

“Pangabuhi Sa Pandemya: Stories of Indigenous People (IP) Teachers in the Hinterland School”

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study, employing narrative inquiry, was designed to describe, gain insights and aimed to document the life and stories of IP teachers assigned in hinterland schools. For the data collection, strategies used were in-depth interview, focused group discussion, narratives, observations, and field notes. The gathered data were subjected to analysis of narratives to come up with the common themes, and sub-themes. The findings of the study revealed that in terms of their responses and reactions many of the participants were not hesitant nor surprised when they receive an advice from immediate supervisor. Only a few of the participants doubted in mind to accept the advice as it was their first time to be in that particular barangay. Some of the participants were willing and happy to serve their fellow IP's. The challenges experienced by the IP teachers in modular learning, were printing of the modules, passing through slippery and muddy roads, lack of supplies and materials, absence of electricity, difficulty in the distribution and retrieval of modules and parents limited knowledge to follow up their children at home. In coping with the challenges encountered during the transition period the participants claimed that they need to adjust and adapt new teaching strategies and teaching style to cater the needs of every learners. They also need to be Flexible in shifting from modular learning to face to face learning and be able to adjust and adapt to different learning platforms.

Keywords: IP Teachers, Hinterland schools, Qualitative research, Narrative Inquiry, Calinog

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Teaching in the hinterland barangay with no electricity and signal, and it takes two to three hours by means of walking, needs a bundle of determination, passion and motivation. The start of the COVID-19 pandemic led to the immediate closure of establishments, government offices, businesses and schools particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. School closures widened learning inequalities and disproportionately impacted vulnerable children and youth, including indigenous peoples.

Based on the study of (Fernandes, 2020), When COVID 19 hit almost the entire world, the world seemed to stop. Widespread disruption such as global and economic recession political conflicts (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020), impacted almost all sectors in the human race (Tria, 2020). Lockdowns and community quarantines hampered people from all walks of life to do their normal routine. These lockdowns resulted to 114 million people losing their jobs and the International Labor Organization estimated working hours lost in 2020 were equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs, leading to \$3.7 trillion in lost labor income (Richter, 2021). Gould and Kassa (2021) reported that low-income, and low-hour workers were hit the hardest.

COVID 19 hit the economic sector, and the education systems as well. In order to contain and reduce the spread of COVID 19, schools were forced to closed. This action resulted to significant disruption, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents.

According to the study of (Cleofas, 2020). Philippines is affected from this global crisis. The country had been part of the top 20 list with the greatest number of COVID-19 cases globally and had been subject to the longest

quarantine in the world. This has placed the country under a state of national emergency which ushered a new normal in the way people do business and deal with each other.

Following the government's quarantine measures, schools were temporarily closed for almost two years. During these times, the Department of Education (DepED) formulated the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan and Recovery Plan (BELRCP) which adopted alternative modes of delivering learning which would cater all learners regardless of who and where they are.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has revised the School Safety Assessment Tool (SSAT) to mobilize and prepare the schools for safe, effective and efficient conduct of the progressive expansion of face to face learning. The School Safety Assessment Tool was updated based on the monitoring and evaluation results of the pilot implementation and in consideration of the school's present conditions relevant to safe reopening.

There are more than 476 million indigenous peoples found in all regions in the world. They are more than six percent of the global population. In the Philippines, the number of indigenous peoples remains unknown, but it is estimated to be between 10 to 20 percent of the national population (www.iwgia.com, 2021) based on the 2015 population census. They are easily affected by epidemics and other crises and they are nearly three times as likely to be living in extreme poverty as their non-indigenous counterpart.

The Department of Education is serving 2.529 million IP learners in 42,176 public schools around the Philippines in the first decade of the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program. Despite the extreme impact of the pandemic to IP communities, the enrollment of IP learners in public schools for School Year 2020-2021 reached 98.49% in January 2021, from the 83% initial figure in September 2020.

To sustain IPEd in schools in School Year 2021-2022, the Department aims to have additional Program Support Fund (PSF) to ensure learning continuity through continued contextualization of learning resources and COVID-related materials, orientation of new teachers and school heads assigned to schools in IP communities and enhancement learning delivery modalities. The IPEd program is DepEd's response to the right of indigenous communities and indigenous learners to an education that is responsive to their context.

As a teacher as well as a researcher, it is observed that IP learners cannot thrive well in the mainstream education. They are slow at learning and considered inferior in terms of knowledge and skills since the curriculum is not culturally responsive to the specific community context of the IP learners.

To make matters worse during the pandemic, with the adoption of the modular print distance learning modality, what plight do these learners have? Will they be able to adapt to the new normal given their socio-cultural aspect?

Hence, it is in this context that this study is conducted in order to give light to this phenomenon.

Epistemological Perspectives

This study is anchored on constructionism as an epistemology using interpretivism as a theoretical perspective and narrative inquiry as a methodology.

This research is anchored on constructivism as an epistemology. Constructivism is based on the idea that people actively construct or make their own knowledge and that reality is determined by experiences (wgu.edu, 2020). Knowledge and reality are subjective as individuals construct or make meanings as they engage with the world they are in. Hence, there is not any single truth, rather all truth is relative and constructed by individuals or society (Hogue, 2011).

Additionally, in order to understand human action, we need to see the world through the lens of the actors doing the acting. According to interpretivists, individuals are intricately and complexly different; people experience and understand the same "objective reality" in very different ways and have their own, often very different, reasons for acting in the world (revisesiology.com, 2015). Therefore, reality is multilayered and complex and a single phenomenon can have multiple interpretations based simply on one's subjective experiences. That is, how

people construct the social world by sharing meanings and how they interact with or relate to each other (intgrty.co.sa, 2016). Thus, interpretivism as a theoretical perspective comes to play in this study.

In this study, the thing which the researcher worked on, constructed and interpreted was based on the told stories of the IP teachers in the hinterlands. In this light, narrative inquiry is applied as a methodology to gain insight on the context of the lived experiences of the participants.

Each and every one of us has a story to tell. These stories cultivate our existence as well as our experiences for others. Since it is innate for humans to narrate, narrative inquiry is deemed appropriate for the methodology as it can describe, explain and understand story of the participants.

Narrative inquiry uses storytelling as the process of gathering information for the purpose of research. Ontologically, narrative is perceived as a condition of social life, therefore, to be human is to be storied (Smith and Sparkes, 2009). They are regarded as the preeminent way in which humans form meanings (Maloney, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riley & Hawe, 2005). Therefore, narrative inquiry aims to capture how people make sense of their world and to reveal the meanings represented in the narratives (Karpa, 2021).

The conceptual framework which describes the relationship of factors that affect the participant's lives is shown in Figure 1.

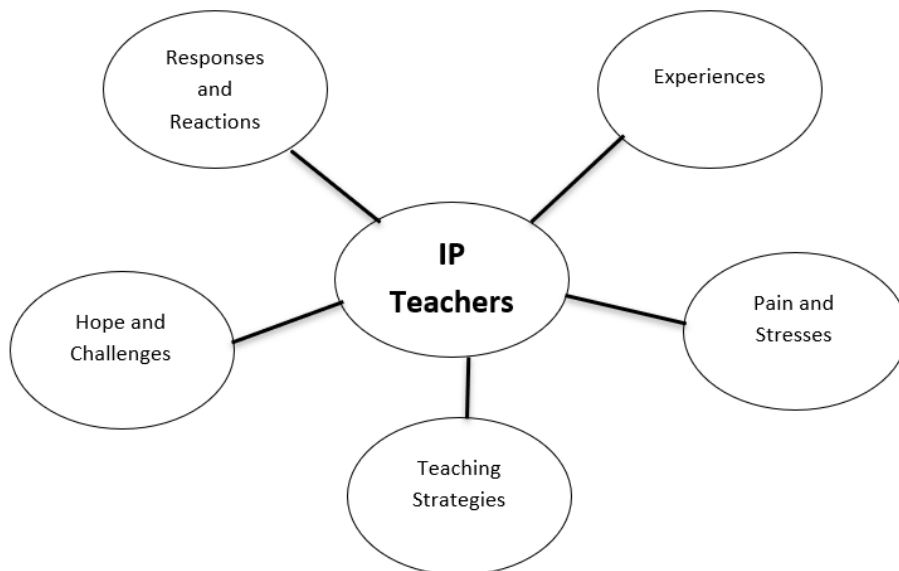


Figure 1. Interrelationship of factors affecting the IP teachers during the pandemic.

Research Questions

This study aimed to analyze, the stories of IP teachers in the hinterland school in the District of Calinog II.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions.

1. What are the reactions of Indigenous People (IP) teachers assigned in hinterland barangays?
2. What are the challenges experienced by the IP teachers in utilizing the modular learning modality?
3. How do IP teachers cope with the challenges during the transition period?

Significance of the Study

Illuminating the meanings of personal stories and events is the goal of narrative inquiry (Wang and Geale, 2015). Thus, these stories seek to look closely on the life experiences of IP teachers using the modular learning modality.

The findings of this study will be beneficial to different persons and organizations namely: teachers, school heads, Department of Education (DepEd), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and future researchers.

Teachers. The result of the study may benefit the teachers in a way that these may give them insights into the causes and effects of the new mode of learning. This will prompt them to contextualize and adjust to suit the nature of the IP learners as well as give extra time and attention to them.

School Heads. The results of the study may also be an eye-opener to school heads as to their learning continuity plan (LCP). This will give them a prompt action to see whether the continuity plan is practiced properly and develop strategies that can promote effective learning not just for the IP learners but for all learners.

Department of Education. The Department of Education (DepEd) may use the findings of this study to strengthen its Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) programs to make sure that it is responsive to their context, identities, and values. Furthermore, this will qualify the department to make its IPEd programs reach other places or schools that cater indigenous learners by providing additional Program Support Fund (PSF) to ensure learning continuity through continued contextualization of modules and trainings for teachers or school heads in IP communities.

National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. The National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) may use the result of the study to create programs that can help or assist IP learners in their studies in this new normal. They could partner with DepEd to devise plans, programs or activities that could aid learners, parents or community leaders in the facilitation of learning.

Future Researchers. The result of the study may also benefit future researchers. They can use the results of the study as baseline data for their research that concerns indigenous teachers and learners.

Definition of Terms. For better understanding of the study, specific terms to be used here in the text are defined conceptually and operationally.

Modular Distance Learning Modality - is a method of organizing the learning process by dividing the content of teaching into autonomous modules. These modules can vary in content and scope depending on the goals, profile, and level of students. This modality is in the form of individualized instruction where in the guidance of any member of the family. (Learning Delivery Modality Course 2, 2020).

In this study, modular distance learning modality refers to the printed self-learning modules used by the IP learners in their individualized instruction at home.

IP Teachers - are teachers coming from a particular territory and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations are often politically dominant (indigenpeople.net, 2017).

In this study, they refer to 5 – 8 IP teachers teaching in hinterland school and they are the participants of the study.

Indigenous Peoples (IPs) – as stipulated in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, Section 3(h), IPs or indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) refers to people or group of people identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, tradition and other distinctive cultural traits.

In this study, Indigenous Peoples refers to the native people of the Municipality of Calinog.

Hinterland Schools- is a rural educational institution experiencing challenges in digitalization due to poor infrastructure and limited teacher training, hindering technological advancement in remote areas.

In this study, hinterland school refers to the six (6) last mile IP schools in Municipality of Calinog.

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

This study aimed to analyze the stories of IP teachers. However, not all angles of life experiences were explored. Certain limitations were set to describe and gain insights into their lives.

As to the scope and coverage, this study covers only one (1) municipality which is the municipality of Calinog, and it covers the six (6) IP community (Barangay) which consist of three (3) elementary schools, two (2) primary schools and one (1) national high School.

As to the number of participants, this study involved six (6) full blooded IP teachers that were selected purposively. In addition, 5-8 participants were selected according to the given inclusion criteria: a) must have a certificate of confirmation (COC) from the office of NCIP and b) must be a permanent teacher in the District of Calinog II assigned in an IP school.

The data-gathering was conducted from November to December 2022 in the Schools District of Calinog II, and audio-recorded transcription were done from January to June 2023 with the total of eight (8) months. After the data organization, translation of data to English, coding of themes, analysis and interpretation, and writing of reports followed.

There are many interesting facets that can be studied in the life experiences of Indigenous peoples (IP) Teachers to gain a deeper understanding of their situations. However, this study is limited only to describe the following: experiences of the IP teachers during the pandemic, the responses and reaction when they were assigned in hinterland school, challenges experienced by the IP teachers; and lastly, how they cope during transition period of the IP teachers in the hinterlands.

The research design is qualitative research using narrative inquiry as an approach. Observations (with the researcher as participants observer), in-depth interviews, and focused group discussions (FGDs) were employed as methods of research. In addition, observation field notes, interview guide/schedule, narratives, taping and photographs, FGD discussion guide, and the researcher himself were the instruments used to gather the needed data.

The data gathered were analyzed using qualitative research analysis procedures such as identifying of themes, patterns, coding, and categorizing.

Lastly, the findings or result of this study reflected only the views, beliefs, opinions and characters of the IP teachers under study and does not represent other groups of people with similar characteristics. In short, the findings of this study were only true to them and may not be true to others.

Researcher's Subjectivity Statement

This section reveals the subjectivity statement of the researcher. It denotes the researcher's own views based on the past experiences, values, attitudes and beliefs on certain events in his life.

My deep interest to study the life stories of Indigenous Peoples (IP) Teachers is rooted from my personal experience as a Teacher in the hinterland school in the Municipality of Calinog, I was hired by the Department of Education with a status of permanent last October 2018, I was assigned at Aglonok Primary School. This is the last barangay elementary School in the Municipality of Calinog. To get there, you have to take 2 hours ride by means of motorcycle (Habal habal) from the town proper to Brgy. Supanga, Calinog, Iloilo. From Barangay Supanga it takes 3 to 4 hours of walking going to Aglonok Primary school passing the muddy roads, terrains, and crossing rivers to reach the school station. The barangay lies in the boundary of three provinces: Aklan, Antique, and Iloilo.

Most of the families relies to farming of banana, coffee, abaca, cacao, rice, and sweet potato as their source of food. Most of the parents of our learners are elementary level since its difficult for them to study and continue

their education in the next Barangay Elementary School. The place has absence of electricity and signal. The only communication available is the two-way hand radio. As a member of Panay Bukidnon tribe. Upon walking and realizing the situation it has fueled my interest to gain a deeper understanding on the life stories of Indigenous People (IP) Teachers experiences the same conditions I had experienced in my four (4) years as a teacher in the hinterland school. Thus, I look at the varied circumstances, underlying causes, and multifaceted interplays that made the IP teachers participants of this study.

This study focused on the life stories of Indigenous Peoples (IP) teachers in a hinterland school using narrative inquiry as an approach. This study expected or probe about their daily experiences, how they were able to cope with this challenging situation and understand their continued struggle hoping to improve the education level and eventually to achieve a better life.

To avoid bias on the analysis and interpretation of the data, I deliberately disclosed my connections, knowledge and experience as a teacher in the hinterland school for my current position in the study. However, this knowledge and background which I gained was not used to introduce subjectivism which would surely affect the integrity of data analysis and interpretation of the study. I was able to interpret the result, specifically on the meaning of experiences, based on the participants perspective alone. My subjectivity was carefully excluded in order not to violate the philosophical stance of constructionism.

Before the data gathering, turning my previous mental ideas into blank sheet on such experience would result to an effective strategy to start conducting the study free from biases and prejudices in terms of analysis and interpretation of data.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the related literature and studies. The related literature and studies give insights and identify gaps that would serve as groundwork of this study. The chapter contains four (4) parts.

Part One, COVID-19 Pandemic, discusses its origin and history, signs and symptoms of the virus, policy responses in relation to COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 to the world, and studies pertaining to COVID-19.

Part Two, Indigenous People under the pandemic, describes the indigenous people in the country, Indigenous People's Right Act (IPRA), and Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPEd).

Part Three presents the Summary.

Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has become one of the most dangerous challenges the world has faced in recent time. It is a kind of a human crisis which threatened the overall well-being of everyone in all parts of the globe.

Origin and History

Coronavirus (CoV) is a large family of viruses that cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses (niaid.nih.gov, 2021), like common cold to more severe diseases. It is named coronavirus because of its crown-like spikes on their surface.

Over the years, three coronaviruses have emerged that caused serious and widespread illness and death:

1) SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) which was first identified in Foshan, Guangdong, China in November 2002;

2) MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) which was identified in September 2012; and 3) SARS-CoV-2 which emerged from China in 2019. All these three coronaviruses are believed to have emerged from animals which circulate among pigs, camels, bats, and cats.

On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization was informed of the cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan City, Hubei province of China. A new coronavirus was identified as the cause as what Chinese authorities reported on January 2020 and was temporarily named “2019-nCoV” (euro.who.int, 2020).

On January 30, 2020, the novel coronavirus was declared a public health emergency of international concern with 98 cases and no deaths in 18 countries outside China.

On March 11, 2020, a rapid increase in the number of infected individuals outside China led to the announcement of the WHO Director-General that the outbreak could be a pandemic since 118,000 cases over 114 countries with 4291 deaths were recorded (WHO, 2020).

Signs and Symptoms

COVID-19 has affected people in different ways. Most infected people developed mild to severe respiratory illness, including death and as of December 16, 2021, there have been 272 million confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 globally, plus more than 5.3 million confirmed COVID-19 related deaths (Lennon, 2021).

As the virus enters the body through the mouth, nose or eyes in the form droplets or from transfer of the virus from hands to face, the virus travels to the back of the nasal passages and mucous membrane in the back of the throat, attaches to cells, begins to multiply and moves into lung tissue which then spreads to other body tissues (clevelandclinic.org, 2021).

The symptoms of this virus may vary in severity, with some experiencing symptoms of a mild respiratory infection and others developing pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome while others, however, develop no symptoms and are asymptomatic (Lennon, 2021).

