

# KEM GÓNÔ GESEKÉT NE GENDENG: The Untold Stories of Tboli Educators Implementing Indigenous Peoples Education Program

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## Abstract

This qualitative study explores the lived experiences, particularly on the obstacles and outcomes of Tboli educators in implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) program at Lake Sebu 1 District, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Philippines. Using the ethnographic research design and phenomenological approach, it captures the narratives of six (6) school heads and six (6) teachers from three (3) clusters. The study identifies major challenges, including the lack of culturally relevant instructional materials, limited institutional support, resource constraints, and socio-cultural barriers. Despite these difficulties, the findings highlight significant successes, such as the preservation of cultural identity, increased community engagement, and strengthened institutional collaborations. The aspirations of Tboli educators emphasize the need for policy reforms, enhanced teacher training, and sustainable program implementation to ensure culturally responsive education. Based on these findings, the study recommends the development of mother-tongue learning resources, deeper integration of indigenous knowledge into curricula, stronger institutional backing, and continuous professional development for educators. These efforts are crucial in balancing cultural preservation with modern educational competencies, empowering indigenous learners for both local and global opportunities.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples Education Program; Tboli Educators; lived experiences; obstacles; outcomes; untold stories.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Even if education is a fundamental right, it remains a privilege riddled with systemic barriers by many of the Indigenous People. Indigenous learners have endured an educational system that frequently ignores their cultural heritage, language, and ways of knowing for many years. In response Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program was established. The IPEd is contextualized approach to education that honors Indigenous identities, conserves traditional knowledge, and closes the gap between mainstream education and Indigenous realities. By ensuring that education becomes an empowering tool rather than a means of erasure, this program is a crucial step in redressing historical injustices.

However, while global education policies advocate for inclusivity, Indigenous education remains marginalized in many parts of the world. Research highlights the persistent challenges faced by Indigenous educators, including a lack of culturally responsive curricula, insufficient resources, and systemic biases (Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2013). Despite international commitments to educational equity, Indigenous learners often experience disparities in access, quality, and outcomes, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage.

At the national level, the Philippines has made strides in recognizing Indigenous education through policies such as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 and the Department of

Education's IPed Framework. However, gaps persist in implementation. Studies

reveal inconsistencies in teacher training, resource allocation, and policy execution, leaving Indigenous educators to navigate the challenges with minimal institutional support (Doyle, 2019).

Zooming into the local context, Lake Sebu is home to the Tboli people, celebrated for their rich cultural heritage, including weaving, music, and oral traditions. Despite being at the heart of the IPed initiative, they contend with socio-economic constraints, linguistic barriers, geographic isolation, and the delicate balance of integrating Indigenous knowledge within the structured educational framework hinder effective program implementation (Garcia, 2022; Tamayao, 2020; Dela Cruz, 2021). The untold stories of these educators reveal the resilience required to sustain cultural education amidst modern challenges.

This study sought to uncover these narratives—giving voice to the Tboli educators who are at the forefront of implementing the IPed Program. It highlighted the untold stories of Tboli educators. By understanding their obstacles and outcomes, this research aimed to contribute to the discourse on Indigenous education, advocate for policy improvements, and ensure that the IPed Program fulfills its mission of providing a truly inclusive and culturally responsive education for the Tboli and other indigenous learners.

### Operational Definition of Terms

For the better understanding of the study, the succeeding terms were defined operationally.

*Aspirations and Dreams.* These referred to the hopes, goals, and visions of Tboli educators and their community in relation to the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program and for the Tboli learners. It encompassed their desire for culturally responsive education, empowerment, and the preservation of their Indigenous identity.

*Department of Education (DepEd).* This referred to the government agency responsible for implementing the IPed Program, providing policies, curriculum support, and training for Tboli educators in Lake Sebu, while also representing the institutional challenges navigated.

*Gesekét ne Gendeng.* These were Tboli words meaning obstacles and outcomes, representing the challenges and results encountered by Tboli

educators in implementing the IPed Program. This phrase encapsulated their struggles, perseverance, and triumphs in bridging Indigenous traditions with formal education.

*Indigenous Peoples.* This referred to the Tboli, Ubo, Manobo, Blaan, and other Indigenous ethnic groups residing in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. These communities possessed distinct languages, traditions, and knowledge systems, which the IPed Program aimed to recognize and integrate into education.

*IPed Program.* This referred to the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program, a culturally responsive educational framework designed to honor, integrate, and sustain the Indigenous knowledge, language, and traditions of the Tboli community. It sought to address historical educational marginalization and promote inclusive learning experiences tailored to Indigenous learners.

*Lake Sebu.* This referred to the ancestral domain of the Tboli people, located in South Cotabato, Philippines. It served as the geographical and cultural setting of the study, where Tboli educators worked to integrate Indigenous knowledge into the formal education system.

*Obstacles.* These referred to the lived challenges faced by Tboli educators in implementing the IPed Program. These challenges included limited resources, lack of institutional support, linguistic barriers, curriculum constraints, and sociocultural tensions between Indigenous knowledge systems and mainstream education policies.

*Outcomes.* These referred to the results of overcoming or struggling with obstacles in the implementation of the IPed Program. Outcomes could be successes, such as improved Indigenous learning experiences, or failures, such as systemic barriers hindering meaningful integration of Indigenous education.

*Tboli Educators.* These referred to the frontline implementers of the IPed Program—including school heads, teachers, and cultural mentors—who were Tboli themselves. They played a pivotal role in bridging Indigenous traditions with formal education, ensuring that Tboli learners received an education reflective of their cultural identity.

*Republic Act 8371 (Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 – IPRA).* This referred to the legal framework that recognized and protected the

rights of Indigenous Peoples. This served as the foundation for the implementation of the IPed Program, guiding policies that supported Tboli educators in integrating Indigenous knowledge into mainstream education.

*Untold Stories.* These referred to the personal narratives and lived experiences of Tboli educators as they navigated the challenges and triumphs of implementing the IPed Program. These stories, often unheard in mainstream educational discussions, revealed their struggles, resilience, and commitment to Indigenous education.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative ethnographic research design, a methodological approach specifically aimed at exploring cultural groups and social practices within their natural contexts. This design required a deep and sustained engagement with the participants, primarily through extensive interviews, which allowed for a thorough exploration of their beliefs, behaviors, and social interactions. Ethnography aimed to interpret and vividly portray the cultural meanings and lived experiences of the groups examined (Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. 2019).

In the context of this study, a detailed investigation revealed the personal and professional obstacles encountered by Tboli educators as they navigated the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPed) program. The findings encompassed a range of obstacles, including cultural barriers, resource limitations, and the educators' efforts to adapt pedagogical practices to better meet the needs of their community. Through this rich, qualitative approach, the research illuminated the complex dynamics that shape the educators' experiences and the broader implications for educational practices in indigenous contexts.

### Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the picturesque Lake Sebu District 1, a vibrant tapestry woven from three clusters that span across 18 barangays, each echoing the rich heritage of Lake Sebu. Nestled in the heart of South Cotabato, Philippines, this enchanting locale served as a

pivotal backdrop for the exploration of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed). The area is predominantly inhabited by the Tboli people, a proud Indigenous group celebrated for their deep-rooted cultural legacy. Their traditional practices, intricate weaving artistry, and lively festivals come alive in a kaleidoscope of colors and sounds, expressing their unique identity through captivating music and dance.

The Tboli people's profound spiritual connection to their ancestral lands infuses their lives with a sense of pride and belonging, forming a cornerstone of their culture and values. This intricate relationship to the land shapes not only their identity but also the collective ethos of their community.

This study took a comprehensive look into the lived experiences of Tboli educators, delving into the multifaceted challenges they encounter in their roles and assessing the outcomes stemming from the implementation of IPed within their communities. It meticulously uncovered the barriers that hinder effective education while illuminating the successes that arise from culturally relevant teaching practices. Moreover, this study sought to foster and highlight culturally responsive educational initiatives, aspiring to enhance teaching methodologies that honor and seamlessly integrate indigenous

The researcher drew participants from Tboli educators for this qualitative study, targeted a total of twelve (12) from Lake Sebu District 1. Each participant engaged in an in-depth interview, with their responses recorded (Accad and Accad, 2016). To guarantee the highest quality in selecting participants, the researcher established a purposive sampling method with clear criteria for participant selection.

The criteria for choosing participants who met the study's requirements were as follows: First, participants had to be either a school head or a classroom teacher. Second, they had to be employed at a school implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) program. Third, they had to be bona fide members of the Tboli community in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. Lastly, they had to have served in the Tboli community for a minimum of two years.

It was essential to note that participants could withdraw from the study at any time without

consequence, and they received a token of appreciation for their contributions.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher's primary instrument in gathering data and information from the participants was a self-made questionnaire and follow-up questions for the interview to understand the untold stories of Tboli educators in the implementation of the IPed program. It also included opening and closing questions. The interview questions guide was composed of three parts. Each part corresponding to the statement of this study, which helped the research ensure that all the research questions were answered.

The researcher consulted her research adviser for corrections and improvements to ensure the validity of the questionnaire. The adviser's recommendations were taken into account when finalizing the questionnaire design. The interview guide questions undergone a series of scrutiny from the six (6) validators who are respected and knowledgeable about the IPed Progeam and the Tboli culture.

Participants were informed about the study's objectives, how the results would be utilized, any potential negative consequences of participation, and who would have access to the data. Providing participants with the necessary information allowed them to make an informed decision about their participation, which was the primary goal of informed consent. Additionally, if a participant experienced any distress, further information was provided to address their concerns.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

Before conducting data collection, the researcher requested permission from the Schools Division of South Cotabato through a written letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent. Subsequently, the researcher sent letters to various public schools in Lake Sebu District 1, informing them about the study's objectives. The researcher awaited their response to determine their willingness to participate in the study.

Once the researcher secured permits and consent from the appropriate stakeholders involved in the research, she began conducting interviews with the Tboli educators. Prior to the interview process, the researcher sought permission from the participants to confirm their

agreement to participate in the study (Ang Karugasik, 2016). Upon receiving consent, the researcher briefed the participants on the goals of the study and the interviewing procedure. To ensure participants remained anonymous throughout the data collection process and could provide honest feedback, the researcher took necessary precautions. The interview process lasted between 20 and 30 minutes.

After the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, ensuring the preservation of participants' original expressions and nuances (Creswell, 2013). The researcher engaged in a systematic analysis of the interview transcripts to identify common themes and patterns in participants' experiences. Phenomenological reduction, a method of analysis, involved a thorough examination of each interview to uncover the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, the researcher engaged in member checking, where participants were given the opportunity to review and validate the researcher's interpretations of their experiences (Creswell, 2013).

The following methods utilized by the researcher:

**Content Analysis:** This research tool helped determine the presence of specific words and concepts within the qualitative data. The researcher can infer from participants' responses and transcribe them in a way that is comprehensible to the general public.

**Presentation of Findings:** Data presented categorically and purposefully to align with the study's objectives.

**Frequency Analysis:** Categorical data analyzed using frequency counts to describe various parameters such as age, sex, ethnic group, family status, and role in the community. Frequency statistics would simply count how many times each variable occurs.

### **Data Analysis**

In areas where limited research had been conducted, such as the obstacles and outcomes faced by Tboli educators in educational settings, a descriptive qualitative approach was particularly useful. Thematic analysis was utilized for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns

(themes) within qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The researcher categorized the data into themes or categories from the literature by extracting text samples and classifying them under specific categories or themes. After the coding process, the researcher revisited the information repeatedly, leading to interpretations and analytical notes outlining the findings.

To contextualize and give relevance to the educators' lived experiences, the researcher analyzed the data by highlighting key themes, recurring concepts, and belief patterns that emerged throughout the interviews. As themes arose from the data, interpretations materialized. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), this aspect of data analysis allowed the researcher to establish connections between the interviews, providing context to the identified themes and categories.

#### Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured an accurate and thorough discussion of the study's objectives to uphold ethical considerations. Respondents remained anonymous, and their names and personal information were not disclosed. A consent form was provided to respondents prior to the interview, once they had agreed to participate fully. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time without needing to provide an explanation or facing any judgment. Additionally, the researcher guaranteed the security of respondents after the interview was conducted. The information and testimonies collected were used solely for academic purposes and were treated with the utmost confidentiality.

According to Section 8 of the Data Privacy Act of 2012, it was essential to maintain the confidentiality of personal information that came into the researcher's possession. Therefore, deliberate measures were taken to protect this information. The safety and protection of research participants remained the researcher's top priority. When implementing concepts of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, researchers always considered what was best for the participants who contributed to the research.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter unveils the compelling findings of the study, which delves into the often-overlooked narratives of Tboli educators passionately engaged in Indigenous Peoples Education. Through meticulous thematic analysis, the rich patterns and themes woven into the fabric of the participants' responses would be uncovered. The chapter is carefully organized to present the data in a structured manner, aligning with the core research questions of the study, guiding readers through a vivid exploration of these educators' experiences and insights.

The study utilized a comprehensive and systematic approach to analyze qualitative data, focusing specifically on the experiences of Tboli school heads and teachers in implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) program. Data collection commenced with in-depth structured interviews, which provided a platform for the participants to share their personal narratives and insights, often untold stories; about their experiences, obstacles and outcomes in the educational landscape.

