Exploring the Lived Experiences of IP Students in Pursuing Technology and Livelihood Education Program

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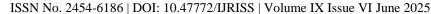
ABSTRACT

Indigenous people, often portrayed as uneducated and uncivilized, necessitate an exploration of their current circumstances, particularly in the realm of technology and livelihood education. This phenomenological qualitative study was conducted to examine the experiences of ten (10) IP students who are pursuing Technology and Livelihood Education program from Davao del Norte State College. In-depth Interviews (IDI) was the method utilized to gather data with the identified informants. Audio recordings were transcribed and translated, and the transcriptions were analyzed for this study. As a result, fourteen (14) major themes emerged from the analysis of the data gathered, the identified themes were: Integrating Cultural Pride and Identity, Showing Resilience amid Academic Struggles, Experiencing Inclusive and Supportive School Environment, Engaging in Practical and Relevant Learning, Balancing Multiple Roles and Responsibilities, Family Influence and Expectations, Personal Aspirations and Career Goals, Cultural Pride and Community Impact, Interest and Enjoyment in the TLE Program, Support Systems from Friends and Teachers, Development of Inclusion in Culture and Diversity , Promotion of Fair Treatment, Inclusion of Culture Appreciation in the Curriculum , Cultivation of Growth Mindset and Support System. Key findings from the study suggest that most IP students in the TLE program at Davao del Norte State College struggle in their studies due to a lack of background knowledge in the subject. Hence, in order to cope with the course's demands, particularly its focus on hands-on activities and skill development, the students have adopted various strategies to better understand the lessons. Despite these challenges, they remain resilient and optimistic. They have the support of their families and community, as well as the school, which promotes an inclusive and supportive environment. This serves as a source of motivation, providing them with hope and a beacon of success.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Experiences, Indigenous Peoples Students, Technology and Livelihood Education

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations has stated that Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and nomadic peoples have faced numerous challenges in accessing education. Indigenous students often perform worse than their non-Indigenous peers. This is reflected in low enrollment rates, high dropout rates, absenteeism, repetition rates, and literacy rates, which affect overall educational outcomes, with retention and completion being two significant issues (Buenaflor et al., 2023). lifestyles, traditions, and belief systems (Galindo, Reginio, Liguid, et al., 2018). This pervasive stereotype, which portrays them as uneducated and uncivilized, necessitates an exploration of their current circumstances, particularly in the realm of education. To highlight the problematic situation, TLE programs are often designed based on mainstream concepts and skills, neglecting the rich traditional knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) communities. This lack of relevance can lead to disengagement and a sense of alienation from the learning process (UNESCO, 2017). Many IP communities experience poverty, making it difficult for them to afford the costs associated with TLE programs, such as materials, transportation, or potential lost income while attending these programs (NSCB, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences and challenges faced by TLE Indigenous college students in order to understand the differences in society and lifestyle affecting these students' access to education. The goal is to reduce discrimination and ensure economic, social, and political participation as citizens of their states and communities. Through this study, substantial information can be obtained about their hardships and how they manage their silent battles, struggles, and difficulties, as well as the various problems they encountered while learning and how they cope with these unfavorable experiences. This research can help shape local policies and actions, encourage inclusion, and develop educational environments that meet the cultural and educational needs of Indigenous students.

Research Questions

This study explored the lived experiences and challenges

faced by TLE IP college students. Specifically, it answered the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of Indigenous students pursuing Technology and Livelihood Program?

2. What motivations drive Indigenous students to pursue their studies?

3. What are the insights of IP students that contribute to a deeper understanding of diversity and inclusion in higher education?

Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored to the theory on Critical Indigenous Pedagogy by Marker and Gonzales (2018), Social Cognitive Career Theory by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2018), and the Intersectionality Framework by Crenshaw (2019). These three theoretical perspectives collectively offer a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students in higher education.

Critical Indigenous Pedagogy served as the foundational lens, emphasizing the significance of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices. It underscores the necessity of acknowledging Indigenous students' historical and cultural backgrounds, ensuring that educational approaches align with their values and ways of knowing. This framework advocates for transforming educational environments to be more inclusive of Indigenous perspectives, fostering a sense of belonging for IP students.
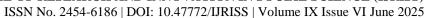
Social Cognitive Career Theory added a dimension by explaining how socio-cultural factors, such as cultural norms and familial expectations, influence the educational and career choices of IP students. It highlights the importance of understanding how these contextual factors shape students' perceptions of their academic and career paths, emphasizing the role of support systems and self-efficacy in their development.

Finally, the Intersectionality Framework allowed for a deeper analysis of how multiple social identities—such as ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status—intersect to shape IP students' experiences in higher education. This framework is crucial for understanding the complexities of privilege and oppression that impact their educational journeys, revealing how various forms of systemic inequality affect access, retention, and success in academia.

By integrating these three frameworks, this study offers a nuanced perspective on the challenges and opportunities that Indigenous students face in pursuing higher education, promoting culturally sensitive research, policies, and practices that better support their academic and personal growth.

