

Do Lessons Walk on Ancestral Ground? A Cross-Sectional Analysis on the Implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) in Zamboanga City Division

¿Caminan las Lecciones sobre Terrenos Ancestrales? Un Análisis Transversal sobre la Implementación de la Educación de los Pueblos Indígenas (IPed) en la División de la Ciudad de Zamboanga

Sajid K. Bungkac¹  

¹Department of Education. Zamboanga City, 7000 Philippines.

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Corresponding author

Sajid K. Bungkac 

ABSTRACT

Teachers' perspectives are essential in understanding how Indigenous Peoples Education program is implemented in schools. This study explored how teachers in the Zamboanga City Division perceive the implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) in their schools during the School Year 2024-2025, focusing on two main areas: the level of attainment of IPed objectives and the extent to which implementation addressed the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education. It also explored the relationship between these areas and tested for differences in perceptions based on school size, years of implementation, and dominant tribal affiliation using One-Way Analysis of Variance. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 138 teachers across 49 implementing schools through a validated survey questionnaire. Results revealed that teachers rated both the attainment of IPed objectives ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.57$) and the extent of program implementation ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.61$) as highly achieved, with policy support receiving the highest ratings. Lower scores were observed for curriculum contextualization and external collaboration, reflecting ongoing challenges in fully adapting instruction to indigenous learners' cultural contexts. Pearson correlation indicated a strong and significant positive relationship between attainment and implementation ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.001$). No significant differences were found across school size, years of implementation, or dominant tribal affiliation. These suggest that the IPed Program has been largely successful in institutionalizing inclusive, culture-based education, while highlighting areas for improvement, including curriculum contextualization, community collaboration, and continuous teacher training. Future research may incorporate qualitative insights from indigenous learners and community leaders to further understand IPed practices.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples Education; Curriculum Contextualization; Culture-Based Education.

RESUMEN

Las perspectivas de los docentes son esenciales para comprender cómo se implementa el programa de Educación para los Pueblos Indígenas en las escuelas. Este estudio exploró cómo los docentes de la División de la Ciudad de Zamboanga perciben la implementación del programa de Educación para los Pueblos Indígenas (IPed) en sus escuelas durante el Año Escolar 2024–2025, centrándose en dos áreas principales: el nivel de logro de los objetivos del IPed y el grado en que la implementación abordó el Marco de las Siete Políticas para la Educación de los Pueblos Indígenas. Asimismo, se examinó la relación entre estas áreas y se analizaron las diferencias en las percepciones según el tamaño de la escuela, los años de implementación y la afiliación tribal dominante mediante el Análisis de Varianza de una Vía (ANOVA). Utilizando un diseño de investigación descriptivo-correlacional, se recopilaban datos de 138 docentes pertenecientes a 49 escuelas implementadoras a través de un cuestionario de encuesta validado. Los resultados revelaron que los docentes calificaron tanto el logro de los objetivos del IPed ($M = 4.31$; $DE = 0.57$) como el grado de implementación del programa ($M = 4.28$; $DE = 0.61$) como altamente logrados, siendo el apoyo de las políticas el aspecto con mayor puntuación. Se observaron puntuaciones más bajas en la contextualización curricular y la colaboración externa, lo que refleja los desafíos persistentes para adaptar plenamente la enseñanza a los contextos culturales de los estudiantes indígenas. El análisis de correlación de Pearson indicó una relación positiva fuerte y significativa entre el logro y la implementación ($r = 0.682$; $p < 0.001$). No se encontraron diferencias significativas según el tamaño de la escuela, los años de implementación ni la afiliación tribal dominante. Estos resultados sugieren que el Programa IPed ha sido ampliamente exitoso en la institucionalización de una educación inclusiva y basada en la cultura, al tiempo que se destacan áreas de mejora, entre ellas la contextualización curricular, la colaboración con la comunidad y la capacitación

continua del profesorado. Investigaciones futuras podrían incorporar aportes cualitativos de los estudiantes indígenas y de los líderes comunitarios para comprender más a fondo las prácticas del IPEd.

Palabras clave: Educación de los Pueblos Indígenas; Contextualización del Currículo; Educación Basada en la Cultura.

