Assessing Teachers’ Awareness of Palaw’an Indigenous Beliefs and Practices in Panitian, Sofronio Española, Palawan, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

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|  This study examines the level of teacher’s awareness on Palaw’an beliefs and pratices at Panitian, Sofronio Espanola, Palawan, Philippines. Hence, this study analyzed the teachers’ level of awareness on Palaw’an beliefs and practices at Panitian, Sofronio Espanola, Palawan, Philippines in terms of kinship, languages, livelihood, religious beliefs, tribal system, literary arts, musical instruments, and rituals. The respondents of the study are teachers from Panitian National High School and Panitian Elementary School of Barangay Panitian, Sofronio Espanola, Palawan, Philippines. This study employed probability sampling methods using stratified sampling in determining the respondents of the study. Using Slovin’s Formula, the required sample size was determined with the preferred margin of error at 5%. The computed sample is thirty-one (31) from the population of thirty-four (34) secondary teachers of Panitian National High School, while twenty-four (24) from the population of twenty-five (25) elementary teachers of Panitian Elementary School bringing the total to 55 respondents. This study utilized quantitative method of research. To assess this awareness effectively, the study employed a combination of quantitative descriptive measures, including frequency counts, percentages, and means. A researcher-made questionnaire was employed. Moreover, this questionnaire was subjected to content validation of experts before it was administered to the respondents. The findings of this study reveal that teachers' awareness of various aspects of Palaw’an culture generally falls within the moderate range, with mean ratings for kinship (4.22), language (4.15), livelihood (5.31), religious beliefs (4.23), tribal systems (5.07), and rituals (4.29) all categorized as moderate level of awareness. However, areas such as literary arts (mean = 3.99) and musical instruments (mean = 3.92) reflect low levels of awareness. This study will serve as an eye-opener to the curriculum planner to give emphasis and monitor the implementation of curriculum indigenization and its relation to the level of cultural awareness of teachers in the field. Furthermore, the school administrators may consider this study to conceptualize a training program that will help enhance teachers’ awareness of Palaw’an beliefs and practices of their community. Moreover, this study will help indigenous students feel more valued members of the society.  |

*Keywords: Curriculum Indigenization, Teachers’ Awareness, Intervention Program, Palaw’an beliefs and practices, Palawan*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a diverse country characterized by various cultures promulgated in more than a hundred languages and dialects spoken by people of different groups, religions, and ethnicity, which make up the overall population. The schools in the country are a microcosm that exhibits this breadth of diversity; classrooms in many places are made up of a majority of native Filipinos from different ethnic groups.

Barangay Panitian is comprised mostly of Palaw’an indigenous students. However, the majority of the teachers are not original residents of the community. Most of them come from other municipalities like Roxas, Aborlan, Narra, Quezon, and Puerto Princesa City. As such, they are rooted in different cultures of their own municipalities. Out of 55 faculty and staff of both elementary and secondary school, only one teacher is a Palaw’an.

Several studies on the level of teachers’ cultural awareness have found that the majority of the teachers are not familiar with the cultures of the indigenous people within their community, mainly because most of them are not original residents of that particular community.

Ali (2022), in her study, found that teachers have a moderate level of awareness of the practice of kinship in public schools in the city of Irbid. In addition, Doctor (2021) found that teachers are slightly aware of the indigenous knowledge of their community relating to their livelihoods. Moreover, a study conducted by Hatcher and Dwyer (2020) highlighted that many teachers exhibited limited awareness of Indigenous knowledge, particularly regarding religious beliefs and cultural practices. A study conducted by Martinez and Lee (2020) also revealed that teachers have a low level of understanding of Indigenous tribal systems, which directly affects their ability to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching practices.

Meanwhile, in a study conducted about the reflection of teaching and learning of traditional music and dance in Tamale International School, it has been found that teachers have minimal knowledge of traditional music subject among teachers that result of their difficulties in handling their syllabus (Mensah, 2021). However, Doctor (2021) emphasized that since the majority of the teachers were original residents of the community, they are highly aware of the concept of traditional knowledge orally passed from one generation to another.

