

Lived Experiences of Indigenous People's Education (IPED) Teachers in Integrating the IPED Curriculum

Vanessa Amor M. Verdida*, Catherine G. Malon, Denmark S. Macalisang
Southern Capital Colleges, Oroquieta City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: vanessa.verdida@deped.gov.ph

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Abstract. The IPED Program aims to provide marginalized ethnic groups with an inclusive curriculum that respects their cultural identity. Department of Education recognizes that access to culture-responsive primary education is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed among Indigenous Peoples, given its significance in achieving the country's Education for All (EFA) targets. This study was conducted to determine the lived experiences of IPED teachers in integrating the IPED curriculum. Participants were assigned from different IPED-implementing schools in the Division of Misamis Occidental. They were selected through purposive sampling. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather the data from the participants. The study employed a qualitative research design, and the researcher used the transcendental phenomenological approach. Responses were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic method of data analysis. Findings revealed that IPED teachers faced various challenges in integrating the IPED curriculum, including additional workload, difficulty in Subanen Orthography, limited IPED instructional materials, and disinterest in the Indigenous Program. The participants also gained meaningful opportunities to become IPED teachers, such as understanding the Subanen culture and receiving awards and recognition as IPED teachers. To cope with the mentioned challenges, IPED teachers had to seek assistance from I.P. leaders in the community, attend IPED seminars and workshops, and observe flexibility and open-mindedness. These suggest that addressing the workload, cascading intensive Subanen Orthography workshop, supplying adequate IPED instructional materials and teaching resources, boosting IPED learners' interests, and increasing I.P. community involvement are essential steps toward improving the educational experience for both teachers and students.

Keywords: Challenges encountered; IPED curriculum; IPED teachers; Lived experiences; Qualitative approach.

1.0 Introduction

The pursuit of providing Indigenous Peoples with culturally rooted education that caters to their specific needs has become a significant concern for numerous nations and local and international organizations (Montaner, 2020). However, the struggle for inclusive education remains a poignant challenge in countries where particular ethnic groups face marginalization. The increasing influx of immigrants into Europe places additional pressure on educational systems to understand and address the requirements of immigrant students. Meanwhile, indigenous peoples residing in rural areas in Asia present a pressing issue (Cucio & Roldan, 2020). In the Philippines, the Department of Education recognizes that access to culture-responsive primary education is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed among Indigenous Peoples, given its significance in achieving the country's Education for All (EFA) targets, Millennium Development and Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA).

However, implementing this program has resulted in mixed reactions from teachers of Indigenous People's Education (IPEd). Integrating indigenization and technology in the teaching-learning process poses opportunities and challenges for indigenous education in the Philippines (Tolentino et al., 2020). The success of program implementation is influenced by factors such as the teacher's knowledge of the learner's culture and traditions, the relevant training attended by implementers, the socioeconomic status of I.P. families, and the availability of necessary resources and facilities (Bangcas et al., 2022). A study conducted by Cucio and Roldan (2020) focused on implementing the IPEd curriculum in Cabadbaran City, highlighting the dominance of the Manobo tribe and the orientation provided by DepEd. The localization and indigenization of the curriculum, as well as stakeholder engagement, have been integral to the institutionalization of Indigenous People's Education within the Division.

Ocampo, Rufino, and Gonzales (2021) conducted a study on the policy creation processes that integrate inclusion and social justice in the education policies for indigenous people within the K to 12 Basic Education Program. Their investigation uncovered the profound capacity of education tactics and procedures that are tailored to specific contexts and empower individuals, to bring about significant changes not only in policies but also in the individuals who create those policies. This implies that policymakers have the ability to bring about significant transformation by adopting educational strategies that are based on the cultural background of indigenous people. This will result in the promotion of greater inclusivity and social justice within the education system.

