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# Compliance with the Integration of Indigenous People Studies into Relevant Higher Educational Curricula: The Case of State Universities and Colleges in Negros Occidental

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**Abstract.** The integration of Indigenous Studies is a crucial step for higher education institutions (HEIs) to foster inclusive academic environments. In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) mandated this integration through CMO No. 2, Series of 2019. This study assessed the extent of HEIs' compliance with this policy, specifically in the areas of curriculum schemes, training, and monitoring. It also qualitatively explored the challenges faced by IP educators and the strategies they employ. A multi-method approach was utilized, beginning with a quantitative component that surveyed program chairs and faculty members to measure institutional compliance. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Concurrently, a qualitative component involved focus group discussions (FGDs) with IP educators from three State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Negros, providing rich, cross-verified insights which were analyzed using Lichtman's 3Cs. Quantitative findings revealed a moderate level of compliance among HEIs, indicating that while institutional efforts were present, they were not sufficient to meet all criteria. The qualitative inquiry further illuminated these findings by identifying key themes on the strategies used and the numerous challenges encountered in the integration process. This study affirms the value of a multi-methods approach for a comprehensive evaluation of policy compliance, as quantitative data provides a snapshot of institutional efforts, while qualitative insights reveal the critical gap between documented compliance and actual classroom practice. These findings underscore the importance of continuous, collaborative dialogue among all stakeholders to ensure the respectful and sustainable integration of Indigenous Peoples' studies into higher education.

**Keywords.** Indigenous People Studies, Higher Educational Curricula, Multi-Method, State Universities and Colleges, Negros Occidental, Philippines

## 1. Introduction

Indigenous Peoples Studies, a multidisciplinary field drawing from anthropology, sociology, history, literature, political science, and gender studies [1], began in Canada during the 1960s and in the United States in the 1970s. This period was marked by rising anti-war sentiment, growing resistance movements, and significant challenges to social injustices [2]. Recent educational trends for indigenous peoples have been shaped by a conflict between decolonization and assimilation. A key moment in decolonization was the 2007 United Nations'

adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [3]. Despite this, many indigenous students around the world still face challenges. They often lack access to education in their native languages, and school curricula frequently omit indigenous histories, worldviews, and traditional knowledge. Inappropriate educational practices, policies of assimilation, and exclusionary curricular models have led not only to educational disadvantage but to the erosion of Indigenous identity and self-determination [4].

Efforts to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into higher education have been a growing challenge for institutions. Educators and scholars are increasingly aware that traditional curricula, content, and teaching methods can reinforce colonial biases and exclude certain student populations [5]. Despite decades of policy aimed at solving the "Aboriginal problem" through education, these initiatives have largely been unsuccessful [6]. However, integrating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum has shown positive results. When classroom instruction validates their cultural identity and personal experiences, students are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and academic motivation [7]. A recent systematic review explored the current research landscape on integrating Indigenous knowledge into school curricula [8].

In the Philippine context, indigenous knowledge and worldviews remained underrepresented in the national curriculum. It is often treated as supplementary content rather than a central component of educational discourse [9]. The enforcement of Republic Act 8371 [70], commonly referred to as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, and Republic Act 10908 [71], mandating the inclusion of IP and Muslim Filipino history in educational curricula, marked a legislative step forward. Furthermore, the issuance of CHED Memorandum Order No. 2, Series of 2019 [69], which mandated the incorporation of Indigenous Peoples Studies into relevant higher education curricula, reflects a policy-level recognition of the importance of IP inclusion. However, the success of such initiatives depends heavily on how higher education institutions translate policy into practice, foster partnerships with IP communities, and reframe academic spaces as inclusive and culturally affirming.

In the province of Negros Occidental, HEIs, both in public and private institutions, are enjoined to offer IP studies in their curricula [10]. The extent of compliance may vary from the institutions category considering factors like access to diverse funding sources, strong community partnership and flexibility in curriculum design. Various strategies were employed to create a more engaging and supportive learning environment effectively. Yip and Chakma [11] emphasized that indigenous knowledge can be taught as a stand-alone unit of study. However, in SUCs, the IP studies were incorporated mainly as a topic and context in History and Sociology. The integration is primarily evident in Social Science subjects [12].

While recent years have seen growing advocacy for including Indigenous knowledge in education, numerous practical challenges continue to hinder its full realization, especially in the Philippine context. Most existing studies, such as those by Webb and Mashford-Pingle [13] and Fajardo and Alex [14], have focused on K–12 or elementary-level interventions, where IP concepts are embedded in basic education through the Indigenous Peoples Education Program. At the tertiary level, Banes and dela Cruz [12] emphasized the importance of integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems in university curricula. These works highlighted initial efforts toward institutional recognition but also pointed to the lack of systematic assessment of compliance, particularly among State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) mandated to implement such reforms. Despite multiple studies on IP at the international and national levels, gaps persisted in the literature concerning localized, empirical evaluations of how IP Studies are being implemented in Philippine higher education.

Thus, this study determined the extent of compliance of the State Universities in Negros Occidental, Philippines, on the integration of the Indigenous People's Studies/Education into the relevant higher educational curricula based on CHED Memorandum Order No. 2, series of 2019 [69], during the school year 2023-2024. Likewise, it explored the strategies and challenges of higher educational institutions in compliance with the integration of IP education. The findings of the study serve as a basis for the formulation of a proposed subject module on IP studies.

## **2. Framework of the Study**

This study theorizes that integration of IPs studies into relevant curricula will address societal challenges faced by indigenous communities, such as poverty, human rights violations, and IPs' right to cultural identity, using the Critical Indigenous Theory by Smith [16] and the Constructivist Learning Theory by Vygotsky [15]. These theories explain why indigenous studies must be integrated into the curriculum and how this knowledge could be best acquired.

Critical Indigenous Theory asserts that educational systems must be transformed to recognize and respond to the socio-political realities of Indigenous Peoples. By integrating IP education into higher education curricula, institutions promote cultural knowledge and address systemic issues such as poverty, ancestral land rights, and the erosion of indigenous identity. Education thus becomes a site of resistance, renewal, and collective empowerment. Constructivist Learning Theory, based on Vygotsky's [15], posits that students construct knowledge based on their experiences and social interactions. Integrating indigenous studies encourages experiential and context-based learning since these are socially constructed processes influenced by culture and experience. Such integration encourages students to engage with local realities, community wisdom, and intergenerational knowledge systems.

The significance of this study is anchored in the political and sociological context of Critical Indigenous Theory, which situates learning within the historical and contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples, fostering critical consciousness about colonization, land rights, and systemic inequalities. Constructivist Learning Theory supports learning rooted in real-world contexts. For Indigenous education, this means incorporating local knowledge, land-based learning, and community involvement. Consequently, this study provides a framework that recognizes that the curriculum is a political and cultural space and that higher education plays a critical role in reshaping dominant narratives and legitimizing historically marginalized voices. These theories are essential for developing culturally relevant, decolonized, and engaging indigenous education. Together, they provide the philosophical foundation and pedagogical method for inclusive and transformative curricula, thus supporting the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge and the holistic development of both IPs and non-IP students.

## **3. Methods**

This study used a multi-method design, an approach that allows researchers to use more than one methodology in a single project. Wellman et al. [17] highlight that this can provide several benefits, including a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of complex organizations. In this research, both quantitative and qualitative data were used to more deeply analyze and understand the extent to which Indigenous Peoples' Studies have been integrated into higher education curricula.