During the interviews, responses were recorded meticulously to capture the participants' voices authentically. These recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in reflecting the content and context of what was communicated. After transcription, the data underwent a rigorous coding process, in which significant statements were identified and labeled with relevant codes to effectively categorize their responses. This step was crucial in distilling the vast amount of qualitative data into manageable segments for further analysis.

Thematic analysis was followed, where initial themes were crafted from the coded data, representing common patterns and ideas that emerged from the participants' accounts. These initial themes were then carefully refined through iterative analysis, resulting in a set of finalized themes that encapsulated the essence of the participants' untold stories and highlighted the key factors affecting the implementation of IPEd.

In the final stages of the study, the interpreted data were thoroughly discussed and illustrated using tables, narrative analyses, and citations from relevant literature. This comprehensive approach not only aimed to support the findings but also to provide a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in executing the IPEd

program within the Tboli community. The outcome presents a richly detailed narrative that reflects the realities faced by educators in this unique cultural context.

The findings of the study were organized into three key areas: (1) obstacles encountered, (2) outcomes and success stories, and (3) dreams and aspirations of the Tboli educators. These areas offer a comprehensive understanding of the untold stories of Tboli school heads and teachers, along with the implications of the IPED implementation in a cultural setting within mainstream education.

### Presentation of Findings

The presentation of findings unfolds like a journey, structured around the core themes derived from our research questions. In this section, the researcher meticulously explore the rich tapestry of insights shared by participants, with themes coming to life through their vivid responses. The data interpretation reveals intricate patterns, weaving connections to existing literature that deepen our understanding. To illuminate these findings, the researcher employed a blend of detailed tables and engaging narrative analysis, capturing the profound and impactful experiences of the teachers in a way that resonates deeply.

### Obstacles Encountered by the Tboli Educators

Tboli teachers face numerous obstacles in delivering quality education while preserving their cultural identity. The teachers must navigate an education system that often does not fully support indigenous knowledge, requiring them to develop innovative strategies to bridge the gap between formal education and traditional learning.

Table 1:

*Obstacles Encountered by the Tboli Educators*

| Emerging Theme                                             | Clustered Theme                               | Codes                  | Significant Statements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Frequency |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1.Challenges in Contextualization and Cultural Integration | 1.a Lack of contextualized learning materials | Insufficient resources | "We need to translate the materials from Hiligaynon to Tboli so our learners will understand." - P2<br>"Resources is one of the factors... material resources... if you want to teach learners our traditional music, our dances... you need cultural masters." -P7<br>"The obstacles that we encountered in our school is insufficient materials or references specific to Tboli cultures, such as books, songs, or folklore." -P9 | 3         |
|                                                            | 1.b Language barriers in teaching             | Language difficulties  | "Our mother tongue books are in different languages, like Hiligaynon, Tagalog, and many more." - P2<br>"Another thing, of course, young language barriers, especially sa mga non-IP teachers who are teaching here in our school." -P11<br>"The communication in mother tongue language is definitely encouraged to bridge the national competency and indigenous knowledge." -P12                                                  | 3         |

|                                            |                                                          |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 2.Institutional and Structural Limitations | 2.a Limited professional development for IPED            | Lack of teacher training   | performing the dances, it's no longer authentic." -P7<br>"Fewer training opportunities tailored to IP education, maybe one or two only." - P2<br>"First young obstacle karuna is young mga guro po kasi non-IP teachers po sila. So mostly 70% ang non-IP, then 30% lang po young IP teachers." -P8<br>"Limited Teacher Training: Educators frequently do not receive enough training on Indigenous knowledge systems." -P12 | 3 |
|                                            | 2.b Resistance and lack of support from stakeholders     | Institutional resistance   | "Even though the IP education is already implied in our schools, somehow, it lacks resources and cultural education." - P5<br>"Nagpatayag po kami ng meeting with the barangay officials para ma-address po namin young problema sa school." -P8<br>"We conducted orientation with the parents, with the teachers, for them to be familiarized... in terms of IKSP, and IPRA law." -P11                                      | 3 |
|                                            | 2.c Financial constraints and lack of Government support | Budgetary limitations      | "There is no finance for the honorarium of elders, making it hard to engage them as resource speakers." - P4<br>"It's really hard to finance or put budget into IP education because of many requirements... we cannot afford to do it." -P7                                                                                                                                                                                 | 2 |
| 3. Resource Constraints                    | 3.a Lack of Educational Materials                        | Inadequate Materials       | "The obstacles that we encountered in our school cultures, such as books, songs, or folklore." -P9<br>"We have a limited access to teaching materials, especially written intervals. Our mother tongue books are in different languages." -P2<br>"Actually, in lesson plan contextualization and making of localized IMs, obstacles, inadequate materials, insufficient materials." -P11                                     | 3 |
|                                            |                                                          | Financial Constraints      | "It's really hard to finance or put budget into IP education because of many requirements." (P7)<br>"We didn't have direct funds to be allocated to the schools for the IPED implementation." -P4<br>"Many IPED programs suffer from a lack of financial support, which is crucial for promoting effective Indigenous education." -P12                                                                                       | 3 |
|                                            |                                                          | Limited Cultural Expertise | "You need cultural masters, experts to perform and let them show the school children how something is being done. Nowadays, there are only a few instructors who can play the music, unlike before" -P7<br>"The expertise of the teachers itself. Kasi there are some, even, they are Tboli, pero hindi tradisyonal." -P3                                                                                                    | 2 |
| 4. Socio-Cultural                          | 4.a Geographical                                         | Distance to Schools        | "The distance of students' homes from the school"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 2 |

|                                  |                                                       |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Barriers Affecting Participation | Infrastructure Challenges                             |                                               | <i>prevents them from joining activities." -P8</i><br><i>"Most of the students are absent because of the far community." (P10)</i>                                                                                                                       |   |
|                                  |                                                       | Lack of Basic Facilities                      | <i>"We have no water supply, which is a basic need." -P9</i><br><i>"First, we had no electricity in our school, which made implementing IPED challenging." -P8</i><br><i>We need a portion of the MOOE to be allocated for this implementation." -P4</i> | 3 |
|                                  |                                                       | Insufficient Teaching Materials               | <i>"We don't have enough indigenous musical instruments or books related to our culture." -P8</i><br><i>"Limited materials to be used—like we only have one <i>trunggong</i> instrument." -P11</i>                                                       | 2 |
|                                  | 4.b Cultural Identity and Community Engagement Issues | Parental and Community Support                | <i>"Some parents do not prioritize education because they are busy with work." (P8)</i><br><i>"Maganda kasi pag ang parents very supportive sa program na implement mo." -P11</i>                                                                        | 2 |
|                                  |                                                       | Non-IP Teachers' Challenges in Implementation | <i>"Most teachers are non-IP, and they struggle with implementing the IPED curriculum." -P8</i><br><i>"We conducted orientation with teachers, including non-IP teachers, to familiarize them with the IPED framework." (P11)</i>                        | 2 |
|                                  |                                                       | Loss of Cultural Authenticity                 | <i>"I could see that the way our IP learners are performing the dances, it's no longer authentic. Students are becoming strangers to their own roots." -P7</i>                                                                                           | 4 |

