

Assessing the Implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education in Elementary Schools: Basis for an Intervention Program

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Abstract— This study assessed the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program in selected elementary schools in Jimenez District, Misamis Occidental, Philippines. Employing a descriptive quantitative design within an exploratory sequential mixed-methods framework, the study examined six domains: pedagogy and methodology, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs), curriculum and content, language of instruction, teacher training, and instructional materials. Data were collected from 49 respondents using validated survey instruments and analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation. Findings indicate a generally high level of IPEd implementation, particularly in pedagogy and curriculum contextualization, reflecting teachers' efforts to integrate culturally responsive practices. However, moderate ratings in teacher training, instructional materials, and IKSP integration reveal gaps in sustained professional development and resource support. While resource availability was generally sufficient, limitations in culturally grounded materials and capacity-building opportunities persist. The study concludes that although IPEd is operational and consistently practiced, its depth and sustainability are constrained by systemic challenges. It recommends strengthening teacher training, enhancing material development, reinforcing institutional support, and fostering community collaboration to ensure authentic and sustainable implementation.

Keywords— Indigenous Peoples Education; culturally responsive pedagogy, IKSPs, multilingual education, program implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental human right and a critical driver of social equity and national development. However, for many indigenous communities, access to quality and culturally relevant education has historically been limited. In the Philippine context, Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) have long experienced marginalization within mainstream education systems that often overlook their cultural identities, languages, and knowledge systems [15]. This disconnect has contributed to persistent educational disparities, including lower participation rates, reduced academic performance, and weakened cultural continuity.

In response to these challenges, the Philippine government institutionalized the Indigenous Peoples

Education (IPEd) Program through the Department of Education. Grounded in Republic Act No. 8371, also known as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, and further operationalized through DepEd Order No. 62, s. 2011, the program seeks to ensure that indigenous learners receive education that is inclusive, culturally responsive, and respectful of their identities. IPEd emphasizes the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs), the use of mother tongue-based instruction, and the active participation of indigenous communities in curriculum development and implementation. These principles align with global frameworks such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and Sustainable Development Goal 4, which advocate for inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

At its core, IPEd challenges the traditional notion of a standardized curriculum by promoting contextualized and localized learning. It recognizes that knowledge is not culturally neutral and that meaningful learning occurs when instruction is connected to learners' lived experiences, community practices, and ancestral domains. As such, teachers play a central role in translating policy into practice by adopting culturally responsive pedagogies, contextualizing content, and fostering inclusive classroom environments. However, this process is complex and requires not only individual initiative but also strong institutional support, adequate resources, and sustained professional development.

Despite the progressive vision of IPEd, its implementation at the grassroots level remains uneven. Existing studies and field observations suggest that while teachers demonstrate commitment to integrating cultural elements into instruction, they often face constraints such as limited access to localized instructional materials, insufficient training on IKSP integration, and challenges in balancing national curriculum standards with indigenous knowledge. Additionally, resource disparities across schools, including gaps in learning materials and capacity-building opportunities, further complicate the consistent delivery of culturally responsive education.

Empirical studies support the effectiveness of culturally grounded education. For instance, Pedagogy and curriculum contextualization significantly influence learning outcomes in indigenous settings [3]. Likewise, teachers with greater exposure to IPEd training are more likely to employ participatory and culturally responsive teaching strategies [8]. However, despite these promising practices, implementation challenges persist. Studies by [8] and [25] highlight gaps in teacher training, instructional materials, and systematic integration of IKSPs, which hinder consistent program delivery.

Furthermore, the success of IPEd depends not only on classroom practices but also on institutional support systems. The study of [21] emphasized that teacher competence in indigenous education requires continuous professional development and cultural

immersion. Meanwhile, [6] underscore the importance of community collaboration in curriculum development to ensure authenticity and relevance. Without these supports, there is a risk that cultural integration becomes superficial rather than transformative.

