
INDIGENOUS CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL LIVELIHOOD PRACTICES AMONG LUMAD LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the relationship between indigenous cultural knowledge and technical livelihood practices among Junior and Senior High School Lumad learners at Divine Mercy School of Bukidnon during the 2025-2026 school year. Using an adapted survey questionnaire and descriptive-correlational analysis, the research evaluated five dimensions of cultural knowledge: Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Traditional Livelihood and Technology, Social and Political Systems, Cultural Beliefs and Worldview, and Indigenous Health and Wellness. The findings reveal that Lumad learners possess a robust cultural foundation, with knowledge practiced to a great extent across all dimensions. Furthermore, respondents demonstrated a high level of proficiency in technical livelihood practices, acting as active practitioners of indigenous technology. Correlation analysis established a significant positive relationship between the extent of cultural knowledge and the level of technical practices, confirming that ancestral wisdom serves as the functional engine driving technical mastery. The study concludes that indigenous heritage is a living, professional competency rather than a fading tradition. It is recommended that teachers integrate cultural expertise into daily lessons and that schools institutionalize a Culture-Based Livelihood Framework by involving tribal elders in vocational training. This transition from theoretical instruction to advanced, contextualized application ensures that the curriculum fosters both academic relevance and technical empowerment. By validating indigenous systems as sophisticated professional assets, the educational environment can better support the cultural continuity and economic self-reliance of Lumad learners within their communities.

KEYWORDS: *Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Lumad Learners, Technical Livelihood Practices, Culture-Based Education, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Vocational Excellence, Bukidnon.*

Chapter 1

The Problem

INTRODUCTION

Scholars and practitioners frequently observed that formal education, even within specialized schools like Divine Mercy School, often marginalized or underestimated the profound indigenous cultural knowledge and technical livelihood practices that Lumad learners naturally carried. This systemic neglect fostered a profound cultural disconnect, which resulted in the alienation of learners and a decline in academic drive as they viewed their ancestral legacies as unrelated to the utility of their daily classroom instructions. When the academic framework neglected to authenticate their personal histories and traditional expertise—including activities like agricultural production, textile weaving, or artisanal craftsmanship—learners found difficulty in identifying the practical value of their formal schooling. Consequently, a structured evaluation of the particular expertise and technical methods within the environment of the school became an urgent requirement to reinforce cultural self-worth and improve the significance of the educational process.

Building upon the need for cultural affirmation, the inquiry found its legal and theoretical foundations in several national mandates, such as the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which protected the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities, and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (Republic Act No. 8371, 1997), which required the provision of culturally suitable education. Additionally, the Department of Education (2015) through DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015, underscored the importance of curriculum contextualization to ensure that instruction remained significant and culturally attuned to the needs of the community. Earlier research, including the work of Bago and Torres (2021) regarding the inclusion of indigenous systems in basic schooling and the investigation by Mazo (2018) on the effects of culturally pertinent teaching methods, established a clear link between the validation of heritage and heightened engagement among learners. These essential records and previous academic discoveries provided the necessary legal and conceptual evidence for the evaluation that the researcher conducted.

Despite the existence of strong national policies favoring the inclusion of indigenous cultural knowledge, a substantial disparity remained regarding the localized implementation of these

requirements. While the available academic literature frequently discussed indigenous systems through a generalized lens, it seldom offered a granular analysis of the specific technical livelihood practices that teachers could systematically incorporate into the formal Social Studies curriculum. Furthermore, a noticeable scarcity of localized data existed concerning the distinct requirements and cultural assets of the Lumad learners enrolled at Divine Mercy School of Bukidnon. This investigation functioned to close the divide between theoretical research and actual classroom practice by generating a tangible, data-driven structure for curricular blending rather than simply promoting the idea of integration in a vacuum.

