

Montecentral Indigenous People: student's live experience and challenges in pursuing secondary education

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Abstract

This qualitative narrative study investigates the lived experiences and challenges of secondary-level Indigenous students from Montecentral, enrolled at Ramon Enriquez National High School in Labuan, Zamboanga City. Leveraging a descriptive qualitative design and semi-structured interviews with five purposively sampled participants, the research explores the cultural identity, economic hardship, and institutional barriers. It highlights their persistent engagement with education despite facing environmental and Infrastructural Barriers financial Struggles, ethnic discrimination, lack of Learning Resources and poverty

It was found out the challenges faced by Indigenous students in MonteCentral have far-reaching consequences that go beyond mere inconvenience. Washed out bridges, flooded rivers, and unreliable motorcycle transport underscore how environmental and infrastructural deficiencies severely disrupt access to secondary education. Despite daily struggles poverty, family responsibilities, and emotional strain these young learners persist, driven by a clear sense of purpose: to uplift their families and build a better life. Another issue they encounter is students often face harsh ethnic discrimination through isolated comments and bullying; students face lack of resources and connectivity. Many students must work to help support their families. Despite these systemic obstacles, students express deep gratitude and joy in accessing education and demonstrate strong perseverance and purpose, driven by aspirations to uplift their families. The study recommends a holistic, culturally grounded framework: enhance rural infrastructure; train teachers in Indigenous-responsive pedagogy; and provide targeted scholarships and material support. By integrating environmental, cultural, and economic strategies, stakeholders can create a truly inclusive educational environment—one where students thrive academically and maintain their cultural identity

Keywords: Indigenous People, secondary education, lived experiences, challenges, cultural identity

Introduction

The Monte Central Indigenous Peoples (IP) students embody the rich cultural heritage and resilience of their community. These students, often facing unique challenges in their academic journey, strive to preserve their heritage while embracing modern learning opportunities. As they navigate their educational journey, they balance traditional knowledge with modern learning, ensuring that their ancestral wisdom remains alive. Through experiential learning and community engagement, these students gain firsthand insights into social realities, fostering a deep commitment to inclusive development. Their dedication to education not only empowers them but also strengthens their role in preserving Indigenous identity and advocating for their people's rights. Their journey is a testament to the enduring spirit of Indigenous youth striving for a future that honors both tradition and progress.

Indigenous students pursuing secondary education face a journey filled with both enriching experiences and significant challenges. Lived experience refers to the real-life experiences of students in relation to their education. It includes their daily interactions in school, challenges they face, and personal insights gained throughout their academic journey. These experiences can be shaped by factors such as learning environments, social interactions, cultural influences, and personal struggles. For Indigenous students, lived experiences may involve, adapting to mainstream education, balancing cultural traditions with academic responsibilities, and overcoming financial or accessibility challenges. These experiences provide valuable perspectives on the realities of education and help shape policies and programs that support student success.

The lived experiences of Montecentral Indigenous People (IP) students are deeply correlated with the challenges they encounter in pursuing secondary education. These students often navigate a complex reality where cultural practices, economic hardship, and geographic isolation directly impact their educational journey. Their experiences of walking long distances to school, helping with household or livelihood tasks, and direct discrimination within the school environment are not merely individual issues they are shared conditions rooted in their identity and context. As such, the barriers they face are not only academic but also social, emotional, and cultural.

According to Cariño (2012), Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines continue to face systemic barriers in accessing quality education, including discrimination, poverty, and a lack of culturally relevant teaching strategies. Meanwhile, Delos Santos and Bernarte (2018) emphasize that most educational programs are developed without a deep understanding of indigenous learners' unique cultural contexts, leading to alienation and low engagement in school. While the Department of Education's Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program has sought to address these challenges, its implementation has varied widely across regions (Salvador-Amores, 2020). Most existing research focuses on broader indigenous populations or commonly studied communities in Luzon and Mindanao. However, there is a noticeable absence of localized studies that explore the specific lived experiences of Indigenous learners in Montecentral, a context that may reveal distinct cultural, social, and geographic factors influencing education. This study seeks to fill that gap by providing an in-depth, narrative-

based account of the challenges Montecentral IP students face in pursuing secondary education.