In symptomatic cases of COVID 19, people may experience a variety of symptoms. These symptoms may show within two (2) to fourteen (14) days of exposure. Most common symptoms include fever, cough, tiredness, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, aches and pains, and even diarrhea. Serious symptoms can include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, loss of speech or mobility, and chest pain.

In asymptomatic cases of COVID 19, people do not show any signs that the virus is present in the body. The Center for Disease Control estimated that 35 % of COVID-19 cases are asymptomatic so they do not know they are infected and there is also no way for others to know either (Cornell, 2020).

In a study conducted by Heneghan, Brassey, and Jefferson (2020), between 5% and 80% of people testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 may be asymptomatic, some asymptomatic cases will be symptomatic over the next week (pre-symptomatic, and that children and young adults can be asymptomatic).

Furthermore, in a study from Peking University in China, 40.5% of 30 million individuals who were tested and received a positive result were asymptomatic which showed that the high percentage of asymptomatic infections may impose potential risk and infections in communities (Ma, Liu and Liu, 2021).

Policy Responses to COVID 19 Pandemic

With the increasing number of cases and deaths due to the virus, countries around the world have resorted to pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical interventions in order to contain and lessen the spread of the virus.

Lockdowns

A lockdown can be defined as an emergency protocol implemented by the authorities that prevents people from leaving a given area in order to address an unusual situation or weakness in a system to forestall any danger to people, organization or system (businessinsider.in, 2020)

Since Covid-19 is a relatively new coronavirus which is more contagious and deadly than the flu, lockdowns were implemented in order to flatten the curve of the pace of advance of the virus (futurelearn.com, 2020).

The first lockdown happened in Wuhan, China in January 2020. With 13 deaths and 300 sickened, China made a decision to close off Wuhan with its 11 million population and also placed a restricted access protocol on Huanggang, 30 miles to the east, where the residents cannot leave without special permission (ajmc.com, 2021). This put 18 million Chinese people under strict lockdown.

By April 2020, half of the world's population or approximately 3.9 billion people in more than 90 countries or territories around the globe (Sandford, 2020) were under some form of lockdown. 1.3 billion people in India had been ordered to stay inside for 21 days and 200 million people in Latin America were under lockdown with the help of the military (Buchholz, 2020). 300 million people in the USA (business insider, 2020) were also under some form of lockdowns.

As for indigenous peoples, they have turned to traditional practices during the pandemic, including village closures, community lockdowns and voluntary isolation to fight the spread of COVID-19 (UNPFIL, 2021).

The Philippines was under lockdown when president Duterte declared and placed Metro Manila under lockdown from March 15, 2020 to April 14, 2020. The country has one of the longest and strictest lockdowns with levels of community quarantines imposed on regions or provinces.

Countries and territories around the world have enforced lockdowns of different stringency in response to the virus. Some imposed total, preventive or emergency lockdown depending on the severity of the cases.

Border / Travel Restrictions and Bans

Travel restrictions are widely used measure being applied by destinations to limit the spread of COVID-19.

In 2016, there were about 3.6 billion people who travelled (short or long distances) (Ullah & Chatteraj, 2018) excluding passengers moving by train and road transportation. On average, about one million passengers fly per day by airplane and shows how mobile people are today (Ullah et. Al, 2021).

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on people traveling, for whatever purpose they may have. The world seemed to stop as travelers stopped moving. Prior to the declaration of the pandemic, restrictions were only observed in Asia and the Pacific and Europe. When the pandemic was declared by March 2020, all destinations worldwide closed their borders. After some time, 96% of all worldwide destinations have introduced travel restrictions, 90 destinations have completely or partially closed their borders to tourists, while 44 are closed to certain tourists depending on country of origin (untwo.org, 2020).

Countries have different travel restrictions and entry requirements depending on where one came from. For example, when one travels to the USA, ages two years old and above, must provide a negative COVID-19 viral test taken within one calendar day of travel.

In the Philippines, the Philippine Bureau of Immigration uses a traffic light system which determines entry rules and quarantine protocol: red list countries are considered high risk, yellow list countries are considered moderate risk, and green list countries are considered low risk. These classifications are decided based on each country, jurisdiction, or territories respective incident rates and case counts, in addition to testing data (resources.envoyglobal.com, 2021).

Education Systems

In addition to health systems, education systems have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At its peak, school closures affected 1.6 billion children in 188 countries, with over one billion of these children living in low-income and middle-income countries (UNICEF, 2020).

Nearly two years of disruptions to education, Robert Jenkins, UNICEF Chief of Education, estimated an insurmountable scale of loss to children's schooling. This means that children have significantly missed out on the academic learning that they could have acquired had they been in the classroom. Worse, younger and more marginalized children face the greatest loss in basic numeracy and literacy skills.

Education cannot wait; our learners cannot wait (Briones, 2017). With the thought that whatever is happening in the country, whatever challenges we are facing, education must continue. Following the marching orders of the department and President Duterte's approval and support of the LCP, flexible learning became the new normal in education.

When the new normal in education took off, 61,00 schools offering K to 12 Basic Education Program reopened to serve about 24, 753, 906 learners – 22, 525, 282 enrollees in public schools and 2, 173, 969 enrollees in private schools (Montemayor, 2020). The BE-LCRP provided quality distance learning with the use of self-learning modules in digital and printed form, radio, television, and the internet.

Far-flung schools are mostly deprived of the much-needed facilities (Figuroa et al., 2016), and the teachers are exposed to various types of stress, which may affect their performance (Hartney, 2020; Quejada, A. B., & Orale, R. L. (2018). The Philippine Constitution emphasized the importance of education. Article XIV Section 1 of 1987 states that they should protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education and make such education accessible to all. However, UNESCO says that less than 10% of children of primary school age in the Philippines are out of school.

Indeed, teaching in a small school is an enormous challenge. Teachers would encounter a variety of uncomfortable means of transportation like "habal-habal," and even the use of animals such as horses or carabao just to reach the school (Barcena, 2018). Teachers risk their lives and their entire families to pursue their chosen careers. Some teachers need to walk thousands of meters to rough terrains in these areas. In the country, few pieces of research have documented the lives of teachers in remote areas. These are from news agencies that illustrated their ordeal in delivering services to the children. These are stories of an elementary teacher who walks 23 kilometers daily (Quejada, A. B., & Orale, R. L., 2018), trekking into the mountains (Mallari, 2010), and conducts classes anywhere available (Umil, 2015), and other challenges.

A media factsheet of UNICEF (2021) showed the following results: 1) in low-and middle-income countries, learning losses to school closures have left up to 70 per cent of 10-year-olds unable to read or understand a simple text, up from 53 per cent before the pandemic; 2) learning losses in the US have been observed in many states including Texas, California, Colorado, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and Maryland. In Texas, for example, two thirds of children in grade three tested below their grade level in Math in 2021, compared to half of children in 2019; 3) in severe Brazilian states, around three in four children in grade two are off-track in reading, up from 1 in 2 children in pre-pandemic. Across Brazil, one in 10 students aged 10-15 reportedly are not planning to return to school once their schools reopen; and 4) in South Africa, school children between 75 per cent and a full school year behind where they should be. 400,000 to 500, 000 students reportedly dropped out of school altogether between March 2020 and July 2021.

Even in high-income countries which are able to quickly organize real-time online instruction, learning losses appear substantial. In Belgium, where schools were closed or partially closed for one third of the school year in 2020, evidence from standardized tests implemented before and after the start of the pandemic suggests losses of 0.17 standard deviations for math and 0.19 standard deviations for language, with larger learning losses in schools with high proportions of disadvantaged students (Maldonado et al, 2021). In the United Kingdom, results from autumn 2020 showed a learning loss in reading akin to two months of learning, among both primary and secondary students (Department of Education, United Kingdom, 2021). Data from an 8-week school shutdown in the Netherlands show a learning loss equivalent to 20 percent of a school year (Engzell, 2020). Evidence from Italy compares results in math for grade three students affected by the pandemic compared to a previous cohort. Students performed 0.19 standard deviations worse in math compared to the pre-covid cohort (Contini, 2021)

Simulations at the end of 2020, 9 months into the pandemic, suggested that school closures lasting seven school months could cost this generation of students an estimated \$10 trillion in lifetime earnings in present value in the intermediate scenario—or as much as \$16 trillion under a pessimistic scenario (unicef.org, 2021). World Bank simulations in 2020 expected to see a global loss of 0.9 learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS), driving the global average down from 7.8 LAYS to 6.9 LAYS (Azevedo et al., 2021). Under this scenario, a typical student would lose \$25,000 in lifetime earnings in present value terms, and this generation of students

could lose an estimated \$16 trillion in earnings. And with that duration of school closures, learning poverty was expected to increase by 10 percentage points, reaching 63 percent (Azevedo, 2020).

Given the President's approval of the recommendation for the progressive expansion of face-to-face classes, Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones has authorized all regional directors to commence the progressive expansion phase of face-to-face classes for both public and private schools.

Pending the issuance of a Revised Joint Memorandum for the expansion phase, the main protocols and standards in the DepEd-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular 001, s. 2021 shall remain applicable as appropriate, with the following main parameters for inclusion:

Expansion schools have been validated as compliant with the standards of School Safety Assessment Tool (SSAT)

Schools must be located in areas under alert levels 1 and 2 based on the periodic risk assessment by Department of Health Schools may already include other grade levels based on the capacity of schools. Schools or Division must have secured the concurrence of the Local Chief Executive in the City or Municipality where the expansion school is located, and the schools must have taken the proper coordination with their respective barangay officials. Students participating in the face-to-face classes must have the written consent of their parents. Schools are given flexibility in contact time for teaching and learning, provided that meals are not taken in school except during managed recess.

Only vaccinated teachers may participate in the face-to-face classes, and vaccinated learners shall be preferred.

Following the directive by Secretary Briones for Regions to conduct the readiness assessment in all schools during the pilot implementation period, the Regional Directors have submitted a list of 6,686 schools nationwide that have passed the SSAT, of which 6,586 are public schools and 100 are private schools. This list will progressively increase as the rest of the schools are able to address their respective SSAT gaps.

Based on the COVID Alert Levels for February 1 to 15, 2022 as issued under IATF Resolution No. 159-A date January 29, 2022, a total of 304 public schools are located in Alert Level 2 Areas, including: 118 schools in NCR cities; 12 in Batanes; 106 in Bulacan; 33 in Cavite; 21 in Rizal; 5 in Biliran, and 9 in Southern Leyte. (<https://www.deped.gov.ph/2022/02/02/on-the-expansion-phase-of-limited-face-to-face-classes>).

Furthermore, it is not only the learning that children missed during the closure of schools but also nutrition. School meals are a critical source of nutrition for millions of vulnerable children around the world (Alderman and Bundy, 2012). School closures due to COVID-19 have disrupted the normal distribution channels through which school meal program operate and many children may be without this vital source of food resulting to an additional 121 million people facing acute food security by the end of 2020 (Borkowski et al., 2021).

Education Under the New Normal

COVID-19 has forced schools to shut down all over the world. Globally, over 12 billion of children in 186 countries are out of the classroom (Li and Lalani, 2020). This forced education systems to implement a new way of teaching and learning.

Even before the pandemic, many institutions had plans to make greater use of technology in teaching, but the outbreak of COVID-19 has meant that changes intended to occur over months or years had to be implemented in a few days (Daniel, 2020). As a result, education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching in undertaken remotely on digital platforms (Li and Lalani, 2020).

Remote Learning

Most recently, COVID-19 pandemic emphasized remote teaching and learning as an effect of closure of schools around the world.

Remote learning is the process of teaching and learning performed at a distance (gradecam.com, 2020). This means that students and teachers are not physically present in a traditional classroom setting and students are far from their teachers and peers. Information and lessons are usually transmitted via technology with the use of emails, discussion boards, video conferences, and audio bridge (trainingindustry.com, 2022).

There two options of instruction in remote learning: a) synchronous and b) asynchronous. Synchronous learning requires simultaneous attendance of students at a scheduled lecture or class. Students learn together at the same time, hence, technology is required. Online setting may include but not limited to video conferencing, live chatting or live-streamed lessons happening real-time. On contrast, asynchronous learning enables students to learn at any time convenient to them. This allows students to flexible in their time to balance family, work, and school in a way that works for them. This type of learning uses recorded videos or presentations, social media groups, emails exchanges and cloud based collaborative documents (powerschool.com, 2021).

Over a year and one school year, remote learning has indeed become the new normal. Schools opted for either asynchronous or asynchronous learning so as to facilitate learning. Teachers, students, parents, and school administrators have identified the successes and failures of this new type of learning.

New Normal in the Philippine Basic Education

When the first COVID-19 case was recorded in March 2020, the country was put under a state of national emergency. The country was put under lockdown and to further prevent the spread of the virus among the people, the government imposed certain measures such as restriction on movements, ban on mass gatherings, social distancing, and mandatory use of masks when going out.

With these measures to contain COVID-19, the basic right of students to education was put on hold and the education was one of the sectors who were greatly affected due to the closure of schools and other learning institutions.

In response to the threat and challenges posed by the pandemic, the Department of Education, under Secretary Leonor Briones, developed the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) which covers the essential requirements of education in the time of COVID-19.

Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP)

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that the “State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such analyzing to all.” This right was upheld by the DepEd as it recognizes its duty to ensure that education is possible and accessible to all even during national emergencies, hence the creation of the BE-LCP.

A learning continuity plan seeks to ensure that students’ learning progresses even amidst disasters such as natural calamities, storms, fires, and pandemic (newsroom.naudu.com, 2020). As always emphasized by Secretary Briones that education cannot wait and must continue no matter what, the Department of Education developed its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) to make students get back on track while ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of learners, teachers, and personnel of the department.

Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs)

Even prior to the spread of COVID-19 that led to closures of schools nationwide, the congested curriculum has been a perennial problem of teachers (Andaya, 2018). With a lot of disruption and suspension of classes due to natural disasters experienced by the country, teachers find it hard to make do with the competencies and lessons with shorter period of time. This is seen as one of the factors of poor performance of Filipino learners.

Initiated by Secretary Leonor Briones in the middle of 2019, the department through its Bureau of Curriculum Development started working on the identification of essential learning competencies as part of its curriculum review. This curriculum review is part of her commitment to ensure quality, relevant and liberating education for all which is espoused on the Sulong Edukalidad framework.

According to DepEd order No. 8, s. 2015, learning competencies are knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that learners need to demonstrate in every lesson or learning activity. These competencies will enable students to successfully navigate their personal journeys in learning, living, and working (arpdcresources.ca, 2013).

Essential learning competencies, on the other hand, are defined as what the students need, considered indispensable in the teaching-learning process to build skills to equip learners for subsequent grade levels and consequently, for lifelong learning (LDM 2, 2020).

A learning competency is considered essential if it has the following characteristics as based on a US-developed competency validation rubric (New Hampshire Department of Education, 2012): 1) it is aligned with national, state, or local standards or frameworks, 2) it connects the content to higher concepts across content areas, 3) it is applicable to real-life situations, 4) it would be important for students to acquire competency after s/he left that particular grade level, and 5) it would not be expected that most students would learn this through their parents/communities if not taught at schools.

As part of DepEd's response to develop resilient education system, especially during emergencies and will enable DepEd to focus instruction on the "most essential and indispensable competencies (Gonzales, 2020), it has streamlined the curriculum into most essential learning competencies. This will be the primary reference for all schools in determining and implementing learning delivery approaches that are suited to the local context and diversity of learners while adapting to the challenges posed by COVID-19 (depedtambayan.net, 2020).

The department reduced its learning competencies. All learning areas from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (excluding the technical-vocational-livelihood/TVL specializations in Senior High School) have been streamlined by 60%, retaining only 5,689 which are considered "most essential" from the original 14,171 (DepEd, 2020). A competency is deemed most essential if it is enduring. As defined by DepEd, a competency is considered enduring if it remains with the learner even after a test or a unit of study. Such learning competencies include research skills, reading comprehension, writing, map reading, and hypothesis testing, which are essential in any professions and in everyday life (Many & Herrell, 2014).

In streamlining the learning competencies, some competencies are retained, merged, dropped, or rephrased. As a general rule, a competency is retained if it satisfies the endurance criterion which greatly contributes to a life-long learning and is a prerequisite to the next grade level, two or more competencies are merged or clustered if they have the same learning intention, competencies are dropped if they are too specific, recurring, and subsumes in another competency, and rephrased to be more concise (LDM 2, Module 2, 2020).

The release of MELCs is not a departure from the curriculum guides, rather, serves as a supplementary guide for teachers as they deal with instructional needs of learners. The content and performance standard are still taken from the curriculum guides. In addition, its release accelerated the curriculum review of the congested and overlapping curriculum that the department initiated in 2019.

By streamlining the learning competencies to the most essential, learning activities and resources are given more priority while ensuring sufficient time for coverage and master.

Learning Delivery Modalities

Another key element found in the learning continuity plan of the department is the use of multiple learning delivery modalities. There are four learning modalities that schools may adopt. They can also use one or a combination of the modalities depending on the restrictions set in certain areas as well as the context of learners in a school or locality.

Face-to-Face

This learning modality emphasizes that teachers and students are physically present in the same physical location or classroom at the same time. This entails opportunities for active engagement, immediate feedback, and development of socio-emotional development of learners.

Face-to-face option is only possible in very low-risk areas. This would refer to places that are geographically isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected areas with no history of infection and very low and easily monitored external contacts, but with teachers and learners living in the vicinity of the school (BE-LCP, 2020).

With this modality, certain approaches are used: 1) modified shifting of classes which would depend on the code and number of competencies to be covered in all learning areas; 2) shifting of classes with dyadic teaching wherein two teachers are in charge of instruction per learning area; 3) for Junior High School, English, Science, and Mathematics are taught in school and the rest of the subjects are in modular approach; 4) for elementary, only Reading, English, Science, and Mathematics are taught in schools while other learning areas are modular in approach; and lastly, 5) for Senior High School, only core and specialized subjects are taught in schools while applied subjects are done home-based, modular approach (Llego, 2021).