A descriptive design was utilized for the quantitative component. The descriptive approach described the extent of compliance with the integration of Indigenous People's Studies in accordance with CMO No. 2, Series of 2019, as assessed by internal and external auditors in

the areas of schemes for offering indigenous peoples' studies, training of indigenous people educators, and monitoring of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).

On the other hand, for the qualitative component, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion to better understand the strategies and challenges encountered by the IP educators in integrating indigenous studies in HEIs.

### **3.1. Quantitative Phase**

The respondents of the study were sourced from the roster of faculty members from the SUCs who handled social science subjects for more than three (3) years. They were categorized into two categories: the internal and external assessors. The internal assessors are composed of program chairs and faculty members teaching social sciences subjects in SUCs in Negros Occidental. On the other hand, the external assessors are composed of educators who handle administrative functions and are experts in the field of social science. They were chosen using a purposive sampling method.

The researcher utilized a validated researcher-made questionnaire to gather the quantitative data that determined the extent of compliance with the integration of IP studies. The items in the instrument were based on the three pertinent sections of CMO No.2, Series of 2019, on the areas of schemes in offering IP studies, training of IP educators, and monitoring HEIs. Part I presented the profile of the respondent. Part II is focused on the extent of compliance with integrating Indigenous Peoples' Studies of SUCS. It consists of 30 questions in a Likert-type statement that assesses the extent of compliance of CHED CMO No. 2, Series of 2019 [69], in the areas of schemes in offering IP studies, training of IP educators, and monitoring HEIs. Part I reflected the self-reported profile of the respondents, which included a type of assessor (faculty and experts in the field of Social Science) and their school, categorized as a state university or college.

Part II contained 30 Likert-type statements that assessed the extent of compliance in integrating IP anchored on CMO No.2, Series of 2019.

To establish the validity of the research instrument, the researcher submitted the questionnaire to five jurors who are experts in their chosen fields. These jurors made corrections and gave suggestions to improve the questionnaire. Likewise, these jurors used the Good and Scates Jury Validation Form to rate the questionnaire. Thus, the validity rating was 4.49, which is verbally interpreted as very good. On the other hand, to establish the instrument's reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot test on 30 respondents randomly chosen from the subject teacher and program chairs who had not participated in the study from the satellite campuses of the SUCs in Negros Occidental. After administering the test, the data were subjected to Cronbach's alpha formula. Thus, the reliability rating is 0.94, which is verbally interpreted as a very high reliability index.

The researcher conducted a focus group discussion on the strategies and challenges encountered by the faculty members in integrating IP studies. The interview was an open-ended question to allow participants to express their independent knowledge, feelings, and understanding. An audio and video recording was used to capture the detailed responses of the participants.

Descriptive analysis was used using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency was used to obtain the profile of the respondents per university and college. The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of compliance with CHED Memorandum Order No.2 Series of 2019 [69] of the SUCs.

### **3.2. Qualitative Phase**

Purposive sampling was utilized to determine the participants in the focus group discussion. Each group was endorsed by institutional academic heads based on the inclusion criteria and presented a diverse, yet relevant profile of educators involved in implementing Indigenous Peoples (IP) education in higher education curricula.

The researcher conducted a focus group discussion using an open-ended question to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the participants' own knowledge, feelings, or experiences. The questions evolved to determine the strategies utilized by the participants in integrating the IP studies into the curricula and the challenges that they encountered in compliance with the CHED mandate.

Data gathered in a focus group discussion were analyzed using a recursive textual analysis aided by Litchman's 3 C' s-coding, categorizing, and conceptualizing to identify the strategies and challenges of higher educational institutions in compliance with CMO No.2, Series of 2019. It was utilized to help the researcher analyze the transcripts of the interview. To facilitate this, the researcher accomplished the following steps:

To begin, the researcher reviewed the interview transcripts multiple times to become familiar with the data. Next, the researcher segmented and coded the participants' statements that reflected their insights on the strategies and challenges of integrating Indigenous Peoples' (IP) studies. The researcher then grouped these statements into core concepts or themes. The researcher continued to read and reread the data to generate thematic insights, allowing a conceptual structure to emerge. To provide further detail, the researcher included direct quotes from the interview transcripts. Finally, the researcher used existing research to articulate an "eidetic insight," which captured the meaning and essence of the phenomenon from the participants' point of view.

To address concerns about bias and subjectivity in the qualitative study, the researcher used strategies to ensure trustworthiness and rigor. This approach, which involves interactive dialogues between the researcher and participants, helped ensure the study's reliability and validity. As a result, the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were all applied [18].

Lastly, to guarantee full trust, respect, and integrity in the treatment of the participants and the result of the study, the researcher adheres to the ethical guidelines and considerations set by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB).

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Quantitative**

#### ***4.1.1 Extent of Compliance of CMO No. 2, Series of 2019 as a Whole***

Findings in Table 4 revealed that both internal and external assessors rated the extent of compliance as generally partial across all dimensions. In terms of schemes, external assessors reported a slightly higher mean ( $M=2.46$ ,  $SD=0.23$ ) compared to internal assessors ( $M=2.23$ ,  $SD=0.45$ ), both interpreted as partial compliance. For training, external assessors again gave a marginally higher mean ( $M=1.86$ ,  $SD=0.74$ ) than internal assessors ( $M=1.80$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ), still within the partial compliance category. In monitoring, external assessors reported a higher mean ( $M=2.20$ ,  $SD=0.42$ ) than internal assessors ( $M=1.93$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ), reflecting a partial extent level. When combined, the overall means across all assessors indicated partial extent levels in schemes ( $M=2.27$ ,  $SD=0.43$ ), training ( $M=1.81$ ,  $SD=0.57$ ), monitoring ( $M=1.97$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ), and compliance ( $M=2.05$ ,  $SD=0.46$ ). These results suggest a consistently partial extent of compliance with the provisions of CMO No. 2, Series of 2019 across all assessed dimensions.

In-depth analysis revealed that a partial extent of compliance in the three areas of integration may reflect that while various initiatives are in place, full implementation has not been achieved. The partial compliance can be attributed to various factors, such as the unavailability of instructional materials, insufficient financial support from the institution, a lack of training of IP educators, and having no opportunity to coordinate with indigenous communities in the planning and delivering content. The result denotes the need for capability-building efforts, strong policy enforcement, and collaboration of IP communities to ensure comprehensive and authentic integration.

At the tertiary level, collaborative efforts were strategized to establish indigenous peoples' studies [12]. Miolo [19] analyzed that while CMO2 exhibits a promising start to nationally integrate indigenous studies in the higher education curricula, the order was criticized as premature due to a lack of sanctions and in-depth provisions for including them in the curriculum. Parallag [20] highlighted that unfamiliar materials may pose another load for students new to the situation. In the training component, partial compliance has emerged. Tamana and Pagaddut [21] noted that social studies teachers have limited expertise in integrating indigenous knowledge. Moreover, Mon-ay and Labitad [22] emphasized that the indigenous community must be involved in formulating and implementing educational policies that promote culturally sensitive and inclusive educational practices. On the other hand, effective monitoring must involve co-assessment mechanisms with IP representatives to ensure cultural accuracy, relevance, and alignment with community values [23].