Thus, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of Montecentral Indigenous People (IP) students in their pursuit of secondary education. It seeks to identify the various challenges they face, including cultural, social, economic, and institutional barriers that affect their ability to access, remain in, and complete secondary schooling. The study also aims to understand how their cultural identity and day-to-day realities influence their educational journey. By capturing and analyzing these experiences, the study intends to provide meaningful insights that may guide educators, school administrators, and policy-makers in developing more inclusive and culturally responsive educational practices for Indigenous learners.

1.1. Problem Statement

This study aims to assess the lived experiences and challenges in pursuing secondary education of students belonging to Montecentral Indigenous People. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

- a. Describe the lived experiences of Montecentral Indigenous students in pursuing secondary education?
- b. Determine the challenges they encounter in pursuing secondary education?
- c. Is there any form of intervention or support on how students may overcome the challenges they encounter in pursuing secondary education?

1.2. Scope and Delimitation

The scope of the study is delimited to Indigenous learners from Montecentral who are currently enrolled in Ramon Enriques National Highschool a secondary education. It includes their day-to-day school life, emotional and psychological struggles, academic challenges, family and community support, and issues related to cultural identity and educational access.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study will employ a descriptive qualitative design is a type of research approach used to provide a detailed, straightforward description of a phenomenon, experience, or situation. It focuses on understanding what is happening, how it happens, and what it means to the people involved, especially in real-life contexts.

This research design is used to explore and understand the lived experiences and challenges encountered by students from Montecentral Indigenous student's in pursuing secondary education. This approach is appropriate for capturing the depth and richness of personal narratives, meanings, and perspectives directly from the participants.

2.2. Participants of the Study

The respondents for this study will include Indigenous students from the Montecentral community who are currently enrolled in secondary education in Ramon Enriquez National High School, Labuan Zamboanga City. The study will target approximately 5 students from these schools who have consented to participate in the research. These students will provide valuable insights into the challenges they face in pursuing secondary education.

2.3. Sampling Procedure

The sampling design for this study will involve the use of a purposive sampling technique. This method is appropriate for descriptive qualitative research as it allows the researcher to intentionally select participants who have direct, lived experiences relevant to the research topic.

Five (5) Indigenous students from Montecentral will be chosen based on the following criteria:

- Currently enrolled secondary education
- Belonging to an Indigenous group residing in Montecentral
- Willing and able to articulate their educational experiences and challenges

This approach ensures that the data collected will be rich, meaningful, and deeply reflective of the unique realities faced by Indigenous students pursuing secondary education.

2.4. Research Instrument

The researcher crafted a semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire to guide in-depth interviews with Montecentral Indigenous students. The instrument underwent expert validation by three specialists in Indigenous education and literacy, ensuring cultural relevance, linguistic clarity, and alignment with study objectives... The instrument was designed in English language however, to gather indepth knowledge about their experiences and allows smooth conversation, the researcher conducted the interview in their own preferred language such as visaya, chavacano and tagalog.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process for this study will follow several key steps to ensure the collection of rich and authentic information from the selected Indigenous students of Montecentral. Since this research employs a descriptive qualitative design, the focus will be on collecting firsthand narratives and lived experiences through personal interaction. Prior to data collection, the researcher will obtain the necessary permissions from relevant authorities, such as the school head, and secure informed consent from each participant. For minors, parental or guardian consent will also be acquired. Participants

will be fully informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and the assurance of confidentiality.