Modular distance learning allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) and other learning resources like learner's materials, textbooks, activity sheets, and study guides for individualized instruction. They are available in print or digital formats. This type of distance learning is common especially in rural areas where internet connection is slow or is not available. Parents and teachers work hand in hand to facilitate learning in this type of modality. Parents act as teachers (para-teacher) at home while teachers take the responsibility of monitoring the progress of learners by making their weekly monitoring plan, giving feedbacks in learner's answer sheets, preparing intervention materials for learners who lag behind, and doing home visitations to learners.

TV/Radio-Based Instruction also utilizes SLMs which are converted to video lessons or TV episodes for television-based instruction and radio scripts for radio-based instruction. This type of instruction provides complimentary learning opportunities to viewers and listeners while using their SLMs. Completed episodes of DepEd TV can be seen on IBC 13, GMA 7, Cignal, GSAT, Grace TV, Solar, Planet Cable, Pacific Kabelnet, Mabuhay Pilipinas TV, and PCTA members (DepEd Press Release, 2021). Some schools which use RBI have radio partners such as Spirit FM 98.3, Kairos FM 101.1, El Oro FM 97.5, Radyo Kahamugaway FM 106.5, and Radyo Kabag-uhan DZNT 99.1 in SDO Masbate province Teacher broadcaster and radio teachers.

Homeschooling

Home-based education or homeschooling is an alternative delivery mode (ADM) which aims to provide learners with quality basic education that is facilitated by qualified parents, guardians, or tutors who have relevant training in a home-based environment (BE-LCP, 2020). This enables families to educate their child/dren based on their personal faith, philosophy, and values. This also allows families to adjust learning schedules based on their respective schedules and circumstances.

However, this type of learning modality is still subject to DepEd issuance before its expansion as certain issues need to be addressed such as the supervision of licensed teachers and the alignments with the curriculum.

Henceforth, with the different learning delivery modalities than can be employed by schools, the most common and used by all public schools is the modular distance learning modality (DepEd, 2020) where learners are given printed self-learning modules (SLMs) to be studied at home. This type of learning modality gives consideration to learners who are in rural areas where internet connectivity is poor and learners have no gadgets for online instruction.

Though this modality encourages independent study and flexibility for teachers as well as learners, it poses greater self-discipline and self-motivation for learners and level of support from parents.

In a study of the initial implementation of printed modular distance learning in the city of Naga, Cebu by Labrado, L. et al (2020), the observations and experiences of teachers tell that learners with high levels of anxiety were unable to focus on the new mode of learning and struggling parents had difficulty balancing work and being a learning facilitator at home.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by Pe Dangle and Sumaoang (2021) on the implementation of modular distance learning in secondary public schools, one of the challenges in this type of learning is the lack of time

for learners to answer all the modules since each module contains a lot of activities. In addition, parents lack knowledge to academically guide their child/children.

Indigenous Peoples (IPs)

They comprise about 6.2 percent of the global population, approximately 476 million indigenous peoples in the world, spread across 90 countries and representing 5,000 different cultures (UNDP, 2021). About 70 percent live in Asia and the Pacific, followed by 16.3 percent in Africa, 11.5 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1.6 percent in Northern America, and 0.1 percent in Europe and Central Asia (culturalsurvival.org, 2021)

Indigenous peoples are distinct social and cultural groups which are considered to be keepers of a one-of-a-kind culture, tradition, language, and knowledge. There may be no universal definition for “indigenous” but there are certain characteristics that are present among them around the world: a) they have their own culture and tradition which they still practice; b) their own language, culture, and tradition are influenced by their living relationship with their ancestral homelands; c) they are considered as one of the most underprivileged and discriminated groups of people.

According to Hall and Gandolfo (2016), indigenous peoples live below poverty line much larger than the non-indigenous population. They are not just below poverty line; rather their poverty is much more severe. This can be seen in their health, education, vulnerability to disasters, and even in their property rights.

The situation worsened with the emergence of COVID-19. They have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 as they had been exposed and exacerbated pre-existing structural inequalities and systematic racism (Kehris, 2021). According to Tzay (2021), indigenous peoples were likely to die of COVID-19 as they were hit hardest by its socio-economic consequences and their inadequate access to health care.

Furthermore, they are also at a disadvantage when it comes to education. With the temporary closure of schools and a shift to remote learning, learning materials, internet, and electronic gadgets are a must. Measures like these worsen the inequalities experienced by indigenous learners and affect the learning process and the overall learning of these learners negatively.

In a documentary research done by Santa-Cruz, E. et. Al., (2021), about the impact of COVID-19 on education provision to indigenous people in Mexico, the pandemic made it clear that educational measures, intentionally or unintentionally, are biased in favor of monolingual Spanish-speaking learners, with limited materials produced in indigenous language. Likewise, access to information and communication technologies, such as TVs, cell phones and other electronic gadgets and internet are essential to education in COVID-19 times is significantly lower in indigenous households compared to mainstream population.

In addition, Human Rights Watch interview with a student program coordinator in Pueblo of Jemez, a Native American community in New Mexico in 2020, revealed that the distributed printed handouts in English created problems for younger students since their Towa language, an oral and unwritten language, is taught until grade 2. The same is true with the Alaskan native students who were given schoolwork packs in English, rather than Yup'ik which is many students' first language.

This failure to accommodate indigenous languages as well as access to the internet has exacerbated inequalities that indigenous peoples experience.

As indigenous learners have no access to learning materials, the internet, or even electricity, they are left behind and the effect of pandemic will endure throughout their academic and working life (ilo.org, 2021).

Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines

The Philippines is a culturally diverse country with an estimated 14-17 million indigenous peoples belonging to 110 ethno-linguistic groups, mainly concentrated in Northern Luzon (Cordillera Administrative Region, 33%), Mindanao (61%) and the Visayas area (6%) (ph.undp.org, 2013).

As defined by the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, indigenous peoples in the Philippines are a group of people or homogeneous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continually lived organized communities on community bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions, and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, become historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos.

Ethnic groups are known as minorities in any society. However, the richness of their culture can never be undermined, rather, it serves as defining stuff of history that is worthy of being upheld and preserved.

Indigenous People's Right Act of 1997 (IPRA)

Just like their global counterparts, indigenous peoples in the Philippines, are considered among the poorest of the poor and the most disadvantaged sector. They do not possess the capacities to cope with the fast-changing society given their socio-economic context. With these, they are the most vulnerable when it comes disasters, poverty, and injustices.

To protect the indigenous peoples in the country, Republic Act 8731, otherwise known as Indigenous Peoples' Rights Acts, was established. This law was anchored on the provision of the 1987 Constitution. These are found on Article II, Section 22 which states the recognition and promotion of the State to the rights of Indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development. Likewise, Article 12, Section 5 promotes the protection of rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being. Lastly, Article 14, Section 17 promotes the preservation and development of their culture, traditions, and institutions.

There are four bundle of rights found under IPRA. The first right is the Right to Ancestral Domains and Lands. Ancestral domains refer to all areas comprising lands, inland waters, coastal areas, and natural resources which have been occupied by the Indigenous people since time immemorial. This right protects them from displacement, entry of migrants, conflicts as well as the right to clean air and water and to redeem lands lost through vitiated consent.

The second right is the Right to Self-Governance and Empowerment. This enables the Indigenous people to freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development (Section 13), participate in decision-making (Section 16), determine and decide priorities for development affecting their lives, beliefs, institutions, spiritual well-being, and the land they own, occupy, or use (Section 17). Furthermore, they can use their own justice system for conflict resolution and peace building within their respective communities so long as it is in accordance with the national legal system and the internationally recognized human rights (Section 15).

The third, which is the Right to Social Justice and Human Rights, promotes equal protection and non-discrimination of Indigenous people – consistent with the equal protection clause of the charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and internal human rights laws. This means that Indigenous people should be given the same employment rights, opportunities, basic services, education, and other rights and privileges available to every member of society (Section, 21).

Lastly, the fourth right, which is the Right to Cultural Diversity, aims to protect and promote indigenous culture, traditions, and institutions. This includes recognition of cultural diversity, community intellectual rights as well as religious, cultural sites and ceremonies. Also, included in this right is the provision of education in their own language in a manner which is appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. Thus, paving the way to the creation of indigenous people's education.

Indigenous People's Education (IPEd)

The indigenous peoples, considered to be the most vulnerable and marginalized members of society, continue to be deprived of basic social services and opportunities to take part in the social, economic, and political aspects of the country.

Among the disadvantages faced by indigenous peoples, access to education seems to be the most crucial to be addressed, as this “enabling right” will empower them to claim their rights, exercise self-determination, and lay down possible choices available to them. Thus, basic education is a means for them to live decency together with their non-indigenous counterparts.

The Philippine Constitution stipulates that the state shall “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” (Article XIV, Sec. 1). The state is further mandated to encourage indigenous learning systems (Article XIV, Section 2.4) and to “recognize, respect, and protect the rights of the indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions” (Article XIV, Section 17.) Following the mandate of the Constitution, and supported by DepEd order No. 101 s. 2010, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Curriculum for Indigenous Peoples (Ips) and in coordination with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) the Department of Education under Br. Armin Luistro FSC, adopted the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework (DepEd Order No. 62, S. 2011) to achieve the country’s commitment to achieve Education for all (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In order to address the indigenous learners’ needs, the department made interventions, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples. These interventions are as follows (DepEd Order No. 62, S. 2011):

- a.) Ensure the provision of universal and equitable access of all Indigenous people to quality and relevant basic education services towards functional literacy for all.
- b.) Adopt appropriate basic education pedagogy, content, and assessment through the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) in all learning areas and processes.
- c.) Provide adequate and culturally-appropriate learning resources and environment to IP learners.
- d.) Strengthen the hiring, deployment, and continuous development of teachers and learning facilitators in the implementation of its IP education Program.
- e.) Establish and strengthen appropriate multi-level units with DepEd responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring IP education interventions.
- f.) Expand and strengthen institutional and civil society linkages to ensure proper coordination, knowledge-sharing, and sustainability of the IP Education Program.

Henceforth, IPEd is a culture responsive education which focuses on the contextualization of lesson plans for IP learners, use of the local language for teaching, having elders as teachers and mentors, and using the ancestral domain as the classroom (Gubalani, 2021). This specifically designed curriculum for learners from the indigenous cultural communities focuses on teaching indigenous knowledge, models, methods, and content within formal and non-formal educational systems (Arias, 2016).

To sustain this development in IPEd, the department aims to have additional Program Support Funds to ensure learning continuity through continued contextualization of learning resources and COVID-related materials, orientation of new teachers and school heads assigned to schools in IP communities, and enhancement of learning delivery modalities (DepEd, 2021).

Summary

This section discusses the summary of the related literature and studies. From the body of materials presented, the bulk of literatures talk more about the life and working conditions of the IP teachers under the Department of Education and teaching in the hinterland school. But it takes more about the life, culture, and working conditions of Indigenous People (IP) Teacher.

As also revealed, although there are many restriction and protocols to be observed and followed, both public and private institutions did not stop and tried new ways of handling things. Working from home and studying at home became the new normal for many people.

“Education cannot wait. If learning stops, we will lose human capital (UNESCO, 2017).” In spite of the circumstances, education must continue and this paved the way to a new normal in education which is the distance and remote learning programs.

Moreover, UNESCO’s belief that educational quality, access, and systems strengthening cannot be compromised in times of crisis (UNESCO, 2017), the Department of Education (DepEd) formulated the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) to ensure that learning continues under a state of emergency while guaranteeing the health, safety, and wellbeing of all teachers, learners, and its employees.

Where school-based face-to-face learning is now possible, limited face to face learning is used by all public schools since parents and learners most preferred this method according to a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd). This gives learners from rural areas as well as the disadvantaged groups like IP learners the opportunity to continue education in new normal sitting. Even without gadgets or the internet as the department exhausts all possible means to ensure that no learner is left behind as we continue with our fight with COVID-19.

The creation of indigenous Peoples education (IPEd) enabled IP learners to learn in their own context using indigenous knowledge, methods, and content. This gave them the opportunity to be empowered in order to claim their rights, exercise self-determination, and live in decency with their non-indigenous counterpart.

However, there are still IP learners that go to mainstream education and with the adoption of modular distance learning under the new normal, new struggle is faced by these learners. Just like what other indigenous learners in other countries experience, the failure to accommodate indigenous languages and learning resources in the modules will worsen the inequalities experienced by these learners which will greatly affect them negatively. As such this study would like also to discuss the success stories of IP teachers in facing adversity and making them resilient no matter what the challenges may come. This is to give meaning on their experiences that might serve as an inspiration to others. Therefore, this study has come into being.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is a qualitative research using narrative inquiry as an approach. Qualitative research is defined as the study of the nature of the phenomena, which includes their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they appear or the perspectives from which they can be perceived (Philipsen & Vernooiji Dassen, 2007 in Busetto, et. Al, 2020). This research design is used to understand how people experience the world and usually includes data in the form of words rather than numbers.

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research based on interpretive hermeneutics (Gregory, 2010), which provides a valuable construct for gaining an in-depth understanding of the complexities or participants’ experiences through reflection (Fontana & Frey, 2008).

Narrative inquiry is grounded in the premise that people make sense of their lives through stories they tell. In doing so, people use narratives to compose and order their life experiences.

As a research approach, narrative inquiry is an appropriate way to gather data about their lived experiences. Since human beings come to understand and give meaning to their lives as stories, narrative inquiry is appropriate in generating and analyzing stories of life experiences and reporting the results (Cresswell, 2013 in Foxall, et al, 2021).

The Role of the Researcher

In this study, the researcher is part of the primary instrument in the collection of data and interpretation of results. As a data collector, he attempts to access the thoughts and feelings of the study participants. This is done by asking the participants to talk about their experiences in the chosen study. As a data interpreter, the researcher puts himself in the shoes of his participants and sees the world from that perspective in order to transcribe and encode appropriate thematic analysis based on the meanings of the participants' experiences.

Moreover, the data are collected and interpreted. The primary responsibility of the researcher is to safeguard participants and their data. Disclosure of personal values, knowledge, experience and integrity are crucial in the quality of any scientific inquiry.

As such, the researcher adheres to the principles of confidentiality, objectivity and impartiality. This simply means that utmost ethical considerations and standards were taken into great consideration throughout the conduct of the study.

In this area of research pursued by the researcher, his interest and exposure to teaching IP learners influenced him to delve into this research focusing on the resiliency, creativity and experiences of IP teachers.

Setting of the Study

This study was conducted in the hinterland schools in the District of Calinog II with 100% indigenous learners. These schools are: Intapian Elementary School, Marandig Primary School, Caratagan Primary School and Supanga Elementary School.

The researcher asked a written permission from the office of the National Commission on Indigenous People. After the approval, a letter was sent to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent, which was then sent to the office of the Schools District Supervisor and to the Office of the School Principal of the different schools respectively.

The venue of the in-depth interview was conducted in their respective school for them to feel at ease and safe. The setting of the study is shown in Figure 2.

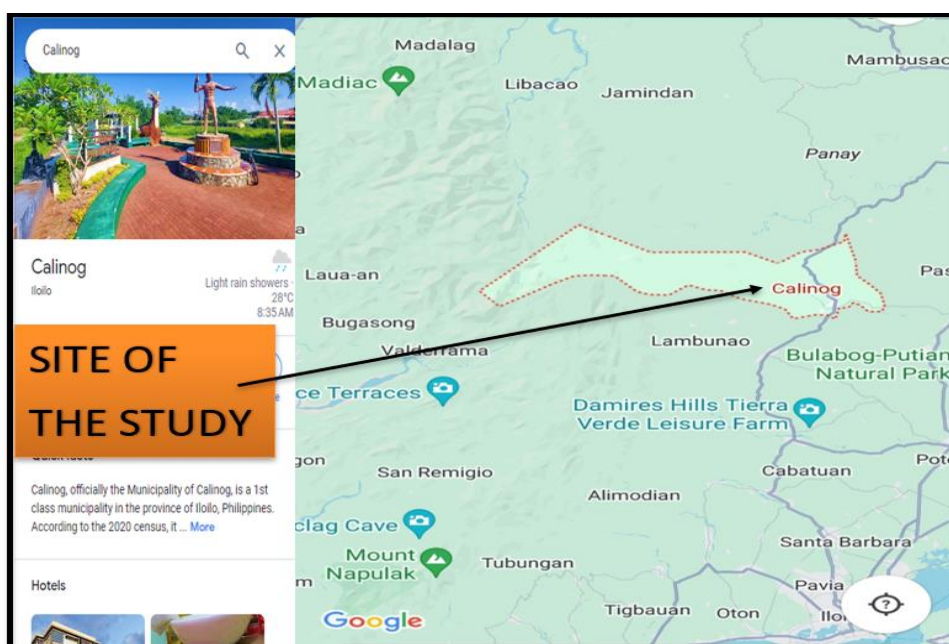


Figure 2. Site of the Study. The map describes the location where the study was conducted.

Participants of the Study

In a narrative inquiry, personal stories are told. This approach allows participants to tell about their experiences without any constraints imposed externally. It makes the implicit explicit, the hidden seen, the unformed formed and the confusing clear (Chou, Tu & Huang, 2013).

In this light, participant selection in this study is purposeful. Purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are specifically knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This selective sampling technique is highly subjective and determined by the researcher generating the qualifying criteria each participant must meet to be considered for the research study (statisticssolution.com, 2022) Hence, two selection criteria are generated: (A) must have a certificate of Confirmation from the office of the NCIP and (b) must be a permanent teacher at the District of Calinog II assigned in an IP Schools, one indigenous people teacher from each school.

The participants of this study are the six (6) IP teachers in the District of Calinog II. The general criteria were as follows; male or female, of legal age, married or single, with three or more years of experience teaching in IP community School.

Ancillary participants who are the key informants are the family members/relatives of the participants, Colleagues, overseers who have known the participants in person were also interviewed to give details on some doubtful description or information pertinent to the key participants. There were Six (6) ancillary participants who involved in the study.

The location of the participants is shown in Figure 3.

