

ACADEMIC CHALLENGES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to assess the academic challenges of Indigenous Peoples in Arakan, Cotabato. According to research, indigenous peoples face academic challenges that have an impact on their educational outcomes. This study investigates the experiences of indigenous peoples, determines their academic challenges and analyzes the solutions they use to deal with these issues. This study used a qualitative narrative research approach, and the findings were gathered through an in-depth interview with ten (10) indigenous people and focus group discussion of seven (7) participants who were all purposefully sampled. The interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The themes that emerged in the academic challenges of indigenous peoples are poverty, discrimination, and parental influence. In dealing with their academic challenges, the themes, personal motivation and academic aspirations emerged. The findings indicate that academic challenges are experienced by indigenous peoples in Arakan, and that these issues have affected their education. On this basis, it is recommended that intervention programs be established to address these issues. More research is needed to better understand the underlying connections of these academic challenges and how they influence one another. It is also recommended that in delving into these topics, a more sophisticated research approach with a larger research sample be used.

Keywords: *Indigenous Peoples, Academic Challenges, Poverty, Discrimination, Parental Influence, Personal Motivation, Narrative Approach*

INTRODUCTION

There has long been controversy surrounding the education of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations in the US. Through education, the US government has historically ignored Native and Indigenous cultures while pressuring Native American children and teenagers to adopt European-centric culture. Some of these Native children were taken away against their will from their homes in order to attend school far from their relatives. Native communities' perceptions of American education have been negatively impacted by this, creating an unwelcoming learning environment for Native students. The system's problems have significantly slowed down Native Americans' educational advancement in recent years. The severity of socioeconomic issues and trauma is one of the challenges that Native students face when trying to attend school. Native children under 18 make up 29% of the population living in poverty, and they are more likely than other groups to experience traumatic events as children. Since there aren't any nearby colleges or other educational facilities, many Native American villages are referred to as "education deserts," forcing children to enroll in a school that is 50 miles

away from their homes. Many underlying factors, including the lack of financial support, have an impact on the graduation and enrollment rates of Native students. Furthermore, the fact that 36% of Native American children lacked internet access contributed to the widening of the digital divide between Native students and other American students (Atwell et al., 2021).

Despite their parents' meager financial resources, the young Dumagat Indigenous people from the provinces of Nueva Ecija and Aurora have demonstrated a strong desire to complete college. The native population of these areas struggles with the cost of education due to the distance from the schools and their own financial constraints, which makes financial competence the most important component in their education. This study addresses the subject of poverty among ethnic groups and its impact on schooling (Eduardo & Gabriel, 2021).

Aeta students have experienced difficulties while attending a state university in Central Luzon, the Philippines. The Aeta students struggle with a variety of challenges, including low self-esteem, verbal bullying, academic pressure, language barriers, fear of teachers, and a lack of family support (Rogayan, 2019). In an interview with Al Jazeera, Norman King, the first Aeta to graduate from the University of the Philippines, spoke about the prejudice that still exists towards his people. He claimed that in comparison to other Filipinos, the Aeta were seen as illiterate, poverty stricken, and mountain dwellers who had little to no access to opportunities. He earned his degree with the intention of eliminating the stereotypical perception of the Aeta community and elevating his people to full social equality (Aljazeera, 2018).

Cultural discrimination, injustice, and oppression are among issues that The Lumad's Alternative School in Mindanao is dealing with, and they have had a significant impact on the continuation of true IP education. In the Philippines, colonialism and imperialism have a long history that dates back to the introduction of formal education, which led to the identification of indigenous cultures as being distinct and the resulting history of cultural prejudice. There has been a long history of cultural prejudice and injustice towards the Lumad people, which has led to the emergence of non-governmental organizations (NGO) like the Alternative Learning Center for Livelihood and Development (ALCADEV). Despite their genuine intentions to establish Lumad schools in the area and provide legitimate education while incorporating the indigenous cultural belief systems, traditions, and practices of the community, these Lumad alternative schools and youth came under attack from oppressive groups and the state due to claims that they were serving as a haven for communist and insurgent ideologies. Since 2009 till the present, there have been documented instances of soldiers infiltrating these communities. The militarization of Lumad communities has resulted in land grabs by influential political elites and the eviction of Lumad residents from their homes (Magdadaro & Sacramento, 2022).

FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that underlies the research questions for this study is referred to Ecological Systems Theory. Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed the ecological systems theory that suggests the understanding of human development by looking and considering the entire ecological system where the growth occurs. This system is composed of five socially structured sub-systems that help support and influence the development of a human being. They span the spectrum from the microsystem—a person's immediate surroundings like home, schools, and social circles—to the macrosystem, which refers to the beliefs, knowledge resources, traditions,

and life choices. The various levels within the ecological systems theory are often presented graphically as a series of five systems nested around a focal like a set of concentric circles or a set of Russian dolls.