Respondents will be selected using purposive sampling. Five (5) Indigenous students who meet the criteria for participation will be identified and invited. An orientation will be conducted to explain the interview process and address any questions they may have. Data will be collected primarily through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. These interviews will allow for open-ended responses and follow-up questions to better capture the depth of the participants' lived experiences. Interviews will take place in a safe and private setting and will be conducted in the language most comfortable to the participants, with translation assistance provided if needed. With the participants' consent, audio recordings of the interviews will be made to ensure accuracy in transcription and analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

Presented in this chapter is the result of the data analysis. Discussion is also provided to give a comprehensive explanation of the themes that were generated in response to the objective set in this study.

Student's live experiences in pursuing secondary education.

3.1 Environmental and Infrastructural Barriers

Indigenous students from Monte Central face profound environmental and infrastructural obstacles on their path to secondary schooling. Many live in geographically isolated areas with limited or unreliable transport, meaning daily journeys can stretch over difficult terrain and vulnerable crossing points. These remote communities also face environmental threats like typhoons, floods, and landslides, which disrupt access to schools and damage infrastructure. The participants had the same answer in describing what it's like being a student from their community attending secondary school. The following are their answer:

R1: Tormento gayot si ta keda na monte kay si man ulan hinde kame ta puede anda na iskuela kay el Puente ta sigi man anut na abinida.("It's really difficult living in the mountains because when it rains, we can't go to school as the bridge keeps getting washed away by the river.")

R2: Mahirap pon talaga kapag nakatira sa montecentral dahil kapag malakas ang ulan hindi kame makatawid dahil malakas ang tubig na umaagos sa ilog at sumasama ang aming tulay.("It's truly hard living in Montecentral because when the rain is heavy, we can't cross as the strong river current carries away our bridge.")

R3: The journey to school is long and sometimes it's difficult to go to school due to bad weather.

R5: Para kumigo malisud gat pag nuay motor nuay ken ase hatud malisud pag tan baha aki kay hinde ta puede anda na iskuela.("For us, it's really hard when there's no motorcycle or someone to bring us, especially during floods, because we can't go to school.")

In summary, the lived experiences of Monte Central's Indigenous students navigating washed out bridges, flooded rivers, and unreliable motorcycle transport underscore how environmental and infrastructural deficiencies severely disrupt access to secondary education. The environmental and infrastructural challenges faced by Indigenous students in Monte Central have far-reaching consequences that go beyond mere inconvenience. The daily struggle to reach school due to washed-out bridges, impassable rivers, and the absence of reliable transportation—especially during adverse weather—significantly affects attendance, academic consistency, and student morale. These conditions not only lead to frequent absences but also foster feelings of hopelessness and exclusion, as students are physically and socially distanced from the educational support systems they need to thrive.

3.2 Support to Parents in Livelihood

Each day begins early for Indigenous students in Monte Central, as they rise before dawn to support their families' livelihoods. Whether washing dishes, doing laundry, helping with pig tending, or clearing the kaingin (swidden farming), these young learners step into household duties first before heading to class. The participants answer in describing what typical school day look like for them; from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed.

. The following are their answer:

R1: Desperta io aga ta ase anay iyo trabaho bago ase el mga school work.("When I wake up in the morning, I first do my work before doing my schoolwork.")

R2: Paggising ng umaga trabahong bahay tulad ng paghuhugas ng plato at maglalabada at bago po ako matulog gumagawa po ako ng mga activity at assignment.("When I wake up in the morning, I do house chores like washing dishes and doing laundry, and before I go to sleep, I do my activities and assignments.")

R3: Our classes start at 12:00 pm I help with chores and do my requirements.

R4: Si disperta io aga el dimio obligation ayuda kunel dimio tata y nana igual saka kumida de puerko pati ayuda dimio nana na kaingin. Si sera tamen el noche dimio trabaho ayuda ase sena akabar ase sena ase ya dimio mga assignment.("When I wake up in the morning, I help with my duties together with my father and mother—like bringing pig food—and I also help my mother in the farm. In the evening too, I help with work: prepare dinner, finish it, and then do my school assignments.")