Moreover, these studies are at a very limited extent as most of them focus on the teachers’ cultural awareness on indigenous knowledge outside the province and even outside the country with no specific concentration on teachers’ awareness on Palaw’an beliefs and practices within the province of Palawan.

This study primarily focuses on determining the teachers’ level of awareness on Pala’wan beliefs and practices terms of kinship, languages, livelihood, religious beliefs, tribal system, literary arts, musical instruments, and rituals at Barangay Panitian, Sofronio Española, Palawan.

This study will serve as an eye-opener to the curriculum planner to give emphasis and monitor the implementation of curriculum indigenization and its relation to the level of cultural awareness of teachers in the field. This could give insights into what possible actions or frameworks should be taken to make learning more contextualized and functional to the needs of society. This will serve as a basis of school administrators in formulating school policies and programs that will help enhance teachers’ awareness on Palaw’an Beliefs and Practices. This study will also help teachers realize their own awareness of the Palaw’an beliefs and practices. It will be of great help to their personal and professional development specifically through enhancing their knowledge and skills in terms of indigenizing their instruction.

This study will give indigenous people the opportunities to hear their voices, appreciate their beliefs and culture, and make them feel included in the existing curriculum of the school. Meanwhile, the students are the utmost concern of this study. Determining the teachers’ level of awareness on Palaw’an beliefs and practices will open opportunities that highlight Palaw’an beliefs and practices and other ethnic groups of the community. This study will help indigenous students feel more valued members of the society.

2. methodology

The respondents of the study are junior and senior high school teachers from Panitian National High School and teachers of Panitian Elementary School of Barangay Panitian, Sofronio Espanola, Palawan. This study employed probability sampling methods using stratified sampling in determining the respondents of the study.

Using Slovin’s Formula, the required sample size was determined with the preferred margin of error at 5%. The computed sample is thirty-one (31) from the population of thirty-four (34) secondary teachers of Panitian National High School, while twenty-four (24) from the population of twenty-five (25) elementary teachers of Panitian Elementary School bringing the total to 55 respondents.

This study utilized quantitative method of research whose purpose is to analyzed the level of teachers’ awareness on Palaw’an beliefs and practices in terms of kinship, languages, livelihood, religious beliefs, tribal system, literary arts, musical instruments and rituals.

 Items on the level of teachers’ awareness on Pala’wan beliefs and practices have been quantified using the following descriptive indicators based on their total scores in each sub-topics: (9-10 total scores) very high awareness level, (7-8 total scores) high awareness level, (5-6 total scores) moderate awareness level, (3-4 total scores) low awareness level and (0-2 total scores) very low awareness level.

Moreover, to assess this awareness effectively, the study employed a combination of quantitative descriptive measures, including frequency counts, percentages, and means.

A researcher-made questionnaire was employed. Moreover, this questionnaire was subjected to content validation of experts before it was administered to the respondents.

The researcher first wrote a letter to the school head of Panitian National High School and Panitian Elementary School asking for approval to gather data from the respondents. After the request had been approved, the researcher asked consent from the respondents through an informed consent form before gathering data on the problem being studied. The researcher started administering a researcher-made questionnaire to the respondents. An estimated 30-45 minutes was needed to answer all the questions.

3. results and DISCUSSION

**Respondents’ Level of Awareness on Palaw’an Beliefs and Practices**

The results outline the level of awareness of the teachers on the Palaw’an beliefs and practices. This includes kinship, languages, livelihood, religious beliefs, tribal systems, literary arts, musical instruments, and rituals. As mentioned, this study measures the respondents' level of awareness through their test scores, which are indicative of their knowledge and understanding of these important cultural parameters.

**Table 1:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Kinship*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | 5 | 9.09 | 4.22 | Moderate |
| High | 7 | 12.73 |
| Moderate | 11 | 20.00 |
| Low | 13 | 23.64 |
| Very Low | 19 | 34.55 |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Legend:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

**Table 2:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Languages*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | 3 | 5.45 | 4.15 | Moderate |
| High | 5 | 9.09 |
| Moderate | 13 | 23.64 |
| Low | 18 | 32.73 |
| Very Low | 16 | 29.09 |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Note for Mean Rating:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