Significance of the Study

This phenomenological study adds to the usefulness and significance of learning by examining the experiences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students while navigating higher education. Moreover, this study is a strategic way

of promoting quality education in our country. It is not only the IP students who will benefit from this study; it will also be beneficial to:

Community Leaders & Indigenous Communities. Community leaders play a crucial role in understanding the challenges and successes of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students. By working closely with Indigenous communities, they can better address the unique needs of these students and support their educational journeys. Engaging with IP college students allows community leaders and Indigenous communities to advocate for resources and programs that support higher education within the community, fostering growth and development, preserving and promoting Indigenous culture and traditions within higher education settings, and ensuring cultural continuity and pride.

Schools. This study can also benefit schools by providing information regarding Indigenous students' lived experiences and can help CHED officials strengthen educational awareness and strategies for delivering quality education.

Teachers. It can assist teachers who willingly share their experiences in handling IP students, providing them with awareness so they can express their deepest and sincerest appreciation and understanding toward these students.

Parents. Understanding the experiences of IP college students can promote empowerment for parents to actively support their children's educational pursuits, providing guidance and encouragement throughout their college journey.

Regular students. Learning from these experiences and perceptions may also provide an opportunity for other students to be motivated and strive harder in their studies.

Future Researchers. Lastly, this study can assist future researchers interested in exploring the experiences of IP students. It will help them identify areas of teaching that need further study and investigation.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in this study to help readers understand them clearly:
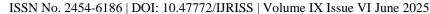
IP Students - Refers to students who self-identify as members of an Indigenous tribe, are of school age, or are identified in university records as Indigenous (Law Insider Dictionary, 2024). In this study, it refers to students who are fully or partially Indigenous (IP) and are enrolled in a TLE (Technology and Livelihood Education) course.

Lived Experiences - According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2024), these are experiences a person has undergone firsthand, particularly those that provide them with knowledge or understanding that others, who have only heard about such experiences, may not possess. In this study, it refers to TLE IP students' direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events, as opposed to assumptions or second-hand knowledge from other people, research, or media.

Livelihood Education Program - Technology and Livelihood Education focuses on equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in specific occupations and careers (Ryan Brown & Joshua Brown, 2010). In this study, it refers to the course of study from which the participants come, contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

Limitations and Delimitations

This qualitative phenomenological study was limited to the lived experience and perceptions of IP college students, selected relative to their limited sample size and the potential bias in responses resulting from the unique characteristics of this student population. The participants of the study are second- to third-year IP college students enrolled in Technology and Livelihood Education program who are certified students of

Davao del Norte State College, located in Barangay New Visayas, City of Panabo, Province of Davao del Norte.

The delimitation of this study was confined to the personal observations of the researcher and the responses of second- and third-year IP college students enrolled in the Technology and Livelihood Education program during the 2023-2024 school year. Although this study involved a small sample, the results were envisioned to be significant in various ways. During the data gathering, 10 in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with individual IP students to explore their personal perspectives. Due to the challenge of identifying participants, the researchers used snowball sampling, a research method relying on referrals. The researchers approached students enrolled in the Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education Program and asked if they knew anyone who might fit in the given criteria. This approach ensured the validity and reliability during the selection process of participant's identities. However, we acknowledge the limitations that may prevent this research from achieving the expected generalizability, given the small sample size. Thus, while the findings offer deep insights into this specific group, they may not directly apply to all IP student populations due to regional and cultural variations. The results may not be generalizable and cannot adequately support claims of valid and reliable conclusions, particularly since the real stories shared by participants pertain to past events and are subject to human error in terms of memory.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized and arranged in an order which can be easily identified and understood by the readers. Below is a comprehensive presentation and discussion of the organization of the study.

Chapter 1 is the inclusive presentation of the introduction of the study, which includes some problem situations regarding the experiences of Indigenous college students. It is followed by the purpose of the study, which states the intention behind the conduct of the study. Research questions consist of interview guide questions that are formulated and validated to acquire responses from the participants to attain the aim of the study. It is followed by a theoretical lens, which is composed of supporting studies and theories that the study relies on. Next is the significance of the study, which discusses who the beneficiaries of the study are, and the definition of terms, which are operationally defined to give clear and comprehensive interpretations. It is followed by the delimitations and limitations of the study, which are presented to show the parameters of the study. Lastly, the statement on the organization of the study is presented.

Chapter 2 presents the review of related literature, which is composed of supporting studies related to this study. The review includes challenges, coping mechanisms, and views of Indigenous college students (IPs) who have direct learning related to the study.

Chapter 3 consists of the methodology employed in the study. This includes the research design, role of the researcher, research participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness and credibility, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The results are divided into four main parts, namely: the participants' data, the categorization of data in coding the evolving themes, the responses to the interviews, and the synopsis of the responses.

Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the results. It further explains the most important findings related to the mentioned literature. This chapter also includes the implications of the study, suggestions for future observations in the field of research and educational practices, as well as the concluding remarks.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To provide a framework for the investigation, selected literature related to this study are presented in this chapter. The review includes lived challenges, coping mechanisms or motivations, and insights or views of IP TLE college students who have direct learning related to the study.

Lived Experiences of TLE Indigenous College Students

Exploring the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students in pursuing technology and livelihood education is crucial for understanding the challenges, successes, and unique perspectives they bring to academia. In many parts of the world, including countries with significant Indigenous populations like Australia, Canada, and the United States, Indigenous students face systemic barriers that hinder their access to and success in higher education (Smith, J. 2019). In the Philippines, IP communities are still considered the poorest and most disadvantaged due to their adherence to traditional pre-colonial cultures and practices. Consequently, they are subjected to discrimination and face limited opportunities in economic aspects, education, and political participation (Bamba et al., 2021). Smith and Garcia investigated the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students pursuing higher education in technology-related fields. They emphasized the significance of cultural identity and community support in shaping the academic journeys of IP students, highlighting the role of culturally responsive pedagogy in fostering engagement and success (Smith & Garcia, 2021).

Coping Mechanism of TLE Indigenous College Students Pursuing Technology and Livelihood Education Program

Access to Indigenous-specific support programs, mentorship opportunities, and culturally competent counseling services can mitigate the academic, social, and emotional challenges faced by IP students. Creating spaces where Indigenous students feel valued, respected, and empowered to express their identities and worldviews is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and well-being on campus (Patel, M., 2021).

Adams and Johnson (2020) reviewed literature on Indigenous Peoples (IP) students in higher education, highlighting the importance of cultural identity, institutional support, and effective pedagogy. Supporting this, Wager et al. (2022) examined systemic barriers faced by Indigenous youth in Canada, calling for decolonized, culturally responsive education. Both studies stress the need for inclusive policies and practices to improve Indigenous students' academic outcomes.
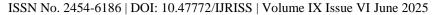
Insights are drawn from the experiences of TLE Indigenous College Students (IPs)

Culturally inclusive teaching strategies are vital for Indigenous Peoples (IP) students in Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE). Assessments should match students' skill levels and include real-life tasks, group activities, and the use of the mother tongue (Burgiss, 2019; Wilks et al., 2020; Riley & Johansen, 2019). Practical skills and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSP) should be integrated into lessons, with the help of elders and community leaders (Mercado, 2021). Flexible learning, supported by resources, helps IP students stay resilient and engaged (Amihan, 2023), while parental involvement, though challenged by economic pressures, positively influences academic outcomes (Cuartero-Enteria & Tagyam, 2020).

Institutional support also plays a key role. Mentorship, financial aid, and inclusive policies boost retention and success (Torres & Diaz, 2021; Morales et al., 2019). Culturally sensitive teaching builds stronger connections and improves learning (Perso & Hayward, 2020; Martinez & Brown, 2020). Inclusive classrooms and practical activities help develop IP students' problem-solving and life skills (Mangundayao, 2021; Elli & Ricafort, 2020). Including Indigenous technology in lessons affirms identity and promotes equity (Gumbo, 2023).

Synthesis

Moreover, the literature on the lived experiences of Indigenous students pursuing Technology and Livelihood Education programs underscores the importance of understanding the historical, cultural, and systemic factors that shape their educational journeys. By adopting culturally responsive pedagogies, providing holistic support services, and acknowledging the resilience and strengths of Indigenous students, higher education institutions can work towards creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments for IP learners.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a further discussion of the methods and instruments utilized by the researchers in the study. It also covers the precautions and processes taken by the researchers to ensure the validity and credibility of the undertaking, as well as the welfare of the participants.

Research Design

A phenomenological method was employed in the investigation. This method, known as phenomenological research, examines how people perceive, comprehend, and feel about the things they encounter in their world (Jordan, 2019). The researchers were particularly interested in learning more about the experiences of IP college students pursuing the Technological and Livelihood Education program to explore and address the gap in the literature regarding Indigenous students in higher education and how they deal with issues of cultural identity, access to resources, and inclusion in academic environments.

search Participants

The participants in the study were those identified as second- and third-year IP students in the Technological and Livelihood Education program who were certified students at Davao del Norte State College, located in Barangay New Visayas, City of Panabo, Province of Davao del Norte. The researchers conducted 10 in-depth interviews (IDI) with individual IP students to explore their personal perspectives. According to Creswell (2013), there is growing support that, depending on the topic and diversity captured, a reasonable sample size for a phenomenological study could range from 3 to 25 participants, which is sufficient to uncover and understand the major issues in any study of lived experience.

