
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring The Challenges and Strategies of Special Education Teachers in Developing Social and Adaptive Skills

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| ABSTRACT

The study explored the challenges and strategies of special education teachers in developing social and adaptive skills among learners with disabilities at Tabunok Central Elementary School, Cebu City Division, Cebu, Philippines, during school year 2024-2025 as basis to draw implications for practice. This research used qualitative phenomenological design. There were five (5) participants selected through purposive sampling technique who were interviewed using the researcher-made semi-structured questionnaire that contained eight (8) open-ended questions constructed in English language. Data gathered were subjected to thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the participants integrated social and adaptive skill development into their curriculum by having: Storytelling Sessions Focused on Social Situations; Practice of Basic Household Chores in Class; and Integration of Adaptive Skills in Arts and Crafts Activities. The challenges that teacher participants faced in teaching social and adaptive skills to students with disabilities were: Lack of Parent-Teacher Collaboration; Overloaded Teacher Schedules Limiting Focus on Life Skills; and Insufficient Support from Non-SPED Teachers. While the instructional strategies that teachers find most effective in improving the social and adaptive skills of students with disabilities were: Use of Social Narratives and Role-Playing; Small Group Activities to Promote Peer Interaction; and Incorporation of Visual and Tactile Learning Materials. It is concluded that Teachers demonstrate a steadfast dedication to integrating social and adaptive skills into their regular instruction. However, their efforts are impeded by systemic barriers. It is recommended that the implications for practice be implemented.

| KEYWORDS

Special Education, Teachers' Challenges and Strategies, Social and Adaptive Skills, Learners with Disabilities, Special Education Teachers, Phenomenology, Cebu, Philippines

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Successful navigation of daily life depends on not just intellectual understanding but also on highly developed social and adaptive abilities. Children with impairments must learn these qualities if they are to be independent, self-sufficient, and significant members of society. Many students with disabilities still struggle to pick up these vital life skills even if inclusive education is becoming more and more important. Equipping these children with the required skills to operate in their surroundings successfully depends mostly on special education teachers. The degree to which these educators include social and

adaptive skill development into their courses greatly affects the capacity of the students to confidently and competently enter adulthood.

Including communication, self-care, mobility, social engagement, and problem-solving, social and adaptive skills cover a broad spectrum of activities. These abilities help people to live on their own and engage in social acceptable interactions with others. Social and adaptive skills instruction is as important as academic education since these skills directly affect the students' capacity to operate in daily life events (Bindu & Saravanakumar, 2023). Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in the United States, for example, have objectives aimed at these competencies, therefore guaranteeing that every student receives customized help catered to their particular need. To further skill development, schools also use evidence-based techniques include social narratives, peer-mediated interventions, and controlled play activities. In Europe, too, inclusive models stressing functional life skills training—often including these teachings into the general school program—have been adopted. Sweden and Finland among other nations have given a more inclusive approach—where children with disabilities learn alongside their neurotypical peers—top priority, therefore fostering natural social connections and adaptive behavior modeling. In Japan, the idea of "special needs education" has changed to concentrate not only on social competency and independent living skills but also on academic performance. Likewise, South Korea has launched transition programs meant to provide real-life skills to handicapped pupils so ready for employment and community involvement. Still, there are difficulties in terms of teacher preparation, curriculum modification, and resource availability notwithstanding these developments.

Like other countries, the Philippines has been improving inclusive education legislation; nonetheless, the execution of focused initiatives for social and adaptive skills still varies. Although the Department of Education (DepEd) has developed regulations supporting the integration of students with disabilities into mainstream education, no actual data on the efficacy of these programs at the classroom level exist. Limited resources, poor training, and a growing student-to-teacher ratio cause many special education teachers in the nation to struggle in juggling academic instruction with life skills training. Moreover, the way that social and adaptive skills are included into the curriculum differs greatly depending on the institution; some lack organized initiatives to assist in these important spheres of growth. Different degrees of teacher preparedness, resource availability, and program efficacy mean that Cebu City and Talisay City still struggle to offer complete support. While some schools have created special education (SPED) programs with committed instructors and facilities, others battle limited money, antiquated teaching tools, and inadequate professional development chances for staff. Furthermore, complicating the application of successful teaching tactics is the absence of consistent evaluation instruments to track students' development in social and adaptive skills. These elements emphasize the pressing necessity of research on how special education teachers in various areas include social and adaptive skill development into their instructional strategies.

