
EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS PATHWAYS AMONG MANOBO IP LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the educational challenges and success pathways among Manobo IP Junior High School Learners. This study addresses the following problems: (1) What was the level of educational challenges among Manobo Indigenous Peoples (IP) learners in terms of (a) language barriers, (b) resource availability, (c) teaching methods and curriculum, and (d) socioeconomic and environmental challenges? (2) What was the extent of success pathways among Manobo IP learners? (3) Was there a significant relationship between the level of educational challenges and success pathways among Manobo IP learners? This study adopted the descriptive correlational research design, and 140 public junior high school IP learners responded to structured questionnaire. The results were analyzed descriptively in terms of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation; and analytically with Pearson r. Results showed that the distribution of respondents by school: Pantaron Integrated School (54), Bulacao Integrated School (41), Concepcion Highschool (24), and Buco Integrated School (21), totaling 140. Findings revealed moderate educational challenges overall, with language barriers at a moderate level ($M = 2.72$), resource availability showing notable gaps particularly in textbooks ($M = 2.52$, Low) and support programs ($M = 2.54$, Low) despite strengths in technology access ($M = 4.22$, Very High), teaching methods and curriculum at moderate levels ($M = 3.83$) bolstered by high teacher training ($M = 4.29$, Very High) and cultural respect ($M = 4.22$, Very High), and socioeconomic-environmental factors at moderate levels ($M = 2.63$). Success pathways were consistently high (overall $M = 4.51$, Always), driven by exceptional learner motivation despite obstacles ($M = 4.84$), keen awareness of early marriage risks ($M = 4.78$), and robust

cultural resilience ($M = 4.38$). A significant positive correlational relationship emerged between educational challenges and success pathways across all domains (language barriers: $r = .283$, $p < .001$; resources: $r = .624$, $p < .001$; teaching methods: $r = .518$, $p < .001$; socioeconomic-environmental: $r = .526$, $p < .001$), with resource availability exhibiting the strongest association, underscoring how challenges cultivate resilience and adaptive strategies.

The statistical analysis yielded significant associations between educational practices and the success pathways among Manobo IP learners, which provided support for the idea that culture-friendly teaching and language help integration. The findings underscore the necessity of relevant professional development opportunities and Communities should partner for scholarships, campaigns against early marriage, and resilience activities. Future studies should track long-term effects and compare IP groups to create fair education policies.

KEYWORDS: Manobo IP learners, educational challenges, success pathways, indigenous education, Pearson correlation, cultural resilience, resource availability

INTRODUCTION

The Manobo Indigenous People in District 7 & 10 of Valencia City are one of the largest indigenous groups in the Philippines, known for their deep cultural heritage rooted in age-old traditions, native language, and close community ties. Their rich culture and identity have been preserved through generations, even as they face modern educational challenges. Many Manobo families live in remote, mountainous parts of Mindanao, which makes access to quality education difficult. Language differences, economic hardships, and teaching methods that do not always respect their culture create barriers that affect their academic progress and personal growth. For the Manobo, education is highly valued as a key to improving their lives and social status, though these obstacles often stand in the way of achieving these dreams.

Several significant challenges confront Manobo learners in this district. The geographical isolation of their communities' limits resources and access to schools. Poverty adds another layer of difficulty, as families may prioritize survival needs over schooling. The mainstream educational system often lacks culturally relevant curricula that reflect Manobo traditions and languages, making learning feel foreign and disconnected from their daily lives. Schools sometimes do not have enough teachers trained in indigenous education or the technology to support modern learning. These factors contribute to higher dropout rates and lower literacy

levels among Manobo students, putting their cultural future and socio-economic opportunities at risk.

Despite these hurdles, there are hopeful signs of success among Manobo learners in District III. Community resilience, cultural preservation, and inclusive education programs help them navigate these challenges. Local efforts and government support, such as scholarships and alternative learning systems tailored to indigenous learners, have made a positive impact. By integrating Manobo cultural knowledge and involving families and communities in education, learners stay grounded in their identity while gaining skills to succeed academically and socially. These success stories show the critical role of culturally sensitive education as a foundation for empowering indigenous learners.