**Table 4.** Extent of Compliance of CMO No.2, Series of 2019 as a Whole

Variable	Schemes			Training			Monitoring			Compliance		
	M	SD	Interpret	M	SD	Interpret	M	SD	Interpret	M	SD	Interpret
Assessor												
Internal	2.23	0.45	Partial	1.80	0.55	Partial	1.93	0.60	Partial	2.02	0.47	Partial
External	2.46	0.23	Partial	1.86	0.74	Partial	2.20	0.42	Partial	2.21	0.40	Partial
<b>Whole</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>Partial</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>Partial</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>Partial</b>	<b>2.05</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>Partial</b>

#### 4.1.2 Extent of Compliance of CMO No. 2, Series of 2019, in terms of Schemes

Table 5 presents the extent of compliance with CMO No. 2, Series of 2019, in terms of schemes in offering Indigenous Peoples (IP) studies and education. Overall, the extent of compliance was rated at a partial extent (M=2.27, SD=0.43). Items that were integrated to a full extent include "Integration of IP studies as topics in History" (M=2.68, SD=0.54), "Incorporation of I.P. concepts in Sociology subjects" (M=2.61, SD=0.56), "Incorporation of I.P. concepts in Social Sciences subject" (M=2.75, SD=0.44), and "Promotion of positive attitude towards indigenous culture" (M=2.73, SD=0.49). Conversely, "Offering I.P. studies as a degree program" (M=1.32, SD=0.64) and "Offering I.P. studies as an elective subject" (M=1.73, SD=0.88) were among those with the lowest compliance, falling under non-compliance and partial extent, respectively. These results reflected a strong compliance with culturally inclusive curriculum components already embedded in general education courses.

The findings indicated that compliance with the Commission on Higher Education's directive is partial and fragmented, favoring curricular integration over structural reforms. The

full compliance in integrating IP topics into existing general education subjects like History and Social Science may reflect the accessibility and flexibility of these courses to accommodate new content. However, the poor compliance in offering IP-focused electives, stand-alone subjects, or degree programs suggested institutional hesitation or a lack of resources and faculty expertise to create dedicated IP educational tracks. Moreover, items concerning the use of culturally anchored pedagogy and IP-specific academic materials also scored modestly, reflecting a limited transformation at the pedagogical and infrastructural levels. This highlighted a tendency among HEIs to adopt a symbolic rather than substantive approach to IP inclusion that conforms to mandates in form but is not yet fully in-depth.

Several studies corroborated the partial compliance observed in this study. Boer and Fry [24] underscored that decolonizing the tertiary curriculum creates important openings for Indigenous knowledge but faces numerous obstacles within existing institutional structures. Miole [19] noted that HEIs need to infuse IP studies into existing subjects and recognize IP knowledge systems as independent epistemologies deserving stand-alone academic spaces. On the other hand, Mon-ay and Labitad [22] revealed that the allocation of program support funds is the most significant issue in the implementation of IP education. Adequate funds can support professional development initiatives and opportunities for training and workshops. Macdonald et al. [25] affirmed that practicing teachers who express limited knowledge and confidence in IP perspectives and appropriate methods in teaching were likely to avoid teaching Indigenous curriculum content. To foster positive integration, teacher education must emphasize the skills and knowledge needed to live in an increasingly pluricultural and plurilingual world [8].

**Table 5.** Extent of Compliance of CMO No.2, Series of 2019, in terms of Schemes

Variable	Internal			External			Whole		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Schemes in offering I.P. studies/education									
1. Integration of I.P. studies as topics in History.	2.6	0.5	FC	2.8	0.3	FC	2.6	0.5	FC
	4	7		9	3		8	4	
2. Incorporation of I.P. concepts in Sociology subjects.	2.5	0.5	FC	2.7	0.4	FC	2.6	0.5	FC
	7	8		8	4		1	6	
3. Inclusion of I.P. education in the school syllabus.	2.4	0.6	PC	2.5	0.7	FC	2.5	0.6	FC
	9	6		6	3		0	6	
4. Integration of I.P. topics in Humanities subjects.	2.2	0.6	PC	2.4	0.8	PC	2.2	0.6	PC
	6	1		4	8		9	5	
5. Incorporation of IP concepts in social Science subject.	2.7	0.4	FC	2.8	0.3	FC	2.7	0.4	FC
	2	5		9	3		5	4	
6. Offering I.P. studies as a stand-alone subject.	1.6	0.7	PC	1.6	1.0	PC	1.6	0.8	PC
	0	7		7	0		1	0	
7. Offering I.P. studies as an elective subject.	1.7	0.8	PC	1.6	1.0	PC	1.7	0.8	PC
	4	7		7	0		3	8	
8. Offering I.P. studies as a degree program.	1.3	0.6	NC	1.2	0.6	NC	1.3	0.6	NC
	4	4		2	7		2	4	
9. Selection of teaching method anchored on relevant cultural knowledge.	2.4	0.6	PC	2.6	0.7	FC	2.4	0.6	PC
	3	8		7	1		6	9	
10. Inclusion of readings about I.P. and Muslims in the Gen. Educ. Curriculum	2.4	0.6	PC	2.5	0.7	FC	2.4	0.6	PC
	7	9		6	3		8	9	
11. Integration of I.P. education is founded on I.P.'s cultural identity.	2.4	0.6	PC	3.0	0.0	FC	2.5	0.6	FC
	7	5		0	0		5	3	
12. Promotion of a positive attitude towards indigenous culture.	2.7	0.5	FC	2.8	0.3	FC	2.7	0.4	FC
	0	1		9	3		3	9	

13. Assimilation of I.P. programs in terms of the language of instruction.	1.8 5	0.8 3	PC	2.2 2	0.8 3	PC	1.9 1	0.8 4	PC
14. Integration of Indigenous and Western Ways of Knowing.	2.1 3	0.6 1	PC	2.6 7	0.5 0	FC	2.2 1	0.6 2	PC
15. Use of relevant IP textbooks and other academic materials in the school library.	2.0 6	0.7 0	PC	2.7 8	0.4 4	FC	2.1 8	0.7 2	PC
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.2 3</b>	<b>0.4 5</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>2.4 6</b>	<b>0.2 3</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>2.2 7</b>	<b>0.4 3</b>	<b>PC</b>

*Mean Scale:* 1.00 - 1.49 = Non-Compliance (NC), 1.51 - 2.49 = Partial Compliance (PC), 2.50 - 3.00 = Full Compliance (FC)

#### **4.1.3 Extent of Compliance of CMO No. 2, Series of 2019, in terms of Training**

Table 6 shows the overall extent of compliance with CMO No. 2, Series of 2019, in terms of "Training", as evaluated by internal and external assessors. As a whole, the level of compliance was rated to a partial extent (M=1.81, SD=0.58). The top three items that received relatively stronger compliance ratings were "Are open to continuous assessment and evaluation of their teaching performance in the delivery of I.P. discussion" (M=2.23, SD=0.76), "Attended seminar/webinar sponsored by the CHED concerning relevant topics that highlight I.P. studies" (M=1.95, SD=0.70), and "Attended capability-building training on I.P. studies" (M=1.95, SD=0.70). In contrast, the most underdeveloped areas included "Trained in teacher-training facilities organized in cooperation with IP communities" (M=1.56, SD=0.69), "Trained in language-training methodologies" (M=1.57, SD=0.68), and "Were selected based on educational background and training in consultation with IP communities" (M=1.61, SD=0.76). These aspects indicated an encouraging willingness among faculty to enhance their competencies and engage in professional development aligned with IP education.