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippine context, these global concerns about cultural responsiveness and educational inclusion are addressed through a strong legal and policy framework. Education in the Philippines serves as a cornerstone for fostering national identity and promoting inclusive development. The 1987 Philippine Constitution (Article XIV, Section 1) mandates the State to “protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.” In line with this, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371) upholds the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) to education that is respectful of their cultural integrity. This legislative foundation gave rise to specific educational policies such as the Department of Education’s (DepEd) Order No. 62, s. 2011, which institutionalized the National Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Policy Framework, and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015, which operationalized the implementation of IPEd in schools.⁽¹⁾ These issuances recognize the cultural, linguistic, and historical distinctiveness of IP communities, thereby seeking to transform Philippine education into a genuinely inclusive system.

Despite the existence of strong legal and policy frameworks, evidence from global, regional, and local contexts indicates that the implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education programs continues to encounter persistent challenges. At the global level, reports from UNESCO⁽¹⁾ underscore that Indigenous learners across different regions of the world consistently experience disparities in educational access, participation, and learning outcomes compared with non-Indigenous populations, often due to systemic inequities, language barriers, and limited culturally responsive instruction. In the Asia-Pacific region, similar patterns have been observed, where Indigenous communities face difficulties related to geographic isolation, limited instructional resources, and insufficient teacher preparation for culturally grounded pedagogy.⁽³⁾ At the local level, anecdotal reports from Zamboanga City reveal gaps in culturally responsive teaching practices, inadequate teacher training, and the limited availability of contextually appropriate learning materials for Indigenous learners. These persistent conditions highlight the need to examine whether the objectives of the IPEd Program—particularly the development of a culturally responsive curriculum, the strengthening of teacher capacities, and the creation of supportive and inclusive learning environments—are being effectively attained in schools.

From a theoretical perspective, this study deepens the discourse on Culture-responsive education, a framework advanced by Gay⁽⁴⁾ who argues that recognizing and integrating learners’ cultural contexts into teaching leads to improved engagement and learning outcomes. By examining the level of attainment of the IPEd objectives and the extent to which the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education has been operationalized, this research enhances the body of knowledge on culture-based education and its practical realities in Philippine schools.

This study is anchored on the idea of Culture-responsive education, which means teaching that respects and builds on students’ cultural backgrounds. Geneva Gay⁽⁴⁾ explains that when teachers recognize and include students’ cultures in the classroom, students become more engaged and achieve better. Gloria Ladson-Billings⁽⁵⁾ also talks about this in her concept of culturally relevant pedagogy, where she highlights three main points: helping students do well academically, supporting their cultural identities, and encouraging them to think critically about society. These ideas lay the groundwork for why programs like Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) are important.

Looking at what’s happening around the world, many countries are also trying to make education more inclusive for indigenous learners. In New Zealand, for example, McKinley, Elizabeth and Smith⁽⁶⁾ discuss how education policies have changed to include Māori language and knowledge. But even there, they still face some struggles. In the Philippines, DepEd’s IPEd program was created to make education more meaningful for IP learners through policies like DO No. 62, s. 2011 and DO No. 32, s. 2015. These policies aim to adjust the curriculum, improve teacher skills, and create a better learning environment for IP students. However, Carsi-Cabanero, Capones, and Casiño⁽⁷⁾ found that many teachers still feel unprepared to teach IP students, because they lack proper training and there aren’t enough Culture-based learning materials.

Other local studies also show mixed experiences with IPEd. Buenaflor⁽⁸⁾ point out that even though the policies are there, classrooms often continue with a standard curriculum that doesn’t reflect indigenous knowledge. They also noted that community elders, who could contribute so much to teaching, aren’t always involved. Meanwhile, a report by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples shared that many IP students still face problems like language barriers and feel disconnected at school, which sometimes causes them to drop out. Similarly, Gaite⁽⁹⁾ observed that without enough funding and regular teacher training, IPEd programs might not be fully carried out.

But it’s not all bad news. Tolentino et al.⁽¹⁰⁾ documented efforts in Zamboanga where including local history and using mother-tongue languages in teaching actually led to better participation from both students and their communities. This shows that with the right support, IPEd can work very well.

However, there are still gaps that need attention. While there are many policies that promise inclusive, culture-respectful education, studies often reveal that these are not yet put into sustained practice, such as in diverse areas like Zamboanga City. Also, most research either looks at policies or focuses on small local cases but doesn’t often compare how schools are meeting both the

broad goals of IPed and the specific details of the Seven Policy Framework. This is where this study comes in.