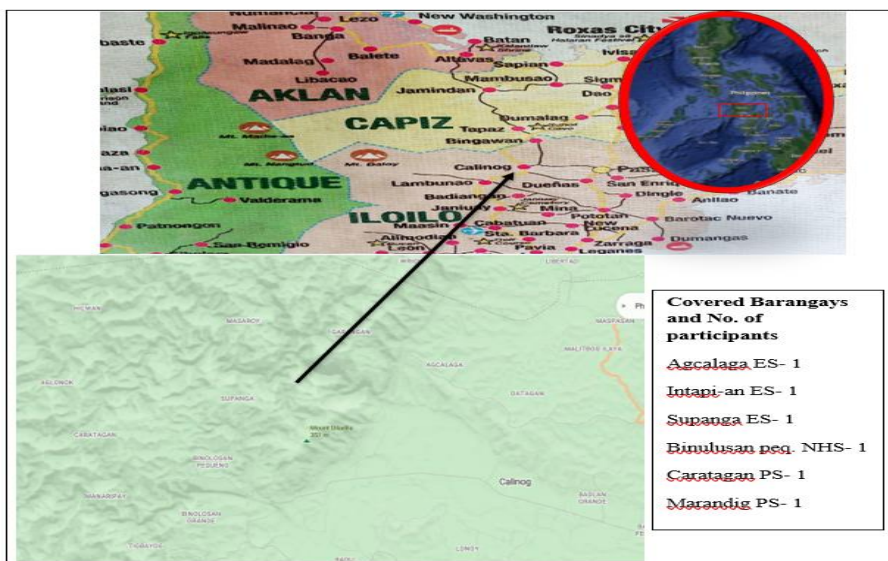


Figure 3 shows the area location of the study.

Research Instrument

In a qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument which collects data through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants (Creswell, 2013).

In order to probe into the experiences of IP teachers, the researcher was utilized a researcher-made instrument which consists of two parts: Part One is the demographic profile of the main participants and confirmatory validators and Part Two is the interview guide.

For the main participants, interview guide was used to gather relevant data from their experiences with the use of the modular distance learning modality. For the confirmatory validators, the interview guide was used to validate and confirm the information shared by the participants.

To find out the experiences of IP teachers, interview was used. According to Creswell (2012), an interview is typically a face-to-face conversation between a researcher and a participant involving a transfer of information to the interviewer. This is primarily done in qualitative research when researchers ask one or more participants in general, open-ended questions and record their answers (Phillips, 2016) using audiotapes for successful transcription.

For the main participants, the IP teacher, an in-depth interview was used. An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that is used to conduct detailed interviews with a small number of participants (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). An in-depth interview (IDI) involves a single respondent for the purpose of understanding thoughts, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, or motivations related to a specific subject (Cruz, 2020). It is typically semi-structured, with more-open ended questions.

A series of predetermined but open-ended questions were asked to the participants who allow conversational and two-way communication which allow informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms (Keller and Conradin, 2019).

Moreover, semi-structured interviews had increased validity because it gives the interviewer the opportunity to probe for a deeper understanding, ask for clarification and allow the interviewee to steer the direction of the interview (McLeod, 2014).

This enabled the participants to openly tell their knowledge, feelings and understanding towards modular distance learning modality. By using open-ended questions, the researcher gets to understand the true feelings of the participants by probing deeper into their answers.

For the ancillary participants, a focus group discussion was used. Focus group discussion (FGD) involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic or interest. FGDs are predetermined semi-structured interview lead by a moderator which asks broad questions to elicit responses and generate discussion among the participants (humansofdata.atlan.com, 2017).

In this study, FGDs was used to verify the IP teachers' experiences in the use of modular distance learning modality as observed by their family members and supervisors.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

According to Creswell (2013), the process of data collection is a “circle” of interrelated activities that include, but go beyond collecting data. To him, the phases of the data collection process include locating site or individual, gaining access and making rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues and storing data. These processes were the researchers' guide throughout the conduct of the study.

The first step, sending of permission letter to the office of National Commission for Indigenous People (NCIP), Followed by the letter to the Schools District Supervisor.

Second, it is important to gain permission to participate from the participants as well as related individuals. Informing them the purpose of the study as well as securing their anonymity will help build rapport in conducting the study.

Third, purposeful sampling, is selecting participants who have stories to tell about their experiences on the phenomenon being studied.

Fourth is collecting data. In this study, interviews such as in-depth interview and focus group discussion was used to explore the experiences of IP teachers. Also, observing the participants as well as their activities and interaction was employed in order to identify patterns and events being observed from the participants.

After the collection of data, recording information comes next. This involved recording information through sound or voice recording, interview write-ups, photographing, observational notes.

When gathering data in the field, a researcher may face issues. These issues may include entry and access, type of information collected, potential ethical issues, amount of time in collecting data and richness of data encountered. Anticipating them enabled the researcher to deal with the issues as they arise.

Lastly, storing of data includes organizing notes, transcripts, and rough jottings in a computer protected by a password. Backup copies of computer files were also developed.

Although the researcher started by locating individuals to study, another entry point in the circle was used as starting point in the collection of data (Creswell, 2013).

Figure 4 showed the data collection circle.

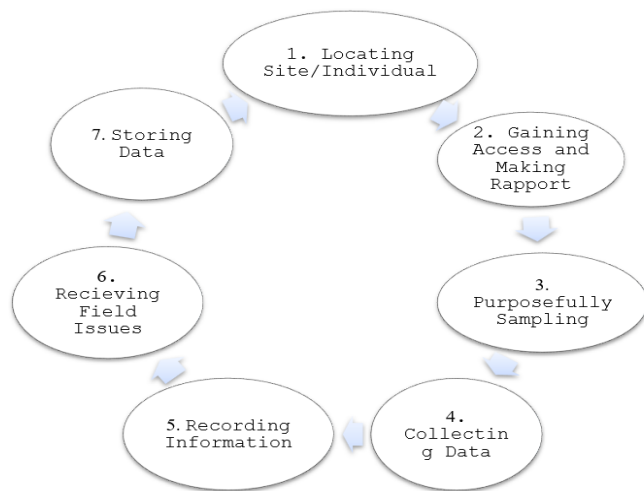


Figure 4 Data Collection Circle by Creswell (2013)

Interview

In the narrative interview, the informant was asked to present the history of an area of interest, in which the interviewee participated. The interviewer's task is to make the informant tell the story of the area of interest in question as a consistent story of all relevant events from its beginning to its end (hermanns 1995 cited in Flick 2002, p.97)

In this study, the researcher used the semi-structured interview. In semi-structured interview, the goal was to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (Kristernberg,2002).

Before the conduct of an in-depth interview, the researcher prepared an interview schedule. It is an open-ended type of questionnaire that serves as a guide for the researcher to gain information from the participants about their stories. The researcher set an appointment for an interview to the participants at their most convenient time. The length of the interview usually last from one hour, to one and a half or two hours, depending on the dynamic of interviewer-interviewee interactions. The interview ended when the desired information was substantially gathered. The same process was followed until all participants were completely interviewed. A total of (6) six participants and two (2) ancillary informants composed of overseers and one (1) immediate relative of one of the participants were interviewed.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

For Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the researcher selected the participants based on the set inclusion criteria. The FGD participants were chosen through referral from the core participants of the study, school heads, family,

friends, and other informants. After the referral list of participants were gathered, the researcher conducted a school visit to personally talk to the participants to solicit for their permission and support to participate in the FGD. Then, the date, time and venue of the FGD was scheduled. During the day of the FGD, the researcher explained to the participants about the purpose, confidentiality, and the benefits of their participation in the study. The researcher then asked for the informed consent, read to them in vernacular and secured their signatures.

The research used a “general interview guide”, which, according to Patton (1990), is a list of general themes and questions to explore during the course of the interview. At the onset of the FGD, house rules were set to avoid and manage disruption of the FGD session, and introduction of participants followed. FGD paraphernalia and other necessary gadgets were also set to ensure proper recoding and capturing of data. During the session, the researcher allowed the conversation to flow in any direction to capture as much as possible relevant information necessary for the study, especially those which were not included in the interview guide.

In addition, the researcher served as a moderator. It was because there maybe be confidential information that come out in the FGD. Besides the researcher was able to gain rapport with the participants and gain ground for participants trust and confidence to share their opinions. One assistant was employed to take notes and also, a recorder was used to record the proceedings.

Narratives

A story is an example of a narrative. A story is always a narrative, but narrative structure is not limited to story. With the use of the word story, it is to be understood as narrative structure that organizes or emplots human events. It is the construction by the teller or narrator. Narrative knowing is expressed in a narrative form called stories (de Marrais & Lapan, 2004). Stories are valued by some as “culturally constructed expressions which are among the most universal means of organizing and articulating experiences” (Turner & Bruner, 1986, in de Marrais & Lapan, 2004). Stories preserve memories, prompt our reflections, connect us with our past and present, and assist us to envision our future.

Each story has a plot and one more character. As structured, stories organize or “emplot” human events in time. Each story, as narrative, reflects perspective of a narrator, or a point of view. Each story has a setting and in time and place. Each story has a beginning, middle, and ending, although not necessary presented in that order as it is told. (de Marrais & Lapan, 2004 p. 109).

This is what narrative does. If you think of a story as: “life as told,” then it is a through story that you come to know “life as experienced”. It is in telling that meaning is given to experience. It is in telling that we come to understand. Important to note, however, is that there is no existing story for the narrator to tell; rather, the story come to be in the act of telling, where meaning is assigned to experience, and intentionality becomes apparent. Observation alone provides only part of the picture for you as researcher. Narrative inquiry yields what careful observation cannot—a way of coming to understand by being open to the story’s individuals tell and how they themselves construct their stories and, therefore, themselves. (de Marrais & Lapan, 2004 p.110-111)

Observation

As suggested by Hammersley & Atkinson (1995, in Creswell, 2007), the researcher followed the following steps in observing the site; 1) selection of the site and obtaining permission on its access 2) Identification of who and what to observe, when and how long; 3) Determination of a role to be assumed as an observer, 4) Designing of observational protocol as a method for recording notes in the field; 5) Asking someone to introduce the researcher to the participants, 6) Recording of the portrait of the participants, physical settings, events and activities, and reactions. 7) After observing, slowly withdraw from the site, thanking the participants and informing them of the use of the data and their accessibility to the study. This step were observed by the researcher during the conduct of observation in the site being studied.

In this study, the assumed role of the researcher was initially as an outsider and gradually becoming as an insider over time. The researcher was an observer and the same time a participant, by participating or interacting with

the participants being observed. The researcher had decided to stop the observation after seeing the recurring of similar patterns and events in the site being observed.

Field Notes

On field notes taking, “notes can help you remember details about nonverbal gestures of questions of emphasis, can help you remember where the interview has gone and avoid repeating topics, and you can reconstruct the interview if the taping fails” (Esterberg, 2002, p.106) Also Creswell (2007) Stressed that field notes, by conducting an observation as a participant and observer as method or data production will be “useful in giving accurate descriptions of the scene undercover (p.130).” Silverman (2002) p. 140 stressed two practical rules for making field notes: 1) record what we can see as well as what we hear, and 2) expand fieldnotes beyond immediate observations.

Part of observation was the field note taking to record the events and non-verbal actions that took place during the observation.

Interview Guide

The semi-structured interview guide was used to allow the free flow of conversations between the researcher and participants. According to Esterberg (2002), the goal of semi-structured interview is “to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviews to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (p.89). “It was supported by Patton (1990) Which stated that “we can’t observe everything we, might want to know, thus, we interview people to understand what life is like from perspectives other than our own.”

In this study, two (2) interview guides were prepared and validated by experts. The individual in-depth interview guide and the focus group interview guide were used to elicit relevant information necessary for the interpretation and analysis of data. The in-depth interview guide was used to gather information in a face-to-face conversational manner to extract information from the participants. The focus group interview guide also aided the researcher in gathering the views and opinion of the FGD participants about the topic.

Both interview guides list the main topics and also contain specific questions that would elicit response from the participants to answer the research questions of the study. It also includes questions for probing.

Taping and photographs

In this study, audio-taping for all individual interviews was used. On the other hand, the FGDs were audio recorder to capture all parts and angles of the proceedings of the session. Moreover, certain photo documentations were also mobilized to capture a more detailed day-to-day events and activities being observed.

Data Procedure

In qualitative data, the process of data collection and analysis in general is composed of: examining raw data, reducing them to themes through coding and recording processes and representing the data in figures, tables, and narratives in a final research text. However, data analysis is custom-built, revised and “choreographed” (Huberman & Miles, 1994 in Creswell 2013) so certain variations may be used in order to come up with a detailed analysis of data. Furthermore, narrative analysis rarely provides strict guidelines for researchers that tell them where to look for stories, how to identify them, how to obtain them, or what aspects of them they should investigate (Chase, 2011 in Flick 2019).

In this study, data analysis spiral by Creswell and Poth (2018) was used. This includes managing and organizing data, reading and memoing emergent ideas, describing and classifying codes into themes, developing and assessing interpretations, and representing and visualizing the data (SAGE Publications, 2017).

Data management is the first loop in the process wherein the data are transformed into files. Texts and audios are transformed into transcripts and images are transformed into photos, videos, or charts.

The second in the loop is reading and memoing emergent ideas. This is done by reading the transcripts several times in order to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts (Agar, 1980 in Sage publications, 2017). Memoing helps in exploring a database. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana

(2014), memos are not just descriptive summaries of data but attempts to synthesize in them into higher level analytical meanings because it helps track development of ideas through the process.

From reading and memoing, the next step in the spiral is describing, classifying, and interpreting the data. Here, codes or categories are formed by “winnowing” the data. Preliminary classifications of schemes emerged and raw data were categorized into group.

Next step is assessing and interpreting. This process requires both creative and critical faculties in making carefully considered judgments about what is meaning in the patterns, themes, and categories generated by analysis. This involves coding of similar meaning, clustering similar categories, creating meaning for the clusters, and from the themes emerged which were then interpreted to answer the research questions.

The identification of themes within each story and those common to all is what Polkinghorne (1995) called an “analysis of narrative”, essentially a paradigmatic approach to narrative inquiry. The “analysis of narrative” characterized in this approach moves from stories to common elements.

Data, such as shared theme, that one derives from the stories is then organized to become accessible. Typically, the researcher uses an appropriate paradigmatic structure such as a matrix, taxonomy, or categories. A matrix is an especially effective way to bring together the common themes and individual themes. All aspect of matrix stands in relations to each other. The variation on a theme remain explicit and meaningful at the same time the common themes were identified and illustrated. The integrity of each narrative is also maintained as you enable your audio move readily between individual themes and common themes.

In the paradigmatic type or analysis of narratives, the purpose in using stories is generally to understand a concept or abstraction. As a researcher, the stories provide you with data. The researcher analysis of the narratives begins in each story. the data were separated and common or shared constituents such as themes were identified. The findings are presented in an appropriate paradigmatic structure that ideally allows the researcher to move between the particular and the shared or common elements.

“Narrative Analysis” the second type of narrative inquiry (Polkinghorne 1995), moves from the particular data gathered to the construction of stories. In a narrative analysis the researcher, construct a narrative, also called a *Stories analysis*, using the data gathered from each story. The story “*must fit the data while at the same time bringing an order and meaningfulness that is apparent in the data themselves*” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.16). In narrative analysis, you construct a story in which you integrate the data rather than separate it as you would do in an analysis of narrative.

The final step in data analysis, according to Creswell (2007), involves an interpretation or meaning of the data. Asking, “what were the lessons learned?” captures the essence of this idea (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Creswell, 2009). These lessons could be the researcher’s personal interpretation, couched in understanding that the inquirer brings the study from her or his own culture, history, and experiences. It could also be a meaning derived from the comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literatures or theories. Thus, interpretation in qualitative research can take many forms, be adapted for different types of designs, and be flexible to convey personal, research-based, and action meaning (Creswell, 2009).

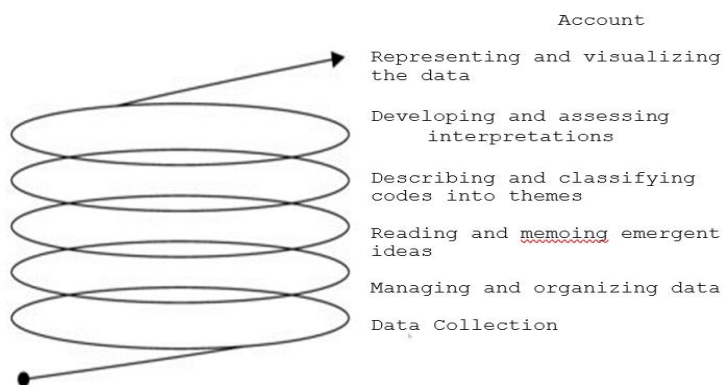


Figure 5 illustrates the data analysis procedure.

Ethical Considerations

In the conduct of this study, a set of ethical considerations guide the research design and practices. These principles include confidentiality, informed consent, potential for harm and results communication.

Confidentiality is designed to protect the privacy of participants during the collection, analysis, and report of data (Allen, 2017). Confidentiality in the conduct of this study include the use of codes to label data instead of using names and keeping a separate list of code-to-name match-up and aliases were used in interview studies when recording and publishing data (uniteforsight.org, 2021). Likewise, data from the study were secured through the use of password protected files so that no one can easily access to it and if the information to be published is potentially recognizable to others, the participant should agree to the release of the said information.

In addition to safeguarding confidentiality among participants, they should also be informed of the key elements of the study. These include the purpose, duration, list of procedures, as well as possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project. This is done by providing them with an informed consent document written in plain language appropriate to the subject population and since the participants belong to the vulnerable population, permission from parents were obtained first in addition to the consent of the children.

Furthermore, the British Psychological Society enumerated the ethical research principles which can be observed in the conduct of the study. These are: 1) Respect for the autonomy, privacy, and dignity of individuals and communities; 2) Scientific integrity; 3) Social responsibility; and 4) Maximizing benefit and minimizing harm.

