

The role of mother tongue based-multilingual education in enhancing early language development: Impact study

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Abstract

This study is intended to determine the impact of Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education in enhancing early language development at Lope T. Quial Sr. Central Elementary School, Libungan, North Cotabato. Using the explanatory-sequential design, the data was collected from the Grade 3 level with 101 parents, 10 teachers, and 4 school administrators, through questionnaires and interviews. The study revealed that the cognitive group of indicators received the mean scores of 3.80, 3.26, and 3.27 among the group of respondents, describing the influence of MTB-MLE on language development that enhances children's ability to analyze and apply concepts in real-life situations. Meanwhile, in the stakeholders' perception on the effectiveness of MTB-MLE, the cognitive indicators received mean scores of 3.44, 3.26, and 2.87 which indicates the consistent difference between the perceptions of teachers, parents, and administrators reflects their distinct roles and levels of involvement in the program. Additionally, the cognitive domain shows the P-value of 0.032 determines a statistically significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development. On the other hand, a broad consensus shows a positive influence on the sociocultural aspect with weighted mean scores of 3.69, 3.30, and 3.42 indicates that the benefits of MTB-MLE for cultural identity, cultural engagement, and cultural heritage are highly beneficial. In acknowledging the nature of MTB-MLE implementation, the result reveals to have a strategic approach that integrates the development of targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by each stakeholders group. Empower teachers to adapt the curriculum to meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of their students. Engage local communities in the development of culturally appropriate learning resources. Offer specialized training on strategies for supporting multilingual learners and promoting cross-cultural understanding. And foster strong partnerships between schools, families, community organizations, and local government agencies to support MTB-MLE implementation.

Keywords: Impact Of MTB-MLE; Perceptions of Stakeholders To MTB-MLE; Influence Of MTB-MLE; Effectiveness Of MTB-MLE; Early Language Development

1. Introduction

In accordance with the goal of the MTB-MLE, the significance of this study determines the impact of the mother tongue to the learners' ability to learn quickly and actively participate in school activities. It also determines the perceptions of the stakeholders towards the use of Mother Tongue Based Instruction. Due to this matter, this research is designed to determine the role of Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education in enhancing early language development in the classroom. This study also attempts to examine the benefits of using the Mother Tongue (MT) and to know the problems encountered by the stakeholders in the implementation of the MT.

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2. Materials and method

The research design employed in this study was the explanatory-sequential design. This method of research was used to determine the impact of the role of Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education in enhancing early language development during the academic year 2024-2025. The study was conducted at Lope T. Quial Sr. Central Elementary School, Libungan, North Cotabato, focusing on 101 Grade 3 parents, 10 teachers, the administrators (that is composed of 2 master teachers, 1 assistant school principal, and 1 school principal).

The primary instrument used to gather the data was the survey questionnaires. The tool's reliability results were accurately classified as Excellent (with 0.919 for Part I), Good (with 0.884 for Part II), and Excellent (with 0.921 for Part III) based on Cronbach's Alpha, indicating that the scale is efficient and appropriate for use in research.

The survey questionnaire utilized was divided into four parts. The first part asked about the profile of the respondents as to their name (optional), grade and section of the child, and the mother tongue used at home. The second part asked about the influence of MTB-MLE on language development. The perceptions were categorized on the cognitive development, language and literacy development, cultural presentation and awareness, educational equity and access to multilingualism and language transition and teacher's support and implementation. The third part asked about the sociocultural benefits of MTB-MLE. The perceptions were categorized on cultural identity, cultural engagement, cultural heritage, And the fourth part consists of the guide questions that were categorized on the challenges in implementing MTB-MLE, the strategies for overcoming MTB-MLE challenges, the opportunities provided by MTB-MLE.

Additionally, the statistical treatment used for this research are the weighted mean and mean in order to determine the influence of MTB-MLE on language development, perceptions of the stakeholders (teachers, parents, and administrators) on the effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development and Sociocultural benefits of MTB-MLE. Moreover, the One-way ANNOVA was used to the significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development as perceived by the three groups of respondents

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Influence of MTB-MLE on Language Development

Table 1 Summary on the Influence Of MTB-MLE On Language Development

Indicator	Teacher		Parent		Administrator	
	Mean	Adjectival Rating	Mean	Adjectival Rating	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Cognitive Development	3.80	Strongly agree	3.26	Strongly agree	3.27	Strongly agree
Language and Literacy Development	3.56	Strongly agree	3.29	Strongly agree	3.07	Agree
Cultural Presentation and Awareness	3.74	Strongly agree	3.21	Agree	3.13	Agree
Educational Equity and Access	3.54	Strongly agree	3.21	Agree	3.13	Agree
Multilingualism and Language Transition	3.44	Strongly agree	3.21	Agree	2.87	Agree
Teacher's Support and Implementation	3.20	Agree	3.26	Strongly agree	3.04	Agree
Over-all Mean	3.55	Strongly agree	3.24	Agree	3.09	Agree

Table 1 shows the summary of the respondents' responses on the influence of MTB-MLE on language development. The teachers, with a weighted mean score of 3.55, show the strongest agreement, describing the influence as highly evident or strongly present. This suggests that teachers directly observe and experience the benefits of MTB-MLE in fostering

language skills among their students. While Parents recorded a mean score of 3.21 and administrators recorded a mean score of 3.13, both perceived the influence as evident or moderately present. While still positive, their agreement is less pronounced than that of teachers. This difference could stem from varying levels of direct involvement in the classroom and different perspectives on the program's goals and outcomes.

