

PEEKING Through the Lived Experiences of Teachers on the Implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education Program: A PHENOMENOLOGY

Marlon M. Matais¹, Dr. Nida P. Matutino²

¹Grade VI - Adviser IP Coordinator

Department of Education, Region XI, Division of the City of Mati, Mati Northeast District, Bobon Elementary School
marlon.matais@deped.gov.ph

²Graduate School Department, University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City, Philippines
nmatutino@uic.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This research study employed a qualitative approach and specifically used phenomenological design to acquire an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the elementary public school teachers from the schools serving IP learners. Participants were teachers from the schools in the Division of Mati City who were chosen based on the inclusion criteria set to become participants for the in-depth interview and focus group discussion. I employed thematic analysis on the transcribed responses, categorized and coded to arrive at essential themes. Three major themes drawn from the lived experiences on the implementation of the IPEd Program: lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights shared with the academe and community. As regard to the lived experiences on the implementation of the IPEd Program, three themes emerged: strenuous and complex pedagogical teaching workload, delivering culture-sensitive lessons, and exemplifying the commendable role of a model IP teacher. As to the coping mechanisms for the challenges encountered on the IPEd Program, three themes arose: being a passionate teacher, fostering teacher capability, and intensifying support system. As to the insights shared with the academe and the community, three themes arose: holistic development program for IPEd teachers, sustainable support from school authorities, and preservation of cultural diversity.

KEYWORDS: *Education, educational management, indigenous peoples, elementary public school teachers, phenomenology, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most astounding involvements in the educative process was integrating the preservation of indigenous culture and tradition. The connections with the learners, who came from various cultural backgrounds, produced a dynamic learning atmosphere that holistically enhanced the curriculum. However, indigenous communities often experience inaccessibility to schools due to teachers' lack of cultural competency, resulting in insensitive teaching approaches that do not consider the specific learning patterns of indigenous learners (Cosentino, 2016). Further, many aspects of Indigenous Peoples education, such as curriculum content planning, language instruction, teacher training, teaching materials, assessment, and evaluation, frequently received poor ratings (Castellano, 2016).

As reported by UNESCO (2015), globally, an estimated 476 million IPs, constituting 6 percent of the world population, face considerable challenges, with 19 percent living in impoverished conditions. The obstinate marginalization and disadvantage experienced by these communities are worsened by limited access to high-quality education. Due to this, many Indigenous peoples exhibit lower literacy rates compared to dominant groups, emphasizing the urgent need to emphasize the value of education for marginalized individuals within Indigenous Peoples (Cosentino, 2016).

Furthermore, New Zealand has made progress toward reestablishing a native-cultured education. However, underfunded school systems are left to do whatever local officials want. This often ensures the indigenous people can be educated in their language but limits education to a few years of poor-quality instruction with underpaid teachers in terrible facilities (Fisher, 2015).

In the Philippines, despite education department efforts, the ongoing school control struggle breeds fear in the tribe, anticipating identity loss (Singh, 2017). This reflects a broader governmental failure to accord significant consideration to the IP culture within the country, highlighting a systemic issue where the voices of those with more substantial influence take precedence. In contrast, the smaller voices, particularly those of indigenous peoples, are often unnoticed (Abejuela, 2013). The ramifications of miseducation have left a generation misunderstood, undocumented, and unappreciated, resulting in negative perceptions. This exploration confirms that education has been neglected, including physical facilities, materials, training, and opportunities (Cabreza, 2015).

Notably, the research conducted by Flor et al. (2013) in Cordillera Province revealed a significant issue among implementers when implementing

the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program, including a need for more materials, textbooks, and references rooted in indigenous context. The potential challenges also included using English teaching materials, considering the indigenous peoples' living conditions, addressing gender issues, recruiting local teachers, and integrating the use of the mother tongue in the classroom. Additionally, multiple studies explored teachers' experiences implementing the IPEd Program. Acknowledging the pivotal role of teachers in preserving and imparting indigenous traditional knowledge, culture, and customs through integration into the K to 12 curriculum stands out as a paramount aspect of the IPEd program (Luistro, 2018).

Further, the Department of Education, Division of Agusan Del Sur, Philippines, gained a satisfactory rating for pedagogy, methodology, and the incorporation of IKSPs; however, aspects such as curriculum received a poor rating. The findings underscore the necessity for a curriculum design and framework to originate from the grassroots, reflecting the communal life of IPs. Thus, there is a need to enhance teachers' knowledge of the IPEd policy and promote the modification of teaching methods to conform to the IPS's cultural norms and indigenous educational systems (Castellano, 2016).

