3.90	0.63				
	11–15	3.83	0.65				
	16 and above	3.91	0.65				
II. Attitudes							
Belief in the Value of Inclusive Education	1–5 y	4.51	0.58	3, 212	0.842	.472	Not significant
	6–10	4.57	0.55				
	11–15	4.61	0.48				
	16 and above	4.67	0.46				
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity	1–5 y	4.47	0.60	3, 212	0.294	.830	Not significant
	6–10	4.51	0.59				
	11–15	4.52	0.57				
	16 and above	4.57	0.52				
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices	1–5 y	4.35	0.54	3, 212	1.863	.137	Not significant
	6–10	4.47	0.53				
	11–15	4.53	0.52				
	16 and above	4.57	0.49				
Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges[a]	1–5 y	4.24	0.54	3, 107.219	0.005	> .999	Not significant
	6–10	4.25	0.80				
	11–15	4.24	0.69				
	16 and above	4.24	0.54				

Note. N = 216. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = numerator, denominator degrees of freedom; 16+ = 16 years and above. Group sizes, in order, were 69, 62, 43, and 42. α = .05. Ordinary ANOVA was used except where marked a.

[a] Welch's ANOVA was calculated from reported group sizes, means, and SDs because Levene's p = .033. Welch values are approximate because the source summaries were rounded.

Position. All three perceived knowledge domains and all four attitude domains differed significantly by position (Table 10). Post hoc comparisons showed that Principals scored

higher than SICs and Head Teachers in Conceptual Understanding, Policies and Legal Frameworks, Belief in the Value of IE, Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity, and Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices. For Roles and Responsibilities, only the Principal-SIC comparison was significant. For Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges, only the Principal-Head Teacher comparison was significant. No SIC-Head Teacher comparison was significant.

Table 10. Perceived Knowledge and Attitude Differences by Administrative Position

Domain	Position	Mean	SD	df	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
I. Perceived Knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of Inclusive Education	Principal	4.50	.55	2, 213	6.856	.001	Significant
	SIC	4.19	.54				
	Head Teacher	4.24	.63				
Policies and Legal Frameworks	Principal	4.38	.58	2, 213	7.458	.001	Significant
	SIC	4.03	.61				
	Head Teacher	4.10	.69				
Roles and Responsibilities in Inclusive Education	Principal	4.02	.54	2, 213	6.956	.001	Significant
	SIC	3.69	.59				
	Head Teacher	3.93	.70				
II. Attitudes							
Belief in the Value of Inclusive Education	Principal	4.77	.38	2, 101.422	10.888[a]	< .001	Significant
	SIC	4.49	.53				
	Head Teacher	4.41	.67				
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity	Principal	4.67	.45	2, 104.279	6.161[a]	.003	Significant
	SIC	4.43	.58				
	Head Teacher	4.38	.70				
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices	Principal	4.66	.43	2, 110.344	11.215[a]	< .001	Significant
	SIC	4.33	.55				
	Head Teacher	4.36	.54				
Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges	Principal	4.38	.58	2, 213	4.037	.019	Significant
	SIC	4.21	.63				
	Head Teacher	4.05	.77				

Note. N = 216. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom. Statistical significance was assessed at α = .05. df is shown as numerator, denominator. Principal n = 83; School-in-Charge (SIC) n = 89; Head Teacher n = 44. Values displayed as .000 in the output are reported as p < .001.

[a] Welch's ANOVA was used for Belief, Openness, and Commitment because Levene's tests were significant. Ordinary one-way ANOVA was used for the knowledge domains and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges. Post hoc comparisons used Games–Howell for the Welch analyses and Tukey HSD for the ordinary ANOVA analyses.

School size. School size differentiated all three perceived-knowledge domains and two attitude domains, Belief in the Value of IE and Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices (Table 11). Differences in Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity ($p = .056$) and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges ($p = .218$) were nonsignificant.

For Conceptual Understanding, administrators in small and medium schools scored higher than those in very small schools. For Policies and Legal Frameworks, those in medium schools scored higher than those in very small and small schools. In Roles and Responsibilities, the significant comparison was between medium and very small schools. Administrators in large schools had higher Belief scores than those in very small schools, while those in medium and large schools had higher Commitment scores than those in very small schools. Other reported pairwise comparisons were nonsignificant.