This study focuses on exploring the educational challenges and success pathways of Manobo IP learners in District 7 & 10 of Valencia City. It aims to understand how these learners confront barriers and what factors contribute to their achievements. This research is essential for designing education that respects indigenous culture while promoting academic success. The findings will help educators, policymakers, and community leaders create programs that support Manobo learners and protect their cultural heritage for generations to come.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is grounded in the Indigenous Wholistic Theory by Dr. Cora Weber-Pillwax emphasizes the interconnectedness of mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of a learner's life. This theory posits that educational success for indigenous learners like the Manobo is not merely academic achievement but a balanced harmony among cultural identity, personal wellness, and community relationships. The wholistic approach promotes culturally relevant curricula, caring Indigenous role models, and community support as vital components that nurture learners' well-being and academic progress.

Complementing this framework, Culturally Responsive Education advocates for integrating indigenous knowledge and languages into the curriculum to make learning more meaningful and accessible for Manobo learners. It calls for teaching strategies and policies that reflect the cultural context, addressing the barriers posed by mainstream education systems. This approach aligns with the goal of reducing cultural isolation and promoting inclusion, thereby enhancing engagement and success.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a critical lens to examine how historical and structural inequalities rooted in colonization and systemic racism continue to affect the educational

experiences and outcomes of indigenous students (Lee, 2018). CRT encourages recognizing and addressing power imbalances and institutional biases within educational settings to create equitable opportunities for marginalized groups. By applying CRT alongside Indigenous Wholistic Theory and Culturally Responsive Education, this study comprehensively considers both the challenges and strengths of Manobo IP learners, offering a framework for understanding and fostering their educational success.

Significance of the Study

For the Learners, this study will help Manobo IP learners by identifying the specific educational challenges they face, such as language barriers, limited resources, and cultural dissonance in schooling. Recognizing success pathways will empower learners by providing insights into strategies and programs that support their academic growth while preserving their cultural identity and heritage. This ultimately encourages their active participation and resilience in education.

For the Teachers, the study provides teachers with a deeper understanding of the unique needs and difficulties experienced by Manobo learners. It encourages the adoption of culturally responsive teaching methods and the integration of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. Awareness of success pathways will assist teachers in employing effective strategies to motivate and engage these learners, enhancing teaching practices.

For the School Administrators, school administrators will gain valuable information on the systemic and contextual barriers affecting Manobo IP education. The study's findings can inform school policies and resource allocation to support indigenous learners better. Emphasizing success pathways will guide school heads in promoting inclusive, culturally sensitive environments and strengthening community partnerships.

For the Community, the local community benefits from a better understanding of how education influences the socio-cultural and economic well-being of Manobo families. Supporting indigenous learners' educational success strengthens community cohesion, preserves cultural heritage, and paves the way for sustainable development. The study encourages community involvement and advocacy in enhancing educational services.

For the Curriculum Development, the study highlights the importance of contextualizing and indigenizing the curriculum to address the cultural and educational needs of the Manobo learners. It provides empirical evidence for policymakers and curriculum planners to design programs that integrate indigenous knowledge systems and practices. This ensures that

curricula are relevant, inclusive, and capable of fostering both academic competence and cultural identity among IP learners.

Definition of Terms

The terms are operationalized, and the following is done so that they can be grasped of by the researcher as well as communicated more readily to the audience members.

Educational Challenges refers to the various obstacles and difficulties that Manobo IP learners encounter in their pursuit of education. These include issues related to limited access to quality learning materials, lack of teacher support, inadequate instructional methods, and barriers in adapting to formal schooling, especially in the context of remote and indigenous communities.

Language Barriers pertains to the difficulties Manobo learners face when their native language differs from the language of instruction used in schools. Language barriers hinder comprehension, participation, and overall academic performance, as learners struggle to understand lessons delivered in Filipino, English, or other non-indigenous languages.

Teaching Methods and Curriculum refers to the pedagogical approaches and educational content used in schools. For Manobo learners, a lack of culturally responsive teaching methods and curricula that incorporate indigenous knowledge and practices poses challenges, often resulting in disengagement and poor learning outcomes. Curriculum that does not reflect their cultural background can be difficult to relate to and comprehend.