|  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  |  | <i>"Even though we are Tboli and 99% Tboli in our school, they don't have any idea on what Tboli culture is. We are lack of education. And through that, as a teacher, we don't have any idea on that. How could we teach if we do not know what is the real story of Tboli? The authentic one." -P5</i><br><br><i>"Serving our IP communities is always fulfilling. But I feel like I have done so much, and yet, in the end, the cultural authenticity is still fading because implementation is just on paper, not in action." -P3</i><br><i>"We are not yet on the level that we engage them totally with the IKSP practices... Just more on concept feeding, but not the hands-on experiences." -P4</i> |  |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

### Emergent Theme 1. Challenges in Contextualization and Cultural Integration

The findings highlight the critical need for educational policies and programs that support indigenous knowledge systems. The lack of contextualized learning materials and language

barriers underscores the necessity for culturally relevant curriculum development. Additionally, safeguarding cultural identity requires community-driven initiatives that engage cultural masters and indigenous elders in the education process. Addressing these challenges will ensure that indigenous learners receive an education that respects and preserves their heritage while equipping them with essential competencies for the modern world.

Policymakers and educational institutions should collaborate with indigenous communities to develop culturally appropriate learning materials and teacher training programs. Providing language support and resources tailored to indigenous learners can enhance educational outcomes and promote cultural sustainability (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014).

As found out in the research of Battiste (2017), it clearly demonstrates that incorporating indigenous languages into education not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also significantly boosts their engagement. The absence of culturally appropriate materials exacerbates this situation, compelling educators to translate mainstream educational content into Tboli—a time-consuming and often inadequate endeavor that must be addressed for effective learning.

### Emergent Theme 2: Institutional and Structural Limitations

The findings highlight significant challenges in implementing Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd), particularly regarding teacher training, resource availability, and financial support for cultural experts. These issues profoundly impact the effectiveness of IPEd and the broader goal of preserving Indigenous knowledge and identity within the education system.

The absence of tailored training opportunities for IP educators indicates a potential gap in instructional quality. Without proper training, teachers may struggle to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their lessons, leading to a curriculum that does not fully reflect the lived experiences of Indigenous learners (Gay, 2018).

Moreover, the insufficient availability of culturally relevant learning materials means that Indigenous students may not see their heritage represented in their education. This lack of

representation can result in a gradual disconnection from their cultural identity and contribute to cultural erosion (Smith, 2012).

The lack of funding and stakeholder support underscores the necessity for government agencies to allocate sustainable resources for indigenous education. By addressing these challenges, educational institutions can create an environment that respects and preserves indigenous heritage while ensuring academic success for indigenous learners.

### Emergent Theme 3: Resource Constraints in IPED Implementation

The challenges identified in these findings significantly impact the future of indigenous education. A lack of culturally relevant materials and financial support limits educators' ability to implement Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPED) effectively. Consequently, learners risk disconnecting from their heritage, leading to cultural erosion. The absence of cultural experts further weakens the transmission of indigenous knowledge to younger generations.

To overcome these challenges, policymakers and stakeholders must prioritize funding for IPED programs, develop and distribute indigenous learning materials, and involve cultural experts in schools. Strengthening these areas will create a more effective indigenous education system that empowers students to preserve their cultural identities.

### Emergent Theme 4: Socio-Cultural Barriers Affecting Participation

The findings highlight the urgent need for improvements in accessibility, infrastructure, teacher training, and cultural preservation in Indigenous People's Education (IPED). The geographic isolation of students and lack of basic school amenities impede access to quality education for indigenous learners. Non-indigenous teachers need thorough training to effectively implement the IPED curriculum and accurately represent indigenous knowledge. Additionally, the decreasing authenticity of indigenous cultural expressions underscores the need for cultural experts to preserve traditional practices.

To tackle these issues, policymakers should prioritize infrastructure development in indigenous schools, establish transportation support for

students, and implement ongoing teacher training programs. Strengthening partnerships with indigenous elders and cultural leaders is essential for effective knowledge transmission. Without these efforts, indigenous education risks failing to preserve the rich heritage of indigenous communities.

Table 2:  
*Outcomes and Success Stories of Tboli Educators in IPED Implementation*

| Emerging Themes                                     | Clustered Themes                                     | Codes                                 | Significant Statements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Frequency |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Cultural Preservation and Identity Strengthening | 1.a Integration of Indigenous Knowledge in Education | Contextualized Learning               | "At least somehow to tell them to not forget their origin... telling them that they should not forget their language because that is their own identity." -P1<br><br>"My success stories as an IPED implementer are the implementation of contextualized lesson plan and collaborating with IP elders, leaders, and communities to integrate indigenous knowledge systems and practices into lesson plan." -P9 | 2         |
|                                                     |                                                      | Traditional Practices and Skills      | "The program equips students with skills in the traditional Tboli craft, such as Tsalak weaving, embroidery, brass casting, wood carving, as well as sustainable tourism practices." -P6                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1         |
|                                                     | 1.b Revival of Traditional Arts and Music            | Weaving, Dance, and Music Integration | "Through the IPED program, we have successfully revitalized traditional weaving and embroidery practices among young learners. We also incorporated Tboli music and folklore into our lessons, ensuring these traditions are passed down to the next generation." -P12                                                                                                                                         | 1         |
|                                                     |                                                      | Cultural Pride and Awareness          | "Before, many Tboli students struggled with expressing themselves in a westernized curriculum. But when their stories, myths, and history were integrated into learning, they became                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1         |
| 2. Community Engagement and Empowerment             | 1.c Promotion of Traditional Attire and Practices    | Wearing Tboli Attire                  | more active and proud of their identity." -P6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |           |
|                                                     |                                                      |                                       | "First yung sa akin po na ipapakita po sa mga guro na I am an IP school head. Ho, through every Friday mag-suot ng Tboli attire." -P8                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1         |
|                                                     | 2.a Stakeholder Participation and Collaboration      | Community Support                     | "Our stakeholders are the backbone of the school... We build connections wherein we involve the parents in every activity that we have in our school." -P2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1         |
|                                                     |                                                      | Collaboration with Elders and LGUs    | "Building strong partnerships with Tboli elders, local government units, and cultural organizations has been essential. They offer expertise, resources, and cultural validation, ensuring that our IPED curriculum                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1         |

culture, available learning materials, and budget" (P7). This underscores the need for ongoing government and educational support to ensure the program's viability (Battiste, 2013).