The cognitive group of indicators, which focuses on the influence of MTB-MLE on children's cognitive abilities, received strongly positive ratings from all respondent groups. The highest mean score of 3.80 from teachers indicated a strong belief that MTB-MLE significantly improved children's cognitive skills, specifically their ability to analyze and apply concepts. While slightly lower than teachers, the scores from parents (3.26) and administrators (3.27) still reflect strong agreement. This suggests that, while perhaps not as directly involved in the classroom, parents and administrators recognize the cognitive benefits of MTB-MLE. All groups strongly agree that MTB-MLE enhances children's ability to analyze and apply concepts in real-life situations. Furthermore, the cultural presentation and awareness, educational equity and access; and multilingualism and language transition group of indicators on the influence of MTB-MLE on language development, recorded significant data. In the indicator of cultural presentation and awareness, the teachers reported the highest mean score (3.74) with a strongly agree rating. This suggests teachers believe MTB-MLE effectively incorporates and promotes cultural awareness in education. While parents (3.21) and administrators (3.13) both agree, though their scores are lower than teachers'. This indicates a generally positive view but perhaps a less direct observation of cultural integration compared to teachers. In the aspect of educational equity and access, strongest agreement from teachers reported the highest mean score of 3.54 with a strongly agree rating, suggesting that they see MTB-MLE as a means to promote educational equity and access. Similar to cultural presentation, parents mean score of 3.21 and administrators mean score of 3.13 indicate agree, emphasizing a positive perception of MTB-MLE's role in providing equitable access to education. Meanwhile, the multilingualism and language transition recorded that teachers strongly agree given the mean score of 3.44 that MTB-MLE supports multilingualism and facilitates effective language transition. While parents agree with the mean score of 3.21 on this aspect. And administrators show the lowest agreement with a mean score of 2.87, still within the agreed range, but significantly lower than the other groups. Overall, the indicators suggest that stakeholders have positive perceptions of MTB-MLE's influence on cultural presentation and awareness, educational equity and access, and multilingualism and language transition.

3.2. Perceptions of the Stakeholders (teachers, parents, and administrators) on the Effectiveness of MTB-MLE on Language Development

3.2.1. Influence of MTB-MLE on Language Development

Table 2 Summary on the Perceptions of the Stakeholders (teacher, parent and administration) on the Effectiveness of MTB-MLE on Language Development

Indicators	Teacher		Parent		Administrator	
	Mean	Adjectival Rating	Mean	Adjectival Rating	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Cognitive Development	3.44	Strongly agree	3.26	Strongly agree	2.87	Agree
Language and Literacy Development	3.74	Strongly agree	3.29	Strongly agree	3.13	Agree
Cultural Presentation and Awareness	3.54	Strongly agree	3.21	Agree	3.27	Strongly agree
Educational Equity and Access	3.56	Strongly agree	3.21	Agree	3.07	Agree
Multilingualism and Language Transition	3.54	Strongly agree	3.21	Agree	3.13	Agree
Teacher's Support and Implementation	3.20	Agree	3.25	Strongly agree	2.47	Agree
Over-all Mean	3.56	Strongly agree	3.24	Agree	2.99	Agree

Table 2 shows the summary of the respondents' responses on the perceptions of the stakeholders on the effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development reveals a generally positive perception, although with varying degrees of agreement among different groups. This suggests that teachers (with weighted mean score of 3.56), more so than parents (with weighted mean score of 3.24) and administrators (with weighted mean score of 2.99), perceive MTB-MLE as highly effective in language development. This could be due to their direct involvement in implementing the program and witnessing its effects on students.

The cognitive development, language and literacy development indicators reveal a consistent trend: teachers (with a weighted mean score of 3.44) perceive a stronger positive impact of MTB-MLE than parents, and parents (with weighted mean score of 3.26) perceive a stronger impact than administrators (with weighted mean score of 2.87). The consistent difference between the perceptions of teachers, parents, and administrators reflects their distinct roles and levels of involvement in the program. The teachers, being at the forefront of instruction, are more likely to see these cognitive and linguistic benefits firsthand.

Analyzing the educational equity and access, and teacher support and implementation indicators shown similar patterns to earlier analyses. However, in educational equity and access, teachers (with 3.56 weighted mean score) perceive the strongest positive impact followed by parents (with 3.21 weighted mean score), and then administrators (with 3.07 weighted mean score). This aligns with the core principle of MTB-MLE, which aims to provide a more equitable learning environment by using the child's native language. On the other hand, in the teacher support and implementation, parents (with 3.25 weighted mean score) strongly agree that there is adequate teacher support, while teachers (with 3.20 weighted mean score) show an agree result. On the side of the administrators (with 2.47 weighted mean score) show the lowest level of agreement. The results suggest that while parents might perceive adequate support, teachers themselves may not feel sufficiently supported in implementing MTB-MLE. This could be due to several factors, such as insufficient resources, inadequate training, and lack of ongoing support.

The cultural presentation and awareness show a significant result. It's worth noting the shift in parents' perception (with 3.21 weighted mean) that shows only an agree adjectival rating while administrators (with 3.27 weighted mean score) shift to strongly agree adjectival rating. This may suggest that parents see less of a direct impact on cultural presentation and analysis compared to other areas. Moreover, the high level of agreement of the teachers (with 3.54 weighted mean score) and the administrators also suggests a widespread belief that MTB-MLE supports cultural presentation and analysis within language development.