Therefore, while previous research has focused on the development and policy aspects of IPED, more needs to be understood regarding the practical challenges and successes teachers face in implementing this curriculum. By examining teachers' experiences, this study will provide valuable insights into the obstacles encountered, strategies employed, and the impact of IPED on students' learning and cultural identity. The findings will improve teacher training, curriculum implementation, and policy development, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of IPED initiatives.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized qualitative research, which conducted face-to-face interviews and direct observation methods in a transcendental phenomenological approach. The participants' interview transcripts were scrutinized and analyzed through in-depth reading to achieve the target interpretation for this part of the study. Husserl primarily created a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology known as transcendental phenomenology, which aims to comprehend human experience. Pure transcendental phenomenological research is grounded in the concept and conditioned upon setting aside all preconceived ideas to see phenomena through unclouded glasses, thereby allowing the true meaning of phenomena to emerge naturally and within their own identity (Husserl & Moran, 2012). Through this lens, the study utilized the method to investigate the real-life experiences of teachers teaching the IPED curriculum. Statements of the respondents that were essential to the conduct of this study were transcribed, bearing the lived experiences of teachers teaching the IPED curriculum. The participants were permitted to speak in the language they were comfortable talking. This design was employed since the study will use non-numerical data to interpret and analyze people's experiences and actions. As such, the study aimed to obtain the informants' perspectives and perceptions from the vantage points of their experiences. This study also utilized open-ended conversational communication through personal interviews with the informants.

2.2 Research Participants

The study participants, who were selected through purposive sampling, included only ten (10) teacher-participants from IPEd-implementing schools in the Division of Misamis Occidental as suggested by Morse (2000) that at least 6 participants are required for phenomenological studies. The following are the criteria in the selection of the participants: (1) at least five years of experience working as a public elementary teacher in an IPED school within the Division of Misamis Occidental, (2) has been teaching IPEd classes using IPED curriculum, (3) within the age bracket of 25-55 years old and (4) with no pending administrative case.

2.3 Research Instrument

This study used researcher-made interview guide questions. A researcher-made guide question, also known as an interview protocol, is a set of open-ended questions developed by the researcher to guide the qualitative data collection process, such as in-depth interviews. In this study, the researcher created interview guide questions. A

collection of open-ended questions created by the researcher to direct the qualitative data-collecting process, such as in-depth interviews, is called an interview protocol or researcher-made guide question set. There are four (4) sections to it. The participants' demographic profile is covered in the first section. The second part is about the participants' experiences, either positive or challenging experiences. The third part asks about the coping mechanisms of participants with the challenges they experienced, and the last part addresses participants' aspirations as IPED teachers. The researcher-made interview protocol is usually based on the research objectives and theoretical framework and is reviewed and validated by experts to ensure their relevance and clarity. The experts in the Division of Misamis Occidental were the following: (1) Education Program Supervisor in LRMDs, Multigrade, and IPED; (2) Principal of IPED implementing school; (3) IPED Focal Person. A guide question guarantees that essential subjects and themes are covered organized and methodically while allowing for flexibility and adaptation in the data collection process.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

This research commenced after obtaining authorization from the Dean or Program Head of the Graduate School to carry out the investigation. The researcher also obtained consent from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Misamis Occidental. After obtaining consent, the researcher chose ten (10) teachers from different IPED-implementing schools in the Division of Misamis Occidental and scheduled an interview with them. The researcher employed a face-to-face interview method to avail the advantages of seeking clarifications, posing further probing inquiries, and observing non-verbal cues. Furthermore, using a voice recorder proved advantageous for the researcher in retrospectively examining the events that occurred throughout the interview.

The informants were apprised of the study's objective both orally and using a consent letter. The participants were cognizant of the fact that their involvement in the interview was optional and that they had the freedom to end it at any time without providing an explanation. Declining to participate would not incur any penalty or forfeit any rewards. Participants were aware that all items were confidential and should only be utilized for the purpose of this study.

After gathering and verifying the data, they were reviewed and analyzed using thematic analysis by identifying the themes related to this study. The thematic analysis procedure was used to classify the perspectives and significance of the views in the transcript of each participant (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In the phenomenology approach, the participant's sense of the life experience comprises the main thematic points in the conclusions (Polit, 2010). Statements made in the vernacular by the research participants are to be transcribed without changing the end of the speech, and commonalities are to be found among their accounts to identify them by theme. Moreover, the responses of the participants were labeled per category.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study, the participant's rights, privileges, and health came first. During the inquiry, the following ethical considerations were applied and recorded.

Informed Consent. The first step was the use of consent letters. It was made available to the participants a few days before the event so they could think about their options and, if they like, sign a document confirming their voluntary involvement. They had plenty of time to freely offer their full cooperation, support, and involvement in the study or decline to participate if they did not want to. The consent letter informing participants of the study's goals, benefits, and drawbacks was crucial. Thus, throughout the study's execution, deception was avoided.