Examining the local context is essential to create pertinent interventions that improve teacher efficacy and student results given the special education environment in Talisay City Division. Examining these events qualitatively may help all the stakeholders involved to get important understanding of the advantages and shortcomings of present methods, therefore opening the path for evidence-based recommendations that might enhance teaching strategies to promote the welfare and best interest of the students with disabilities. The findings would be instrumental in guiding policy adjustments, teacher training initiatives, and curriculum development efforts aimed at strengthening the integration of social and adaptive skill instruction in special education programs.

2. Literature Review

A substantial body of research has been undertaken on instructing social and adaptive skills to children with disabilities. Numerous studies underscore the importance of organized interventions, efficient instructional methodologies, and educator experiences in improving student performance. Milne (2018) discovered that personalized social skills training markedly enhances communication capabilities in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Elbeltagi et al (2023) asserted that structured play-based therapies facilitate the development of adaptive behaviors in children with developmental delays. Hakobyan and Harutyunyan (2021) indicated that educators utilizing visual aids and organized routines experience greater success in fostering self-care skills in kids with intellectual disabilities. Michalopoulou (2023) validated that peer-mediated therapies improve social interaction abilities in children with exceptional needs. Vembye et al (2024) investigated the effects of collaborative teaching methods, determining that co-teaching models enhance adaptive skill learning among heterogeneous learners.

Additional research has examined the difficulties encountered by educators in instructing social and adaptive skills. Ireri et al. (2020) cited insufficient resources and inadequate professional training as significant impediments to successful instruction. Antala et al. (2022) observed that educators' attitudes and self-efficacy affect the execution of adaptive skill programs. Øzerk et al. (2021) discovered that parental participation substantially enhances the reinforcing of social skills acquired in school. Klimaitis

and Mullen (2021) indicated that students with disabilities get advantages from direct instruction paired with practical application chances. Khasawneh (2024) emphasized the need of employing diverse assessment instruments to gauge advancements in adaptive skills development among learners with disabilities.

Klavina et al. (2024) argued for the incorporation of assistive technology in the instruction of adaptive behaviors, noting enhancements in student involvement and autonomy. Chen et al. (2021) demonstrated that varied education tactics improve student with disabilities' engagement and the adoption of adaptive behaviors. Molina Roldán et al. (2021) examined the impact of inclusive classroom environments on the development of social skills, highlighting the necessity for organized peer interactions. Vlcek et al. (2020) indicated that collaboration between teachers and therapists or specialists enhances the efficacy of adaptive skill education. Shochet et al. (2022) conducted a longitudinal study about a school-based approach to building resilience and mental health among adolescents on the autism spectrum yield enduring enhancements in social adaption for adolescents with ASD. Ahmad and Parween (2022) claimed that school-wide positive behavior support programs markedly enhance the acquisition of adaptive skills for learners with disabilities. Byrd and Alexander (2020) highlighted the significance of teacher professional development in improving instructional strategies for social skill training. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory offer a theoretical framework elucidating how students develop these skills via directed involvement and observed learning. Philippine legislation, specifically RA 10533, RA 7277, Department of Education Order No. 13, s. 2023, establishes a legal framework that emphasizes the government's dedication to inclusive education and skill enhancement for students with disabilities. A substantial body of literature underscores the significance of structured interventions, teacher readiness, and curriculum modifications in promoting the development of social and adaptive skills among learners with disabilities.