3.3. Significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development

Table 3 shows the ANOVA results which indicate a statistically significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development, specifically within the cognitive domain, as perceived by teachers, parents, and administrators. To note the breakdown of the analysis, the F-value of 3.558 shows a higher value which suggests greater group difference. On the other hand, the P-value of 0.032 determines statistical significance. It concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in how the three groups perceive the effectiveness of MTB-MLE on cognitive development. This means that the observed differences in mean scores between the groups are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 3 Significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development as perceived by the three groups of respondents

Source of Variation		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Conclusion
Cognitive development	Between Groups	2.519	2	1.260	3.558	0.032	Significant
	Within Groups	39.290	111	0.354			
	Total	41.809	113				
Language and Literacy Awareness	Between Groups	0.921	2	0.460	1.182	0.310	Not Significant
	Within Groups	43.229	111	0.389			
	Total	44.150	113				

Cultural Presentation and Awareness	Between Groups	0.782	2	0.391	1.08	0.421	Not Significant
	Within Groups	40.223	111	0.362			
	Total	44.15	113				
Educational Equity and Access	Between Groups	0.846	2	0.423	1.135	0.325	Not Significant
	Within Groups	41.355	111	0.373			
	Total	42.201	113				
Multilingualism and Language Transition	Between Groups	0.958	2	0.479	1.207	0.303	Not Significant
	Within Groups	44.075	111	0.397			
	Total	45.033	113				
Teacher Support and Implementation	Between Groups	0.134	2	0.067	0.152	0.859	Not Significant
	Within Groups	48.918	111	0.441			
	Total	49.052	113				

Table 4 The cognitive development, Tukey's HSD result on the Significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development as perceived by the three groups of respondents

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	0.53987*	0.20688	0.028	0.0484	1.0313
	3	0.68889	0.39663	0.196	-0.2533	1.6311

The above results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development across the three groups of respondents (teachers, parents, and administrators) for the following domains in the language and literacy awareness, the cultural presentation and awareness, the educational equity and access, the multilingualism and language transition; and the teacher support and implementation. For all these domains, the p-values are greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05. This shows that the observed differences in mean scores between the groups are likely due to random chances, rather than a systematic difference in their perceptions. While the stakeholders might have different average scores for each domain, these differences are not statistically significant. It cannot confidently say that one group truly perceives the effectiveness of MTB-MLE differently from another in these areas. It is important to consider these non-significant findings considering the earlier significant result on the cognitive domain. While there is disagreement on the cognitive aspects, there appears to be a consensus among stakeholders on the other domains assessed.

3.4. Sociocultural benefits of MTB-MLE

The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education recognizes and leverages the sociocultural context of students, leading to several benefits in the aspects of identity, engagement, and cultural heritage. In order to identify its benefits, a survey questionnaire was employed to the respondents.

Table 3.5 presents that an overall mean score of all three groups of respondents (teachers weighted mean score of 3.69, parents weighted mean score of 3.30, and administrators weighted mean score of 3.42) rated the benefits of MTB-MLE for cultural identity, cultural engagement, and cultural heritage as highly beneficial. This suggests a broad consensus that MTB-MLE has a positive influence on these sociocultural aspects.

Table 5 Summary on the sociocultural benefits of MTB-MLE

Indicator	Teacher		Parent		Administrator	
	WM	AR	WM	AR	WM	AR
Identity	3.74	Highly Beneficial	3.29	Highly Beneficial	3.40	Highly Beneficial
Engagement	3.66	Highly Beneficial	3.30	Highly Beneficial	3.47	Highly Beneficial
Cultural heritage	3.66	Highly Beneficial	3.30	Highly Beneficial	3.40	Highly Beneficial
Over-all Mean	3.69	Highly Beneficial	3.30	Highly Beneficial	3.42	Highly Beneficial

As indicated above, the teachers consistently gave the highest ratings across all three categories (cultural identity, engagement, and heritage), with a weighted mean score of 3.66 or 3.74 that indicates a highly beneficial adjectival rating. This may reflect their direct experience in the classroom and their understanding of how MTB-MLE affects students' sense of identity, participation, and connection to their cultural heritage.

In addition, the parents' ratings of 3.29 or 3.30 were slightly lower than teachers' rating but still indicated a highly beneficial adjectival ratings for all three categories. This suggests that parents also recognize the value of MTB-MLE in promoting cultural awareness and engagement.

Moreover, the administrators' ratings of 3.40 or 3.47 were similar to parents', with highly beneficial adjectival ratings for cultural identity, engagement, and heritage. This indicates that administrators see the importance of MTB-MLE in supporting the school's mission of fostering culturally responsive education

3.5. Challenges in Implementing MTB-MLE

The following guide questions deepened the understanding of the challenges, solutions, and opportunities associated with implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). They are structured logically and cover different perspectives from teachers, parents, administrators, and policymakers.

3.5.1. For Teachers

What are the most common difficulties you face when teaching in the mother tongue?

Based on the teachers' responses, here's an analysis of the most common difficulties they face when teaching in the mother tongue.

For the response, "transition to other languages: Pupils who are taught primarily in their mother tongue may face difficulties when transitioning to other languages where bilingual education is available." This indicates that teachers are concerned that pupils primarily taught in their mother tongue may struggle when transitioning to other languages (Daño et al., 2024). In addition, there are differing views on whether mother-tongue instruction hinders or helps the learning of English.

On the "lack of standardized vocabulary in the mother tongue. Unfamiliar words or dialects." According to Lartec et al., (2014) The absence of a standardized vocabulary in the mother tongue, along with unfamiliar words or dialects, poses a challenge for teachers.

Another difficulty is that some of the learners' mother tongues are unfamiliar to me (teacher). I must research and ask for help whenever I can't understand." This means that some teachers may be unfamiliar with some learners' mother tongues, requiring them to research and seek help (Lartec et al., 2014). Additionally, some teachers report lacking fluency in their mother tongue, specifically in the vocabulary related to their field of work.

These difficulties highlighted the need for adequate resources, teacher training, and support for both teachers and students in multilingual classrooms. Addressing these challenges is crucial to maximizing the potential benefits of MTB-

MLE (Teachers' Competence and Difficulties in Teaching Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), 2024).

