Exploring the Experiences and Practices of Elementary Teachers in the Aeta Tribal Community: Revealing their Worth towards Excellence in Education

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***Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to unravel the experiences and practices of elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community. This study was carried out in order to increase awareness among educational administrators about the underappreciated efforts in the practices of the teachers in the Aeta tribal community, as well as to provide an information on the challenges they experienced while engaging the Aeta pupils in the education during the pandemic. Wherein Aetas were classified as one of the recognize Indigenous People in the Philippines. The study used a descriptive phenomenological approach as to investigate and explain individuals' living experiences. The Colaizzi method was utilized to analyze the collected data. The findings revealed the teachers' distinct efforts in engaging and providing a great quality education to the Aeta pupils. Teachers demonstrated adaptability and resiliency in dealing such challenges posed by the pandemic. Their manifestation of untiring perseverance in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community made them worthy and excellent teacher to the Aetas in the community. However, additional assistance from the local government in the execution of the IPED program may help the existing project in delivering excellent education in line with their culture and custom to the Aeta students.*

Keywords— Aeta pupils, Aeta tribal community teachers, Indigenous People (IP)

1. INTRODUCTION

Education provides inclusive options based on the premise that everyone has an equal access to the quality education and that no one is left behind. However, the current educational environment in the Philippines has suddenly shifted to a phenomenal degree as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since pandemic started, the Department of Education (DepEd) and other educational institution were forced to make adjustments just to cope with the current situation. Furthermore, teachers in public and private schools cannot hold face-to-face classes until the situation gets better. Notably, this disruption in education would likely have long term effects in the country.

In response to the new learning set-up, the education under a "new normal" had brought a lot of challenges to the education sector. Students from all over the country need to study in distant learning such as online, modular, blender, or digital learning setup. The current situation presents significant challenges to educational sector particularly to the school administrators who tried to maintain intact connection with the students. The transition to distance learning has radically altered the role of school teachers in educating their students in order to ensure the education of the child.

Alvarez (2020), through his study, found out that learning remotely in these trying times is very challenging because aside from the existing problems on access and affordability, the emerging concerns on financial stability and affective support contributed to interrupt learning engagement. The existing learning setup in response to the call for continued education despite the global health threat is a big challenge in life of every learners. The findings in this study from the perspectives of learners showed a glimpse that continued learning in the middle of COVID-19 phenomenon requires collaborative understanding, support, and compassion. [1]

On the other hand, as students having a hard time to deal with such different learning setup, teachers too. Fauzi (2020) proved that an online learning found ineffective because of various obstacles experienced by the teachers when having an online class [2]. Chan (2021) revealed that teachers in the Philippines bear the brunt of problems because they teach using a modular approach in remote areas, especially in provinces where internet access is limited. Furthermore, teachers in remote areas of the world during the pandemic may have considerable experience in providing a modular approach to meet the needs of their students. Problems have arisen when there is an instance such as adversity in module distribution, erroneous modules, and loss of interest among students and a lack of willingness on the part of parents to play a supportive role in their children's learning [3].

In addition, according to Sánchez-Cruz et al, 2021; Masinire et al, 2021; López et al, 2021; as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, global efforts have been made to close classrooms at all levels and shift schooling to the online realm, implying a heavy reliance on access to the internet and electronic devices. On their study, the school communities demand a political system that encourages equal education and ensures a method of building information that is available to all; an educational viewpoint that recognizes traditional groups and cultures, including those that are typically financially marginalized, such as indigenous people. [4]

In the Philippine, there are groups of Indigenous People (IP). One of these are the Aetas. They were classified as an indigenous group of people who belonged to the country's impoverished sector and were among the first recognized migrants or inhabitants. However, to support the Department of Education plan, the DepEd order no. 22 series of 2016 were implemented as guideline in the allocation and utilization on the Indigenous People Education (IPEd) and as a response to indigenous peoples' (IP) right to basic education that is contextually sensitive, should recognizes their cultures, and encourages the importance of their indigenous expertise, skills, and other facets of their cultural heritage.

