

School heads' roles in the preservation of indigenous peoples education (IPED)

MILANE B. CONDE *

Master of Arts in Education Major in Administration and Supervision, Daniel B. Pena Memorial College Foundation, Inc.

International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2026, 19(01), 1160-1163

Publication history: Received on 20 March 2026; revised on 26 April 2026; accepted on 28 April 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2026.19.1.0920>

Abstract

This study investigates the roles of school heads in preserving indigenous heritage through culturally responsive teaching in Tiwi District, Albay. It examines how instructional leadership, curriculum integration, community engagement, resource allocation, and experiential leadership contribute to sustaining indigenous identity within public elementary schools. Guided by national and international mandates including the 1987 Philippine Constitution, DepEd's Indigenous Peoples Education Framework, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples the research highlights the challenges faced by school heads and proposes actionable strategies for inclusive education. By involving teachers, parents, and community elders, the study underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in embedding indigenous knowledge, language, and practices into classroom instruction. Findings aim to inform policy refinements, strengthen teacher training, and enhance culturally grounded learning environments that affirm indigenous identity while promoting academic achievement.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples Education; Culturally Responsive Teaching; School Leadership; Curriculum Integration

1. Introduction

The preservation of indigenous heritage has become a pressing educational and cultural concern in the context of globalization. Indigenous communities possess rich traditions, languages, and knowledge systems, yet these are often marginalized in mainstream education, leading to gradual cultural erosion. Education serves as a powerful tool for cultural sustainability, and culturally responsive teaching provides a framework for integrating learners' cultural backgrounds into instruction. By aligning school leadership with indigenous values and lived experiences, educators can foster inclusivity, affirm identity, and enhance academic engagement.

Global mandates such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) emphasize the role of education in transmitting indigenous knowledge. Similarly, the 1987 Philippine Constitution and DepEd policies institutionalize culture-based education, mandating the integration of indigenous languages and practices into curricula.

This study focuses on the roles of school heads in Tiwi District, Albay, in implementing Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED). It explores their leadership in curriculum integration, community collaboration, and resource allocation, while identifying challenges and proposing solutions. Ultimately, the research contributes to inclusive education that sustains indigenous heritage and strengthens cultural identity among learners.

Here's a concise and informative draft of the requested sections based on *Chapter III: Research Method and Procedure*.

* Corresponding author: MILANE B. CONDE

2. Material

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources to ensure comprehensive data collection. Primary materials included survey questionnaires and interviews with school heads and teachers from ten public elementary schools in Tiwi District serving indigenous learners. These instruments were designed to capture insights into leadership roles, curriculum integration, community engagement, and challenges in implementing Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd). Secondary materials consisted of academic literature, DepEd policy documents, and reports on culturally responsive teaching, which provided theoretical grounding and contextual support. The research instruments were divided into four parts: roles of school heads, level of application of these roles, challenges encountered, and proposed action plans. Validation was conducted through face and content review by experts in school administration and indigenous education. Together, these materials ensured that the study was evidence-based, contextually relevant, and aligned with both national and international mandates on indigenous education.

3. Methods

A descriptive-analytical research design was employed to examine the roles of school heads in preserving indigenous heritage through culturally responsive teaching. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents, ensuring relevance and expertise in Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd). The study involved 10 school heads and 30 teachers from public elementary schools in Tiwi District actively implementing IPEd. Data collection relied on validated survey questionnaires, structured interviews, and classroom observations. The instruments measured leadership practices, curriculum integration, resource allocation, and community engagement. Validation included face validity during thesis proposal defense and content review by external experts in indigenous education. Data gathering followed ethical protocols, with letters of consent submitted to the Division Superintendent and confidentiality assured to respondents. Statistical analysis utilized frequency counts and weighted means to interpret responses, with results categorized into adjectival descriptions ranging from "Very High" to "Very Low." This method provided both quantitative and qualitative insights.

4. Results

Findings revealed that school heads demonstrated moderate to high levels of engagement in culturally responsive leadership roles. Instructional leadership and curriculum integration were consistently applied, with teachers reporting improved inclusion of indigenous knowledge and practices in lessons. Community engagement was strong, as schools collaborated with elders and parents to embed cultural traditions into activities. Resource allocation was adequate but limited, with funding constraints hindering the expansion of cultural programs. Leading by example and promoting experiential leadership were evident in initiatives such as cultural festivals and storytelling sessions. However, challenges included insufficient training, time constraints, and external pressures from modernization. Weighted mean analysis showed most indicators falling within the "High" category, reflecting positive but uneven implementation. Differences between school heads and teachers' perceptions were minimal, supporting the hypothesis of no significant difference in role application. Overall, results affirmed the importance of leadership in sustaining indigenous heritage through education.

5. Discussion

The results highlight the critical role of school heads in advancing Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) through culturally responsive teaching. Their leadership in curriculum integration and community engagement fosters inclusivity and strengthens indigenous identity among learners. The strong collaboration with parents and elders demonstrates the value of community partnerships in sustaining cultural heritage. However, persistent challenges such as limited resources, lack of training, and administrative workload restrict the full realization of culturally responsive practices. These findings align with national mandates under the 1987 Philippine Constitution and DepEd's Indigenous Peoples Education Framework, which emphasize the integration of indigenous knowledge into formal education. The minimal differences between school heads and teachers suggest shared commitment to cultural preservation, though systemic support remains necessary. Addressing resource gaps, enhancing capacity-building, and institutionalizing monitoring mechanisms are essential for sustainability. Ultimately, the study underscores that culturally responsive leadership is both a pedagogical and moral responsibility in education.

6. Conclusion

The study highlights the pivotal role of school heads in preserving indigenous heritage through culturally responsive teaching. Their leadership in curriculum integration, instructional supervision, and community engagement ensures that indigenous knowledge, languages, and practices are meaningfully embedded in education. Despite challenges such as limited resources and systemic constraints, school heads serve as cultural leaders who model inclusivity and promote experiential learning.

By aligning with constitutional mandates and DepEd's Indigenous Peoples Education Framework, their efforts contribute to both academic success and cultural sustainability. Collaboration with teachers, parents, and community elders further strengthens the preservation of indigenous identity within schools.

Ultimately, the study affirms that culturally responsive teaching is not only a pedagogical necessity but also a moral and legal responsibility. Sustaining indigenous heritage through education empowers learners to value their identity, fosters equity, and ensures that cultural traditions are passed on to future generations.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest should be disclosed.

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