 **Table 3:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Livelihood*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | 10 | 18.18 | 5.31 | Moderate |
| High | 7 | 12.73 |
| Moderate | 15 | 27.27 |
| Low | 14 | 25.45 |
| Very Low | 9 | 16.36 |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Note for Mean Rating:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

**Table 4:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Religious Beliefs*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | 2 | 3.64% | 4.23 | Moderate |
| High | 7 | 12.73% |
| Moderate | 12 | 21.82% |
| Low | 19 | 34.55% |
| Very Low | 15 | 27.27% |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Note for Mean Rating:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

**Table 5:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Tribal System*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | 7 | 12.73 | 5.07 | Moderate |
| High | 9 | 16.36 |
| Moderate | 9 | 16.36 |
| Low | 21 | 38.18 |
| Very Low | 9 | 16.36 |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Note for Mean Rating:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

**Table 6:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Literary Arts*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | 2 | 3.64 | 3.99 | Low |
| High | 4 | 7.27 |
| Moderate | 12 | 21.82 |
| Low | 27 | 49.09 |
| Very Low | 10 | 18.18 |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Note for Mean Rating:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

**Table 7:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Musical Instruments*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | 4 | 7.27 | 3.92 | Low |
| High | 1 | 1.82 |
| Moderate | 13 | 23.64 |
| Low | 22 | 40.00 |
| Very Low | 15 | 27.27 |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Note for Mean Rating:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

**Table 8:** *Respondents’ Level of Awareness in terms of Rituals*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of Awareness** | **Frequency (f)** | **Percentage (%)** | **Mean** | **Description** |
|  | Very High | - | - | 4.29 | Moderate |
| High | 5 | 9.09 |
| Moderate | 18 | 32.73 |
| Low | 23 | 41.82 |
| Very Low | 9 | 16.36 |
|  **TOTAL** | **55** | **100.00** |  |  |

*Note for Mean Rating:* 0.00-2.00 – Very Low; 2.01-4.00 – Low; 4.01-6.00 – Moderate;

 6.01-8.00 – High; 8.01-10.00 – Very High *(Source: Primary data, 2024)*

Table 1 reveals that among the 55 respondents, one third or 34.55 percent - demonstrate a very low level of awareness regarding Palaw'an culture, particularly kinship practices. Additionally, 13 teachers (23.64 percent) report a low level of awareness. These statistics highlight that a significant number of respondents lack fundamental knowledge about the kinship practices that are essential to Palaw'an culture. Conversely, only five respondents (9.09 percent) exhibit a very high level of awareness, while seven (12.73 percent) are classified as having high awareness. This distribution underscores the urgent need for increased educational initiatives to enhance teachers’ understanding of this critical cultural aspect.

These findings indicate that low awareness among teachers can significantly hinder their ability to effectively educate students about the cultural heritage of the Palaw'an people. This lack of understanding may lead to cultural misunderstandings and undermine the importance of indigenous knowledge within the classroom. If teachers are not adequately informed, they may find it challenging to convey the significance of kinship ties in Palaw'an culture, which could ultimately result in students developing a limited appreciation for cultural diversity.

Additionally, the mean rating of 4.22 reflects a moderate level of awareness among respondents regarding kinship practices. This level of awareness carries significant implications that can negatively impact the educational experience.

A lack of understanding may lead to cultural misunderstandings, causing teachers to misinterpret students' behaviors and values. This can result in an environment that does not adequately respect or reflect the cultural backgrounds of Indigenous students. Therefore, there is an urgent need for targeted professional development programs focused on Indigenous cultures and practices. Further, this study also suggests that school administrators should prioritize training that equips teachers with the knowledge and resources necessary to develop a more inclusive curriculum that honors and incorporates diverse cultural perspectives.

The aforementioned findings align with the study conducted by Ali (2022), which highlights that teachers possess only a moderate level of awareness regarding kinship practices. This moderate understanding has significant implications for educational practices, particularly how teachers engage with Indigenous students and their cultural contexts. Ali's study emphasizes that when teachers have low awareness of kinship concepts, they are less likely to adopt culturally relevant pedagogy. This lack of culturally responsive teaching can create a disconnect between the curriculum and the lived experiences of Indigenous students.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is essential for fostering an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and understood. It involves integrating diverse cultural perspectives into lesson plans, thereby allowing students to see their own cultures reflected in their education.

