

# Supportive Behavior of School Heads and Teachers' Pedagogical Adaptions Within Indigenous Education in Tboli East District, South Cotabato

Arceli B. Solatorio; Remigilda Gallardo

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to determine the influence of supportive behavior of school heads on teachers' pedagogical adaptations within Indigenous communities in Tboli East District, South Cotabato. A quantitative non-experimental design using a descriptive-correlation approach was adopted, with 121 elementary teachers selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a modified and pilot-tested survey questionnaire to ensure reliability and internal consistency. Results showed that school heads' supportive behavior was generally rated as moderately extensive, with open communication being the most evident and professional development and emotional support rated lower. Teachers' pedagogical adaptations were found to be extensive overall, especially in adapting assessment methods, while the use of Indigenous languages was only moderately extensive. A moderate and significant positive correlation was found between overall supportive behavior and teachers' pedagogical adaptations, confirming that leadership practices influence culturally responsive teaching. Among the domains, professional development opportunities had the strongest influence, followed by emotional support and open communication. Recognition and encouragement did not show a significant effect, suggesting that symbolic support is insufficient to drive instructional change. The regression model demonstrated that leadership support significantly contributes to teachers' capacity to implement culturally grounded education in Indigenous settings.

**Keywords:** *Supportive Behavior, Pedagogical Adaptions, Indigenous Communities, Professional Development, Leadership Support.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In rural indigenous communities, a lack of culturally responsive teaching and inadequate teacher training led to low student engagement and poor academic outcomes. This highlighted the need to explore how school heads' supportive behavior influenced improvements in teachers' pedagogical practices for indigenous learners.

Across various regions—including the United Kingdom, Africa, Malaysia, Luzon, Mindanao, and the T'boli East District—teachers consistently faced challenges in adapting their pedagogical approaches to Indigenous cultural contexts. Common issues included a lack of training in culturally responsive teaching, insufficient resources, and disconnects between the curriculum and Indigenous students' lived experiences. These shortcomings often led to student disengagement, poor academic performance, and a sense of cultural alienation. Systemic problems such as inadequate funding and weak policy support further

compounded these challenges, resulting in persistent educational disparities and unmet cultural needs among Indigenous learners.

There was a significant research gap in understanding how school heads' supportive behavior influenced teachers' pedagogical adaptations in indigenous communities, particularly in the Tboli East District, South Cotabato. While existing studies had highlighted the importance of culturally responsive teaching and leadership support, they rarely linked these elements within the local Tboli context. This study addressed the urgency of instructional mismatches and resource limitations by examining how supportive leadership enhanced teaching effectiveness, ultimately guiding policy and professional development tailored to the cultural needs of Tboli learners.

The literature emphasized the vital role of school heads' supportive behavior in enhancing teaching effectiveness, especially in indigenous communities.

Supportive leadership—through resources, encouragement, and guidance—helped teachers confidently adapt methods and integrate indigenous knowledge. This fostered autonomy and respect, sustaining culturally relevant teaching. However, past studies often lacked depth in exploring this dynamic within indigenous settings. Given the need for culturally sensitive education, further investigation into how school heads' support influenced teachers' adaptations addressed a critical gap and informed policies and leadership training to improve indigenous education outcomes.

This study was guided by three theories: Transformational Leadership Theory, Path-Goal Theory, and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory. Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978) explains how leaders inspire and support teachers to implement culturally responsive practices. Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971) highlights how leaders help teachers reach their goals by providing support, direction, and resources, especially important when addressing the needs of indigenous learners.

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987) offers a sociocultural lens to examine how community norms, tools, and expectations shape leadership and teaching practices. It helped the study explore how school heads' supportive behavior interacts with indigenous cultural contexts to influence pedagogical adaptations.

The study focused on two variables: the independent variable—supportive behavior of school heads—measured through open communication, recognition, professional development, and emotional support; and the dependent variable—teachers' pedagogical adaptations—measured through the integration of indigenous knowledge, use of local languages, adapted assessments, and flexible learning environments.

The objective of the current study was to examine the influence of supportive behavior of school heads on teachers' pedagogical adaptations within indigenous communities in Tboli East District, South Cotabato. Hence, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- *What is the Extent of Supportive Behavior of School Heads in Terms of:*
  - open communication;
  - recognition and encouragement;
  - professional development opportunities; and
  - emotional support?
- *What is the Extent of Teachers' Pedagogical Adaptations Within Indigenous Communities in Terms of:*
  - inclusion of indigenous knowledge and practices;
  - use of indigenous languages in instruction;
  - adaptation of assessment methods; and
  - flexible learning environments?

- *Is there a Significant Relationship Between Supportive Behavior of School Heads and Teachers' Pedagogical Adaptations Within Indigenous Communities?*
- *Which Domains of Supportive Behavior of School Heads Significantly Influence the Teachers' Pedagogical Adaptations Within Indigenous Communities?*

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between supportive behavior of school heads and teachers' pedagogical adaptations within indigenous communities.
- H<sub>02</sub>: None of the domains of supportive behavior of school heads significantly influence the teachers' pedagogical adaptations within indigenous communities.