Given these realities, there is a need for systematic and empirical assessment of how IPEd is being implemented in specific local contexts. Quantitative evaluation provides an objective means of identifying patterns, strengths, and gaps in program implementation, particularly across key domains such as pedagogy, curriculum, language use, teacher training, and instructional resources. Such evidence is essential for informing policy refinement, guiding resource allocation, and designing targeted interventions that address the actual needs of educators and learners.

This study focuses on the quantitative assessment of IPEd implementation in selected elementary schools in Jimenez District, Misamis Occidental, an area situated within the Subanen ancestral domain. By examining the level of implementation and the extent of resource availability, the study aims to provide a data-driven understanding of how IPEd is operationalized in this context. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on indigenous education by highlighting both the progress achieved and the challenges that persist, ultimately supporting efforts to strengthen culturally responsive and inclusive education for indigenous learners.

In doing so, the study underscores the importance of bridging the gap between policy and practice. While the IPEd framework provides a strong conceptual foundation, its success ultimately depends on how effectively it is implemented in classrooms and supported by institutions. Through this quantitative lens, the research seeks to offer insights that can enhance the sustainability, consistency, and authenticity of Indigenous Peoples Education in the Philippines.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design within the broader framework of an

exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach. However, for the purpose of this manuscript, only the quantitative phase is presented to provide a systematic and objective assessment of the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program. The quantitative approach is appropriate as it enables the measurement of patterns, levels, and variations in program implementation across identified domains using numerical data and statistical analysis.

The descriptive design was utilized to determine the current status and extent of IPEd implementation in selected schools. It allowed the researcher to quantify respondents' perceptions regarding various components of the program, including pedagogy, curriculum, language use, teacher preparedness, and instructional resources. This design is particularly suited for educational program evaluation, as it facilitates the identification of strengths and gaps without manipulating variables.

The study was conducted in selected IPEd-implementing public elementary schools in Jimenez District, Division of Misamis Occidental. These schools are located within or near the Subanen ancestral domain, where culturally responsive education is essential in preserving indigenous identity and promoting inclusive learning. The geographical and cultural context of the area makes it a relevant setting for examining how IPEd is operationalized at the grassroots level.

The respondents of the study consisted of 49 participants, including 45 teachers and 4 school heads from seven IPEd-implementing schools. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques was employed. Purposive sampling ensured that participants were directly involved in IPEd implementation, thereby providing relevant and informed responses. Convenience sampling was applied to account for accessibility and availability within the research setting.

Teachers were selected as primary respondents due to their direct role in delivering instruction and integrating culturally responsive practices in the classroom. School heads were included to provide

insights into administrative support, resource allocation, and program supervision.

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire adapted from previously validated instruments [26], [22] and [20]. The questionnaire utilized a Likert-scale format, allowing respondents to rate the extent of implementation and availability using standardized response categories.

To ensure content validity, the instrument underwent expert evaluation by both internal and external validators with expertise in Indigenous Peoples Education and educational research. Revisions were made based on their feedback to enhance clarity, relevance, and cultural sensitivity. Reliability testing was conducted through pilot testing, and internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Initial results indicated variability across constructs; however, after revision, all domains achieved acceptable reliability coefficients ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), indicating that the instrument consistently measured the intended constructs.

Collected data were organized, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. Specifically, the following measures were employed: Frequency and Percentage, Weighted Mean, and Standard Deviation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the quantitative findings on the level of implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program and the extent of resource availability in selected elementary schools in Jimenez District. The results are organized according to the key domains of the study and are interpreted using descriptive statistical measures.

3.1 Level of Implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd)

The results demonstrate that IPEd implementation in Jimenez District is generally strong and well-established, with all domains achieving a high level of implementation. This reflects a positive alignment between policy directives and classroom practices, particularly in promoting culturally responsive pedagogy and contextualized instruction. Similar findings were reported by [26], who noted that IPEd

implementation across selected regions in the Philippines is generally consistent at the classroom level, though variations exist in depth and authenticity.

