

# Resource Availability and Teaching Engagement on the Cultural Competence of Teachers in Indigenous Peoples Schools

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## ABSTRACT

This quantitative, descriptive–correlational study examined the relationships among resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence among teachers in Indigenous Peoples (IP) schools implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) program in the Division of Bukidnon. The study aimed to determine how resource availability and teaching engagement influence teachers’ cultural competence and to identify the strongest predictor. Data were collected through survey questionnaires administered to teachers in IP schools. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses were used. Findings revealed a high availability of safety resources and trained personnel, while equipment and digital tools were only moderately available. Teaching engagement was generally high, particularly in terms of job satisfaction and classroom interaction, whereas work–life balance obtained relatively lower ratings. Regarding cultural competence, teachers demonstrated strong competence in student empowerment and the integration of Indigenous knowledge, but lower competence in family engagement and the use of Indigenous languages. Significant positive relationships were found between cultural competence and both resource availability and teaching engagement. Regression analysis identified work–life balance as the strongest predictor of cultural competence. The findings highlight the need to enhance educational resources, professional development, and teacher well-being to strengthen cultural competence and support effective IPED implementation.

**Keywords:** Resource Availability, Teaching Engagement, Cultural Competence, Work–Life Balance, Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED)

## INTRODUCTION

Given the complexities of indigenous peoples’ education, resource availability remains a critical factor influencing instructional delivery and learning quality in Indigenous Peoples (IP) schools. Existing literature highlights key dimensions of educational resources, including the availability of basic instructional equipment, access to digital and technological tools, the safety and conduciveness of the learning environment, and the presence of trained human resources capable of responding to indigenous contexts (Thomas, 2018; DepEd, 2025; Evangelista & Manalang, 2024). However, while these components have been examined individually, limited studies have explored their collective availability as experienced by teachers in IP schools, particularly in the Division of Bukidnon.

Teaching engagement likewise plays a vital role in shaping culturally responsive instruction. Prior studies indicate that teachers’ job satisfaction, ability to design culturally relevant lessons, quality of classroom interaction, and maintenance of work–life balance significantly affect their motivation and instructional effectiveness, especially in challenging indigenous contexts (Suarta et al., 2022; Cruz & Santos, 2026). Teaching in IP schools often demands additional emotional, cultural, and professional labor, making sustained engagement a critical factor in the delivery of quality instruction. Despite this, empirical investigations focusing on the specific dimensions of teaching engagement among IP school teachers in Bukidnon remain limited.

Cultural competence is equally essential in indigenous peoples' education, as it determines teachers' capacity to foster inclusive learning environments, develop culturally respectful attitudes, construct meaningful learning experiences, and empower learners to apply knowledge within their cultural contexts. Scholars have identified key dimensions of cultural competence, including establishing inclusion, developing attitudes that respect cultural diversity, enhancing meaning through contextualized instruction, and engendering competence that enables learners to navigate both indigenous and formal education systems (Caingcoy et al., 2022; Kunting, 2025). However, the extent to which teachers manifest these dimensions of cultural competence in IP schools, as well as the factors that most strongly influence them, has not been sufficiently examined at the local level.

Although several studies acknowledge the importance of resources and teaching engagement in promoting culturally responsive education, much of the existing research treats these variables in isolation. Limited empirical evidence exists that simultaneously examines the relationship between resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence among teachers in Indigenous Peoples' schools. Moreover, few studies have identified which specific variables best predict teachers' cultural competence within the Bukidnon context, where geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, and cultural diversity intersect.

In view of these gaps, there is a clear need for a study that systematically examines the levels of resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence among teachers in Indigenous Peoples' schools in the Division of Bukidnon, Philippines, as well as the relationships among these variables. Identifying which factors significantly predict cultural competence will provide valuable insights for strengthening Indigenous Peoples Education implementation, improving teacher preparation and support, and informing educational policy and practice at both the local and national levels.

