Exploring School Personnel's Conceptions on Managing Instruction and Services for High School Aeta Students

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ABSTRACT

    The exploratory study featured four high schools and their personnel's conceptions of better instruction and school services for Aeta students. The researcher used open-ended questions to interview 42 public school personnel. Sharing their strengths, weaknesses, and experiences related to inclusiveness towards the Indigenous students, the teachers, administrators, and support service personnel hinted at their training needs revolving around competencies in producing investigative articles on the educational needs of the Aetas, collaborating with co-workers in synergistically servicing the indigenous, greater awareness of ethical protocol in engaging with the Indigenous in service provision contexts, reflecting more intensively on personal efficacy in teaching non-mainstream students, re-tooling given on cultural competence, knowing more of the culture and values of the Aetas, and championing more pro-actively the

needs of the Indigenous, particularly in the educational and livelihood spheres of their life. Thematic analysis and interpretation brought to the fore the personnel's strong support for a curriculum that is specifically designed for the Aetas, support systems strengthened to empower the personnel further inclusiveness-wise, differentiated instruction facilitated with animation of Indigenous knowledge and learner centeredness, inclusiveness training for the personnel, inclusive community events, and counseling specifically for Aetas.

INTRODUCTION

Research from developed countries in the West has shed light on the best way to carry out conversations on improving the capability of personnel to provide responsive educational services to the Indigenous. Part of the recommendations in Aikenhead and Huntley (1999) delved into curricula, instruction, and assessment that appropriately factored in culture and the involvement of instructors and educational managers. Through its recommendations, the research envisioned several teachers pooling together to dispense the responsibility of being culture brokers. The groups would work closely in performing research and development roles. Support would be provided for individual and group endeavors. Community-based committees were also recommended to assist in contriving innovative practices for instruction, testing, and materials preparation that are informed by the learners' Aboriginal culture and language and therefore considered inclusive. This study provided later researchers with the impetus to put forward research frameworks factoring in the personnel's perceptions of the Indigenous students' experience alongside their own perspectives on what teachers and leaders in the academe should learn to be better service providers to Aboriginal students.

Aikenhead and Huntley (1999) ascribed non-accomplishment of goals within classes for Indigenous students to teacher-related factors. In the instruction-associated hindrances to the accommodation of the cultures of Aborigines alongside the precepts of Western science were conceptual (non-recognition of science as a culture), pedagogical (lack of awareness that the earlier understanding of students can get in the way in studying science, and non-provision of instruction that is cross-cultural in approach), ideological (blaming students for missing out on senior-level classes in science), psychological (variable reactions to classroom conflicts which were cultural). The study identified deterrents to goals in the classroom, which might be related to administrators. These were classified as cultural (focus on endorsing memorization over deep comprehension, certain learners experiencing alienation from their aboriginal cultures, and sectors not

keen on promoting Aboriginal know-how in classes for science); and practical (under-resourced and limited support for students and teachers).

Contributing to the concept of promoting innovations promoting inclusiveness would be Shah and Widin (2010), Ely (1999ab), and Sashkin and Egermeier (1993) as they intersected in pointing to the significance of determining measures to pave the way for the successful provision of learning to the Indigenous by centering development plans on five factors: leadership, quality of teachers, adequate support structures in schools, vocational education, and training colleges, and universities; a renewed approach to education promotion within Aboriginal groups; and linkage among schools, technical and further education institutions, and universities.

From such studies as Toulouse (2007), stakeholders in education find useful information regarding the provision of training that is supportive of Indigenous individuals. The study defined Indigenous-inclusive education as a system of management where the Indigenous realize that they play an integral role in the teaching-learning set-up. To meet the need for such an accepting and humane treatment of the Aboriginal people, educators are invited to ascertain that they strongly trust in the capabilities of Indigenous learners. Considering that teachers and administrators alike contribute to the Indigenous learners' experience of education, it appears to be helpful to investigate the aspects of the same school personnel that could have implications on the Indigenous students' learning experience.