Table 11. Perceived Knowledge and Attitude Differences by School Size

Domain	School Category	Mean	SD	df	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
I. Perceived Knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of Inclusive Education	Very Small (99 and below)	4.07	.62	3, 212	5.955	.001	Significant
	Small (100–299)	4.35	.56				
	Medium (300–499)	4.60	.47				
	Large (500–799)	4.39	.52				
Policies and Legal Frameworks	Very Small (99 and below)	3.93	.67	3, 212	7.506	< .001	Significant
	Small (100–299)	4.17	.62				
	Medium (300–499)	4.59	.46				
	Large (500–799)	4.34	.48				
Roles and Responsibilities in Inclusive Education	Very Small (99 and below)	3.63	.59	3, 212	4.411	.005	Significant
	Small (100–299)	3.88	.60				
	Medium (300–499)	4.07	.61				
	Large (500–799)	4.08	.55				
II. Attitudes							
Belief in the Value of Inclusive Education[a]	Very Small (99 and below)	4.45	.62	3, 54	3.738	.016	Significant

Domain	School Category	Mean	SD	df	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
	Small (100–299)	4.58	.51				
	Medium (300–499)	4.69	.45				
	Large (500–799)	4.82	.29				
Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity[a]	Very Small (99 and below)	4.38	.71	3, 51	2.696	.056	Not significant
	Small (100–299)	4.51	.54				
	Medium (300–499)	4.63	.45				
	Large (500–799)	4.75	.38				
Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices[a]	Very Small (99 and below)	4.30	.59	3, 51	4.487	.007	Significant
	Small (100–299)	4.47	.51				
	Medium (300–499)	4.60	.43				
	Large (500–799)	4.73	.36				
Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges	Very Small (99 and below)	4.20	.57	3, 212	1.492	.218	Not significant
	Small (100–299)	4.20	.71				
	Medium (300–499)	4.39	.52				
	Large (500–799)	4.50	.61				

Note. N = 216. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom. Statistical significance was assessed at α = .05. df is shown as numerator, denominator. School size is based on total enrolment. Very Small n = 51; Small n = 122; Medium n = 29; Large n = 14. Values displayed as .000 in the output are reported as $p < .001$.

[a] Welch's ANOVA was used for Belief, Openness, and Commitment because Levene's tests were significant. Ordinary one-way ANOVA was used for the knowledge domains and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges. Tukey HSD was used for the knowledge-domain post hoc comparisons and Games–Howell for the significant attitude-domain comparisons.

Relationship between Perceived Knowledge and Attitudes

Table 12 presents the correlations between perceived knowledge and attitudes. All twelve correlations were positive and statistically significant. The strongest association was between Conceptual Understanding and Belief, while the weakest was between Roles and Responsibilities and Openness.

Table 12. Correlations between Perceived Knowledge and Attitudes

Perceived-knowledge domain	Belief	Openness	Commitment	Challenges
Conceptual Understanding of IE	.581	.523	.496	.445
Policies and Legal Frameworks	.517	.504	.487	.436
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	.395	.333	.428	.446

Note. Values are Pearson r coefficients; all $p < .001$. Belief = Belief in the Value of IE; Openness = Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity; Commitment = Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices; Challenges = Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges.

Predictors of Attitudes toward Inclusive Education

Multiple linear regression examined the three perceived-knowledge domains, highest educational attainment, and years in the administrative role as predictors of each attitude dimension.

Belief in the Value of Inclusive Education

Table 13 presents the regression results for Belief in the Value of IE. The overall model was statistically significant, and Conceptual Understanding was the only significant individual predictor.

Table 13. Regression Predictors of Belief in the Value of IE

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	AdjustedR^2
Constant	2.356	0.231	—	10.179	< .001	.348	.313
Perceived knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of IE	0.410	0.085	.471	4.831	< .001		
Policies and Legal Frameworks	0.069	0.089	.087	0.769	.443		
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	0.037	0.066	.045	0.562	.575		
Educational attainment							
Bachelor's degree	0.012	0.076	.011	0.160	.873		
CAR master's degree	−0.038	0.087	−.029	−0.439	.661		
Master's degree units	−0.098	0.136	−.043	−0.719	.473		
Doctoral degree	0.079	0.089	.056	0.883	.379		
CAR doctoral degree / doctoral units / others	0.196	0.157	.074	1.249	.213		

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Years in the administrative role							
6–10 years	−0.013	0.074	−.012	−0.177	.860		
11–15 years	0.053	0.083	.043	0.641	.522		
16 years and above	0.061	0.083	.049	0.742	.459		

Note. n = 215; F(11, 203) = 9.849, p < .001. R^2 and adjusted R^2 describe the model as a whole and are shown in the Constant row. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized coefficient. Reference groups were a master's degree (MAEd/MS/other) and 1–5 years in the administrative role. CAR = completed academic requirements; IE = inclusive education. One case was excluded from this model during residual screening.

Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity

Table 14 presents the regression coefficients for Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity. The overall model was statistically significant. Conceptual Understanding and Policies and Legal Frameworks were significant individual predictors.