Confidentiality. The researcher guaranteed the security and anonymity of the data obtained and the confidentiality of the participant's personal information and identities. As a result, after gathering data, the researcher handled and discarded any documents (printed or digital) holding the informants' data with extreme caution.

3.0 Results and Discussion

This study used a direct observation method in the transcendental-phenomenological approach, in which the interview transcripts of the participants were scrutinized through thorough reading to achieve the target interpretation for the content of this part of the study. Statements of the respondents that were essential to the conduct of this study were transcribed, bearing the lived experiences of IPED teachers in integrating the IPED

curriculum. The significant statements disclosed by the participants in this research were grouped and arranged under the pre-identified themes, which were considered main themes: Experiences and Challenges of IPED Teachers, IPED Teacher Opportunities, and Effective Strategies.

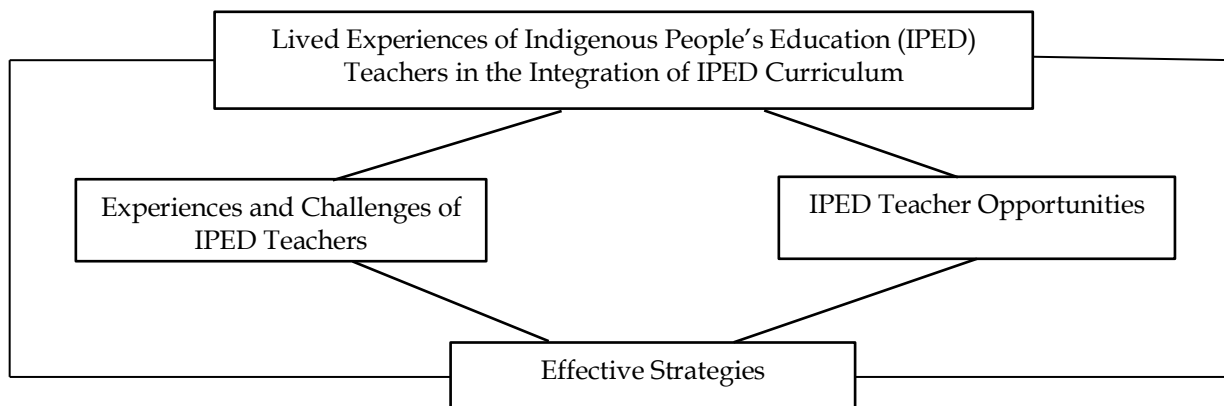


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Theme 1: Experiences and Challenges of IPED Teachers

The following emergent themes were formulated after exploring the challenges encountered by IPED teachers in the integration of IPED curriculum: (1) Additional Workload; (2) Difficulty in Subanen Orthography; (3) Limited IPED Instructional Materials and Teaching Resources; (4) Disinterest in Indigenous Program.

Additional Workload. Most IPED teachers' assignments are in hinterland areas where the school is in the Subanen ancestral domain. Integrating the IPED curriculum is considered an additional workload for IPED teachers handling combination or multigrade classes. The following statements of the participants reinforced these claims during the interview:

"Our school is only a primary school that offers kindergarten to grade 4 classes. There are only two teachers in our school. I am handling a multigrade class consisting of Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2. As an IPED teacher, I considered the integration of the IPED curriculum as an additional workload. Although I found teaching the beauty of Subanen culture interesting, I need more time to prepare the instructional materials since I handle two and three classes daily."
(P10:SS2)

"I love teaching IPED lessons, especially to lower-grade learners. However, sometimes, I fail to teach them because I am busy with other equally important tasks. I am handling a combination class of Grades 1 and 2. I teach all the learning areas of both grades. Being an IPED teacher is genuinely exciting, but it requires more time to fulfill since it is an additional workload for me." (P1:SS3)

"The integration of the IPed curriculum added tasks for us teachers. We make lesson plans with motivations or springboards like stories, poems, and songs translated into Subanen that conform to the Subanen Cultural Standards or IKSPs. While we pursued marrying the Subanen Core Values and IKSPs to DepEd competencies, sometimes drawn deeper with the tasks, we were astonished at how beautiful and unique our culture is." (P8:SS1)

Based on the feedback, teachers report that teaching multigrade courses and incorporating IPED curriculum is a tiring experience. Insufficient management of tasks such as drafting lesson plans for several grade levels, developing instructional materials for all topics, assessing and documenting students' work, and handling student conduct can result in time conflicts. Furthermore, the inclusion of IPED lessons into teachers' already burdensome workload exacerbated the problem for them.