How do students react when shifting from mother tongue instruction to Filipino and English?

The teachers' responses reveal a mix of positive and negative reactions from students when shifting from mother-tongue instruction to Filipino and English:

For this response, "they easily understand what you meant. Cultural identity: some of my pupils might feel a sense of loss regarding their cultural identity. They may perceive a shift in cultural context when switching from their mother tongue to English to Filipino." Some teachers noted that students easily understand what is being taught when transitioning to Filipino and English.

Another response states that, "They are more participative. They also ask questions about its meaning, and they are happy to learn a new language." This shows that students become more participative in class activities; and they ask questions about the meaning of new words and express happiness in learning a new language. Additional response also states that, "The students have more capabilities to understand the lesson." This means that students demonstrate more capabilities to understand the lesson.

With regards to this response that says, "Some students struggle to grasp the lessons taught in their mother tongue. They are not yet proficient in reading and comprehension." This denotes to the negative reactions concerning cultural identity that according to Cruz, (2011) some pupils might feel a sense of loss regarding their cultural identity. They may perceive a shift in cultural context when switching from their mother tongue to English or Filipino. Moreover, some students struggle to grasp the lessons taught in their mother tongue due to not being proficient in reading and comprehension. This may indicate that some students would prefer to learn in other languages.

These mixed reactions highlighted the complexities of language transition in education. Some students may thrive in a multilingual environment, while others may face challenges related to cultural identity and language proficiency (Chureson, 2014; Cruz, 2011). Reyes et al, (2023) highlighted that it is important to note that English-speaking learners may struggle with understanding and speaking Filipino.

Do you have sufficient textbooks, instructional materials, and teaching aids in the mother tongue? If not, how does this affect teaching?

The teachers' responses indicate varying levels of access to textbooks, instructional materials, and teaching aids in the mother tongue, and these discrepancies have a direct impact on their teaching practices:

Based on their response, it is stated that, "Not sufficient. Classroom instruction and learning of pupils are affected, but I find ways from my learners, and the objectives will be achieved." This is coined according to Lartec et al. (2014) that when materials are not sufficient, classroom instruction and learning are affected. It is also emphasized that teachers need to find alternative ways to achieve learning objectives, which can be challenging and time-consuming.

Moreover, another response noted that, "I don't have. The insufficient learning materials make lesson preparation more difficult." It is absolute that the insufficient learning materials make lesson preparation more difficult. Teachers may need to create their own materials or rely on limited resources, adding to their workload (Lartec et al., 2014).

The lack of books and materials in the mother tongue is a problem encountered by teachers (Lartec et al., 2014). It is deeply stressed out according to Chiuye and Moyo (2008) that in the absence of textbooks and teaching materials in the pupils' mother tongues, developmental efforts are rendered hollow. Teachers use strategies such as translation, multilingual teaching, and improvisation of instructional materials (Lartec et al., 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to provide teachers with adequate resources and support to effectively implement mother-tongue instruction (Teachers' Competence and Difficulties in Teaching Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), 2024).

Have you received adequate training to effectively implement MTB-MLE? What additional training do you think is needed?

Based on the teachers' responses, the perception of the adequacy of training to implement MTB-MLE effectively is varied. With the response that states, "Yes, it can help teach our pupils in MTB-MLE." This is obviously based on teachers' experience and note that some of them believed that the training they received can help them teach pupils in MTB-MLE. In contrast, another response that says, "Training courses are mostly general." Therefore, some responses suggest that

training courses are mostly general, which may not address the specific challenges and nuances of teaching in a multilingual classroom. And the recent response, it agreed to another response that states, "Yes, through SLAC sessions conducted by our school." Teachers receive training through School Learning Action Cell sessions conducted by their school.

Do students face difficulties understanding or engaging with MTB-MLE? How do you address these issues?

The teachers' responses suggest that students do face some difficulties understanding or engaging with MTB-MLE, but these issues can be addressed based on their responses.

On the response that states, "Yes, some pupils struggled with unfamiliar dialects, even within their mother tongue." Some pupils struggle with unfamiliar dialects, even within their mother tongue. In these cases, teachers help them understand by translating phrases from their mother tongue to other dialects. Through this, another response that says, "Not so much since learners are eager to learn. Generally, learners are eager to learn, which helps mitigate potential difficulties.

To address these issues, teachers are employing strategies such as translation to bridge the gap between dialects. The importance of MTB-MLE is that it encourages active participation of children in the learning process because they understand what is being discussed and what is being asked of them ("Difficulties and Challenges in Teaching Science: The Aftermath of MTB-MLE," 2019).

3.5.2. For Parents

How do you assist your child in their studies when lessons are taught in the mother tongue?

The parents' responses highlight their direct involvement in supporting their children's learning through the mother tongue.

Based on their response that says, "By explaining to him about their lessons." This is clear that parents assist by explaining lessons to their children. With this, parents also gave their response that state, "Teach them how to understand a lesson using the language they know."

Among parents' responses shows the significant target that states, "By reading with him in the mother tongue language and helping him with his schoolwork." This matter provides a concrete scenario that the parents read with their children in their mother tongue and help them with schoolwork. Moreover, home setting shows an important role as parents says that "Because of the daily interactions at home, the children understand what we talk about and adopt it." This means that the daily interactions at home in the mother tongue reinforce learning and understanding.

These responses emphasize the importance of parental involvement in reinforcing mother-tongue instruction (Forey et al., 2015). By using the language, the child knows best, parents can effectively support their child's understanding and engagement with the material. One study (Cabansag, 2016) indicates that involving local stakeholders and parents can significantly contribute to the success of MTB-MLE.

Do you think your child benefits more from learning in the mother tongue? Why or why not?