Table 2 highlights a critical issue regarding the level of awareness among teachers concerning Palaw'an languages. Out of 55 respondents, only three teachers, or 5.45 percent, show a very high level of awareness, while five (9.09 percent) report a high level of awareness. The moderate awareness category includes 13 teachers (23.64 percent), indicating some familiarity with Palaw'an languages. However, it is concerning that the majority of respondents fall into the lower awareness categories, with 18 teachers (32.73 percent) classified as having a low level of awareness and 16 (29.09 percent) exhibiting a very low level.

The results of this study stress that low levels of awareness hinder teachers' ability to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy, which is essential in fostering an inclusive classroom environment. Without an understanding of Palaw'an languages, teachers may overlook the linguistic diversity present in their classrooms, leading to missed opportunities to celebrate students' cultural identities.

Further analysis also reveals that the mean rating of 4.15 categorizes the overall awareness as moderate. This statistic indicates that a substantial number of teachers lack essential knowledge about Palaw'an languages, which can severely hinder their ability to effectively teach and promote these languages in their classrooms. Without a solid understanding of Palaw'an languages, teachers may struggle to incorporate these linguistic elements into their curricula, thereby missing opportunities to enrich students' learning experiences and foster cultural appreciation.

This finding presents a notable contradiction to the study conducted by Doctor (2021), which emphasizes that teachers possess a strong awareness of their local languages and recognize their significant role as an integral part of Indigenous knowledge. This further suggests that teachers are not only familiar with the linguistic aspects of their local languages but also appreciate their cultural importance, viewing them as vital tools for fostering identity and community cohesion among Indigenous students.

In contrast, the current findings align more closely with the work of McCarty and Lee (2014), who highlight a generally low level of awareness regarding Indigenous languages among teachers. They further echoed that this lack of awareness leads to several challenges, including inadequate representation of Indigenous languages in educational materials and a failure to incorporate these languages into daily teaching practices.

Table 3 reveals the level of awareness among respondents regarding Palaw'an livelihood practices. Of the 55 participants, 10 individuals (18.18%) demonstrate a very high level of awareness, while 7 respondents (12.73 percent) report a high level. Additionally, 15 teachers (27.27 percent) fall into the moderate category, indicating some familiarity with these practices. However, it is concerning that a significant portion of respondents—14 teachers (25.45 percent)—have a low level of awareness, and 9 teachers (16.36 percent) exhibit a very low level of awareness regarding Palaw'an livelihoods.

This distribution of awareness levels carries significant implications for teaching, particularly in the context of localization. Localization emphasizes the integration of local cultural, social, and economic contexts into educational practices, making learning more relevant and engaging for students. With only a small percentage of teachers demonstrating very high awareness of Palaw'an livelihood practices, there is a clear need for teachers to deepen their understanding of local contexts. Teachers with low awareness may struggle to incorporate relevant examples and practices into their lessons, which can lead to disengagement among Indigenous students who do not see their lived experiences reflected in the curriculum.

Furthermore, the mean rating of 5.31 places the overall awareness in the moderate range, suggesting that while some educators possess a solid understanding, a substantial number still lack the necessary knowledge to effectively integrate this content into their teaching. This moderate level of awareness underscores the critical need for curriculum development that is inclusive of Palaw'an livelihood practices. Teachers with limited knowledge may struggle to design lessons that reflect the cultural context and relevance of these practices, potentially alienating Indigenous students who do not see their experiences represented in the curriculum.

The results of this study corroborate the findings of Doctor (2021), who highlighted that teachers possess only a slight awareness of the Indigenous knowledge pertinent to their communities, particularly regarding livelihood practices. This level of awareness can hinder their ability to effectively incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching, thereby failing to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of their cultural heritage and its significance to their daily lives. Furthermore, these findings align with the research conducted by Battiste (2013), which underscores the prevalent low awareness among teachers regarding Indigenous livelihood practices. Battiste emphasizes that when teachers are not well-informed about the intricate relationships between Indigenous communities and their livelihood practices, they are less likely to integrate relevant content into the curriculum. Likewise, this lack of representation can lead to a diminished sense of belonging among Indigenous students, who may feel their cultural backgrounds are overlooked or undervalued in the educational setting.