The findings were supported by the study of Jumoad et al., 2021, which states that workload significantly influences teacher burnout. Their workload also impacts teachers' productivity. Teachers juggle various responsibilities at home and school, so they have a lot on their minds. Workload problems are a significant source

of stress for teachers. The job's demands can be overwhelming, particularly when meeting deadlines and managing multiple tasks. A study by the National Education Association (NEA) found that over half of teachers reported that their workload was so heavy that it prevented them from having enough time to plan and prepare for instruction (NEA, 2021).

Difficulty in Subanen orthography. Most of the IPED teachers were not native speakers of Subanen. Though they were Subanen in blood, Visayan was their native tongue. Integrating IPED lessons became challenging when teachers needed to master speaking and correctly writing the Subanen orthography. According to a study by Otxero (2022), the main issues are the need for culturally relevant learning resources and teachers' need for experience in localizing instruction. Therefore, it is imperative to tackle the many issues the implementers face and consider the suggested intervention program for the comprehensive execution of the IPED program. The responses of the participants supported these during the interview:

"Integrating the IPED curriculum is very hard since I am not a dialect speaker, much more of the kids." (P2:SS1)

"Despite being a Subanen in blood, I have never lived in a community where people speak the Subanen dialect frequently. Thus, I am not used to it. Therefore, I needed help communicating and teaching Subanen lessons." (P3:SS1)

"I am a proud Subanen by blood, but unfortunately, I only learned to speak a few Subanen words. It was challenging to teach the IPED curriculum since I only had limited knowledge of the Subanen dialect. Though I love to talk in the Subanen dialect, teaching its complicated orthography was more challenging to master." (P4:SS1)

"Being an IPED teacher is one of my most challenging tasks in the DepEd family since I am not a native speaker of the language. I find it very hard to pronounce, spell, and understand even the simplest Subanen words. That is why I need to study and review the lessons before presenting them to my learners. I need to learn how to revive the dying culture and language of Subanen." (P5:SS1)

"I admit that I found it very difficult to implement the IPED Curriculum because I am Subanen by blood, but I don't know how to speak the dialect. I am confused about how to teach it, so I looked for DepEd-corrected resources that can fit into my teaching, but until now, I only found a few." (P7:SS1)

"The challenge was to integrate the DepEd competencies with Subanen Cultural Standards, and sad to say, most of us do not practice and speak the dialect even at home." (P8:SS2)

The interview findings indicated that teachers encountered challenges when they had not mastered speaking and writing the Subanen dialect orthography. Due to its complicated sounds and spelling, speaking, and writing, the Subanen dialect requires careful integration of its correct orthography. Most of the IPED teachers were Subanen in blood but unable to speak the Subanen dialect fluently. They were familiar with some basic Subanen words but needed help communicating using longer Subanen sentences or phrases.

Quimbo's 2023 study confirms that cultural homogenization poses a serious challenge in safeguarding the Indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSPs) and indigenous learning systems (ILSs) of the I.P.s. The process of globalization poses a threat to the cultural heritage of indigenous communities, which could result in the loss and potential disappearance of their traditions. This would have a detrimental effect on the development of identity for indigenous learners.

These experiences were also consistent with David Perkins' Difficulty hypothesis (2007). Teachers faced obstacles and complexities in adopting the IPED curriculum. There is still a shortage of educators who are skilled in the language of intellectual property rights (IPs) and indigenous cultural communities (ICCs). This is because most subjects taught in the mother tongue focus on local dialects and languages, rather than the language spoken by indigenous people (Eduardo & Gabriel, 2021). Enhancing language literacy is one of the primary educational goals of the Philippine K-12 curriculum. The language literacy enhancement for teachers of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) is challenging due to many obstacles that may have impacted the language learning proficiency of Indigenous learners (Saysi & Batuctoc, 2022).