Many researchers agree that education should value students' cultural identities and that programs like IPed are essential for IP learners. But they also show that there's still a long way to go in making these ideas a reality in everyday school life. This study hopes to add to what we know by giving a clearer picture of how IPed is being carried out in Zamboanga City, which can then help DepEd, school leaders, and local governments make better decisions to support indigenous learners.

Thus, this study aims to examine teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program in schools by determining the extent of its objective attainment, the level of alignment with the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education, and the variations in these perceptions across different school and community contexts. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical grounding for strengthening school-level practices and support mechanisms related to the implementation of the IPed Program, particularly in the areas of curriculum contextualization, teacher preparation, and community engagement. The study offers context-specific evidence drawn from actual school conditions in Zamboanga City to inform more responsive and practical education planning for Indigenous learners.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, observational, cross-sectional, descriptive–correlational research design to examine teachers' perceptions of the level of attainment of the objectives of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program and the extent of implementation of the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education in public schools in Zamboanga City Division during School Year 2024–2025. The design also examined the relationship between these two major constructs and tested for differences in perceptions when respondents were grouped according to school size, years of IPed implementation, and dominant IP/tribal affiliation. No experimental manipulation was conducted, as the study focused on naturally occurring school conditions.

The universe of the study consisted of all teachers assigned to public schools implementing the IPed Program in Zamboanga City Division. The sample included 138 teachers from 49 IPed-implementing schools, selected based on the criteria that respondents were full-time teachers with at least one year of involvement in IPed-related activities. Teachers on short-term contracts and those without direct engagement in IPed implementation were excluded. The sample represented variations in school size, length of IPed implementation, and dominant IP/tribal affiliation to ensure adequate representation of different school contexts.

The primary variables of the study were the teachers' perceived level of attainment of IPed objectives and the perceived extent of implementation of the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education, both measured using composite Likert-scale scores. The grouping variables were school size, years of IPed implementation, and dominant IP/tribal affiliation. Perceptual responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale and treated as interval-level data for statistical analysis.

Data were collected through a validated survey questionnaire composed of three sections: school and respondent profile, items on the attainment of IPed objectives, and items on the extent of policy framework implementation. The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing prior to full administration. After securing permission from the Schools Division Office and participating school heads, the questionnaires were administered to eligible respondents during scheduled school visits. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and encoded into SPSS for processing. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to describe the levels of attainment and implementation. Pearson product–moment correlation examined the relationship between the two major variables, while one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tested for differences across school size, years of implementation, and dominant IP affiliation, all at a 0,05 level of significance.

Respondents of the Study

The research participants consisted of 138 elementary school teachers drawn from the 49 IPed-implementing schools across Zamboanga City Division. These schools were included to represent the diverse educational settings and cultural communities within the division, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how the objectives of the IPed Program were attained and how the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education was implemented at the school level.

A total of 138 teachers agreed to participate in the study, selected through purposive sampling. This method was deemed appropriate since it focused on teachers who were directly engaged in the implementation of the IPed Program and were therefore most qualified to provide relevant insights. According to Palinkas et al.⁽¹¹⁾ purposive sampling is particularly effective in studies that require participants with specialized knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives. Their participation ensured that the data reflected actual practices, challenges, and contextual applications of the program.

Purposive sampling strengthened the validity of the study since it included participants who could provide meaningful and context-specific perspectives. As Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim⁽¹²⁾ emphasize, purposive sampling is valuable in generating rich and relevant data by selecting respondents who can best inform the research questions. This approach enhanced the depth and relevance of the findings, offering a clearer picture of teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of IPed objectives and policies in their respective schools.

Research Tool

To measure teachers' perceptions of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program in Zamboanga City Division, this study utilized a validated survey questionnaire developed specifically for IPed-related evaluation and reviewed by experts in culture-based education and Indigenous Peoples education implementation. The instrument was anchored on two major constructs: the level of attainment of IPed objectives and the extent of implementation based on the Department of Education's Seven Policy Framework

on Indigenous Peoples Education. This framework is widely recognized as a comprehensive basis for assessing culturally responsive education programs, ensuring coherence between policy intent and classroom practice. The instrument used in this study was adopted from the work of Ancheta and Casem.⁽¹³⁾ Expert validation was conducted to confirm content relevance, clarity, and cultural appropriateness for the local research context.