Community engagement is also crucial for effective IPed implementation. Active participation from Indigenous elders, parents, and local leaders helps authentically represent and transmit Indigenous traditions (Brayboy et al., 2012). One educator stated, "Building strong partnerships with Tboli elders and local organizations has been essential for ensuring our IPed curriculum stays authentic" (P12). Such collaboration enhances students' sense of belonging and pride (United Nations, 2019).

Furthermore, culturally responsive teaching methodologies are vital. Research shows that integrating Indigenous traditions and languages into lesson plans significantly boosts student engagement (Gay, 2010). As one participant shared, reintegrating Indigenous culture into lesson planning has improved participation (P11). This approach ensures that Indigenous students receive an education that respects their identities (Cummins, 2000).

Lastly, ongoing research and evaluation of IPed programs are necessary to assess their long-term impact. Measuring the integration of Indigenous knowledge on academic performance and self-esteem can guide future improvements (May & Aikman, 2003). One educator remarked, "IPed has given them a sense of pride, purpose, and belonging" (P9). Understanding these impacts helps ensure that Indigenous education continues to empower future generations (Paris & Alim, 2017).

## Emergent Theme 2. Community Engagement and Empowerment

The findings suggest that community engagement is fundamental to the success of IPed programs. The active participation of parents, elders, cultural practitioners, and institutions ensures the preservation of indigenous traditions while fostering a more inclusive and empowering learning environment. Research supports the notion that sustainable indigenous education must be rooted in the collective efforts of all stakeholders, where the integration of cultural knowledge enhances student learning outcomes and strengthens cultural identity (Gay, 2010).

|  |                                                  |                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |   |
|--|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
|  |                                                  |                                        | <i>for being a proud Tboli." - P12</i>                                                                                                                                                                              |   |
|  |                                                  | Role of Elders and Cultural Masters    | <i>"We invite the cultural masters to demonstrate certain skills: dancing, playing musical instruments, storytelling." - P4</i>                                                                                     | 1 |
|  |                                                  | Partnerships and Institutional Support | <i>"The program is a collaborative effort between the Tboli community, the Department of Education, and Ateneo de Davao University, aiming to preserve Tboli heritage while providing relevant education." - P6</i> | 1 |
|  | 3. Personal and Professional Growth of Educators | Opportunities for IP Teachers          | <i>"As an implementer, I have been given the opportunity to engage with top-level education training. I was awarded Outstanding IPED Implementer for Big School Category." - P4-</i>                                | 1 |
|  |                                                  | Inspiration and Leadership             | <i>"They see in me as their inspiration. And through that inspiration, they are doing their best to go beyond their expectations." - P5</i>                                                                         | 1 |
|  |                                                  | Fulfillment in Teaching                | <i>"Serving our own Tboli community is really a fulfillment. I feel that I have contributed to the lives of the Tboli learners." - P3</i>                                                                           | 1 |

## Emergent Theme 1. Cultural Preservation and Identity Strengthening

The findings indicate that institutional support for Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) programs must be strengthened. Success stories from educators highlight the importance of a well-developed curriculum, teacher training, and adequate resources to support Indigenous education (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014). One participant noted, "If IPed is institutionalized, there must be a curriculum, teachers to teach the

Moving forward, fostering deeper collaboration and expanding support networks will be essential in ensuring the continued success and sustainability of IPed programs for future generations.

### Emergent Theme 3. Personal and Professional Growth of Educators

The insights shared by these educators have several key implications for indigenous education:

Integrating indigenous knowledge into educational systems not only transforms classrooms but also empowers entire communities, allowing them to take charge of their own learning journeys. When education is grounded in cultural responsiveness, it sparks students' curiosity and enthusiasm, diminishing dropout rates and enhancing academic success, as learners become actively invested in their studies (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009).

Moreover, when educators step into the role of inspiring mentors, they ignite a spark of involvement within the broader community, encouraging collaboration in both education and the preservation of rich cultural traditions (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014). Through these efforts, a vibrant tapestry of knowledge and culture can thrive, ensuring that future generations carry forward the legacy of their heritage.

Table 3

#### *Dreams and Aspirations of Tboli Educators*

| Emerging Themes                                   | Clustered Themes                         | Codes                     | Significant Statement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Frequency |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Strengthening Indigenous Identity in Education | 1.a Integration of Culture in Curriculum | Contextualized Curriculum | <p>"The policies can establish a well-structured, contextualized curriculum in order for them to enjoy their learnings as an IP and as a growing community." -P1</p> <p>"The Gat Jose Rizal said, the youth is the hope of our motherland. And we believe that the youth here in Hailian is the hope of our community." -P5</p> | 2         |

|                                                    |                                       |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
|                                                    | 1.b Cultural Heritage Preservation    | Community-Based Learning | <p>"Cultural heritage learning center is the one of the approaches to focus on the skill transfer because inside the classroom, it's more on the content." -P4</p> <p>"I envision a balance where education empowers learners with global knowledge and skills while integrating and preserving their cultural identity." -P2</p> | 2 |
|                                                    | Advocates                             | Promotion                | <p>which we can teach them the indigenous knowledge systems and practices as early as possible so they will not forget it." -P4</p>                                                                                                                                                                                               |   |
| 2. Educational Empowerment and Equal Opportunities | 2.a Inclusive and Equitable Education | Equal Access to Learning | <p>"I dream of providing a quality, culturally relevant education that preserves the indigenous heritage while empowering our pupils with the knowledge and skills they needed for a brighter future." -P2</p> <p>"I am dreaming na ang mga bata sa bukid is maging manami nga, nation builder sila." -P3</p>                     | 2 |

|             |                                          |                                                |                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |   |
|-------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 4<br>I<br>L | 3. Solidification of IPED Implementation | 2.b Bridging Traditional and Modern Education  | Global Competence with Cultural Roots           | <p><i>"We need to think global and act local. The learners should understand that our culture should not be a threat in modernization." - P4</i></p> <p><i>"We must envision ourselves for a change. Like that. The only constant in this world is justice change." - P5</i></p> | 2 |
|             |                                          | 3. a Expanding IPED in More Schools            | Establishment of pilot IPED schools             | <i>"Establish more IPED learning hubs within indigenous communities, document and formalize indigenous knowledge for future generations." -P12</i>                                                                                                                               | 1 |
|             |                                          |                                                | Strengthening the presence of IPED institutions | <i>"Let us make IPED a permanent and integral part of the Philippine education system with a clear mandate and funding." -P9</i>                                                                                                                                                 | 1 |
|             |                                          | 3. b Full integration of culture in curriculum | Culture-sensitive education                     | <i>"Let the children as early as grade one be exposed to the culture. Manifest the culture."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                 | 1 |