As schools ensure the satisfaction of mainstream students, in the same way, educational managers would do well to put a premium on Aboriginal students' favorable evaluation of their course experience. Sonn's (2000) study explained that minority students oftentimes encounter problems in their participation in education. The research analyzed the experiences of students with indigenous backgrounds while pursuing their studies. Recurring themes included the effects of racism—whether exhibited or understated—on the experience of the students in education. Participants reported instances of direct discord between mainstream and aboriginal values, as evidenced in the content of the study and the degree of support in different institutions of learning. Responses likewise underscored the importance of having a school-based center catering to their non-mainstream needs.

According to López et al. (2006) and Suttichujit (2009), the concept of cultural competence necessitates the cooperation of school personnel in demonstrating diligence to serve the Indigenous. Cultural competence includes awareness of one's worldview, nurturing positive attitudes directed to those who are ethnically different, acquiring an understanding of dissimilar traditional

norms and paradigms, and honing competencies for interchange and social connection across cultural groups. These attributes, beliefs, and behaviors called for in professional practitioners to cater to the needs of their clientele constitute the cultural competence most fittingly called for in today's learning institutions. Suttichujit (2009) argued that with the uptrend in public knowledge about what could be considered the essential nature and urgency of cultural proficiency (same as cultural competence or competence heightened further), it is most fitting and expedient for cultural competence to be made integral to the education system.

Mason (1995, 2002) discussed how the administration of the "Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire" (CCSAQ) in various institutional locales has led the proponents to a number of conclusions: (a) several areas of cross-cultural training could be measured by individuals with skills and competencies who are already within a manpower infrastructure; (b) one solution or reparative measure does not fit all circumstances, and; (c) latent strengths the likes of rich and varied linguistic and religious precepts, data pertaining to culturally-bound ideologies and norms or experience in ethnic surroundings can be pointed out as a parcel of the process of interpretation. An aspect of the procedure that is described to be of equal importance is that of completing the self-assessment questionnaire as a starting point for an institution earnest in assuming a stance of greater cultural competence. It is an instrument towards a goal. Usually, the CCSAQ is combined with an intervention (i.e., cross-cultural training sessions) so that the following assessment of the same respondents shows a degree of disparity or favorable difference. Therefore, it might be best to perceive the conclusions drawn from the CCSAQ not as a static body of information but rather as indicators of development to be fostered further.

In Europe, some of the latest research on cultural competence tends to be spread in different topical combinations and veers away from high school concerns specifically. Žalytė-Linkuvienė (2022) discussed optimizing the possible pairings between various forms of technology media and promoting inclusive education. Akhmetova et al. (2020) investigated technology and cultural competence, a prerequisite of inclusiveness, and psychology and teaching-related competencies. Cultural competence in this study was established as the primary factor that may focus on the human dimension instead of getting lost in the mix of other factors. On the other hand, Dvorianchykova et al. (2022) emphasize the pivotal role of language in ascertaining the development of sensibilities relevant to cross-cultural understanding, with particular attention to the most common communication medium, English.

Cross-continental in its scope, one interesting and recent research was Fallah et al. (2018). The cross-continental paper investigated the relevance of

promoting cultural competence in situations of families with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, particularly in their perceptions of cultural competence as shown in their respective schools in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southwest Asia.

Particularly in Asia, personnel of high school institutions serving the Indigenous are rather highly underrepresented in the most recent research. In India, an indirect reference to cultural competence is deduced in Kosareva et al. (2019), who investigated the complex of factors in communication that demand awareness and sensibilities on multiple cultures in the modern context of language learning. The Japan-based research by Ismailov (2021) followed a trend in implicating culture in communication. The paper focused on students' depth of engagement in intracultural dialogue while online and operating through an inquiry orientation.

