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Teachers' Readiness in the Implementation of IPED Program and Students' Academic Engagement

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ABSTRACT: This study examined how students assess their teachers' readiness in the Implementation of IPEd Program and their academic engagement. This also determined the significant relationship and identified dimensions that predicted students' academic engagement. Using correlational and causal research designs, the researcher collected data using a two-part questionnaire that passed the validity and reliability tests to 101 indigenous students in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City during School Year 2025-2026. Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Multiple Linear Regression were utilized to analyze and interpret the data collected. The findings reveal that teachers demonstrate a very high level of readiness in implementing the IPEd Program and that the students exhibit a very high level of academic engagement. The results also show a significant and strong positive relationship between teachers' readiness and students' academic engagement. Moreover, culturally responsive teaching strategies and assessment are significant predictors of students' academic engagement. The study concludes that culturally responsive teaching strategies and assessment drive students' academic engagement. Therefore, this study recommends that school administrators may sustain teachers' readiness by providing continuous professional development.

KEYWORDS: academic engagement, indigenous learners, teachers' readiness

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' readiness is essential in ensuring the effective implementation of culturally responsive educational programs, particularly those designed for Indigenous students. The Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Program seeks to preserve cultural identity while promoting equitable academic outcomes, making teacher preparedness a central concern of educational quality. Implemented through Department Order No. 62, s. 2011, the program aims to provide a culturally responsive and contextually relevant education that integrates Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) into the curriculum.

The Department of Education institutionalized the IPEd Program to address the unique educational needs of Indigenous Peoples while respecting their cultural heritage. Teachers implementing the program may demonstrate readiness in terms of pedagogical skills, cultural competence, curriculum adaptation, and community engagement. However, research indicates that many teachers face challenges due to limited training, insufficient instructional materials, and inadequate institutional support. Thus, examining teachers' readiness in the Philippine IPEd context remains vital to improving both implementation quality and student outcomes (Quijada & Lumayag, 2024).

Moreover, students' academic engagement serves as a key mechanism through which instructional practices influence academic achievement. Academic engagement reflects students' active involvement in learning activities, encompassing how they behave, feel, and think during the learning process. Engaged students demonstrate higher motivation, persistence, and academic success across diverse educational settings. In Indigenous education, engagement becomes especially important as it mediates the relevance of culturally grounded teaching practices to learners' academic experiences (Martin & Nakata, 2023).

Specifically, behavioral engagement refers to students' observable participation in academic tasks, such as attending classes, completing assignments, and following classroom norms. High levels of behavioral engagement indicate that students actively respond to instructional strategies and classroom expectations. Culturally responsive teaching enhances behavioral engagement among Indigenous learners by aligning instruction with their lived experiences. Teachers who exhibit readiness in implementing the IPEd curriculum can therefore foster positive learning behaviors that contribute to improved academic achievement (Gay, 2023).

In addition, emotional engagement reflects students' affective responses to learning, including their interest, enjoyment, and sense of belonging. Emotional connections to school and the learning environment strongly influence students' willingness to participate and persist in academic tasks. Indigenous students who feel culturally valued and emotionally supported develop more positive attitudes toward schooling. Teachers who effectively integrate Indigenous knowledge systems and practice respect in the classroom nurture students' emotional engagement (Kanu, 2024). These efforts encourage learners to build meaningful connections with their education and remain actively involved in their learning experiences.

Furthermore, cognitive engagement requires students to invest in learning through deep thinking, self-regulation, and the use of effective learning strategies. Cognitively engaged students actively seek understanding, apply prior knowledge, and persist in challenging tasks. Instructional practices grounded in cultural relevance and inquiry-based learning enhance Indigenous learners' cognitive engagement. Well-prepared teachers who implement the IPEd Program effectively stimulate higher-order thinking and meaningful learning experiences. These practices enable students to take an active role in constructing knowledge and sustaining their engagement in the learning process (Schleicher, 2023).

Despite these insights, a research gap persists in examining the relationship between teachers' readiness in implementing the IPEd Program and students' academic achievement, particularly through the lens of academic engagement. While existing studies often focused on policy implementation or student outcomes separately, limited research integrates teacher readiness, engagement dimensions, and achievement in a single framework. Moreover, few studies provided localized evidence from Philippine public schools implementing the IPEd Program. Addressing this gap is necessary to inform policy, practice, and professional development initiatives (Dizon & Calub, 2025).