The daily routines of Indigenous students in Monte Central, who begin their days with demanding household responsibilities, reflect how livelihood support for their families deeply shapes their educational experience. This dual role—being both a student and a contributor to the family's subsistence—demonstrates resilience and responsibility but also brings significant implications. Students often arrive at school physically tired, with reduced time and energy for academic work. Late-night study after chores or farming duties affects not only their academic performance but also their overall well-being.

3.3 Joy and Gratitude in Learning

When interview made about How do they feel when they are at school? What emotions do they often experience? Every morning, Monte Central's Indigenous students bring joy and heartfelt gratitude into their classrooms. they replied:

"Alegre ion a ya manda kumigo entra eskuela." (R1) — "I'm so happy when I'm allowed to go to school."

"Ang nararamdaman ko kapag nakakapunta ako sa eskuela sobrang saya ko po." (R2)

"When I go to school, I feel immense happiness."

"Alegre io kay ya puede io entra eskuela for medyo de di amun pobresa maskin pakilaya ya puede io pisa highschool." (R4) — "I'm joyful because I can attend school, despite our poverty, I can still step into high school."

"Alegre io kay ta entra io eskuela." (R5) — "I'm happy because I get to go to school."

These heartfelt expressions capture the deep gratitude Indigenous learners feel for access to education a gateway to hope, identity, and a brighter future. Research supports this powerful connection: culturally responsive teaching like weaving native language, traditions, and practices into lessons nurtures not only academic proficiency, but also cultural pride and emotional well-being.

In Monte Central, the classroom is a place of celebration where each lesson deepens cultural ties, each moment affirms belonging, and each day is marked by joyful, grateful hearts eager to learn.

3.4 Perseverance and Purpose

In the conducted interview, students were asked have you ever thought about stopping school? If yes, what made you stay? These students face obstacles and yet their resolve to press on with purpose remains strong:

R1: "nui gat io pensa man stop kay kere gat io ayuda na mi mga mayores y kere Tambien io io ase akaba entra eskuela para tiene buen trabaho."
(I never think of stopping, because I want to support my elders and also go to school to get a good job.)

R4: "nui se na dimio pensamiento man stop io entra eskuela kay bien tormento el bida."
(I never think of quitting school because life is very hard.)

R5: "nui gat io pensa man stop na eskuela kay para otro diya puede io ayuda na dimio mga mayores."
(I never think to stop, because I want to help my elders in the future.)

Despite daily struggles poverty, family responsibilities, and emotional strain these young learners persist, driven by a clear sense of purpose: to uplift their families and build a better life. The unwavering determination of Monte Central's Indigenous students illustrated in R1, R4, and R5 reveals a powerful message: their educational perseverance is deeply rooted in a sense of purpose that extends beyond personal ambition. They carry a strong desire to support their elders and uplift their families, reflecting a culturally grounded motivation known to bolster resilience among Indigenous learners.

Student's challenges faced in pursuing secondary education.

3.5 Financial Struggles

In Monte Central, the financial burden of education weighs heavily on Indigenous students threatening their dreams before they even reach the classroom. For these learners, the cost of daily baon (meal money) and pamasahé (fare) especially for motor travel is often the most painful barrier. This echoes broader findings in Indigenous Filipino contexts, where families struggle to cover transportation, school supplies, and food, causing students to miss class. These are their responses to the question What are some of the hardest things you face when it comes to going to school every day?

R1“El pinaka malisud palta el baun pati pamasahé todol diya.”
 “The hardest thing is not enough baon (meal money) and fare every day.”

R2“Ang pinakamahirap na experience ko kapag pumupunta sa paaralan ng walang baon at walang pamasahé sa motor.”(My most difficult experience is going to school without baon and without fare for the motorbike ride.)

R3“The biggest challenge is the long distance from home to school and the fare expensive.”

“The biggest challenge is the long distance from home to school and the expensive fare.”