In this realm, the significant influence of curriculum localization on student performance bears transformation not only yielded relevance for local learners but also created a valuable learning resource applicable to diverse needs. (Wiley, 2015). Likewise, curriculum adaption significantly improved the learning process by including culturally significant material, adapting information to local contexts, and using sustainable local resources (Pun, 2018).

Further, a curriculum that authentically reflects the indigenous practices of the particular community must be developed to implement the program, which requires cooperation with the culture bearers and the community. The active participation of DepEd officials, administrators, and teachers alone is insufficient because of the program's distinctive concentration on the cultural identity of IPs (Rhaiti, 2016). Significantly, acknowledging the pivotal role of teachers in preserving and imparting indigenous traditional knowledge, culture, and customs through integration into the K to 12 curriculum stands out as a paramount aspect within the IPEd Program (Luistro, 2018).

Despite established state policies, most IPs in the Philippines still need to realize the right to education. A significant education gap persists between IPs and the general population, highlighting a noticeable inconsistency between educational policies and their concrete implementation (Gabriel, 2017). I aimed to address this gap by exploring and filling the disparities in implementing education policies for IPs in our context.

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological research explored and gained insights into the lived experiences of the teachers in three schools at the elementary level of Mati North District, Division of Mati City, as regards the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education Program. This study provides awareness among the teachers, school heads, and administrators to improve the implementation of the IPed Program. Hence, this offers a chance to bring attention to the academic community as a developing subject that merits discussion for an improved perspective on changes and advancements in the field of education.

Theoretical Lens

In order to comprehend teachers' actual experiences implementing the IPed Program, this study is grounded in three theories, namely: Indigenous Theory by Davison (2018), Socio-culturalism by Vygotsky (1934), and Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977). First, this study was primarily anchored on the Indigenous Theory of Davison (2018), defined as a theory of human behavior that is accurate to the cultural environment, not imported from other contexts or cultures, and purposely designed for the people who live in that context or culture. Second, this study was anchored on the theory of the Socio-culturalism Theory of Vygotsky (1934), which emphasizes the importance of social interactions, cultural context, and language in the development of cognition and posits that a child's cognitive development is deeply connected to social and cultural influences. Third, this study was grounded on the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1977), which emphasizes the role of observational learning, modeling, and imitation in shaping behavior. This theory suggests that individuals learn not only through direct experiences but also by observing the actions and outcomes of others, and by modeling their behavior accordingly.

METHODS

Research Design

The strategy of inquiry in this study is qualitative research. It is a method employed to investigate and understand the significance that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human issue (Creswell, 2014). It is conducted to give individuals the opportunity to express their narratives and experiences, amplifying their voices and perspectives as it aims to reduce the power dynamics commonly present between researchers and participants in a study (Creswell,

2013). Meanwhile, phenomenology was appropriate since this is ideal. Nevertheless, readers learn about the researcher's experiences and can judge whether the researcher focused exclusively on the respondent's experiences in the description without bringing himself or herself into the picture (Creswell, 2013). Indeed, it focuses on establishing the shared significance of lived experiences related to a concept or phenomenon among multiple individuals. It emphasizes illustrating the collective nature of these experiences within the specific group being studied as it aims to distill individual encounters with a phenomenon into a portrayal of its universal essence (Yuksel et al., 2015).

Research Site and Participants

This study involved 17 elementary school teachers from three selected schools serving IP learners in Mati North District, Schools Division of the City of Mati. Ten teachers participated in individual in-depth interviews (IDI), and seven engaged in focus group discussions (FGD). The small number of participants enabled the researcher to delve deeply into their experiences, aiding in crafting a detailed and comprehensive depiction of those encounters (Creswell & Merriam, 2009). One of the selected schools was School A, located in Sitio Bugakan, Brgy. Tagabakid, City of Mati Davao Oriental, the second one was School B in Brgy. Don Salvador, City of Mati, Davao Oriental, and lastly was School C in Brgy. Tagbinonga, City of Mati, Davao Oriental. The sample size of the participants met the recommendation for conducting IDI and FGD in a qualitative study, specifically in a phenomenological study. As argued by Creswell (2013), to understand the lived experiences of the respondents, a sample size of three to 10 cases is acceptable to reach data saturation of variability. In particular, they were teachers who had at least one year of teaching experience from a single school district within DepEd and had been handling classes serving IP learners.