The partial rating across training indicators reflected a transitional stage where awareness and policy recognition are present, but deeper structural support is still lacking. The positive ratings in seminars and willingness for evaluation suggest a foundational readiness among faculty for IP education; however, the absence of culturally embedded training frameworks and community-based instructional design undermines the potential impact. Notably, language training and community-based teacher preparation, critical for culturally responsive and inclusive instruction, received the lowest ratings, indicating difficulty in compliance with policies and procedures, specifically in critical areas of IP pedagogy. This gap reflected broader challenges in institutionalizing IP studies within higher education, such as limited collaboration with IP communities and a lack of policy implementation support, echoing trends in education reform globally where well-intentioned policies fall short in practice due to capacity constraints.

Recent literature supported the findings that training in IP education remains insufficiently developed in higher education institutions. Galang [26] emphasized that effective IP instruction requires content knowledge and cultural immersion, which is lacking when training is delivered in isolation from IP communities. Noberte [27] highlighted that administrative support in investing in cultural competency training significantly embraces IP education initiatives.

Yip and Chakma [11] recommend that ongoing professional development and workshops should be required to ensure that Indigenous Peoples (IP) educators are incorporating IP knowledge respectfully and effectively. Faculty members who integrate these studies need to have a deep cultural understanding and be competent in the specific knowledge

and content of IP studies. Furthermore, a teacher's self-efficacy and their belief in their own ability to use culturally relevant teaching methods are vital for creating a culturally inclusive classroom [21]. Reyes [28] confirms that both new teachers and those who are not from an IP background require more intensive language and culture training to properly teach indigenous skills, knowledge, and practices to IP students.

**Table 6.** Extent of Compliance of CMO No.2, Series of 2019, in terms of Training

Variable	Internal		Int	External		Int	Whole		Int
	M	SD		M	SD		M	SD	
My university/college has competent and qualified faculty who									
1. Undergo intensive training in developing and implementing I.P. studies.	1.9	0.5	PC	1.8	0.9	PC	1.9	0.6	PC
2. Attended capability-building training on I.P. Studies.	1.9	0.6	PC	2.1	0.9	PC	1.9	0.7	PC
3. Trained in language-training methodologies.	1.5	0.6	PC	1.5	0.7	PC	1.5	0.6	PC
4. Equipped with indigenous culture as well as the national culture.	1.9	0.6	PC	1.7	0.8	PC	1.8	0.6	PC
5. Trained in teacher-training facilities organized in cooperation with I.P. communities.	1.5	0.6	PC	1.6	0.8	PC	1.5	0.6	PC
6. Used experiential teaching materials in consultation with the indigenous community.	1.6	0.7	PC	1.7	0.9	PC	1.6	0.7	PC
7. Attended a seminar/webinar sponsored by the CHED concerning relevant topics that highlight I.P. studies.	1.9	0.6	PC	1.8	0.9	PC	1.9	0.7	PC
8. Able to create an IM based on the prescribed standards and substance duly approved by the CHED.	1.7	0.7	PC	2.1	0.9	PC	1.8	0.8	PC
9. Were selected based on educational background and training in consultation with I.P. communities.	1.5	0.7	PC	1.7	0.9	PC	1.6	0.7	PC
10. Are open to continuous assessment and evaluation of their teaching performance in the delivery of the IP discussion.	2.2	0.7	PC	2.0	1.0	PC	2.2	0.7	PC
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>P</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>C</b>

#### 4.1.4 Extent of Compliance of CMO No. 2, Series of 2019, in terms of Monitoring

As shown in Table 7, the overall extent of compliance in terms of Monitoring was rated at a partial extent (M=1.97, SD=0.58). Across all raters, the three highest-rated items were "Incorporate IP studies in the course syllabus" (M=2.45, SD=0.81), "Integrate IP education in the revised curriculum" (M=2.43, SD=0.76), and "List down the faculty member handling IP education subject" (M=2.18, SD=0.86). These were perceived as the most consistently followed practices. Conversely, the lowest-scoring items, which point to areas with the least compliance, were "Conduct regular classroom observation for IP educators handling IP subjects" (M=1.54, SD=0.76), "Provide drop box for feedback/comments on enhancing the integration of IP studies in a classroom discussion" (M=1.63, SD=0.80), and "Update the seminars/training attended by IP educators" (M=1.64, SD=0.75). These results reflected efforts to formalize IP integration within the academic structure, although implementation practices remain uneven across institutions.

The findings showed that monitoring mechanisms are among the least developed aspects of IP education implementation, which poses a risk to sustainability and continuous improvement. The consistent recognition of curricular integration is a positive signal. However, the absence of robust monitoring practices such as classroom observation, updated training logs, and participatory feedback systems suggests that institutions may be meeting compliance in form but not in substance. The disparity between internal and external ratings is particularly evident on full compliance indicators. Also, the disparity implied possible over-reporting by external raters or under-reporting by internal ones. Significantly, effective monitoring was essential to ensure fidelity to culturally responsive teaching, regular teacher development, and ongoing curriculum enhancement. The minimal emphasis on community-engaged evaluation and performance tracking reflected missed opportunities to elevate the relevance of Indigenous People's education within State Universities and Colleges.

Related studies underscored the importance of consistent and culturally anchored monitoring in educational programs involving indigenous knowledge systems. Miole [19] emphasized that it is very significant to note that institutional policies necessitate monitoring and evaluating the cultural interface with the conscious presence of indigenous communities. According to Banes and dela Cruz [12], a lack of clear university policies and monitoring plans for integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into curricula and teaching methods makes it difficult to achieve sustainable IKS integration across different subjects.

Ancheta and Casim [29] add that monitoring, such as classroom observations, is essential for overseeing Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPEd) implementation and reminding educators of what needs to be done. Similarly, Angelino and Matronillo [30] recommend that school leaders strictly monitor the preparation of instructional materials to ensure that language instruction resources meet the necessary standards. Therefore, compliance monitoring must move beyond simple technical procedures and become a reflective, culturally-focused practice that includes both academic and community stakeholders.

**Table 7.** Extent of Compliance of CMO No.2, Series of 2019, in terms of Monitoring

Variable	Internal			External			Whole		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
It is the duty of my university/college to									
1. Submit the I.P. education form to the CHED Regional Office prior to the start of the academic Year	1.60	0.74	PC	2.33	1.00	PC	1.71	0.82	PC
2. Integrate IP education in the revised curriculum.	2.32	0.78	PC	3.00	0.00	FC	2.43	0.76	PC
3. List down the faculty member handling I.P. education subject.	2.15	0.83	PC	2.33	1.00	PC	2.18	0.86	PC
4. Incorporate I.P. studies in the course syllabus.	2.34	0.84	PC	3.00	0.00	FC	2.45	0.81	PC
5. Conduct regular classroom observation for I.P. educators handling I.P. subjects.	1.55	0.77	PC	1.44	0.73	NC	1.54	0.76	PC
6. Provide a checklist of instructional materials duly reviewed by program chairs/coordinators.	2.17	0.79	PC	2.00	1.00	PC	2.14	0.82	PC
7. Update the seminars/training attended by I.P. Educators	1.64	0.74	PC	1.67	0.87	PC	1.64	0.75	PC
8. Identify the IP education being offered either as an elective or incorporated subject.	2.21	0.83	PC	2.22	0.97	PC	2.21	0.85	PC
9. Identify programs where the I.P. studies are lodged.	1.72	0.80	PC	2.22	0.97	PC	1.80	0.84	PC
10. Provide a drop box for feedback/comments on enhancing the integration of IP studies in a classroom discussion.	1.60	0.77	PC	1.78	0.97	PC	1.63	0.80	PC
<i>Weighted Mean</i>	<i>1.93</i>	<i>0.60</i>	<i>PC</i>	<i>2.20</i>	<i>0.42</i>	<i>PC</i>	<i>1.97</i>	<i>0.58</i>	<i>PC</i>

**Synthesis.** The quantitative findings of the present study are focused on the analysis of the three major areas: the schemes employed in offering Indigenous Peoples education, the training of faculty members, and the institutional monitoring practices to ensure quality and cultural alignment. The results provided a comprehensive view of how IP education is operationalized within the context of the state universities and colleges.