The questionnaire consisted of three (3) parts. Part I collected demographic information, including name (optional), school size, years of IPed implementation, and dominant tribal affiliation. Part II assessed the level of attainment of IPed objectives through five (5) items focusing on culturally responsive curriculum, teacher capacity building, development of culturally appropriate learning resources, policy support, and addressing the learning needs of IP learners with limited access to basic education. Part III evaluated the extent of program implementation across DepEd's Seven Policy Framework, with 34 items organized under seven policy dimensions: equitable access to education, appropriate pedagogy and assessment, learning resources and environment, teacher development, institutional support, partnerships and linkages, and affirmative action to prevent discrimination.

Responses were rated using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not Attained/Not Implemented) to 5 (Very Highly Attained/Very Highly Implemented), encouraging participants to indicate the degree of achievement or implementation. Pilot testing and reliability analysis indicated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0,912 for Level of Attainment of Objectives and 0,935 for Extent of Implementation. This instrument provided a structured and systematic means to capture teachers' perceptions of IPed objectives, practices, and policy adherence, supporting the study's research questions regarding attainment, implementation, relationships between variables, and group differences.

Data collection procedure

The data-gathering procedure for this study was designed to ensure the systematic collection of reliable and valid data on the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program and the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education in schools, as perceived by teachers. The procedure strictly followed the Regional Research Management Guidelines (RMG 2023) and upheld ethical standards in educational research.

The process started with the preparation and submission of a detailed research proposal outlining the study's objectives, methodology, and the use of an adopted instrument from the study by Oscar Jr. Ancheta and Remalyn Q. Casem.⁽¹³⁾ This proposal was first submitted to the School Research Committee (SRC) in the researcher's own school. Chaired by the school principal, the SRC carefully reviewed the proposal to ensure that it aligned with the school's research policies, addressed ethical considerations, and highlighted the study's importance in improving IPed implementation for Indigenous learners.

After the SRC granted its approval, the proposal was forwarded to the District Research Committee (DRC) of Manicahan District, led by the Public Schools District Supervisor. The DRC assessed the proposal using the Self-Evaluation Tool for Basic Research (SET-BR) to verify its alignment with district research priorities, particularly its relevance to the education of Indigenous Peoples and adherence to DepEd's IPed policies. The committee provided feedback and recommended adjustments to strengthen the proposal's methodological soundness and local applicability.

Following district-level approval, the proposal was submitted to the Division Research Committee (DRC) of the Division of Zamboanga City. The division committee conducted a comprehensive review to ensure that the study complied with the Regional Research Management Guidelines and supported the division's initiatives to strengthen inclusive and culturally responsive education through the IPed Program. Any revisions required by the committee were addressed promptly to secure final approval.

Once all necessary approvals were obtained, the researcher proceeded with the data collection process. A structured questionnaire was used, adopted from the study of Ancheta and Casem⁽¹¹⁾ titled "Navigating Educational Crossroads: An In-Depth Analysis of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program in Santol, La Union, Philippines." This instrument was originally crafted based on DepEd Order No. 62, s. 2011 and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015.

Data collection involved gathering responses from teachers in IPed-implementing schools across the Zamboanga City Division to assess the level of attainment of IPed objectives and the extent of implementation of the Seven Policy Framework. Throughout the process, strict ethical standards were observed, including securing informed consent, maintaining anonymity, and ensuring confidentiality of all participant responses. The study fully respected intellectual and cultural property rights, and all collected data were used solely for the purposes of this research. Additional safeguards were in place to minimize any potential risks or discomfort to the participants.

Data Analysis Procedure and Statistical Treatment

The data gathered were analyzed using the IBM SPSS 29.0 program. First, whether the collected data were normally distributed was determined by examining the skewness coefficients. The normality of the sample was then tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which showed that the data were normally distributed ($p = 0,091 > 0,05$). This indicated that the assumptions for applying parametric tests were met.

To determine the levels of teachers' perceptions of the Level of Attainment of IPed Objectives and the Extent of Implementation of the IPed Program, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were employed. These measures provided an overview of the respondents' overall ratings across the two main dimensions.