Data Analysis

After collecting and coding the qualitative data, I organized, interpreted, and analyzed the information to develop distinct categories and themes. Employing rigorous research practices, I implemented an Audit Trail to showcase participants' statements systematically. The data was meticulously sorted, categorized into folders with precise labels, and managed systematically to ensure consistency and deep familiarity with the dataset. This comprehensive approach entailed repeated and thorough readings of transcribed information to extract meaningful insights. As Creswell (2014) recommended, qualitative

research is characterized by a process wherein the research problem is examined in its natural setting. This information collection method enables the researcher to gather insights from various sources and comprehend the meaning of the issues through the perspectives of respondents or the involved audience. As Côté & Turgeon (2005) highlighted in qualitative research, different approaches entail distinct techniques for performing, documenting, and assessing data analysis. However, it falls upon the individual researcher to ensure rigor and reliability. Researchers can exhibit the conduct of data analysis by recording, organizing, and disclosing detailed methods, enabling readers to assess the credibility of the process.

Trustworthiness

Four criteria, taken from Denzin and Lincoln (2014), credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were taken into consideration to show the reliability of this qualitative content analysis. Establishing credibility highlights the importance of the investigation's results and indicates their deservingness of consideration.

RESULTS

Profile of the Participants

Table 1.1

Profile of the Participants

No.	Code	Sex	Age	Civil Status	Designation	Years of Teaching	Study Group
1	IDI 1	Female	27	Single	Teacher I	6	IDI
2	IDI 2	Female	32	Married	Teacher II	7	IDI
3	IDI 3	Male	30	Married	Teacher I	4	IDI
4	IDI 4	Female	29	Single	Teacher II	6	IDI
5	IDI 5	Female	34	Married	Teacher II	10	IDI
6	IDI 6	Female	30	Married	Teacher II	6	IDI
7	IDI 7	Male	30	Single	Teacher III	8	IDI
8	IDI 8	Female	48	Married	Teacher III	21	IDI
9	IDI 9	Female	46	Married	Teacher III	15	IDI
10	IDI 10	Female	32	Single	Teacher II	6	IDI
11	FGD 1	Male	28	Single	Teacher I	6	FGD

12	FGD 2	Male	29	Single	Teacher I	7	FGD
13	FGD 3	Female	30	Single	Teacher II	8	FGD
14	FGD 4	Female	34	Married	Teacher III	8	FGD
15	FGD 5	Female	29	Single	Teacher I	5	FGD
16	FGD 6	Female	29	Single	Teacher II	7	FGD
17	FGD 7	Male	32	Married	Teacher III	10	FGD

Table 1.1 shows the profile of the 10 participants in IDI and 7 participants of the FGD, composed of IP teachers assigned to the schools serving IP learners. It shows that there were five male and twelve female participants; nine of them were married, and eight were single. They all taught at the elementary level in the three chosen public elementary schools in Mati North district, Schools Division of the City of Mati. Their ages range from 27 to 48 years old.

Lived Experiences of Elementary Public School Teachers

I coded and labeled themes about teachers' lived experiences on the implementation of the IPed program and transcribed IDI and FGD. As shown in Table 1.2, I came up with the following themes: strenuous and complex pedagogical teaching workload, delivering culture-sensitive lessons, and exemplifying the commendable role of a model IP teacher.

Table 1.2
Lived Experiences of Elementary Teachers

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Strenuous and complex pedagogical teaching workload	Needing extra effort in suiting varied teaching-learning approaches Contextualizing the lessons applicable to IP learners Preparing learning materials due to insufficiency and unavailability
Delivering culture-sensitive Lessons	Delivering cultural-based lessons Engaging with experiential classroom activities in developing competencies Instilling the value of teaching the culture, customs, and traditions of IP Enriching the lessons with the rich culture of the IPs

Exemplifying the Commendable Role of a Model IP Teacher	Demonstrating equal treatment to various tribes in class Avoiding discrimination of IP cultural beliefs and practices Imparting the goodness and value of having a tribal identity Establishing partnerships reaching out to the IP Community Adapting the IP way of life in an IP environment
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Strenuous and complex pedagogical teaching workload. Teachers encounter pervasive challenges when implementing the IPED program, primarily due to a need for contextualized Indigenous Peoples (IP) materials. Exploring their experiences with the IPED program revealed that teachers also grapple with the considerable impact of a demanding workload on their overall well-being. The participants mentioned:

I find it difficult since there is a need for us to contextualize another material using the Mandaya dialect. (IDI)

Teaching with insufficient learning material adds workloads to the role of the teacher. – (FGD4)

Delivering Culture-sensitive Lessons. Integrating culture into the curriculum of the IPED program heightened teaching effectiveness. Tasks became more engaging when linked to culture and ethnicity. Designing a culturally sensitive curriculum, including Indigenous perspectives and traditional knowledge, was essential. The participants mentioned:

Teachers need to improve classroom practice and hone their skills in line with indigenous knowledge through training programs. – (IDI1)

Since I lack the information and background necessary for their language, ... difficult for me to relate all of their practices to my lesson. – (FGD3)

Exemplifying the Commendable Role of a Model IP Teacher. IP teachers served as community role models, engaging in initiatives, mentorship programs, and leadership roles. Their contribution to affirming cultural identity among students by examining their role instills pride in Indigenous heritage and fosters

a sense of belonging. The participants mentioned:

I assist in creating contextualized lesson plans and learning resources as part of my role in implementing the IPED program. – (IDI8)

As an IP teacher, I will make my learners understand why incorporating Indigenous perspectives is important in all subject areas. – (IDI10)

Coping Mechanisms of the Teachers

I categorized and labeled coping themes for challenges faced by teachers in three public elementary schools serving IP learners and transcribed IDI and FGD. Table 2 displays the themes: being a passionate teacher, fostering teacher capability, and intensifying a support system. These themes were discussed thoroughly in the succeeding pages.

Table 2
Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Being a Passionate Teacher	Having a deep understanding of learner’s needs Enhancing teacher-student relationship and student-student relationship Learning to accept and adjust the present teaching situations Committing oneself to the proper implementation of the IP education program
Fostering Teacher Capability	Joining actively during Learning Action Cell sessions Attending available seminars and other professional and personal development activities Participating in in-service training
Intensifying Support System	Asking for information from an IP colleague Soliciting ideas and suggestions from the IP community Strengthening communication between IP leaders and elders Involving IP leaders and elders in school activities

Being a Passionate Teacher. Adaptability was crucial as teachers adjusted their strategies based on evolving needs, community dynamics, and educational policies. They prioritized the well-being of IP learners, used culturally relevant

methods, and dedicated themselves to overcoming educational challenges. The participants mentioned:

Being a volunteer and engaging yourself to be part of the community can help. It leads me to understand and tolerate their identity and way of living. – (IDI2)

I viewed videos on online platforms. I truly acquired knowledge that I can use in my class. I read and put all the information I've learned from reading to use. – (FG6)

Fostering Teacher Capability. Teachers advocated for ongoing commitment to professional growth, including cultural sensitivity training, specialized workshops, and further education relevant to indigenous education. This aimed to enhance their pedagogical skills and understanding of the unique needs of IP learners. The participants mentioned:

I engaged myself in seminars related to IP during our LAC sessions. – (IDI3)

Volunteering in the community might truly be beneficial. I came to accept and understand their way of living. – (FGD4)

Intensifying Support System. Teachers considered other possible actions or solutions to address negative experiences in the IPEd program. This involved mentors guiding newer teachers in navigating IPEd program complexities, ensuring holistic support beyond the classroom. The participants mentioned:

We are inviting certain elders in the community to vouch for our educational materials. – (IDI2)

I participate in all activities relevant to IP education. I include IPEd practices in my classes. – (FGD2)

Insights Shared to the Academe and the Community

I categorized and labeled themes on coping mechanisms of selected teachers from three public elementary schools serving IP learners and transcribed IDI and FGD. As shown in Table 3, I came up with the themes: holistic development program for IPEd teachers, sustainable support from school

authorities, and preservation of cultural diversity. These themes were discussed thoroughly in the succeeding pages.

Table 3

Insights Shared to the Academe and the Community

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Holistic Development Program for IPED Teachers	Lacking in-service training on varied, appropriate instructional approaches and teaching skills relevant to IPED Intensifying schools' learning action cell sessions and other learning activities in connection to IPED
Sustainable Support from School Authorities	Necessitating funds for training, school resources, and other school activities Having insufficient school's technological resources Needing available learning materials intended for IP classes
Preservation of Cultural Diversity	Valuing every IP student in the classroom Respecting the beliefs and traditions of IP learners Creating a welcoming and honest classroom environment