3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative phenomenological design, which is a research method that focuses on investigating people's lived experiences with a particular event. Phenomenology studies how humans perceive, interpret, and make meaning of their experiences (Engelland, 2020). The phenomenological technique is suited for this study since it seeks to investigate special education teachers' experiences teaching social and adaptive skills to children with impairments. By collecting educators' personal narratives and observations, this design enables for a more in-depth knowledge of the problems, strategies, and overall significance of social and adaptive skill development in special education settings. The study aims to provide a detailed account of the teachers' lived experiences, emphasizing the role of instructional tactics, assessment methodologies, and institutional support in developing these critical skills for learners with disabilities.

Participants' responses to questions about their experiences and obstacles in teaching social and adaptive skills to children with disabilities were interpreted using thematic analysis. This analytical technique, detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006), will be extremely useful in identifying underlying themes, patterns, and insights contained in special education teachers' lived experiences. The procedure will consist of six structured stages to ensure a complete and systematic analysis of the obtained data.

The first stage transcribed the recorded interviews. These transcriptions were verified several times to ensure accuracy and allowed for a thorough immersion in the information. The second was coding the data, which involved methodically identifying and labeling essential elements. This procedure assisted in categorizing the responses into useful areas such as instructional tactics, obstacles, assessment methods, and institutional support.

Following the coding procedure, the following step was to aggregate similar codes and organize all pertinent information into larger categories. This structure helped identify patterns and commonalities in the data. Once these patterns are identified, first themes emerged, reflecting the key concepts provided by the participants' experiences. Subsequently, the themes were modified and clarified to ensure that they accurately convey the substance of the material. This step involved removing any overlapping or redundant themes while ensuring that each theme is distinct and related to the study's objectives. The final step was to develop the analytical narrative, which connected the themes to current literature and theoretical frameworks. This narrative provided a thorough analysis of the participants' points of view, providing useful insights on the effectiveness of teaching tactics, frequent obstacles encountered, and opportunities for development in special education programs. The theme analysis has taken a rigorous and methodical approach to provide an in-depth knowledge of the instructional dynamics and obstacles that special education teachers face when cultivating social and adaptive skills in children with disabilities. The findings of this analysis form the basis for the creation of an action plan targeted at improving special education practices and policy that could improve the learners or children with disabilities.

4. Results

4.1 How Special Education Teachers Integrate Social and Adaptive Skill Development into Their Curriculum

Theme 1: Storytelling Sessions Focused on Social Situations

The special education teachers reported using storytelling sessions focused on social situations as a primary strategy to teach social and adaptive skills. Teachers emphasized that through storytelling, learners can explore proper behaviors and picture real-life situations in a fun and non-threatening way. They explained that children learn how to control their emotions, form friendships, seek assistance, and settle disputes by using short stories with likable characters. Students are encouraged to ponder, make predictions, and act out what they would do if they were in the story's protagonists' shoes during these frequently interactive sessions.

One teacher shared, "We use short stories about children sharing toys or helping a friend so our students can learn what to do in similar situations."

Another remarked, "After the story, we ask them questions like 'What would you say if that happened to you?' so they can practice responding."

A third teacher explained, "Sometimes, we let them act out the ending of the story to help them experience the right way to handle social problems."

These responses highlight how teachers use storytelling not just for listening comprehension but as a tool for building real-world social skills. Spencer and Petersen (2020) observed that social stories and narrative-based instruction significantly increase social knowledge and behavior among children with impairments, which is consistent with this strategy. In a similar vein, Gröbblinghoff (2025) stresses that narrative fosters the growth of perspective-taking and problem-solving abilities when paired with dialogue and role-play. This implies that teaching social skills should use narrative in a methodical manner. By offering storybooks or making story banks that tackle typical social issues that pupils encounter, schools may assist teachers. Learning outcomes can be maximized by preparing teachers to lead role-playing and discussion after storytelling sessions. By encouraging parents to read and talk about social stories with their kids, this practice can be extended to the home and help to further reinforce acceptable social conduct in a variety of contexts.

Theme 2: Practice of Basic Household Chores in Class

The teacher participants identified the practice of basic household chores in class as one of their core strategies for developing the adaptive skills of students with disabilities. Teachers indicated that tasks like sweeping floors, wiping tables, arranging chairs, and folding clothes are integrated into the daily routine to foster students' responsibility, independence, and confidence in handling basic domestic duties. These activities offer practical, significant learning experiences that students can readily implement at home. Teachers observed that learners with disabilities derive pleasure from engaging in these practical activities and experience a sense of achievement when acknowledged for their accomplishment.