## FRAMEWORK

Resource availability plays a foundational role in the effectiveness of Indigenous Peoples' (IP) education, particularly in supporting culturally responsive teaching and learning. The literature consistently emphasizes that educational resources in IP schools extend beyond physical infrastructure to include culturally relevant instructional materials, access to technology, safe learning environments, and trained human resources. Thomas (2018) underscored that community-based and culturally grounded resources are essential to aligning instructional strategies with Indigenous ways of knowing. Similarly, Eduardo (2021) and Nielsen et al. (2022) reported that persistent gaps in access to culturally appropriate materials and trained teachers continue to undermine meaningful engagement in Indigenous education across local and international contexts. Within the Philippine setting, several studies highlight the structural disadvantages faced by IP schools. Evangelista and Manalang (2024) noted that many IP schools are classified as Last Mile Schools, lacking electricity, adequate classrooms, and basic equipment—conditions that directly constrain instructional effectiveness. Bastida et al. (2022) and Mon-ay and Labitad (2024) further demonstrated that deficiencies in learning materials and technological tools limit teachers' capacity to address learner diversity and deliver culturally responsive instruction. Empirical evidence from Lazaro and Paglinawan (2023) and Okongo (2020) likewise confirms that adequate and functional resources are strongly associated with higher teacher effectiveness, student engagement, and the development of cultural competence.

Teaching engagement has also been identified as a critical factor in sustaining quality education in IP schools. Research indicates that teachers' job satisfaction, instructional design practices, classroom interaction, and work–life balance significantly influence their motivation, retention, and instructional performance. Suarta et al. (2022) and Cruz and Santos (2026) found that teachers who actively integrate Indigenous narratives, rituals, and community knowledge foster stronger learner participation and cultural pride. Consistent with these findings, Ramos et al. (2025) and Lopez et al. (2019) reported that mother tongue-based multilingual education enhances engagement by affirming learners' linguistic and cultural identities. However, teaching engagement in IP schools is often constrained by challenging working conditions. Studies by Eduardo and Gabriel (2021), Nantin and Morales (2025), and Anog (2024) revealed that geographic isolation, limited administrative support, heavy workloads, and restricted access to professional development negatively affect teacher morale and engagement. Research focusing on work–life balance further indicates that unmanaged stress, financial constraints, and multiple non-teaching responsibilities contribute to burnout and turnover among IP teachers (Sarabia &

Collantes, 2020; Rufin & Buniel, 2022; Mercado, 2019). These findings suggest that sustained teacher engagement requires both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic institutional support.

Cultural competence emerges as a central outcome shaped by both adequate resources and sustained teaching engagement in IP education. Caingcoy et al. (2022) conceptualized cultural competence as teachers' ability to establish inclusive learning environments, develop culturally respectful attitudes, enhance meaning through contextualized instruction, and engender learner competence rooted in Indigenous identity. Kunting (2025) further described culturally competent teachers as cultural mediators who balance national curriculum standards with Indigenous community values. Despite broad recognition of its importance, teachers often report feeling insufficiently prepared to implement culturally sustaining pedagogies due to limited training and immersion opportunities (Gutierrez, 2025; Nazarita & Morales, 2025).

International and local studies converge on the view that cultural competence does not develop in isolation. Mvana (2023) and Okongo (2020) demonstrated that adequate resources enhance teachers' psychological readiness and engagement, which in turn strengthen culturally responsive practices. Community participation has likewise been identified as a critical enabler. Mercado (2021) and Raguindin et al. (2025) found that collaboration with elders and Indigenous knowledge holders enriches curriculum relevance, improves classroom interaction, and reinforces teachers' confidence in culturally embedded instruction. These studies establish a clear interrelationship among resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence in Indigenous Peoples' schools. While existing research has largely examined these variables independently, limited empirical studies have explored their combined influence, particularly within the context of Bukidnon. This gap underscores the need for a systematic investigation into how these factors interact and which variables best predict teachers' cultural competence in IP schools. Addressing this gap is critical for strengthening Indigenous Peoples Education implementation, enhancing teacher preparation, and promoting inclusive, culturally affirming learning environments.