The above-mentioned ethical principles were strictly observed in the conduct of this study. Protocols on obtaining informed consent were observed in gathering information using three types of data gathering techniques such as in-depth interview, focus group discussion and observation.

On in-depth interview, the participants were asked to sign the informed consent before the conduct of the interview. Through their local dialect, they were informed that their participation and withdrawal of consent before, during and after the interview was purely voluntary. Non-disclosure of names and other identifying information in the transcript and reporting, video-taping and recording or interview, destroying of videos and tapes after the conduct of the study, and assuring the participants that only the researcher and the research staff will have access to the data were thoroughly discussed before the conduct of the interview. This was done to safeguard the right of participants on the issue of confidentiality and anonymity of data collection and production.

On focus group discussion, before the conduct of the FGD, all members were asked to sign the Confidentiality Statement Form. All provisions in the said form were discussed thoroughly in local language in order to protect their rights to confidentiality and anonymity.

Validity

Since qualitative data cannot be quantified, validity is crucial in determining the credibility and trust-worthiness of the findings of the study. It relates to the appropriateness of any research value, tools and techniques and processes including data collection and validation (Thakur & Chetty, 2020). In this study, the researcher himself applied set criteria for validity by being objective since the start of this study. To ensure the validity of data, the following strategies were employed: 1) triangulation of data; and 2) respondent's validation.

On the triangulation of data, the researcher used data triangulation technique in examining the consistency and validity of data before moving on to the analysis and interpretation. The three methods that were triangulated were the interview, FGD and observation data. Denzin (1989b, pp.237-241, in Flick, 2002) discussed data triangulation as the use of different data sources which should be distinguished from the use of different methods for producing data. Also, triangulation is often used to mean bringing different kinds or evidence to bear on a problem (Denzin, 1989, in Esterberg, 2002, p. 176). Thus, analysis is likely to be much sounder than if you rely on only one source of evidence. This is because each kind of evidence has its own strengths and weaknesses. In this manner, inconsistent data were eliminated and excluded in the interpretation of result.

On the respondent's validation, the researcher went back to the participants for the verification of tentative results. The researcher read the tentative stories in local language for their verification and enhancement prior to subjecting the data for English translation. Some of the inconsistencies found were on the dates of the events which were promptly corrected. After, their confirmation if they agree with the initial findings. Respondents validation suggests that we should go back to the subjects with our tentative results and refine them in the light of our subjects' reactions (Reason and Rowan, 1981 in silvermanam, 200 p. 177).

To further evaluate whether the narrative analysis is good, useful, establish, truth, logical, coherent or plausible, the following guides for evaluating narrative analysis presented by (Catherine Riessman 1993 in esterberge, 2002 p. 195) were also adopted by the researcher. These were as follows: 1) analysis was grounded in the storyteller's own word, (2) documentation of how the analysis conducted was kept and it is available upon request so that others can determine the reasonableness of the analysis, and (3) ensuring the availability of transcript of interview to other researcher upon request to contribute to the plausibility of the analysis. The above-stated were considered by the researcher to ensure accuracy, consistency, validity, and reliability of data to be used for analysis.

Triangulation has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Carter, et.al, 2014). It tests the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments and increases the chance to control or at least assess some of the threats or multiple causes influencing the results. The three methods that will be used are the in-depth interview, focused-group discussion (FGD) and observation data.

Profile and Narratives of the participants

This chapter introduces the Indigenous Peoples (IP) Teachers, who they are, and their lives as teachers. It consists of two parts: (1) The Inner core: The General profile of the Indigenous Peoples (IP) Teacher participants, and (2) The outer Core: Unveiling of their life stories.

Part One, The Inner Core: Presents the general profile of Indigenous Peoples (IP) Teachers and describes the demographic characteristics of the participants such as their family background and other personal information.

Part Two, the Outer Core: Unveiling the life stories indigenous Peoples (IP) teachers introduces the six (6) participants of the study and a glimpse of their life stories. It describes their experiences during the pandemic, their responses and reactions, the challenges experienced during modular learning modality, and how they cope during the transition period.

The Inner Core: The General profile of the Indigenous Peoples (IP) Teachers.

The Indigenous Peoples (IP) teachers general profile yields the following important demographic information such as age, sex, marital status, teaching experience, educational attainment, certificate of confirmation and IP groups.

Out of six (6) participants, one (1) is male and five (5) are females. As to their marital status, two (2) are single and four (4) are married. As to participants age group, 6 participants belonged to working age population (age group 18 to 65). As to educational attainment of the participants two (2) are master's degree holder, 1 is with units in masters, and three (3) are bachelor's degree. As to teaching experience of the participants five (5) are (3 to 10 years) of teaching experience, while the other one (1) is (11 to 20 years) of teaching experience. As to certificate of confirmation six (6) of them have a certification from the office of the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). As to IP group all of the six (6) participants belonged to Panay Bukidnon tribe.

The Outer core: Unveiling of the life stories of Indigenous peoples (IP) Teachers.

This section describes the life stories of indigenous peoples (IP) teachers. This presents the stories of Anabel, Vilma, Sharon, Nora, Lucy, and Richard.

Anabel



Anabel is 39 years old, female, a resident of Brgy. Agcalaga, Calinog, Iloilo. She is a daughter of a prominent family wherein both of her parents are members of the Panay Bukidnon tribe and her father is one of the elder leaders in their barangay. Both of her parents are engaged in rice farming typical of other indigenous people. Anabel has 3 siblings; her aunt is also a teacher teaching in their Barangay which is a 100% IP community. This is the reason she was inspired to take Education and become a teacher. She is married but don't have children yet. She was assigned at Marandig Primary School. She is a full-blooded Panay Bukidnon.

According to Anabel, when she entered in service it was a time surge of Covid-19 pandemic where restrictions and lockdown was observed. She had to pass three barangays before she can reach Marandig Primary School from Brgy. Alibunan where she and her husband reside. During that time the face to face classes was suspended to ensure the safety of the pupils and the community. The Department of Education implemented the different types of modality to sustain the basic education needs of pupils.

She also added that due to the distance, approximately 60 kms from Barangay Marandig to the town proper, she had to ride for one to two hours in a motorcycle and walk for two to three hours in rough terrain and muddy roads every week. They also have to pay six hundred pesos for a one-way fare in a motorcycle. Because of this scenario she sacrificed to stay in the school cottage without her husband because on Mondays she will travel going to school and goes home on Friday afternoon, the barangay has no signal and electricity. They only have solar panel donated by the private institutions for their light every night. This solar panels could not sustain power for laptops and printers for the printing of modules, plus the foggy weather resulting to lowered visibility of the place.

As to the benefits she received, she elaborated that she received twenty five percent (25%) hazard pay every month but it was given once a year. She received lower hazard pay because they are on a work from home basis.

For some instances Anabel encountered some accidents in motorcycle and risk is a part of her job as a teacher. She also had personal illness which was triggered by riding in motorcycle especially on rainy days. She also experienced delivering modules and gave it to the learner. Upon receiving the modules, she was surprised that the module was not answered by the student. The ext time she gave out the modules, she spent one hour on orienting the parents on what to do with the modules.

At present, Anabel is still assigned at Marandig Primary School teaching Grade Five. She is hoping to be transferred since she has served more than three years already in the said school.

Vilma



Vilma is 30 years old, female, and is married to a Senior high School Teacher of Calinog National Comprehensive High School in the town of Calinog. They don't have any children yet. She finished her Master in Education in Reading at West Visayas State University- Lambunao Campus. She lived in Barangay Supanga, Calinog, Iloilo. Both of her parents had only finished elementary education. She had 3 siblings. Both of her parents were members of the Indigenous People group and among the barangay elders. The parents plant rice, corn, and coffee. She experienced to walk from Barangay Supanga to Barangay Tuyongan, Calinog, Iloilo which was approximately 20 kms every week to pursue her college education. This is the reason why she strives to finish her education and give back to the community where she lived. Vilma reiterates that she has to strive hard to finish her college and find a permanent job to uplift her family from poverty. After passing the board exam she applied at DepEd where she was given a Local School Board assignment in the barangay school for three (3) years with a salary lower than those having permanent position. Despite of that she was able to help send her younger sister to college and also become an educator assigned in an IP community. She is now serving her fellow IP's in Supanga Elementary School for 7 years and she is a full-blooded Panay Bukidnon.

Sharon



Sharon is 36 years old, female, and married to a policeman with one (1) son. Her father is a resident of Barangay Badu, Calinog, Iloilo and her mother is living in barangay Banban Pequeño, Calinog, Iloilo. Both her parents have wide rice farm. Sharon has 4 siblings. Sharon graduated at West Visayas State University- Lambunao Campus in 2011 and passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers in the same year. Sharon was employed as Local School Board for three (3) years before she got permanent Teacher I item in the same school.

College days was tough for her since her family relied only in farming and she had another sibling who was also in college. Because of determination and dedication, she was able to finish her studies.

She experienced walking in muddy roads and high terrains for three (3) hours from Barangay Tuyongan to Barangay Binulusan Pequiño, Calinog, Iloilo. She was influenced by her aunts to become a teacher since most

of her aunts were also teachers. She had been at Binulusan Pequiño Elementary School for six (6) years and she is a full-blooded Panay Bukidnon.

Nora



Nora is 45 years old, female, married and with three (3) Children, she lived in Barangay Garangan, Calinog, Iloilo. She graduated at West Visayas State University- Lambunao Campus with Latin Honor as *Cum Laude*. She said that she experienced to do (*Bayo ka Humay*) because there was no available rice mill in their barangay. She was the only one who graduated in college among her siblings. She pursued to become a teacher because she wanted to be near to her family and she wanted to serve her fellow indigenous people in her community.

Nora is living in Barangay Simsiman, Calinog, Iloilo near the town with her family since their children were studying in one of the private schools in town. Since the school is about 30 km from the town plaza, they were riding a motorcycle for about two (2) hours passing the muddy road and high uphill terrain. Nora reports to school early in the morning of Monday and if the weather is fine, she goes home in the afternoon. However, if the weather is not favorable, she had no choice but to stay in their teacher's cottage until Friday afternoon. Nora is an active member of *Hubon IPED writers of the Schools Division of Iloilo*. She is now serving the Department of Education (DepEd) for 18 years. Currently, she is a Master Teacher 1, teaching at Intapi-an Elementary School. She is a full-blooded Panay Bukidnon.

Lucy



Lucy is 28 years old, female, single, and a resident of Brgy. Supanga, Calinog Iloilo. Her parents are elementary graduates, and they engage in banana, rice, corn, and coffee farming in their inherited ancestral land. As a result of their hard work, they were able to send their 4 children in college. Lucy had 3 siblings One is a policeman, and the other two (2) are working abroad. She graduated at West Visayas State University- Calinog Campus.

During her college days she experienced walking in muddy roads from Barangay Supanga, Calinog, Iloilo to Barangay Tuyongan, Calinog, Iloilo. From there, she had to ride in a motorcycle going to the town proper. After her graduation, she worked as a sales lady to support her brother who was still in college. She was hired in 2018 and her first assignment was in Barangay Caratagan, Calinog, Iloilo as a Teacher-In-Charge for 4 years. She was surprised upon receiving the advice that she was going to teach in Caratagan Primary School which is the barangay next to her home address. Lucy is also a full-blooded Panay Bukidnon.

Richard



Richard is 34 years old, male, single, and a resident of Brgy. Masaroy, Calinog, Iloilo. He graduated from West Visayas State University- Calinog Campus with Latin Honors as (*Cum Laude*). He is a working student since high school in one of the prominent families in town. He was able to manage his time in complying all the school requirements while doing household chores.

He believed that being a working student is not an easy task to do. He spent his whole high school and college life serving other people.

He believed that someday, he will become successful and his hardwork and patience would uplift him from poverty. He also believed that what he is doing is also for the upliftment of quality education for his fellow indigenous peoples. He wanted to inspired them and serve as a role model to his community. Richard has 4 siblings. The youngest one is also a teacher at Masaroy Primary school. His first assignment was as a Junior High School teacher at Binulusan Pequiño National High School and he became the Teacher-In-charge for 3 years. He resigned as Teacher-In-Charge because he wanted to pursue his master's degree at West Visayas State University- Lambunao Campus.

At present, he is a School IPED Coordinator of Binulusan Pequiño National High School upholding and bearing the culture and tradition of Panay Bukidnon tribe as he integrates IPED Curriculum in his everyday lessons for better understanding of IPED learner. He is now 7 years in service and he is a full-blooded Panay Bukidnon.

The general profile of the participants is presented in table 1 as to some identified demographic characteristics

Table 1 shown the summary of general profile of the participants.

Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Teaching Experience	No. Of Siblings	Certificate of Confirmation	No. Of Children	Highest Educational Attainment	IP Group
Anabel	39	F	Married	4 years and 6 months	3	Yes	0	Bachelor Degree	Panay Bukidnon
Vilma	30	F	Married	7 years	3	Yes	0	Master's Degree	Panay Bukidnon
Sharon	36	F	Married	6 years	4	Yes	1	Bachelor Degree	Panay Bukidnon
Nora	45	F	Married	18 years	3	Yes	3	Master's Degree	Panay Bukidnon
Lucy	28	F	Single	4 years and 8 months	3	Yes	0	Bachelor Degree	Panay Bukidnon
Richard	34	M	Single	7 years	4	Yes	0	Bachelor Degree	Panay Bukidnon

Summary

This part summarizes the participants as to who they are, what they are doing and their life stories.

The life stories of the indigenous people (IP) teachers were revealed and capsulized to have a closer look to their lives. Almost all of the Indigenous people's teachers were teaching in IP schools and some in elementary schools in the hinterlands of Calinog. Most of them were teaching for many years already in hinterland schools. Most of the participants were female. As to marital status most of the participants were married. As to experience all of them were in service for four years and they were assigned in a hinterland school where most of them takes the motorcycle ride (habal-habal) for two to three hours and passing high terrain and muddy roads to reach their respective stations. As to certificate of confirmation all of the participants had certificate of confirmation from the office of the National Commission for Indigenous People (NCIP). This certification is issued only and exclusive to the member of Panay-Bukidnon tribe. As to educational qualifications most of the participants were bachelor's degree holder and two had finished their master's degree. As to IP group all of the participants belonged to Panay Bukidnon tribe and served (IP) Schools.

Most of the participants schools had no access to internet and electricity due to the distance from the town. The participants stayed in school Monday morning and goes home Friday afternoon. The only access to communication is the two-way radio connected to the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (MDRRMC).

RESULTS

Indigenous Peoples (IP) Teachers Reactions and Responses

This part focused on the themes, acceptance and adjustments, doubted, Willingness and Happiness.

Acceptance and Adjustments of Indigenous People (IP) Teachers in Hinterland Schools.

Teaching in the hinterlands takes a lot of passion, dedication, and determination to face all the challenges in both physical reporting (*pag byahe, lutakon nga dalan, duha (2) hours nga panaway or laktanay*) (*Muddy roads during travel and it takes 2 hours by walking*) and teaching strategies (modular modality Learning) during pandemic. The participants experienced lots of dilemma in terms of transportation as they reported to their respected schools every Monday and goes home every Friday.

Based on the study of Russell et al. (2017), when an individual arrives for the first time in an unfamiliar land, they may experience a degree of culture shock, a feeling of confusion, uncertainty, and frustration. It can affect them according to their life experiences. Under certain circumstances, individuals in any profession experience stress, especially teachers who are not accustomed to this feeling. Schultz (2008) pointed out that it is usually unhealthy. A healthy level of stress can be perceived as positive. Managing, developing, and employing strategies are keys to handling and relieving stress. Same with the participants' feelings, despite the different emotions identified by the teachers when problems arise like feelings of worry, stress, hurt, pity, sadness, and pain, they were still determined and consistent in their mission in their teaching profession. They find answers and solutions to their problems in far-flung areas. Searching for meaning is a self-determined behavior and not only important to the individual, but it is an essential need that promotes desired effects in varied cultural settings (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim & Kaplan, 2003). Positive work outcomes and organizational commitment have long-term benefits for the organization that attempt to foster initiatives that promote a healthy environment at work.

As the responses of the indigenous people (IP) teachers' participants (Nora and Vilma) accept that they were going to assigned in the hinterland schools.

Nora expressed that, "*Pag assign kanakon tuya waay ako gaduha duha nga batunon, kay ti IP man ako mo sanay naman ako sa bukid nga gusto ko man mag serve sa ano sa mga tuya dampi nga mga kabataan sa pihak nga bukid no... kag ang akon nga item is IP item pagsulod nakon.*"

(When I was assigned there, I had no second thoughts about accepting it because I am also an Indigenous Person (IP), and I am used to rural areas. I really wanted to serve the children in the remote areas. My teaching position is specifically for IPs, and I took it willingly.)

Vilma tells that "*Before ako gin assign sa bukid waay man gid ako nabudlayn kay ti taga bukid man ako may adjustment man pero gamay lang gid nga kay ti amo lang da eh mabudlay ang dalan paagto sa eskwelahan like for example sang una mapanaw kailangan pa namon nga mga may dalan nga dapat namon nga hindi masulod ka sarakyan mga budlay dalan paagto gid tana sa eskwelahan*"

(Before I was assigned to the hinterland school, I didn't have much difficulty because I am from the countryside, too, so I had some adjustments, but they were minimal. The only challenge was the road going to school, for example, in the past, we had to walk because vehicles couldn't access the rough roads leading to the school.)

This was also supported by the result of the focused group discussion composed of school heads and co-teachers of the participants. They stated that it takes some adjustments to teach the IP's because of many factors to be considered. as Teacher D from FGD stated that:

"At first sir adjustment period pa gidman kay ive been teaching sa private school for three years and sa ahh pag saylo ko sa bukid sa Marandig Primary School big adjustment gid kay wala signal so you have to be resourceful when it comes to your uhmmm instructional materials sir kay kon sa mary immaculate academy sa private school provided ang tanan you have the television so manami gid ang pag learn ka mga kabataan pero sa bukid ma experience mo gid didtu ka gid mahasa si"

(At first Sir it was really an adjustment period since I've been teaching in a private school for three years and in ahhh. Upon my tran sfer to Marandig Primary School, it was a big adjustment since there was no signal so you have to be resourceful when it comes to your uhmmm instructional materials Sir, because when I was at Mary Immaculate Academy, a private school, everything was provided. You have the television, so learners learn better but, in the uplands, you will experience those (difficulties) and you will be molded (by these experiences).