In view of these gaps, the justification for performing this assessment rested on the critical demand for educational fairness and the validation of traditions within indigenous groups. By offering a precise and localized system, this study converted theoretical ideals into functional instructional strategies, which ensured that the learning journey at Divine Mercy School became pertinent, useful, and culturally supportive. This proposed structure served not only to increase the authenticity of the Social Studies program and boost the retention rates of learners, but it also functioned as a repeatable blueprint for other schools functioning within comparable indigenous contexts. Ultimately, the investigation aided in the conservation of Lumad traditions by formally acknowledging their technical livelihood practices as valid intellectual expertise; therefore, the researcher conducted this study to evaluate the depth of indigenous cultural knowledge and technical livelihood practices among Lumad learners as a Framework for Curriculum Integration in Divine Mercy School of Bukidnon, Valencia City, Bukidnon, during the School Year 2025-2026.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The researcher anchored this investigation on the Theory of Social Constructivism, which Lev Vygotsky (1978) developed. This perspective asserted that learners actively constructed their own comprehension and knowledge of the world by engaging with personal experiences and reflecting upon those encounters. Within the context of this study, the extensive indigenous cultural knowledge and technical livelihood practices of the Lumad learners—which encompassed traditional agriculture, weaving, and craftsmanship—constituted more than mere educational content. Instead, these elements functioned as the experiential foundations upon which the learners established their worldviews and epistemological structures.

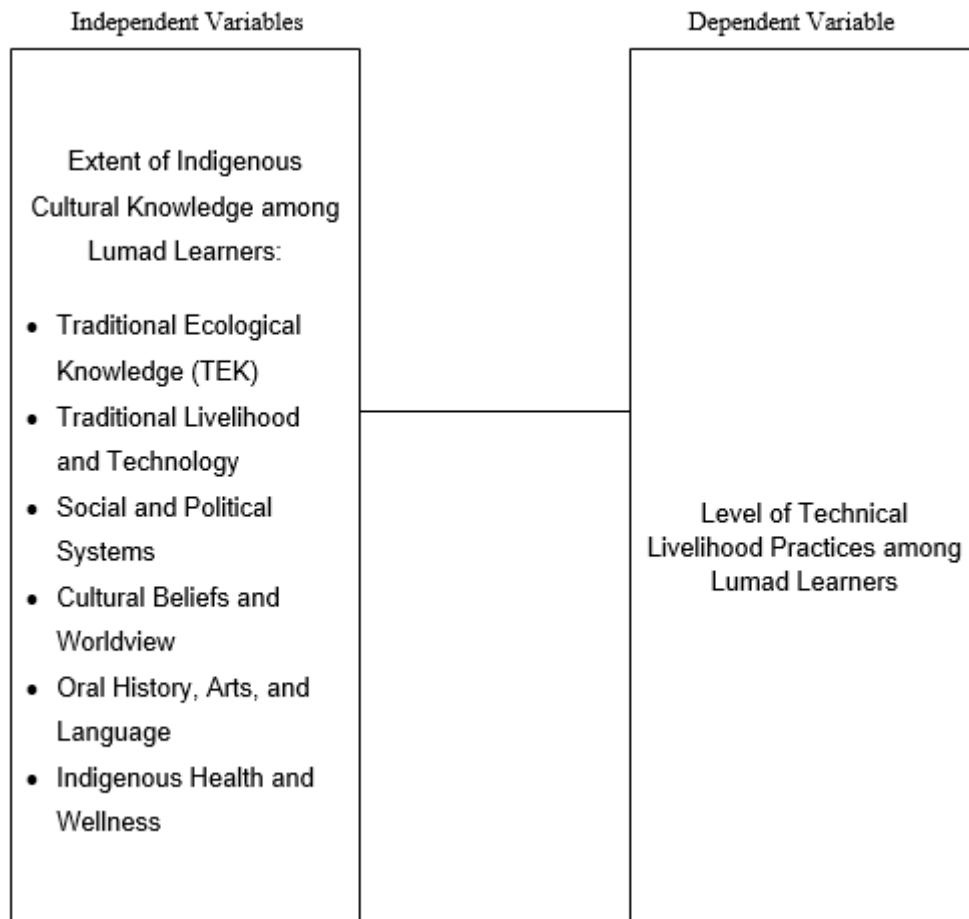
In relation to these foundational experiences, the study recognized that children already possessed intricate and developed schemas concerning their environment and sustainable living practices. By evaluating these activities, the researcher determined that incorporating such established prior knowledge into the official Social Studies and TLE curriculum affirmed the cultural reality of the learners. This integration rendered the abstract concepts taught in schools personally relevant and significant, which subsequently fostered deeper and more self-directed learning processes. Consequently, the transition from community-based wisdom to formal instruction allowed teachers to validate the existing intellectual framework of the learners.