The parents' responses reveal diverse perspectives on the benefits of mother-tongue instruction.

One of the perspectives states that, "Yes, because they will understand the lessons they are discussing better." Children understand lessons better when taught in their mother tongue. Another perspective says, "Yes, learning words in their mother tongue is a great help so that they are not ignorant of words in the mother tongue." This denotes that learning words in their mother tongue helps children avoid being ignorant of their native language.

Additionally, the parents' perspective states that, "Yes, my child has benefited from learning the mother tongue language because my child has become flexible about the language he has learned." This proved that parents see that the Children can become flexible about the languages they have learned. Moreover, a significant perspective highlighted those states "My child has benefited from learning the mother tongue language, because it will allow them to know the language of their ancestors. This reflects that parents value the importance of MTB-MLE and It allows them to connect with the language of their ancestors (Why the Mother Tongue Matters, 2023).

Overall, the responses lean towards recognizing the benefits of mother-tongue instruction, particularly in enhancing understanding, promoting language awareness, and fostering a connection to cultural heritage (Bolger, 2023; Nishanthi, 2020). It can also lead to better academic results and interesting career opportunities (Bolger, 2023).

Do you experience difficulties in helping your child with schoolwork due to differences between the mother tongue used at home and in school?

The parents' responses indicate that they do experience difficulties in helping their children with schoolwork when the mother tongue used at home differs from that used in school.

One indication to this is the response that says, "A little, because what he learns is different from what he learns in his classroom." In the aspect of the content of the lesson/s, What the child learns at home is different from what they learn in the classroom. The earlier response firmly adheres to the next that says, "It can be difficult, because there are other languages used that we don't understand." Sometimes these unfamiliar languages are used, which parents don't understand hinder their ability to help the child. Generally speaking, a response that says, "Yes, because it's difficult for me to help him if the language used at home and at school is different." This shows that it is difficult for parents to help their children if the language used at home and school is different.

These difficulties highlight the challenges that arise when there is a linguistic difference between home and school (LaRocque, 2013). When the language used in school is not the same as the language primarily spoken at home, it can hinder parents' ability to assist their children with schoolwork (Casalan, 2022). This is further complicated in multilingual settings where children grow up with multiple mother tongues (Gupta, 1997).

Do you feel involved in the implementation of MTB-MLE? What support do you think parents need?

Based on the parents' responses, an analysis of their involvement in MTB-MLE and the support they perceive is needed.

In the responses that says, "Supporting children in their mother tongue and helping them learn as a parent; yes, helping children read or study at home in the evening; and yes, I feel the need to be involved in the process for my child. The support I can give is to help my child understand." These are the proactive responses that parents see their role primarily as directly supporting their children's learning at home. This includes helping with lessons, explaining concepts, reading together, and ensuring understanding, all using the mother tongue. There's a clear feeling among parents that they *should* be involved in their child's educational process, particularly when it comes to MTB-MLE. They recognize the value of reinforcing mother-tongue learning outside of the classroom.

Additionally, the responses that says, "Yes, and the support that is needed is additional training and materials to help our children and the support that I think parents need is to help them with their questions and when they are having difficulty." Signifies that parents explicitly mention the need for additional training. This likely refers to understanding the MTB-MLE approach better, knowing how to effectively assist their children, or perhaps even improving their own literacy skills in the mother tongue if needed. Similar to the needs expressed by teachers, parents identify a need for materials to help their children. This could range from supplementary reading materials to guides for parents on how to support learning activities. Parents require support when they encounter difficulties or have questions about their child's schoolwork or the MTB-MLE program itself. This suggests a need for clear communication channels and resources from the school.

The responses indicate that parents are willing and feel a responsibility to be involved in the MTB-MLE process by directly assisting their children (Nieto, 1987). However, they recognize that their ability to provide effective support can be enhanced. The call for additional training, materials, and general assistance highlights a gap between the desire to help and the resources available to do so effectively. Providing such support could strengthen the home-school partnership, which is crucial for the success of educational programs like MTB-MLE (Cabansag, 2016; Family Engagement Home Language Multilingual Learning Toolkit, 2024). Addressing the need for training and materials is a recurring theme in MTB-MLE implementation, affecting both teachers and parents (Implementation of Mother Tongue – Based Multilingual Education in a Multicultural and Multilingual Community: A Teacher's Perspective, 2025; Purcia and Castante, 2023).

Do you believe MTB-MLE helps in preserving local culture and identity? If not, what concerns do you have?

The parents' responses overwhelmingly indicate a belief that MTB-MLE helps in preserving local culture and identity.

In the responses that says, “Yes, I believe this is a great help for the Children,” and “Yes, I believe it will help. So that we don't lose where we came from in the past.” It's seen as a great help to children and ensures that people don't lose touch with their origins and past.

Moreover, the responses that says “Yes, because it will help preserve our culture and identity,” and “Yes, I believe that my child learned more about cultural identity using MTB-MLE.” It actively contributes to preserving culture and identity. And children learn more about their cultural identity through MTB-MLE.

These sentiments align with the core goals of MTB-MLE, which include fostering a sense of cultural pride and identity among students (Mendoza, 2023). By using the mother tongue as the language of instruction, MTB-MLE connects children to their cultural heritage and allows them to learn about their traditions, values, and beliefs in a meaningful way (Lekatompey, 2021). This is particularly important in a globalized world where local cultures are often at risk of being overshadowed by dominant cultures (Cabansag, 2016).

3.5.3. For School Administrators and Policymakers

What policies or guidelines are in place to ensure the smooth execution of MTB-MLE?