The first emergent theme that arose was acceptance and adjustments of indigenous people (IP) teachers in hinterland areas, for it was the only means to have a permanent job. This is in support of R.A. 4670 otherwise known as "The Magna Carta for Public School Teachers," which focused on the security on employment and tenure of teachers. Besides, public school teaching jobs were typically secured because they were funded by the taxpayers (Philippines Republic Act No. 4670, 1966).

Doubts in the Mind of Indigenous People (IP) Teachers.

The most obvious when a school is located in hinterland area is always far, high terrain, muddy roads, unfamiliar scenario and different beliefs.

The other two (2) participants (Anabel and Sharon) said that they were in doubt to accept the challenge as it was their first time to be in that particular barangay far away from their respective homes.

Anabel said that: *"So sang first time naman-an ko nga sa Marandig ako na-assign, so medyo daw nag doubt ako no kay ti waay pa ko kaagi kaabot bisan pinabulusan pa gane kay sa Agalaga ako gauli, pero hambal ko kay gusto ko gid mag teach so gin accept ko ang challenge nga biskan diin lang ako e-assign basta maka teach lang ako"*.

(The first time I learned that I was assigned to Marandig, I had some doubts because I had never been there before, not even passing through, as I returned to Agalaga. But I thought to myself that I really wanted to teach, so I accepted the challenge of being assigned anywhere as long as I could teach.)

While Sharon said: *"Wow! Una-una ko gid to nga saka kabudlay gid no? Nakita ko ang dalan, first day ko pag-abot ko sa balay sang hapon hambal ko to kay nanay daw mauntat dun ko sa pag ka maestra, kay kita ko pil-as nga hulugan ko"*.

(Wow! At first, I thought it would be very challenging, you know? I saw the road, and on the first day when I arrived at the house in the afternoon, I told my mother that I might quit being a teacher because I saw the steep hill I had to fall.)

This was also supported by the result of the focused group discussion composed of their school heads and co-teacher participants. Teacher C from focused group discussion reiterated that as public servants, where ever the assignment is located, it is our duty and responsibility.

"Well As ahhhh... Public servant so indi man kita maka deny kon diin kita e assign no. sooo.. gin sumpaan naton daa so carry ah. hmmm".

(Well as ahhhh.... Public servant, we cannot refuse wherever we get assigned to since it is our sworn duty, thus we just have to carry on. Hmmm).

Willingness and Happiness of Indigenous People (IP) Teachers

The participants' feelings about teaching in hinterland schools were both positive and negative, as revealed in the study. They stated that teachers in hinterland schools were willing and happy to serve thier fellow IP's and had not ceased continuously wearing optimistic outlook towards work despite the situation. They loved their work and valued the efforts of learners going to school every day and always want to inspire the lives of the children who were patiently waiting for them at every start of the week.

Lucy said *"So far, ang akon nga willingness kag ang passion ko gid magteach as IP man bilang maka inspire man sa mga Bata nalipay man ako nga didto ako naassign sa Karatagan Primary School"*.

(So far, my willingness and my passion to teach, especially as an Indigenous People (IP), to inspire the children, I am happy to have been assigned to Caratagan Primary School.)

Richard stated that *“At first way back 2016, daw hindi man gid it mahambal nga shocking ang pagka assign sa Binolosan Pequeño National High School, anyway Binolosan Pequeño National High School is more than 20 kilometers halin diya sa banwa ka Calinog, ah... pag open ka Binolosan so aware kami as applicant nga my posibilidad nga tuya kami i assign sa Binolosan, once nga maqualified kami sa RQA so daw hindi duman siya it bag.o kay te ako as a teacher kag naghaggod man ako sa uma so daw pareho lang man nga environment siguro naga differ lang sa kind of person or mga tawo sa community kag ya mga approaches siguro kung paano but then kung in terms of... ano ya nabatyagan so, normal lang ah normal man nga waay gid t duro nga problem”*.

(When Binolosan opened, we were aware as applicants that there was a possibility of being assigned there, once we qualified in the RQA. So it wasn't a new place for me because I am a teacher, and I had been familiar with the rural environment. It's pretty much the same kind of environment, just with differences in the people and community's approach. In terms of my feelings, it was normal, there weren't any major issues.)

The FGD composed of school heads and co-teachers supported the statements of the participants that they are willing and happy to serve their fellow IP's. As Teacher F said:

“So sa pagbatian ko nga tuya ako ma assign sa supanga daw mas na motivate man ako nga mas magtudlo tuya kay para mabal an man kon anu ang anda nga kaya ubrahon tuya nga makaya man sa ubos, kon anu ang makaya diya sa banwa basi makaya man tuya sa bukid”.

(So when I heard that I will be assigned in Supanga, I felt more motivated to teach because I believe that whatever the townspeople can do, and so can the uplanders).

Teacher A had an interesting story since she is now seven (7) years in teaching. as she recalled:

“So far sa 7 ko in service daw okey man kag asta tulad okey man sa gihapon kay dawn a enjoy ko naman ang travel travel ko every day kag mag suray suray sa uran kag mag tabok tabok sa overflow nga naga baha daw kanami man”.

(So far, in my seven years of in-service, it feels okay and now, I seem to be enjoying the daily travel, getting drenched in the rain and crossing the overflow bridge that is flooded).

Teacher B also said that:

“Para kanakon okey man tana sa bukid hay matawhay , amo lang da hay marayo lang galling pay atleast enjoy kaw hay manami tana tuya hay preska gid ya hangin.

(For me, it's peaceful in the uplands, the only thing is it's far but at least you get to enjoy the fresh air).

When they were hired, they were aware that their first assignment is in hinterland schools. Most of them were riding a motorcycle and passing high terrain and muddy roads during rainy season. The place is quite challenging as they walk for two (2) to three (3) hours every week, but because of their passion and dedication to teach they accepted the challenge.

The responses and reactions of IP teachers assigned in hinterland schools showed that they did not hesitate or felt shocked upon receiving an advice that they will be serving their fellow indigenous people. As they say that I am *“taga bukid”* it is not difficult for them to deal with the pupils from hinterland schools since they can easily adjust, adapt and understand the situation in the community.

Some of the participants were in doubt at first, since they will be assigned in hinterland barangays where they are not familiar and they haven't visited the place yet.

Almost all of the participants accepted the assignment and they were willing to teach and inspire their fellow indigenous people. They believed that they could help in improving their self as well as elevate their status from poverty.

As stated in the study of Lariosa, et al (2022). The teachers in far-flung schools were challenged to work out of their comfort zone and to deal with students and communities with different cultures. They employed different strategies for adaptation that helped them survive and stay in far-flung areas. Their situation as a far-flung teacher is not as easy as what some had narrated. They were able to manage and cope with different problems and challenges in the far-flung areas; they even became more resilient, brave, consistent, and determined to stay and impart their knowledge to the empty minds of their children.

The responses and reactions of IP teachers assigned in hinterland schools as shown in figure 6.

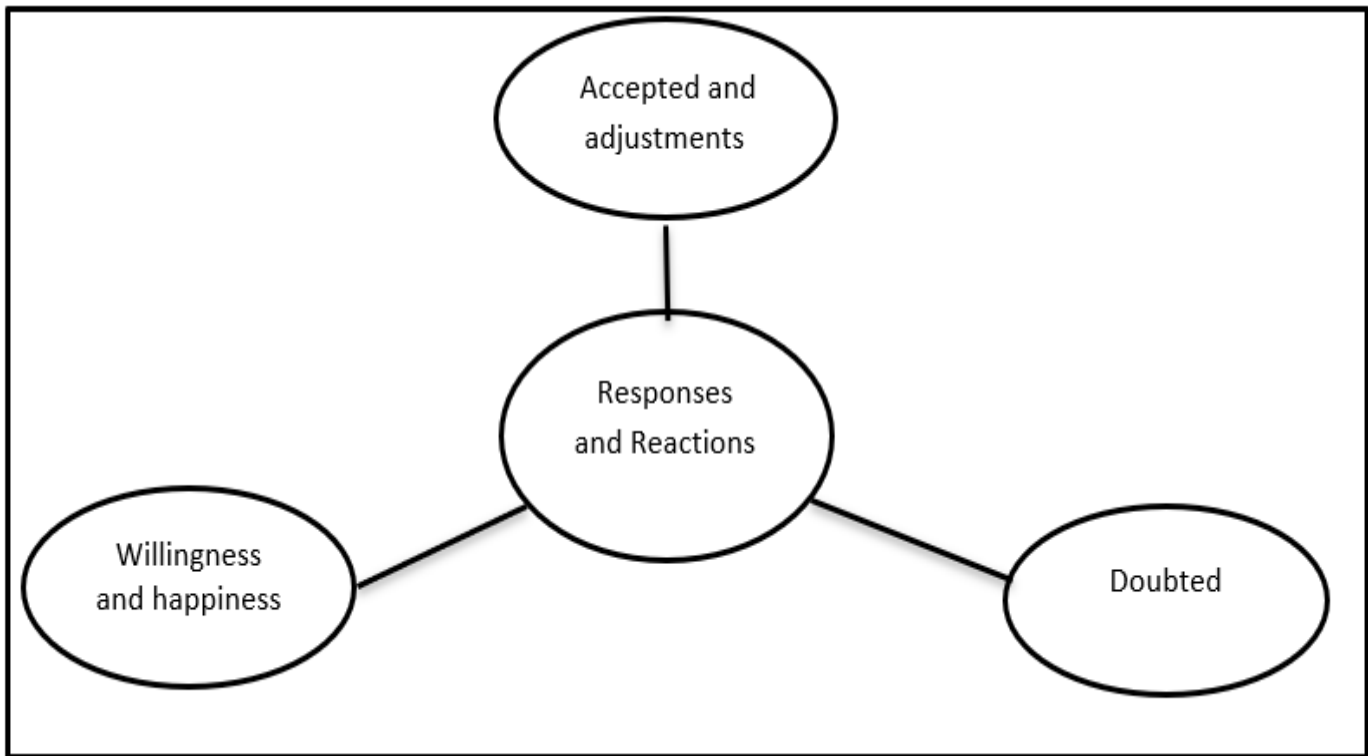


Figure 6. Responses and reactions of IP teachers assigned in hinterland schools.

Challenges and Risks of Indigenous Peoples (IP) teachers

Part One *Risk Factors* presents two subsections. The first subsection discussed the theme “*Difficult roads leads to a beautiful destination*”. The second subsection discussed the theme “*Supplies and materials*”.

Part Two, is the *Challenges factors*, which presents three (3) subsections. The first subsection discusses the theme “*Distribution and Retrieval Period*”. It talks about the way how the teachers distributed modules to parents and retrieve it every week. The second subsection discussed the theme “*Parent’s Little Knowledge*”. It talked about the basic education knowledge of the parents. The third subsection discussed the theme “*No electricity and no signal*”. It tackled the availability of signal and electricity in the hinterland schools.

The Risks faced by of indigenous people (IP) Teachers.

This section presents the risk which includes the situation of the roads and terrain going to their respective stations. *Work hazard* pertains to any source or cause of potential harm or adverse health effect. The cause may be depending on weather condition, and road condition. *Risk*, on the other hand, refers to the likelihood or probability that a person will be harmed or exposed to a hazard. For this research, these definitions of work hazard and risk are used, as adapted from ILO (2010) and CCOHS (2009).

Difficult Roads Leads to beautiful Destinations



Roads can give us access to all the places we want to be. But not all roads are accessible, especially in hinterland areas where only motorcycles can pass and survive. Motorcycle transport is the most widely used mode of travel in the hinterland barangay of Calinog. Some barangays have newly opened roads through the project of the province and adopted by municipalities as “farm to market roads”.

The indigenous peoples (IP) teachers have stories to tell based on their personal experiences during the implementation of modular learning modality.

Anabel was teaching at Marandig Primary School for four (4) years. Every week she had to ride a motorcycle from her home to her assigned station. Anabel recalled that:

“e-travel paagto sa station sa Marandig, halin sa ano nagasakay kami sa motor kung kaisa abutan pa kami ka uran mabasa pa ang amon ginapa bitbit nga modules, so pag-abot mo sa school”.

“we had to ride on a motorcycle, and we'd occasionally get caught in the rain, risking damage to the modules we were carrying”.

Like Anabel, Lucy also experienced delivering the module to her station. She narrated:

“during modular learning modality is kabudlay gid kay sang una face to face then nag transform sa modular so kabudlay gid bilang isa ka Teacher, maprint ka pa diya sa banwa kay waay ti kuryente didto kag dal-on naman ang modyul sa isakay sa motorcycle or habal-habal so may jan nga mabasa ang modules”.

(during modular learning modality we had to transport the modules on a motorcycle or 'habal-habal.' Some of the modules got damaged along the way.)

Richard had also his own story to tell. He is a junior high school teacher and they have thirteen catchment barangays scheduled every week for the distribution and retrieval of the modules. As he recalled:

“ginadara namon sa learning areas or catchment areas sa ka da barangay so for example hay ang Binolosan Pequeño National High School may apat ka catchment areas so para hindi mabudlay sa mga learners kag hindi man magbaralik sa eskwelahan ang kabataan kay hindi pwede so kami naga dara ka module sa anda nga barangay para tuya dalang bul.on so te ya number one problem is ang aragyan kay te Literal nga mabudlay ya dalan hindi maaccess kang motor kung mauran madalom nga lutak kung tig ururan”.

(So we delivered modules to their respective barangays to make it easier for them to pick up the modules. But there were instances where we had problems. The literal problem was the difficult terrain – the roads were inaccessible by motorcycles, especially when it rained and the mud was deep).

This was also supported by the result of the focused group discussion composed of their school heads and co-teacher participants. They stated that riding a motorcycle and passing terrain are the common means of the

teachers as they go to their respective stations. FGD participants experienced difficulty of roads including muddy road during rainy days, high terrain and unpredictable weather conditions. As teacher F from FGD reiterates his experienced:

“It was quite difficult to travel to school and to deliver the modules because the weather was unpredictable so at times, it’s disheartening when the modules got wet because we were caught by surprise by the rainfall and we’re unable to properly pack the modules”.

Teacher E also reiterates that:

“pero ang pag transpost pakadtu didtu sa amon eskwelahan amo da ang nabudlayan namon. Tapos ang pag retrieve likewise kanday sir nga marayo ang panimalay, ang iban nga parents indi kaadtu sa eskwelahan”.

(but we found it difficult to transport the modules to school. In terms of retrieval, we had concerns with the distance of teachers’ house from school, some parents cannot get the modules).

All participants experienced riding a motorcycle as this is the only vehicle that can go through the muddy roads, and rugged terrain of the mountain.

Difficulty in reproduction of modules

The different sectors of government, including education, were stretched to fit the “New Normal”. The system had gone through a lot in a short period and had come to great lengths to uphold its mission. Despite being the center of the government, economy and education were not ready for it. Unavailability of gadgets, lack of resource materials and supplies as well as poor internet connection were just three of the factors that conflicted with its mandate to deliver quality education to the learners. With that, the Department of Education (DepEd) crafted the Basic Education Learning Continuing Plan (BE-LCP) that featured different learning modalities to ensure safety among the different stakeholders. Some challenges in preparing modules were related to supplies and materials such as inks, printers and bond papers. The lack of printing materials and scarcity of supplies affect the productivity of teachers in printing of modules. Thus it was experienced by Sharon as she recalled:

“Una gid siguro sir sa pag reproduce ka mga modules, it’s because nga sa kakulangan namon sang mga gamit like printers na tapos supply sang mga ano eh... mga bond papers”.

(First and foremost, sir, in reproducing the modules, it was a challenge due to our lack of equipment like printers, and also the supplies such as bond papers. It was difficult to obtain donations for these).

Like Sharon, Richard also had a story to tell as he reiterates:

“So, on the first year implementation kang modular learning, so ti number one production kang learning materials amo gid da number one kay ti ah, before may mga news ti ah division ya mareproduce tapos bul.on lang pero my mga instances nga kulang ya modules nga allocated sa kada schools kay ti nakadependi sa mga number of learners ti kung may mga kulang ti of course ti amo diya ginaprint man sa eskwelahan so t instead nga preparation mo lang is on delivery so naga ano kapa sa preparation kay madownload ka pa, maprint kapa, masort ka pa, masegregate kapa, so amo ka da. At the same time sa delivery pa gid ka learning modules sa every barangay sa first year ka pandemic, so ya amon nga set up is ang mga learning modules”.

(In the first year of implementing modular learning, the number one problem was the production of learning materials. Before, there were reports that the division would reproduce them, but there were instances where the allocated modules weren't enough for each school. It depended on the number of learners. So, instead of focusing on teaching preparation, we had to do a lot more. We had to download, print, sort, and segregate modules).

The FGD composed of School Heads and Co-teachers supported the claims of the participants that most of the challenges of reproduction of modules were due to insufficient supplies and materials like printers, bond papers, and inks.

As teacher D said: *it's difficult to reproduce the modules since it takes time, patience, and effort.*

Teacher A has interesting story since she is pregnant during that time. As she recalled:

“So far pag modular learning modality kita so ka stressfull gid para kanakon snag time nga ato, its because that time pregnant ako tapos ka stressfull nga madownload kaw ka modules tapos ma print ka tapos ang printer mo ga bisyo pa, so ang kwan bala nga, ang time bala nga.. time consuming sya mag print ka module kay gina pulawan mo, tapos ikaw lang isa mang sort, tapos ikaw lang isa mang stapler”.

(So far, during the modular learning modality, it was stressful for me because I was pregnant at that time. It was so stressful from downloading to printing the modules, especially when the printers were not working properly so it was time consuming since you have to stay late at night to finish printing the modules, then you have to sort it out and staple them all by yourself.)