Table 14. Regression Predictors of Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Constant	2.435	0.263	—	9.274	< .001	.297	.259
Perceived knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of IE	0.317	0.096	.333	3.290	.001		
Policies and Legal Frameworks	0.228	0.102	.263	2.246	.026		
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	−0.065	0.075	−.072	−0.860	.391		
Educational attainment							
Bachelor's degree	−0.019	0.086	−.015	−0.216	.830		
CAR master's degree	0.089	0.099	.062	0.904	.367		
Master's degree units	−0.103	0.154	−.042	−0.669	.504		
Doctoral degree	0.055	0.101	.036	0.545	.586		
CAR doctoral degree / doctoral units / others	0.320	0.178	.111	1.795	.074		
Years in the administrative role							
6–10 years	−0.047	0.084	−.039	−0.563	.574		

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	Adjusted R^2
11–15 years	0.009	0.094	.007	0.101	.920		
16 years and above	−0.007	0.094	−.005	−0.075	.941		

Note. n = 215; F(11, 203) = 7.803, p < .001. R^2 and adjusted R^2 describe the model as a whole and are shown in the Constant row. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized coefficient. Reference groups were a master's degree (MAEd/MS/other) and 1–5 years in the administrative role. CAR = completed academic requirements; IE = inclusive education. One case was excluded from this model during residual screening.

Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices

Table 15 presents the regression results for Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices. The overall model was statistically significant, and Conceptual Understanding was the only significant individual predictor.

Table 15. Regression Predictors of Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Constant	2.248	0.248	—	9.057	< .001	.305	.268
Perceived knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of IE	0.266	0.092	.293	2.903	.004		
Policies and Legal Frameworks	0.113	0.097	.136	1.163	.246		
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	0.133	0.072	.154	1.852	.065		
Educational attainment							
Bachelor's degree	0.002	0.082	.002	0.029	.977		
CAR master's degree	0.065	0.094	.046	0.686	.494		
Master's degree units	−0.125	0.147	−.052	−0.846	.398		
Doctoral degree	−0.017	0.097	−.012	−0.178	.859		
CAR doctoral degree / doctoral units / others	0.148	0.171	.053	0.868	.386		
Years in the administrative role							
6–10 years	0.061	0.080	.053	0.767	.444		
11–15 years	0.158	0.089	.121	1.771	.078		
16 years and above	0.132	0.090	.099	1.470	.143		

Note. n = 216; F(11, 204) = 8.140, p < .001. R^2 and adjusted R^2 describe the model as a whole and are shown in the Constant row. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized coefficient. Reference groups were a master's degree (MAEd/MS/other) and 1–5 years in the administrative role. CAR = completed academic requirements; IE = inclusive education. No cases were excluded from this model during residual screening.

Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges

Table 16 presents the regression results for Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges. The overall model was statistically significant. Conceptual Understanding and Roles and Responsibilities were significant individual predictors.

Table 16. Regression Predictors of Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Constant	1.958	0.257	—	7.630	< .001	.332	.294
Perceived knowledge							
Conceptual Understanding of IE	0.194	0.095	.207	2.054	.041		
Policies and Legal Frameworks	0.185	0.103	.215	1.802	.073		
Roles and Responsibilities in IE	0.184	0.076	.206	2.411	.017		
Educational attainment							
Bachelor's degree	0.071	0.087	.057	0.814	.416		
CAR master's degree	−0.026	0.098	−.018	−0.267	.789		
Master's degree units	−0.038	0.152	−.015	−0.247	.805		
Doctoral degree	−0.123	0.101	−.081	−1.227	.221		
CAR doctoral degree / doctoral units / others	0.063	0.176	.022	0.358	.721		
Years in the administrative role							
6–10 years	0.128	0.085	.104	1.512	.132		
11–15 years	0.037	0.093	.027	0.396	.692		
16 years and above	−0.077	0.092	−.056	−0.834	.405		

Note. n = 209; $F(11, 197) = 8.885$, $p < .001$. R^2 and adjusted R^2 describe the model as a whole and are shown in the Constant row. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized coefficient. Reference groups were a master's degree (MAEd/MS/other) and 1–5 years in the administrative role. CAR = completed academic requirements; IE = inclusive education. Seven cases were excluded from this model during residual screening.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of responses from 15 administrators produced five themes. Tables 17-21 present the subthemes, selected codes, and representative participant excerpts. Participant identifiers are reported as Admin1–Admin15. The excerpts illustrate the themes and do not indicate their prevalence among all administrators.

Theme 1: Inclusive Education as a Commitment Grounded in Values and Policy

Administrators described IE through equal access, learner belonging, and policy guidance. Their accounts emphasized opportunities for learners to participate and feel valued in the school community

Table 17. Perceptions of School Administrators on the Nature and Basis of Inclusive Education

Subtheme	Code	Sample Narratives
Educational Equity, Access, and Participation	Access to equal education	"… all learners … are given access to quality education equally, within the same learning environment or classroom" (Admin4)
Sense of Belonging and Inclusion	Belonging and support	"… all kinds of learners feel valued, supported, and able to participate regardless of their abilities, culture, and background." (Admin14)
Policy Alignment in IE	Policy guidance system	"DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2019 and DepEd Order No. 72 s. 2009, these policies guide us in strengthening access and participation." (Admin7)

Note. Admin = anonymized administrator participant code. Ellipses indicate omitted text. Policy references within quotations reproduce participants' statements.