Therefore, this study aimed to assess teachers' readiness in the implementation of the IPEd Program and determine its relationship with students' academic achievement based on the learners' perception. The study intended to contribute to improving instructional practices, strengthening teacher preparation, and enhancing educational outcomes for Indigenous students. The findings aimed to support more effective and culturally responsive implementation of the IPEd Program in Philippine schools.

This study was anchored on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) as advanced by Ladson-Billings (2020), which emphasized the deliberate integration of students' cultural references into all aspects of teaching and learning to enhance educational outcomes, particularly for marginalized communities. CRP asserts that meaningful learning occurs when educators connect academic content to students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. The framework wads grounded on academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy directly influences the academic engagement of Indigenous students by validating their cultural identities within the classroom environment. Newhouse and Tanguay (2021) emphasized that CRP promotes academic success when teachers intentionally integrate students' cultural knowledge, values, and practices into instructional activities. This approach enables students to feel recognized and respected, which strengthens their motivation and willingness to participate in learning tasks.

Recent studies further highlighted the role of CRP in developing Indigenous students' critical consciousness. Clark and Simpson (2022) argued that CRP extends beyond academic achievement by equipping learners with the capacity to critically examine social inequities affecting their communities. Through discussions centered on cultural identity, history, and social justice, educators encourage students to question dominant narratives and reflect on their roles within society. This emphasis on critical reflection strengthens students' cognitive engagement and supports higher-order thinking skills essential for academic success. CRP encourages students to reflect on their cultural roots and how these connections can inform their educational paths and societal roles. This shift toward critical thinking and self-awareness boosts students' cognitive engagement and contributes to their overall academic development.

In addition, CRP significantly contributes to Indigenous students' emotional engagement by fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom climate. Taylor and Jacobs (2023) demonstrated that culturally relevant teaching practices enhance students' sense of belonging, emotional safety, and self-worth. When teachers affirm Indigenous cultures and perspectives, students experience reduced feelings of marginalization and increased emotional attachment to learning. This emotional connection positively influences students' motivation, resilience, and overall engagement in academic tasks. When Indigenous students see their cultures respected and reflected in their education, they are more likely to engage actively and persist in their studies, improving both their academic performance and mental well-being.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed both correlational and causal research designs. The study used a correlational research design to assess the relationship between the extent of implementation of the IPEd Program and the level of academic engagement of

indigenous students. The researcher selected correlational research because it identified patterns or associations between two or more variables without manipulating them. This design proved appropriate for educational research contexts where ethical and practical constraints prevented manipulation of variables, thereby allowing the researchers to examine naturally occurring relationships (Creswell, 2021).

In addition, the study employed a causal research design to determine which variables predicted, either singly or in combination, the level of academic engagement of indigenous students. The researcher used this design to explain cause-and-effect relationships by identifying factors that directly influenced student engagement outcomes. This approach enabled the researcher to analyze patterns more deeply and determine which variables demonstrated the strongest predictive power (Johnson & Christensen, 2022).

Problems 1 and 2 utilized the Mean and Standard Deviation**.** Problem 3 employed the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Finally**,** Problem 4 used Multiple
Linear Regression.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. How do students assess the teachers' readiness in the implementation of IPEd program in terms of:

1.1. curriculum relevance;
1.2. culturally responsive teaching strategies; and
1.3. assessment?

Table 1. Summary Result of Teachers' Readiness in the Implementation of IPEd Program

Dimension	Mean Range	SD	Qualitative Description
Curriculum Relevance	4.30	0.74	Very High
Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies	4.30	0.71	Very High
Assessment	4.42	0.68	Very High
Overall	**4.34**	**0.71**	**Very High**

Note: 4.21-5.00 Very High; 3.41-4.20 High; 2.61-3:40 Moderate; 1.81-2.60 Low; 1.00-1.80 Very Low