## Objectives

This study examined the relationship between resource availability and teaching engagement and their influence on the cultural competence of teachers in Indigenous Peoples' schools in the Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to: (1) determine the levels of resource availability in terms of basic equipment, access to digital and technological resources, safety and learning environment, and availability of trained human resources, as well as assess the levels of teaching engagement in terms of job satisfaction, instructional design, classroom interaction, and work–life balance; (2) describe the level of teachers' cultural competence in relation to establishing inclusion, developing attitudes, enhancing meanings, and engendering competence, and examine the relationship between cultural competence and the combined effects of resource availability and teaching engagement; and (3) identify which variable or combination of variables best predicts the cultural competence of teachers in Indigenous Peoples' schools.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to examine the relationship between resource availability and teaching engagement and their influence on the cultural competence of teachers in Indigenous Peoples' (IP) schools. The descriptive approach was used to determine the levels of resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence, while the correlational method examined the relationships among these variables and identified which factors best predict teachers' cultural competence. The participants consisted of 354 elementary and secondary school teachers from selected Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd)–implementing public schools in the Quezon, Kitaotao, and San Fernando Districts of the Division of Bukidnon during the School Year 2025–2026.

A purposive sampling technique was employed, selecting teachers currently assigned to IP schools or cluster schools serving a substantial proportion of Indigenous learners. Data were collected using three validated survey instruments measuring resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence. The resource availability questionnaire assessed basic equipment, access to digital and technological resources, safety and learning environment, and availability of trained human resources. The teaching engagement questionnaire

measured job satisfaction, instructional design, classroom interaction, and work–life balance. Cultural competence was assessed across four dimensions: establishing inclusion, developing attitudes, enhancing meanings, and engendering competence.

All instruments utilized a five-point Likert scale and demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from 0.88 to 0.94. Data gathering was conducted after securing approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of Bukidnon and the respective school heads. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study through a cover letter and participated voluntarily. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to ensure accurate and complete responses. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics to summarize the levels of resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationships among the variables, while multiple linear regression analysis identified which variable or combination of variables best predicted teachers’ cultural competence.

**Limitations Of the Study**

This study had several limitations that should be considered in interpreting the findings. First, the study was limited to teachers from selected Indigenous Peoples (IP) schools implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) program within the Division of Bukidnon, which may limit the generalizability of the results to non-IP schools or other divisions with different socio-cultural contexts.

Second, the study employed a quantitative approach using survey questionnaires as the sole data collection method; therefore, the findings may have been influenced by self-report bias and may not have fully captured teachers’ actual classroom practices. Finally, the study utilized a cross-sectional design, with data collected only during the 2025–2026 school year, which limited the ability to establish causal relationships among resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 Respondents of the study by Districts in the Division of Bukidnon.

Variable	Sample (n)
San Fernando II (29 Schools)	246
Quezon III (2 Schools)	24
Quezon IV (1 School)	34
Kitaotao I (7 Schools)	50
Total	354

The respondents of the study consisted of 354 public elementary and high school teachers from selected Indigenous Peoples (IP) schools under the Districts of the Division of Bukidnon. The respondents were drawn from San Fernando II District, which accounted for the largest number of participants, with 246 teachers from 29 schools. This was followed by Kitaotao I District, with 50 teachers from seven schools; Quezon IV District, with 34 teachers from one school; and Quezon III District, with 24 teachers from two schools. This distribution ensured adequate representation of teachers from various IP school settings across the Division of Bukidnon, Philippines, reflecting diverse geographic locations and educational contexts.

Table 2 Level of Resource Availability

Sub-variable	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Safety and Learning Environment	3.93	Very Often	High Availability
Availability of Trained Human Resources	3.72	Very Often	High Availability
Access to Digital and Technological Resources	3.33	Often	Moderate Availability
Availability of Basic Equipment	3.18	Often	Moderate Availability
Overall Mean	3.93	Very Often	High Availability

The findings show that teachers in Indigenous Peoples’ Schools in the Division of Bukidnon experienced a high level of resource availability, as indicated by the overall mean of 3.52, interpreted as Very Often. Among the identified dimensions, Safety and Learning Environment had the highest mean of 3.93, followed by Availability of Trained Human Resources with a mean of 3.72, both indicating high availability. In contrast, Access to Digital and Technological Resources, with a mean of 3.33, and Availability of Basic Equipment garnered a mean of 3.18, were rated as moderately available.