Table 1 presents the overall level of IPED implementation across the six identified domains.

Table 1. Level of IPED Implementation

Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
Pedagogy and Methodology	2.62	0.296	High
Indigenous Knowledge System	2.61	0.282	High
Curriculum Content and Planning	2.56	0.215	High
Language of Instruction	2.84	0.238	High
Teacher Training	2.88	0.358	High
Materials	3.16	0.322	High
Overall	2.78	0.285	High

Among the domains, materials ($M = 3.16$) obtained the highest mean, indicating that instructional resources are relatively available and utilized. This finding aligns with [6] and [18], who emphasize that access to contextualized and culturally grounded materials enhances learner engagement and comprehension. However, existing literature also cautions that the effectiveness of such materials depends on their authenticity and alignment with indigenous knowledge systems, highlighting the need for community involvement in their development.

The high rating for teacher training ($M = 2.88$) suggests that respondents perceive themselves as adequately prepared to implement IPED. This supports the findings of [18], who reported that teacher competence is closely linked to the extent of training and professional development received. However, Navas et al. (2023) argue that training must be continuous and culturally immersive to ensure deeper pedagogical competence, indicating that high ratings may not necessarily reflect sustained or specialized training.

Meanwhile, the slightly lower ratings in IKSP integration and curriculum planning suggest that deeper collaboration with indigenous communities and more structured curriculum indigenization may still be needed. These domains require not only teacher initiative but also institutional and community support to ensure authenticity and sustainability.

The study of [27] and [23] cautioned that cultural integration in teaching is sometimes implemented superficially, without deep engagement with community knowledge bearers. Similarly, [18] note that balancing national curriculum standards with indigenous knowledge remains a persistent challenge.

The low standard deviation values across all domains indicate consistency in respondents' perceptions, suggesting that implementation practices are relatively uniform across schools. However, the findings also imply that while IPED is widely practiced, its depth, authenticity, and sustainability may vary.

Overall, the findings suggest that while IPED implementation is consistently practiced, its depth and quality may vary, particularly in areas requiring specialized knowledge, collaboration, and curriculum development.

3.2 Extent of Resource Availability

Resource availability was generally high, particularly in learning environments, supporting [16], who emphasized the importance of culturally responsive spaces. These environments play a crucial role in fostering a sense of inclusion, belonging, and cultural identity among indigenous learners, which in turn enhances their participation and engagement in classroom activities.

A culturally responsive learning environment not only provides physical space but also reflects indigenous values, traditions, and ways of knowing, thereby making learning more meaningful and relevant. In this

context, the high rating suggests that schools are making efforts to create supportive and inclusive spaces; however, the effectiveness of these environments ultimately depends on how well they are integrated with culturally grounded pedagogy and instructional practices.

Table 2 presents the extent of availability of resources necessary for the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program. The results indicate that the overall availability of resources is high ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.319$), suggesting that schools generally possess the essential inputs needed to support IPEd implementation.

Table 2. Summary on the Extent of Availability of Resource in IPEd implementation

Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
Teaching and Learning Materials	3.07	0.313	High
Capacity-building and Teacher Training	2.88	0.296	High
Learning Space and Environment	3.30	0.348	Very High
Overall	3.08	0.319	High

Among the resource components, learning space and environment ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.348$) obtained the highest mean and was interpreted as very high. This finding implies that the physical and instructional environments of the schools are highly conducive to teaching and learning. This result aligns with the findings of [20], who emphasized that a supportive and culturally responsive learning environment significantly enhances student engagement and participation in IPEd settings. Similarly, DepEd (2015) highlights that culturally appropriate learning spaces are essential in fostering inclusive education and ensuring that indigenous learners feel respected and represented within the school context.