One teacher shared, "We assign them simple tasks like folding towels or sweeping the floor so they feel responsible and helpful."

Another remarked, "We make it part of the class routine to let them wipe the board or arrange the chairs, and they enjoy doing it."

A third teacher explained, "Some parents told us their children now help with small chores at home, like putting away their clothes or setting the table."

These statements reflect how practicing household chores in class extends beyond the school environment and benefits students in their daily lives. Sullivan (2025) supports this strategy, highlighting that functional life skills, such as home duties, are crucial for fostering independence and enhancing the quality of life for those with impairments. Camilleri (2023) observed that instructing practical home-management skills equips pupils for adulthood and facilitates their engagement in family and community activities. This implies that practical life skills instruction ought to be an integral component of the special education curriculum.

Educational institutions might augment this practice by supplying resources such as cleaning implements, apparel, or culinary utensils for classroom utilization. Engaging parents in the continuation of these tasks at home can enhance the application of skills in everyday life. Integrating household task practice into both educational and domestic routines enables kids to develop crucial skills that foster independence and personal accountability.

Theme 3: Integration of Adaptive Skills in Arts and Crafts Activities

Special education teachers creatively integrate adaptive skills into arts and crafts activities as a strategy to promote fine motor, social, and functional life skills. Teachers said that arts and crafts sessions extend beyond mere artistic expression; they aim to enhance students' skills in adhering to instructions, utilizing tools responsibly, and executing work autonomously. Engaging in activities like cutting shapes, adhering materials, folding paper, and embellishing crafts enables kids to refine hand coordination, enhance attention to detail, and cultivate task persistence. Teachers indicated that these activities facilitate organic interactions among learners with disabilities, enabling them to exchange resources and seek assistance when necessary.

One teacher shared, "When we do arts and crafts, students practice asking for scissors or glue, which helps them learn how to request things properly."

Another remarked, "Folding paper or cutting shapes helps improve their hand coordination, which they also need for tasks like buttoning or tying shoelaces."

A third teacher explained, "We encourage them to follow steps in order, like 'First cut, then paste,' which teaches them how to sequence tasks."

These examples illustrate how arts and crafts activities become functional learning experiences that support both adaptive and social skill development. This approach is corroborated by study by Iffah and Aulina (2024), which highlighted that creative activities foster fine motor development, problem-solving abilities, social connection, and task completion capabilities. Moro et al. (2024) observed that incorporating functional skill practice into stimulating activities such as arts and crafts enhances student motivation and engagement. This implies that arts and crafts programs should be deliberately structured to incorporate adaptive skill development. Educational institutions can equip educators with training on integrating life skills into creative assignments, ensuring these activities transcend mere aesthetics and foster practical learning. Offering a diverse array of materials and instruments can enhance these experiences, while engaging parents in analogous projects at home can strengthen skill transfer. This method guarantees that students experience creative expression while also developing practical skills applicable in everyday life.

4.2 The Challenges That Teachers Face in Teaching Social and Adaptive Skills to Students with Disabilities

Theme 1: Lack of Parent-Teacher Collaboration

Special education teachers consistently identified the lack of parent-teacher collaboration as a critical challenge in developing students' social and adaptive skills. Teachers indicated that although they strive to impart these abilities in the classroom, advancement sometimes stagnates when parents fail to support or perpetuate the practice at home. They observed that certain parents are challenging to involve, infrequently attend meetings, or do not reply to notifications regarding their child's progress and need. Teachers underscored that without collaborative efforts between home and school, students find it challenging to apply the abilities acquired in the classroom to their everyday lives beyond school.

One teacher remarked, "We invite parents for meetings and orientations, but only a few actually attend or follow through with the recommendations."

Another stated, "Some parents believe that teaching these life skills is only the teacher's responsibility, so they don't practice them at home."