Teacher D has a different story to tell since they have many learners and printing of modules take a lot of time, patience, and effort. As she recalled:

“First and foremost, sir uhmmm. During the reproduction of modules because damo man amon estudyante maskin, despite of uhmmm being ahh of teaching in primary schools damo man dyapon amon enrollment so three teachers school ang marandig sir so kabudlay gid mag reproduce ka modules it takes a lot of time, patience, effort and kon kis a naga paper jam pa”.

(First and foremost, Sir uhmmm. Despite teaching in a primary school, we still have high percentage of enrollment so it made the reproduction of modules challenging. Marandig is composed of three teachers, so it's difficult to reproduce the modules since it takes time, patience, and effort)

Challenges of Indigenous People (IP) Teachers

This section presents the extra mile the teachers went through to implement the modular learning modality. After the printing of modules, the teachers were tasked to distribute the modules to their pupils. To avoid the risk of Covid-19, the schools implemented the system of delivery and retrieval. The schools put-up a stations or catchment area. The said stations or catchment area were near the place where the pupils were residing, and parents were the ones who get and submit the modules every week.

Distribution and Retrieval of Modules



The distribution and retrieval of modules every week was challenging to teachers and parents due to the distance that they have to travel from school to the assignment catchment areas. Tapping stakeholders like the Brgy. Officials was a big help for fast distribution and retrieval of modules. The mode of module distribution and

retrieval of modules was set by the Department of Education. The modules will be taken by the parents and it will be available to the designated catchment area or station. Accomplished modules were retrieved by the teachers from the parents. As Anabel recalled her story:

“kung kaisa waay pa ti mga kabataan kay ang mga kabataan sa tabok kung kaisa mahulat pa ikaw the next day para may mabuol lang kamu modules no tapos ang ginikanan, baw ayawan pa ikaw kung kaisa ka contact ka nanda kay ang ginikanan kabudlay pa ka nanda mahambal ma ubra pa tanda so kailangan isal-ot gid nanda ang time nga mag agto sa eskwelahan so plus ang ginikanan na waay man it knowledge kung kaisa about sa education nga mag tudlo sa kabataan da amo ra kaisa nagapam-ampo man sanda nga daw gaayo sanda nga pag face to face kay ti bawal sang time nga to”.

(sometimes the children weren't there because they lived on the other side, and sometimes we had to wait until the next day for them to receive the modules. Additionally, the parents were not always easy to contact, and it was a challenge for them to communicate or assist their children in their education. They needed to set aside time to come to the school).

Vilma has also a story to tell as she said *“So, amo gid da mabudlay tuya kanamon kay ti naapektohan kada modular kay ti panagtag namon ang module kung monday ah friday eh ano namon pag ka next monday e-retrieve namon ang module ano pag stura ka 'tong module nga pagta-o pagbalik kanamon amo japon ana itsura, waay gid! may jan man nga mga bata naga sabat kung ano lang gid ana nasabtan amo lang gid ana nasabtan”.*

(So, it's really challenging for us because every module is affected. When we distribute the module on a Monday, and on Friday, we retrieve the module, when we look at the module upon its return, it still looks the same, unchanged! Some students even provide answers that are as they are, without any understanding).

Like Anabel and Vilma, Richard has a story to tell serving from a big school. As they recalled their experiences:

“so ya amon nga set up is ang mga learning modules, ginadara namon sa learning areas or catchment areas sa ka da barangay so for example hay ang Binolosan Pequeño National High School may apat ka catchment areas so para hindi mabudlay sa mga learners kag hindi man magbaralik sa eskwelahan ang kabataan kay hindi pwede so kami naga dara ka module sa anda nga barangay para tuya dalang bul.on so te ya number one problem is ang aragyan kay te Literal nga mabudlay ya dalan hindi maaccess kang motor kung mauran madalom nga lutak kung tig ururan, at the same time aside ka di ah isa man namon ka problem ang mga learners man eh, okey ang mga dependent nga learners kay te active nanda magbuol ka anda modules every twice a week or sa duha ka simana kaisa sanda magbuol ka module”.

(We had to deliver the learning modules to every barangay during the first year of the pandemic. Our setup was to deliver the learning modules to learning areas or catchment areas in each barangay. For example, Binolosan Pequeño National High School had four catchment areas. This was done to avoid difficulties for the learners and to prevent them from coming back to school because it wasn't allowed. So we delivered modules to their respective barangays to make it easier for them to pick up the Dependent learners were fine because they were active in picking up their modules. However, there were instances where some didn't pick up their modules).

The FGD composed of School Heads and Co-teachers supported the statement of the participants that they encountered difficulties in distribution and retrieval of modules since the catchment area were far from the school. As teacher C recalled that:

“then ang mode of delivery kay kon waay ikaw contact sa mga estudyante mo more or less. Pwede gid nga ma delay ang mode of learning naton and then mabudlay man sa mga estudyante kay t indi sanda kaguwa sa balay nanda ginikanan da ang mabuol ka mga modules”.

(Another was the mode of delivery, since if you don't have contact with your learners more or less, this caused the delay in the mode of learning and it's hard for the learners since they can't go out of their homes thus, it's their parents who need to get the modules).

Teacher D said that:

“with regard to distribution and retrieval amo gid na ang isa pagid ka challenge sa amon nga part kay kon kis-a malayo man abe ang kabataan namon, kon kis-a naga kadelay sila mag submit kang modules mag retrieve kami sang modules”.

(with regard to distribution and retrieval this is another challenge on our part since our learners were far from us, this caused the delay in the submission and retrieval of modules).

Teacher E has expressed:

“Tapos ang pag retrieve likewise kanday sir nga marayo ang panimalay, ang iban nga parents indi kaadtu sa eskwelahan, iondi kabuol ka modules, and iban magballik ka modules wala answer kag basa, so ginapaagi lang nam, on sa tanod kon sin o makadtu sa school kag sa mga parents.

(In terms of retrieval, we had concerns with the distance of teachers’ house from school, some parents cannot get the modules, and during the retrieval, some modules were not answered and some were wet, so we coordinated with the Barangay Tanod for them to get the modules from school or inform the parents (about the distribution and retrieval of modules).

Teacher F also reiterated that:

“sa pag retrieve naman ka modules amo da ang mabudlay kay waay gawa mga gamit ang mga bata nga surodlan like plastic bags or plastic envelopes pagbalik kanimo basa may lutak, may higko, ti indi ta gidman da mahambalan ang mga bata kay t waay man sanda ka mga resources nga garamiton.

(During retrieval, it’s also difficult to see that the learners didn’t have the materials where they can put their modules in such as plastic bags or envelopes, so when the modules were retrieved, either it’s wet, with mud or with dirt, but we cannot tell the learners off since they didn’t have the resources to use).

Parents Little Knowledge

Parents play a vital role in shaping the mind and study habits of their children. Children need the support from their parents spiritually, emotionally and financially. Parental involvement in school had been demonstrated to be a key factor for children’s academic outcomes. However, most of the parents in hinterland barangay has a little knowledge and most of them were elementary graduates. As Anabel recalled:

“Tapos ang ginikanan, baw ayawan pa ikaw kung kaisa ka contact ka nanda kay ang ginikanan kabudlay pa ka nanda mahambal ma ubra pa tanda so kailangan isal-ot gid nanda ang time nga mag agto sa eskwelahan so plus ang ginikanan na waay man it knowledge kung kaisa about sa education nga mag tudlo sa kabataan da amo ra kaisa nagapam-ampo man sanda nga daw gaayo sanda nga pag face to face”.

(They needed to set aside time to come to the school. Plus, the parents sometimes lacked knowledge about education and teaching, so they resorted to prayer, hoping that the face-to-face classes would resume soon, as they were not allowed during that time).

Vilma also expressed that when they distribute modules to the parents and when they of retrieved the modules it was the same and had no answer. As she said:

“we retrieve the module, when we look at the module upon its return, it still looks the same, unchanged! Some students even provide answers that are as they are, without any understanding”.

Like Anabel and Vilma, Nora also stated that:

“Actually, nabudlay gid kami sang modyular eh...kay bangud sa module nga ginagamit kag ang mga tawo sa Intapi-an hindi man gid masyado naka eskwela or mga ginikanan nabudlayan gid sanda mag follow up sa mga

bata, mag tudlo sa mga bata nanda tapos kung mga bata man daw hindi man magpati gawa sa mga ginikanan nga mag... tuon kang anda mga modyuls no, kag kaisa mga ginikanan dalang naga answer, siguro hindi man lang taga tuya kanamon nga part daw kalabanan amo man di ah natabo. Ah sa part kang teachers mabudlay gid kag ano kailangan mo gid, ta mag gamit ka mga startegies nga iba eh,”.

(Actually, we had a really tough time with the modular approach. It was due to the modules being used and the fact that many people in Intapi-an didn't have much education, and the parents found it challenging to follow up with their children and teach them from the modules. Sometimes, the children didn't obey their parents' teachings, and sometimes, parents just provided answers. Perhaps they didn't even understand most of what we were teaching).

The claim of the participants of the study were also supported by the participants of the FGD composed of their school heads and co-teachers. Tecaher C said:

“masakit pa kada dyan kon indi pa maintindihan ka estudyante tungud nga may dyan kita nga ginikanan nga daw, nga illiterate kita nga ginikanan so mabudlay ang setwasyon”.

(What's more painful on our part was when the learners cannot understand since there were parents who are illiterate, thus it made our situation even harder).

Teacher D said: *“tapos kon kis a wala pa ina answers kay bal an man naton ang mga ginikanan nila kis-a daw, kulang man sa edukasyon nga gina tawag”.*

(At times, the modules didn't have answers and we knew that this happened because some of their parents were also deprived of education).

Absence of electricity and cell site in schools

Electricity and signal were very important in their daily activities in school like office works, downloading and uploading of reports, virtual seminars and meetings, printing of modules, and presenting their lessons via power point and etc. But most of the hinterland schools in the Municipality of Calinog had no access to internet, phone signal, and absence of electricity in the area. As Anabel stated that:

“So sa bukid kay ti sa kabudlay gid no, waay ti kuryente, waay it signal, so kabudlay gid bisan sa pag-download lang ka modules so sa ubos pa kami naga-download tapos e-travel paagto sa station sa Marandig” (So, in the countryside, it was indeed very challenging. There's no electricity, no signal, making even the simple task of downloading modules difficult. Furthermore, we had to travel down to the Marandig station to download the modules).

Lucy added that:

“So, actually during sang experience ko nga bilang IP Teachers during modular learning modality,so kabudlay gid bilang isa ka Teacher, maprint ka pa diya sa banwa kay waay ti kuryente didto kag dal-on naman ang modyul sa isakay sa motorcycle or habal-habal so may jan nga mabasa ang modules dasun”.

(It was difficult as a teacher to print the modules because there was no electricity in the area, and we had to transport the modules on a motorcycle or 'habal-habal).

The claims of the participants of the study were also supported by the participants of the Focus Group Discussion composed of their school heads and co-teachers. Teacher B stated that:

“where the signal is unstable, thus making communication harder. There were pupils who submitted their modules without answers, so we really did adjust”.

They find it difficult to print modules in their respective hinterland schools since there is no electricity and signal in the area. As Teacher C said:

“So first Sir... Poor connection is our first concern in the upland areas since there’s no signal. Another was the mode of delivery, since if you don’t have contact with your learners more or less, this caused the delay in the mode of learning and it’s hard for the learners since they can’t go out of their homes.

The claims of the participants of the study were supported by the FGD participants composed of their school heads and co-teachers. Teacher B recalled:

“parehas kanamon sa bukid kay waay it kuryente waay man it signal t mabudlay ya communication namon ang iban ga balik lang ya module nga waay it answer”.

(especially in the upland areas where the signal is unstable, thus making communication harder).

Teacher C said:

“mabudlay gid una ang signal mahina gid tana amon signal sa bukid kag waay gid tana it signal”.

(Poor connection is our first concern in the upland areas since there’s no signal).

Teacher had to print modules in their respective residences and deliver it in their respective catchment area by riding in a motorcycle.

Most of the teachers had difficulty in downloading modules due to absence of electricity and signal in the barangay. They also encountered problem in delivering modules to their different catchment areas due to the distance, muddy roads, and damaged modules especially during rainy days. They also encountered difficulty since most of the parents in the hinterland communities had only limited knowledge and most of them were not able to proceed in high school. Despite of the challenge’s parents, teachers, and other stakeholders helped each other in implementing the modular learning modality.

Some participants encountered difficulty in delivery of modules since they are handling huge enrollment in high school and elementary and they have to classify it by cluster or catchment areas in every barangay. They have to sort, and segregate the modules by subject area per grade level. They also encountered difficulty in tracking their modules since most of the catchment barangay has no signal and internet access.

Most of the participants had to pass a muddy roads and high terrain and sometimes they were risking their lives riding in motorcycle especially on rainy days. Some of them damaged their modules along the way.

Indeed, teaching in a small school is an enormous challenge. Teachers encounter a variety of uncomfortable means of transportation like *“habal-habal,”* and even riding animals like horses or carabao just to reach the school (Barcena, 2018). Some teachers need to walk kilometers of rough terrains in these areas. In the country, research have documented the lives of teachers in remote areas. These are from news agencies that illustrated their ordeal in delivering services to the children. Among the stories is an elementary teacher who walks 23 kilometers daily (Quejada, A. B., & Orale, R. L., 2018), trekking into the mountains (Mallari, 2010), and conducts classes anywhere available (Umil, 2015).

Modular distance learning allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) and other learning resources like learner’s materials, textbooks, activity sheets, and study guides for individualized instruction. They are available in print or digital formats. This type of distance learning is common especially in rural areas where internet connection is slow or is not available. Parents and teachers work hand in hand to facilitate learning in this type of modality. Parents act as teachers (para-teacher) at home while teachers take the responsibility of monitoring the progress of learners by making their weekly monitoring plan, giving feedbacks in learner’s answer sheets, preparing intervention materials for learners who lag behind, and doing home visitations to learners.

Challenges experienced by IP Teachers in Modular Learning Modality

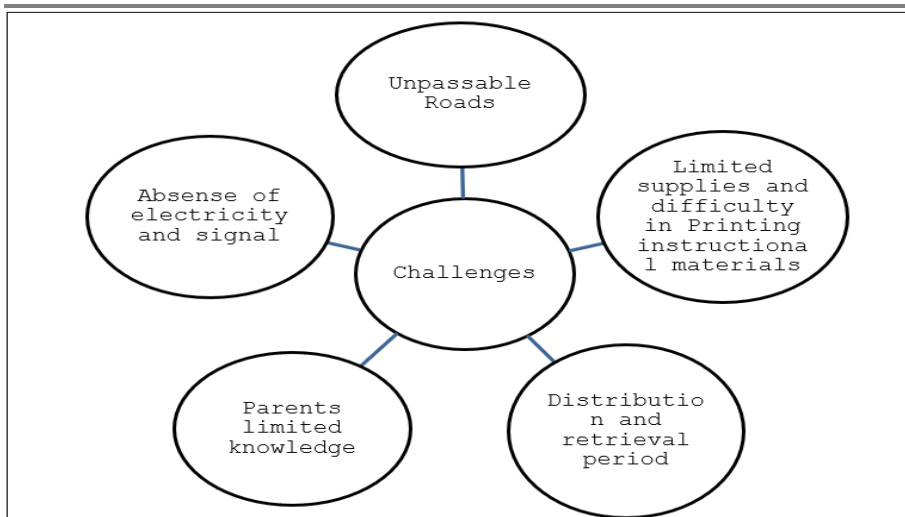


Figure 7. Challenges Experienced by IP Teachers in Modular Learning Modality.

Coping with the challenges encountered of Indigenous People (IP) Teachers during Transition period in instruction in the classroom

This part presents the coping the challenges encountered by indigenous people (IP) teachers during the transition period in conducting instruction in the classroom and in dealing with stress and problems in hinterland schools. It also discussed the themes related to “*face to face learning to modular learning*”. It talked about how the teachers handled the transition period.

Modular learning to face to face learning

Modular learning was one of the flexible learning modalities used by the institution during pandemic. It is an individualized instruction and letting the learners to use a self-learning pace. This commonly used by teachers in basic education particularly in hinterland schools where internet connection and electricity were not available.

Face to face learning is an effective way in learning skills and knowledge it uses different ways of learning including reading, presentations, writing, group work, discussion, practice, and demonstration. Through face to face learners will be able to concentrate harder because of less distractions. They could also gain greater understanding of stories and real scenarios, feel more comfortable and have an opportunity to connect with. They see education as a ladder to success and as a means to break the cycle of poverty. When asked about coping with the challenges during the transition period in instruction in the classroom, Anabel expressed:

“So kung basehan mo sa previous sang 2019... daw mas ok gid tana guru katong naga face to face pero sang nag module dun nga ja daw medyo mabudlay daw nag behind ang kabataan tungod nga waay sanda nag tudlo, ang ginikanan abi nanda daw hindi pagid ka bulig kananda gid nga actually tudlo pag basa kag pagsulat ti ang gasarig gid sanda sa maestra kung paano matudloan ang anda kabataan pero daw karun t sa kaluoy ka Mahal nga Diyos nga amo dun kaja nga naka agto dun kabataan sa eskwelahan”.

(So, if we base it on the situation prior to 2019, it seems that the students performed better when they were in face-to-face classes. But when they switched to the modular approach, it was a bit challenging because they fell behind due to a lack of instruction. Parents, perhaps, didn't feel confident in helping their children with actual teaching in reading and writing).

Vilma narrated that she struggled from face to face learning to modular learning and back again to face to face learning. The learners struggled on reading and writing. Further she stated that:

“During transition namon ka pagbalik ka face to face halin modular so una gid ano mga bata mostly gid kananda mga dalang mga hindi gid sanda kamaan magbasa. So, una gin himo namon sang una gin himo namon one month nga nag pabasa lang gid kami read, writing amo lang gid da ang gin-fokusan namon for one month then

after kadi ah amo dun kami to nag start di man ka gin makaya dun ka bata namon mag ano ka lesson diman nanda eh for actual dun ka face to face process”.