Table 1 presents the summary result of how the students assess their teachers' readiness in the implementation of IPEd Program. The results show an overall Mean of 4.34 with SD=0.71, which is qualitatively described as Very High. The results indicate that teachers demonstrate a very high level of readiness in implementing the IPEd Program, as reflected by the strong overall mean and consistent performance across all dimensions. The alignment of curriculum relevance, culturally responsive teaching strategies, and assessment suggests that teachers integrate indigenous knowledge, values, and contexts into their instructional practices. These findings imply that the IPEd Program benefits from a solid instructional foundation that supports culturally grounded and meaningful learning experiences. They also indicate that teachers possess the capacity to sustain inclusive and responsive practices that address learners' diverse cultural backgrounds. To maintain this level of readiness, schools may continuously strengthen professional development which focuses on contextualized and culturally responsive pedagogy. Administrators may encourage collaborative reflection and sharing of best practices among teachers. Regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms should also be established to support continuous improvement in IPEd implementation.

Bennett and Kanu (2023) emphasized that teachers' readiness in implementing the IPEd Program is essential in creating culturally safe, inclusive, and learner-centered classrooms for indigenous students. They explained that teachers who effectively integrate curriculum relevance, culturally responsive strategies, and appropriate assessment practices help learners feel recognized and empowered in the learning process. Their study showed that such preparedness strengthens students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. Teachers' competence also supports sustained participation and motivation by aligning instruction with indigenous knowledge systems and community contexts. Moreover, strong readiness enables teachers to consistently implement practices that promote identity development and academic persistence. This literature reinforces the present findings that very high teacher readiness significantly contributes to the effective and meaningful implementation of the IPEd Program.

In the same table, the highest Mean is observed in the Assessment dimension, with a Mean of 4.42 and SD=0.68, which is qualitatively described as *Very High*. This result indicates that teachers demonstrate strong readiness in designing and implementing assessment practices that are aligned with the goals and principles of the IPEd Program. It suggests that teachers are capable of using culturally responsive and context-appropriate assessment strategies that respect indigenous learners'

knowledge systems, experiences, and ways of demonstrating learning. This implies that teachers possess strong competence in using culturally responsive and context-appropriate assessment practices that align with indigenous learners' experiences and ways of knowing. It also indicates that assessment serves as a key mechanism for supporting learner engagement, monitoring progress, and reinforcing meaningful learning within the IPEd framework. To sustain this strength, schools may continue providing professional development focused on culturally grounded and performance-based assessment strategies. Teachers may also be encouraged to collaboratively develop and share assessment tools that reflect indigenous contexts and community values. Moreover, regular review and refinement of assessment practices may be conducted to ensure continued alignment with IPEd goals and learners' evolving needs.

This study aligns to the study of Alday (2025), which found that teachers' readiness in pedagogy, curriculum content, and assessment significantly contributed to improved academic performance among indigenous learners. The researcher emphasized that culturally appropriate assessment practices help teachers accurately capture learners' understanding while respecting indigenous contexts and knowledge systems. The study highlighted that well-prepared teachers use assessment not only to measure learning but also to guide instruction and support student engagement. The very high assessment readiness reflects this capacity to align evaluation practices with the goals of the IPEd Program. Hence, the findings affirm that strong assessment readiness plays a vital role in sustaining meaningful and effective IPEd implementation.

Meanwhile, the lowest Mean is shared by Curriculum Relevance and Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies, both with a Mean of 4.30 and standard deviations of 0.74 and 0.71, respectively, which are still qualitatively described as *Very High*. This result indicates that although teachers demonstrate strong readiness in contextualizing lessons and applying culturally responsive strategies, these areas show slightly more variability compared to assessment. The findings suggest that integrating indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and community practices into daily instruction may require more sustained support and consistency across classrooms. This implies that while teachers are highly prepared, there remains room to further strengthen the consistent integration of indigenous knowledge, languages, and community practices across learning areas. It also suggests that variations in access to culture-based materials and teacher training may influence how effectively these dimensions are implemented. To address this, schools may intensify professional development focused on deepening teachers' understanding of indigenous cultures and contextualized pedagogy. Teachers may be supported through collaboration with elders and community members to enrich lesson content and teaching strategies. Additionally, the development and provision of localized, culture-based instructional materials may be prioritized to ensure sustained and consistent implementation of IPEd principles.