Both teaching and learning materials ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.313$) and capacity-building and teacher training ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.296$) were rated as high, indicating that these resources are generally available but may still have room for enhancement. The availability of instructional materials suggests that teachers have access to resources that facilitate lesson delivery; however, the rating also implies that these materials may not always be sufficient in quantity or fully contextualized to reflect indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSPs). This finding supports the study of [18], which noted that while instructional materials exist in many IPEd schools, they are often limited in cultural specificity and require further localization. Likewise, [6] emphasized the importance of co-created materials developed in collaboration

with indigenous communities to ensure cultural accuracy and relevance.

In terms of capacity-building and teacher training, the relatively lower mean suggests that although professional development opportunities are present, they may not be sufficiently sustained or specialized. This finding is consistent with Navas et al. (2023), who argued that teacher competence in IPEd depends on continuous training that develops cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and expertise in indigenous pedagogy. Similarly, [24] stressed that teacher education programs must integrate intercultural competencies to effectively prepare educators for indigenous contexts. The results also echo [18], who found that the effectiveness of IPEd implementation is strongly linked to the extent and quality of training received by teachers.

The relatively low standard deviation values across all components indicate consistency in respondents' perceptions, suggesting that resource availability is fairly uniform across the participating schools. However, the findings also imply that while resources are present, their quality, depth, and cultural responsiveness may still require improvement.

Overall, the findings reveal that while resource availability is not a major constraint in the implementation of IPEd, there are still important areas that require strengthening, particularly in the development of culturally responsive instructional

materials and the provision of sustained teacher training. These results reinforce the earlier finding that while implementation is strong, its quality and depth depend on the continuous enhancement of institutional support systems.

The results suggest that improving IPEd implementation should focus not only on increasing the quantity of resources but also on enhancing their quality, cultural relevance, and accessibility. Strengthening partnerships with indigenous communities in the development of materials, as well as institutionalizing regular and context-specific training programs, will be essential in ensuring that resources effectively support culturally responsive education.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study quantitatively assessed the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program in selected elementary schools in Jimenez District, Misamis Occidental. The findings reveal that the overall level of IPEd implementation is high, indicating that the program is actively practiced and generally aligned with its intended goals of delivering culturally responsive and inclusive education.

Across the six domains, teachers demonstrated consistent efforts to integrate culturally grounded pedagogy, contextualized curriculum content, and appropriate language of instruction. The relatively high ratings in pedagogy, language use, and instructional materials suggest that classroom-level practices are responsive to the needs and cultural contexts of indigenous learners. These results affirm the principles of culturally responsive education, which emphasize the importance of aligning teaching strategies with learners' lived experiences and cultural identities.

However, while all domains were rated high, the findings also reveal variations in depth and consistency, particularly in the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) and curriculum planning. These areas, although present, may not yet be fully institutionalized or systematically implemented across all schools. This suggests that IPEd practices are still evolving and may

depend largely on individual teacher initiative rather than structured systems.

In terms of resource availability, the study found that resources are generally sufficient, with a very high rating in learning space and environment. This indicates that schools provide supportive physical settings for teaching and learning. However, teaching materials and capacity-building opportunities, while rated high, remain areas that require strengthening, particularly in ensuring cultural relevance and sustainability.

Overall, the study concludes that IPEd implementation in the district is functionally effective but still developing in terms of depth, consistency, and institutional support. While the foundational elements are in place, further enhancement is needed to ensure that implementation moves from compliance to a more authentic, systemic, and sustainable practice.

To strengthen the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program, it is recommended that schools and education authorities prioritize sustained and context-specific teacher training that enhances competencies in culturally responsive pedagogy, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs), and mother tongue-based instruction. The development and distribution of culturally relevant instructional materials should be intensified through active collaboration with indigenous communities to ensure authenticity and accuracy. Institutional support must also be reinforced by providing adequate resources, funding, and structured monitoring systems to ensure consistency across schools. Furthermore, stronger partnerships between schools and community elders should be fostered to deepen cultural integration in teaching and learning. Finally, a systematic evaluation mechanism should be established to continuously assess program effectiveness and guide data-driven improvements, ensuring that IPEd implementation becomes more responsive, consistent, and sustainable.

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