Socioeconomic and Environmental Challenges includes the financial, social, and environmental factors that affect the educational experiences of Manobo learners. Poverty, limited family income, lack of technology and internet access, and living in remote or environmentally challenged areas contribute to difficulties in attending school consistently and accessing learning resources.

Success Pathways refers to the positive factors, strategies, and supports that enable Manobo IP learners to overcome educational challenges and achieve academic advancement. Success pathways may include community support, culturally relevant education, government programs, parental involvement, learner motivation, and inclusive teaching practices that foster both academic and cultural growth.

The Methodology

This study employed the descriptive-correlation design. It will examine the level of the educational challenges and success pathways among Manobo IP Junior Highschool Learners in District 7 & 10, Valencia City Bukidnon, for the school year 2025-2026.

Researchers obtained data on the level of the in educational challenges and Success Pathways among Manobo IP Junior Highschool Learners through a reasercher made questionnaire.

Research Locale

The researcher carried out the study within the Division of Valencia City, which is situated in the province of Bukidnon in the Northern Mindanao region of the Philippines. Valencia City stands out as a dynamic and economically progressive urban center, distinguished by its robust population growth and vibrant commercial activity. It ranks as the third largest city in Northern Mindanao in terms of population, after Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, and serves as a key hub for trade, agriculture, and industry within the region. The city's rapid development and strategic importance have contributed to its reputation as a center of advancement and opportunity in Northern Mindanao.

The Division of Valencia consists of many Indigenous Peoples (IP) schools and is run and headed by a leader with our District Focus Supervisor, Zaldy Ampong, for the IP schools. It includes four key schools: Pantaron Integrated School, Mapantaw Elementary School, Concepcion Integrated School, and Buco Integrated School. This specific map of schools was purposefully selected for the study due to their high concentration of Manobo IP junior high school learners, who face unique educational challenges such as geographic isolation, cultural barriers, limited access to resources, and integration into mainstream curricula amid rapid urbanization.

These schools represent a focused locale where success pathways can be meaningfully examined, aligning with the Division's priority on IP education under DepEd mandates, and providing rich, context-specific data for descriptive-correlational analysis. Not all IP learners in these schools were able to answer the questionnaire, primarily due to factors such as chronic absenteeism from family obligations or farm work, language comprehension gaps, scheduling conflicts during data collection, and mobility issues in remote areas.

Respondents of the Study

The study's respondents were the public junior high school IP learners of, Division of Valencia City, S.Y. 2025-2026.

Sampling Procedure

The type of sampling used in this study was complete enumeration. This study has invited all the Araling Panlipunan Teachers in Damulog South District, Division of Bukidnon to be considered as their respondents for School year 2025-2026.

Research Instrument

In this study, the researcher made the questionnaire related to Success Pathways among Manobo IP Junior Highschool Learners but translated in Bisaya.

It consisted of a survey questionnaire with two components.

Part I covered educational challenges of Manobo IP junior high school learners. There are 6 indicators for each variable. The five-point Likert scale serves as the foundation for the choice columns. Respondents only need to look at the column to see their selected response.

Part II dealt with the Success Pathways among Manobo IP Learners. Each area contains 10 items. The response options are present in columns corresponding to a five-point Likert scale. Respondents indicate their selected answer by checking the appropriate column.

Data Gathering Procedure

This research adhered to the standard methodology and regular operating procedures of the Division of Valencia City (VCI). First, approval and endorsement from the Dean of Graduate Studies were obtained and submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon securing approval, permission was requested from the Public Schools District Supervisor, followed by obtaining school principals' approval to conduct the study. Informed consent was secured from parents, assent from pupils, data anonymity ensured through coding, and beneficence upheld via beneficial interventions. Finally, questionnaires were distributed to the respondents.

Scoring Procedure

The data were processed and interpreted using the rating scales presented below. The level of educational challenges and success pathways among Manobo IP Learners was interpreted using a Five-Point Likert Scale.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The study employed the following statistical tools: mean and standard deviation are used to determine the Educational Challenges and Success Pathways among Manobo IP Junior Highschool Learners.