Furthermore, the Vygotskian perspective underscored the vital significance of social and cultural circumstances throughout the learning process. For Lumad learners, technical livelihood practices remained intrinsically social in nature, as individuals acquired these skills through active partnerships with family members and community elders. These traditional techniques encompassed a common lexicon, specific instruments, and shared cultural principles that defined the community's identity. By acknowledging these social roots, schools identified the collaborative essence of indigenous expertise as a primary driver of cognitive and social development.

Furthermore, the Vygotskian perspective underscored the vital significance of social and cultural circumstances throughout the learning process, particularly through the lens of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). For Lumad learners, technical livelihood practices remained intrinsically social in nature, as individuals acquired these skills not in isolation, but through active partnerships with family members and community elders who functioned as "more knowledgeable others."

By acknowledging these social roots, schools identified the collaborative essence of indigenous expertise as a primary driver of both cognitive and social development. This realization suggested that the technical proficiency of Lumad learners was a product of "situated cognition," where learning was inseparable from the social world and physical environment of the learners. When teachers validate these communal learning structures, they move beyond the Western individualized model of education and instead embrace a more holistic, socio-cultural framework. Consequently, the classroom becomes a space where the "funds of knowledge" from the home are utilized to bridge the gap between traditional survival skills and modern vocational competencies, ultimately fostering a more profound sense of academic agency and cultural pride within the school.

Following this emphasis on social context, the study highlighted the transferable cultural values inherent in such practices, which offered a structured way to social learning opportunities directly within the educational environment. This method promoted cultural continuity and established a robust connection where formal education served as an extension and formalization of the knowledge already developed within the primary cultural context of the learners.



The Methodology

This chapter is composed of the research design, research locale, respondents of the study, the sampling procedure, the research instrument, data gathering, scoring procedure, validation and try out of instrument, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

This study was performed by applying the descriptive-correlational research design. It assessed the extent of indigenous cultural knowledge and technical livelihood practices among Lumad learners in Divine Mercy School of Bukidnon, Incorporated located at Sto.

Domingo, San Fernando Bukidnon, School Year 2025-2026. The junior and senior high school Lumad learners composed the respondents of the study. Data on the extent of indigenous cultural knowledge of Lumad learners and their level of technical livelihood practices will be gathered by using the adapted questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be utilized to analyze the data.

Research Locale

The researcher conducted this investigation at Divine Mercy School of Bukidnon, Inc., which functioned as a private school located in Sto. Domingo, San Fernando, Bukidnon. The school began its operations following its founding on the Feast of the Divine Mercy on April 3, 2005. This foundation date held significant spiritual importance for the community, as it coincided with the passing of Pope John Paul II, who had previously designated the Sunday after Easter as the Feast of the Divine Mercy. Consequently, the founders named the school in honor of the Divine Mercy to promote devotion to the compassionate heart of Jesus and to share this spiritual mission with the broader world.

Regarding its administrative origins, Engr. Hernane C. Miague, alongside his wife Ophelia and their son Hernane Vincent, established the school with the support of their extended family, including Bonifacio F. Manguera Sr. and Rosela Elica Manguera. During the early and often challenging years of the school, friends such as Prospero and Mimveluz Gonzaga provided essential encouragement and comfort to the founding family. Furthermore, the Gonzaga couple facilitated the introduction to Antonio Nicor and his family in Sto. Domingo, who assisted in the initial processing of the legal documentation required to open the school. Following the completion of the preliminary requirements, the construction of the physical plant commenced on April 28, 2005. The original structure consisted of several rooms, including three designated as classrooms for the learners and an additional space that housed the administrative offices, the library, and the laboratory. Academic sessions officially began on June 5, 2005, under a temporary permit from the Department of Education, eventually securing full Government Recognition (No. 04 s. 2007) on June 8, 2007. This legal milestone solidified the status of the school as a recognized provider of basic education within the Division of Bukidnon, capable of implementing specialized curriculum frameworks. Figure 2, which presents the administrative map of San Fernando, Bukidnon showing the the study.