Based on the response that says, “Policies and guidelines are institutionalized through DepEd Orders to ensure the smooth execution/ implementation of MTB-MLE policies, such as using the learner's first language as a medium of instruction from kindergarten to Grade 3.” The school administrators and policymakers indicate that the policies and guidelines for MTB-MLE implementation are institutionalized through Department of Education Orders. These orders ensure the use of the learner's first language as the medium of instruction from kindergarten to Grade 3. This top-down approach is designed to ensure the smooth execution of MTB-MLE policies.

However, it is worth noting that the success of such policies relies on effective communication and collaboration between higher-level management and local stakeholders (Cabansag, 2016). According to Purcia and Castante (2023) teachers should also take part in the implementation/revision of the MTB-MLE curriculum since they are at the helm of the program implementation.

How well are schools equipped with resources (books, learning modules, multimedia) to support MTB-MLE?

The responses from school administrators and policymakers highlight a critical challenge in MTB-MLE implementation particularly in the insufficient availability of resources (Cabansag, 2016).

It is evident in the responses that says, “Our school has insufficient textbooks for MTB. So, the teachers find resources on the Internet, and the school is seeking funding to purchase more resources to support the MTB-MLE.” And “Many schools face challenges in fully supporting MTB-MLE due to the limited availability of localized instructional materials, the lack of trained teachers, and insufficient funding, especially in linguistically diverse or remote areas.” It is indicated that schools often lack an adequate number of textbooks in their mother tongue. In the aspect of localized materials, there is a shortage of instructional materials that are specifically tailored to the local context and language. And in the side of fundings in schools, especially in linguistically diverse or remote areas, face insufficient funding to adequately support MTB-MLE. Additionally, the lack of trained teachers (Purcia and Castante, 2023).

According to Purcia and Castante (2023), to address these challenges, schools are resorting to finding resources online and seeking additional funding to purchase necessary materials. The Department of Education should provide support to teachers to enhance their teaching capabilities on the use of MTB-MLE instruction, especially the necessary materials and interventions that will be utilized in delivering instructions more effectively.

What challenges have you observed regarding teachers' preparedness for MTB-MLE instruction?

The responses reveal several challenges regarding teachers' preparedness for MTB-MLE instruction.

Based on the statement that says, “Teachers often face challenges in MTB-MLE due to limited training, a lack of fluency in the mother tongue, and insufficient teaching materials.” Teachers often lack adequate training in MTB-MLE methodologies (Purcia and Castante, 2023). Some teachers may not be fluent in the mother tongue they are expected to teach. Another response that says, “As per observation, the newly hired teachers lack training in MTB-MLE.” The Newly hired teachers, in particular, may not have received sufficient preparation (Montes et al., 2018). Moreover, a response that says, “The books delivered are not aligned with the learner's mother tongue. Although they are Cebuano, the book

content is not in Cebuano.” The lack of appropriate teaching materials further hinders teachers' ability to effectively implement MTB-MLE. In some instances, the delivered books are not even aligned with the learners' mother tongue.

According to Kanwit (2024), these challenges highlight the need for comprehensive teacher training programs that focus on developing both pedagogical skills and language proficiency in the mother tongue. It is also crucial to provide teachers with adequate and relevant teaching materials to support their instruction (Purcia and Castante, 2023).

How do you assess the success of MTB-MLE in your school? What key performance indicators do you use?

Based on the response that says, “in assessing the success of MTB-MLE in our school, the key performance indicator for the school itself is the student learning outcomes. These outcomes focus on literacy and numeracy skills in evaluating the learner's proficiency, which is measured through tests, classroom assessments, and reading and writing skills;” and “the success of MTB-MLE in our school is assessed through learners' improved reading and comprehension skills, mother tongue proficiency, classroom performance, and results from formative and summative assessments.” The school administrators and policymakers assess the success of MTB-MLE primarily through student learning outcomes that include literacy and numeracy skills (Cabansag, 2016); improvements in reading and comprehension skills, and proficiency in the mother tongue; the results from formative and summative assessments; and the general classroom performance.

In essence, according to Purcia and Castante (2023), the success of MTB-MLE is measured by its impact on students' academic performance and their ability to effectively use their mother tongue (Cabansag, 2016). Teachers should also take part in the implementation/revision of the MTB-MLE curriculum, since they are at the helm of the program implementation.

What are the long-term challenges in sustaining MTB-MLE in your school or district?

According to the response that says, “The long-term challenges in sustaining MTB-MLE include the limited updated materials, continuous teacher training needs, changing language dynamics in the community, and inconsistent stakeholder support;” and “one of the long-term challenges in sustaining MTB-MLE in our school is the societal attitudes and perceptions wherein some communities may not fully embrace MTB-MLE even after its long years of implementation. Others view this as a barrier to English proficiency and make it difficult to gain widespread support.” The school administrators and policymakers highlight several long-term challenges in sustaining MTB-MLE: The availability of current and relevant learning materials is a continuous concern (Daño et al., 2024); the need for ongoing teacher training to keep educators updated with best practices and address emerging challenges; the language use and attitudes within the community can evolve, requiring adjustments to the MTB-MLE program; the lack of consistent support from parents, community members, and other stakeholders can hinder long-term sustainability (Malone, n.d.); and the negative perceptions or a lack of full acceptance of MTB-MLE within some communities can create a barrier to widespread support (Wroge, 2017). Some view MTB-MLE as a barrier to English proficiency (Wroge, 2017).

These challenges underscore the need for a comprehensive and adaptable approach to MTB-MLE implementation that considers the evolving needs of the community and ensures ongoing support for teachers and students (Cabansag, 2016).

3.6. Strategies for Overcoming MTB-MLE Challenges

3.6.1. For Teachers

What techniques do you use to make MTB-MLE instruction more effective?