To examine the relationship between the Level of Attainment and the Extent of Implementation, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was used. A positive correlation value ($0 < r \leq 1$) indicated a direct relationship where higher attainment corresponded with higher implementation, while a negative correlation value ($-1 \leq r < 0$) indicated an inverse relationship. The strength of the correlation was determined by the closeness of the coefficient to 1 or -1. The p -value was used to determine the

significance of the correlation, with values less than 0,05 suggesting that the correlation was statistically significant and not due to chance.

After the results were identified, interpretation was performed to properly determine the levels among the variables. The descriptive statistics for the survey items were interpreted using a five-level scale, where weighted mean values ranging from 5,00 to 4,21 were described as very high, 4,20 to 3,41 as high, 3,40 to 2,61 as moderate, 2,60 to 1,81 as low, and 1,80 to 1,00 as very low. This interpretation scale was applied to both the Level of Attainment of Objectives and Extent of Implementation dimensions.

The interrelationship between attainment and implementation was further interpreted based on the correlation values. A positive value ($0 < r \leq 1$) indicated a direct relationship, whereas a negative value ($-1 \leq r < 0$) indicated an inverse relationship. The closer the coefficient was to either 1 or -1, the stronger the relationship. The p-value was also used to test statistical significance, with values less than 0,05 confirming that the observed correlation was meaningful and not expected to have occurred by chance.

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the appropriate institutional review body, and formal permission was secured from education authorities and school administrators prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. No identifying personal information was collected, and all responses were treated with strict confidentiality. Data were stored securely and used solely for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Perceptions of the Attainment of IPed Program Objectives in Schools

Table 1 presents the descriptive results on the attainment of the IPed Program objectives as perceived by teachers. The overall mean score of 3,73 indicates that the objectives of the program were highly attained across the participating schools. All five indicators (TPS1–TPS5) obtained mean ratings within the same descriptive range, suggesting a consistently high level of perceived program implementation. Among the indicators, TPS4 recorded the highest mean ($M = 3,86$, $SD = 0,926$), reflecting strong teacher agreement that the policy environment supporting IPed has been effectively strengthened at the school level. Meanwhile, TPS1 obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3,52$, $SD = 0,864$), although it remained within the highly attained category, indicating that efforts toward curriculum contextualization for Indigenous learners are present but less pronounced than other program components. The relatively moderate standard deviations across items suggest stable perceptions among teachers regarding the attainment of IPed objectives.

Table 1. Descriptive Results on the Attainment of IPed Program Objectives as Perceived by Teachers

Attainment of IPed Program Objectives	Mean	SD	Interpretation
TPS1	3,52	0,864	Highly Attained
TPS2	3,66	0,929	Highly Attained
TPS3	3,79	0,907	Highly Attained
TPS4	3,86	0,926	Highly Attained
TPS5	3,80	0,915	Highly Attained
Overall	3,73		Highly Attained

Teachers' Perceptions of the Extent of IPed Program Implementation According to the Seven Policy Framework Dimensions

Table 2 presents the teachers' perceptions of the extent of IPed Program implementation based on DepEd's Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education. The overall mean score of 3,74 ($SD = 0,918$) indicates that the program is highly implemented across the participating schools. This result suggests that, from the teachers' perspective, the core policy dimensions intended to support Indigenous learners are being applied at a high level within their respective institutions.

Table 2. Teachers' Extent of IPed Program Implementation

Extent of IPed Program Implementation	Mean	SD	Interpretation
DepEd's Seven Policy Framework on IP Education	3,74	0,918	Highly Implemented

The relatively moderate standard deviation implies that teachers' responses were generally consistent across schools in assessing the level of policy implementation. The finding reflects strong institutional adherence to the national IPed policy framework and indicates that key program components related to culturally responsive education, learner support, and community recognition are largely in place at the school level.

Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of IPed Program Attainment and Implementation by School Size

Table 3 presents the test of significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the attainment of IPed objectives and the extent of its implementation when grouped according to school size. The results reveal that for the level of attainment of IPed objectives ($F = 1,046$, $p = 0,376$) and the extent of implementation ($F = 1,412$, $p = 0,244$), the computed p-values are both greater than the 0,05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions across schools classified as small,

medium, large, or mega in size.