The quantitative data served as a critical foundation in understanding how CHED's CMO No. 2, Series of 2019 [69], is being implemented in higher education institutions. The findings illuminated areas of progress, such as curricular integration and faculty willingness, while revealing significant gaps in institutional structures, training depth, and accountability mechanisms. These insights are essential for guiding policy refinement, capacity-building initiatives, and stakeholder collaboration to ensure that the integration of IP education is compliant with national mandates and authentically reflective of the identities, needs, and aspirations of indigenous communities.

## **4.2 Qualitative**

The thematic insights that emerged from the qualitative data of the study highlighted both the strategies employed and the challenges encountered in integrating Indigenous Peoples studies in higher education curricula. Under theme 1, educators adopted a variety of strategies in the integration of IP studies. These include the utilization of project-based learning, engagement in experiential activities, and the use of multimedia. On the other hand, theme 2 revealed the challenges in integrating IP studies. These include the unavailability of appropriate instructional materials, misinformation from different online sites, a lack of training and seminars for IP educators, insufficient administrative support, limited proficiency in IP language, and the cultural sensitivity of indigenous peoples, which were noted as significant challenges.

### **Theme 1. Strategies in the Integration of IP Studies**

One of the evident themes that emerged from the FGD was the specific methods and approaches used by the IP educators in integrating IP studies into the curricula. Participants claimed that these strategies were utilized to promote respect, inclusion, and understanding of Indigenous peoples and their significant contributions in our community. Adopting various inclusive education strategies can lead to higher academic achievement, better attendance, and increased self-esteem. They feel more valued and engaged when they see their cultures, languages, and identities reflected in school. Strategies that integrate Indigenous education are not just about inclusion, but also empower indigenous communities to participate in the development of their own educational systems by providing them a more diverse educational environment that benefits both IPs and non-IPs

#### **1.1. Utilization of Project-based Learning**

Instead of passively absorbing facts, one way to stimulate and directly involve students in creating authentic and practical context about IPS is by giving them projects and activities that are both hands-on and culturally enriching. It helps students to understand, appreciate, and preserve indigenous traditions while applying artistic skills.

... students were tasked to develop their practical skills, such as painting, drawing, or molding clay, in describing the IP community, their perception about IPs, or any idea they have

in mind about IPs. These outputs were displayed during the IP month... through this activity, students learned how to actualize their concept based on what they perceived in classroom discussion... (AP6, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 210 – 213)

We have poster making wherein it showcases the different cultures of different indigenous people in their localities, or it depends on the criteria given or the theme. Students should not only be limited to concepts or theories ... (AP5, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 240 – 241)

About IPs, wherein they could anchor how they view the culture, life, belief, and practices like different tribes of IPs in the community, they have a clear perspective. Basically, because they were the ones who created and exerted effort since it is part of their project. (AP4, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 309 – 311)

### **1.2. Engagement in Experiential Learning Activities**

Rather than just reading, listening, and watching, students actively learn through hands-on and practical experiences that allow them to do, reflect, and apply their knowledge in a real-world or meaningful context. As shared by the participants, these include role-playing and stimulating discussions of social and cultural issues, re-enacting historical events, and visiting the local indigenous community to learn about traditional practices.

I had a role-playing, like embracing the physical attributes of I P people and...Even just for character, they would experience what it is like to be in someone else's shoes and those of IPs. Instead of staying away from them...This kind of activity somehow helps them to be more sensitive to the feelings of others, not only IPs... at least to lessen the gap. (AP1, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 30-35)

Like dancing, for IPs, dance is not only a basic dance, but it also has significance in their actions in a way that they communicate their beliefs. They can have it through research on how the action was done and the meaning ... (AP7, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 187-189)

I asked them to dramatize their culture, such as their rituals and practices, and let them explain the meaning or purpose of those actions... (BP1, FGD, June 8, 2023, Lines 746 – 747)

...we have a role-playing that would showcase different theoretical perspectives. Role-playing helps students to better understand the different perspectives by simply stepping into someone else's role. Also, it paved the way for students to better understand and gain information through experience. (BP5, FGD, June 8, 2023, Lines 759-762)

### **1.3. The Use of Multimedia**

IP educators used various digital and visual tools, such as videos and audio recordings, to teach indigenous content more dynamically and interestingly. They engaged students in different learning styles while enhancing their interest and connection to the material. For most of them, multimedia makes indigenous content more accessible, relatable, and realistic. Students can connect emotionally and intellectually with the material, thus encouraging them to develop creativity and collaboration with others. Participants' responses highlighted the essentials of multimedia in students' creative learning experience.

...we use videos created by the students using pictures they have researched, then present them in class, which includes interesting facts about IPs, like what they really hate most, what offends them, their adjustments, and the milestones of their fellow IPs. Aside from providing a nice video, it is also one way to develop their creativity and enhance their valuable skills in this digital age... (AP1, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 51 – 54)

Part of my requirement is for my students to create their own video presentation of the different tribes of IP, they must choose if local or national.... I gave them time to do it their own way. (AP3, FGD, May 17, 2023, 86-89)

For my students to explore and express creatively, they have these documentaries, like they will also choose where to focus ... (AP5, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 296-297)

As part of their project, they must create their own video, this time being the actors and actresses of their narrative. They will present their documentary in class on the adjustments in tertiary education and difficulties in pursuing their dreams of becoming degree holders. Through this, they will develop confidence in acting and the ability to express their own sentiment based on the characters they portrayed. (BP5, FGD, June 8, 2023, Lines 718 – 721)

## **Theme 2: Challenges in the Integration of Indigenous Education**

The effort of IP educators to integrate indigenous context, concepts, topics, and teaching methods into the formal educational system, such as SUCs, presents a key consideration. As the participants shared in their response, instructional materials, training, support, and cultural sensitivity of IPs were among their considerations.

### **2.1. Unavailability of Appropriate Instructional Materials**

Certain teachings, stories, and ceremonies are considered private or sacred and are not meant to be shared publicly or digitally. In the absence of proper materials, best efforts can sometimes fall short. Most mainstream materials sometimes do not reflect this local distinction, making it hard for learners to connect with the main issues in understanding IPs.

Maybe it is a factor because we do not have available materials about IPs, we also have books, but they are not good enough as a source... (AP2, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 168 -169)

We need to have a theme. For example, in Muslim, Ifugao, where will we focus, plus what materials will be used in this discussion, since our library has limited books relative to this topic? (AP1, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 506 – 507)

We do not have much reference material in the library, so we basically research using the internet. (BP6, FGD, June 8, 2023, Lines 772-773)

### **2.2. Misinformation from Different Online Sites**

Many online sources present inaccurate information about IPs, which often result in non-authentic reports and may carry an argument as to the veracity of the knowledge presented, which, for IPs, is often holistic and context specific. Any deviation, or when taken out of

context, could be misinterpreted. These realizations were reflected in the following responses of the participants.