Table 4 illustrates the level of awareness among respondents regarding Palaw'an religious beliefs. Out of 55 participants, only 2 individuals (approximately 3.64 percent) demonstrate a very high level of awareness, while 7 respondents (12.73 percent) report a high level of awareness. With only a small fraction of teachers demonstrating a very high or high level of awareness, it is worth noting that many teachers may lack the necessary knowledge to effectively incorporate Palaw'an religious beliefs into their curricula. This lack of understanding can lead to a curriculum that fails to acknowledge or respect the cultural and spiritual practices of Indigenous students, which may alienate them and hinder their educational experience.

Moreover, a moderate level of awareness is indicated by 12 teachers (21.82 percent), suggesting some familiarity with these beliefs. However, a significant portion of respondents falls into the lower awareness categories: 19 teachers (34.55 percent) have a low level of awareness, and 15 teachers (27.27 percent) exhibit a very low level of awareness regarding Palaw'an religious beliefs. The predominance of low to very low awareness among nearly 62 percent of respondents indicates a pressing need for targeted educational initiatives. This suggests that professional development programs should focus on enhancing teachers' understanding of Palaw'an religious beliefs, exploring their significance within the cultural context, and providing strategies for integrating this knowledge into classroom instruction. Similarly, engaging with local Indigenous communities can also play a crucial role in this process, as it allows educators to gain first-hand insights and a deeper appreciation of these beliefs.

In addition, the mean rating of 4.23 places the overall awareness in the moderate range, suggesting that while some respondents possess a degree of understanding regarding Palaw'an religious beliefs, a substantial number still lack sufficient knowledge. This moderate level of awareness indicates that there are pockets of understanding among educators, yet it is insufficient for effectively integrating these beliefs into teaching practices. This implies that, although some teachers may recognize the importance of Palaw'an religious beliefs, their knowledge is likely fragmented. This limited understanding can hinder their ability to incorporate the Palaw’an religious beliefs meaningfully into the curriculum, which is essential for fostering an inclusive educational environment.

The results of this study confirm the findings of Hatcher and Dwyer (2020) who highlighted that many teachers exhibit limited awareness of Indigenous knowledge, particularly regarding religious beliefs and cultural practices. The study underscores the critical need for teacher education programs to prioritize Indigenous knowledge, including religious beliefs, to prepare teachers for culturally responsive teaching.

Table 5 shows the level of awareness among respondents regarding the Palaw'an tribal system. Of the 55 participants, only seven respondents (12.73 percent) exhibit a very high level of awareness, suggesting that while some teachers have acquired substantial knowledge about the tribal system, they represent a minority within the group. Similarly, nine respondents (16.36 percent) report a high level of awareness, and another nine participants also fall into the moderate category, indicating that a limited number of educators possess even a basic understanding of the tribal system’s complexities and significance.

However, the data uncovers a more concerning trend, as 21 respondents (38.18 percent) demonstrate a low level of awareness, making this the largest group among the participants. Additionally, another nine respondents (16.36 percent) exhibit a very low level of awareness, highlighting a significant knowledge gap that is critical for effective teaching and cultural representation. This pattern suggests that a substantial portion of teachers may not be adequately prepared to engage with or teach Palaw'an tribal system, which is essential in fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.

Moreover, the mean rating of 5.07 positions the overall awareness of the Palaw'an tribal system within a moderate range, suggesting that while some teachers have a foundational understanding, this level of awareness is inadequate for effectively integrating Indigenous knowledge into their teaching practices. This moderate awareness indicates that many teachers may possess only surface-level insights into the complexities and significance of the tribal system, which can impede their ability to represent Indigenous perspectives accurately in their classrooms. This reflects that without a deeper understanding, teachers are at risk of oversimplifying or misrepresenting cultural elements, ultimately leading to a curriculum that fails to honor the richness of Indigenous heritage.

The results of this study coincide with Martinez and Lee (2020) who revealed that teachers have a low level of understanding of Indigenous tribal systems, which directly affects their ability to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching practices. The study further highlights that teachers who possess a deeper understanding of tribal governance, cultural practices, and community values are more likely to incorporate these elements into their lessons, creating a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment.