In addition, in response to the DepEd order no. 22 series of 2016, Tecson (2020), on her article stated that one of the Integrated School in Pampanga, a rural school where the majority of the students are from the Aeta community. The teachers on this integrated school, devised an innovative concept to meet the requirements of the students when the school reopened (A rickshaw learning Advance Knowledge using Motorized Trikes for Education). The students will take their learning materials home with them to review and complete their assignments. Within the same week that the materials were distributed, teachers will return to the region to collect and check the supplied tasks. [5]

Furthermore, Aglibot (2020) stated that teachers of the integrated school in Zambales, crossed rivers while riding a wooden sled carried by a carabao to reach the Integrated School in a last-ditch effort just to give instructional modules to their 236 Aeta pupils. To go to school at the base of Mt. Pinatubo, some teachers must travel for at least eight hours. Another challenge they experience is guiding the illiterate parents who are unable to help their children study at home. [6]

Moreover, even the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet occurred, it is already a problem for the DepEd to produce teachers most especially in remote areas. On the article released by The Manila Times (2013), one of the schools in Bataan had only three (3) teachers to cater to the 132 students present, most of them are Aetas. Since then, the Department of Education has acknowledged that a shortage of teachers and classrooms continues to be a problem. The government employed 61,000 teachers to fill the void, but more are required due to the increasing number of students enrolled in public schools. As for the report of the Department of Education, 21,724,454 students have enrolled in public and private schools around the country for the 2020-2021 school year. [7]

This study is beneficial as it aimed to unravel the experiences and practices of elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community. As quoted by Stander (2020), to better understand how to help educators, children, and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone should to hear directly from them about their fears, the problems they face, and how they believe these issues can be resolved. Only through such conversations and consultation you will learn about the true needs of everyone [8]. Furthermore, although there have been a few studies on the topic, no one has focused on the experiences and practices of elementary teachers specifically in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community. For this reason, the researchers conducted this study in order to raise consciousness among educational administrators about the overlooked efforts and behaviors of teachers in the tribal community, as well as to provide information on the problems they encountered when teaching in the tribal community during the pandemic.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study aimed to unravel the experiences and practices of elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community.
Specifically, it sought to answer the following:
1. What are the practices of elementary teachers in engaging education in the Aeta tribal community?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the elementary teachers in engaging education in the Aeta tribal community?
3. How do elementary teachers manage these challenges they had encountered in engaging education in the Aeta tribal community?
4. What are the educational implications can be drawn from the findings of the study?

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), the term qualitative suggests an emphasis on the characteristics of entities as well as processes and meanings that are not scientifically studied or evaluated in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. [9]

Phenomenology, as defined by Hopkins (2005), is a philosophy of experience and the ultimate source of all meaning and value of human lived experience [10]. This study is classified as descriptive phenomenological research. According to Sloan and Bowe (2014), the descriptive phenomenology aimed to discover the lived life world or human experience. As the researchers wish to explore the practices and experiences of elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community, this approach would be appropriate for gathering the necessary data to comprehend context based on the individual experiences of elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community. [11]

3.2 Sampling Technique

This research study used a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, as defined by Sharma (2017), is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, reflects a group of sampling techniques that rely on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units that are to be studied. [12]

In line with the criteria, the researchers selected the participants who are teachers under the second District of Pampanga. Another criterion was used in choosing the participants was that the teacher must be an elementary teacher who provides education in an Aeta tribal community and must have at least three (3) years of teaching experience.

3.3 Participants of the Study

The participants in this study were elementary teachers who engage education to the Aeta tribal community in the second District of Pampanga. A sample of seven (7) participants were utilized in the study because the saturation of responses of the participants was reached. Moreover, according to Saunders et al (2017), saturation of responses seem to follow a narrower, more individual-oriented viewpoint on data saturation, whereby saturation operates not at the level of the dataset as a whole, but in relation to the data generated by a single participant; i.e., it is accomplished at a specific point within an interview. [13]

3.4 Setting of the Study

The study was conducted at the second District of Pampanga, Philippines. The researchers decided to carry out this study specifically to this area to unravel the experiences and practices of elementary teachers who engage education to the Aeta Tribal Community.