The study Utilized the Pearson r Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient or Pearson r to find the correlation between Educational Challenges and Success Pathways among Manobo IP Junior Highschool Learners.

FINDINGS

Based on the data gathered, the major findings are the following:

The level of level of level of educational challenges among Manobo IP learners in terms of; language barriers, resource availability, teaching methods and curriculum, and socioeconomic and environmental challenges among Manobo IP learners is in moderate.

The success pathways among Manobo IP learners were in a very large extent.

There was a significant relationship between level of Educational Challenges and Success Pathways among Manobo IP Learners in terms of Socioeconomic and Environmental Challenges and Resource Availability.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the findings, the following conclusions were formulated.

The level of educational challenges among Manobo IP junior high school learners in Districts 7 & 10, Valencia City Division for S.Y. 2025-2026 was moderate across language barriers, resource availability, teaching methods and curriculum, and socioeconomic-environmental factors. The findings indicate that learners perceive moderate hurdles in these domains, tempered by strengths in technology access, teacher training, cultural respect, and curriculum motivation. This moderate level reflects foundational support through digital tools and culturally attuned instruction, consistent with DepEd's IPed and MTB-MLE frameworks, in fostering resilience amid geographic and cultural contexts.

Conversely, success pathways among Manobo IP learners were consistently high across motivation, optimism, peer encouragement, cultural resilience, and risk awareness. This result signifies strong adaptive capacities, underscoring challenges' constructive role in building informed decision-making, peer networks, and identity preservation.

The findings revealed statistically significant positive correlations between educational challenges and success pathways across all domains. This suggests that while challenges persist at moderate levels, domains like resource availability exhibit the strongest associations. The result implies that adversities enhance rather than impede pathways, affirming the superiority of culturally responsive, resilience-building education over barrier-free ideals. Hence, embedding indigenous knowledge, professional development on IP needs, equitable resource distribution, and community partnerships within IPed frameworks remains vital, complemented by continuous DepEd policy implementation like MTB-MLE and ALS to promote enduring learner triumphs.

The null hypothesis was rejected for socioeconomic-environmental challenges and resource availability, but failed to reject for the remaining variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions, the researcher formulates the following recommendations:

Given that the level of educational challenges among Manobo IP learners was found to be moderate overall across key domains, it is recommended that schools continue to sustain and institutionalize these strengths while addressing gaps. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to ensure culturally responsive practices remain effective. Additionally, schools may enhance their programs by prioritizing investment in basic resources like textbooks and support programs, continuous professional development on indigenous learner needs, and community awareness campaigns for parents. These initiatives will help maintain a culture of relevance, competence, and shared commitment in promoting equitable education within the school community.

Since the success pathways of learners were found to be consistently high across all indicators, it is recommended that schools sustain and strengthen programs that nurture resilience and cultural integration. Initiatives such as structured activities emphasizing motivation and peer encouragement, culturally attuned lesson plans, and daily practices balancing heritage with academics should be continuously implemented to foster these strengths. Teachers and administrators may also be encouraged to provide consistent mentoring and targeted interventions to maintain learners' optimism and adaptive growth, especially amid cultural pressures. Furthermore, collaboration among parents, tribal leaders, and education specialists should be enhanced to create a holistic environment that continually bolsters learners' pathways to achievement.

Since the study revealed statistically significant positive correlations between educational challenges and success pathways across all domains, it is recommended that schools and DepEd stakeholders adopt a more interconnected approach to indigenous education. While maintaining strong culturally responsive practices remains essential for building foundational resilience, schools should also focus on complementary interventions that leverage these relationships. These may include establishing collaborative teacher networks for sharing best practices, piloting IPEd-focused programs, conducting annual assessments linking challenges to pathway gains, and professional development workshops informed by learner experiences. Further research may also be conducted to expand on comparative studies across IP

communities, incorporating longitudinal tracking of outcomes. Through these efforts, schools can develop a comprehensive framework that harnesses adversities for enduring success and holistic learner empowerment.

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