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations/Implications

This chapter provides a synthesis of the study's results, the resulting conclusions, and the practical recommendations or implications derived from the research

Summary

This study was conducted to assess the extent of indigenous cultural knowledge and technical livelihood practices among Lumad learners in Divine Mercy School of Bukidnon, Valencia City, Bukidnon, School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this study aimed to determine the extent of indigenous cultural knowledge among Lumad learners in terms of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), traditional livelihood and technology, social and political systems, cultural beliefs and worldview, oral history, arts, and language, and indigenous health and wellness. It also determined the level of technical livelihood practices among Lumad learners. Then sought the significant relationship between the extent of indigenous cultural knowledge among Lumad learners and their level of technical livelihood practices.

This study gathered the data needed by using an adapted survey-questionnaire. The respondents of this study the Junior and Senior High School Lumad learners in Divine Mercy School of Bukidnon, Valencia City, Bukidnon, School Year 2025-2026. The data were analyzed with the descriptive statistics

FINDINGS

The data collection and analysis produced the following key results:

There was a great extent of indigenous cultural knowledge among Lumad learners in terms of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), traditional livelihood and technology, social and political systems, cultural beliefs and worldview, oral history, arts, and language, and indigenous health and wellness.

There was a moderate level of technical livelihood practices among Lumad learners.

There was a strong significant relationship between the extent of indigenous cultural knowledge among Lumad learners and their level of technical livelihood practices. When extent of indigenous cultural knowledge among Lumad learners increase, the level of technical livelihood practices among them increases also.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the results discussed above, the study arrives at the following conclusions:

This study assessed the extent of indigenous cultural knowledge among Lumad learners across five cultural domains. The findings revealed that learners possess a great extent of ancestral wisdom, particularly in ecological and health practices, which serves as a robust cognitive foundation for their technical livelihood practices. Consequently, teachers must integrate this living asset into the curriculum to ensure educational relevance. Although this study focused on one school, future research should expand to other regions to validate these localized competencies.

This study investigated the level of technical livelihood practices among Lumad learners, revealing a consistent moderate level of proficiency across the group. These findings indicate that learners function as active practitioners of indigenous technology rather than mere observers. To address the study's localized scope, teachers should transition from theoretical instruction to advanced technical applications. Overall, schools must validate these competencies as sophisticated professional assets to ensure long-term economic empowerment and practical independence of the learners.

This study investigated the relationship between the indigenous cultural knowledge of Lumad learners and their technical livelihood practices, identifying a strong significant correlation. These findings prove that ancestral wisdom functions as the primary engine for technical proficiency within the school. While limited to a single demographic, the results suggest that teachers should integrate heritage as a core vocational foundation. Ultimately, validating this cultural literacy ensures the technical empowerment and academic excellence of every learner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the insights gained from this study, the following actions and areas for future research are proposed:

Teachers may actively integrate students' existing cultural expertise into daily lessons by using local biodiversity, indigenous architecture, and community governance as primary examples. By transitioning from standardized examples to these culturally familiar frameworks, educators can bridge ancestral wisdom with formal academic concepts, fostering higher engagement and genuine intellectual empowerment for Lumad learners.

Learners may take full ownership of their technical expertise by mentoring peers and documenting their unique livelihood methods. By recognizing these practical skills as

professional competencies, learners can confidently apply these indigenous technologies to modern challenges, ensuring that traditional practices remain relevant, productive, and a source of sustainable livelihood for the future.

School heads may institutionalize a "Culture-Based Livelihood Framework" that intentionally merges traditional wisdom with vocational training. By utilizing tribal elders as resource persons and creating learning modules that credit indigenous technical skills, the school ensures that academic success is rooted in cultural identity, ultimately transforming ancestral heritage into a recognized foundation for professional excellence.

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