Restricted availability of IPED instructional materials and teaching resources. As per RA 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act 2013), it is essential to incorporate contextualized instructional materials into the K to 12 curricula. The stipulation requires the curriculum to be flexible enough for schools to customize, incorporate local elements, and enhance it based on their specific social and educational contexts. The Department of Education's selected perspective for comprehending the local context is centered around the learner, emphasizing explicitly that Philippine Education is focused on the needs and development of the learner. The Philosophy of Inclusion, as outlined in the DepEd Order of 2015, encompasses previous attempts to promote diversity and acknowledges the various cultures present in the Philippines.

Teaching IPED lessons requires enough supplementary teaching materials to help IPED teachers produce quality instruction. The Division of Misamis Occidental provided IPED workshops and write shops for IPED teachers to integrate the IPED curriculum. However, some IPED teachers needed more IPED teaching resources and instructional materials. This statement was evident when four participants remarked the following:

"The challenge I have encountered in integrating the IPED curriculum is the need for teaching resources. They do not have a book or BOW that will serve as our guide." (P1:SS2)

"One of the challenging experiences I encountered in teaching IPED lessons was the experience of having only limited teaching resources that would fit our daily lessons." (P2:SS2)

"It is challenging because I need more knowledge, training, and materials to learn about IPED. So, I need to know more deeply and be skillful enough about the IPED curriculum and have these materials to use for IPED learners." (P3:SS2)

"One of the challenges I encountered was having limited instructional materials and teaching resources for IPED integration. I believe that our Division was doing its best to cater to these needs. In my own little way, I created some indigenous instructional materials, but they were limited only to a specific competency because I still have more core subjects to teach other than the IPED curriculum." (P4:SS2)

According to the responses, IPED teachers needed help integrating IPED lessons due to limited IPED instructional materials and teaching resources. Participants felt the need for the availability of standardized IPED lesson plans throughout the Division. Though our Division trained most IPED teachers to create IPED lessons, they wondered if their teaching materials aligned with the Subanen standards. Participants find it challenging to teach IPED lessons without an IPED guide and IPED instructional materials.

Indigenous children have often received an education of varying quality. Teachers lack the necessary preparation and resources to effectively teach children with intellectual disabilities, hindering their ability to develop their capacities and skills (Robiños et al., 2020). Extensive research and data suggest that teachers, despite their zeal and devotion, lack a sufficient understanding of how to implement instructions and navigate the intricate aspects of indigenous knowledge, cultures, and identities. This claim was substantiated when three participants made the following remarks:

"Another challenge I am facing is the scarcity of I.P. I.M.s and resources. But even with those experiences, I am very happy because I know that I am helping to preserve the culture soon." (P5:SS2)

"It would be more effective to teach the IPED curriculum if there were enough IPED teaching resources such as BOW, Teacher's Guide, and lesson plans. Regarding instructional materials, I am having a hard time delivering some IPED competencies because I need to create my own instructional materials before I can proceed to the topic. Having limited teaching resources and instructional materials for the IPED curriculum was considered one of the challenges I encountered." (P6:SS1)

"Due to limited IPED teaching resources, I am hesitant and afraid to be blamed for teaching the learners the wrong information." (P7:SS2)

The study conducted by Quimbo et al. (2024) provided further support for the findings. The study included extensive teacher training programs, collaborative platforms for educators to exchange effective historical teaching methods, and the creation of teaching materials that are both historically accurate and culturally relevant. The purpose of this methodical historical approach was to guarantee a unified and coherent integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) into the educational framework. This technique attempted to make sure that the incorporation of indigenous knowledge inside the formal education system was both historically relevant and beneficial, resulting in a more efficient and fair system. The process of education also emphasized and rejuvenated indigenous language. Nevertheless, the absence of written material impeded teachers from retaining and efficiently conveying the language (Mercado, 2021).

Disinterest in Indigenous Program. Some I.P. learners in the I.P. community need more chances to witness the Subanen dialect and practices. Sinugbuanong Binisaya was their native tongue, and I.P. learners blended modernization into their lifestyle. Subanen culture in some areas was dying due to the influence of social media. IPED teachers found it challenging to teach the IPED lesson when learners were not interested in indigenous knowledge, skills, and practices. These experiences were mentioned by the participants in the following interview responses:

"My experiences in integrating the IPED curriculum are inspiring and exciting. At first, while introducing the Subanen words to my learners, they found it very difficult to speak because they were not interested in learning since they were not practicing it daily in the community. Though they are Subanen by blood, they do not use the Subanen dialect." (P1:SS1)