Continuing the exhibited keenness in the nursing field to keep a close watch on cultural competence as a correlate of quality nursing and other medicine-related professional activities, Liu et al. (2022) presented Taiwan-centric evidence on the contribution of cultural competence in working with the clientele's condition and attitudes to facilitate tailored service required. A further feature of the East Asian milieu is in Lee et al. (2020), which situated cultural competence in an institutional cultivation program and proved the program's positive effect on competencies in intercultural service. In one of the limited papers on teachers' teaching competence with culture as a corollary factor, Lampadan et al. (2019) presented Thai tertiary students' rating of their teachers' teaching competence in situations entailing cultural diversity.

Still, in Asia, some of the most recent output in cultural competence and inclusiveness research does not show a direct relation to high school personnel, leaning more toward tertiary instructors and medicine-allied professionals. Yang and Gao (2020) delved into putting more emphasis on making the promotion of cultural competence common among curricular programs instead of being limited to a few. Oanh (2019), on the other hand, discussed the impact of pairing instruction on cross-culturally relevant know-how and strengthening competency in listening, given upgrading competencies in communication across multiple cultures. Furthermore, many of the related papers in Asia sustain a long-standing trend in proving the potent role of cultural competence in enhancing the quality of medicine-allied care, including Liu et al. (2022) that featured culturally relevant strategies in care; Soleimani and Yarahmadi (2023) that proved cultural competence is an offshoot of empathy; Mobaraki-Asl et al. (2019) that promoted a wider reach for the survey on cultural competence to more deeply delve into Iran's cultural elements; and Hosseinzadeh et al. (2022) that advocated more

emphasis on cultural competency such that this no longer lagged behind cultural attitude.

There is a dearth of similar but local investigations. Fiagoy (2000) explained that mainstream learners constitute 90 percent of learners in the Philippines. This makes it easy to see how the remaining non-mainstream students can easily feel like pariahs in the educational setup. It cannot be said that the Aborigines have come a long way in terms of progress or even, at the very least, keeping up with their "straight-haired" (non-Indigenous) counterparts. Also termed aboriginal, aborigines, and native in the study, the Aetas have long been separated from the "mainstream" population and their advancements since the coming of the colonizers in the Philippines. Though successful in remaining distinct from the lowlanders, whether on account of effort of the Aetas' own or otherwise, there is no dismissing the fact that they are needful of assistance and the current educational set up in the Philippines is not on par with the developed world in as far as Indigenous-inclusive curricular management is concerned.

To evaluate the lack of accommodation for the needs of Aboriginal Filipino students, particularly the Aetas of Pampanga, it is a matter of course to map Philippine educational management against those of more developed countries that similarly have Indigenous stakeholders to take care of. A need is felt for localized inclusiveness training to promote the accommodation of the needs of high school Aetas. The studies of Mason (1995, 2005), Aikenhead and Huntley (1999), and the pronouncements from the Institute for Educational Leadership (2005) were presented contiguously because they pertained directly to personnel cultural competence. Aside from this, they were presented in the discussion because they posited other relevant ideas that could tenably contribute to accomplishing this research's goal.

There is a need for research on how Aetas are catered to in high schools that have not been established or envisioned to serve Aeta students in the first place. A sense of inadequacy is felt when searching for data on the struggles of the Aetas and the personnel helping them fit in and absorb ideas in the classroom.

There is a perceived data gap regarding whether stakeholders in the education of the Indigenous have a deep understanding of school improvements that can help the Aetas. There is a need to delve into the personnel's ideations of the needs of the Aeta students and how these relate to the level of ability of the personnel to aid the Indigenous with inclusiveness as a guiding principle, the possible training needs of the personnel themselves; and the other changes that could be made to improve the Aetas' experience of high school. The gap that has been established centers on the predominance of quantitative research among the very limited research on cultural competence in Asia. There is a gap to be filled relating

to research that qualitatively delves into cultural competence to eliminate the possibility of being constrained by prior concepts that may or may not apply to the needs of Aetas in the Philippines.