|  |                                  |                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |   |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
|  | role models and cultural bearers | culture preservers                                | <i>culture, practice the culture so that when the old ones will die, they will be the ones to bring that culture to the next generation." - P7</i> |   |
|  |                                  | Role modeling and mentorship                      | <i>"Indigenous youth can serve as role models and mentors, inspiring young generations to take pride in their cultural identities." -P9</i>        | 1 |
|  | 4.c Success of Tboli learners    | IP learners achieving academic and career success | <i>"Gusto ko po yung mga IPED Tboli learners... makatapos po sila to become successful someday." -P8</i>                                           | 1 |
|  |                                  | Ensuring high academic performance                | <i>"These low-emerging kids, magiging grade-ready na sila by the end of the school year." -P11</i>                                                 | 1 |

Emerging Theme 1: Strengthening Indigenous Identity in Education

The findings indicate that enhancing indigenous identity in education needs a comprehensive approach that includes policy support, intergenerational engagement, and innovative learning strategies. Creating culturally relevant curricula and heritage learning centers will enable indigenous students to succeed both academically and culturally. Furthermore, incorporating global competencies into indigenous education helps learners navigate contemporary opportunities while remaining connected to their heritage (UNESCO, 2019).

Furthermore, early intervention programs, indigenous mentorship, and the active involvement of community elders are essential for sustaining indigenous identity. As educational institutions incorporate cultural elements into formal education, indigenous learners will be

better equipped to balance traditional values with modern advancements (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). This comprehensive approach will not only promote indigenous self-determination but also enhance the overall educational success of indigenous youth, fostering resilience, pride, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

#### Emerging Theme 2: Educational Empowerment and Equal Opportunities

The findings indicate that educational empowerment must be approached in a holistic manner, integrating indigenous heritage, leadership development, and global competencies to provide equal opportunities for all learners. It is imperative that policymakers, educators, and stakeholders collaborate to create curricula that are both culturally responsive and oriented toward the future.

Furthermore, it is crucial to bridge the gap between modernization and indigenous traditions to promote self-determination and nation-building among indigenous youth. Education ought to equip learners with not only academic skills but also a profound appreciation for their cultural roots, while simultaneously preparing them to address global challenges (Brayboy et al., 2012; Battiste, 2013).

Investing in an inclusive and empowering educational framework will ultimately result in stronger communities, enhanced economic mobility, and the establishment of a more just and equitable society (UNESCO, 2019). By prioritizing culturally relevant learning experiences, we can ensure that indigenous learners are not marginalized but are instead empowered as leaders and change agents in an ever-evolving world.

#### Emerging Theme 3: Solidification of IPED Implementation

The findings suggest that a multi-faceted approach is needed to strengthen IPED implementation. Establishing learning hubs and documenting indigenous knowledge will help preserve cultural heritage, while institutional support and sustainable funding will ensure the program's longevity. Early exposure to indigenous culture fosters identity formation, and teacher training coupled with curriculum development enhances instructional quality. Furthermore,

collaboration among educators and ongoing research will drive innovation and improve program outcomes.

The integration of IPED into the Philippine education system aligns with global initiatives on indigenous education, such as UNESCO's recommendations on preserving indigenous languages and knowledge (UNESCO, 2019). Without systematic efforts in funding, policy-making, and implementation, indigenous education risks being sidelined, leading to cultural erosion. Future research should explore the long-term impact of IPED initiatives on student outcomes and community development.

#### Emerging Theme 4: Empowering Indigenous Learners

The findings illuminate the vital importance of empowering indigenous learners through a vibrant and culturally responsive education system. Such a system must honor and celebrate indigenous identities while cultivating leadership and weaving together the rich tapestry of traditional knowledge with essential modern skills. Policies must actively integrate indigenous perspectives into mainstream curricula, champion community-led educational initiatives, and open doors to transformative leadership development opportunities.

Furthermore, education should become a powerful catalyst for self-determination, equipping indigenous youth with the tools to confidently navigate the complexities of both local and global landscapes, all while firmly rooted in their cultural heritage. Achieving this vision requires the collaborative efforts of educators, policymakers, and communities working hand in hand to create inclusive educational frameworks that honor and celebrate indigenous ways of knowing (UNESCO, 2019; Brayboy et al., 2012).

Ultimately, an empowered indigenous learner emerges as a beacon of academic excellence and cultural richness, poised to lead transformative change within their communities and beyond. By investing in this holistic educational approach, we can nurture stronger, more resilient indigenous communities and pave the way for a more just and inclusive society.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

### Summary

The study embarks on a journey to uncover the untold stories of Tboli educators as they implement the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPeD) program in the vibrant Lake Sebu 1 district. It delves into the myriad challenges these dedicated educators faced, while illuminating the remarkable outcomes and inspiring success stories that emerge from their efforts. Furthermore, it seeks to reveal the dreams and aspirations that these Tboli educators hold for both the IPeD initiative and the Tboli learners, as well as the broader community they serve.

Additionally, the study explores the lived experiences of Tboli educators, offering a window into their world as they navigate the complexities of education within their unique cultural context. The participants of this research consist of six (6) school heads and six (6) teachers, representing the diverse and dynamic three (3) clusters of Lake Sebu 1. Through their voices, the narrative of commitment, resilience, and hope unfolds, painting a rich tapestry of educational dedication in the heart of the Tboli community.

### **Obstacles Encountered by Tboli Educators in IPeD Implementation**

The implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPeD) within the Tboli community reveals a complex tapestry of challenges that significantly undermine its effectiveness. These obstacles, articulated through participant testimonies and reinforced by scholarly insights, can be categorized into four central themes: challenges in contextualization and cultural integration, institutional and structural limitations, resource constraints, and socio-cultural barriers that impede participation.

#### **Challenges in Contextualization and Cultural Integration**

At the heart of the obstacles lies a profound lack of instructional materials in the Tboli language, creating a significant barrier for educators striving to connect with their students. Many educational resources are confined to dominant tongues like Hiligaynon and Tagalog, leaving Tboli students grappling with the intricacies of lessons that feel foreign to them. The shortage of culturally pertinent textbooks severed ties with their linguistic heritage, posing a grave threat to their cultural identity and sense of belonging.