Role of the Researcher

The researchers played an active and culturally sensitive role in exploring the educational experiences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students in Technology and Livelihood Education. They built trust within the community and used qualitative methods, such as interviews and in-depth interviews, to collect firsthand narratives. Involved throughout the research process—from data collection to thematic analysis—they ensured ethical integrity and highlighted both the challenges and successes of IP students. Their work aimed to inform policies and practices in higher education, fostering more inclusive and equitable learning environments

Data Collection

The researchers undertook the following actions:

First, they identified the participants in the study. Second, they wrote a letter to the Dean of the Institute of Teacher Education requesting approval for the formal conduct of the study. After receiving approval, an interview schedule was established with the participants' agreement, which worked well for everyone. The participants were given an orientation about the study and informed of their rights and involvement. Fourth, the researchers conducted the interviews. Afterward, the participant data was transcribed and checked for accuracy. Ultimately, the transcribed data was examined by the researchers, and the findings were described and interpreted based on the data.

Data Analysis

The researchers employed various approaches in conducting thematic analysis, including a sixstep process: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing them up. Following these processes helped the researchers avoid confirmation bias in the formulation of their analysis (Caulfield, 2023).

Using thematic analysis helped the researchers simplify the analytical process of the gathered data from the participants' responses. The researchers also performed initial coding after obtaining the transcriptions from the interviews. Consequently, they consulted an expert in data analysis to generate the themes. After doing so, the

key ideas were highlighted, allowing the researchers to break down the key themes and create a comprehensible discussion of the sophisticated and uniquely intricate perceptions of each participant.

Trustworthiness

In this part, the researchers ensured that the data gathered and presented were factual. Qualitative research explores the unique details of human behavior and experiences, emphasizing context. It ensures trustworthiness, which is crucial in establishing the credibility and reliability of qualitative findings. This includes elements such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was achieved through involvement, observation, and triangulation; transferability was achieved through comprehensive and detailed explanations; dependability was attained through extensive documentation and audit trails; and confirmability was established through debriefing, checking, and journaling.

To ensure the credibility of this study, the researchers utilized different methods, including constant observation, participant selection, and data gathering, followed by data analysis. The researchers impartially analyzed the data without adding any untruthful information that could undermine the credibility of the study.

For transferability, the researchers used criteria to increase the degree to which the findings could be applied or transferred. This included a defined set of conditions describing how the study's findings could be transferred to other contexts, settings, or respondents (Stalmeijer et al., 2024).

The gathered data were truthfully interpreted, with supported evidence provided to the readers to demonstrate that the research findings were applicable or transferable to various contexts and a broader population.

Regarding dependability, the researchers conducted rigorous data collection techniques, strictly followed procedures, and maintained well-documented analysis. They first accumulated data through interviews. To avoid biases, the researchers sought advice from their research adviser and consulted with a data analyst expert to gain valuable insights and improve the overall rigor of the research.

Confirmability was ensured through an audit trail, a qualitative research method used to establish the study's findings. This in-depth approach illustrates that the findings are based on the perceptions of the participants' responses rather than the researchers' biases and preconceived ideas (Moran, 2021).

The researchers applied 'audit trails' by keeping records of how the qualitative research was conducted. After collecting sufficient data, the researchers transcribed the participant responses and collaborated with an expert data analyst to analyze the data. After identifying the essential themes, the data were clustered and transparently presented in a table, accompanied by discussions supported by the participants' narratives.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics, in general, refers to the principles of right and wrong that guide individuals or groups. In research, it represents a standard or guideline used by researchers to ensure their actions protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of the participants involved. The researchers followed various ethical principles, including beneficence, which maximizes potential benefits for research participants while minimizing potential harm. In qualitative research, this principle contributes to new knowledge, enhances understanding of a phenomenon, and informs policy or practice.

The researchers adhered to numerous ethical guidelines, such as beneficence, which aimed to maximize the potential advantages for research participants while reducing possible risks. According to qualitative perspectives, this approach can lead to the development of novel concepts, improve comprehension of a phenomenon, or influence changes in practice or policy. Potential harm could include data abuse, breaches of privacy, or psychological discomfort. Given the challenge of identifying participants, the researchers used snowball sampling, relying on referrals. They approached students enrolled in the Bachelor of Technology

and Livelihood Education Program and asked if they knew anyone who might fit the criteria. This approach ensured the privacy of participants' identities.

Justice was another fundamental principle, ensuring equitable sharing of benefits and extensive study. Great care was taken in selecting participants to ensure that vulnerable groups were not disadvantaged or unjustly excluded. Finally, the researchers considered the fidelity principle, which emphasizes being truthful, open, and reliable, as well as building and preserving trust (Atlas, 2024)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data gathered from the in-depth interviews with second- and third-year Indigenous Peoples (IP) students enrolled in the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program at Davao del Norte State College. The information was collected to uncover the students' lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights. The data were elicited using the following research questions aligned with the purpose of this study:

1. What are the lived experiences of Indigenous students pursuing the Technology and Livelihood Education program?
2. What motivations drive Indigenous students to pursue their studies?
3. What are the insights of IP students that contribute to a deeper understanding of diversity and inclusion in higher education?

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an overview of the participants. The second section outlines the data analysis process and the steps employed in classifying the emerging themes. The third section discusses the responses gathered from the informants during the in-depth interviews.