But that is another thing, Ma'am. Sometimes, the videos presented do not really present the actual concept of IP. However, because we are not fully aware of the different tribes from the different geographical locations, we simply believe what has been presented. (AP1, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 81-83)

...we cannot purely rely on the videos that we can download from the different internet sites, we cannot distinguish which one is true or one that creates misleading or wrong information, for some contents do not really exist unless we take the time to validate and do some research as well. (AP7, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 176 – 178)

We must also be cautious about the materials used in our discussion. There is a lot of misinformation and even fake ones. We cannot underestimate our students; they were fast in searching for the answers to our questions and could even correct us if the materials we used came from... (AP4, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 393-395)

### **2.3. Lack of Seminars and Training of IP Educators**

To ensure that educators who handle IP topics are equipped with the right knowledge and skills to teach in an accurate and empowering way, it is essential that they undergo seminars and training. Training allows them to understand indigenous pedagogies and integrate them into their teaching in authentic and meaningful ways. Seminars would help educators ensure that they not only teach about IPs but also teach them with integrity and accuracy.

We are trying to integrate IP knowledge and culture into the educational system, but how can we do that if we, as instructors, were not even trained and were not allowed to be exposed and immersed ourselves in the IPs? (AP3, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 351-353)

Only a few of us had training, not only that, but maybe physical training is essential, like having a speaker who is a researcher, equipped in terms of indigenous knowledge. (AP1, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 362-363)

We need more training and seminars, but not everyone attended the seminar for this IP integration. (AP2, FGD, May 17, 2023, Line 368)

### **2.4. Insufficient Administrative Support for Seminars and Trainings of IP Educators**

The success of training and seminars for educators, especially when integrating IP studies into the curriculum, is anchored on the support of the management. These often require allocation for materials, budget for speakers, venues, and travel allowances.

Maybe financial support from the administration is needed to realize the mandate. (AP2, FGD, May 17, 2023, Line 369)

Still on the issue of the budget. Like GAD, 5% of the budget was allocated for their program. Why not in this integration? We all know that it is hard to implement without the

budget.... Implementation and integration of the CHED mandate could only be realized when we have the support from the school, admin... (AP1, FGD, May 17, 2023, Line 484-486)

Inputs, immersion for the students, budget, and coordination with the different focal persons and the authorities involved in IP, especially the budget. Working without a budget from the admin and local connections is hard. AP5, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 438-440)

### **2.5. Limited Proficiency in IP Language**

Language is the key to culture and meaningful education. IP language carries values and traditional knowledge, which should lead to more accurate and culturally respectful teaching. Understanding IP language helps non-IP educators teach more respectfully and accurately when sharing traditional stories, rituals, practices, beliefs, and land-based knowledge.

Aside from that, we also need to be familiar with the dialect and language of IPs, for it is sometimes difficult if you cannot communicate with them in their language. (AP2, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 376-377)

It's not really that deep a discussion expected from us since IP topics will only be part of the discussions, like in History and other social sciences subjects... part of the discussion will touch the cultures and practices... Knowing and understanding their culture, we are also expected to know their common language. (AP4, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 560-565)

Speaking of language, it has something to do with integration. We anchor our discussion on the language that we used, and the terminology used by our students... It is also a fulfillment in a way, Ma'am, because in the process of preparing yourself for integrating new topics like this IP studies...IP students would be more engaged in the classroom discussion, especially whenever the topic pertains to them. They find strength knowing that it is about them and they were given importance by the government... (AP5, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 573-580)

### **2.6. Cultural Sensitivity of IPs**

Indigenous people are often very sensitive and protective of their cultural knowledge, practices, and traditions. Recognizing and comprehending the historical and social background of IP's way of life, we are less likely to offend, judge, and stereotype them. A sociological lens helps to dispel those preconceived notions by providing real reasons behind their responses.

Let us say there was a preference for one over the other, and they could feel that there was even that is not the purpose... they would feel bad about it, but IPs are conscious about the gestures, behaviors, and the language of non-IPs. That is why we are also careful in class with the words we use and the reaction at times.... (AP3, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 138-140)

IPs may have a different way of expressing themselves, which leads us to feel strange or indifferent, and that is, I guess, one of the factors why we integrate these IP topics to the students, for us to know more about them... (AP8, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 322 – 324)

Also, we must be very careful with everything we talk about regarding IP. They may have different interpretations and perceptions of whatever we say or discuss about them. Maybe we need to be more sensitive and aware of their feelings, behavioral responses, and cultural sensitivity... (AP4, FGD, May 17, 2023, Lines 395-398)

## **Discussion**

### ***On strategies in the integration of IP education***

Integrating Indigenous Peoples (IP) education in higher education curricula requires context. There are sensitive strategies that demonstrate both pedagogical rigor and cultural responsiveness. Recent qualitative data reveal three prominent instructional strategies implemented in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs): **project-based learning**, **experiential learning**, and **multimedia tools**. These approaches align with current educational trends. Research advocating for inclusive, student-centered, and transformative pedagogies.

According to Han [31], a key to effective teaching is successfully integrating Indigenous teaching strategies. These strategies not only improve student engagement but also boost a teacher's confidence when instructing Indigenous students. Nelson et al. [32] suggest that using these strategies, as outlined in the literature, can help Indigenous students succeed and overcome many of the obstacles they face. Despite various support strategies highlighted by education professionals to ease the transition of Indigenous students to post-secondary education, Chichekian and Bragoli-Barzan [33] found a disconnect between the challenges students face and the support they receive. To help Indigenous students achieve long-term academic success, there is a growing focus on developing support strategies that are more culturally relevant.

**Project-Based Learning.** Project-based learning (PBL) was widely used by faculty to facilitate deeper engagement with Indigenous People's education. Participants described how students were tasked to create outputs such as posters, leaflets, caricatures, portfolios, and collages, which allowed them to express their understanding of IP cultures, traditions, and issues. These projects were often presented during IP Month or incorporated into classroom exhibitions. Likewise, teachers shared that students worked in groups to foster collaboration, creativity, and teamwork. PBL was seen as an effective way to instill values of inclusivity and critical awareness while enhancing students' research, analytical, and presentation skills. Through culturally relevant tasks, students were exposed to Indigenous heritage and encouraged to reflect on societal issues such as discrimination, resilience, and identity.

Project-based learning (PBL) is widely recognized in literature as a useful method for encouraging critical thinking, collaboration, and cultural awareness. According to Lالujan and Pranjol [5], PBL is a promising, comprehensive approach that can address the shortcomings of past decolonization efforts in higher education assessment. It effectively integrates various decolonial elements while also providing academic benefits to students' learning and comprehension.

Mohamed [34] suggests that teachers, curriculum designers, and those involved in assessment should use the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach to promote both language and culture. In multicultural education, Gay [35] emphasizes that culturally responsive PBL tasks help students connect academic knowledge with their personal experiences and community realities. In the field of science, Bayani et al. [36] found that combining ethnomedicine with PBL makes learning more culturally relevant by connecting traditional

medicinal practices with modern education. This interdisciplinary method boosts cognitive skills, provides contextual learning, and helps preserve culture.