3.5 Research Instrument

The researchers used a semi-structured interview questionnaire to gather pertinent data. The interview guide was validated by a group of experts in the area of study. The participants are expected to answer a series of questions from the interview guide.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The researchers asked permission respectfully from the participants for their participation in the study. The participants signed the data privacy letter to affirm their consent to use their data in the study. Their privacy was specifically protected in the interests of protection and security. All information collected was treated confidential and were used in the research purposes only, wherein codes were utilized to identify each participant as a substitute to their name for the anonymity, in order to secure their privacy.

3.7 Data Collection

The researchers interviewed the elementary teachers who engage education in the Aeta tribal community in the second District of Pampanga. The researchers sought the permission of the dean of the College of Education in conducting the study. The letter of request was sent to the principal of the school where the participants are teaching, in order for the researchers to conduct the study at their school. Following the consent from the authorities, the researchers requested permission from the participants provided the data privacy letter to affirm their consent to use their data in the study.

However, in response to the current situation, such procedures (wearing face mask, face shield, and social distancing) were strictly observed to ensure everyone's safety during the interview.

3.8 Data Analysis

The researchers used Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method to analyze the data gathered. Colaizzi's (1978) data process of analyzing qualitative research data is commonly used in medicine and the social sciences, to identify relevant information and organize it into categories or themes. In addition, according to Morrow (2015), descriptive phenomenological approaches seek to properly characterize the experiences being lived through, and once the information is gathered. Moreover, the goal of the phenomenological method is to extract the realistic view of the phenomenon under inquiry.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to unravel the experiences and practices of elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community. Utilizing the phenomenological approach, the researchers were able to explore and identify on how teachers engage the education to the Aeta tribal community. A variety of experiences and practices were provided in this study in order for the readers to understand the phenomenon encountered by the participants.

The findings of the study were obtained from seven (7) selected elementary teachers who teach from the Aeta tribal community school. The participants of the study were coded to P1 to P7 which stands for participants and corresponding number to tell what participants number they are.

Analyzing the data using the Colaizzi's phenomenological analysis yielded three (3) interrelated themes. The overarching themes revealed the experiences and practices of the general education teachers based on what practices they do in engaging the education to the Aeta tribal community, the challenges and lastly how they manage the challenges they had encountered in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community.

4.1 Practices of Elementary Teachers in Engaging Education to the Aeta Tribal Community

In this theme, the study identified the practices of elementary teachers in engaging education in the Aeta tribal community. Through the different practices listed below, teachers in the Aeta tribal community were able to engage their Aeta pupils in the education amidst the challenges they were facing. Their adaptability to cope in a situation made the education possible even for the upland pupils.

4.1.1 Presenting a Simplified Self-Learning Modules for Aeta Pupils

Based on the obtained answer from the participants, just like the other school they adopted the new trend in the

education which is the distance learning through self-learning modules. Teachers from this school used the modular learning from the DepEd not until they found it to be ineffective for their Aeta pupils. In the middle of academic year, teachers from this school started modifying the self-learning modules of the Aeta pupils into two facets.

4.1.1.1 Indigenized Modules for the Aeta Pupils

The participants clearly stated that the usage of indigenized self-learning modules that would be provided to their Aeta pupils was now their primary method of engaging the Aeta pupils in the education.

*"So, we the elementary teachers engage the Aeta learner through translating and indigenizing the module. So that's it, creating the PAMITUTU. That." – P1

"You should indigenize the lessons for them to understand. When you do indigenization it means you need to localize your lessons. Those things you can see up here are the things you need to use in your lesson. So it is easy for them to understand the lesson." – P3

"We adopted the PAMITUTU which is we localized and contextualized those modules from the Division of Pampanga to indigenized and to make it easier for the students to answer." – P4

"We're localizing it and indigenizing the modules that was written in katutubo language. Their activities every subject -- because modules came from the DepEd are too longer and it is difficult for students to answer it." – P5

"So we make our own modules, we indigenized and localized and even contextualized the SLM's from the division office. We are simplifying them on the easiest way for them to understand the modules" – P6

"As an up-land teacher I always make sure that my lesson always easy to them for easily catch up the topic. And I always indigenized my lesson …it's just like they are in the community or in the surroundings so that they may not struggle in they're lesson." – P7

Laylo (2018) stated that, the usage of localized elements in instructional material (IM) boosts the IM developer's inventiveness while lowering the IM's cost. Using contextualized and indigenized IM, on the other hand, will help students grasp the subject being taught, especially if the students are unfamiliar with specific terminology. [14]

4.1.1.2 Condensed Lessons and Activity

The lessons and activity in the modular learning that the students received were shortened and made easier. It has been condensed into the smallest form possible in order for the Aeta students to complete answering it so quickly.