Table 6 provides a comprehensive analysis on the level of awareness among respondents regarding Palaw'an literary arts. The data indicates that only two respondents (3.64 percent) demonstrate a very high level of awareness, suggesting that only a small number of teachers possess a deep understanding of Palaw'an literary traditions. This limited representation raises important questions about how the Palaw’an literary arts are integrated into educational curricula and highlight a potential oversight in the professional development of teachers regarding Indigenous knowledge. Additionally, the findings show that four respondents (7.27 percent) report a high level of awareness. While this figure is slightly better, it still underscores the overall limited familiarity with Palaw'an literary arts among the majority of participants. Together, this statistic indicates that a significant portion of educators may not have the necessary knowledge to engage meaningfully with these vital literary arts, which are essential for fostering an inclusive educational environment.

In stark contrast to the small percentage of educators with high awareness, a substantial portion of respondents falls into the lower awareness categories. The largest group, comprising 27 respondents (49.09 percent), reports a low level of awareness. This statistic is particularly alarming, as it indicates that nearly half of the teachers surveyed do not possess a solid understanding of Palaw'an literary arts. Furthermore, an additional 10 respondents (18.18 percent) exhibit a very low level of awareness, further emphasizing the extent of the very low awareness regarding these important cultural expressions.

Meanwhile, the overall mean rating of 3.99 categorizes the level of awareness as low. This rating reflects the fact that, while some educators have a foundational understanding of Palaw'an literary arts, this knowledge is insufficient for effective integration into their teaching practices. Teachers with limited awareness may struggle to incorporate Indigenous narratives and literary forms into their lessons, which can hinder the representation of Palaw'an culture and diminish the richness of the educational experience for students.

The aforementioned finding is parallel with Hatcher and Dwyer (2020) who stated that many educators possess a limited understanding of Indigenous literary arts and cultural expressions. The findings highlight significant gaps in teacher education programs regarding the inclusion of Indigenous content, resulting in teachers being ill-equipped to integrate these perspectives into their curricula. Meanwhile, the results of this study negate the findings of Doctor (2021) who found out that teachers are highly aware of the concept of traditional knowledge orally passed from one generation to another, which includes stories, legends, folklore, rituals, songs, and laws.

The low level of awareness on this area of Palaw’an culture highlights the overlooked opportunity in localizing the curriculum. Several literatures (Reid (2013); Lobel (2013); Survival International (n.d)) put premium on the rich literary culture of the Palaw’an people. Several factors may explain the low level of awareness of the respondents such as availability of materials, exposure, or even interest as learning the literary culture requires a person to engage one’s self in the community as literary culture of the Palaw’an is predominantly oral.

Table 7 illustrates the level of awareness among respondents regarding Palaw'an musical instruments, revealing a concerning trend in knowledge among educators. The data shows that only four respondents (7.27 percent) demonstrate a very high level of awareness, indicating that only a small number of educators possess a deep understanding of Palaw'an musical traditions. Moreover, with just one respondent (1.82 percent) reporting a high level of awareness, the findings further underscore the overall lack of familiarity with this crucial cultural aspect, highlighting the need for enhanced educational initiatives in this area.

In contrast, a substantial portion of respondents falls into the lower awareness categories, with the largest group comprising 22 individuals (40.00 percent) who report a low level of awareness, indicating that nearly half of the participants have a limited understanding of Palaw'an musical instruments. Furthermore, an additional 15 respondents (27.27 percent) demonstrate a very low level of awareness, which underscores the significant knowledge gap regarding these important cultural expressions. This situation highlights the urgent need for educational initiatives aimed at enhancing awareness and understanding of Palaw'an musical traditions among teachers.

The mean rating of 3.92 categorizes the overall awareness as low. This rating reflects that while some teachers possess a foundational understanding of Palaw'an musical instruments, this level of knowledge is insufficient for effective integration into teaching practices. The implications of this low awareness are significant since teachers lacking a deep understanding of these Palaw’an musical traditions may struggle to incorporate these into their curricula.