A third teacher explained, "When there is no support at home, it feels like we are starting all over again every day, because the students don't get to practice outside school."

These statements highlight the teachers' concern about the gap between school-based instruction and home-based reinforcement. This difficulty is corroborated by the research of Xu (2020), who underscored the importance of good family-

school connections in facilitating student learning and development, especially for those with special needs. Herman (2020) emphasized that sustained engagement between parents and teachers improves the efficacy of skill development programs by offering pupils ongoing practice in various environments. This suggests that schools ought to enhance their family involvement methods by providing parent education sessions, home activity guidelines, and consistent follow-up communication. Fostering trust and transparent communication can motivate more parents to engage actively in their child's education. Acknowledging and applauding parents' contributions, regardless of their magnitude, may also enhance involvement. Enhancing home-school collaboration guarantees that students have uniform, supportive instruction in both educational and domestic environments, thereby optimizing their potential for achievement.

Theme 2: Overloaded Teacher Schedules Limiting Focus on Life Skills

Special education teachers expressed concern about their overloaded teaching schedules, which limit their ability to focus on life skills instruction. Teachers indicated that in addition to instructing functional and social skills, they must address the regular academic curriculum, maintain documentation, participate in meetings, and execute administrative duties. These further responsibilities constrain their time and energy, hindering the provision of effective and regular life skills instruction. They acknowledged that while they understand the significance of adaptive skills, these are frequently subordinated to the completion of academic obligations or the fulfilment of administrative responsibilities mandated by the institution.

One teacher shared, "We really want to teach more life skills, but most of our time is spent preparing lessons and doing paperwork for academic subjects."

Another explained, "Sometimes we have to rush through life skills activities because we have so many academic tasks to cover."

A third teacher stated, "We're expected to meet academic targets, attend meetings, and submit reports, so there's little time left to focus on practical skills."

These statements reflect how systemic demands often prevent teachers from providing balanced instruction that includes both academic and life skill components. This challenge is corroborated by Dill (2022), who observed that workload stress and conflicting demands frequently constrain special education teachers' ability to provide thorough instruction. Ayeh (2024) contended that excessive schedules exacerbate educational deficiencies, especially in non-academic domains such as life skills, which are vital for children with disabilities. This implies that schools and administrators should reevaluate teacher workload regulations to ensure that life skills instruction is prioritized equally with academic subjects. Designating specific time for functional skills training, minimizing paperwork obligations, and supplying support personnel might enhance teachers' ability to provide comprehensive education. Educational institutions could contemplate amending curriculum pacing guides to incorporate life skills as fundamental learning objectives. Confronting this challenge guarantees that students obtain a comprehensive education that equips them for both scholarly achievement and autonomous living.

Theme 3: Insufficient Support from Non-SPED Teachers

The teacher participants reported insufficient support from non-SPED teachers as a significant challenge in implementing social and adaptive skills instruction. They articulated that although they diligently strive to deliver inclusive and effective learning experiences, their endeavors frequently remain solitary due to insufficient collaboration or engagement from general education teachers. Educators indicated that non-SPED colleagues occasionally perceive adaptive skills as being the duty of the SPED program, resulting in restricted opportunities for students with disabilities to develop these skills in general education environments. The absence of support impedes the complete integration of learners with disabilities in school-wide activities, where they could demonstrate social and functional behaviors with their classmates.

One teacher remarked, "Sometimes it feels like we are the only ones responsible for teaching life skills, while the other teachers focus only on academics."

Another stated, "We try to involve our students in general activities, but some teachers don't know how to include them or don't seem interested."

A third teacher explained, "Our students need to practice social skills with other children, but without support from other teachers, they miss those opportunities."

These insights highlight the isolation felt by SPED teachers and the missed chances for inclusive learning experiences. The findings of Hansen (2020) substantiate this issue, highlighting that effective inclusion necessitates collaborative engagement from all educators, rather than solely from special education personnel. Thompson (2023) emphasized that establishing a school-wide culture of inclusion relies on the collective duty of all educators in facilitating the engagement and achievement of students with disabilities.