The teachers employ a variety of techniques to enhance the effectiveness of MTB-MLE instruction. Based on their response that says, “Identify student language proficiency levels and language profiling to know the language background of the learner.” The Teachers identify student language proficiency levels and create language profiles to better understand each learner's linguistic background. In the aspect of utilizing engaging activities, response says, “Games, songs, storytelling, and role-playing are used to make learning fun and engaging. These activities promote language acquisition naturally and enjoyably.” They use games, songs, storytelling, and role-playing to make learning fun and engaging, promoting natural and enjoyable language acquisition (Newton and Star, 2013). Moreover, teachers also deal with the utilization of contextualized materials and according to the response that says, “Use of contextualized materials, realia or real objects and situations.” These prove that teachers utilize materials that are relevant to the students' local context, incorporating real objects and situations into their lessons (Cabansag, 2016; Purcia and Castante, 2023).

These techniques align with the principles of MTB-MLE, which emphasize creating a supportive and culturally relevant learning environment that builds on students' existing knowledge and experiences (Gr, 1992). By using engaging activities and contextualized materials, teachers can make learning more meaningful and accessible for students, fostering a deeper understanding of both the language and the subject matter (Santiago and Nabayra, 2024; Stebila, 2010).

How do you support students who struggle with mother tongue instruction?

Teachers employ several strategies to support students who struggle with mother tongue instruction. Based on their response that says, "applying technologies in discussion, such as video presentations, pictures, and games, will help pupils understand efficiently and effectively;" and "translate difficult mother tongue dialects into words that they can understand easily." Technology integration plays a vital role in supporting students in their learning process. According to Santiago and Nabayra (2024) that using videos, pictures, and games enhances understanding. On the otherhand, the simplified translation emphasized that translating difficult dialects into easily understandable terms (Lartec et al., 2014) help improve child's understanding.

Another response that says, "by conducting interventions to help struggling students and observe learners' participation, engagement, and language used in the class." Teachers are conducting targeted interventions to provide extra support (Ferlazzo, 2020) and closely observing learners' participation, engagement, and language use in class to identify areas of difficulty (Mongillo et al., 2016). In addition to these strategies, teachers can also leverage techniques such as language profiling to understand the learners' language background ("Difficulties and Challenges in Teaching Science: The Aftermath of MTB-MLE," 2019). Also, utilizing multilingual teaching (Lartec et al., 2014). Peer collaboration, where students work together in their native languages to understand content, can also be effective (Huynh, 2022).

Do you collaborate with fellow teachers to develop MTB-MLE teaching strategies? If so, how?

The teachers' responses indicate a strong culture of collaboration to enhance MTB-MLE teaching strategies. Based on the response that says, "Yes, by asking them what strategies they used in the class and share our knowledge and experiences and share how we handle and what strategies we can apply." Teachers actively inquire about, and exchange effective strategies used in the classroom. By sharing knowledge, experiences, and approaches to handling challenges, they create a supportive environment for professional development.

In addition, teachers' response says that, "Yes, by sharing with them the best practices they used in teaching MTB-MLE and its resources, we have created a supportive environment for professional growth and development and by sharing best practices, lesson plans, and instructional materials." They share their most successful teaching methods and relevant resources to support one another's professional growth. Sharing of lesson plans and instructional materials.

Teacher collaboration can enhance teaching skills, and feedback received from each other helps them get better at their teaching (Collaborative Lesson Planning, 2023). Collaboration helps teachers do their best work because there's someone to think with, talk with, and bounce ideas off of (Teacher Collaboration... While Teaching!, 2023). Teachers should also take part in the implementation/revision of the MTB-MLE curriculum since they are at the helm of the program implementation (Purcia and Castante, 2023).

Have you integrated digital tools or technology to improve MTB-MLE implementation?

The teachers' response, "Yes, it is more effective and efficient," suggests that they have indeed integrated digital tools or technology to improve MTB-MLE implementation. Digital tools can support MTB-MLE by providing access to a wider range of resources, enhancing engagement, and facilitating differentiated instruction (CSW-Digital Tools, 2024; Inclusive Classroom Chrome Extension for ELL and SPED, 2025). For example, teachers can use digital tools to: access online libraries and multimedia resources in the mother tongue; create interactive lessons and activities; provide personalized support for struggling learners (Inclusive Classroom Chrome Extension for ELL and SPED, 2025); and use translation tools to bridge language gaps.

While the response is brief, it highlights the potential of technology to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of MTB-MLE (Inclusive Classroom Chrome Extension for ELL and SPED, 2025).

How do you assess students' progress in MTB-MLE? What adjustments do you make based on their learning needs?

Base on the teachers' responses that says, "I assessed the students' progress in MTB-MLE through class discussions. If they understood the lesson, they always raised their hands. They also participated in hands-on activities such as quizzes

and exams, and I use both formative and summative assessments” The teachers used varied assessment methods to gauge student progress in MTB-MLE through assessing understanding through student participation, like raising hands to indicate comprehension. Using quizzes and exams as practical assessments. And Using quizzes and exams as practical assessments.

Another response that says, “By using a variety of assessment methods and making adjustments based on students' learning needs, teachers can ensure that all students have the opportunity to take MTB-MLE. This approach fosters a more inclusive and equitable learning environment; and encourages students to reflect on their language learning and set goals for improvement.” The teachers adjusted their teaching based on individual needs. They employed both types of assessments to gain a comprehensive understanding of student learning. They also considered ensuring all students have the opportunity to participate through varied methods and adjustments (The Role of Continuous Assessment and Effective Teacher Response in Engaging All Students, 2018). Moreover, encouraging students to reflect on their language learning and set goals (Teachers' Use of MTB-MLE Strategies in Multilingual Lower Primary School Grades of Chongwe Rural District, 2024).