Participants

Key Informants. During the data collection process, ten (10) informants were chosen from the Davao del Norte State College, specifically from the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program. These informants were selected based on their status as second- and third-year IP students. The participants were determined using the following criteria:

a) Currently enrolled as a second- or third-year student at Davao del Norte State College. b) Identified as an Indigenous Peoples (IP) student, either full- or half-IP, with at least one parent having pure IP heritage. c) Involved in Indigenous cultural activities or having a meaningful connection to their Indigenous culture and language. d) Able to provide a certificate of indigency as proof of their involvement in Indigenous cultural activities and their willingness to participate in the study.

The informants for this study were all pursuing various courses under the TLE program. They were selected to provide a diverse range of perspectives on their lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms as Indigenous students in higher education.

Overview of Participants

The ten (10) informants represented a mix of second- and third-year students, all of whom met the inclusion criteria. Each participant was given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality and privacy, as stated in Chapter 3 and in the Informed Consent Form signed by the informants. The pseudonyms and relevant demographic information of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants

Pseudonym	Course	Year Level	Gender	Tribe	IP Status
Lory	BTLED	2nd Year	Female	Manobo	Half IP

Queeny	BTLED	3rd year	Female	Ati	Half IP
Mikha	BTLED	2nd year	Female	Bagobo	Half IP
Lene	BTLED	2nd year	Female	Manobo	Half IP
Mae	BTLED	2nd year	Female	Manobo/Agusanon	Half IP
Kate	BTLED	2nd year	Female	Mansaka	Half IP
Bhlace	BTLED	2nd year	Female	Mandaya	Half IP
Larah	BTLED	2nd year	Female	Sama	Half IP
Ace	BTLED	2nd year	Female	Bagobo	Half IP
Mic	BTLED	3rd year	Male	Mandaya	Half IP

This diverse group of participants provided rich and varied insights into the experiences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students pursuing the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program. Their involvement in various cultural activities ensured that their perspectives were deeply rooted in their Indigenous heritage, making their contributions invaluable to the study.

In-depth Interview. The data for this study were gathered through in-depth interviews conducted with the selected informants within the campus premises during their vacant time. These one-on-one interviews aimed to uncover the experiences, motivations, challenges, and coping mechanisms of Indigenous college students pursuing a Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program.

As the data gathering progressed, it became evident that the Indigenous college students participating in the study had diverse experiences and perspectives. Their decisions to pursue the TLE program were influenced by various factors, including their cultural background, personal interests, and motivations. Despite these differences, some common themes emerged. The responses were transcribed, translated, and analyzed to identify these themes.

To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to the participants, replacing their real names as outlined in Table 1. The interviews were recorded using mobile phones after obtaining consent from the participants. Prior to starting the interviews, the researchers introduced themselves, explained the study, and highlighted important points from the Informed Consent Form (ICF), which the informants signed.

The researchers employed snowball sampling to choose participants, utilizing referrals and networking to identify those who met the inclusion criteria and were willing to participate. Before the scheduled interviews, the participants were informed about the scope and objectives of the study. Validated research questions were used to guide the interviews, and an interview guide was employed to ensure that all relevant topics were covered. The participants willingly shared their experiences, providing rich qualitative data.

Categorization of Data

The researchers carefully transcribed the interviews using Microsoft Excel, encoding all information word for word. This process involved continuously listening to and studying the input to ensure accuracy. The responses were translated into English where necessary. Transcription involved critical decisions about data selection, interpretation, and representation (Bailey, 2008). The second phase of text analysis, data coding, involved organizing text data, dividing it into segments, assigning codes, and breaking these codes into broader themes.

Data reduction, presentation, conclusion formulation, and verification were the key steps in the data analysis process (Creswell, 2007). Data reduction was used to remove unnecessary information, transforming it into vital, logical information that was easily comprehensible (Creswell, 2012).

Furthermore, thematic analysis was the approach used to classify and categorize the data both in pairs and independently. Through data reduction, the lengthy and enormous volumes of qualitative data that were obtained were condensed and made manageable. A specialist in data analysis was also consulted to assist in analyzing the data. The researchers also analyzed the primary themes that the data analyst provided, which matched the central concepts identified in the data analysis conducted separately by the researchers. As Creswell (2012) outlined in the presentation of the answers to research question number 1, the data analyst provided the study's layering themes.

Lived Experiences of IP Students in Pursuing Technology and Livelihood Education Program

The following questions were asked during the in-depth interviews to elicit a thorough discussion about the aforementioned study problem: How would you describe your experience as a BTLED IP student? What are the advantages of being an Indigenous student pursuing the TLE program? How do you balance the demands of studying in the TLE program while meeting various cultural responsibilities and obligations? What subjects in the program do you find interesting and challenging? How do these impact your overall college experience?
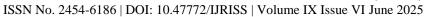
Moreover, it contains the five major themes that emerged from the data collected on the experiences of the study participants, as presented in Table 2. These themes address the question of what are the lived experiences of IP students in pursuing the Technology and Livelihood Education program. The generated themes are as follows:

Integrating Cultural Pride and Identity, Showing Resilience Amid Academic Struggles, Experiencing an Inclusive and Supportive School Environment, Engaging in Practical and Relevant Learning, and Balancing Multiple Roles and Responsibilities.

