



INTEGRATION OF THE MANOBO COMMUNITY LIFESTYLE IN THE EDUCATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (IP) LEARNERS IN SCHOOLS OF SAN MIGUEL II DISTRICT, SURIGAO DEL SUR, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the integration of the Manobo community lifestyle into the education of Indigenous Peoples (IP) learners in schools of San Miguel II District. Specifically, it determined the status of the Manobo community lifestyle in terms of economic activities, cultural and educational practices, political structure, and religious beliefs; assessed the extent of community involvement in curriculum relevance, teaching methods, and school programs; evaluated the performance of IP schools in promoting cultural identity and social-emotional well-being; and explored the relationship between community lifestyle, involvement, and school performance. Using a mixed-method research design, the study involved 140 respondents composed of learners, parents, and teachers from selected IP schools. Quantitative data were gathered through validated survey questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through interviews and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the Manobo lifestyle remains moderately to strongly practiced, particularly in cultural and political dimensions. Community involvement was evident in teaching methods and school activities but remained limited in curriculum development. The performance of IP schools showed positive promotion of cultural identity and social-emotional well-being, although some institutional gaps persisted. Significant relationships were identified between community lifestyle, involvement, and school performance. The study concludes that culturally responsive and community-based educational practices contribute positively to the educational experiences of Manobo learners. Strengthening curriculum collaboration, cultural integration, and institutional support is recommended to enhance Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) implementation.

Keywords: *Indigenous Peoples Education, Manobo community, culturally responsive education, community involvement, cultural identity, IP learners, San Miguel II District*

INTRODUCTION

Education among Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the Philippines continues to face challenges associated with socio-economic barriers, cultural disconnection, and limited access to culturally responsive educational programs. The Manobo community, one of the major Indigenous cultural groups in Mindanao, possesses distinct traditions, beliefs, and social structures that significantly influence the educational experiences of learners. Republic Act No. 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 mandates the protection of Indigenous cultural integrity and guarantees access to culturally appropriate education. However, the implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) remains complex in geographically isolated communities such as San Miguel II District.

Recent studies emphasized that culturally contextualized education improves learner engagement, participation, and academic performance among Indigenous learners (McKinley, 2021; Tovey et al., 2022). Similarly, culturally relevant pedagogy promotes learner identity, self-esteem, and educational motivation by integrating indigenous knowledge systems into classroom practices (Gay, 2021). In the Philippine setting, research demonstrated that educational programs integrating indigenous traditions and local cultural practices enhance learner participation and strengthen cultural identity among IP students (Coloma, 2022). Furthermore, Reyes (2022) stressed that active participation of indigenous communities in educational planning contributes to more meaningful and responsive educational programs. Auerbach (2021) further emphasized that community engagement and culturally responsive educational approaches strengthen collaboration between schools and indigenous communities, resulting in improved learner inclusion and educational relevance.

Despite existing policies and studies, there remains limited localized research focusing on the integration of the Manobo community lifestyle into educational implementation in San Miguel II District. This study addresses this gap by examining how Manobo cultural practices, community involvement, and indigenous knowledge systems influence the performance of IP schools and the educational experiences of learners.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the status of the lifestyle of the Manobo community as to:
 - 1.1 Economic activities;
 - 1.2 Cultural and educational practices;
 - 1.3 Political structure; and
 - 1.4 Religious beliefs?
2. To what extent is the involvement of the Manobo community in IP schools as to:
 - 2.1 Curriculum relevance;

- 2.2 Teaching methods;
- 2.3 School programs, activities, and projects?
- 3. What is the performance of IP schools as to:
 - 3.1 Cultural identity;
 - 3.2 Social and emotional well-being?
- 4. Is there a significant relationship between the status of the Manobo community lifestyle and the performance of IP schools?
- 5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of Manobo community involvement and the performance of IP schools?
- 6. What are the lived experiences of teachers and Manobo community members regarding the IPEd curriculum?
- 7. What intervention program may be designed to enhance the implementation of IPEd in San Miguel II District?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a mixed-method research design employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect used correlational research to determine the relationship between the lifestyle of the Manobo community, community involvement, and school performance, while the qualitative component utilized phenomenological inquiry to explore the lived experiences of teachers and Manobo community members regarding IPEd implementation. The study was conducted in selected IP schools in San Miguel II District involving 140 respondents composed of learners, parents, and teachers selected through stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Data were gathered using validated survey questionnaires, interview guides, and school performance records. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson’s correlation coefficient were employed to analyze quantitative data, while thematic coding and thematic mapping were used to analyze qualitative responses.