Ecological systems theory is used in a study in a socioeconomically deprived neighborhood of Sydney, Australia, involving young school-leavers, to examine the variables. According to the theory, an individual's development and success is related to their interaction within the family, the result of the study showed that family support is indeed a crucial factor for success. Some of the respondents who were once students who underachieved did not lack the potential and capability, they failed because their potentials were not developed and nurtured in the school environment (Nand, 2017).

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design to determine the academic challenges that indigenous peoples experience. The researcher has found that the qualitative approach is most suited for this study since it seeks to express indigenous peoples' experiences in the context of Philippine education. In order to deeply understand the topic of the research, the researcher will utilize narrative research approach in delving the academic challenges of Indigenous Peoples in view of their lived experiences. (Creswell, 2018).

Respondents

The researcher has decided to have seventeen (17) individuals who will serve as the respondents of this qualitative study; ten (10) for in-depth interview and seven (7) for focus group discussion (Creswell, 2018). The researchers formulated the criteria that define the selection of the sample in order to maintain quality assurance when choosing the respondents. The criteria used to choose the particular participants who satisfy the requirements of the study are as follows:

- The subjects of this study must be at least 18 years old or above and could be male or female.
- Subjects must be residents of a barangay in the Municipality of Arakan, Cotabato.
- Subjects should be a bona fide member of a recognized ethnic group in Arakan, Cotabato.
- Subjects must have attended high school or higher education (old or new curriculum) in Arakan for at least 2 years or more.

Instruments

The in-depth interview and focus group discussion questions were built around the research questions that were going to be covered in this study. The researcher developed open-ended questions under each of the research questions in order to obtain the necessary data from the respondents. They covered every facet of each research question and were direct and open-ended.

Data Analysis Method

Thematic Analysis is utilized in this study. Finding themes, or noteworthy or intriguing patterns in the data, is the goal of a thematic analysis. Once themes have been identified, the research or argument can be discussed using these themes. The data are explained and made clearer through a strong thematic analysis, which goes beyond simple summarization (Clarke et. al., 2013). For any study that aims to find meaning through interpretations, thematic analysis is considered to be the ideal approach. Data analysis gains a methodical element as a result. It allows researchers to link an analysis of a theme's recurrence to an evaluation of the complete text. This will boost the research's overall meaning while simultaneously increasing the research's precision and complexity (Marks et. al, 2004).

DISCUSSION

Academic Challenges of Indigenous Peoples

In this section indicated the academic challenges faced by the indigenous peoples as they pursue their education with corresponding three (3) themes emerging from the conduct of thematic data analysis such as Poverty, Discrimination and Parental Influence seen in Table 1.

Poverty. This theme delves into the most significant challenge in the education of the participants that has greatly affected their success or failure in school. Poverty was a recurring theme among the experiences shared by the participants during the in-depth interview. All indigenous participants have shared their experiences with financial difficulties and have revealed that financial struggles have been the most significant impediment to their educational success. Participants came from various Indigenous Peoples communities across Arakan, but the reality of poverty in these native communities remained consistent. They also expressed awareness of their financial situation and viewed it as one of the reasons why they perceive themselves to be at the bottom of the social hierarchy. In addition to their awareness, they have accepted the fact that poverty is prevalent among indigenous peoples and have expressed their struggle with this issue in their studies. Hence, the statements of the participants below:

The tribe/IP is known to be poor. First of all we do not have education, because if you have education you can be government employee to help you sustain the needs of your family. The tribe/IP is known poor and has no education. It is painful, but it is the reality (IDI_P1)

The number one problem is the basic needs or daily needs. Most of the tribes are situated in remote areas. There are traditional foods available naturally, but other needs like soap and other basic needs are hard to come by (IDI_P3).

We have a student parade during the anniversary of the barangay, I was hiding because I do not have slippers on. I walk in the middle of the road where grass is growing so my feet will not hurt from the stones. During dry seasons, I go to school with banana as my only food.... If you really have no interest in studying, you cannot really finish your studies because of these circumstances (FGD_1).

Because of the difficulty of our situation...The reason why I have not finished my studies is because of financial problems. Due to the many school responsibilities that must be paid, my family lacks budgeting, I have no paper and money for school: these contributed to the reasons why I have not finished my studies (IDI_P2).

When I was studying, what I did is solely by initiative. I manage my time and everything I do is allocated, from waking up to doing the things I have to finish. When I was studying, I have a sideline job of clearing farms before going to school. I just wait for the school warning, and then I will change clothes and go directly to school (IDI_P5).

When I was in high school, every Saturday and Sunday, we will contact our teachers to know if there are jobs, we can do in their farms in exchange for money to buy rice and pay for our projects in school (FGD_2).