#### **Institutional and Structural Limitations**

Adding to these difficulties is the glaring absence of structured training programs tailored specifically to IPeD. Educators, yearning to weave indigenous perspectives into their teaching, face a scarcity of opportunities for professional growth. Despite the acknowledgment of IPeD within the national education framework, a chasm remains between policy and practice, illustrated by the blatant lack of resources and culturally relevant educational materials in schools. Moreover, without adequate financial support for indigenous elders, who embody the rich cultural heritage, their pivotal role as cultural resource persons is diminished, preventing the transference of invaluable wisdom to the younger generations.

#### **Resource Constraints in IPeD Implementation**

Another critical struggle plaguing the IPeD initiative among the Tboli is the severe shortage of culturally relevant instructional materials. Teachers find themselves yearning for access to books, songs, and folklore that could seamlessly integrate indigenous knowledge into their lesson plans. Consequently, many resort to the laborious task of translating mainstream educational content, which often feels like a mere shadow of the rich narrative that Tboli culture embodies. This scarcity is compounded by financial limitations, which stifle the availability of essential learning materials and cultural initiatives. With sustainable funding being vital for nurturing indigenous education, many IPeD programs remain precariously reliant on external partnerships or grassroots efforts to survive.

#### **Socio-Cultural Barriers Affecting Participation**

Geographical isolation and deficient infrastructure further complicate the practical realization of IPeD. Many Tboli students must traverse long, rugged paths to reach their schools, leading to erratic attendance and alarmingly high dropout rates. Often, schools situated within these indigenous communities lack the most basic facilities—clean water and electricity—further dissuading student participation. Another glaring issue is the limited availability of indigenous teachers who intuitively understand the cultural and linguistic needs of Tboli learners. Non-indigenous educators may inadvertently

misrepresent or dilute the essence of the IPed curriculum, jeopardizing the authenticity of cultural transmission. Compounding this challenge is an alarming trend: the decline in the accuracy of traditional performances and practices among the younger generations, putting cultural authenticity at further risk.

In essence, the integration of IPed within the Tboli community is not just an educational endeavor; it is a critical lifeline for preserving a rich cultural heritage facing existential challenges.

### **Outcomes and Success Stories of Tboli Educators**

The remarkable success of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) within the Tboli community is invigorated by the vibrant participation of stakeholders and united efforts dedicated to preserving their rich cultural heritage.

The findings illuminate three pivotal themes that showcase the uplifting outcomes facilitated by this program: community engagement and empowerment, authentic representation of indigenous culture, and strategic institutional collaborations for sustainability. These themes emphasize the crucial importance of collective involvement in fortifying indigenous education.

#### **Cultural Preservation and Identity Strengthening**

One of the most remarkable triumphs of the IPed program lies in its profound ability to preserve and enrich the cultural identity of the Tboli people. By weaving indigenous traditions, languages, and histories into the fabric of formal education, students have forged a deeper and more meaningful connection to their ancestral roots. Prior to IPed, many Tboli learners faced challenges in articulating their identities within a westernized curriculum that felt alien. However, the infusion of indigenous tales, myths, and cultural practices into lessons has transformed the learning experience, sparking enthusiasm and building confidence among students. An educator encapsulated this transformation beautifully: students who once grappled with disconnection now proudly embrace their heritage.

The program has breathed new life into traditional practices such as weaving vibrant textiles, intricate embroidery, and the captivating rhythms of indigenous music. By incorporating

these elements into lesson plans, the IPed program ensures that younger generations are equipped to inherit and nurture invaluable cultural traditions. Educators have taken up the mantle of cultural stewards, collaborating closely with community elders and integrating indigenous attire and languages into the daily tapestry of school life. These initiatives have not only instilled a sense of pride but have also underscored the importance of cultural appreciation. For the IPed program to flourish, however, it requires robust institutional support—ranging from curriculum development and comprehensive teacher training to adequate resource allocation. The active involvement of communities and support from government entities is essential to sustain the program's long-term vitality and impact.

#### **Community Engagement and Empowerment**

The success of the IPed program is intricately woven into the fabric of community engagement and empowerment experienced by the Tboli people. The collaboration among schools, parents, elders, cultural organizations, and local government units has been invaluable in ensuring that education resonates deeply with indigenous learners. This partnership has cultivated a vibrant sense of shared responsibility, creating an environment where cultural knowledge is not only honored but also actively transmitted to future generations.

One of the most uplifting outcomes of this community involvement is the surge in parental support for the program. Initially, many parents approached IPed with skepticism, but as they witnessed the transformative changes in their children's motivation and academic achievements, their support blossomed. Schools have invited cultural masters to showcase their skills through dynamic demonstrations, allowing students to engage in hands-on learning of indigenous arts, music, and storytelling. This experiential approach aligns harmoniously with research underscoring the effectiveness of learning through experience rather than abstract theory.

Furthermore, strategic partnerships with universities and government agencies have infused additional resources and training for educators, ensuring the IPed program's sustainability. These collaborations not only fortify indigenous education but also cultivate a more inclusive and

enriching learning environment. Looking ahead, enhancing support networks and deepening community involvement will be critical to the continued success of this transformative educational initiative.

### Personal and Professional Growth of Tboli Educators

Beyond its significant impact on students and the broader community, the IPed program has been a catalyst for the personal and professional growth of its educators. Many teachers have garnered recognition for their dedication and innovation in implementing culturally responsive teaching strategies, with some receiving prestigious awards for their exceptional contributions. This acknowledgment not only affirms their hard work but also fuels their passion for continuous innovation in teaching.

Tboli educators have discovered profound personal satisfaction in their roles, as they serve their own communities with pride and purpose. Teaching indigenous students within a culturally relevant framework allows them to contribute actively to the preservation of their heritage while inspiring learners to celebrate their identity. One dedicated teacher expressed that witnessing students flourish within the program has brought immense joy, solidifying their commitment to the noble field of education.

Moreover, these educators have emerged as inspirational role models for both their students and peers. Their unwavering commitment and passion galvanize others to adopt culturally responsive teaching methods and to engage actively within the community. As indigenous education continues to evolve and flourish, it is crucial to provide ongoing professional development opportunities, as well as institutional support for these educators, ensuring that their profound impact can be sustained and amplified for years to come.

### The Dreams and Aspirations of Tboli Educators

The dream and aspirations of Tboli educators vividly illustrate their unwavering dedication to fortifying indigenous identity within the realm of education. They are champions of educational empowerment and equality, working tirelessly to solidify the implementation of Indigenous Peoples

Education (IPed) and uplift indigenous learners. These powerful themes weave together a holistic vision for an educational landscape that not only safeguards cultural heritage but also furnishes students with vital skills to flourish in an ever-evolving global society.