"I encountered many challenges because it is not the native tongue of our community. Sometimes, a learner would tell me that I was telling nonsense and didn't understand me. They would ask why I was teaching this, making it hard for them. Despite all that I have experienced, I am thankful to the Lord for giving me an enlightened mind." (P7:SS3)

"Sometimes, the learners are not interested in learning the Subanen words because they are hard to pronounce. They already had difficulty reading Visayan words, so how much more the Subanen?" (P10:SS1)

The study's findings showed that IPED learners' disinterest in learning the Subanen dialect added to the IPED teacher's difficulty performing tasks. IPED learners should learn to master the Subanen dialect as part of their culture. Teaching uninterested IPED learners was challenging for teachers because they could not proceed to their objectives when IPED learners were not motivated to learn.

The findings were supported by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development (1978), which states that culture is a critical element affecting people's learning ability. He believed that children acquire attitudes and ideas from their culture's values. This theory is appropriate to this study since integrating IPED lessons, the cultures, traditions, beliefs, and values, and how I.P.s interact with others are considered their way of life. Language is viewed as a part of living or intangible heritage and, as such, is transmitted from generation to generation. For indigenous communities, the function of language is beyond communication. It is integral to their identities and the preservation of their cultures (Lucasan et al., 2020).

Theme 2: IPED Teacher Opportunity

Understanding of the Subanen culture. In integrating the IPED curriculum, IPED teachers and I.P. learners shared a common goal: to learn the Subanen knowledge, skills, and practices and to understand their rich culture. Through numerous IPED workshops and seminars, IPED teachers gained essential knowledge in implementing the IPED curriculum. The following statements of the participants reinforced these claims during the interview:

"And as an IPED teacher, I have had opportunities to interact with my Subanen brothers and sisters, love our culture even more, and help them in a way that allows us to preserve and reminisce about our culture and traditions." (P3:SS3)

"I am grateful to be an IPED teacher because it has allowed me to learn and love the Subanen culture more deeply. The different seminars and workshops conducted by the Department of Education allowed me to explore the rich culture of the Subanen people in terms of their dialect and traditions." (P4:SS3)

"On the other hand, I also encountered opportunities like attending training, seminars, and lectures, which allowed me to go to nice places, eat sumptuous foods, and meet my co-teachers in IPED. These experiences led me to a deeper understanding of our culture." (P5:SS3)

"It also enables us teachers to appreciate the dialect we speak, learn more, and feel confident about our culture without thinking that ours is inferior to others. Soon, all of us will master our dialect and be able to impart our culture to our pupils who are waiting for our own culture to be appreciated and recognized." (P8:SS3)

"One of the advantages of being an IPED teacher was the chance to participate in the IPED Summit, where all IPED-implementing schools in the Division showcase the different delicacies, songs, dances, rituals, and stories of the I.P. community. Through this, I have witnessed how rich the Subanen culture is. IPED integration is an interesting journey, and I also learned a lot of amazing things about Subanen culture and related them to everyday teaching." (P9:SS1)

"As an IPED teacher in the Division of Misamis Occidental, I have had the opportunity to learn and understand the Subanen culture. Exploring its rich culture and witnessing its celebrations gives me pride and motivates me to teach IPED lessons in my classes." (P10:SS4)

According to the responses, IPED teachers enjoyed the opportunities and benefits of being an IPED teacher in the Division of Misamis Occidental. Attending different IPED celebrations and seminars like I.P. Summit, I.P. Day, IPED Retooling, and IPED Curriculum Workshop increased their knowledge and understanding of the Subanen culture. Witnessing the Subanen rituals and indigenous practices gave them pride and gratification as Subanen descendants. Enjoying the Subanen delicacies and exploring the rich Subanen culture through songs and dances inspired them to teach better and love deeper.