Holistic Development Program for IPed Teachers. The incorporation of cultural sensitivity training into teachers' development is essential. This involves an understanding of IP traditions and community practices. Also, the academe explored various IPed trainings for teachers that include pedagogical teaching, cultural competency workshops, and community engagement. The participants mentioned:

Link teachers with parents to discuss educational goals for their children and to provide opportunities for parents to have ... at school. – (ID11)

Organize IP-related seminars that will encourage students and teachers to join. – (FGD3)

Sustainable Support from School Authorities. School authorities involved local IP communities in decision-making processes and program development to ensure sustained support. Additionally, the academe explored institutional policies that supported sustainable IPed programs. This encompassed budget

allocation, staffing decisions, and long-term planning for IPEd initiatives. The participants mentioned:

This program is very helpful for the administrators to look for alternative way on how they can support the program. – (IDI5)

Prioritize the role of the parents and elders in the implementation of IP education. – (FGD5)

Preservation of Cultural Diversity. Cultural events were integrated into the school calendar to promote diversity and celebration. This involved including indigenous languages, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices in the educational resources. Thus, the academe examined how the curriculum was structured to incorporate and preserve cultural diversity. The participants mentioned:

I am continually drawn to the idea that what I teach should be based on the community's needs because I am an IP teacher. – (FGD5)

It made me conscious that I will always take boundaries, tolerance, and understanding of diversity wherever I go as a human. – (IDI7)

DISCUSSION

Based on the transcribed lived experiences of teachers on the implementation of IPEd program IDI and FGD, three themes materialized, namely: *Strenuous and Complex Pedagogical Teaching Workload, Delivering of Culture-Sensitive Lessons, and Exemplifying the Commendable Role of Model IP Teacher.*

Strenuous and complex pedagogical teaching workload. This theme proves that teaching in indigenous communities requires a deep knowledge of the area's customs, history, and culture. However, teachers continually needed professional development, contributing to their complex workload. This resulting theme confirms the study of McGregor (2017), which found that many teachers and school boards need help incorporating indigenous beliefs and worldviews into curriculum modifications. The result likewise supports what Vygotsky (1934) claims in his Socio-culturalism Theory that emphasizes the development of educational approaches such as cooperative learning, where

students work together to achieve common goals, and integrating cultural context into curriculum design.

Delivering of culture-sensitive lessons. This theme reveals that the ability of teachers to present lessons was much developed by the inclusion of culture in the curriculum that was connected to students' cultures and ethnicities. This agrees with the study of Chinn (2017), which revealed that teachers need to be prepared to adapt their lessons to fit the cultural needs of their learners for the IPed Program to be effective. In the same vein, incorporating indigenous people into developing culturally sensitive lesson plans was essential to guaranteeing purposeful and considerate research in various cultural contexts. This finding confirms the study of Battiste (2022) that culturally responsive education is predicated on a solid foundation in a specific community's language and cultural heritage. Thus, it is crucial to determine the proper traits and behaviors connected to culturally responsive curricula.

Exemplifying the commendable role of a model IP teacher. This is the participants' point of view that understanding and tolerance of the practices of indigenous communities serve a significant role played by teachers in the IPed program. They can establish an inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment by integrating cultural lessons into their approaches. They ensure that the materials used in the classroom represent the cultural backgrounds of the learners. This supports the Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977, which affirms that it is a psychological framework emphasizing the role of observational learning, modeling, and imitation in shaping behavior. In the same way, the result also confirms the study of Abayao (2003) that the curriculum is concerned with the cultural grounding of IPed in specific ancestral domains and promotes cultural diversity in the educational system. Thus, the framework instructs about IPs' vision for their communities in the context of their individual and collective conceptions of existence, affirming their vision of self-determination.

Three themes emerged from the participant's responses in the IDI and FGD regarding their coping mechanisms for the challenges encountered in implementing the IPed Program. These themes are Being a Passionate Teacher, Fostering Teacher Capability, and Intensifying A Support System.

Being a passionate teacher. Passionate teachers cultivate emotional fortitude, confronting obstacles associated with past traumas, economic inequality, and cultural conservation. Their commitment leads to the promotion

of IPed, the advocacy of resources, and the resolution of systemic issues. The emerging theme aligns with the study of Cross et al. (2020), which states that teachers must unrestraint the classified structure of their classrooms and promote reciprocal learning and teaching among students of the Indigenous community. In this realm, the curriculum addresses IPed requirements that teachers were sought for their commitment to developing learning content, activities, materials, and evaluation systems. The results parallel the pronouncement of Ganal (2017), who states that the curriculum developed for IPs reflects the primary area of IPs' daily concerns.