The reality of poverty among IP has always been a burden placed on the shoulders of IP students who want to complete their studies. Participants who successfully completed their studies shared that they worked part-time or side jobs (often laborious) to meet their daily needs, education, and sometimes even their families. Even at such a young age, they have learned to work in order to survive another day and continue their education. In particular, it is confirmed that poverty is the main issue that the indigenous peoples face and that it has significantly impacted their performance in education.

This result is consistent with the previous studies on the subject of poverty in indigenous peoples. The findings show that financial adversity is the most influencing point that families take into account when making decisions about their children's education and it occurs frequently in every IP household. Due to the fact that families were unable to support their children financially, IP students were forced to work additional jobs to keep up with their studies. Doing sideline jobs and being a working student are mostly what the students did to address this problem. Poverty is a serious matter that should be address since it largely affects education especially in the case of the IP students. Thus, their financial situation is a determinant on the difficulty of going to school and this is reflected in their experiences. The remarks of the participants are supported by Eduardo & Gabriel (2021).

Discrimination. This theme investigates school-based discrimination, specifically in the context of IP students studying in non-IP dominant schools. Due to the municipality's IP minority, there have been few to no schools with an IP dominant student population, and as a result, IP is the minority enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. The participants shared their experiences with discrimination as an IP student studying in these educational institutions. Although discrimination did not manifest in all research participants, it is noteworthy that more than half of the participants had some level of discrimination.

The remarks of the participants are supported by Atrey (2018) & Eriksson (2019). Discrimination is related to the IP students' feelings of shame and fear as they were subjected to ridicule and taunting because of their financial situation. Prejudice against IP is a form of discrimination based on their appearance, color, and/or the preconceived notion that IP is beneath society. These actions of contempt are directed at IP by non-IP students. IP students are led to

question why they are even an IP, which contributes to their feelings of shame and fear. Participants have also stated why they believe they have faced discrimination. This is closely related to the third theme that emerged in this study. They believe that prejudice against the IP community stems from home. Some participants stated that IP parents have not taught their children to be proud of their heritage and to understand the tribe's deep meaning and colorful history. As a result, when IP students are taunted and bullied at school because of their ethnicity, they are unable to defend themselves. Furthermore, they believe that non-IP parents should be held accountable to teach their children value and respect for others regardless of ethnicity or social status. Meanwhile, below are the statements of the participants.

Based on my experience when I was studying, our lunch is mostly mashed banana, cassava or sweet potato, and we eat on top of trees. The reason is for us to not be seen by our classmates eating such food, because if they see us, they will make fun of us (IDI_P4).

The reason why there is discrimination because of our level in the society. We are in the low level, because our parents cannot provide us financially just like our clothes. They cannot afford it for themselves, how much more for us? (FGD_3)

Sometimes, I think of why I am an IP. Especially during the difficult times and when you are facing discrimination, you will really question why I am a member of the IP community. But time to time, I realize the reason why we are like this, so I must be proud (IDI_P7).

One of the reasons why the youth do not show love for their culture is because of their parents. Parents have not educated their children at a young age about how precious their culture and the reason why they live the way they live. If we do not educate our kids, there is a tendency for them to be ashamed in school. Sometimes they think that 'I am different from them' and they act as they are different from other children (IDI_P8).

In my opinion, this largely depends on the parents. If parents have low regards to other people, there is possibility that their children will copy them. What I want to happen is whether you are non-IP or you belong to an IP community, at least teach your children respect for other people because they will carry such character to school (FGD_4).

The data analysis identified discrimination as a challenge in IP education. Previous research suggests that discrimination is present in the educational experiences of indigenous peoples, which in this study is confirmed with significant findings from the experiences of IPs in Arakan. Interestingly, the themes of poverty and discrimination are inextricably linked, as the majority of discrimination experiences are directly caused by poverty.

According to the findings, IP students experienced fear and shame as a result of being bullied by their non-IP classmates because of their financial status, which was caused by the food they ate and the clothes they wore. The findings also show a link to the literature mentioned in

the introduction, which states that discrimination has affected the self-esteem of indigenous students as a result of the presence of bullying in school. Due to continued bullying, IP students became timid, and they lost confidence to continue attending school. The remarks of the participants are supported by Rogayan (2019).

Parental Influence. The parental influence in the participants' education is examined in this theme. Participants were questioned about the role that their parents played in influencing their education. Participants claimed that their education has been significantly impacted by their parents. The views of IP parents regarding education and their beliefs in general have either positively or negatively affected their children's education, both directly and indirectly. Participants who have parents who support them in their education have completed their tertiary education successfully.