RESULTS

Table 1. Status of the Lifestyle of the Manobo Community

Lifestyle Dimension	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Category	Interpretation
Economic Activities	3.28	Sometimes	Moderate engagement in traditional livelihoods
Cultural and Educational Practices	3.57	Oftentimes	Strong cultural transmission practices
Political Structure	3.89	Oftentimes	Traditional leadership remains influential
Religious Beliefs	3.73	Oftentimes	Spiritual beliefs remain embedded in daily life

Lifestyle Dimension	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Category	Interpretation
Overall Average	3.53	Oftentimes	Lifestyle practices remain moderately to strongly observed

Table 2. Extent of Involvement of the Manobo Community in IP Schools

Area of Involvement	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Category	Interpretation
Curriculum Relevance	3.36	Less Extent	Limited participation in curriculum planning
Teaching Methods	3.50	Greater Extent	Strong cultural responsiveness in teaching
School Programs and Activities	3.65	Greater Extent	Active participation in cultural programs
Overall Average	3.50	Greater Extent	Moderate to high community involvement

Table 3. Performance of IP Schools

Performance Indicator	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Category	Interpretation
Cultural Identity	3.42	Greater Extent	Moderate to strong cultural identity promotion
Social and Emotional Well-being	3.58	Greater Extent	Positive learner well-being and inclusion
Overall Average	3.50	Greater Extent	Schools positively support indigenous learners

Table 4. Relationship Between Community Lifestyle and School Performance

Variables Compared	Relationship	Interpretation
Community Lifestyle and Cultural Identity	Significant	Positive relationship exists
Community Lifestyle and Social-Emotional Well-being	Significant	Positive relationship exists

Table 5. Relationship Between Community Involvement and School Performance

Variables Compared	Relationship	Interpretation
Community Involvement and Cultural Identity	Significant	Positive relationship exists
Community Involvement and Social-Emotional Well-being	Significant	Positive relationship exists

Table 6. Lived Experiences of Teachers and Community Members

Emerging Themes	Description
Cultural Preservation	Schools help preserve indigenous identity
Curriculum Challenges	Limited culturally contextualized materials
Community Collaboration	Importance of elders and parents in education
Learner Identity	Increased pride among indigenous learners

Table 7. Proposed Intervention Program

Proposed Intervention	Objective
Curriculum Localization	Integrate indigenous knowledge into lessons
Teacher Training	Strengthen culturally responsive pedagogy
Community Participation Programs	Increase collaboration with elders and parents
Cultural Activities	Promote indigenous traditions and language

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that the lifestyle of the Manobo community remains moderately to strongly practiced across economic, cultural, political, and religious dimensions. Traditional livelihood activities such as farming and fishing continue to dominate the economic practices of the community, while participation in formal employment and entrepreneurial activities remains limited. This indicates that the Manobo people continue to rely heavily on subsistence-based economic systems despite exposure to modernization and formal economic structures. In terms of cultural and educational practices, the strong use of indigenous language at home, the transmission of traditional knowledge, and the observance of healing practices demonstrate the persistence of cultural identity and heritage among the respondents. Political structures within the community also remain influential, particularly in the continued respect for

traditional leadership and cultural governance systems. Religious and spiritual beliefs continue to shape the daily lives of the Manobo people, especially in educational decisions and the recognition of traditional spiritual practices within schools. These findings support the assertion of McKinley (2021) that indigenous governance systems and cultural structures remain essential in preserving indigenous identity and social cohesion. Similarly, Gay (2021) emphasized that preserving cultural identity within educational contexts strengthens learners' sense of belonging and engagement in school. In addition, Auerbach (2021) explained that community-based and culturally responsive educational systems promote stronger partnerships between schools and indigenous communities, contributing to more meaningful educational experiences.

The study further revealed that the extent of community involvement in Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) schools was moderate to high, particularly in teaching methods and school programs, activities, and projects. Teachers were found to use culturally responsive instructional strategies that respect indigenous ways of knowing and accommodate the cultural contexts of learners. School activities also integrated cultural preservation initiatives and encouraged collaboration between schools and community members. However, community participation in curriculum relevance and curriculum planning was observed to be less extensive. The findings suggest that while cultural integration is visible in classroom instruction and school activities, indigenous communities remain minimally involved in formal curriculum review and educational material development. Reyes (2022) explained that indigenous communities are often underrepresented in educational planning despite existing policies promoting community participation. Furthermore, culturally responsive teaching practices, according to Coloma (2022), enhance learner participation, improve cultural appreciation, and create inclusive educational environments for indigenous learners. This finding also aligns with the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework of the Department of Education (DepEd, 2015), which emphasizes the importance of contextualized and culture-sensitive learning approaches for Indigenous learners.