Overall, these themes emerged as part of the lived experiences of IP students in pursuing the Technology and Livelihood Education program. They illustrated how these students integrated their culture, pride, and identity through their unique talents and practices, showing resilience amidst academic struggles. Despite hurdles in studying the program, they experienced an inclusive and supportive school environment where everyone felt respected and valued. They engaged in relevant and practical learning processes that demonstrated real-world skills and balanced multiple roles and responsibilities in their families, schools, and communities.

Table 2 Lived Experiences of IP Students in Pursuing in Technology and Livelihood Education Program

ESSENTIAL THEMES	CORE IDEAS	SHORT QUOTES
Integrating Cultural Pride and Identity	• IP Students take pride in uniqueness of their culture • IP Students showcase their talents, practices and food. • Actively participating and preserving cultural traditions	• "In our culture, we have many unique talents." (Lory) • "Like, we make beads and cook traditional food for us IP." (Mikha) • "Like, we celebrate IP day for gatherings then we show off our different talents as an IP group." (Queeny)
Showing Resilience Amid Academic Struggles	• Recognizing the impact of college experiences in shaping resilience	• "As an IP studying as BTLED student, I can say that it is really difficult because, there are a lot of skills that need to be learned, but overtime it

	• Acknowledging the challenges and emotional breakdowns	shaped me how to become resilient." (Kate) • "Sometimes I struggle and emotional breakdowns will happen." (Lory)
	• Maintaining a desirable commitment to academic goals	• "I did not expect that this course would be this difficult and challenging but, it helped me become committed to my own learning as an IP BTLED student." (Mae)
Experiencing Inclusive and Supportive School Environment	• Educational environment where all students are treated with respect	• "As an IP student, the school is good; there's no discrimination and the students here in DNSC are respectful." (Lory)
	• Providing support to IP students which facilitate their educational journey.	• "As a BTLED IP student, I am lucky because I belong to this school. I haven't seen any bullying or harassment because others adopt our culture and they support us." (Lene)
		• "It is a privilege to be given an opportunity to be a scholar as an IP student, helping our needs when it comes to transportation, allowance, and others." (Queeny)
	• Recognizing the privilege and opportunities provided to IP students	
Engaging in Practical and Relevant Learning	• Relevance of subjects that relate to everyday activities and cultural practices	• "It's interesting because it is connected to our daily activities, such as cooking and sewing subjects." (Lory)
		• "Since the TLE Program involves a lot of hands-on activities, it is really advantageous for me as an Indigenous student." (Mae)
	• Learning experiences that are hands-on and directly applicable to students' lives	• "My experiences here at DNSC have had a significant influence on me, there are many skills that I have apply to myself and in real-life situations through developing my practical skills." (Larah)
	• Highlighting the development of practical skills	
		• "For me, what really made a difference were the subjects we studied in TLE. It has been very beneficial, refining my

		skills and broadening my understanding in different fields we've covered." (Mic)
Balancing Multiple Roles and Responsibilities	• Prioritizing tasks based on urgency and deadlines.	• "Maybe time management, prioritize the things that need immediate attention, what needs to be finished, then set aside those are not." (Kate)
	• Balancing academic pursuits with cultural obligations	• "When it comes to cultural obligations, if I'm done with academics, that's the time when I prioritize my cultural responsibilities." (Queeny)
	• Maintaining connections with community, family, and cultural roots	• "It's not difficult in terms of family relationships, but what's challenging is adhering to our cultural roots while still striving as BTLED students." (Ace)

These themes emerged as part of the lived experiences of IP students in pursuing the Technology and Livelihood Education program. They illustrated how these students integrated their culture, pride, and identity through their unique talents and practices, showing resilience amidst academic struggles. Despite hurdles in studying the program, they experienced an inclusive and supportive school environment where everyone felt respected and valued. They engaged in relevant and practical learning processes that demonstrated real-world skills and balanced multiple roles and responsibilities in their families, schools, and communities.

Table 3 The motivations which drive indigenous students to pursue their studies

ESSENTIAL THEMES	CORE IDEAS	SHORT QUOTES
Family Influence and Expectations	• Provide emotional and financial support.	• "I strive to finish my studies to honor my family and culture." (Mikha)
		• "My family is my backbone, supporting and encouraging my education." (Lene)
	• The family instills foundational values and ethics.	• "What they hope for me doesn't always match what I hope for myself." (Bhlace)
	• Family expectations may exert pressure and sometimes clash with personal interests.	• "I carry my family's hopes and my culture's pride in every step of my journey." (Mikha)
	• A role model, motivating others to achieve similar success.	
Personal Aspirations and Career Goals	• Understanding personal passions and interests.	• "Our dreams include the hopes of those who raised us." (Lene and Mae)