FRAMEWORK

This research's definition of cultural competence and inclusiveness in providing educational service to the Indigenous aligns with that of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in Washington. The IEL affirmed in 2005 the following: (a) Educational leaders are culturally competent, and this results in effectiveness; (b) they exert effort to comprehend biases governing discriminatory tendencies, putting to use competence, courage, and commitment to control the surrounding undesirable influences of these discriminatory tendencies to student performance; (c) they derive their cultural competence and knowledge from their filial and community connections; (d) educational leaders' cultural competence is enhanced by their practice over time with their associations and interactions with organizations; and (e) rules and guidelines promulgated by the government have to reflect the genuinely pressing need for cultural competence in today's leaders.

Furthermore, in working towards school improvement, which entails inclusiveness, prerequisites in Ely (1999 a, b) may be factored in: *(a) dissatisfaction with the status quo; (b) availability of time; (c) availability of resources; (d) sufficient knowledge and skills; (e) rewards or incentives; (f) participation; (g) commitment; and (h) leadership* (Ely's Conditions of Change, par. 2).

Cultural competence was described in *The Early Years Learning Framework Newsletter* (2011, November 7) as a combination of attributes, beliefs, and behaviors that reflects—but extends beyond—knowledge of cultural diversity. It is the capacity to comprehend, talk with and efficiently mingle with individuals from various cultures. Mason (1995, 2002) discussed cultural competence as central to an institution's training needs in relation to inclusiveness or an accepting attitude and set of practices towards other cultures. The areas involved in promoting cultural competence were: (a) raising the quality of the delivery of services to clientele hailing from different cultures; (b) pinpointing the individual participants' cross-cultural assets that are presently observed inside the system of an organization, or network of practitioners; and (c) turning to fruitful training subjects for service providers. Though this instrument is purported to help service providers who work with groups of color, it will also invariably have utility for other diverse groups.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research aimed to get perspectives from the personnel related to changes needed for (a) improved services for the Aetas, (b) sufficiency of learning facilities and materials, (c) the school's provision of cultural competence training, (d) the application of knowledge and skills gained in the cultural competence training in actual school practice; (e) support from superiors that encourages cultural competence development; and (f) shared goal-setting and decision-making on issues related to Aeta students. The study aimed to present a discussion on the self-declared perceived competence of teachers, office staff, and administrators in effectively providing for the needs of Aeta students while duly respecting the latter's way of life and harmoniously interacting with them through well-developed cross-cultural sensibilities. Ultimately, the researcher had the objective of generating suggestions for inclusive service.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study followed the qualitative-descriptive design delineated by Kim et al. (2017). Creswell (2012) guided the study in terms of the methodical carrying out of the research procedures. Furthermore, the design entailed gleaning from Mertens (2014) appropriate steps to qualitatively discuss the perspectives of the personnel on areas for further development in rendering services for Indigenous high school students. The techniques utilized in the research included clarifying theories to hedge the confines of the study coming from pertinent literature, designing the qualitative gathering tool, collecting data, interpreting, and discussing the answers to the research questions.

In using the qualitative-descriptive design, the research adopted the interview technique in data gathering followed by thematic analysis. Drawing from the discussions of Mertens (2014) and Creswell (2007, 2012) with specific attention to the qualitative method of carrying out a research project, the research design allowed for ideas to flow from the exploratory conversations with the school personnel with no restrictions on the shared insights that would warrant analysis of emergent categories later in the procedures.

Within the qualitative paradigm, the research investigated the viewpoints of the teaching and administrative personnel on what their current practice and training holds as strong points, weaknesses, and perhaps what the same personnel look forward to by way of fresh and innovative changes in the way their Aeta learners' academic engagement in managed within their respective schools--four

high schools that have as their students Aetas who are mixed in with mainstream, non-Indigenous students.

The handling of the qualitative information was according to the analysis of themes covered in Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003); Creswell (2012); and Creswell (2007) to stay true to the purpose of the research to base its generalizations on needed improvements on the systematically generated themes for possible institutional innovations in services and pedagogy. Themes that emerge in the analysis would be considered for possible applications in the improvement of the locale and the engagement of the students in the study. This manner of handling themes for later application in programs is akin to the suggestions in Frigg (2006) and Bledin and Shewmake (2004).