On the other hand, IP students from families with less favorable views of education had to struggle to further their education. The results also demonstrated the presence of strong family ties in the IP families. Strong family ties are one of the characteristics of the IP that has in some way impacted the education of IP children. Some participants described this as a strong family bond that is closely linked to the culture and beliefs of the IP community. Hence, the remarks of the participants below.

The influence of family is big. The way parents molded their children in education is directly connected to their perception of life. The parents have the greatest influence in the education of their children because if parents are supportive in their children's education, they will also be interested in studying. My family had so many sacrifices for me. When I was in college my mother was the only one providing my needs and I saw her provide me everything even if it means that she will deprive herself these things (IDI_P8).

Even if it is hard, children should be sent to school so their lives will not be same as ours. But there are parents who just avoid or neglect the obligation of sending their children to school. They often say, "I will not send my children to school because I do not even have the money to pay for the school obligations." (IDI_P9)

Actually, my father also studied law but because of strong family ties in the IP, he was not able to finish it. My grandmother did not allow my father to go to Manila to study and would say that they can survive eating sweet potato only as long as they are together. She would say that, "It does not matter if you finish or not as long as we are together." (IDI_P8)

There are IP parents who have no interest in sending their children to school, because of their fear that something bad will happen to their children if they are distanced from them (FGD_5).

Another interesting theme occurred in the findings is the connection of discrimination and parental influence. Participants believe that parental influence plays a vital role in the upbringing of children through the teachings that parents teach at home which manifest in the attitude and character the children portray in school. They believe the attitude that the non-IP portray towards

IP students are due to the upbringing of their parents at home. In addition, IP students are greatly affected by bullying since IP parents have not taught their children to stand their grounds.

The statements of the participants are supported by Galindo et al. (2018). The findings also point to the importance of parents in the education of their children. There is a high likelihood of children completing their education in households where IP parents are supportive of their children's education. Children who grow up in homes where education is not a priority have the possibility of dropping out. The presence of strong family ties in IP families has had a significant impact on the education of the IP children. Family is essential to a child's growth and decision-making, according to Ecological Systems Theory. This holds true for the study's IP participants. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), parents have such a powerful impact over their children's life that it may affect the choices they make and the direction they go.

Table 1. Academic Challenges of Indigenous Peoples

Profile of the respondents	Core ideas/statements	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Themes
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 1</p> <p>Female Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tribe/IP is known to be poor. First of all we do not have education, because if you have education you can be a government employee to help you sustain the needs of your family. The tribe/IP is known poor and has no education. It is painful, but it is the reality. 	<p>SS1: The tribe/IP is known to be poor. First of all we do not have education, because if you have education you can be a government employee to help you sustain the needs of your family. The tribe/IP is known poor and has no education. It is painful, but it is the reality.</p>	<p>FM1: Poverty was a recurring theme among the experiences shared by the participants during the in-depth interview. All indigenous participants have shared their experiences with financial difficulties and have revealed that financial struggles have been the most significant impediment to their educational success. Participants came from various Indigenous Peoples communities across Arakan, but the reality of poverty in these native communities remained consistent.</p>	<p>Poverty</p>
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 3</p> <p>Male Manobo-Kulamanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number one problem is the basic needs or daily needs. Most of the tribes are situated in remote areas. There are traditional 	<p>SS2: The number one problem is the basic needs or daily needs. Most of the tribes are situated in remote areas. There are traditional foods available naturally, but other needs like soap</p>	<p>SS7, SS8, SS9, SS10, SS11, SS12</p>	

	<p>foods available naturally, but other needs like soap and other basic needs are hard to come by.</p>	<p>and other basic needs are hard to come by.</p>		
<p>FGD 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a student parade during the anniversary of the barangay, I was hiding because I do not have slippers on. I walk in the middle of the road where grass is growing so my feet will not hurt from the stones. During dry seasons, I go to school with banana as my only food.... If you really have no interest in studying, you cannot really finish your studies because of these circumstances. 	<p>SS3: We have a student parade during the anniversary of the barangay, I was hiding because I do not have slippers on. I walk in the middle of the road where grass is growing so my feet will not hurt from the stones. During dry seasons, I go to school with banana as my only food.... If you really have no interest in studying, you cannot really finish your studies because of these circumstances</p>		
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 2</p> <p>Female Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of the difficulty of our situation...The reason why I have not finished my studies is because of financial problems. Due to the many 	<p>SS4: Because of the difficulty of our situation...The reason why I have not finished my studies is because of financial problems. Due to the many school responsibilities that must be paid, my family lacks budgeting, I have no paper and money</p>		