In relation to the performance of IP schools, the study found that schools moderately promoted cultural identity and social-emotional well-being among learners. Indigenous learners demonstrated strong use of their native language, respect for traditional knowledge, and participation in cultural activities. These findings indicate that culturally responsive educational environments positively contribute to learner identity formation and cultural pride. However, challenges remain in helping learners balance traditional and contemporary identities and in strengthening school mechanisms that fully affirm indigenous identity. The results support the findings of Villaluz et al. (2023), who emphasized that indigenous language preservation is critical in sustaining cultural identity among younger generations. In addition, culturally inclusive school environments contribute positively to learners' emotional well-being, confidence, and social participation. Educational institutions that affirm indigenous culture foster stronger learner engagement and reduce feelings of marginalization among indigenous students. The findings are likewise supported by DepEd Order No. 62, s. 2011, which highlights the importance of promoting indigenous identity, rights, and culturally appropriate education among IP learners.

The study also established significant relationships between the lifestyle of the Manobo community, community involvement, and the performance of IP schools. The results imply that stronger cultural practices and active community participation contribute positively to the promotion of cultural identity and social-emotional well-being among learners. Indigenous learners benefit when educational systems acknowledge and integrate their cultural experiences, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems into classroom instruction and school activities. These findings are consistent with the work of Tovey et al. (2022), who found that culturally grounded educational approaches improve indigenous learner engagement, academic participation, and identity development. Likewise, active collaboration between schools and indigenous communities creates educational experiences that are more relevant, meaningful, and responsive to the needs of Indigenous Peoples learners. Auerbach (2021) further emphasized that sustained community engagement enhances school responsiveness and educational inclusivity for marginalized learners.

The qualitative findings further revealed that teachers and community members recognize the importance of preserving indigenous culture through education. Participants highlighted the need for stronger curriculum contextualization, increased instructional resources, and greater institutional support for Indigenous Peoples Education. Teachers emphasized that integrating indigenous knowledge systems into classroom instruction enhances learner participation and cultural pride, while community members stressed the importance of involving elders and parents in educational implementation. However, challenges such as limited culturally contextualized materials, insufficient teacher preparation, and inadequate institutional support continue to affect the effective implementation of IPEd programs. Overall, the findings demonstrate that culturally responsive and community-based educational practices are essential in strengthening the educational experiences, identity formation, and holistic development of Indigenous Peoples learners in San Miguel II District.

Conclusions

The study concluded that the Manobo community lifestyle remains strongly embedded in cultural, political, and spiritual dimensions, significantly influencing the educational experiences of Indigenous Peoples learners. Community involvement in teaching methods and school activities contributes positively to the promotion of cultural identity and learner well-being. However, curriculum planning and institutional collaboration with the indigenous community remain limited. The findings further confirmed that culturally responsive educational practices and active community participation positively affect learner engagement, identity formation, and emotional well-being. Therefore, integrating indigenous cultural knowledge into educational implementation is essential in strengthening Indigenous Peoples Education in San Miguel II District.

Recommendations

Schools implementing Indigenous Peoples Education programs should strengthen curriculum contextualization by actively involving Manobo elders, parents, and cultural

leaders in curriculum development and instructional planning. Teachers should undergo continuous training on culturally responsive pedagogy to improve the integration of indigenous knowledge systems into classroom instruction. Educational authorities should provide more culturally appropriate instructional materials and institutional support for IPEd implementation. Furthermore, schools should strengthen partnerships with indigenous communities through collaborative cultural activities and community-based educational programs. Future researchers may conduct similar studies focusing on other Indigenous communities to further enrich the body of knowledge on culturally responsive education.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The study strictly observed ethical standards in the conduct of research involving Indigenous Peoples communities. Prior approval was secured from school authorities and community leaders before data gathering. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. The researcher respected Indigenous cultural practices and ensured that all information gathered was used solely for academic purposes. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. The study also adhered to the ethical principles of beneficence, respect for persons, and cultural sensitivity in accordance with Indigenous Peoples Education policies and institutional research guidelines.

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