This finding aligns with the observations made by Mensah (2021), who highlighted that many teachers possess minimal knowledge of traditional music subjects. Such a lack of understanding implies that educators may not fully recognize the practical applications of Indigenous musical instruments in their teaching practices. The study further reveals that when teachers lack familiarity with these instruments, they miss valuable opportunities to incorporate Indigenous musical elements into their curricula effectively.

Table 8 provides a detailed overview of the level of awareness among respondents regarding Palaw'an rituals. The data indicates that no respondent reported a very high level of awareness, which points to a concerning lack of deep expertise among teachers in this area. This absence of high awareness suggests that teachers may not fully grasp the complexities and significance of Palaw'an rituals, limiting their ability to incorporate these vital cultural elements into their teaching. Furthermore, only five respondents (9.09 percent) reported a high level of awareness. This limited representation underscores a broader trend of insufficient familiarity with Palaw'an rituals among teachers. While 18 respondents (32.73 percent) indicated a moderate level of awareness, reflecting a basic understanding, this level of knowledge is still inadequate for effective integration into educational practices.

Contrariwise, a substantial portion of respondents falls into the lower awareness categories, highlighting a critical gap in knowledge. The largest group consists of 23 respondents (41.82 percent) who report a low level of awareness, suggesting that nearly half of the participants possess limited knowledge of Palaw'an rituals. This lack of awareness is particularly alarming, as it indicates that teachers may overlook essential cultural practices that are integral to the identity and heritage of the Palaw'an community. Additionally, another nine respondents (16.36 percent) exhibit a very low level of awareness.

Furthermore, the mean rating of 4.29 categorizes the overall awareness of Palaw'an rituals as moderate, indicating that while some respondents possess a foundational understanding of these important cultural practices, there is still substantial room for improvement. This moderate rating suggests that educators are somewhat aware of the existence and significance of Palaw'an rituals but lack the depth of knowledge necessary for meaningful engagement with these traditions.

This study is similar to McKinley and Smith (2019) who underscored the pervasive issue of insufficient knowledge regarding Indigenous rituals among educators.

 Their research reveals that a significant number of teachers graduate from their training programs with only a superficial grasp of Indigenous cultures and rituals, which poses a considerable barrier to effectively integrating this vital content into their teaching practices.

5. Conclusion

Based on the statement of the problem raised in this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. This study reveal that teachers' awareness of various aspects of Palaw’an culture generally falls within the moderate range, with mean ratings for kinship (4.22), language (4.15), livelihood (5.31), religious beliefs (4.23), tribal systems (5.07), and rituals (4.29) all categorized as moderate level of awareness. These indicates that while some respondents possess a foundational understanding of these important cultural practices, there is still substantial room for improvement.
2. However, areas such as literary arts (mean = 3.99) and musical instruments (mean = 3.92) reflect low levels of awareness, highlighting specific cultural domains that require focused educational interventions. These gaps underscore the pressing need for enhanced efforts and in promoting cultural awareness among teachers.
3. This study will serve as an eye-opener to the curriculum planner to give emphasis and monitor the implementation of curriculum indigenization and its relation to the level of cultural awareness of teachers in the field. This could give insights into what possible actions or frameworks should be taken to make learning more contextualized and functional to the needs of society.
4. The school administrators of Panitian National High School and Panitian Elementary School may consider this study to conceptualize a training program that will help enhance teachers’ awareness of Palaw’an beliefs and practices of the community and Teachers of Panitian, Sofronio Española, Palawan may consider this study to increase their awareness of Palaw’an beliefs and practices. It will be of great help to their personal and professional development, specifically through enhancing their knowledge and skills in terms of indigenizing their instruction;
5. The students are the utmost concern of this study. Determining the teachers’ level of awareness on Palaw’an beliefs and practices will open opportunities that highlight Palaw’an beliefs and practices and other ethnic groups of the community. This study will also help indigenous students feel more valued members of the society. Future researchers can utilize this study as a basis to conduct another study about teachers’ awareness of other indigenous groups of people from their community.

Ethical Approval and Consent:

To address the ethical concerns of the study, written informed consent was obtained from the participants. The author hereby declare that this study have been examined and approved by the University Ethics Research Committee and have therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the Palawan State University Research Ethics Review Committee with the Certificate Reference Number: 2024-0056-C.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

Option 1:

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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