*"The modules that we created is much easier, we lessen the pages so that it will be easy for the children to answer it." – P3

"Our principal instructs us to example if the module has fifteen (15) pages, we will make it two (2) pages only to lessen the pages that the students will answer and that is the first adjustment." – P4

"We are just contracting modules. If what they will understand – the easiest one for them, is what was created. Then we are just condensing the activity from the module that was came from the DepEd so that they will understand." – TTA5

"Yes! We simplify them on the easiest way for them to understand the modules." – P6

*"What we do is that we compressed the main topic on the lesson that was there. That's where we focus so that the Aeta learners would easily understand it." – P7

Teachers from the Aeta tribal community have done that so the Aeta pupils will be encouraged to finish their module quickly. That is one way for the teacher to motivate their pupils to study despite of the problems that everyone is facing in the current situation.

4.1.2 Preparation for the Distribution of modules

The participants also have mentioned that they give so much time and effort in preparing the learning materials or the modules of their Aeta pupils. They make sure that all the materials and modules are ready for distribution. Aeta parents need someone who will entertain their queries about the modules, for the retrieval, and for taking another set of modules.

"It's the PAMITUTU. The printing, sorting, creating, then the distribution and retrieval of modules."– P1

*"What we do is when we are printing modules we make sure that all modules are ready before the day of distributing it for example when they come here and the modules are not ready, they just wasted their time so as a teacher we need to be prepared on the modules that they will be getting." – P2

*"Every Monday we are distributing and retrieving the modules and it's okay because the Aeta parents are following their schedule in getting and passing of modules…" – P4

*"Now we are doing every morning before they will come here in school, we will arrange everything like the modules that we will distribute. Of course we have to explain to them the things they need to accomplish in Week 1 of Quarter 4." – P5

*"Ah first of course the preparation for the modules. So that is one of our preparation that we were doing. After that in end we will assess child if she/he have learned." – P7

They called their module Pinasimpleng Aralin para sa Mag-indi na TUTUlong sa pag-abot ng pangarap (PAMITUTU). It took a lot of time to finish one module of the child that consist of all the subjects because they are not only contextualizing and localizing the modules to make it

indigenize but they are also contracting the lessons and activity of each subject just to provide a comprehensive self-learning modules.

4.1.3 Regular Home Visitation of the Elementary Teachers to their students

To ensure that their pupils is doing well, the participants also do regular home visitation to visit their students and do the "Learning Kamustahan". The uniqueness of this practice from the other schools help them a lot even though some of the houses that they are visiting are so far from the school and sometimes it took 3 hours of walking and traveling in the houses of the Aeta pupils.

*"*The home visitation. It should only be face to face. Example in the *dangas* that is two to three hours of walking. It's just like there is no other way to reach them out. It's only be home visitation. That is the challenge here, they do not have cellphone." – P1

*"*We do home visitation." – P2

*"*Those practices, number one is the – we do the *"Learning Kamustahan"* or what we call home visitation. The pupils are not allowed to enter the school." – P3

*"*The home visitation wherein not only the parents that we are communicating, but also the students to have follow up. Then every Thursday I do home visitation for those who are not getting their modules."– P4

*"*The home visitation only, and when they, went here to get and bring back the modules. Because there is no other way to communicate with them." – P5

*"*We are visiting the pupils at home, especially who are lagging behind and do the necessary interventions." – P6

*"*We always go to their home, we call that home visitation. My purpose is to deliver and give their module, because of some reasons they are not able to get their other modules." – P7

According to Callahan (2018), one of the most important parts of home visits is that it provide the teachers an insight into the lives of the children they teach. They provide insight into each family's problems, what they lack, and what they consider to be the most challenging obstacles in their life. When the teachers witness these terrible realities for themselves, they are better prepared to give the specific assistance that each child in the program need. [15]

4.1.4 Giving Extra Activities for the Left-behind Aeta Pupils

Furthermore, teachers are giving extra activities or differentiated activities for those students who are left behind for some reasons. For them to cope up with their lessons and for them to truly understand and acquire learning.