	<p>school responsibilities that must be paid, my family lacks budgeting, I have no paper and money for school: these contributed to the reasons why I have not finished my studies.</p>	<p>for school: these contributed to the reasons why I have not finished my studies.</p>		
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 5</p> <p>Male Manobo-Kulamanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I was studying, what I did is solely by initiative. I manage my time and everything I do is allocated, from waking up to doing the things I have to finish. When I was studying, I have a sideline job of clearing farms before going to school. I just wait for the school warning, and then I will change clothes and go directly to school. 	<p>SS5: When I was studying, what I did is solely by initiative. I manage my time and everything I do is allocated, from waking up to doing the things I have to finish. When I was studying, I have a sideline job of clearing farms before going to school. I just wait for the school warning, and then I will change clothes and go directly to school.</p>		
<p>FGD 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I was in high school, every Saturday and Sunday, we will contact our teachers to know if there are jobs, we can do in their 	<p>SS6: When I was in high school, every Saturday and Sunday, we will contact our teachers to know if there are jobs, we can do in their farms in exchange for money to buy rice and pay for our projects in school.</p>		

	<p>farms in exchange for money to buy rice and pay for our projects in school.</p>			
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 4 Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on my experience when I was studying, our lunch is mostly mashed banana, cassava or sweet potato, and we eat on top of trees. The reason is for us to not be seen by our classmates eating such food, because if they see us, they will make fun of us 	<p>SS13: Based on my experience when I was studying, our lunch is mostly mashed banana, cassava or sweet potato, and we eat on top of trees. The reason is for us to not be seen by our classmates eating such food, because if they see us, they will make fun of us</p>	<p>FM2: The participants shared their experiences with discrimination as an IP student studying in these educational institutions. Although discrimination did not manifest in all research participants, it is noteworthy that more than half of the participants had some level of discrimination. The data analysis identified discrimination as a challenge in IP education. Previous research suggests that discrimination is present in the educational experiences of indigenous peoples, which in this study is confirmed with significant findings from the experiences of IPs in Arakan. Interestingly, the themes of poverty and discrimination are inextricably linked, as the majority of discrimination experiences are directly caused by poverty.</p>	<p>Discrimination</p>
<p>FGD 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reason why there is discrimination because of our level in the society. We are in the low level, because our parents cannot provide us financially just like our clothes. They cannot afford it for themselves, how much more for us? 	<p>SS14: The reason why there is discrimination because of our level in the society. We are in the low level, because our parents cannot provide us financially just like our clothes. They cannot afford it for themselves, how much more for us?</p>		
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 7 Female</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes, I think of why I am an IP. Especially during the difficult times 	<p>SS15: Sometimes, I think of why I am an IP. Especially during the difficult times and when you are facing discrimination, you will</p>	<p>SS18, SS19, SS20, SS21, SS22</p>	

<p>Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<p>and when you are facing discrimination, you will really question why I am a member of the IP community. But time to time, I realize the reason why we are like this, so I must be proud</p>	<p>really question why I am a member of the IP community. But time to time, I realize the reason why we are like this, so I must be proud</p>		
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 8 Female Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the reasons why the youth do not show love for their culture is because of their parents. Parents have not educated their children at a young age about how precious their culture and the reason why they live the way they live. If we do not educate our kids, there is a tendency for them to be ashamed in school. Sometimes they think that 'I am different from them' and they act as they are different from other children. 	<p>SS16: One of the reasons why the youth do not show love for their culture is because of their parents. Parents have not educated their children at a young age about how precious their culture and the reason why they live the way they live. If we do not educate our kids, there is a tendency for them to be ashamed in school. Sometimes they think that 'I am different from them' and they act as they are different from other children.</p>		
<p>FGD 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In my opinion, this largely depends on the parents. If 	<p>SS17: In my opinion, this largely depends on the parents. If parents have low regards to</p>		

	<p>parents have low regards to other people, there is possibility that their children will copy them. What I want to happen is whether you are non-IP or you belong to an IP community, at least teach your children respect for other people because they will carry such character to school.</p>	<p>other people, there is possibility that their children will copy them. What I want to happen is whether you are non-IP or you belong to an IP community, at least teach your children respect for other people because they will carry such character to school.</p>		
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 8 Female Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The influence of family is big. The way parents molded their children in education is directly connected to their perception of life. The parents have the greatest influence in the education of their children because if parents are supportive in their children's education, they will also be interested in studying. My family had so many 	<p>SS23: The influence of family is big. The way parents molded their children in education is directly connected to their perception of life. The parents have the greatest influence in the education of their children because if parents are supportive in their children's education, they will also be interested in studying. My family had so many sacrifices for me. When I was in college my mother was the only one providing my needs and I saw her provide me everything even if it means that she will deprive herself these things.</p>	<p>FM3: Participants claimed that their education has been significantly impacted by their parents. The views of IP parents regarding education and their beliefs in general have either positively or negatively affected their children's education, both directly and indirectly. Participants who have parents who support them in their education have completed their tertiary education successfully. On the other hand, IP students from families with less favorable views of education had to struggle to further their education.</p>	<p>Parental Influence</p>