	• Recognizing personal strengths and skills. • Acquiring the necessary education and skills through various learnings. • Building professional networks and seeking mentorship.	• "I chose TLE not because it was my first choice, but because it helps me grow my skills." (Mae) • "Finishing my studies brings me closer to becoming the teacher I admire." (Bhlace) • "My siblings are my strength; their push keeps me going." (Mic)
Cultural Pride and Community Impact	• Embracing and celebrating cultural heritage. • Active participation in cultural and community activities. • Advocating for cultural awareness and preservation. • Demonstrating cultural pride can inspire others.	• "Guided by family and friends, I pursue a path that honors both their hopes and my dreams." (Mic) • "Being part of culture means showing up and shining." (Lene) • "Cultural awareness is the key to preservation." (Mae) • "Proud of my roots, inspiring new growth." (Mikha)
Interest and Enjoyment in the TLE Program	• A hands-on approach engages students and enhances learning. • TLE programs provide valuable technical and vocational skills. • The curriculum is relevant to real-life situations. • TLE allows students to explore creativity	• "TLE opens doors to diverse skills and knowledge." (Queeny and Lene) • "TLE builds skills for real-world success." (Queeny and Lene) • "Skills and knowledge for everyday challenges."(Queeny and Lene) • "TLE sparks creativity and fuels innovation."

	and innovation.	
Support Systems from Friends and Teachers	• Emotional encouragement helps students cope with challenges. • Teachers offer guidance, while friends often share personal experiences. • Collaborative learning environments enhance understanding. • Motivate students to stay focused and accountable while pursuing their goals. • Teachers provide academic resources, while friends share information and study materials.	• Lene and Bhlace: "I follow the path shown by teachers I admire." • "Teachers lead the way, friends walk beside us." • "Teamwork turns knowledge into insight." • "Stay focused, your goals are within reach." • "Academic support from teachers, study help from friends."

The theme highlights the vital role of fostering cultural inclusion and appreciation within the educational environment to promote fair treatment and respect among diverse students, including Indigenous Peoples (IP) students. By integrating cultural awareness—especially recognizing the rich heritage and contributions of IP students—into the curriculum and encouraging open sharing of values, the school community—comprising students, teachers, and staff—creates a supportive atmosphere that honors cultural legacies and nurtures personal growth. This inclusive approach not only strengthens students' sense of belonging but also drives their motivation to succeed academically and develop a growth mindset, ultimately contributing to a harmonious and empowering learning experience for all.
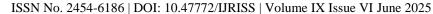
Table 4 The insights of IP students that contribute to a deeper understanding of diversity and inclusion in higher education

ESSENTIAL THEMES	CORE IDEAS	SHORT QUOTES
Developing inclusion in culture amidst diversity	• School promotes inclusivity by providing events. • Create activities that enables cultural awareness. • Allow and ignite IP students to showcase and share their talents.	• "I realize that college promotes a diverse, diverse environment, and though we have differences, they still promote inclusivity in our school, they provide an event that values cultures…" (Queeny) • There are many programs that I've attended here at the school that promote inclusion, especially in cultural events, sports days, or seminars and orientations..." (Mae)

		• "Most school events are inclusive for all students. For example, in Kalibulong, they showcase different cultures, allowing us to discover various cultural practices, beliefs, and backgrounds that we didn't know before." (Mic)
Promotion of Fair Treatment	• The school's environment is fair for all, regardless of background and origins. • The DNSC Community is united and has no exclusivity despite diversity. • Encourage students to actively join different school activities, no matter who they are.	• "There are events that they acknowledge the diverse of us. They acknowledge our presence, to those people who have different culture" (Queeny) • "Like us IP students, we are given good treatment in the environment in DSNC and of course there are Muslim faculty that I can see; there is unity and no exclusivity when it comes to culture" (Queeny) • "Promoting equality like this encourages us to actively participate in various school activities, even though I am an IP student" (Jenny)
Inclusion of Culture Appreciation in the Curriculum	• The school's curriculum ensures equality for all. • The teachers are sensitive and mindful in their teaching methods. • The faculty shows respect and values individual beliefs and cultures.	• "They show empathy and care to diverse students, not only those who don't have a specific cultural tribe" (Queeny) • "Especially in the teaching methods of the instructors, they always ask if it's okay to discuss sensitive topics with students. In that situation, I can really say that in Davao del Norte, they truly prioritize inclusivity for all students." (Mae) • "Since we have Muslim classmates, our instructors have us pray twice: once for Christians and once for Muslims. In this way, it makes everyone valuable, especially those from different cultures, feel included and respected at school."(Ace)
Cultivation of Growth Mindset and Support System	• The eagerness to learn and enhance skills induces an interest. • Close and loved ones are a source of strength and	• "I like to learn and enhance my skills in sewing since I find it interesting and it can also give me joy when I sew clothes" (Queeny) • "My family has been my source of

	encouragement.	strength, providing me with strong support and encouragement to continue with this course."(Mikha)
	• Enhancing skills, gaining knowledge, and developing the right attitude.	• "I've been considering taking TLE because it not only enhances my skills and knowledge but also develops my attitude here."(Larah)