*"*Then making of differentiated activities for those pupils who are left behind, …we are also providing the extra activities or extra modules for those students who are quite left behind, …for the students to understand their lessons very well." – P3

*"*We are making remedial… lesson remedial practices, so that no one would left behind" – P7

Giving them extra activities is their way of helping a child to cope up properly with the lessons. They do not also want them to be left behind to their classmates.

Fanous (2004), said that students learn through participating in the acquisition of knowledge by acquiring information, processing it through problem solving, and expressing what they have learned. Each activity allows students to enhance their learning by applying ideas and expressing new information. [16]

4.1.5 Giving Rewards for the Completion in Answering the Modules

Teachers used the benefits of completing and submitting the modular learning on a weekly basis to engage the Aeta students in the education. The small amount of assistance they got, such as food, have motivated them to complete the modules so that they may return it and obtain another set for the next coming week.

*"*Before we have a feeding program provided by DepEd. Then now, there's also a gift giving like groceries from local government. We are doing that to motivate them." – P1

*"*They not regularly taking the modules of their children. So, when we give relief goods, they will come automatically ma'am? So, that is our motivation for them to take the modules. They were motivated to get the modules" – P3

The teachers at this school continued to motivate the Aeta pupils by reminding them that if they finished answering the modules and returned them, they would receive their rewards or relief supplies. And if they do a good job, they will be rewarded with extra items.

4.1.6 Attending Indigenous People's Education Seminar and Training

The participants have mentioned also that they are attending IPEd seminars and training so that they will they will become familiarized and fluent on the language of the Aeta pupils which is the "Ayta mag-indi". They were being oriented on the things that they needed to do to provide the education for the Aeta pupils especially those who are newly hired in the school.

*"*We are doing seminar… we are having a training for their language. There's already a seminar for teachers" – P5

"We attend IPED seminars, where we are being oriented especially the newly hired teachers. We study and practice speaking their dialect (Ayta-Mag-indi)" – P6

Morgan (2008) stated that for the teachers to understand their pupils when they talked and for them to execute the

lessons well they must seminars and training. Attending a seminar offers various advantages, such as developing communication skills, obtaining expert information, networking with others, and renewing motivation and confidence. [17]

4.1.7 Securing the school and following the health protocols

In response to the currents situation, the participants have made an emphasis in following the health protocol in order to protect themselves from the virus. They have prepared thermal scanners and alcohol for those Aeta parents and other people who will visit their school for the safety of everyone. Additionally, they covered the windows with plastic. It is also stated further down that they are adhering to the health regimen so that the Aeta community must adhere to.

*"*First we are securing the school to follow the health protocols so as you can see in the windows we have plastic covers the we have the entrance and exits then, we have the thermal scanner and alcohol for them when they enter and." – P4

*"*Of course, the teacher should be a good example wherein you follow the protocols like wearing a facemask… but sometimes we tell them to do a social distancing and to follow the protocol." – P5

*"*Then especially the number one is protocol, but it is difficult to do because we have to repeat again and again." – P7

This was done in response to the World Health Organization (WHO) protocols who brought out several steps and regulations that should be examined and implemented to avoid the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in schools and the community. Some of the following safety protocol are; Hygiene and daily practices at the school and classroom level, Physical distancing inside and outside classrooms, and Wearing safety protective measure (Face mask and Face shield). [18]

4.2 Challenges Encountered by the Elementary Teachers

In this theme were identified the challenges encountered by Aeta elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta Tribal Community. The ever changing world putted a lot of challenges to the teachers and the also the currents issue that the world were facing had brought too much difficulties to every teachers.