	<p>sacrifices for me. When I was in college my mother was the only one providing my needs and I saw her provide me everything even if it means that she will deprive herself these things.</p>		<p>Participants believe that parental influence plays a vital role in the upbringing of children through the teachings that parents teach at home which manifest in the attitude and character the children portray in school. They believe the attitude that the non-IP portray towards IP students are due to the upbringing of their parents at home. In addition, IP students are greatly affected by bullying since IP parents have not taught their children to stand their grounds.</p>	
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 9 Male Manobo-Kulamanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if it is hard, children should be sent to school so their lives will not be same as ours. But there are parents who just avoid or neglect the obligation of sending their children to school. They often say, "I will not send my children to school because I do not even have the money to pay for the school obligations." 	<p>SS24: Even if it is hard, children should be sent to school so their lives will not be same as ours. But there are parents who just avoid or neglect the obligation of sending their children to school. They often say, "I will not send my children to school because I do not even have the money to pay for the school obligations."</p>	<p>SS27, SS28, SS29, SS30, SS31, SS32, SS33</p>	
<p>IDI PARTICIPANT 8 Female Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actually, my father also studied law but because of strong family ties in the IP, he was not able to finish it. My grandmother 	<p>SS25: Actually, my father also studied law but because of strong family ties in the IP, he was not able to finish it. My grandmother did not allow my father to go to Manila to study and would say that they can survive eating sweet</p>		

	<p>did not allow my father to go to Manila to study and would say that they can survive eating sweet potato only as long as they are together. She would say that, "It does not matter if you finish or not as long as we are together."</p>	<p>potato only as long as they are together. She would say that, "It does not matter if you finish or not as long as we are together."</p>		
FGD 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are IP parents who have no interest in sending their children to school, because of their fear that something bad will happen to their children if they are distanced from them. 	<p>SS26: There are IP parents who have no interest in sending their children to school, because of their fear that something bad will happen to their children if they are distanced from them.</p>		

Dealing with Academic Challenges and the Academic Aspirations of Indigenous Peoples

This part of the study determined how indigenous peoples deal with the challenges they face in their education and their aspiration for it. Through thematic analysis, two (2) themes emerged such as Personal Motivation and Academic Aspirations of Indigenous Peoples seen in Table 2.

Personal Motivation. This theme investigates the participants' individual motivations for pursuing and completing their education. Despite the many challenges that have impacted their education, the innate motivation of the students has the biggest impact on whether they succeed or fail in school. As participants discussed their opinions on education and their convictions about its efficacy, this theme emerged. Participants acknowledged that challenges do affect how well their academic efforts turn out, but they also asserted that their inner resolve to overcome these obstacles outweighed all of their difficulties. They claimed that while the harsh words they

encountered from others and even from their own community may have been detrimental to them, they took them positively and used them as inspiration for their studies. Hence, the remarks of the participants as presented below.

I really persevered. When I started studying, I was already a working student and provided for my education. I really looked for ways to keep going (IDI_P9).

We are 9 siblings in the family, and I was the only one who is interested in studying. My older siblings were married at early age, and this challenged me to pursue my education (IDI_P10).

Personally, I disregarded all the problems and challenges I faced, and I used them as motivation to keep going (FGD_7).

Although it was difficult, because I have to work in order for me to continue my studies, I was motivated to graduate to set an example in my community and to encourage them to continue their studies as well (FGD_6).

The findings revealed an intriguing result indicating that IPs' personal motivation is a determinant in their education. Although challenges impacted their educational experience, their personal motivation and innate interest has driven their determination to complete their studies. This is a notable result because, despite financial constraints, discrimination, and parental influences, personal interest was a key factor in their success and perception of education. This result emerged in the study that was not anticipated by the researcher and was not supported by relevant literature presented in the study. This is significant because their desire to complete their studies has led them to seek solutions to problems and continue their education despite hardships and challenges. It answers the question of what they did to deal the problems they encounter in their education. In connection, further studies can be conducted to deeper understand the function of personal motivation in educational performance and how it helps in the success of the students in the field of education.

Academic Aspirations. This theme explores the aspirations of the participants for the education of the indigenous peoples. Their intentions for the IP's education are apparent in their statements. Additionally, as participants have high hopes for the upcoming IP generations, they encouraged young IP students to continue with their individual studies. Despite the fact that not all participants had successfully completed tertiary education, they all expressed their belief in the value of education and their conviction that it will play a crucial role in improving the IP community. Some participants expressed a desire for an inclusive and progressive education system for the IP. They stated some strategies for developing an education system that will greatly benefit the IP's education. One example is the integration of IP culture and practices into government-provided formal education. Another is the full and improved implementation of the IPEd program. Lastly, the establishment of the *Study Now Pay Later* program in education especially for IP students. Thus, indicated below are the remarks of the participants.