This study aligns with the study of Bastida et al. (2025), which reported that while teachers generally demonstrate strong commitment to culturally responsive teaching and curriculum localization, variations in implementation persist due to limited culture-based resources and uneven training exposure. They emphasized that contextualizing lessons and applying culturally responsive strategies require continuous support to ensure consistency across classrooms. Their findings suggest that differences in teachers' cultural literacy and access to indigenous materials influence the depth of curriculum relevance in practice. Thus, the results affirm that sustained professional development and resource support remain essential to further strengthen these dimensions of IPEd implementation.

Furthermore, schools may establish sustained partnerships with indigenous communities and local cultural bearers to regularly enrich teaching strategies and ensure the continuous alignment of curriculum content with authentic indigenous contexts.

Problem 2. What is the level of students' academic engagement in terms of:

2.1 behavioral;

2.2 emotional; and

2.3 cognitive?

Table 2. Summary Result of Students' Academic Engagement

Variables	Mean Range	SD	Qualitative Description
Behavioral	4.39	0.70	Very High
Emotional	4.36	0.70	Very High
Cognitive	4.36	0.70	Very High
Overall	**4.37**	**0.70**	**Very High**

Note: 4.21-5.00 Very High; 3.41-4.20 High; 2.61-3:40 Moderate; 1.81-2.60 Low; 1.00-1.80 Very Low

Table 8 presents the overall Mean of 4.37 and SD=0.70, qualitatively described as *Very High*. The results show that students demonstrate strong behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in their learning. Students participate in classroom activities, feel emotionally connected to their school experiences, and apply higher-order thinking skills in academic tasks. They exhibit responsibility, pride, motivation, and reflective thinking across learning dimensions. These findings imply that the school effectively creates a supportive and culturally responsive learning environment that nurtures holistic engagement. The balanced high scores across the three domains indicate that instructional practices address not only academic performance but also students' emotional well-being and intellectual growth. This comprehensive engagement strengthens students' readiness for sustained academic success. Teachers may maintain integrated strategies that simultaneously develop behavioral discipline, emotional connection, and cognitive skills. Schools may continue promoting culturally relevant and inclusive programs that sustain high engagement levels. Administrators may provide ongoing monitoring and support systems to preserve and enhance holistic student engagement.

This finding is supported by the study of Matthews and Littlebear (2022), which emphasized that academic engagement among indigenous learners significantly increases when education integrates culturally relevant content and community-centered approaches. The study explained that students demonstrate stronger behavioral participation, deeper emotional connection, and enhanced cognitive involvement when they feel seen, respected, and represented in the curriculum. It further highlighted that culturally responsive environments promote motivation, persistence, and higher-order thinking, leading to holistic engagement across multiple dimensions. This supports the present result, where students exhibit responsibility, pride, motivation, and reflective thinking in behavioral, emotional, and cognitive domains. The balanced very high scores across the three areas affirm the literature's claim that culturally affirming and inclusive instructional practices foster comprehensive academic engagement.

Behavioral engagement obtained the highest Mean 4.39 and a SD=0.70, which is qualitatively described as Very High. This indicates that students strongly demonstrate observable participation, responsibility, and adherence to classroom expectations. Students consistently follow rules, collaborate with peers, and take accountability for their learning outcomes. They actively engage in tasks and contribute to maintaining a positive learning environment. These results imply that classroom management practices and structured routines effectively promote disciplined and productive behaviors. Strong behavioral engagement supports emotional and cognitive involvement by creating an organized and focused learning atmosphere. This strength reflects a culture of responsibility and cooperation among learners. Teachers may continue reinforcing positive behavior and collaborative learning strategies. Schools may sustain programs that recognize and reward responsible student conduct. Administrators may strengthen professional development on positive discipline and student-centered classroom management.

This finding is supported by the study of Miller and Edwards (2023), which explained that culturally responsive and structured learning environments significantly enhance students' behavioral engagement. The study emphasized that when schools integrate indigenous knowledge systems and establish clear expectations, students demonstrate improved attendance, active participation, and persistence in completing academic tasks. These outcomes align with the present result, where students consistently follow classroom rules, collaborate effectively, and take responsibility for their learning. The literature further noted that strong classroom structures and supportive practices cultivate disciplined and productive behaviors that reinforce overall engagement. Thus, it affirms that organized, culturally responsive, and well-managed classrooms foster responsibility, cooperation, and sustained participation among learners.