Teachers encounter challenges in the present standard education system. These issues include educating the students, where it is difficult for instructors to reach out to all of the students at home, even when the teachers use various modes of communication. . Because the learners are at home while learning the lessons, it is difficult for them to enhance their abilities. Not all parents have the willingness or skill to help their children with their education. Some parents are

unable to grasp the handwritten details provided on the modules (Canonizado, 2020). [19]

4.2.1 Parents are illiterate in Providing Knowledge and Guidance to their Children

As per the responses from the participants, one of the challenges encountered by the Aeta elementary teachers is parents are not totally literate to provide knowledge and guidance to their children in accomplishment of modules since some of them are not graduated and unable to finish their studies.

"So, the challenges are some of the parents don't get the module because of they did not understand – those illiterate parents. You must find solution for that." – P1

*"*The most difficult is that they don't know how to answer the modules because they are illiterate (parents)… they are both illiterate." – P3

*"*First, of course, the parents – most of them are not able to help their child in answering their modules. They are only up to grade 1 but they can able to read and write but some children answer their modules on their own. Those are children who are literate and intelligent." – P5

On the current year, education still remains out of reach for thousands of Aeta children, posing a severe barrier to attaining sustainable development goals. On the other hand, the elementary teachers in the Aeta Tribal Community continuously provide the Aeta pupils the education they deserve despite of the challenges they have encountered.

According to the report of Aeta Tribe Foundation (2017), many Aeta elders are illiterate because elementary schools are two to three hours away, are inaccessible by road, and lack power. As a result, Aeta children become uninspired and ignorant. They spend much of their time looking for food and, more critically, water. [20]

4.2.2 Prioritizing Livelihood over the Modules

Teacher's also encountered challenges to parents who are not prioritizing the modules of their children due to livelihood is their first priority. Moreover, it is better for Aeta parents to plant and work rather than taking the modules of their children.

*"*They will prioritize planting, working rather than getting the module." – P1

*"*When we asked why you didn't take your modules? "ay ma'am mananam ke pu" and when they tell us that, you cannot do anything."– P3

"Our main challenge is that almost of the parents are working in their lot when they are going in their farm. If they will not work they cannot provide food so it seems that getting modules here is becoming less of a priority, their first priority is to find their food." – P4

Espiritu (2017), stated that the Aeta children help their parents in farming, harvesting or whatever livelihood activity they are involved in as soon as they are able to do it. Members of the household collaborate in harvesting, cleaning, sorting, and transporting items to the market after harvesting. [21]

4.2.3. Early Marriage as the Culture of Aeta Pupils

The participants also have mentioned that one of the challenges that they are facing in engaging the education to the Aeta pupils is when their culture on early marriage is prevailing. Teachers has nothing to do but let their pupils because it was their culture.

*"*The challenges that we encountered here is their early marriage. If the parents want their children to get married, they can't do anything next." – P2

"I think it's their culture (Early Marriage), which is the most difficult challenge that we've experienced because they preserve and follow strictly their culture."— P5

"Early marriage those are in grade 5 grade 6 they are getting marriage. So of course we can't do nothing because that is one of their tradition. It so hard because you cannot pull the child going back to school if the parents of the child they don't want." – P7

In the Philippines, the Aeta indigenous people followed monogamy as one of the norm in Aetas society, but on the other hand, a man is permitted to have more than one wife provided he can amass enough "bandi," or bride money. This bridal payment may contain arrows, bows, bolos or big knives, fabric, and money. The wedding date can only be set if the bride's family has paid the bride price. Herrera (2000). [22]

4.3 Managing the Challenges that Elementary Teachers had encountered

In this theme, the participants discussed their strategies on overcoming various obstacles that they experienced in engaging education to the Aeta Tribal Community. To overcome the difficulties, teachers' performance must be improved, as well as training activities, and assistance for educational growth and implementation of digital classes to enhance the efficacy of distance education (Kebritchi, et al., 2017). [23]

4.3.1. Regular Monitoring through Home Visitation

Based on the narration of the participants, the teachers from the Aeta tribal community manage their challenges that they have encountered by monitoring the education of the Aeta pupils through regular home visitation and give their best so that no student in the Aeta tribal community will left behind.