What I want to happen is that the IP youth will persevere in finishing their education. First of all, they should think that education is really the key to success. It is the only way that the IP community will develop and be empowered (IDI_P1).

Education is the tool to empower each of us for the development of the nation and not only for the nation but for us individually (IDI_P4).

I have seen that the tribe needs degree-holders to serve and help the IP community, in order to uplift their confidence and help in leadership (FGD_3).

Education should not be the reason that traditional education or Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) be eliminated. Some of the IP students who have graduated have a tendency of forgetting or disregarding their IKSP. I hope that the traditional way of education will be integrated in modern education, not that the modern education is the cause that traditional education will be forgotten (IDI_P7).

As a tribe, what we want is integration of Indigenous Peoples Education in DepEd. This is what we advocate, because through this all students not only the IP will learn to love the culture of the tribe. Nowadays, there are IPEd implementing schools, but IPEd is only taught in grades 1 to 3. What we want is that it should be integrated in the culture and arts subjects in high school and college. Through this, students will discover our origin and they will learn to love the culture of the tribe. Honestly, Arakan will not be this colorful if the tribe is not present (IDI_P8).

There should be specific programs for the IP like the Study Now Pay Later Program. This is one of the best ways to help the IP, because CFCST (local college) here in Arakan offers limited degree programs only. The tribe needs lawyers to protect our ancestral domain, and doctors and nurses... Through this the IP community will have access to these professions that they want and need (IDI_P9).

The findings of the study revealed the academic aspirations of the indigenous peoples for education. Their mentality is a manifestation of the idea that education is essential for the empowerment of the IP community and the solution to all of their problems. This demonstrates that the IP community is supportive of education and would pursue higher education if given the chance. This finding is significant for the state of education among indigenous peoples because it supports their belief that education can improve their socioeconomic situation and help the IP community. The findings also highlighted some of their academic aspirations. The first step is to improve the implementation of the IPEd curriculum in Philippine schools. They believe that by better understanding of the IPs culture and beliefs, youth can learn to respect and love the culture they practice. With better understanding, IP children will never be ashamed of their ethnicity and will be able to proudly declare that they are a member of an ethnic group (Villaplaza, 2021).

Aside from that, they hoped for an inclusive and progressive educational system in which traditional and modern education collaborate. They think that learning about the IPs culture and practices in school will help them understand it more effectively and reduce the likelihood that they will forget them. Only by integrating traditional education into formal education will this be possible. This provides an opportunity for more research on how to incorporate traditional

education into modern education. Lastly, in order to solve the problem of poverty in the education of the IP, they suggested an educational program of Study Now Pay Later. Through this the IP will have access to professions that are needed by the community. Not having to problem, the financial part of going to school will give the IP a chance to venture to study the degree programs they want.

Table 2. Dealing with Academic Challenges and the Academic Aspirations of Indigenous Peoples

Profile of the respondents	Core ideas/statements	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Themes
IDI PARTICIPANT 9 Male Manbo-Kulamanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I really persevered. When I started studying, I was already a working student and provided for my education. I really looked for ways to keep going. 	SS34: I really persevered. When I started studying, I was already a working student and provided for my education. I really looked for ways to keep going.	FM4: Despite the many challenges that have impacted their education, the innate motivation of the students has the biggest impact on whether they succeed or fail in school. Participants acknowledged that challenges do affect how well their academic efforts turn out, but they also asserted that their inner resolve to overcome these obstacles outweighed all of their difficulties. The findings revealed an intriguing result indicating that IPs' personal motivation is a determinant in their education. Although challenges impacted their educational experience, their personal motivation and innate interest has driven their determination to complete their studies. This is a notable result because, despite	Personal Motivation
IDI PARTICIPANT 10 Male Manobo-Kulamanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are 9 siblings in the family, and I was the only one who is interested in studying. My older siblings were married at early age, and this challenged me to pursue my education. 	SS35: We are 9 siblings in the family, and I was the only one who is interested in studying. My older siblings were married at early age, and this challenged me to pursue my education.		
FGD 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personally, I disregarded all the problems and challenges I faced, and I used them as motivation to keep going. 	SS36: Personally, I disregarded all the problems and challenges I faced, and I used them as motivation to keep going.		
FGD 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although it was difficult, because I have to work in order for me to continue my studies, I was 	SS37: Although it was difficult, because I have to work in order for me to continue my studies, I was		