Emotional and cognitive engagement both recorded have the lowest Mean of 4.36 and SD=0.70, although they remain within the *Very High* range. Students show strong emotional attachment and reflective thinking, yet these areas slightly trail behind behavioral participation. They feel the pride, motivation, and intellectual involvement, but opportunities for deeper expression and complex thinking may still be enhanced. These findings imply that while students actively participate, schools can further strengthen emotional empowerment and advanced cognitive challenge. Emotional validation and critical thinking require continuous and intentional instructional effort. Strengthening these domains will further balance holistic engagement. Teachers may incorporate more reflective discussions, student voice activities, and inquiry-based learning tasks. Schools may design programs that foster creativity, dialogue, and deeper emotional expression. Administrators may invest in training that enhances culturally responsive teaching and higher-order thinking facilitation.

This finding is consistent with the study of Jones (2021) and Whitecloud and Jensen (2024), which emphasized that emotional validation and higher-order thinking develop through intentional and sustained instructional practices. The literature explained that while students may demonstrate strong participation, deeper emotional engagement requires consistent affirmation of student voice and identity, and cognitive growth requires structured opportunities for critical analysis and creative problem-solving. These perspectives align with the present result, where emotional and cognitive engagement remains very high but slightly trail behavioral participation. Studies further highlight that culturally responsive teaching and reflective, inquiry-based

approaches strengthen both emotional connection and intellectual challenge. Therefore, enhancing dialogue, reflective expression, and complex thinking tasks can further balance and elevate holistic student engagement across all domains.

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' readiness in the implementation of IPEd Program and students' academic engagement?

Table 3. Correlation Analysis Between Teachers' Readiness and Students' Academic Engagement

Dimensions of Independent Variable	r-value	p-value	Description	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Curriculum Relevance	0.784**	0.000	Significant	Reject	High Positive
Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies	0.861**	0.000	Significant	Reject	High Positive
Assessment	0.888**	0.000	Significant	Reject	High Positive

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 reveals the correlational analysis between teachers' readiness and students' academic engagement, as reflected by p-values of 0.000 at the 0.01 level. The results indicate that as teachers strengthen curriculum relevance, culturally responsive teaching strategies, and assessment practices, students demonstrate higher levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that teachers' readiness significantly influences students' academic involvement. These strong relationships highlight the critical role of well-prepared teachers in fostering meaningful participation, motivation, and higher-order thinking among learners. The findings show that teacher readiness functions as a foundational factor in sustaining holistic student engagement. They also demonstrate that improvements in instructional competence directly correspond to increases in student involvement. These results imply that investing in teacher development can yield measurable improvements in student engagement outcomes. They further imply that engagement initiatives should prioritize strengthening instructional quality across multiple domains. Schools may implement continuous capability-building programs that enhance teachers' curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment literacy. Administrators may establish monitoring systems that regularly evaluate and support teacher readiness to sustain high engagement levels.

This finding is aligned with the study of Alday (2025), which found that effective implementation of the IPEd program particularly in pedagogy, methodology, and curriculum content significantly correlated with improved academic performance and increased student participation. The study emphasized that when teachers demonstrate strong readiness and competence in delivering culturally relevant instruction, students show higher levels of engagement and scholastic achievement. This aligns with the present result, where curriculum relevance, culturally responsive teaching strategies, and assessment practices significantly relate to students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The strong positive correlations affirm that teacher preparedness directly influences the quality of student involvement in learning. Therefore, investing in teacher development remains essential in sustaining holistic and meaningful academic engagement.

Assessment obtained the highest correlation (r = 0.888), indicating that effective assessment practices have the strongest relationship with students' academic engagement. This suggests that when teachers design fair, relevant, and feedback-oriented assessments, students become more motivated, reflective, and actively involved in their learning. The data reveal that assessment strongly shapes how students monitor progress and respond to academic expectations. They also show that feedback mechanisms significantly influence students' persistence and effort. These findings imply that assessment serves not only as a measurement tool but also as a driver of engagement and improvement. They further imply that strengthening formative assessment practices can amplify students' emotional and cognitive investment. Teachers may integrate timely, constructive, and culturally responsive feedback into daily instruction. Schools may prioritize professional development focused on authentic, performance-based, and formative assessment strategies.