Theme 2: Inclusive Education as Leadership with Moral and Professional Commitment

Participants linked inclusive leadership with moral responsibility, reflection, collaboration, and support for teachers. They described adapting school practices, monitoring progress, and using available resources to assist learners.

Table 18. Administrators' View on Leadership Roles and Practices in IE

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
Values and Ethical Leadership	Moral responsibility	"I strongly believe that inclusion is not just a mandate but a moral responsibility. " (Admin2)
	Inclusion as guiding lens	"... a guiding lens for leadership … protect learners' rights, support teachers, and foster a school culture where every learner is valued …" (Admin11)

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
Sustaining Reflective Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Collaboration	Adaptive mindset	" As a school administrator, I need to be open-minded, ready to take risks" (Admin4)
	Adaptive management	"… modeling collaboration with teachers during LAC sessions, monitoring of the learner's progress, adjusting interventions as needed" (Admin6)
	Continuous self-development	"I always take the opportunity to abreast myself in trainings about inclusive education." (Admin3)
	Shared responsibility	"I make an effort to support teachers, work closely with parents, and promote a school environment where every learner feels accepted and valued." (Admin13)
Instructional and Institutional Leadership Support for Teachers	Instructional adaptation	"I manage my school by promoting equal access, adapting instruction, and strengthening support systems for all learners" (Admin1)
	Resource-based inclusion	"… I also need to allocate a portion of the MOOE to support struggling learners" (Admin4)

Note. Admin = anonymized administrator participant code; IE = inclusive education; LAC = Learning Action Cell; MOOE = Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses. Ellipses indicate omitted text.

Theme 3: Inclusive Education Operationalized Through School-Based Programs, Pedagogy, and Collaboration

Implementation accounts included school programs, targeted interventions, individualized planning, instructional adjustments, teacher development, and stakeholder collaboration. Participants described working with teachers, parents, and community partners to provide learner support.

Table 19. Strategies and Practices in Implementing Inclusive Education

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
School-Based IE Programs and Targeted Interventions for Learners with Special Needs	Multiple support programs	"We currently have programs such as individualized learning plans, ARAL program, remedial reading classes, and feeding programs to support learners holistically" (Admin1)
	Policy-driven programs	"We launched Child Find, and SPED support services; partnerships with BLGUs, LGUs and NGOs." (Admin9)
	External collaboration programs	"School joined / participated LGU initiated IE programs and activities yearly" (Admin14)

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
Inclusive Pedagogical Practices through Differentiated and Learner-Centered Approach	Individualized planning	"I assisted teachers in developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)" (Admin10)
	Flexible instruction	"We provide activities according to their needs and abilities" (Admin15)
Teacher Development Programs and Stakeholder Collaboration	Teacher training	"I always encourage them to attend and participate trainings related to inclusive education" (Admin3)
	Multi-stakeholder support	"These were initiated through collaboration with teachers, parents, and local stakeholders." (Admin 8)
	Parent orientation	"Conduct orientation to parents/ PTA" (Admin14)

Note. Admin = anonymized administrator participant code; IE = inclusive education; ARAL = Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning; IEP = individualized education plan; SPED = Special Education; BLGU = barangay local government unit; LGU = local government unit; NGO = nongovernmental organization; PTA = parent–teacher association.

Theme 4: Implementation Constrained by Interrelated Barriers

Administrators reported shortages in resources, specialist personnel, and practical training. Other concerns involved applying broad policies at the classroom level, preparing individualized education plans, and obtaining parental and stakeholder cooperation.

Table 20. Challenges and Barriers Encountered in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
Resource and Capacity Constraints	Resource & training constraints	"… lack of resources and limited training in handling diverse learners, especially those with special needs mainstreamed in our regular class"-(Admin1)
	• Resources, trainings, and stakeholder issues	"… limited resources, … limited training of teachers... varying attitudes of stakeholders, where some teachers or parents may initially feel unprepared or uncertain about inclusive practices." (Admin12)
	• Technical skill gap	"Neither I nor the teachers have formal training in Special Needs Education (SNED), which makes the development of IEPs … challenging… " (Admin10)
Policy Implementation Gap of IE in Classroom-Level	• Implementation gap	"Policies were broad and difficult to operationalize at the classroom level" (Admin11)

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
Parental Resistance and Awareness of Learners with Special Needs	• Parental denial	"Having parents that are in denial of the learner's disabilities… " (Admin5)
	• Awareness gap	"Some teachers and parents may initially have doubts or limited understanding about inclusion" (Admin13)

Note. Admin = anonymized administrator participant code; IE = inclusive education; SNED = Special Needs Education; IEP = individualized education plan. Ellipses indicate omitted text. Quotations reflect participants' reported experiences.