This suggests that schools ought to foster a culture of shared accountability and collaboration between SPED and non-SPED educators. This can be accomplished by professional development in inclusive practices, co-teaching approaches, and consistent planning meetings that engage all staff members. Schools may use mentoring systems in which special education instructors advise general education teachers on how to serve children with disabilities across diverse learning environments. Promoting school-wide collaboration guarantees that kids with disabilities have uniform support, not alone in special education classes but across the whole school community.

4.3 Instructional Strategies That Teachers' Find Most Effective in Improving the Social and Adaptive Skills of Students with Disabilities

Theme 1: Use of Social Narratives and Role-Playing

The special education teachers identified the use of social narratives and role-playing as a highly effective strategy for building students' social and adaptive skills. Teachers articulated that they create straightforward, understandable narratives—termed social narratives—that depict typical social scenarios such as sharing resources, greeting classmates, or soliciting assistance. Following the examination of these narratives, students engage in role-playing exercises to demonstrate the anticipated actions. This method enables pupils to conceptualize social norms and rehearse suitable reactions within a secure and nurturing setting. Educators noted that pupils not only relish these activities but also gradually implement the acquired habits in real-life contexts.

One teacher shared, "We write short stories about situations they face, like asking to join a game, and we let them act it out."

Another said, "Role-playing helps them remember what to say or do because they get to practice it over and over again."

A third teacher remarked, "After these activities, we see them starting to greet their classmates or ask for help more confidently."

These statements highlight how combining storytelling with physical practice enables students to develop social awareness and apply learned behaviors meaningfully. Research supports the implementation of social narratives and role-playing in special education environments. ALomar et al. (2023) highlighted that social narratives are crucial in assisting students with disabilities in comprehending social norms and expectations. Parks (2021) discovered that the integration of role-playing with social stories markedly enhances students' abilities in social initiation and interaction. These findings corroborate the educators' perceptions that such tactics enhance student participation and social engagement. This implies that schools ought to provide teachers with resources and training for the development and implementation of social narratives and role-playing exercises. Establishing a repository of exemplar scenarios and scripts can facilitate uniform deployment across schools. Engaging parents in the application of analogous tactics at home can enhance the reinforcement of learning. Consistently incorporating these strategies into classroom routines guarantees that children with disabilities receive continuous, significant opportunity to cultivate and utilize social skills in both structured and organic environments.

Theme 2: Small Group Activities to Promote Peer Interaction

The special education teachers reported that small group activities are one of their most effective strategies for promoting peer interaction and social skill development among students with disabilities. Teachers noted that putting students in small, manageable groups helps them learn taking turns, communicating, and working as a team. Group projects, cooperative games, and shared tasks are some examples of these activities where students collaborate to achieve a common objective. Smaller group settings, according to teachers, make it simpler to keep an eye on interactions, offer assistance when required, and establish a welcoming environment where kids feel less stressed and more eager to participate.

One teacher remarked, "In small groups, students have more chances to talk and interact because they are not competing for attention with a big class."

Another stated, "We assign roles in group activities, like leader or helper, so they practice working with others."

A third teacher explained, "We noticed that students who are shy in big groups start to open up when they work with just two or three classmates."

These reflections highlight how small group activities create meaningful social learning opportunities for students with diverse communication and interaction needs. Carter et al. (2015) observed that controlled peer interaction in small group settings boosts social engagement and creates meaningful relationships between students with and without impairments, which supports this method. Additionally, Kamps et al. (2015) highlighted that small group activities offer a constructive setting for honing cooperation, turn-taking, and conversational skills. This implies that teachers should incorporate small group activities into their lesson plans on a regular basis. Schools can offer instruction on creating productive group projects that encourage communication and cooperation. Social learning can be further improved by including classmates from general education in inclusive small groups. Smaller, structured peer engagement opportunities can help kids with disabilities become more self-assured, communicate better, and form wholesome social bonds outside of the classroom.