This finding is supported by the study of Morgan and Shillingford (2023), which emphasized that collaborative and culturally aligned assessment practices significantly enhance indigenous students' motivation, participation, and commitment to learning. The study explained that when assessment integrates meaningful feedback and community-centered values, students become more reflective and persistent in their academic tasks. This supports the present result, where assessment demonstrates the strongest correlation with students' academic engagement. The literature highlights that effective and responsive evaluation methods encourage learners to monitor their progress and strive for improvement. Therefore, strengthening formative and culturally responsive assessment practices can further elevate students' emotional and cognitive investment in learning.

Curriculum relevance recorded the lowest correlation (r = 0.784), although it still reflects a high positive and significant relationship. This indicates that contextualized and culturally aligned content positively influences engagement but slightly less strongly compared to assessment and teaching strategies. The findings show that while relevant content fosters connection and interest, its effectiveness depends on how teachers implement and assess it. They also suggest that curriculum impact strengthens when supported by interactive pedagogy and meaningful evaluation.

These results imply that curriculum design alone cannot maximize engagement without complementary instructional strategies. They further imply that schools must align curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment to achieve stronger outcomes. Teachers may continuously localize content while integrating interactive and inquiry-based strategies. Administrators may ensure that curriculum development efforts align with assessment reforms and culturally responsive teaching initiatives.

This finding is aligned with the study of Moore and Yazzie (2023), which emphasized that culturally relevant curricula enhance students' connection and participation, but their effectiveness depends on how teachers deliver and contextualize the content. The study explained that integrating indigenous languages, traditions, and community knowledge increases engagement; however, instructional strategies and assessment practices must reinforce curriculum relevance to maximize impact. This aligns with the present result, where curriculum relevance shows a high positive correlation yet slightly lower than assessment and teaching strategies. The literature further highlights that culturally grounded content becomes more powerful when paired with interactive pedagogy and reflective evaluation methods. Therefore, aligning curriculum design with responsive teaching approaches and meaningful assessment strengthens its overall influence on students' academic engagement.

Problem 4. Which of the dimensions of the independent variable predict singly or in combination the students' academic engagement?

Table 4 shows that the regression model is statistically significant (F = 288.018, p = 0.000), with a very strong correlation (R = 0.917) and an R^2 of 0.840, indicating that 84% of the variance in students' academic engagement is explained by the three dimensions of teachers' readiness. This result demonstrates that teachers' readiness collectively exerts a substantial influence on students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The high explanatory power confirms that instructional preparedness strongly determines the quality of student involvement. These findings reveal that teacher-related factors account for most variations in engagement levels. They show that improving instructional readiness can directly elevate student participation and motivation. The study also highlights the interconnectedness of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in shaping engagement outcomes. The results imply that schools cannot treat engagement as solely a student factor but must address teacher competence as a primary driver. They further imply that systemic improvement in teacher readiness can significantly strengthen holistic academic engagement. Schools may institutionalize continuous professional development programs focused on integrated instructional readiness. Administrators may implement data-driven monitoring systems to evaluate how teacher readiness translates into student engagement outcomes. Policymakers may allocate resources toward strengthening teacher training frameworks that align curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Between Teachers' Readiness and Students' Academic Engagement

Dimensions Independent Variable	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standard Coefficient Beta**		
	B	**Std. Error**		**T**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	0.288	0.140		2.059	0.041
Curriculum Relevance	0.049	0.052	0.054	0.937	0.350
Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies	0.374	0.061	0.378	6.173	0.000
Assessment	0.509	0.058	0.533	8.760	0.000
		R=0.917	R^2=0.840	F=288.018	Sig=0.000

Dependent Variable: Students' Academic Engagement

Predictors (Constant), Curriculum Relevance, Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies, Assessment

Victor and Yano (2024), found that strong implementation and responsiveness of the IPEd Program significantly enhanced student participation and engagement through effective curriculum development, instructional strategies, and learning resources. The study highlighted that teachers' efficiency and preparedness in delivering culturally responsive instruction directly influenced students' active involvement in classroom activities. This aligns with the present regression result, where teachers' readiness accounts for a substantial portion of the variance in academic engagement. The literature emphasized that when teachers

demonstrate competence in integrating curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, students exhibit stronger motivation and participation.