In the research's procedural flow, when the transcribed inputs from the informants were subjected to analysis, the researcher called to mind the relevant theories that contained *a priori* concepts that were instrumental in making sense of the body of data from the interview. This lends sound credence and completeness to the research paradigm that followed: review of related literature to frame the inquiry with a mind to accept all ideas from the informants; formulation of the interview guides composed of open-ended prompts; transcription of responses; thematic analysis that included the iterative reading, coding of the data, and verification of categories; and generating the personnel's thematic concepts on the current state of their performance of duties relative to the education of the Aetas together with envisioned improvements thereon.

Research Site

The site studied was District 2, Division of Pampanga, Department of Education, Philippines.

Participants

Purposively sampled high school academic personnel serving Aetas were the informants and were assigned codes. The participants were 42, composed of 38 teachers and 4 principals.

Instrumentation

For the qualitative data gathering procedure, the researcher utilized interview question sheets prepared for conversations with separate groups of school personnel for every high school. In some instances, the interviewees preferred a written interview. The researcher chose the interview as a technique because it fits the thematic analysis outlined by Abhojailan (2012). This choice of interview-thematic analysis was advisable because the technique, as similarly reflected in Braun and Clarke (2006), was procedurally harmonized with a review of related

literature as a source of relevant concepts foundational to the inquiry.

The research used qualitative data to examine, compare, conceptualize, and categorize ideas to construct propositions, as suggested in the phases of thematic analysis discussed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process entailed an iterative familiarization with the reduced data set, generation of themes from codes, review of the appropriateness of the definitions of themes through collated support ideas, and production of a scholarly report on the analysis of the themes contextualized by vivid extracts from the reduced data set and supported by literature previously cited.

Data Collection

The interview procedures were unbiased and standardized to eliminate the possibility of confounding the concepts the researcher intended to explore. With the informants grounded and primed for the discussions with the researcher, the researcher zeroed into the steps of the procedures--the ethical gathering of subjective data and making sense of the same data with proper documentation to ensure repeatability of the data collection and analysis.

Research Ethics Protocol

The interview guide was validated by ten education experts ranking highly in the administration of private and public learning institutions, including authorities in the Department of Education. The researcher got permission from the division and local levels and got the informants' commitment to the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One-size-fits-all Instruction Does Not Cut It for the Aetas, who need a Curriculum Distinct from the Mainstream. The personnel acknowledged the Aetas's uniqueness and believed it might be better to design a separate program for these Indigenous students. Many of the personnel's responses affirmed that Aetas might be best served if their specific needs were provided through a distinct curriculum. The personnel recognized the Aetas' preference for kinesthetic activities such as planting, and they saw the need for effective follow-through on learning in matters as basic as hygiene. More importantly, the personnel seemed to intuit that an institutional management plan had to be in place, for Aetas were provided generic training and expected to perform alongside the non-Indigenous without substantial provision for the distinct characteristics of these Aborigines as students. It was shared that the ALS, or Alternative Learning System, seemed to be the first project that had a semblance of particular attention paid to the needs

of Aetas. Even so, according to the interviewees, the attention given to Aetas in the said program was still not enough as ALS was for all students—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—who fell short of the required attendance and level of performance expected of the mainstream students. This was why there might be a need for a comprehensive, long-term Aeta-centered curriculum..

The personnel said that classes that promote technical and livelihood skills could help remove the dependence of the Aboriginal students and their families on dole-out assistance. Personnel agreed that the dole-out system may be removed from the list, for it might work to the Aetas' detriment.