Theme 3: Incorporation of Visual and Tactile Learning Materials

Special education teachers highlighted the incorporation of visual and tactile learning materials as an effective strategy for supporting students' social and adaptive skill development. Many of their children learn best when lessons are made concrete and sensory-based, according to teachers. Students gain a greater understanding of everyday routines, social expectations, and functional activities through the use of resources such charts, photographs, textured items, real-world instruments, and hands-on manipulatives. Particularly for students who struggle with language or cognition, these resources make learning more accessible by offering visual organization and sensory engagement.

One teacher explained, "We use pictures and objects like toothbrushes or spoons so students can connect the lessons to real life."

Another remarked, "We prepare tactile materials like textured cards or soft toys to help them focus and remember the task better."

A third teacher shared, "When students touch and see the materials, they understand the steps more easily than with words alone."

These responses reflect the teachers' belief that multi-sensory materials enhance students' engagement and comprehension. This approach is supported by research, with Parks (2021) highlighting how tactile and visual aids improve information processing and lessen confusion for students with impairments. Multisensory materials also improve engagement, task completion, and skill retention, especially for kids with autism and developmental disabilities, according to Khasawneh (2024).

This implies that schools ought to spend money on providing special education classes with a variety of excellent visual and tactile resources. To satisfy the unique needs of each student, teachers should also be trained in the selection and application of sensory-based learning resources. Consistency and generalization can be strengthened by having parents use comparable resources at home. Teachers can design more meaningful learning experiences that help students acquire critical life and social skills by including sensory-rich materials into their regular sessions.