## II. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the relationship between school heads' supportive behavior and teachers' pedagogical adaptations in indigenous communities. Quantitative methods allowed for objective measurement and analysis of variables, enabling the researcher to assess correlations and generalize findings to a broader population. Descriptive research provided a clear picture of current teaching practices and leadership behaviors without examining causes, while the correlational approach examined the natural relationship between the two variables without manipulation.

The study involved 121 elementary teachers from the Tboli East District in South Cotabato, selected from a total population of 172 using Slovin's Formula with a 0.05 margin of error. Respondents were chosen based on the inclusion criterion of having at least two years of experience teaching indigenous students, ensuring they had relevant insights into pedagogical adaptations. A simple random sampling technique was employed, giving each eligible teacher an equal chance of selection. This approach minimized bias, enhanced the reliability and validity of the data, and ensured the findings were representative and applicable to the broader teaching population in the district.

The researcher used a validated and revised survey questionnaire adapted to fit the study. The first part measured the supportive behavior of school heads across four domains: open communication, recognition and encouragement, professional development, and emotional support. Responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale and interpreted through predefined mean ranges. This section had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.881, indicating good reliability.

The second part assessed teachers' pedagogical adaptations in indigenous communities, focusing on the integration of indigenous knowledge, use of indigenous languages, adapted assessments, and flexible learning environments. Also using a 5-point Likert scale, this section

showed excellent reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.943.

The data gathering followed a systematic process to ensure accuracy and reliability. The researcher obtained an endorsement from the Graduate School Dean and ethical clearance, then secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and coordinated with school principals in Tboli East District. Respondents—elementary teachers with at least two years of experience—were selected based on set criteria. After a pilot test, questionnaires were distributed either face-to-face or online, allowing flexibility. Completed surveys were organized in Excel, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends and inferential tests, including Pearson correlation and regression, to assess the relationship between school heads' supportive behavior and teachers' pedagogical adaptations.

The researcher used three statistical tools to analyze the data. Weighted mean was employed to assess the extent of supportive behavior of school heads and teachers' pedagogical adaptations, addressing SOP 1 and 2. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables, answering SOP 3. Lastly, regression analysis was applied to evaluate how well supportive behavior of school heads could predict changes in teachers' pedagogical adaptations within indigenous communities, providing insights for SOP 4.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The overall supportive behavior of school heads in Tboli East District, South Cotabato was rated as moderately extensive, with a mean of 3.30, indicating that supportive practices are occasionally observed but not consistent across all areas. Among the domains, open communication ranked highest (3.44 or extensive), suggesting that school heads frequently share information and seek feedback, fostering collaboration. However, professional development opportunities received the lowest rating (3.19), showing a lack of consistent training initiatives. This highlights the need for school heads to enhance support, particularly in professional growth, to improve teacher performance and school outcomes.

Teachers' pedagogical adaptations within Indigenous communities in Tboli East District, South Cotabato were rated as extensive, with an overall mean of 3.50, indicating that culturally responsive practices are oftentimes demonstrated. The highest rating was in the adaptation of assessment methods (3.77), showing strong efforts to align evaluations with Indigenous values and competencies. However, flexible learning environments received the lowest mean (3.34), suggesting a need for improvement in creating culturally aligned classroom settings.

The analysis revealed a moderate and statistically significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.432$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) between the overall supportive behavior of school heads and teachers' pedagogical adaptations in Indigenous communities within Tboli East District, South Cotabato, indicating that increased support from school leaders is associated with more frequent and meaningful teaching adjustments. Significant positive relationships were also found in the domains of open communication, professional development opportunities, and emotional support, highlighting their importance in promoting culturally responsive teaching. However, recognition and encouragement showed no significant correlation ( $r = 0.058$ ,  $p = 0.526$ ), suggesting it has less influence on pedagogical adaptation.

The regression analysis showed that school heads' supportive behaviors—specifically open communication, professional development opportunities, and emotional support—had significant positive effects on teachers' pedagogical adaptations in Indigenous communities in Tboli East District. Among these, professional development had the strongest influence, followed by emotional support and open communication, highlighting the importance of capacity-building, empathy, and clear dialogue in fostering culturally responsive teaching. However, recognition and encouragement did not significantly affect instructional adaptations. The overall model explained 25% of the variance in pedagogical adaptations, suggesting other factors also contribute. These findings align with key leadership theories—Transformational Leadership, Path-Goal Theory, and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory—emphasizing the critical role of supportive, context-sensitive leadership in shaping effective teaching in Indigenous education.