R4 “Ta paga kame pasahé mas kin para baun yalang kay tormento el bida.”
 “Because we use most of our fare money for transportation, there’s hardly anything left for baon—it makes life really hard.”

This theme underscores a harsh reality: even small costs fuel, fares, snacks can determine whether Indigenous youth make it to school. In Monte Central, where poverty is persistent and transportation sparse, financial precarity transforms education into a daily struggle.

3.6 Ethnic discrimination

In Monte Central, Subanon students often face harsh ethnic discrimination through isolated comments, bullying, and exclusion that cut deeply these are the challenges they’ve encountered that relate to them being a member of an IP group.

R1 & R5: “Ta tenta sila na mga Subano hinde daw kame hente.” — “They avoid Subanon people, saying we’re not human.”

R2: “Binubully nila ako pag malaman nilang ako ay Subano dahil ang mga Subano daw po ay hindi tao at mangkukulam.” — “They bully me when they find out I’m Subanon, saying Subanon aren’t human and are witches.”

R4: actually chene io yan encounter as a subano akel tan bully kumigo ta abla kay el subano daw hinde hente ta abla tamen sila mangkukulam daw io. (“Actually... they bully us as Subanon... they say Subanon aren’t human and are witches.”)

This theme underscores the urgent need for culturally inclusive education, teacher training against bias, and peer programs that foster respect. Such efforts can help

Indigenous students from Monte Central and beyond—feel valued, accepted, and empowered in their educational journey.

3.7 Lack of Learning Resources

Monte Central's Indigenous students face chronic shortages of essential learning tools—gadgets, materials, and connectivity this are some of the reasons why they having hard time to focus or do well in school sometimes

R2: “Kapag walang cellphone at maraming trabaho sa bahay.” (*When there's no cellphone and lots of household chores...*)

R3: “Lack of basic materials I need. Like paper and book and other things.”

R4: “Nui cellphone.” (*I don't have a cellphone.*)

R1: “Nui signal bien lehos el skwela aki kanamun.” (*No signal here, so school is very far.*)

R5: “Nui aki signal tormento ase assignment like research.” (*No signal here—it's hard to do assignments like research.*)

The lack of essential learning tools cellphones, stable internet, paper, books, and culturally relevant instructional materials poses serious impediments to Indigenous students in Monte Central. Without a cellphone or internet connection, they cannot access online classes or complete digital assignments. Students are forced to rely on handwritten notes or outdated printed modules, and lack of paper or textbooks means frustrating delays in completing assignments. This resource gap undermines not just academic performance but also equity, forcing Indigenous students into a constant catch-up cycle while other learners advance. A 2023 study in Butuan City confirmed that although culturally contextualized “big books” and worksheets improved Indigenous learners' engagement, many still lacked basic materials necessary for effective learning . Educational experts emphasize that to close this digital and material divide, stakeholders must distribute learning devices, improve connectivity, and develop culturally rooted resources validated by local communities . Without these supports, remote Indigenous learners remain disadvantaged—a reality that demands urgent, targeted action.

3.8 Poverty

In Monte Central, poverty is more than a backdrop it is a daily reality that shapes whether students can even access education. Many students must work to help support their families, cutting into school time. Financial constraints prevent some parents from sending their kids to school at all. The harshness of their situation makes even attending school feel like an unbearable struggle. These are all their responses to the question What do you think stops other students from your community from finishing high school?

R1: el rason porke nukere ya entra skwela el otro kay palta el sen ta anda na skwela y hinde ta puede dale el mga mayores para project nesisita na skwela. (Children often

can't attend because families can't provide baon (meal money) or school project materials.)

R2: dahil sa sobrang mahirap ng pamumuhay ng mga magulang nila kaya may mga ayaw ng mag-aral dahil sa kahirapan ng buhay.(Extreme hardship leads some parents to discourage their children from studying.)

R3: poverty is a big factor many of them need to work to help their families.