	<p>motivated to graduate to set an example in my community and to encourage them to continue their studies as well.</p>	<p>motivated to graduate to set an example in my community and to encourage them to continue their studies as well.</p>	<p>financial constraints, discrimination, and parental influences, personal interest was a key factor in their success and perception of education.</p> <p>SS38, SS39, SS40, SS41, SS42, SS43, SS44</p>	
<p>IDI PARTICIPAN T 1 Female Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What I want to happen is that the IP youth will persevere in finishing their education. First of all, they should think that education is really the key to success. It is the only way that the IP community will develop and be empowered. 	<p>SS45: What I want to happen is that the IP youth will persevere in finishing their education. First of all, they should think that education is really the key to success. It is the only way that the IP community will develop and be empowered.</p>	<p>FM5: The findings of the study revealed the academic aspirations of the indigenous peoples for education. Their mentality is a manifestation of the idea that education is essential for the empowerment of the IP community and the solution to all of their problems. This demonstrates that the IP community is supportive of education and would pursue higher education if given the chance. This finding is significant for the state of education among indigenous peoples because it supports their belief that education can improve their socioeconomic situation and help the IP community.</p>	<p>Academic Aspirations</p>
<p>IDI PARTICIPAN T 4 Male Manobo-Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education is the tool to empower each of us for the development of the nation and not only for the nation but for us individually. 	<p>SS46: Education is the tool to empower each of us for the development of the nation and not only for the nation but for us individually.</p>		
<p>FGD 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have seen that the tribe needs degree-holders to serve and help the IP community, in order to uplift their confidence and help in leadership. 	<p>SS47: I have seen that the tribe needs degree-holders to serve and help the IP community, in order to uplift their confidence and help in leadership.</p>		

<p>IDI PARTICIPAN T 7</p> <p>Female Manobo- Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education should not be the reason that traditional education or Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) be eliminated. Some of the IP students who have graduated have a tendency of forgetting or disregarding their IKSP. I hope that the traditional way of education will be integrated in modern education, not that the modern education is the cause that traditional education will be forgotten. 	<p>SS48: Education should not be the reason that traditional education or Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) be eliminated. Some of the IP students who have graduated have a tendency of forgetting or disregarding their IKSP. I hope that the traditional way of education will be integrated in modern education, not that the modern education is the cause that traditional education will be forgotten.</p>	<p>SS51, SS52, SS53, SS54, SS55</p>	
<p>IDI PARTICIPAN T 8</p> <p>Female Manobo- Tinonanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a tribe, what we want is integration of Indigenous Peoples Education in DepEd. This is what we advocate, because through this all students not only the IP will learn to love the culture of the tribe. Nowadays, there are IPEd implementing schools, but IPEd is only taught in grades 1 to 3. What we want is that it should be 	<p>SS49: As a tribe, what we want is integration of Indigenous Peoples Education in DepEd. This is what we advocate, because through this all students not only the IP will learn to love the culture of the tribe. Nowadays, there are IPEd implementing schools, but IPEd is only taught in grades 1 to 3. What we want is that it should be integrated in the culture and arts subjects in high</p>		

	<p>integrated in the culture and arts subjects in high school and college. Through this, students will discover our origin and they will learn to love the culture of the tribe. Honestly, Arakan will not be this colorful if the tribe is not present</p>	<p>school and college. Through this, students will discover our origin and they will learn to love the culture of the tribe. Honestly, Arakan will not be this colorful if the tribe is not present</p>		
<p>IDI PARTICIPAN T 9 Male Manobo- Kulamanon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be specific programs for the IP like the Study Now Pay Later Program. This is one of the best ways to help the IP, because CFCST (local college) here in Arakan offers limited degree programs only. The tribe needs lawyers to protect our ancestral domain, and doctors and nurses... Through this the IP community will have access to these professions that they want and need. 	<p>SS50: There should be specific programs for the IP like the Study Now Pay Later Program. This is one of the best ways to help the IP, because CFCST (local college) here in Arakan offers limited degree programs only. The tribe needs lawyers to protect our ancestral domain, and doctors and nurses... Through this the IP community will have access to these professions that they want and need.</p>		

CONCLUSION

When conclusions were drawn based on the summary of findings, the inquiry was more easily comprehended.

1. Results revealed from the thematic analysis that were three (3) themes that emerged from the academic challenges of indigenous peoples including Poverty, Discrimination, and Parental Influence. The results indicate that academic challenges are present in the education of indigenous peoples. These academic challenges are also highly interconnected as the three themes have manifested interrelation in how these academic challenges affect the education of indigenous peoples.
2. Also, it was found out from the thematic analysis that personal motivation and academic aspirations play a vital role in how indigenous peoples deal with their academic challenges. It means that despite struggles brought about by poverty, discrimination, and parental influence, indigenous peoples have found inner resolve to push through in their education, find ways to solve their academic problems, and possess a positive outlook in education for them and for the future generation of indigenous peoples.

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