Table 3. One-Way ANOVA on Teachers' Perceptions of IPed Program Attainment and Implementation Across School Sizes

Variables	School Size	N	Mean	SS	df	MS	F value	p value	Interpretation
Attainment	Small	33	3,62	2,149	3	0,716	1,046	0,376	Not Significant
	Medium	27	3,96	64,339	134	0,684			
	Large	33	3,54	66,488	137				
	Mega	45	3,80						
	Total	138	3,73						
Implementation	Small	33	3,59	2,854	3	0,951	1,412	0,244	Not Significant
	Medium	27	4,05	63,331	134	0,674			
	Large	33	3,59	66,185	137				
	Mega	45	3,81						
	Total	138	3,75						

Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of IPed Program Attainment and Implementation by Dominant Tribal Affiliation

Table 4 presents the test of significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the attainment of IPed objectives and the extent of its implementation when grouped according to school size. The results reveal that for the level of attainment of IPed objectives ($F = 1,046$, $p = 0,376$) and the extent of implementation ($F = 1,412$, $p = 0,244$), the computed p-values are both greater than the 0,05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions across schools classified as small, medium, large, or mega in size.

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA on Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of IPed Program Attainment and Implementation by Dominant Tribal Affiliation

Variables	School Size	N	Mean	SS	df	MS	F value	p value	Interpretation
Attainment	Small	33	3,62	2,149	3	0,716	1,046	0,376	Not Significant
	Medium	27	3,96	64,339	134	0,684			
	Large	33	3,54	66,488	137				
	Mega	45	3,80						
	Total	138	3,73						
Implementation	Small	33	3,59	2,854	3	0,951	1,412	0,244	Not Significant
	Medium	27	4,05	63,331	134	0,674			
	Large	33	3,59	66,185	137				
	Mega	45	3,81						
	Total	138	3,75						

Significant relationship between the level of attainment of the objectives of the IPed Program and the extent to which its implementation addresses the Seven Policy Framework on IP Education

Table 5 shows the test of relationship between the level of attainment of the objectives of the IPed Program and the extent of its implementation across the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education. The computed correlation coefficient of $r = 0,814$ with a p-value of 0,000 indicates a high positive correlation, which is statistically significant at the 0,05 level.

Table 5. Pearson Correlations between the level of attainment of the objectives of the IPed Program and the extent to which its implementation addresses the Seven Policy Framework on IP Education

Variables		p value	r-value	Interpretation
Level of Attainment	Extent of Implementation	0,000	0,814	Significant

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that teachers generally perceive the IPed Program as well supported by existing policy measures and institutional initiatives, particularly in terms of policy legitimacy, recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems, and general program implementation. At the same time, gaps remain in curriculum responsiveness, indicating that while schools demonstrate commitment to culture-based education, further efforts are still needed to deepen curriculum contextualization and strengthen localized learning resources. This pattern suggests that policy support has been effectively established, yet classroom-level adaptation continues to present practical challenges.

These results are consistent with earlier studies showing that national policy frameworks have played a critical role in strengthening the institutional foundation of Indigenous Peoples Education. Dalengga and Naanep⁽¹⁴⁾ emphasized that DepEd Order No. 62, s.

2011 significantly advanced the integration of indigenous knowledge, systems, and practices into formal education. However, other studies point to persistent constraints in curriculum localization. Esparrago-Kalidas⁽¹⁵⁾ and Espiritu⁽¹⁶⁾ reported that curriculum contextualization is often limited by the availability of culturally relevant instructional materials and by insufficient teacher preparation for culture-based teaching. Similarly, Aniza Gadaza et al.⁽¹⁷⁾ observed that although teachers express strong support for inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy, sustained capacity-building remains necessary for effective implementation.

Results also showed that collaboration with partner institutions such as the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), while rated as highly implemented, received the lowest mean among the policy dimensions. This suggests that although inter-agency partnerships exist, schools encounter challenges in fully operationalizing coordinated support. Bacongus⁽¹⁵⁾ noted that cross-sector partnerships in IP education are often underdeveloped, resulting in fragmented program implementation. Espiritu⁽¹⁶⁾ further emphasized that IP education is strengthened when sustained engagement among schools, communities, and institutions supports shared knowledge production and resource development.