The Aetas need subjects that feature an Indigenous-relevant knowledge base and skill areas. Academic subjects may be figured out from these suggestions, which in empirical research are relevant to the voice of Indigenous students. Titles reflective of the Indigenous voice may be akin to: "Aboriginal Culture and History," "Environment Management for the Aetas," and "The Values of the Indigenous." On this matter, one of the teachers shared that there is a gap between the present Aeta generation and their historical past; in fact, not much transfer is carried out in terms of technology (know-how) from one generation to the next; it seems everyone is just drifting along as they aspire for survival. This could be a wake-up call for educator-researchers to lead and collaborate with the Indigenous to research the Aetas' culture and enrich learning content with this cultural knowledge.

It Takes a Village to Raise an Aeta Child, So Personnel Need Support Too. It would be understood from the informants' talk that the personnel feel the Department of Education would do well to spearhead the management of the education of the Aetas more proactively. Since there seemed to be a lack of a comprehensive program specifically designed for the unique needs of the Aetas, the personnel could only say that they received no direct help and incentives from their superiors. The personnel gave the impression of being alone, with little expert advice. However, in such a context, the personnel—as proved by their thoughtful responses in the interview—have crudely come to rely on reflective practice, or the practice of evaluating the effectiveness of one's professional performance against standards set. It could be seen, however, as reflective practice of the rudimentary kind because most of the personnel did not appear to display a well-honed capacity to produce research output, which is a major aim in reflective practice (Tate & Sills, 2004).

Animation of Indigenous Knowledge and Learner-Centered Instruction is In Order. Aetas could benefit from indigenous knowledge animation and learner-centeredness in teaching. Improving instruction through collaboration with the Aetas in cultural research is termed in certain research as the "animation

of Indigenous knowledge," as described in Metallic and Seiler (2009). Following this process of Indigenous knowledge animation, such subject titles mentioned earlier could be produced through research done beforehand regarding the Aetas' culture, history, values, and agricultural practices, along with their advantages and other topics. The personnel did not appear to be particularly disinclined to research the Aetas; in fact, this is a goal several personnel did say they shared—to know more about their students.

Reflection could be done on how Aetas cooperate in projects already in place, such as those in Subic, where Aetas are tapped for arts and crafts entrepreneurial initiatives, cultural exhibits or performances, and tour guides. It could be summarized that the subjects the personnel were observed to favor for the Aetas are need-based courses that could ensure the relevance of the training received by the Aetas. These subjects' characteristics, as gleaned from the ideas shared by the personnel, appeared to mirror the attributes of "learner-centered" subjects. As suggested by the National Institute for Educational Development (2003), the design of learner-centered courses that could ensure relevance in the training of Aetas necessitates respect for the needs of Aetas as reference points for instructional objectives, content, materials, and methods.

Inclusiveness Training may be the Golden Window to Train Aetas Better. The personnel pointed to the absence of inclusiveness training and that they believe such training may provide for the animation of Indigenous knowledge and the use of learner-centeredness in teaching. With sensibilities about serving the Aetas better developed through inclusiveness training, the personnel may be tapped by the higher administration to share their input in subject content design tailored for the Aetas. Combining individualized content and learner-centered instruction, specific training programs may be designed to ensure relevance to the needs of the Aetas by capitalizing on their interests, potentials, and abilities and improving readiness for livelihood opportunities once completed. Training courses which could be conceptually useful are available in literature that include course type, focus, and real life cases of implementation such as: (1) Course on "Sustainable Agriculture" that focuses on equipping farmers with competencies in responsible, organic agriculture as advocated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and exemplified by projects featured in NGO Pulse like "Local Institution Participation towards Livelihood Empowerment of the Mangyan Indigenous Peoples of Occidental Mindoro"; (2) Course on "Cultural Entrepreneurship" with a focus on the ethical marketing of Indigenous cultural goods and services to generate for the poor Aboriginal communities benefits envisioned by the UNESCO, also best illustrated by NGO Pulse's "Local Institution Participation towards Livelihood Empowerment of the