Awards and recognitions as IPED teacher. Every year, outstanding DepEd teachers receive awards and recognition at the school, district, Division, and regional levels. Recognizing teachers' excellent contribution to inclusive education boosts one's confidence and ignites their passion to teach even better. These experiences were mentioned by the participants in the following interview responses:

"Also, my best experience as an IPED teacher was being awarded as the Most Outstanding IPED Teacher in our district during the 2022 Golden Jar Awards. It was really fulfilling to be recognized and receive an award. For me, it was more advantageous to be an IPED teacher during the nomination because only three IPED teachers submitted documents for this category. Therefore, I had a bigger chance of winning. Compared to non-IPED teachers, they had more nomination entries." (P3:SS4)

"The most fulfilling part of being an IPED teacher is the opportunity to receive awards and recognition as the Most Outstanding IPED Teacher in the Division of Misamis Occidental during the 2023 Asenso Awards. Because of this, I have been nominated as one of the finalists during the Search for the Most Outstanding IPED teachers in Region 10 during the Pasidungog sa Amihanang Mindanao 2023. This experience is the best opportunity I have gained as an IPED teacher." (P5:SS4)

"On the other hand, being an IPED teacher opens many opportunities for my professional growth and development. In fact, I was awarded as the Most Outstanding IPED teacher not just in the Division of Misamis Occidental but to the entire Region 10 during the Pasidungog sa Amihanang Mindanao 2022. Because of these awards and recognition, I have gained meaningful experiences that I will always treasure as a proud Subanen." (P6:SS2)

The study findings showed that IPED teachers' efforts are recognized and valued by the DepEd Misamis Occidental Division. They are happy to be awarded a recognition plaque and cash incentive. This opportunity boosted their confidence and increased their pride as IPED teachers. They thank their administrators for nominating them as one of the most outstanding teachers in the IPED category. They considered this opportunity as their most significant achievement in life.

D.O. 9, S. 2001 supported the findings with the heading Creating the Department of Education's Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (Praise). Encouraging, recognizing, and rewarding employees—individually or in groups—for their recommendations, creative ideas, inventions, discoveries, heroic deeds,

exemplary behavior, extraordinary acts or services in the public interest, and other individual efforts that contribute to improving the effectiveness, economy, and efficiency of government operations that lead to organizational productivity is the goal of this DepEd Order.

Theme 3: Effective Strategies

Support from intellectual property (I.P.) leaders. Participants have actively and effectively implemented ways to overcome problems in implementing the National Indigenous People Education Policy Framework and Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices. Their endeavor demonstrates an admirable dedication to surmounting challenges and effectively incorporating these policies and practices into the educational system. These programs demonstrate a strong commitment to creating an inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment for Indigenous individuals. The participants' comments corroborated these findings during the interview:

"To overcome those challenges, I will seek assistance from the Gukom or Elders/Bae so that they can help me translate the Subanen words." (P1:SS4)

"To effectively teach the IPed curriculum, we need to make friends with the community because they will help us prepare not only the learners but also us teachers who are still learning it." (P2:SS3)

"To overcome those challenges, I need to seek help from the community's elders, for without them, I.P. education will not be realized." (P5:SS5)

The interview findings indicated the strong support of the I.P. community in the educational process. The community's I.P. leaders assisted whenever the IPED teachers asked for help. Their collaboration resulted in quality and reliable outputs that conformed to the IPED learning competencies and Subanen community standards. It is important to note that teachers work intimately with their learners, colleagues, parents, and the entire community to ensure the success of the teaching-learning experiences. Teaching culture is improved when learning communities maximize and deliver collaboration and empowerment among teachers, break down walls of isolation, create collective responsibility, and secure continuous professional learning. Another three participants claimed this statement through the following responses:

"Through interaction with the elders and other co-teachers, we improved our skills in contextualizing lesson plans, learned more words in Subanen, and grasped its importance in the educative process." (P8:SS4)

"The best way to overcome those challenges is to learn the culture. As for me, I learned through communicating with our I.P. elders. I involved them in school activities and had them share something about their identity, be it through rituals, dance, a showcase of talents and artifacts, or even simply sharing their experiences as I.P.s. These things helped me a lot to understand them, overcome those challenges, and turn them into opportunities." (P9:SS2)

"We asked local volunteers as community resources who gave us lectures, taught us to sing their songs, execute their dance moves, and make things relative to their lives in the past." (P10:SS3)

The study of Villagrancia (2019) supported the findings and shed light on the significant factors that contribute to the effective implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) program. Her research indicates that the support of stakeholders, particularly in learning materials development, plays a crucial role in enhancing the program's instructional design, monitoring, and evaluation. When stakeholders are actively involved in developing high-quality learning materials, it positively influences the implementation of the IPed curriculum. Localization, allowing schools or local officials to modify the curriculum to meet local needs and connect it with the local environment, is a primary strategy for mainstreaming IKSP (Grande, 2018). There is no need to educate the I.P. community on their indigenous knowledge because they already have it. What is necessary is to make them more engaged in their I.K. by nurturing their sense of identity and sense of self as indigenous people. Through this, it will lead to positive self-esteem and a sense of belonging to their cultural community and heritage (Natano, 2023).