### Strengthening Indigenous Identity in Education

Tboli educators envision a transformative education system that intricately weaves indigenous identity into its very fabric, allowing cultural heritage to flourish as students acquire essential competencies for the modern world. A well-structured and richly contextualized curriculum, reflective of indigenous knowledge and traditions, stands as a paramount priority. One passionate educator articulated this vision: "Policies should pave the way for a well-structured, contextualized curriculum that empowers our learners to relish their education as indigenous peoples and as a vibrant, evolving community."

Equally vital to the strengthening of indigenous identity is the pivotal role played by the youth in the preservation of cultural heritage. As one insightful participant remarked, "The youth are the hope of our motherland, and we believe that the youth here in Halilan hold the key to our community's future." This sentiment highlights the critical importance of intergenerational knowledge transmission, wherein young learners emerge as the dedicated custodians of their rich traditions.

Educators advocate for the establishment of cultural heritage learning centers, dynamic spaces that extend beyond the classroom to offer hands-on experiences, immersing students in their roots and deepening their connection to their heritage. They emphasize that indigenous identity and global competencies can thrive simultaneously, asserting that a harmonious balance is essential. This balance ensures that students remain anchored in their cultural heritage while simultaneously preparing to navigate and engage with the wider world around them.

### Educational Empowerment and Equal Opportunities

Educational empowerment serves as a vital cornerstone for promoting social equity, especially for indigenous learners who encounter significant obstacles in accessing quality education. Tboli

educators are dedicated to delivering an enriching and culturally relevant education that not only honors and preserves the vibrant tapestry of indigenous heritage but also empowers students with the knowledge and skills essential for navigating a successful and fulfilling future. Through their passionate commitment, these educators strive to cultivate a generation that thrives while rooted in their unique cultural identity. One educator noted, "I dream of providing a quality, culturally relevant education that preserves the indigenous heritage while empowering our pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for a brighter future."

The aspiration for indigenous youth to become leaders and nation-builders is also evident. Educators emphasize that despite socioeconomic and geographical barriers, indigenous learners can rise to positions of influence, contributing to the broader society. Furthermore, there is a strong belief in integrating modern knowledge with indigenous traditions, encapsulated in the statement, "We need to think global and act local. Another key aspect of educational empowerment is the recognition that change and progress are necessary for growth. As one participant aptly stated, "The only constant in this world is just change."

#### Solidification of IPED Implementation

For Tboli educators, the successful implementation of IPed is crucial for the long-term preservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge. One of the primary aspirations is the establishment of more IPed learning hubs, which would serve as centers for cultural education, ensuring that indigenous knowledge is documented and formalized for future generations. Furthermore, educators emphasize the importance of making IPed a permanent and integral part of the Philippine education system, requiring clear policies and sustainable funding. Early exposure to indigenous culture is also deemed necessary, as it helps shape students' cultural identities from a young age. Equipping educators with specialized training and resources is another fundamental component, ensuring that they can effectively deliver culturally responsive education. Collaboration among educators, community leaders, and policymakers is essential for refining

and improving IPed, ensuring that it remains relevant and impactful.

#### Empowering Indigenous Learners

Empowering indigenous learners entails providing them with an education system that nurtures both academic excellence and cultural identity. Tboli educators stress that education should not only impart knowledge but also instill a strong sense of identity and belonging. One participant expressed, "We want our children to grow up not just educated but also aware of who they are as indigenous people."

Another critical component of empowerment is ensuring that education acts as a bridge rather than a barrier. One participant noted, "Education should be a bridge, not a barrier. It should help us connect with the world while keeping our roots intact." Finally, adaptability and resilience are key themes in the aspirations of Tboli educators. As one participant stated, "Learning should empower us to adapt, to grow, and to thrive in a changing world without losing who we are."

#### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The obstacles encountered by Tboli educators in the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPed) reveal an urgent call for sweeping reforms in indigenous education. Tackling these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach: the creation of vibrant, mother-tongue instructional materials that resonate with the students' cultural identities, ongoing and immersive teacher training programs that empower educators, substantial funding to support these initiatives, and significant improvements to educational infrastructure. Beyond these structural necessities, cultivating robust partnerships with cultural elders and indigenous communities is essential, ensuring that the rich tapestry of indigenous knowledge is woven into the very fabric of the educational experience. Without these proactive measures, the threat of cultural erosion looms large, accentuating the pressing need to fortify IPed initiatives aimed at preserving and uplifting indigenous identities.

On the brighter side, the positive outcomes and success stories of Tboli educators in implementing

IPED illuminate the profound potential of community-driven education. The energetic involvement of parents, elders, and cultural practitioners has fostered a nurturing environment where indigenous traditions are not merely taught but celebrated, creating an inclusive learning atmosphere that thrives on collaboration. By advocating for the authentic representation of Tboli heritage in the curriculum and strengthening institutional partnerships, IPed has played a pivotal role in preserving cultural traditions and empowering students to take ownership of their identities. Looking ahead, the expansion of these collaborative networks and an increase in institutional backing will be vital in ensuring the enduring success and vitality of IPed programs for generations to come.

Looking forward to the dreams and aspirations of Tboli educators enrich the narrative of an inclusive and culturally attuned educational framework that honors indigenous heritage while championing academic excellence. The triumph of IPed hinges on ongoing engagement from the community, robust policy support, and synergistic partnerships with institutions, all geared toward crafting a meaningful learning journey for indigenous life-long learners. As we move forward, a balanced methodology that intertwines indigenous wisdom with global competencies will be paramount in empowering future generations of Tboli learners. Investing in education that is anchored in cultural relevance allows society to nurture resilient, self-determined indigenous communities that actively contribute to the tapestry of national development.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Develop Comprehensive Mother-Tongue Instructional Materials- Create localized learning resources in the Tboli language to ensure effective instruction and preserve linguistic heritage.
2. Strengthen Community-Based Learning Approaches-Foster deeper engagement with cultural elders and indigenous leaders to ensure that traditional knowledge remains central to the educational experience, promoting lifelong learning rooted in indigenous identity.

3. Enhance Institutional Support – Advocate for increased government and non-governmental support to provide resources, training, and infrastructure that sustain and expand IPED programs.

4. Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in Curriculum Development – Develop more culturally responsive teaching materials and methodologies that authentically represent Tboli heritage while aligning with national education standards.

5. Develop Policies that Strengthen IPED Implementation- Encourage local and national policymakers to create and enforce laws that institutionalize IPed as a permanent and well-funded part of the educational system.

6. Invest in Indigenous Educators Training- Provide continuous professional development programs that equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate indigenous perspectives into their teaching practices.

7. Balance Indigenous and Global Knowledge- Further studies could explore the aspirations for a balance incorporation of 21st-century skills, digital literacy, and global competencies alongside indigenous teachings to prepare learners for both local and global opportunities.

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