Theme 5: Strengthening Capacity Policy and Stakeholder Support

Participants identified practical training for teachers and administrators, adequate materials, assistive technologies, specialist support, clearer policy guidance, and stronger partnerships as priorities. Their recommendations included preparation in differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and individualized educational planning.

Table 21. Recommendations and Strategies to Strengthen Inclusive Education

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
Teacher Training and Development for SNED Learners and Leadership Training for School Administrators in IE	Hands-on SPED training	"Teachers need more hands-on training on handling learners with special needs, including behavior management and differentiated instruction strategies" (Admin1)
	DI, UDL, IEP training	"Continuous training is essential, especially in differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)." (Admin9)
	Basic SPED training access	"School administrators need more training on inclusive education leadership and policy implementation" (Admin12)
Adequate Resources and Specialist Support for SNED Learners	Assistive technology access	"Stronger support systems are needed—such as adequate resources, assistive technologies" (Admin9)
	Funding & SPED personnel	"Adequate funding, learning materials, and also specialized personnel" (Admin3)
Strengthening Policy Implementation and Stronger Stakeholder Support	Policy-to-practice gap	"Administrators need deeper knowledge of DepEd Orders … particularly on how to translate policy into classroom practice" (Admin9)
	Partnership Building	"Build strong partnerships with parents, local government units, and other stakeholders"

Sub-Theme	Codes	Sample Narratives
		(Admin13)
	Advocacy Strengthening	"More Awareness and advocacy on IE" (Admin14)
	Parent engagement	"Workshops on parent counseling to overcome denial through stigma-reduction strategies and simple literacy tools for illiterate families supporting home learning." (Admin6)

Note. Admin = anonymized administrator participant code; IE = inclusive education; SNED = Special Needs Education; SPED = Special Education; DI = differentiated instruction; UDL = Universal Design for Learning; IEP = individualized education plan. Quotations reflect participants' proposed support and training needs. Ellipses indicate omitted text.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Table 22 compares the quantitative findings and participants' reported experiences using convergence, complementarity, divergence, and expansion as integration categories.

Table 22. Joint Display of Integrated Findings

Integration outcome	Quantitative finding	Qualitative finding	Integrated finding
Convergence	Belief: M = 4.58 (Very High) Policy knowledge: M = 4.18 (Knowledgeable).	Themes 1 and 2 described equity, policy guidance, moral responsibility, and inclusive leadership.	Survey ratings and narratives indicate support for inclusion and perceived familiarity with its policy
Complementarity	Roles: M = 3.86 (Knowledgeable) Challenges: M = 4.24 (High). Lowest domain means within their respective scale	Themes 4-5 identified IEP difficulties, training gaps, resource shortages, policy application concerns, and specialist support needs.	Interview accounts provide context for the comparatively lower ratings and identify practical tasks and support needs.
Divergence	All three perceived knowledge domains were Knowledgeable (M = 3.86-4.32)	Participants reported difficulty with IEP preparation and classroom policy application (Admin10 and Admin11)	No clear divergence was established. Knowledgeable self-ratings coexisted with reported application difficulties, indicating apparent tension rather than a demonstrated contradiction

Integration outcome	Quantitative finding	Qualitative finding	Integrated finding
Expansion	The survey assessed perceived knowledge and attitudes; implementation strategies were not directly measured	Theme 3 described school programs, teacher collaboration, parent-engagement, and community partnerships.	Qualitative findings extend the survey by identifying reported implementation strategies and forms of collaboration

Note. Quantitative n = 216; qualitative n = 15. M = mean; IE = inclusive education; IEP = individualized education plan; Admin = anonymized administrator code. Roles = Roles and Responsibilities; Challenges = Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges. Findings reflect self-ratings and reported experiences; implementation performance was not independently verified.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that public elementary school administrators in the Schools Division of Bohol generally perceived themselves as knowledgeable about IE and expressed favorable attitudes toward its implementation. Their responses also identified practical needs involving administrative responsibilities, instructional support, resources, policy application, and stakeholder participation. These findings suggest that professional support should build on administrators' existing commitment while addressing the specific demands they encounter in their schools.

The respondents' profile (Table 3) provides context for interpreting these findings. Females comprised most of the sample, the largest age group was 45-54 years, and SICs constituted the largest position category. Most respondents worked in small or very small schools. The inclusion of different positions, educational backgrounds, and lengths of service allowed the study to examine variation across administrative groups. Although most respondents reported participation in IE training, attendance alone does not establish the depth of preparation or the extent to which learning was applied.