IPED Seminars and Workshops. The Department of Education has always done its best to provide inclusive education. It has allocated significant funds to the IPED program. IPED teachers are willing to attend weeklong seminars and workshops to gain relevant information about I.P. Education. The responses of the four participants supported these during the interview:

"The seminars and trainings help me a lot as an IPED teacher. Although I still have limited knowledge, at least I already have an idea and guide on how to teach Subanen culture. I am thankful to DepEd-Mis. Occ. because I am always one of the participants in different seminars for free." (P1:SS5)

"Our Division should conduct additional training for IPED teachers on pronouncing the Subanen words correctly since it is one of the reasons we had difficulty teaching. It is challenging to teach children the wrong information because everything we teach for them is right." (P2:SS4)

"I can say that for IPED teachers to be more proficient in teaching IPED, it requires a strong foundation, materials, and training for IPED teachers." (P3:SS5)

"Cultural sensitivity training, incorporation of indigenous knowledge, teacher professional development, and curriculum adaptation are among the strategies I develop in coping with those challenges." (P6:SS3)

According to the responses, the ongoing IPED seminars, workshops, and I.P. celebrations have helped IPED teachers cope with the challenges they have experienced. They are thankful for these experiences, which give them opportunities for professional development and cultural preservation and equip them with the tools needed in the teaching and learning IPED curriculum. The support of the Division of Misamis Occidental helps them cope with the difficulties they experienced along the way.

Moreover, it is crucial for the school to establish and enhance effective multi-level units within the Department of Education (DepEd) that are responsible for devising, executing, and overseeing Indigenous Peoples (I.P.) education initiatives. These units should also incorporate Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) into the curriculum, pedagogy, content, and assessment of all subjects (Manuel & Queroda, 2018). Curricular inclusion mitigates detrimental perceptions regarding indigenous peoples in educational curricula and institutions. By utilizing this method, educators can effectively instruct students about tribal cultures and histories with precision. By incorporating genuine cultural material into the curriculum and implementing culturally responsive teaching methods, native students are provided with valuable opportunity to engage with their own cultures in a meaningful manner (Hopkins, 2020).

Flexibility and Open-Mindedness. Positive teacher attitudes are crucial in achieving inclusive education due to the many benefits they generate for schools and social contexts. Several studies have shown that teachers' attitudes and beliefs positively affect inclusive classroom education (Navarro et al., 2019). This claim was evident when three participants remarked the following:

"To be effective IPED teachers, we need to be open-minded and versatile. We need to start with the most accessible concepts/words and use songs and stories because it is easier to learn a language that way." (P5:SS6)

"I must approach indigenous education with respect, empathy, and willingness to listen and learn from indigenous perspectives." (P6:SS4)

"It would be best if you learned to love the culture and immersed yourself in the I.P. community. If you learn to love and understand them, integrating the IPED curriculum will always be in your heart." (P9:SS5)

The study findings showed that IPED teachers possess flexibility and open-mindedness as essential values in coping with their challenges while integrating the IPED curriculum. Being optimistic and open-minded allows them to accept difficulties with a happy heart and a teachable mind. The complexities of the IPED program become more manageable for them when they can learn the IPED within the I.P. community where they reside or are assigned. Immersing themselves in the traditions, practices, and dialect of the Subanen indigenous people gives them real-life learning for a lifetime.

4.0 Conclusion

IPED teachers faced various challenges in integrating the IPED curriculum, including additional workload, difficulty in Subanen Orthography, limited IPED instructional materials, and disinterest in the Indigenous Program. Despite these challenges, IPED teachers gained meaningful opportunities such as a deeper understanding of Subanen culture and recognition as IPED educators. Teachers sought assistance from community I.P. leaders to address these challenges, attended IPED seminars and workshops, and demonstrated flexibility and open-mindedness. These underscore the importance of addressing workload issues, providing intensive Subanen Orthography workshops, and ensuring adequate IPED instructional materials.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors indicate equal contribution to each section. The authors reviewed and approved the final work.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

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