R4:el rason porke el otro hinde na kere entra eskwela kay tiene kanila hinde na kaya el tatay y nana manda entra eslwela kay nui sen.(They can't attend school because their parents can't afford it or send them. The father and mother don't have the means to send them to school)

These accounts echo national data: over half of Filipino families identify as poor, with insufficient income to cover essentials—much less education-related costs like transport, uniforms, books, or snacks (Educ Sit 2021 2023).

This stark reality highlights why poverty is not just a personal condition but a structural barrier to education. It reinforces the urgent need for interventions such as scholarships, financial aid, and income support to ensure that Indigenous students can pursue learning and build pathways out of poverty.

Potential Intervention or support in pursuing secondary education.

To overcome all of the challenges they mentioned earlier. This are the possible intervention they suggest for the following stakeholders to help them pursue their secondary education. To the Parents, School/Teachers, Community and Government. The following are all their responses:

R1: Tapidi ion a miyo mga mayores supporta y dale kosa nesisita na di mio skwela. Ta pidi io na mio mga teacher intende kumgo kun tiene time hinde man iyo ta puede pasa el mga project kose sila tamananda ase kay nui kame cignal akin a montecentral. Na community ta pidi io ayuda kunel mga parents aki kanamun na montecentral kay tormento gat el kamino aki si man ulan tan baha tormento kay ta bungka gat el kamino aki kay bien grande gat el agua si ulan . na gobyerno dale ustdes kanamun buen kaminio akin a montecentral pati era dale tamen ustdes scholarship aki kunamun na mga subano IP.("But I ask the elders and the adults to support and give the things needed for us to go to school. I also ask our teachers to understand if we can't finish projects because we live here in Monte Central. In our community, I ask parents to help those of us living in Monte Central because the road is really difficult when it rains or floods—the water washes out the path since the river becomes so big when it's raining. To the government: please give us a good road here in Monte Central, and also give scholarships for IP Subanon children.")

R2: supporta ng mga magulang para makapagtapos ng pag-aaral. Humihingi rin ako ng tulong sa guro kapag hindi napasa ang activity sa tamang oras dahil wala cellphone at cignal. Sa community ng montecentral gusto ko humingi ng tulong para maayos ang aming daanan at maisemento. At sa gobyerno sana may scholarship na po kame lahat ng mga IP students. ("Support from parents so we can finish school. I ask teachers'

understanding when we don't submit activities on time because we have no cellphone and no signal. In community of Monte Central, I ask for help to repair and cement our roads. And from the government, I hope all IP students get scholarships.")

R4: ta pidi io supporta del dimio mayores para akaba io entra eskuela. Na mga maestra era intende sila kumgo kay pirmi io late y hinde ta puede pasa dayun project. Na community si bungka diamun pwente ay ayuda sila compone para puede kame pasa para anda na eskuela. Na gobyerno ta pidi io dale kunamun scholarship para tiene kame para paga pasahe. ("I ask for support from my parents so I can finish and enter school. I ask teachers to understand when I'm always late and can't immediately submit projects. In our community, please help repair the broken bridge so we can pass to go to school. I also ask the government to provide scholarships so we can pay for transportation.")

3.9 Parental Support

To support Indigenous students in successfully completing secondary education, several key interventions are needed, beginning with strong parental support. Many students express the need for their parents to provide not only financial assistance but also emotional encouragement, food, and time for academic guidance.

3.10 Teacher Understanding

Equally vital is teacher understanding—students ask for flexibility and empathy from teachers, especially when assignments are delayed due to lack of cellphone signal or poor connectivity in Montecentral. When students are late or miss deadlines, they hope teachers will understand their circumstances rather than penalize them.

3.11 Community Infrastructure support

At the community level, infrastructure support is critical. Montecentral learners report that their roads are often impassable during heavy rain due to flooding and broken bridges, making travel to school difficult and dangerous. They ask for community and government help in building or cementing pathways to ensure consistent access to education regardless of weather conditions.