Assessment (B = 0.509, β = 0.533, p = 0.000) emerged as the strongest and most significant predictor of students' academic engagement. This indicates that well-designed, feedback-oriented, and culturally responsive assessment practices most strongly influence how students participate and invest in learning. Students respond positively when assessments guide improvement and provide meaningful feedback. These findings reveal that assessment shapes students' academic behaviors more powerfully than other instructional dimensions. They show that evaluation practices influence motivation, reflection, and persistence. They also confirm that assessment functions not only as measurement but as an active engagement tool. The results imply that strengthening formative and authentic assessment can substantially increase student involvement. They further imply that teachers' ability to design responsive evaluation strategies directly impacts emotional and cognitive engagement. Teachers may integrate continuous formative feedback and performance-based tasks into instruction. Schools may prioritize professional development on authentic, culturally aligned, and feedback-driven assessment systems. Administrators may support mentoring programs that enhance teachers' assessment literacy and reflective evaluation skills.

Flores and Obod (2023), emphasized in their study that when teachers utilized culturally relevant and well-designed instructional materials accompanied by appropriate evaluation strategies, students demonstrated more positive learning experiences and stronger engagement. The study emphasized further that assessment practices grounded in cultural relevance and instructional alignment enhance students' motivation and participation. This aligns with the present result, where assessment emerged as the strongest predictor of academic engagement. The literature further suggests that responsive evaluation and feedback mechanisms encourage learners to reflect, improve, and persist in their academic tasks. Thus, the significant predictive power of assessment reinforces its role as both a measurement tool and a catalyst for sustained behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies significantly predict engagement (B = 0.374, β = 0.378, p = 0.000), while Curriculum Relevance (B = 0.049, β = 0.054, p = 0.350) does not significantly predict engagement when other variables are controlled. This indicates that how teachers implement culturally responsive strategies has a stronger direct impact than curriculum content alone. While relevant curriculum matters, its influence depends on effective delivery and assessment. These findings reveal that pedagogy serves as the bridge between content and engagement. They show that contextualized lessons require interactive and inclusive strategies to translate into active participation. They also suggest that curriculum relevance becomes impactful when supported by dynamic instructional practices. The results imply that schools must prioritize pedagogical competence alongside curriculum design. They further imply that contextualized content alone cannot maximize engagement without strategic implementation. Teachers may actively apply culturally responsive methods such as dialogue, collaboration, and contextual problem-solving. Schools may align curriculum development with pedagogical innovation initiatives. Administrators may provide targeted training that strengthens culturally responsive instructional execution to maximize student engagement. The findings can be summarized with the following regression equation:

$$Y=0.374X_1+0.509X_2+0.288$$

Where: 0.288 = Constant

Y = Students' Academic Engagement

X_1 = Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies

X_2 = Assessment

This finding is supported by the Lopez and Francis (2022), which emphasized that culturally responsive teaching strategies significantly enhance student participation, motivation, and classroom involvement when teachers actively integrate inclusive and relational pedagogical practices. The study explained that the effectiveness of culturally grounded content depends largely on how teachers facilitate dialogue, collaboration, and meaningful interaction in the classroom. This aligns with the present result, where culturally responsive teaching strategies significantly predict engagement, while curriculum relevance alone does not remain significant when other variables are controlled. Hence, the significant predictive power of culturally responsive teaching reinforces the importance of strengthening instructional execution alongside curriculum development to maximize holistic student engagement.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Teachers consistently integrate culturally relevant curriculum, responsive teaching strategies, and inclusive assessment practices which are aligned with indigenous learners' contexts.

2. Teachers deliver culturally grounded instruction which makes learning meaningful, relevant, and connected to students' identities that increase their participation, motivation, and persistence.
3. Teachers are well-prepared to implement culturally responsive practices that enhance students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning.
4. Teachers teaching strategies actively involve learners, respect their cultural perspectives, and provide meaningful learning and evaluation experiences that sustain engagement.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the:

1. School administrators may sustain the readiness of teachers by providing continuous professional development, regular monitoring, and high level of school support.
2. Teachers may continue employing learner-centered and culturally-grounded instruction practices.
3. School administrators may strengthen capacity-building initiatives that enhance teachers' competencies.
4. Teachers may prioritize the integration of indigenous knowledge, contextualized instruction, and culturally appropriate assessment practices.

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