Fostering teacher capability. When the teachers are aware of the cultural quirks of the IP community, they can overcome challenges capably. They can be flexible with their teaching methods and adjust to a wide range of learning demands, making it possible to establish a more encouraging learning atmosphere. They can also use culturally relevant teaching materials, integrate technology, and explore innovative teaching strategies that engage students and make the learning process more dynamic. These results are in congruence with another study by Dimitrov and Haque (2016), which found that teachers are held accountable for the knowledge and perspectives of Indigenous people, fostering a relationship based on reciprocity and caring between educators and Indigenous communities. Once a connection is built on communication and trust, it may be carried over into the classroom to foster an atmosphere where teachers and students are encouraged to challenge preconceived notions and develop an appreciation for Indigenous knowledge.

Intensifying support system. Teachers can continue their professional development through workshops, conferences, and training sessions on culturally relevant pedagogy offered by an improved support system. The theme drawn from the responses of the participants concurs with the study of Eduardo et al. (2017) that acknowledges the responsibilities of the state to maintain IPs distinctive cultural expression by guaranteeing their full involvement in activities related to health, education, and other service areas that enable them to respond to the needs of their distinct communities.

Regarding insights shared with the academe and community, three essential themes emerged from the IDI and FGD conducted with the participants. The themes are Holistic Development Program for Iped Teachers, Sustainable Support from School Authorities, and Preservation of Cultural Diversity.

Holistic Development Program for IPEd Teachers. Establishing ongoing professional development by academic institutions that centered on culturally sensitive teaching strategies is necessary. This provides teachers with advocacy skills, fostering reflective teaching methods and enhancing professional development. The resulting theme confirms the study by Harber (2012) that the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 completely embraces the program in addressing the needs of the IP communities and ensuring all indigenous children have access to good quality free and compulsory primary education. Additionally, to uphold the IP curriculum, teaching and learning strategies are carefully designed to align with the principles of the IPEd foundation, such as demonstration, actual activity, and direct instruction (Steinhauer, 2012).

Sustainable Support from School Authorities. Providing teachers in the IPEd program with long-term assistance depends on school authorities. Schools must conduct programs relevant to the IPEd program that encourage fostering relationships and encouraging partnerships with the community. The theme drawn from the participants' responses concurs with Abayao (2013), which states that in recognition of the right of indigenous peoples to culturally rooted and responsive primary education, the DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015 adopted the IPEd Curriculum Framework.

Preservation of Cultural Diversity. Encouraging cultural diversity among IPEd teachers enhances the educational environment that benefits Indigenous learners. The productivity of cultures in the IPEd program depends on teachers retaining their cultural diversity. The result likewise supports the study of Ganal (2017), which claims that the Indigenous Peoples' Rights (IPRA) of 1987 articulates the rights of Indigenous peoples to their ancestral land, to the enjoyment of human rights, to the development, preservation, and protection of their culture and integrity, and full participation in the direction of health, education, and other services. The Act also guarantees the right to a good education.

Implications for Educational Practices. The findings of this study serve as a basis for the education system to prioritize the needs of teachers in terms of the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education Program. Furthermore, IP students have the right to access high-quality education that is on equal footing with non-Indigenous students and receive an education that respects their heritage. As indicated in the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of

1997, also known as Republic Act No. 8371 in the Philippines, recognizes and advances the rights of indigenous groups. School administrators must prioritize cultural competence, establish connections with Indigenous communities, provide ongoing professional development opportunities for educators, distribute resources fairly, and champion policies that include Indigenous knowledge in the curriculum. Supporting the implementation is one of the most important things that the teacher can have to carry out the resources and methods needed in a classroom and for the learners to demonstrate an understanding of the program. Those experiences imply that teachers exerted efforts to consider the practices that could help them connect to their learners as best as possible.

Regarding their coping mechanisms, incorporating indigenous viewpoints into instructional strategies, integrating Indigenous knowledge, history, and customs into lessons, adapting culturally relevant curriculum, and developing strong relationships with parents, elders, and leaders offers insightful instruction and assistance that guarantees meaningful and exciting learning experiences. Subsequently, the result of this study is a basis for the academe to take appropriate strides on how to help teachers effectively implement the IPED program. It also conforms to the stakeholders' action towards this problem. It entails cooperation, cultural sensitivity, and a dedication to developing an educational framework that uplifts and honors the variety of Indigenous peoples.

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