**Experiential Learning.** On the other hand, participants reported that experiential learning strategies significantly enriched students' appreciation of IP studies. Activities such as role-playing, dramatizations of rituals, community visits, and direct interviews with IP families were employed. These hands-on approaches allowed students to "walk in the shoes" of Indigenous individuals, enhancing their cultural empathy and social awareness. Observations of IP sacred spaces and re-enactments of traditional ceremonies allowed students to move beyond theoretical knowledge and into lived experiences. Teachers noted that these engagements fostered critical consciousness and helped bridge the gap between academic content and social realities.

Experiential learning is a teaching philosophy that connects concrete, hands-on activities with abstract concepts to maximize learning. It combines direct, meaningful experiences for students with guided reflection and analysis [10]. According to Leowen et al. [37], any knowledge system for Indigenous learners must recognize that learning is tied to a specific place. Therefore, it should include a strong experiential learning component in the curriculum. In the context of Indigenous Peoples' education, this type of learning is crucial for gaining an authentic understanding of cultural practices.

According to Benton et al. [38], higher education institutions that increase the number of Indigenous staff members, use experiential learning, and offer culturally specific mentorship programs see better retention and inclusion rates. Additionally, Chichekian [33] suggests that hiring Indigenous educators and embedding Indigenous teaching methods helps create a stronger sense of community. Paquin [39] adds that by partnering with local tribal communities, students can learn about Indigenous knowledge directly from Indigenous people. Presenting both Western and Indigenous perspectives gives students more opportunities for understanding, as they can connect with whichever perspective resonates most with them.

**Use of Multimedia.** The integration of multimedia tools was also prominent in IP education. Faculty shared that they used videos, PowerPoint presentations, and student-created digital projects to enhance learning. These multimedia tools helped cater to various learning styles and kept students engaged. Videos and documentaries produced by students allowed them to reflect on IP issues, document local history, and showcase Indigenous practices creatively. Teachers affirmed that multimedia tools made unfamiliar IP topics more concrete and accessible, thus improving comprehension and stimulating student interest.

Education has been transformed using digital media technologies to improve learning [40]. Multimedia supports multimodal learning and helps students retain information, especially with culturally diverse topics. Shakil et al. [41] emphasize that multimedia simplifies education. Using multimedia, indigenous students can more easily learn new information. When teachers have access to these digital tools, they can create more meaningful lessons, focus more on teaching, and individually help students understand indigenous subjects.

Mayer [42] points out that well-designed multimedia instruction helps with deep cognitive processing, especially when it combines both visual and verbal elements. Abdul Samat and Abdul Aziz [43] found that indigenous students agreed that multimedia is a great tool for improving their reading comprehension skills, though they did not favor the use of audio. Despite this, digital technology has been widely accepted in many indigenous communities [44].

### ***On the challenges in the integration of indigenous education***

Integrating **Indigenous Peoples (IP) studies** into the Philippine curriculum confronts several **systemic, cultural, institutional, or practical** challenges. Based on qualitative data, six dominant challenges have emerged in the conduct of FGD: unavailability of appropriate instructional materials, misinformation brought about by different online sites, lack of training and seminars of IP educators, insufficient administrative support for seminars and training of IP educators, limited proficiency in IP language, and cultural sensitivity of IPs. These challenges are deeply rooted in the colonial foundations of the education system, which has historically prioritized Western knowledge while excluding or devaluing Indigenous worldviews.

Pawilen [45] suggests that while integrating Indigenous knowledge into a curriculum is a noble endeavor, it is also a challenging one for educators. Banes and dela Cruz [12] found that various obstacles prevent the in-depth integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) at the university level. For example, the lack of a clear university policy or a monitoring system for IKS integration into curricula and teaching methods hinders its sustainable adoption across different subjects. Maluleka [46] highlights additional decolonial challenges, such as people valuing Western systems more than their own and a reluctance to leave their comfort zones. Despite these hurdles, some faculty members have successfully integrated IKS into their courses over the years, as seen in their teaching practices.

**Unavailability of appropriate instructional materials.** Participants consistently cited the scarcity of culturally relevant and accurate instructional materials on Indigenous Peoples (IPs) as a major challenge in integrating IP education. Books and printed references are limited. Many teachers are forced to rely on outdated content, which often fails to reflect the localized nature of Indigenous knowledge. Educators strongly needed Indigenous-authored materials and culturally validated resources to ensure authentic representation and learning engagement.

A significant challenge to inclusive education is the lack of learning resources tailored to specific contexts. Banes and dela Cruz [12] found that faculty members struggle most with the limited availability of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) materials in libraries, such as books, local cultural research, documentary videos, and other instructional aids.

Similarly, Ilagan [47] notes that the effective integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) is hindered by issues like the scarcity of cultural learning resources and the overall lack of responsiveness from the educational system. Oclarit et al. [48] also found that inadequate learning materials contribute to the ongoing challenges faced by students trying to complete mainstream education. This problem is compounded by the fact that educational resources often marginalize Indigenous narratives with their standardized, Eurocentric content [49]. As a result, Tamana and Pagaddut [21] suggest creating additional instructional materials specifically for IKSP instruction in this context.

**Misinformation from different online sites.** The accessibility of the internet does not guarantee the quality of content. Participants noted that many IP-related online materials are inaccurate, superficial, or even misleading. This raises issues of misinformation and cultural misrepresentation. Faculty emphasized the need to carefully check the content because using uncritical digital sources could lead to erroneous teaching and reinforce misconceptions about IP communities.

Eduardo and Gabriel [50] state that Indigenous Peoples (IPs) must have access to information and knowledge about their rights for policies to be effectively implemented. According to Muhammed and Mathew [51], misinformation often appears when people lack

the information, they need in uncertain situations. Brown [6] cautions that online platforms frequently reflect dominant cultural viewpoints, which can distort Indigenous narratives. Kamsin [52] stresses the importance of carefully integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into indigenous education, making sure to address both technological gaps and the need for cultural preservation. This ensures that the technology empowers, rather than marginalizes, indigenous students by respecting their unique identities and educational needs.

On the other hand, Grata and Llaneta [53] note that the field of disinformation detection has gained momentum, with scholars exploring the problem from various angles. To combat this issue, Tufchi and Ahmed [54] and Petalla and Tatlonghari [55] suggest that it is crucial to develop effective counterstrategies, such as fact-checking mechanisms and media literacy initiatives.

**Lack of training and seminars for IP educators.** Moreover, educators acknowledged that they lack sufficient training to teach IP topics with cultural sensitivity and pedagogical depth. Many participants reported having never attended training sessions specific to Indigenous education. They called for structured, CHED-endorsed seminars, preferably with resource persons with scholarly and cultural authority.

According to Gay [35], professional development is essential for enabling culturally responsive teaching. Mara [56] adds that training helps educators stay aware of changes in their environment that can influence and necessitate curriculum adjustments. Oclarit et al. [48] observed that many non-indigenous teachers are unprepared to teach in indigenous communities because they lack cultural training and an understanding of indigenous values and lifestyles. To effectively include Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP), Tamana and Pagaddut [21] suggest that curriculum revisions and better training for teachers on IKSP knowledge and integration strategies should be a priority. Teachers could also benefit from training in culturally relevant teaching methods to boost student engagement. Ogegbo and Ramnarain [57] emphasize that, regardless of the strategies discussed in research, teachers need to be educated about Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and receive practical training on how to integrate them into their science instruction.