These results suggest that schools provide strong support through safe learning spaces and trained personnel, which compensates for limitations in physical and technological resources. This finding is consistent with Albarico et al. (2024), who emphasized that culturally responsive education in Indigenous Peoples’ schools depends more on culturally safe environments and competent teachers than on material resources. Similarly, Sarmiento et al. (2025) and Mendoza et al. (2024) highlighted that teacher engagement and culturally responsive instruction improve when schools prioritize safety and teacher training.

The results indicate that strong human and cultural-safety resources create a favorable context for culturally responsive teaching, even amid moderate material and technological constraints.

Table 3 Level of Teaching Engagement

Sub-variable	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Job Satisfaction	4.65	Always	Very High Engagement
Classroom Interaction	4.55	Always	Very High Engagement
Instructional Design	4.41	Very Often	High Engagement
Work-Life Balance	4.23	Very Often	High Engagement
Overall Mean	4.45	Very Often	High Engagement

The results reveal that teachers in Indigenous Peoples’ Schools in the Division of Bukidnon demonstrate a high level of teaching engagement, as reflected by an overall mean of 4.45, interpreted as Very Often. Among the dimensions, Job Satisfaction obtained the highest mean (4.65), followed by Classroom Interaction (4.55), both indicating Very High Engagement, while Instructional Design (4.41) and Work–Life Balance (4.23) were rated as High Engagement. These findings suggest that teachers are highly committed to their work, emotionally invested, and actively engaged in instructional planning and classroom relationships, despite moderate challenges in balancing professional and personal demands.

The consistently high ratings across all dimensions indicate that teachers recognize the importance of satisfaction, interaction, effective lesson design, and personal well-being in sustaining quality teaching. This finding aligns with Delos Santos et al. (2022), who reported that teachers with high job satisfaction and manageable work–life balance demonstrate stronger teaching engagement and improved classroom performance. The results highlight that strong teaching engagement serves as a vital foundation for sustaining culturally responsive and student-centered instruction in Indigenous Peoples’ Schools.

Table 4 Level of Cultural Competence.

Sub-variable	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Engendering Competence	4.28	Very Often	High Competence
Developing Attitudes	4.23	Very Often	High Competence
Enhancing Meanings	4.23	Very Often	High Competence
Establishing Inclusion	4.19	Very Often	High Competence
Overall Mean	4.23	Very Often	High Competence

The results indicate that teachers in Indigenous Peoples’ Schools in the Division of Bukidnon possess a high level of cultural competence, with an overall mean of 4.23, interpreted as Very Often. All four dimensions, Establishing Inclusion, Developing Attitudes, Enhancing Meanings, and Engendering Competence, obtained consistently high ratings, suggesting that teachers apply culturally responsive practices in an integrated and sustained manner.

This implies that teachers are able to affirm Indigenous learners’ identities, connect instruction to Indigenous knowledge and lived experiences, and implement culturally relevant, student-centered teaching and assessment practices. These findings are supported by Aguilar and Reyes (2021), who reported that teachers in Indigenous communities demonstrate higher cultural competence when they intentionally foster inclusive classrooms and strong relationships with learners. Similarly, Mendoza et al. (2024) emphasized that integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into instruction enhances meaning-making and learner identity. Delos Santos et al. (2022) also found that reflective attitudes toward cultural diversity is associated with more inclusive classroom practices, while the Department of Education (DepEd, 2022) underscored that cultural competence is central to the successful implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education. The high cultural competence observed among teachers suggests readiness to sustain culturally responsive instruction and support Indigenous learners’ academic and cultural development.

Table 5 Relationship of Cultural Competence with Resource Availability and Teaching Engagement.

Variables	DV: Teachers’ Productivity R-Value	Probability
Resource Availability	.407	.000**
Availability of basic Equipment	.341	.000**
Access to Digital and Technological Resources	.319	.000**
Safety and Learning Environment	.297	.000**
Availability of Trained Human Resources	.387	.000**
Teaching Engagement	.634	.000**
Job Satisfaction	.446	.000**
Instructional Design	.504	.000**
Classroom Interaction	.504	.000**
Work-life Balance	.523	.000**

The results indicate a strong and significant positive relationship between teaching engagement and teachers’ cultural competence ( $r = .634, p < .01$ ), demonstrating that highly engaged teachers tend to exhibit higher levels of cultural competence. All dimensions of teaching engagement, job satisfaction, instructional design, classroom interaction, and work-life balance, showed significant positive correlations with cultural competence, underscoring the importance of teachers’ emotional commitment, instructional practices, and classroom relationships in culturally responsive teaching.