"The home visitation. In this kind of pandemic there is no way but to make a face to face interview. About their learning" – P1

"It's the regular home visitation. For you to see how the child is, if he is the one who really answers things (modules), if he's left behind, like those things. If he really left behind, you can give him extra activities." – P3

"Home visitation. Through that we can help them. Maybe they have learned something and no one is left behind." – P7

Positive interaction and communication with families can be established through home visits. They are not a replacement for parent-teacher conferences, but rather a procedure in which instructors show their support for students' families by visiting the house or another venue where the family feels at ease (Graff, 2017). [24]

4.3.2. Understanding the Situation and Utilizing a Proper Guidance

Teachers are also have mentioned that in order to continue the education of their learners they are just continue accepting their pupils and understanding their situation. Their proper guidance to make them graduate until high school were continued to be utilized as long as it's not the child is the one who give up.

"Sometimes even they are married as long as they want to study, we are accepting them in school and give them chance to continue their studies." – P2

"The parents will visit you rarely, but of course you cannot report that just like that. That's why the only thing we do is patience… patience by pleasing them to answer and return the modules." – P5

"We still accept our pupils with numerous absences, since it is in their culture to help in their living. We expect our pupils to be absent and it is in the IPEd policy. Here in Nabuclod or in IP's schools they are allowed even hmm 3 months or more." – P6

It is possible to act as though you comprehend other people's sentiments and, more specifically their concerns. But understanding people does not imply agreeing with their emotions or points of view. Instead, it implies you understand their point of view and accept that it differs from yours. Skillsyouneed.com (2011-2021). [25]

4.3.3. Asking Assistance to the Educated Leaders in the Community

To manage their challenges that they are facing in engaging education to the Aeta pupils, teachers also seek a help to the different leaders who are literate in the community. They found it as a big help since they were not be on the side of their pupils for every day.

"We communicated to the Brgy. Captain, Brgy. Council and other leaders in the community to help the pupils per sittio. We also have the high school students like their older sister or brother to help their elementary siblings. Another are the 4P's because they are also somehow… and so they help them. Another are the Kapgu, those are equivalent to an army

here. These are the one who are after to the NPA. Example, in one specific place like the sittio centro, they are the one who is helping the one elementary grade and from another place is another grade again." – P1

"One way that considered is to have a volunteer. Like for example the 4P's leaders, the barangay officials and then the higher grades to help their relatives to answer their modules. That is our way to help them to answer their modules." – P7

MacPhail et al. (2019), stated that the best way for prospective teachers was to connect with peers who can truly assist them with their development. They appeared to favor a more informal manner of communicating among peers when necessary and relevant. [26]

Religion, inter-marriages and early marriages are just some examples of Aetas traditional culture that Aetas have exhibited considerable resistance to change, particularly in their culture.

5. Synthesis of Interpretation

Teachers play a vital role in molding the children's way of learning. They motivate pupils to excel in their studies and to strive to become a better person in the future. Teachers are the living proof reasons why teaching is being called the noblest profession among all. This study revealed the elementary teachers' current experiences and practices in engaging education to the Aeta pupils. The teachers manifested untiring perseverance in teaching as they are putting so much time and effort in engaging and providing great quality education to the Aeta pupils.

In the theory of self-worth, the recognition of one's worth often comes to depend in the ability to perform competitively. While the efforts that an individual puts in is the safeguard of self-worth that may result in feelings of worthlessness and incapability if one fails (Covington, 1998). [27]

The said theory was used to show the teachers' worth towards excellence in education. Following the given framework presented by Covington, the practices of elementary teachers represent their abilities to interact and engage them in education, while coping strategies on the challenges represent the target perceived efforts of the elementary teachers.