Overall perceived knowledge was Knowledgeable (M = 4.12, SD = .54; Table 4). Conceptual Understanding received the highest mean (M = 4.32), followed by Policies and Legal Frameworks (M = 4.18), while Roles and Responsibilities received the lowest (M = 3.86). This descriptive pattern suggests relatively greater self-rated familiarity with inclusive principles and policies than with administrative responsibilities. It supports further practical guidance while recognizing that all domains remained Knowledgeable. Nzuza and Sulaimon (2025) similarly emphasized connecting understanding of inclusion with differentiated instruction and appropriate learner support.

Overall attitudes were High (M = 4.45, SD = .51; Table 5). Belief in the Value of IE and Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity were Very High (M = 4.58 and 4.51, respectively). Commitment to Implementing inclusive Practices was High (M = 4.46), while Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges had the lowest mean (M = 4.24) and greatest variation (SD = .65). This pattern reflects strong endorsement of

inclusion alongside less uniform responses concerning implementation demands. Balikci et al. (2025) likewise found generally positive administrator attitudes accompanied by training and resource concerns. The domain comparisons describe intended content categories, with their interpretation limited by the factor overlap observed in the instrument-analysis sample.

Age, gender, educational attainment, and years in an administrative role did not produce significant differences in perceived knowledge or attitudes (Table 6-9). This differs partly from Rakap (2024), who identified gender and educational background associations among Turkish early childhood administrators. Differences in settings and measures limit direct comparison. The present findings support assessing learning needs across demographic groups, although nonsignificant results do not establish group equivalence, particularly where categories contained few respondents.

Position in school showed significant differences across all perceived-knowledge and attitude domains (Table 10). Principals generally obtained higher ratings, but the differences between groups were not consistent. For Roles and Responsibilities, the supported difference was between Principals and SICs; for Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges, it was between Principals and Head Teachers. Administrative responsibilities and opportunities to coordinate inclusive programs are possible explanations requiring further investigation. The findings support considering the specific needs associated with each position.

School size showed selective differences (Table 11). All perceived knowledge domains, beliefs in the value of IE, and Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices differed significantly, while Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges did not. Selected comparisons favored small, medium, or large schools over very small schools, depending on the domain. This pattern suggests that school size was associated with some ratings rather than uniformly distinguishing every domain. Staffing, resources, and specialist access remain possible contextual explanations that were not directly examined.

All knowledge-attitude correlations were positive and significant ($r = .333–.581$, $p < .001$; Table 12). Administrators who rated their knowledge more highly also tended to express more favorable attitudes. The strongest association involved Conceptual Understanding and Belief in the Value of IE. This is generally consistent with Tsirantonaki and Vlachou (2025), who reported significant relationships among principals' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and practices. The present findings establish association without determining which variable preceded the other.

Across the regression models (Tables 13-16), Conceptual Understanding was consistently significant with standardized coefficients ranging from .207 to .471. Its contributions to Belief in the Value of IE (Table 13) and Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices (Table 15) suggest that perceived knowledge of inclusive principles was associated with both endorsement and reported commitment. Pedaste et al. (2024) similarly highlighted the relationship between school leaders' vision of inclusion and

attitudes toward inclusive practices. The models explained 29.7%-34.8% of the variance, indicating that substantial variation remained unaccounted for.

Policies and Legal frameworks contributed significantly to Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity (β = .263, p = .026; Table 14), suggesting that perceived policy familiarity was relevant to willingness to address diverse needs. Roles and Responsibilities contributed to Perception of Overcoming implementation Challenges (β = .206, p = .017; Table 16), supporting attention to practical administrative guidance. None of the individual educational-attainment or administrative-experience indicators was significant. These results concern adjusted associations within the specified models and do not establish that qualifications or experience are unimportant in other aspects of leadership.

Participants' descriptions of equity, participation, belonging, and policy guidance (Table 17) provide context for their strong endorsement of inclusion. They understood IE as creating supportive learning environments for diverse learners. This resembles Nzuza and Sulaimon's (2025) emphasis on holistic teaching, differentiated approaches, and adequate support. The theme suggests that administrators connected inclusion with educational values and professional obligations.

The leadership theme (Table 18) extends this understanding through moral responsibility, reflection, collaboration, teacher support, and resource allocation. Participants portrayed inclusion as an ongoing administrative commitment. DeMatthews et al. (2020) similarly emphasized principals' beliefs, knowledge, expertise, and instructional leadership in inclusive schools. These accounts give practical meaning to the commitment ratings while remaining descriptions of participants' reported experiences.