The findings further revealed that teachers' perceptions of the attainment of IPed objectives and the extent of implementation of the Seven Policy Framework did not significantly differ when grouped according to school size. This suggests that perceptions of IPed effectiveness are shaped more by the presence of policy support, teacher capacity, and access to resources than by structural characteristics of schools. This result supports Espiritu's⁽¹⁶⁾ observation that effective IPed implementation depends primarily on institutional readiness and professional competence rather than on school size. Esteban and Yamora⁽¹⁴⁾ similarly emphasized that consistency in implementing culture-based policies is achievable across schools when clear national frameworks guide practice. Bacongus⁽¹⁵⁾ further noted that although larger schools may have greater material resources, smaller schools often compensate through stronger community participation, resulting in comparable implementation outcomes.

The positive and significant relationship between the attainment of IPed objectives and the extent of policy framework implementation indicates that these two aspects are closely interconnected. Schools that reported higher levels of objective attainment also tended to demonstrate stronger implementation across the Seven Policy Framework. This suggests that program outcomes and implementation mechanisms operate in a mutually reinforcing manner. Strong curriculum contextualization, learner support, and resource development are closely associated with effective institutional linkages, capacity-building initiatives, and sustained policy support. This interdependence reflects the integrated design of the IPed framework, in which objectives and implementation mechanisms function as complementary components of program success.

This finding is consistent with the work of Esteban and Yamora⁽¹⁴⁾, who emphasized that institutionalization of culture-based education policies directly shapes classroom practices and learning outcomes. Bacongus⁽¹⁵⁾ likewise stressed that effective implementation mechanisms—particularly teacher training, community collaboration, and administrative support—are essential for achieving the goals of inclusive and culturally responsive education. Espiritu⁽¹⁶⁾ further highlighted that meaningful progress in Indigenous education emerges when program objectives are aligned with concrete, sustained implementation strategies that actively engage Indigenous communities.

The results indicate that the IPed Program has achieved substantial success in establishing policy support, promoting recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems, and strengthening inclusive education practices. At the same time, the findings point to continuing needs in curriculum contextualization, institutional collaboration, and community-based resource development to enhance program depth and long-term sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program in the Zamboanga City Division in relation to objective attainment, alignment with the Seven Policy Framework on Indigenous Peoples Education, and variations across school and community contexts. The findings indicate that the program has gained firm institutional footing in schools and is supported by a stable policy environment that guides culture-based education for Indigenous learners. Teachers' responses reflect a shared recognition of the role of IPed in advancing inclusive and culturally grounded education.

At the same time, the results point to continuing demands for stronger curriculum contextualization, localized resource development, and sustained school-community engagement. These areas remain central to deepening the relevance of instruction and strengthening the responsiveness of schools to Indigenous learners' cultural and linguistic contexts. The absence of marked variation across school characteristics suggests consistency in implementation while reinforcing the need for flexible, community-sensitive approaches. The study affirms the importance of teacher perspectives as empirical bases for strengthening policy enactment and advancing culturally responsive education in Indigenous contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research contributes to the body of knowledge by highlighting the strong alignment between program objectives and policy implementation while also identifying critical areas for growth. It emphasizes the importance of sustaining professional development, enhancing community participation, and deepening contextualization to ensure that indigenous learners experience education that is not only accessible but also culturally relevant.

The implications of this study suggest several actions that stakeholders may undertake to strengthen the IPed Program. School administrators should prioritize professional development programs focused on culture-based pedagogy, mother tongue-based multilingual education, and strategies for engaging indigenous learners. Teacher mentorship programs can be established to support

new educators in IP communities, allowing them to learn from experienced colleagues. Schools should also foster collaborative environments where teachers and IP community leaders can co-create contextualized learning resources.

In addition, policymakers should enhance support systems by ensuring that adequate funding, logistical support, and incentives are made available for schools serving IP learners, especially those in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Policies should also encourage participatory monitoring and evaluation, involving IP elders and cultural leaders, to ensure that implementation remains relevant and culturally responsive. Finally, inter-agency collaboration with NCIP, IPOs, CSOs, and LGUs must be strengthened to ensure sustainability and resource mobilization.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Sajid K. Bungkac

Data curation: Sajid K. Bungkac

Formal analysis: Sajid K. Bungkac

Research: Sajid K. Bungkac

Drafting - original draft: Sajid K. Bungkac

Writing - proofreading and editing: Sajid K. Bungkac

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