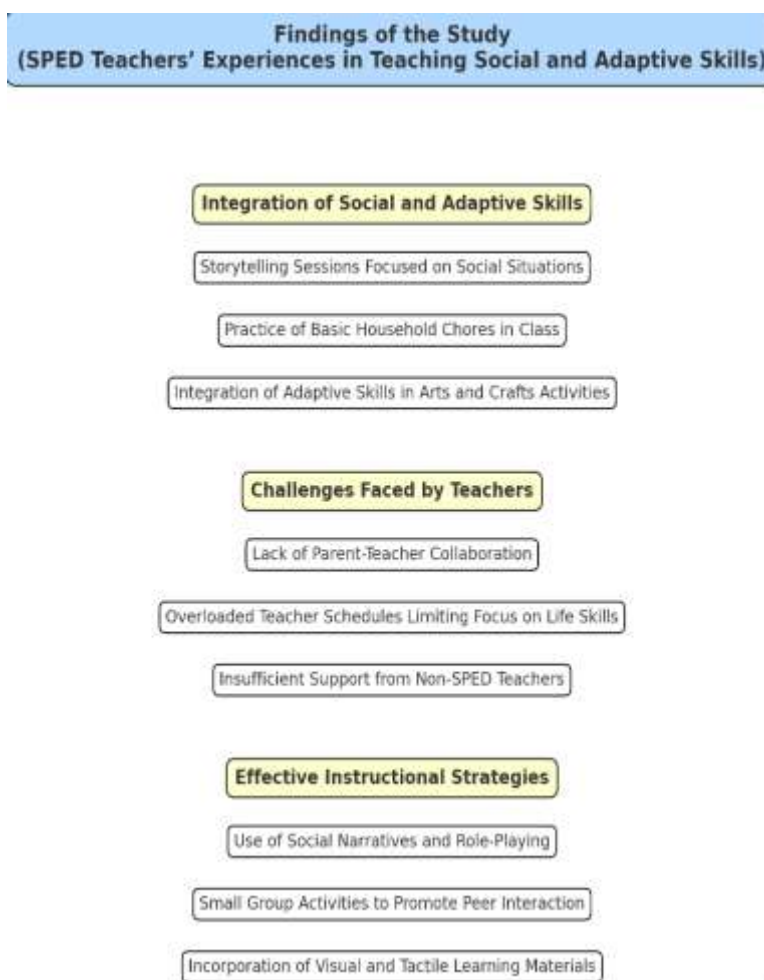


Figure 1. Diagram of the Findings

5. Discussion

Based on the data that were obtained and after the thematic analysis, the following findings were presented. The participants integrated social and adaptive skill development into their curriculum by having: Storytelling Sessions Focused on Social Situations; Practice of Basic Household Chores in Class; and Integration of Adaptive Skills in Arts and Crafts Activities. The challenges that teacher participants faced in teaching social and adaptive skills to students with disabilities were: Lack of Parent-Teacher Collaboration; Overloaded Teacher Schedules Limiting Focus on Life Skills; and Insufficient Support from Non-SPED Teachers. While the instructional strategies that teachers find most effective in improving the social and adaptive skills of students with disabilities were: Use of Social Narratives and Role-Playing; Small Group Activities to Promote Peer Interaction; and Incorporation of Visual and Tactile Learning Materials.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that special education teachers effectively include social and adaptive skills via storytelling, domestic tasks, and artistic endeavors. Nonetheless, they encounter substantial obstacles, including inadequate parent-teacher collaboration, excessive workloads, and insufficient assistance from non-SPED colleagues. Notwithstanding these challenges, educators adeptly utilize tactics such as social narratives, small group interactions, and multi-sensory resources to facilitate learners' development to elevate the implementation and durability of functional life skills education.

7. Implications for Practice

The findings from Tabunok Central Elementary School highlight the dedication of SPED educators in fostering social and adaptive competencies via storytelling, the incorporation of life skills into classroom assignments, and arts-based initiatives. Notwithstanding these innovative strategies, considerable obstacles remain, such as inadequate parent-teacher collaboration, restricted emphasis on life skills due to congested schedules, and insufficient assistance from non-SPED personnel. These observations provide actionable implications for enhancing inclusive education in the Tabunok school setting.

To the Department of Education and Division Offices. To ensure sustainable support for inclusive education, the division office is encouraged to: 1) Create parent engagement frameworks that guide schools in fostering consistent home-school collaboration; 2) Reassess teacher workload distribution, especially for SPED educators, and advocate for teaching support staff or co-teachers to relieve strain; and 3) Promote whole-school involvement by organizing capacity-building workshops for general education teachers on inclusive practices.

To School Administrators. School leadership is pivotal in fostering a culture of inclusiveness. Administrators at Tabunok Central Elementary School are urged to arrange regular parent-teacher conferences and activity exhibitions to close the home-school divide; Modify schedules or assign supplementary responsibilities to alleviate instructor burden, so facilitating increased time for adaptive skill instruction; Enhance institutional support by promoting collaboration between special education and general education teachers in instructional and co-curricular activities.

To SPED Teachers. Special education teachers are acknowledged for their proactive implementation of social narratives, small group engagements, and tactile educational resources. They are urged to persist in employing these evidence-based tactics while recording outcomes to enhance practice. Disseminate success narratives and activity concepts via professional learning communities; and Create streamlined life skills courses that can be sent for completion under parental supervision.

To General Education Teachers. As partners in inclusive education, general education teachers play a vital role in fostering social and adaptive skills. This study encourages them to: Collaborate with SPED teachers in lesson planning; Incorporate differentiated activities that support diverse learners; and Promote acceptance, empathy, and peer cooperation within the classroom community.

To Parents of Learners with Disabilities. Parental involvement is a cornerstone of successful skill generalization. Parents at Tabunok Central are urged to: Attend school-led sessions on adaptive skill reinforcement; Practice assigned household tasks like sorting laundry, setting the table, or cleaning up with their children; and maintain open communication with teachers about student progress and challenges, helping ensure continuity between school and home learning.

To Learners with Disabilities. Learners are encouraged to be active participants in their growth. They should: Engage in group tasks and storytelling sessions with peers; Follow visual cues and verbal prompts during daily routines; and Demonstrate learned skills in both classroom and home environments, promoting confidence and self-reliance.

To Future Researchers. The present instance underscores relevant themes for further examination. Future researchers may: Investigate the impact of parent-centered interventions on the development of adaptive skills; Analyze collaborative models that effectively merge general and special education personnel; and evaluate the enduring advantages of small group and arts-oriented approaches on social communication and life skill acquisition in students with disabilities.

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