3.12 Government scholarship

Finally, students strongly advocate for government scholarships, specifically for Indigenous Peoples (IP), to ease the financial burden on their families. These scholarships could help cover transportation, school materials, and other learning expenses. Access to educational resources like books, electricity, tutoring, and school-based support programs would also greatly improve their chances of success.

Strengthening parental support, teacher understanding, community infrastructure, and government scholarship programs can transform the educational outcomes of Indigenous students in Monte Central. Active parent involvement through home-based

learning support and emotional encouragement directly correlates with improved student performance and retention. When parents are supported with workshops, communication, and access to resources, children benefit from a stable and educationally enriched home environment.

Meanwhile, teachers who are trained in culturally responsive pedagogy and who demonstrate understanding of students' home realities can act as powerful motivators—countering deficit views and building trust between schools and communities. This enhances students' sense of belonging, reduces dropout rates, and provides space for collaborative problem-solving.

Improving local infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and connectivity, addresses the practical barriers that currently prevent students from reaching school, especially during the rainy season. Research shows that when communities are recognized and included in educational planning, school-community partnerships flourish, leading to increased attendance and academic performance.

Lastly, providing government scholarships for Indigenous learners, alongside school-based financial aid like free tuition, transportation allowances, and essential learning materials, dramatically reduces dropouts and encourages high school completion—particularly vital in poverty-stricken rural areas.

Taken together, these interventions rooted in relational trust, cultural respect, and material support offer a holistic pathway to help Monte Central's Subanon youth finish secondary education, break cycles of poverty, and strengthen both personal and communal resilience.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that Monte Central's Indigenous students encounter a complex array of challenges rooted in environmental hazards, infrastructural deficits, financial hardship, resource scarcity, ethnic discrimination, and familial responsibilities that significantly hinder their pursuit of secondary education. These students exhibit remarkable resilience through joy, gratitude, perseverance, and purpose, but their academic stability remains jeopardized by systemic barriers: washed-out bridges that impede access; demanding chores that exhaust time and energy; absence of essential learning materials and connectivity; and discriminatory attitudes that erode their sense of belonging. Together, these obstacles create a fragile educational ecosystem that perpetuates disparities and limits the community's potential.

5. Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

5.1. Curriculum Instruction Division

Integrate Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPEd) frameworks across all levels of curriculum design and teacher training. Adapt the K–12 curriculum to reflect Subanon cultural knowledge, ancestral practices, and local language, guided by DepEd Order No. 32 s. 2015. Expand training on culturally responsive teaching (CRT) so teachers can better leverage learners' cultural backgrounds, fostering more engaging and effective instruction

5.2. School Principal

Principals should champion a culturally safe and inclusive school environment by Engaging with Subanon elders and parents in school planning and decision-making, thereby strengthening school-community partnerships and Instituting flexible attendance and assessment policies that account for weather disruptions and family responsibilities.

5.3. Teachers

Teachers must implement culturally responsive pedagogy by Incorporating local traditions, stories, and indigenous knowledge in lessons and assessments. Classroom observations show that Indigenous learners benefit when cultural practices are woven into instruction. Using collaborative and community-based methodologies such as group learning, reciprocal teaching, and land-based projects to validate and empower student identities.

5.4. Parents

To enhance family support for education, promote active parental engagement by Hosting workshops including home and community visits to build parents' capacity to assist learning at home. Establishing regular parent–teacher dialogues to discuss student needs and challenges. Encouraging participation in school and community infrastructure initiatives, reinforcing shared responsibility and school ownership.

5.5. students

Empower students to become active agents in their own learning through forming peer-support groups that encourage collaborative study, culturally-based tutoring, and collective problem-solving. Engaging in student leadership councils that partner with teachers and parents to address school concerns—such as infrastructure, resources, and discrimination. Participating in culturally rooted school activities (e.g. festivals, traditional arts) to strengthen identity, community pride, and resilience.

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