Descriptions of school programs, instructional adaptations, individualized planning, and partnerships (Table 19) illustrate how participants reported responding to learner needs. Huliganga (2025) identified comparable practices involving intervention programs, teacher training, and stakeholder collaboration, while Marmol-Dado and Carbonell (2024) examined individualized planning, assistance, and reporting. The present responses identify approaches used in schools, but their effectiveness and consistency were not independently assessed.

Reported barriers (Table 20) explain how favorable attitudes can coexist with implementation difficulties. Participants identified resource constraints, limited technical preparation, challenges applying policy in classrooms, and concerns about parental understanding. Pov et al. (2026) reported similar concerns among Cambodian principals, including limited skills, shortages of support personnel, and increased workloads. These findings support attention to the conditions surrounding administrators' work, alongside their personal commitment.

Participants' recommendations (Table 21) emphasized practical training, specialist assistance, adequate resources, clearer policy application, and stronger partnerships.

Requests concerning differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and individualized planning identify specific professional learning priorities. These recommendations are consistent with the training and resource needs reported by Balikci et al. (2025). They favor continuing support connected with actual responsibilities.

The joint display (Table 22) brings these findings together. Convergence appeared in favorable attitude ratings and accounts of equity and moral commitment. Complementarity appeared when participants identified tasks and conditions associated with the comparatively lower practical-domain ratings. Knowledgeable self-ratings and reported difficulties can coexist because familiarity with general principles does not establish proficiency in every task. No clear divergence was established. The findings indicate apparent tension between perceived knowledge and practical application. The qualitative findings also expanded the survey by identifying strategies, partnerships, and support needs. These integrated findings identify role clarification, practical training, adequate resources, and stakeholder collaboration as priorities for support that builds on administrators' reported commitment to inclusion.

Limitations of the Findings

The survey measured self-perceived knowledge and attitudes, while the qualitative narratives described reported practices. The cross-sectional design supports comparisons and associations without establishing cause and effect. Qualitative findings are specific to the selected Schools Division of Bohol administrators, and asynchronous responses offered fewer opportunities for immediate follow-up. Model-specific residual screening produced regression samples ranging from 209 to 216 respondents. The reported regression findings reflect these screened samples and may be sensitive to the exclusion of cases.

Conclusions

The participating elementary school administrators were predominantly female. Administrators aged 45 to 54 years, master's degree holders, SICs, and those with 1 to 5 years in their role formed the largest groups in their respective profile categories. Most respondents served in small schools and reported attending IE training or workshops.

All three perceived-knowledge domains were rated Knowledgeable. Conceptual Understanding had the highest rating, followed by Policies and Legal Frameworks, while Roles and Responsibilities had the lowest. Administrators rated their knowledge of inclusion concepts and policies more highly than their knowledge of practical implementation responsibilities. These ratings represent perceived knowledge rather than objectively tested mastery.

Administrators reported favorable attitudes across the four intended content domains. Belief in the Value of IE and Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity were Very High, while Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges were High. Perception of Overcoming

Implementation Challenges had the lowest mean and greatest variation among the attitude domains.

Perceived knowledge differed significantly by professional position and school size across all three domains. Attitudes differed by professional position across all four dimensions and by school size for Belief in the Value of IE and Commitment to Implementing Inclusive Practices. Neither perceived knowledge nor attitudes showed significant differences by age, gender, educational attainment, or years in an administrative role.

Each perceived-knowledge domain was positively and significantly associated with all four attitude dimensions. Administrators who rated their knowledge more highly tended to report more favorable attitudes toward IE. These associations do not establish cause-and-effect relationships.

Conceptual Understanding was a significant predictor of all four attitude domains. Policies and Legal Frameworks also predicted Openness to Addressing Learner Diversity, while Roles and Responsibilities also predicted Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges. After adjustment for the other predictors, none of the individual educational attainment or years in administrative role indicators was significant.

Administrators described IE as a commitment grounded in values and policy and as a moral and professional leadership responsibility. Their reported strategies involved school programs, inclusive teaching, teacher development, and collaboration. Reported barriers included resource and capacity constraints, difficulties applying policy, and stakeholder reservations. Participants identified practical training, specialist assistance, adequate resources, clearer policy guidance, and stronger partnerships as support needs.

The quantitative and qualitative findings converged on support for inclusion. Qualitative evidence complemented and expanded the survey by explaining practical demands and describing implementation strategies. No clear divergence was established, although favorable perceived knowledge ratings coexisted with reported application difficulties. The integrated findings identified practical preparation and coordinated support as priorities for IE implementation.

The integrated findings provided the basis for Project PRO-INCLUSION, a proposed program addressing role clarity, procedural readiness, inclusive leadership, resources, and collaboration. The program was neither implemented nor evaluated within the study. Piloting and evaluation would be needed to assess its effectiveness.

Recommendations

The Schools Division of Bohol may strengthen professional development by focusing on the practical application of IE, particularly role clarity and procedural readiness. Training may use realistic cases, simulations, role mapping, Learning Action

Cells, and workshops that produce usable school outputs. Follow-up coaching and technical assistance should address difficulties encountered when applying learning in schools.