Mangyan Indigenous Peoples of Occidental Mindoro"; (3) Course on "Indigenous Heritage- and Eco-Tourism" described by the organization Preservation Nation as an economically viable preservation of historic structures and landscapes to serve travelers with its implementation in the National Indigenous Training Academy in Australia that provides nationally-accredited tourism training and community hiring for the Indigenous (Travel Weekly); and (4) Course on "Cooperative Membership and Operation" whose conceptual precedent is seen in the case of "Intibucá's Lenca Farmers' Small-Scale Cooperative: Awardee of the National Environmental Prize" where 101 Indigenous families were trained and continuously mentored in cooperative-mediated value chain management that complemented ancestral production traditions (IPS News). These mentioned potential precursors of courses for the Aetas could be adjusted to center on the basic needs of high school Aetas, in view of future fuller participation in livelihood projects for which the courses would be preparatory.

Two Heads are better than one: Policies should be Made Cooperatively. Sharing decisions was quite inadequate, and decisions needed to be more enlightened by appropriate theories. Consistent among those declared as needing shared decision-making was how the suggested subjects and contents would be delivered in the classroom. There appeared to be a recurrent reflection among the personnel that the present teaching-learning interactions left considerable room for shared decision-making and theory-enlightened teaching. Areas itemized by the personnel that might benefit from applying precepts that are in accord with learner-centeredness included teaching methods that are significantly differentiated from traditional ones used for lowlanders. A desire for substantial development is hinted at in the talk of the personnel when they wound up reflecting on the weak points of the teaching-learning set-up due to the circumstances of the Aetas.

One part where the personnel wanted more independence and learner-centeredness was instruction in subjects like English and Mathematics. These, especially in the case of Aetas, were ideally mastered through constant practice that went beyond class hours. Instruction in these subjects seemed to have been among the first to be undermined because of the reported practice in the high schools catering to Aetas that textbooks were not to be taken home. Another concern was the reported lack of teachers, which could make it difficult to ensure that Aeta students received instruction from experts in all subject areas. It could be said that the personnel all agreed that these conditions are all decided by higher-ups and not the teachers themselves, somehow acting as setbacks to the benefit the Aetas got from instruction in class. As expounded on in Schweisfurth (2011), learner-centeredness possibly makes for a legitimate objective to work on

to ensure provision for materials and conditions of learning that could enable the learners as unique individuals to achieve growth towards independent learning.

Without Community Support for Applying Inclusiveness at Work, Even Competent Personnel can be Fish out of Water. Administrators give verbal encouragement to accommodate the Aetas, but a more concrete and visible complement to what teachers already strive to do is rare at best and none in worst cases. When it came to the high school experience factors outside the classroom that could supplement Aeta-centered academic learning, one teacher said that the Aetas' morale needs boosting through activities like pageants, especially appreciative of the unique beauty of Aetas, where self-identity is developed and supported. These events that complemented instruction could be maximized. Since attention paid to the Aetas' way of life can be affirming according to the personnel, cultural activities on campus could enhance the Aetas' self-confidence. This practice of including cultural activities where the culture of the Indigenous is appreciatively viewed—and perhaps even participated in—could pave the way to having a culturally inclusive atmosphere in the institutions, as referred to in Howard-Wagner (2006) and articles as "Creating a Campus Climate that Values Diversity" from the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. In both discussions, the Indigenous culture was regarded as important and meriting, just as much as the mainstream culture. One personnel member (SAPP2) also envisioned it as having "appreciation and reciprocity" in the school. Again, the personnel's openness to this improvement was encouraging.