On the other hand, through the collective effort of the teachers, the students were able to have a decent way of learning. Coping amidst the pandemic is not easy to conquer. But these teachers, their coping strategies have met and exceeded the duty of a regular classroom teacher in the midst of pandemic. Their efforts to surpass their challenges for their duty as a teacher can be consider as another milestone for the teachers in the upland remote area. Their unconditional love, care, efforts, and sacrifices are all shown trough their passion in their profession. Through the identified coping strategies (efforts), they accomplished their task of being a teacher and display the real role model teachers for the future generation. Every teacher has a unique attempt to engage pupils in their

studies. However, in the Aeta Tribal Community, there are teachers that do so much effort in engaging their pupils in the education. It is well known that being assigned to and teaching in a distant area is quite difficult. But for the teachers from the school in the Aeta tribal community, everything is possible if they are putting efforts and dedication to their work. The way they handle and scaffold their pupils have made a significant impact on the Aeta pupils. Their commitment indicates how much they care about the students, how much they like teaching, and how much they want Aetas to succeed in school. Despite the unfamiliarity to the Aeta language and culture, the teachers were still able to come up in an innovative solution to the problems they have encountered. Teachers at this school are willing to do anything in order to achieve a positive outcome that will assist the need of every pupils in the school. Sacrificing their time and exerting effort isn't new to them. Kilometers, height, rivers, and weathers have never been a hindrance for them to show their passion in teaching and how equipped and competent they are to handle such difficult situation. Particularly, not even the pandemic.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations
6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to unravel the experiences and practices of elementary teachers in engaging education to the Aeta tribal community. Specifically, the aims are to identify the: (1) practices of elementary teachers in engaging education in the Aeta tribal community; (2) challenges encountered by the elementary teachers in engaging education in the Aeta tribal community; (3) way of elementary teachers manage these challenges they had encountered in engaging education in the Aeta tribal community; and (4) educational implication that can be drawn from the findings of the study. The methodology used in this research was Descriptive Qualitative Design, and the data were analyzed using the steps in Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Method.

As stated in the findings of the study, elementary school teachers who are engaging the education in the Aeta tribal community were unbreakable. They manifested untiring perseverance in teaching as they put their 100 percent time and effort in school by engaging and providing great quality education to the Aeta pupils. Their efforts are limitless, if it is possible to do, they will do it to bring the education that all Aeta pupils deserve. Teachers in the Aeta tribal community are so dedicated to their job wherein they give so much effort in imparting knowledge to their pupils. Besides, nothing can stop them in bringing high-quality education to the Aeta Tribal Community. Inspite of the challenges, Aeta elementary school teachers have remained resilient and motivated to work on their profession for the sake of their pupil's future and they proved that they can overcome everything and they are willing to embrace all the challenges they might face in coming times ahead.

6.2 Recommendations

To conquer the challenges in view of the experiences and practices of the elementary teachers in the Aeta Tribal Community, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Orientation Program for Aeta parents. Conducting orientation program for the Aeta parents may help to instruct and educate them with regards to their responsibility as a parent in guiding and helping their children in terms of learning.

2. Seminars for the Aeta Elementary teachers. Providing supplementary seminars for the elementary teachers in the Aeta Tribal Community is also recommended, as it helps Aeta elementary teachers to discover and learn new strategies on how to teach the Aeta pupils despite the pandemic.

3. Awareness campaign for all Aetas. Introducing awareness campaign for all the Aeta Tribal Community is recommend by the researchers. In this manner, it will enlighten the minds of Aeta people regarding to early marriage issues. Moreover, through this campaign it may influence and educate the youth to prevent this kind of matter that may affect in their education.

4. Additional support for the implementation of IPED (Indigenous People Education). Providing additional support from the local government in the implementation of the IPED program may benefit to enhance the project that is being implement to give the rights of the Aeta pupils in providing quality education in accordance to their culture and tradition.

5. Provide extra teachers in the Aeta Tribal Community. The Department of Education is encouraged to provide extra teachers in the Aeta Tribal Community aiming to lessen the workloads of every teachers as well as the challenges they are encountering in engaging education to Aeta pupils. Moreover, having more teachers especially in the Aeta Tribal Community may enable to achieve education for all.

6. Allocate budget for the Aeta Tribal Community. Collaboration among local government and education institutions to allocate budget for the Aeta tribal community to exert continuous support for the feeding programs or relief goods distribution to decrease the absenteeism of Aeta pupils due to parents' prioritizing their livelihood.

7. Execute more in-depth investigation. For a better study, future researchers may do a more in-depth investigation of this research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that teachers face and how they manage those challenges in the Aeta tribal community.

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