With these essential themes generated, it is undeniable and a testament to how the school itself and the people from the surroundings, starting with the students, teachers, and school staff, have a huge contribution and could greatly affect the changes and the harmonious state of the premise. Developing initiatives for inclusion amidst differences promotes fair treatment for everyone, urges and persuades each person to freely share their values, and cascades the cultural legacy from generation to generation. Moreover, through inclusion, the importance of integrating culture into the curriculum is emphasized, enabling students to feel respected. In turn, this respect drives them to seek personal growth, strengthening the foundation of their educational journey.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter emphasizes the implications for practice, the implications for future research, and brings together the findings to explore the lived experiences of IP students in pursuing the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program. This phenomenological study captured multiple experiences of IP students, including driving factors, challenges, coping strategies, and insights for overcoming the difficulties associated with being IP students, all with a focus on answering the research questions. Additionally, the study aimed to investigate how IP students navigated the TLE course in college. A comparative discussion of both IP student experiences is also included in this section.

Implications for Practice

Exploring the lived experiences of IP students pursuing Technology and Livelihood Education has generated various themes through data analysis, highlighting the experiences of IP students, the challenges they face, the motivations that keep them going despite the obstacles they encounter, and the coping strategies they employ. The findings of this study reflect a significant impact on the people around them—their families, classmates, teachers, and the school community—who have contributed to their learning, particularly in the program they are pursuing. As a result, this study can influence education administrators, students, teachers, organizations, and lifelong learners. It first assists education administrators in creating rules or policies that protect IP students from social prejudice within the school. It also encourages students to consider the program as they uphold their future professional duties. For teachers, it helps in fostering sensitive relationships with students and in maintaining a more conducive and culturally responsive curriculum. Lastly, it inspires the school community to organize events and activities that engage IP students, allowing them to showcase their talents, skills, and cultures. This, in turn, provides learning opportunities for other students and the entire school community, helping everyone appreciate the beauty of diversity, fostering respect, and building a safe environment for all, regardless of their background.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS TO FUTURE RESEARCHERS

The phenomenological qualitative study on *Exploring the Lived Experiences of IP Students in Pursuing Technology and Livelihood Education Program at Davao del Norte State College* provides valuable insights into the experiences of these students and has several significant implications for future researchers. It underscores the necessity of understanding the unique challenges faced by Indigenous students, such as

cultural barriers that impact their educational experiences and outcomes, as well as the ways these barriers hinder participation and performance in the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) program.

One area for future research could be to explore the perspectives of educators at state colleges regarding the study, which highlights the importance of developing a culturally responsive curriculum and tailored pedagogical approaches. Researchers can investigate strategies for integrating Indigenous knowledge and practices into the TLE curriculum, leading to more inclusive and supportive educational environments. The study also points to the need to examine the effectiveness of current educational policies and institutional support mechanisms. Future research could assess whether existing policies adequately support IP students and explore the role of resources, such as scholarships and mentoring programs, in enhancing their educational experiences.

The study highlights the need for a curriculum that is sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of IP students. Future research could explore various teaching methods that accommodate the learning styles and cultural contexts of these students. Another area for future research could involve measuring the impact of socio-economic factors on the ability of IP students to pursue and succeed in the TLE program, warranting further investigation. This includes exploring issues such as access to educational materials, financial constraints, and family support, which could help identify patterns and trends that inform policy and practice in the education sector.

Furthermore, the findings can guide future researchers in examining the effectiveness of current educational practices related to IP students, including whether these policies adequately support their needs. This may also prompt the educational sector to implement interventions that enhance the effectiveness of TLE curriculum approaches. Conducting comparative studies across different regions could offer broader perspectives and highlight best practices that can be adopted in various contexts. By addressing these implications, future researchers can contribute to the development of more inclusive, effective, and culturally sensitive educational programs for IP students, while widening the scope to obtain clearer and more specific data for a better understanding of the phenomenon and its implications for students and society.

Finally, a longitudinal study could be conducted to follow IP students, tracking the long-term outcomes of those who have completed the TLE program. This could provide valuable insights into the program's effectiveness, including their career paths and contributions to their communities, and offer a better understanding of the potential long-term consequences of this phenomenon, thereby informing strategies for future researchers.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the powerful connection between culture, education, and resilience in the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) students enrolled in the TLE program at Davao del Norte State College. It confirms that culturally responsive teaching, supportive learning environments, and hands-on, relevant learning activities play vital roles in fostering academic growth, cultural pride, and personal perseverance. The research emphasizes how IP students thrive when their identities are acknowledged and their challenges understood, aligning with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Resilience Theory, and Experiential Learning. By recognizing their unique experiences and supporting them through inclusive and flexible educational policies, institutions can help empower IP students while also preserving their rich cultural heritage.

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