Counselling Works like a Charm as an Additional Service for Aetas. Counseling on the value of education is needed by immediate families and relatives of Aetas so that the Indigenous can imbibe the importance of education. The Aetas' determination in their studies seemed easily tipped over by "difficulties" as the Aetas mentioned several concerns, including the long distance of their walks to school every day and the rains that make the travel to school on foot even less bearable. When such perceived odds of continuous attendance in school affect Aetas, there could be a predominant agreement among the personnel that counseling could help. This counseling could address the need for guidance among the students and their families that Aetas' bullying experience could bring about. Based on Toulouse (2006), this experience could undermine self-confidence, and the personnel might do very well to address it as self-confidence may be described as an important enabling attribute among students. Guidance is called for in the case of Aeta students who are made to marry by their families. Some of the students dropped out of school due to early marriage. To illustrate, from 84, Aeta students dropped to 81. Four have

married shortly after the start of the school year. It might prove beneficial that the students are guided emotionally with due respect for their culture's beliefs and values system, as pursued in counseling programs according to the ethical code of the American Counseling Association(2023). Related to this, a certain apprehension might be felt when hearing comments from personnel centering on their advice given to Aetas not to marry early. This apprehension would seem to be rightly incited with concern that stopping the Aeta children from following their culture's apparent inclination toward early marriage would not be conforming to culture-sensitive counseling practice. This may show a need for school-initiated culture-sensitive counseling services, as Kaplan (2006) described. It could be noted that the personnel member's words were spoken out of concern. One would be informed how some Aeta children had to quit high school because marriage was encouraged as early as reaching 11 years of age. Counseling could help when a young Aeta, for example, would be feeling compelled to marry against her wishes, on account of the "sambong" or dowry that her family is looking forward to receiving. Emotional comfort from school personnel might conceivably be a welcome respite from the distress. More important to pursue as a long-term counseling goal that harmonizes with culture-sensitive counseling might be to add to the values held by the Aetas the value of education that could be life-changing.

Counseling could preclude the problem regarding some of the Aetas dropping out midway through the school year. It is said that some of the Aetas drop out because they really are interested only in the money given as dole-out towards the beginning of the school year by such sectors as politicians or religious groups. However, just like ALS is said to have become an excuse for underachieving students—according to the faculty interviewed—the dole-out seemed to have run out of its convincing power in inculcating the value of learning. Counseling time allows personnel to have cultural interaction that may pave the way to cultural knowledge generation and management mentioned in Sonn et al. (2000), Spak (2005), Park (2004), Adam (2007), and Popovic (2003) which involves the careful recording done by educator-researchers of culturally relevant database that is otherwise unknown in the academic circles and therefore could make for relevant new additions to the body of knowledge.   In turn, this knowledge base arrived at in partnership with Aetas and their families may probably lend itself well to the course design that would include the choice of teaching procedures and formulation of the content of instruction, making these—with further research and analysis—appropriately Indigenized as suggested in Lambe (2003).

CONCLUSIONS

What emerged in the analysis of the informants' talk as possible improvements included the delivery of instruction with the aid of technology to make sure the Aetas students' attention is captured; courses centered on the needs relevant to the cases of Aetas; promotion of pride in Indigenous culture in events at school; and counseling that is sensitive to the way of life of the Aboriginal youth. As presented in Merrill (2013), there appears to be a sense of stringing these mentioned needs together and implementing them using the principles of motivational learning. Other weaker aspects that the qualitative data suggested as resting in the personnel or the milieu in which they find themselves: a lack of institutional impetus for deeper reflection on the social and educational needs of Indigenous students and the need for further development being found in the provision of avenues and opportunities, as well as material and time resources to enhance the ability to research the education of the Indigenous. These indicators noted may be pointing to inclusiveness training needs of the personnel that could receive the highest priority.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

Prints of the research's interview guide may be utilized in localizing efforts to eventually capacitate personnel to provide inclusive service to the Indigenous. Utilization of this research in its journal article form may add credence to proposals for implementing cultural competence-centered professional development projects such as seminars and workshops. The latter could entail the policy of conceptualizing follow-through research proposals as output where the quantitative measurement of personnel cultural competence and qualitative and quantitative cross-data analysis can be done. The ready availability of the digital file of the research would ascertain access to its suggestions to enlighten professional practice and management policies to guide administrators, instructors, and support service staff in applying the insights in their respective spheres of responsibilities and influence to better serve Aetas.

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