Principals, School-in-Charge (SIC) administrators, and Head Teachers should receive support suited to their responsibilities and identified needs. Focused mentoring may be provided to SICs and Head Teachers through experienced principals, supervisors, or other qualified personnel. Shared professional learning should remain available across administrative groups.

Small and very small schools may be supported through cluster-based learning, shared technical assistance, referral networks, specialist consultation where available, and resource sharing. Assistance should respond to documented school needs and available resources.

Schools should strengthen collaboration with parents, local government units, health and social-service providers, community organizations, and other relevant partners. Clear communication and referral arrangements may help address stakeholder concerns and improve access to specialized assistance.

Project PRO-INCLUSION

The integrated findings informed Project PRO-INCLUSION (Procedural Readiness and Operational Initiatives for Inclusion), a proposed training and support program for public elementary school administrators. The program aims to strengthen role clarity, procedural readiness, and inclusive leadership, with attention to the comparatively lower ratings for Roles and Responsibilities and Perception of Overcoming Implementation Challenges. Table 23 presents its proposed components. The study did not implement or evaluate the program.

Table 23. Proposed Project PRO-INCLUSION Components

Program Component	Core Activities	Expected Output
1. Role Clarity and Policy-to-Practice	Role mapping; review of IE responsibilities; policy case analysis; clarification of school-level procedures	IE Role Clarity Matrix and School Workflow
2. Procedural Readiness and Learner Support	Case-based learner support; referral and documentation exercises; IEP-related coordination where applicable	Learner Support and Referral Guide
3. Inclusive Instructional Leadership	Coaching; teacher-support planning; case discussions; collaborative problem-solving	Inclusive Teacher-Support Plan
4. Managing Implementation Challenges and Resources	Problem-solving workshops; resource mapping; case-based planning; identification of available support	Implementation Challenge and Resource Plan
5. Stakeholder Collaboration and Mentoring	Mentoring; peer learning; parent engagement; stakeholder mapping; referral networking	Mentoring and Stakeholder Support Plan

6. School-Level Application and Monitoring	School implementation planning; application of program outputs; follow-up monitoring and technical assistance	School IE Implementation Plan

Note. IE = inclusive education; IEP = individualized education plan. Activities and outputs are proposed.

The Schools Division of Bohol may pilot Project PRO-INCLUSION before wider implementation. Evaluation should include baseline and follow-up assessments of role understanding, review of completed school outputs, and documented implementation indicators. Findings from the pilot should guide revisions to the activities, materials, and support arrangements.

Future studies may supplement self-reports with objective knowledge assessments, school observations, document analysis, teacher feedback, parent perspectives, and learner-support indicators. Research involving other divisions or larger samples may examine whether similar patterns occur across settings. Intervention studies with comparison groups and longitudinal follow-up may assess whether targeted training, mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance improve role clarity and procedural competence and whether improvements are sustained.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The author obtained ethical clearance from the Holy Name University Ethics Review Board and permission from the Department of Education Schools Division of Bohol before data collection. Informed consent was obtained after participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, possible risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their rights. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from participation at any time without penalty or adverse professional consequences. Audio and voice responses were recorded only with permission. Participants' privacy, dignity, and well-being were safeguarded through respectful interaction, voluntary participation, and confidential handling of responses. Anonymity was maintained in reporting through aggregated quantitative results, participant codes, and the removal of identifying details from qualitative quotations. Data privacy safeguards followed the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Electronic records were stored on a password-protected computer, while physical documents were kept in a locked cabinet. Information and findings were used exclusively for research purposes. The author declared no conflict of interest in the conduct, analysis, or reporting of the study. Plagiarism was avoided through proper citation and acknowledgement of sources. Interpretations were grounded in the collected data, without fabrication, falsification, or intentional bias. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used to support the organization, language refinement, and editorial review. AI also assisted the research adviser in reviewing questionnaire clarity, wording, and alignment during instrument development. AI-assisted material was reviewed and revised before use, and no AI-generated participant data were used. The author retains full responsibility for the research design, data collection, analyses, interpretations, conclusions, and accuracy and integrity of the final manuscript.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses appreciation to the research adviser and panel members for their guidance, and to the instrument and thematic validators and statistician for their professional assistance. Gratitude is also extended to Holy Name University, the Department of Education Schools Division of Bohol, and the Public Schools District Supervisors for supporting the conduct of the study. Special thanks are given to the public elementary school administrators who voluntarily participated and shared their time, perceptions, and experiences.

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APA Citation:

Cajes, M. D. M., & Divinagracia, L. S. (2026). INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION: APPRAISING KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS. Ignatian International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 4(10), 387–424. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23499663

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