(During our transition back from face-to-face to the modular approach, we initially noticed that many students struggled with reading, some of them couldn't read well at all. So, at first, we devoted an entire month to focus solely on reading and writing. That's what we concentrated on for one month).

Nora had a different feeling of excitement as she went back again from modular learning. She stated that:

“It's been alright because in face-to-face teaching, it's really nice to see the children and interact with them daily. During the modular phase, it was a bit challenging because we couldn't see them, and it was difficult to follow up with them. But now that we've returned to face-to-face, it's much better because the children are excited to be back in school.”.

The FGD's were participated by the school heads and co-teachers. The group discussion revealed that transition period from modular learning modality to face to face learning was a struggle especially in reading. As teacher A said:

“So far daw nag balik gid ako sa basic kay ang kabataan duro gid tana anda nga nalipatan kay sang pandemic ngato ang mga bata daw nabuyo don ka gamit ka cellphone, gadgets, hampang”.

(So far, I seemed to have gone back to the basics because the learners have already forgotten (their previous lessons) during the pandemic and it seemed that they were hooked on using cellphone, gadgets, and playing games).

Teacher B expressed:

“ginpabasa it amat amat para indi man sanda ma shock sa mga numbers para indi da malipatan , sa adlaw adlaw nga tanan nga pag sulod nanda sa eskwelahan amo da na cope-up man nanda ah”.

(We let them read slowly so they won't get stunned by the introduction of numbers and won't retain what they have learned, but as they enter the school every day, they were able to cope with it).

Teacher E added that:

“base sa amon experience from modular to face to face gapasalamat gid kami sa amon nga stakeholders kag sa brgy. Officials kay ang mga bata nga marayo sa amon nga indi makakadtu sa school bali gin patindugan namon cottage kag gin pa stay namon sila tuya ahh nag conduct kami remedial for slow learners nga anu nga marayo gid sanda sa eskwelahan”.

(Ahh, based on our experience from modular to face-to-face, we are very grateful to our stakeholders and barangay officials. For those pupils who live in hinterland areas and unable to go to school, we constructed cottages where we stayed and conducted remedial to our slow learners).

Adjustments and adaptability of indigenous peoples (IP) teachers to the learning platform.

To meet the demands of a changing environment adjustment to one's behavior is very important, especially in hinterland schools. No matter how difficult the situation is the fulfillment of duty is the upmost priority. Adaptability is a skill that can use to adjust in a new situation. It is the ability to change strategy as needed in facing a new environment.

Lucy also experienced difficulty and made some adjustments during the transition periods. She quipped:

“So during sa cope-up during sa transition period halin sa modular to face to face is ang mga bata is daw kabudlay gid mag adjust as a teacher nga after two years nakabalik ang klase nga mga daw waay sanda learning sa abaly kay kabudlay gid eh ang ila man parents waay ti ineskwelahan. That's all”.

(During the coping process in the transition period from modular to face-to-face, the children found it quite challenging to adjust, and as a teacher, it was also difficult, especially after two years of not having regular classes, and some of them had missed learning opportunities.

Richard had a different story to tell as he needed to follow the standard protocols set by the DepEd and DOH during the transition period. As he said:

“Actually sir, grabe man ya process hindi madali dali kay te man.an naton nga may ginasunod kita nga process sa DEPED may tool gid kita nga dapat sundon nga para matigayon nga ti halin sa pandemic nga set up makabalik kita sa amat amat nga pagbalik ka face to face nga klase sa classroom so through... the help of everybody man no mga teachers, fellow teachers, communities... ah, local government units kag t mga technical system man ka district kag mother schools kag taga division man”.

(Actually, sir, the process was quite challenging because we followed a certain process set by the DEPED, and there were tools we needed to follow to transition from the pandemic setup to a gradual return to face-to-face classes in the classroom. We achieved this through the help of everyone, including fellow teachers, the community, local government units, technical systems from the district and mother schools, and the division.

The FGD’s composed of school heads and co-teachers supported the claims of the participants. As Teacher A recalled:

“so adjust tapos accept batunon mo dulang nga amo dya ang life ka maestra. Challenging sya pero kon ginbaton moda a it hunggod fulfillment man ya mabatyagan mo”.

(adjustments so you will able to teach them to read. So, adjust and accept the realities in a teacher’s life. It’s challenging but if you accept it, you will also feel fulfillment).

Teacher D reiterates:

“So uhmm.. thankfully with the help of higher offices particularly ang amon nga division office may ara kami nga gin craft nga BELRCP-Plus so amo na amon nga kun бага guiding star namon sa kon pano namon e address ang mga challenges nga gina view namon nga ma meet namon for sure along the way”.

(So uhmm. Thankfully, with the help from the higher offices, particularly our Division Office, we have crafted our BELRCP-Plus which served as our guiding star on how to address and overcome the challenges that may come along the way).

Teacher F said:

“So ang amon nga adjustments halin modular paadtu sa face to face syempre ang mga bata nag modular medyu gamay lang ang na learn, syempre nag storya ang mga teacher with our school head nga ang mga bata nga medyu kinanlan nga bulig ibutang anay sa remedial classes”.

(So the adjustment that we did from modular to face-to-face was, given that those pupils who were in modular learned a little, the teachers had a talk with our school head that those identified pupils who seemed to need help be placed in remedial classes).

Flexibility in the shift from modular learning to face-to-Face Learning

Nothing in this world is constant. Being adaptive and flexible to change allows us to grow and survive. One participant mentioned that working as a team, helping each other, maintaining coordination and cooperation, and focusing on achieving the school's goals. Made it easier for the teachers to achieve their objectives. Flexibility and adaptability are important qualities that every teacher must acquire. Effective teachers can adjust, change, and modify teaching methodologies depending on the availability of resources, students’ needs, and context of environment.

Teachers are very flexible in adapting teaching methods to suite the needs of each learner as well as trying the new approaches. By adjusting strategies to accommodate each learner's uniqueness, teachers were able to create a better environment for better learning. As Sharon stated:

"Paano ako naka cope-up, siguro sa transition period, amat-amat lang amat-amat nga gina-intindi mo ang sitwasyon kay ti...daw sa ano bala nga mag travel ako, halin pa ako sa pavia gauuli pako sa Pavia, ti ga-travel pa amo lang na, panigana kaw pra sa kaugalingon mo nga hindi kaman malatunan kay t my mga kabataan pa ko nga gahulat sa balay nga estudyante ko mag tagtag modules, iya ginikana na ano mo man nga basi malatonan man sanda to ti siempre basi lagas kita to katawo, ikaw rason nga na ano sanda, sakit ulo da, na".

(How did I cope? Well, during the transition period, it was a gradual process of understanding the situation. It's like when you're traveling, for instance, I travel from Pavia, and I return to Pavia. It's a journey you take care for yourself to make sure you don't get sick because I still have students waiting at home for me to deliver modules. It's what they tell me – 'What if they get sick, and you're the reason for that).

Richard had a different story to tell as he recalled all the things he did with his colleagues. As he stated that:

"mahambal man naton nga daw nag agi kaman sa buho ka dagom para mabalik sa face to face nga klase but then narealize man at the same time ah mas nagpa budlay man siguro ka process is ti hindi kita kapagusto, that time hindi kita kpagusto kahulag kay t limitado lang kay t nagadungan pa mga activities but then working as team amo gid di ah binuligay lang isa kag isa kag t ah coordination kag cooperation para nga t kung ano goal kang school ano goal ka... aton nga school so mas hapos sya ma achieved"

(While it may seem like we passed through a needle's eye to return to face-to-face classes, we realized that the process became more challenging when our options were limited due to the ongoing activities. However, working as a team, we helped each other, maintained coordination and cooperation, and focused on achieving the school's goals. This made it easier for us to achieve our objectives).

Like Richard, Vilma also had a different story to tell, as She recalled that:

"una gid ano mga bata mostly gid kananda mga dalang mga hindi gid sanda kamaan magbasa. So, una gin himo namon sang una gin himo namon one month nga nag pabasa lang gid kami read, writing amo lang gid da ang gin-fokusan namon for one month then after kadi ah amo dun kami to nag start di man ka gin makaya dun ka bata namon mag ano ka lesson diman nanda eh for actual dun ka face to face process".

(We initially noticed that many students struggled with reading, some of them couldn't read well at all. So, at first, we devoted an entire month to focus solely on reading and writing. That's what we concentrated on for one month. After that, that's when we began teaching them the lessons that they couldn't handle during the actual face-to-face process).

Teachers' presence, importance, and impact to learners' achievement and learning strengthened in the transition back to face-to-face learning. Findings in this study revealed that regardless of the adversities, teachers had adapted and justified the great effect of face-to-face learning to the success of the learners. Teachers gained more insights into their learners' well-being and learning. Seemingly, teachers as an instructional specialist in the new normal set-up from modular to face-to-face learning is being well acknowledged. Teachers made efforts in response to the on-going difficulties amidst the pandemic in the educational transition from modular distance learning back to face-to-face learning.

The FGD's had the same experiences with the main participants. The group discussion revealed that they went back to basic in teaching pupils even in higher grade since they were deprived of actual classroom instruction for two years. They adjusted their teaching methodology, teaching strategies, and teaching styles to cater the needs of every learners. As Teacher F said:

"So the adjustment that we did from modular to face-to-face was, given that those pupils who were in modular learned a little, the teachers had a talk with our school head that those identified pupils who seemed to need help be placed in remedial classes and the rest who were average will stay in regular classrooms; those who need remediation will be pulled out and will focus on reading, writing and arithmetic".

Teacher A also recalled that:

“So far, I seemed to have gone back to the basics because the learners have already forgotten (their previous lessons) during the pandemic and it seemed that they were hooked on using cellphone, gadgets, and playing games. Even when at home, they kept on playing although the connection was unstable. Though they cannot even go out and hang out, still they never have time to open their modules. It’s either their family will bring them to their kaingin or they will stay at home and play with their cellphone all day long, thus you need to go back to basics and introduce to them simple sounds and letters and make adjustments so you will be able to teach them to read. So, adjust and accept the realities in a teacher’s life. It’s challenging but if you accept it, you will also feel fulfillment”.

To cope with the transition period from face to face to modular during the pandemic and back to face to face again, most of the indigenous people teachers made adjustments in their teaching strategies, activities, methods, and approaches of teaching. The process might not be that easy but because of the cooperation and coordination of parents, teachers, pupils and other stakeholders they achieved and made it possible.

Coping with the challenges encountered by indigenous peoples (IP) teachers during the transition period showed that three (3) out of six (6) participants said in the interview that it is not that easy to adjust to teachers and cope with the transition period. Since the learners had passed the previous year level, the level of their learning still needs to be followed up. They have to lower the standard considering that almost 2 years, no teacher and learner interactions happened. Nora said that during face to face it is easy to teach them and now that we are in modular it is difficult to follow-up the students. Now that it is back again to face to face, most of the learners were excited to go back to school again. Richard stressed that “there is a process that need to follow from DEPED in order to make sure the safety of learners in school when they back”. But with the coordination and cooperation of parents and other stakeholders, everything went possible and achieved.

According to Malipot (2020) emphasized that teachers use modular remote learning to vent their grievances. Teachers had received numerous training and seminars to be more equipped in delivering better education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bagood (2020) he stated that it is a departmental rule to train teachers not only for professional growth but also to become ready for unexpected conditions.

Dangle and Sumaoang (2020) also added that the primary obstacles that surfaced were the lack of school funds in the design and distribution of modules. Also, students' struggles in their studies, and their parents' lack a since of understanding to academically assist their children.

Figure 8 shows the coping with the challenges made by the teachers during the transition period

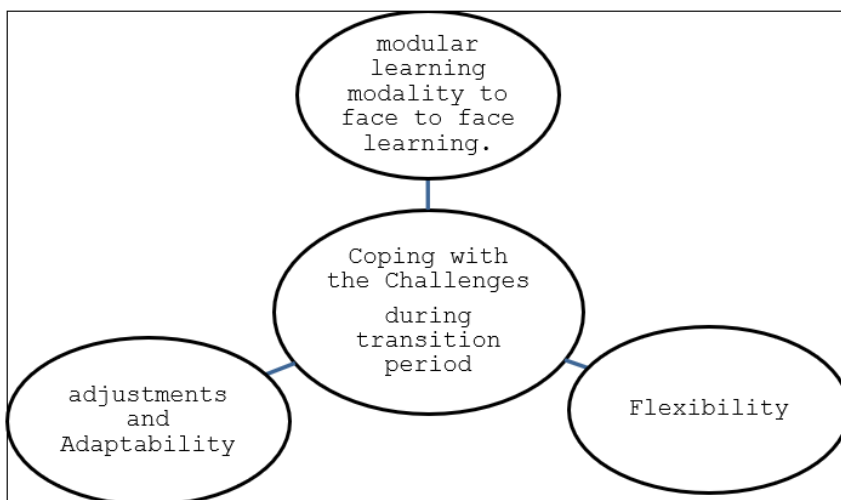


Figure 8. Coping with the challenges made of teachers during the transition period.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses the summary of the findings of the study, conclusions drawn, implications and the recommendations offered on the basis of the findings and conclusions.

Summary

The primary objective of this study is to gain insights into the life stories of Indigenous Peoples (IP) Teachers teaching in hinterland schools, specifically in the Schools District of Calinog II. The study employed qualitative research method to achieve its objectives. In a qualitative research, the role of the researcher is critical as the main instrument for data collection. Various techniques such as document analysis, behavioral observation, and participant interviews were utilized to gather information (Creswell, 2013).

By employing qualitative research methods, this study provided a comprehensive depiction and enhanced the understanding of the experiences and perspectives of indigenous peoples (IP) teachers in the District Calinog II. The researchers aimed to delve deeper into the unique challenges, triumphs, and overall journey of indigenous peoples (IP) teachers residing in this specific context. Through this exploration, a richer understanding of their lives and the context in which they work can be achieved.

It is important to note that qualitative research method allows for a more nuanced and in-depth exploration of the research topic, enabling the researchers to capture the complexities and intricacies of the participants' narratives. By embracing a qualitative approach, the study aimed to contribute to existing knowledge and shed light on the lives of IP teachers in remote rural areas, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of their experiences. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the responses and reactions of IP teachers assigned in far-flung barangays?
2. What are the challenges experienced by the IP teachers in modular learning modality?
3. How do IP teachers cope during the transition period?

Findings of the Study

Based on the results, the following findings had been found out:

1. For the responses and reaction of indigenous people teacher assigned in the hinterland Barangay majority of the participants readily accepted the advice from their immediate superior to serve their fellow indigenous people. A few of the participants doubted at first since they were going to assigned far from their family. However, a small of the participants were enthusiastic and willing to educate their fellow indigenous people.
2. Challenges experienced by indigenous people's teacher reported numerous challenges in modular learning modality. Half of the participants encountered difficulties navigating slippery and muddy roads during rainy days. All of the participants emphasized that Printing of module is particularly the most challenging in hinterland schools due to the absence of electricity. Additionally, half of the participants found the distribution and retrieval of modules from the respective catchment areas to be problematic. Some of the participants also noted that many parents of their pupils have limited basic knowledge, making it difficult for them to assist their children's learning at home.
3. Coping with the challenges during transition period half of the participants believed that learners excel more in face-to-face learning. some of the participants demonstrated flexibility by adapting learner centered methods to meet the needs of indigenous learner. Few of the participants made adjustments and embraced the collaboration, indigenization and inclusive education and strategies specifically tailored to the requirements of indigenous learners.

Conclusion

Given the result of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The Indigenous People Teachers were equipped to preserve the culture and traditions of indigenous people. IPTs were not hesitant and they were willing to render service to their fellows to improve their education and become a professional in the future and improve their quality of life. IPTs have a deep understanding of culture and situation of the indigenous communities. This understanding allows them to deliver education in a more

culturally sensitive and relevant manner, ensuring that the cultural heritage of indigenous communities is passed on to the next generations.

The Indigenous People Teachers are passionate. They have a strong will and more determined to face the challenges they experienced in the implementation of modular learning modality. IPTs rendering service in the hinterland school didn't think about the difficulties and situation of the road, to be far from their family for several days, but rather they strive hard to become resourceful to reproduce and deliver the modules and they were resilient in facing the adversity.

The IPTs were flexible in dealing the difficult situation to cope with the challenges of modular learning modality. The IPTs introduce first the basic of 3Rs (Reading, Writing, Arithmetic), they used learner centered methods that suites the needs of every learners.

Indeed, according to (Barcena, 2018) state that teaching in a hinterland school is an enormous challenge. Teachers would encounter a variety of uncomfortable means of transportation like "habal-habal," and even the use of animals such as horses or carabao just to reach the school. Teachers risk their lives and their entire families to pursue their chosen careers. Some teachers need to walk thousands of meters to rough terrains in these areas.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested based on the result of the study:

1. Teachers may seek professional development training that are relevant to teaching in the hinterland schools. This could include workshops on rural education. Cultural competency training, and developed a localized and indigenized learning materials.
2. School heads may provide feedback during LAC sessions to address the challenges and maintain an open and transparent communication with teachers, parents, community members, and governing bodies. They may also keep their stakeholders informed about school activities, achievements, challenges, and decision-making process.
3. The Department of Education may continue and give the special hardship allowance of teachers. establish partnerships with other government agencies, non-profit organization, and other stakeholders to leverage resources and support for the school.
4. The National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) may advocate for policies and initiatives that promote the rights of indigenous peoples to culturally relevant and quality education in the hinterland areas. This may include advocating for adequate funds, resources and support for schools serving indigenous communities. They may also support efforts to preserve and promote indigenous languages in hinterland schools by encouraging the integration of indigenous languages into the curriculum and provide resources for language revitalization programs.
5. Future researchers may identify gaps in existing research literature related to teaching in hinterland schools and they may develop research questions that address specific aspect of teaching and learning in hinterland schools. Through these research question they may select appropriate methodologies and data collection techniques to gather data on the said research study.

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