For the findings of this study in Tboli East District, South Cotabato, the extent of supportive behavior among school heads was rated as moderately extensive, with open communication being the most evident aspect, while professional development and emotional support were less emphasized, indicating the need for stronger leadership initiatives. Meanwhile, teachers' pedagogical adaptations within Indigenous communities were rated as extensive overall, showing strong efforts to integrate culturally responsive strategies. The highest rating was in adapting assessment methods to align with Indigenous knowledge, while the use of Indigenous languages in instruction was only moderately extensive, highlighting an area for further improvement in fully contextualizing education.

The study found a moderate and significant positive relationship between school heads' supportive behavior and teachers' pedagogical adaptations in Indigenous communities. Professional development, emotional support, and open communication were key factors, while recognition and encouragement had no significant impact. Regression analysis confirmed that leadership support, especially through training and emotional care, plays a crucial role in helping teachers implement culturally responsive teaching practices.

The study found that school heads in Tboli East District provided moderately extensive support, with open communication being the strongest area, while emotional support and professional development need improvement. Teachers showed extensive use of culturally responsive teaching, especially in adapting assessment methods, though use of Indigenous languages remained moderate. A significant positive relationship was found between leadership support and teacher adaptations, particularly in professional development, emotional support, and communication. Regression analysis confirmed these domains as key influences, supporting leadership theories

that emphasize the role of supportive, culturally aware leadership in promoting effective teaching.

The study recommended enhancing school heads' training in emotional support and professional development, increasing teachers' use of Indigenous languages through targeted workshops, and improving recognition practices with meaningful incentives. It also suggested that future research explore why recognition showed no significant impact on teaching adaptations to better inform leadership strategies in Indigenous education.

Table 1 Summary on Supportive Behavior of School Heads in Tboli East District, South Cotabato

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Open Communication	3.44	Extensive
Recognition and Encouragement	3.38	Moderately Extensive
Professional Development Opportunities	3.19	Moderately Extensive
Emotional Support	3.20	Moderately Extensive
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>Moderately Extensive</b>

**Legend:** *Very Extensive*= Always Evident; *Extensive*= Oftentimes Evident; *Moderately Extensive*= Sometimes Evident; *Less Extensive*= Seldom Evident; & *Not Extensive*= Never Evident

Table 2 Summary on Teacher's Pedagogical Adaptions Within Indigenous Communities in Tboli East District, South Cotabato

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge and Practices	3.50	Extensive
Use of Indigenous Languages in Instruction	3.39	Moderately Extensive
Adaptation of Assessment Methods	3.77	Extensive
Flexible Learning Environments	3.34	Moderately Extensive
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

**Legend:** *Very Extensive*= Always Manifested; *Extensive*= Oftentimes Manifested; *Moderately Extensive*= Sometimes Manifested; *Less Extensive*= Seldom Manifested; & *Not Extensive*= Never Manifested

Table 3 Relationship Between Supportive Behavior of School Heads and Teacher's Pedagogical Adaptations Within Indigenous Communities in Tboli East District, South Cotabato

Domains of Supportive Behavior of School Heads	Teachers' Pedagogical Adaptations within Indigenous Communities		
	r-value	p-value	Decision
Open Communication	0.227**	.012	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
Recognition and Encouragement	0.058	.526	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
Professional Development Opportunities	0.297**	0.001	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
Emotional Support	0.285**	0.002	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Overall Supportive Behavior of School Heads</b>	<b>0.432*</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Reject H<sub>0</sub></b>

\*Significant @ p<0.05

Legend: Perfect Correlation for r=1.00; Strong Correlation for 0.7≤r<1.00; Moderate Correlation for 0.3≤r<0.7; Weak Correlation for 0.3>r>0.00; No Correlation for r=0.00

Table 4 Influence of Supportive Behavior of School Heads on the Teacher’ Pedagogical Adaptations within Indigenous Communities Within Tboli East District, South Cotabato

Domains of Supportive Behavior of School Heads	Teachers' Pedagogical Adaptations within Indigenous Communities				
	B	S.E	Beta	p-value	Decisions
Open Communication	0.159**	.042	.311	.000	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
Recognition and Encouragement	0.042	.030	.116	.159	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
Professional Development Opportunities	0.231**	.053	.352	.000	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
Emotional Support	0.182**	.044	.326	.000	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	= 0.250				
F-value	= 10.993**				
p-value	= 0.000				
<b>*Significant @ p&lt;0.05</b>					
Practices	-	-	3.50	-	Extensive
Use of Indigenous Languages in Instruction	-	-	3.39	-	Moderately Extensive
Adaptation of Assessment Methods	-	-	3.77	-	Extensive
Flexible Learning Environments	-	-	3.34	-	Moderately Extensive
<b>Overall</b>	-	-	<b>3.50</b>	-	<b>Extensive</b>

**Legend:** Very Extensive= Always Manifested; Extensive= Oftentimes Manifested; Moderately Extensive= Sometimes Manifested; Less Extensive= Seldom Manifested; & Not Extensive= Never Manifested

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