The findings further suggest that while resource availability provides essential support, teaching engagement serves as the more direct driver of cultural competence. This implies that teachers’ attitudes, interactions, and instructional efforts play a critical role in translating available resources into culturally relevant practice. These results align with prior studies indicating that engaged teachers are more likely to integrate learners’ cultural backgrounds into instruction and demonstrate stronger cultural competence (Aguilar & Reyes, 2021; Mendoza et al., 2024; Delos Santos et al., 2022). The significant correlations lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirm that enhancing both teaching engagement and resource conditions can strengthen cultural competence in Indigenous Peoples’ Schools.

Table 6 Regression Analysis on Teachers’ Cultural Competence

Based on the values you provided, the regression table can be reported and interpreted as follows:

**Regression Analysis Table**

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.675	0.242	—	2.786	0.006
Work-Life Balance	0.254	0.039	0.304	6.515	0.000

## Model Summary

R	R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	p-value
0.662	0.438	54.152	0.000

### Dependent Variable: Cultural Competency of Teachers

The regression analysis revealed that Work–Life Balance is a significant predictor of teachers’ cultural competence in Indigenous Peoples’ Schools in the Division of Bukidnon. Specifically, Work–Life Balance showed a positive and statistically significant effect on cultural competence ( $\beta = 0.304$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that teachers who are better able to manage their professional and personal responsibilities tend to demonstrate higher levels of cultural competence. This finding suggests that emotional stability, reduced stress, and balanced workloads support teachers in consistently practicing culturally responsive teaching.

The regression model was statistically significant ( $F = 54.152$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and accounted for 43.8% of the variance in teachers’ cultural competence ( $R^2 = 0.438$ ), indicating a moderate to substantial predictive capacity. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis that no variable significantly predicts cultural competence and confirms that Work–Life Balance plays a meaningful role in shaping teachers’ competence in Indigenous education contexts.

These findings are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the importance of teacher well-being in culturally responsive practice. Aguilar and Reyes (2021) and Delos Santos et al. (2022) reported that teachers with healthier work–life balance are more emotionally available and better able to integrate learners’ cultural backgrounds into instruction. Similarly, Mendoza et al. (2024) and the DepEd Indigenous Peoples Education policy review (2022) highlighted that reasonable workloads and supportive working conditions are essential for sustaining teachers’ cultural competence. Overall, the results underscore the importance of strengthening school-level support for teachers’ work–life balance as a key mechanism for enhancing cultural competence in Indigenous Peoples’ Schools.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study indicate that teachers in Indigenous Peoples’ schools in the Division of Bukidnon operate within learning environments that provide strong support in terms of safety and trained human resources, although basic equipment and digital infrastructure remain moderately available. Teachers demonstrated high to very high levels of teaching engagement, particularly in job satisfaction and classroom interaction, while work–life balance emerged as the least strong dimension. Teachers also exhibited a high level of cultural competence, with strengths in empowering learners and integrating Indigenous knowledge, alongside slightly lower performance in inclusion-related practices.

Moreover, the study established that cultural competence is significantly related to both resource availability and teaching engagement, with teaching engagement showing the stronger association. Regression analysis further revealed that work–life balance is a significant predictor of cultural competence, explaining a substantial proportion of its variance. This indicates that teachers’ ability to manage professional and personal responsibilities plays a critical role in sustaining culturally responsive teaching practices.

The results emphasize that resource availability, teaching engagement, and cultural competence are interconnected dimensions shaping the quality of Indigenous education. Supporting teacher well-being, strengthening instructional engagement, and improving material and technological resources are essential for sustaining inclusive and culturally grounded learning environments. These findings provide valuable insights for school leaders and education policymakers in strengthening IPED implementation and ensuring that Indigenous learners receive education that is both academically meaningful and culturally responsive.

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