**Insufficient administrative support for seminars and training of IP educators.** Likewise, participants emphasized that even the most well-intentioned training initiatives cannot be sustained without administrative and financial support. They cited the need for budget allocation for IP education programs, the same as what was given for gender sensitivity programs. Support is necessary not only for training fees but also for travel, materials, and speaker honoraria.

Administrative support is crucial for the overall teaching and learning process in higher education [58]. School heads have a duty to provide teachers with timely and relevant training to support their professional growth [59]. Gaudry and Lorenz [60] note that while university administrators may claim to have stronger connections with Indigenous peoples, communities, and knowledge systems, there's a significant need to support educators within existing structures. However, Alfredo and Dayagbil [61] point out that administrative commitment is often lacking due to other competing priorities.

**Limited proficiency in IP language.** In addition, language emerged as a core challenge in delivering IP education effectively. Faculty members acknowledged that unfamiliarity with local dialects often hampers meaningful communication with IP students. They recognized that language is deeply intertwined with IP identity and knowledge and emphasized the value of acquiring basic fluency in local Indigenous languages.

Indigenous languages are a cultural treasure with significant philosophical and cultural value [40]. Reyteran [62] points out that understanding the language of Indigenous students can improve learning, as it supports a mother-tongue-based education. Banes and dela Cruz [12] add that using local languages in the classroom also increases students' appreciation for their Indigenous Knowledge (IK). Despite this, improving language literacy remains a difficult task for Indigenous Peoples Education teachers due to various factors that affect the students' language learning abilities [63] [64]. There is still a shortage of educators who are fluent in the languages of Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities (IPs/ICCs). This is because most mother-tongue subjects cover general dialects [64] but not the specific languages of native indigenous groups [50].

**Cultural sensitivity of IPs.** Consequently, educators described Indigenous students and communities as deeply protective of their traditions and identities. Sensitivity to language, gestures, and perceived stereotypes were essential to building trust. Teachers acknowledged the historical trauma experienced by IPs, which informs their guarded stance. Thus, cultural sensitivity was described as a skill and an ethical responsibility.

Eduardo and Gabriel [50] argue that the postcolonial approach to education in the Philippines not only perpetuated the oppression of students but also dehumanized them by deliberately dismantling their cultural heritage and living traditions. According to Moodie et al. [65], a significant gap remains between the aspirations of Indigenous students and families and the ability of education systems to meet those aspirations. Under the guise of "getting a good education," many Indigenous students feel forced to comply, with schools acting as tools for institutionalization, indoctrination, and assimilation [66].

Abera [67] argues that school curricula should address diversity to help students build self-esteem from knowledge gained through interacting with their local environment. Similarly, Kamsin [52] found that a key part of Malaysia's commitment to diversity and inclusivity is understanding and respecting the rights and cultural heritage of its indigenous peoples. Eduardo and Gabriel [50] suggest that to help Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) change their difficult situation and thrive, they must receive an education that respects their unique identity and meets their specific needs. This will allow them to interact with mainstream society with equal confidence.

On the other hand, [Valencia and Valencia \[68\]](#) argue that the lack of cultural awareness of Indigenous students' differences implies romanticizing, homogenizing, and objectifying them by approaching them as "human museums". In another view, Moodie [65] highlighted that while many non-Indigenous teachers have good intentions, fear and silence paralyze, rendering teachers complicit in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous people.

**Synthesis.** The qualitative data gathered from faculty members of selected State Universities and Colleges in Negros Occidental revealed insightful perspectives on both the strategies and challenges surrounding the integration of Indigenous Peoples studies into higher education curricula. The findings were categorized into two overarching themes: strategies for integration and challenges encountered, each comprising specific sub-themes that reflect the realities educators face in their attempt to foster inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices. These thematic insights demonstrated that while there is a strong and creative pedagogical initiative toward IP integration, institutional gaps that hinder its full realization persisted.

Thus, qualitative data served as a crucial component of the present study as it provides a deeper understanding of how educators operationalized and experienced the implementation

of CMO No. 2, Series of 2019. The experiences of the teachers went beyond statistical trends. These offered context-specific insights illuminating the intersection between policy intentions and classroom realities. Ultimately, this information is essential for guiding curriculum developers, policymakers, and educational leaders in crafting responsive strategies that uphold the cultural integrity and educational rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippine higher education landscape.

## **5. Conclusion**

The extent of integration of IP studies in the SUCs in Negros Occidental is partially completed. The quantitative data provided a clear assessment of compliance in three key areas: schemes, training, and monitoring. On the other hand, the qualitative findings established essential insights that quantitative data alone could not reveal, while qualitative data underscored gaps between documented compliance and actual classroom practices.

With these, the SUCs must review their current curriculum content and identify where indigenous perspectives are missing. It is essential to align institutional curricula in compliance with the CHED mandate and provide ongoing professional development for IP educators. They must take a comprehensive and collaborative approach with IP communities and conduct continuous dialogue between policymakers, administrators, and educators to ensure the authenticity and sustainability of IP integration efforts.

## **6. Limitations of the Findings**

This study recognizes several limitations that may influence the interpretation of its findings. First, the results are based on data gathered from selected State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Negros Occidental and may not fully reflect the practices of all higher education institutions (HEIs) across the province or the country. Institutional policies, resources, and categories of SUCs may vary and may potentially affect the extent of Indigenous Peoples Studies integration. Second, the research is limited by the inherent nature of Indigenous knowledge systems, many of which are considered sacred and restricted. Lastly, the concept of "integration" of IP Studies remains contextually fluid. While CHED mandates the inclusion of IP Studies as a topic, context, or set of concepts across various subjects, interpretations of integration differ across institutions. Some may prioritize curricular content while others emphasize cultural representation or other aspects of Indigenous knowledge. These differences present challenges in standardizing compliance with the integration of the Indigenous People's Studies/Education into the relevant higher educational curricula.

## **7. Practical Value of the Paper**

This study provides empirically grounded insights that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) can utilize to strengthen its existing guidelines and ensure that integrating Indigenous Peoples Studies in higher education is meaningful and not merely symbolic. The findings can also inform the formulation of policies and program outputs that respond more directly to the educational needs of IP learners. These insights may serve as a springboard for more culturally relevant and education-related research focusing on designing context-sensitive curricula.

For curriculum developers in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), the results offer valuable guidance in designing IP-related programs that are responsive to the cultural and social realities of the Indigenous communities. This includes the development of culture-based learning materials that align with the principles of inclusive and rights-based education.

Moreover, the study benefits faculty members handling IP-related courses by providing evidence-based teaching strategies and identifying current levels of institutional compliance. These data points help educators pinpoint areas for instructional improvement and highlight specific knowledge gaps that may require professional development. Finally, the study supports more informed and culturally competent teaching practices that could contribute to a more inclusive and transformative higher education system.

## 8. Directions for Future Research

Future research should investigate the indigenous community's involvement in teaching practices and curriculum development. In addition, comparative studies between public and private higher education institutions could provide deeper insights into factors that enhance or hinder effective integration since they are funded and operated differently. Likewise, longitudinal studies are encouraged to examine the long-term impacts of Indigenous curriculum integration on student learning outcomes, institutional practices, and community relationships. Future investigations may also benefit from focusing on the development of evaluation tools that measure the extent of curricular integration and its alignment with Indigenous values and epistemologies.

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