By using a variety of assessment methods and making adjustments based on students' learning needs, teachers can foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment (Purcia and Castante, 2023). Regular assessments that are linguistically, culturally, and developmentally appropriate are critical. Tools for planning and monitoring multilingual education programs can also aid in assessing student progress (Tools for Planning and Monitoring Programmes of Multilingual Education in Asia, 2023).

3.6.2. For Parents

How do you help your child learn in the mother tongue at home?

According to the responses that say, “by giving time to teach and explain to him, by using the Cebuano language at home to make it easier; and the way I help my child is by exposing him to traditions and their beliefs and I explain to him what he sees.” The parents' responses reveal a commitment to supporting their children's mother tongue learning at home through allocating time to teach and explain concepts (Tong et al., 2021); communicating in the mother tongue (e.g., Cebuano) at home to facilitate easier understanding (Eslit, 2017); and exposing children to traditions, beliefs, and cultural explanations (Koloti and Jita, 2021).

These practices highlight the importance of parental support for school-based learning (Wildmon et al., 2024). To further support their children's learning needs, parents could also create a home environment that values and celebrates the mother tongue (The Importance of Home Language Maintenance, 2022).

Have you joined any school-led initiatives that promote MTB-MLE? If not, would you be open to participating?

Based on their responses that says, “Not yet. And if there is a program, I am willing to join; and it is good for parents to learn so they can help their children. The parents' responses indicate a willingness to engage in school-led initiatives that promote MTB-MLE. Their openness highlights the potential for schools to create programs that involve parents in supporting their children's language development (2015). The parents' responses indicate a willingness to engage in school-led initiatives that promote MTB-MLE. Their openness highlights the potential for schools to create programs that involve parents in supporting their children's language development (2015).

What kind of support do you think parents need to effectively help their children in MTB-MLE?

According to their responses, it says that “I will teach my child what is being taught in their room.” It shows that parents want to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom at home. Parents also say, “I really need more learning materials; and it would be better if the books had footnotes for unfamiliar words/terms.” It proves that they needed to Access to more learning materials, and they emphasized that books with footnotes or explanations for unfamiliar words/terms would be beneficial. Moreover, parents are willing to understand MTB-MLE because based on their response that say, “I will attend school seminars related to MTB-MLE.” Parents would like to attend school seminars to better understand MTB-MLE (Cabansag, 2016).

What concerns or misconceptions about MTB-MLE do you think need to be addressed?

Based on their common responses, it says that “My child might get confused and MTB-MLE is not helpful for children because it cannot be used when looking for a job.” The parents' responses reveal common concerns and misconceptions about MTB-MLE that need to be addressed, and these are the concern that children might get confused by learning in

multiple languages; and the belief that MTB-MLE is not helpful for children because it cannot be used when looking for a job that reflects a misunderstanding of the goals and benefits of multilingual education.

To address these concerns, it's important to communicate the following: learning in multiple languages has cognitive benefits, such as improved problem-solving skills and enhanced cognitive flexibility. That the MTB-MLE provides a stronger foundation for learning additional languages, including languages of wider communication that may be necessary for employment (Cabansag, 2016). In the aspect of cultural identity, the MTB-MLE promotes cultural identity and self-esteem by valuing and preserving the mother tongue. And according to Purcia and Castante (2023) that in the aspect of curriculum and teacher support, Teachers should take part in the implementation/revision of the MTB-MLE curriculum, and the Department of Education should provide support to teachers to enhance their teaching capabilities on the use of MTB-MLE instruction.

What suggestions do you have to improve collaboration between schools and parents regarding MTB-MLE?

The parents' suggestions emphasize the need for a stronger partnership between schools and families to support children's MTB-MLE learning. On their responses that say, "Let's work together to teach our children to understand the mother tongue. And there needs to be more communication between parents and schools." Parents and teachers should work together to teach children their mother tongue. According to Taylor (2023) there needs to be more open and frequent communication between parents and schools.

Moreover, the response that says, "Make MTB-MLE a bridge for subjects that children have difficulty with but don't make MTB-MLE a subject." They suggested utilizing MTB-MLE to support understanding in other subjects, rather than treating it as a separate subject. In addition, they also emphasized to the response that says "Let's involve parents in lectures about MTB-MLE. And let us not just rely on our teachers to teach. Let us also teach our children so that they can learn and not struggle anymore." According to Cabansag (2016) that Involve parents in lectures and training sessions about MTB-MLE is very important and that parents and teachers should share the responsibility of teaching children, rather than relying solely on teachers.

These suggestions align with the principles of family engagement, which emphasize building strong, trusting relationships between schools and families and engaging them as true partners in their children's academic success (Family, Parent, Teacher Engagement in Education, 2024). Schools can foster this collaboration by creating opportunities for two-way communication, providing resources and training for parents, and involving them in decision-making processes (Hiefield, 2018; O'Brien, 2012).

3.6.3. *For Administrators and Policymakers*

What professional development initiatives are available for teachers to enhance their MTB-MLE teaching skills?

Based on the responses that say, "To develop and enhance teachers' MTB-MLE teaching skills, the school conducted regular SLAC sessions for teachers who work collaboratively to improve their teaching practices. The conduct of INSET was also initiated for teachers to update their knowledge and skills and learn new strategies for implementing MTB-MLE;" And "Regional and division-led training workshop." The school administrator and policymakers' responses indicate that professional development initiatives for teachers to enhance their MTB-MLE teaching skills include regular collaborative sessions where teachers work together to improve their teaching practices; training programs initiated for teachers to update their knowledge and skills and learn new strategies for implementing MTB-MLE; and training workshops organized at the regional and division levels.

To further enhance MTB-MLE instruction, it is recommended that teachers take part in the implementation/revision of the curriculum (Purcia and Castante, 2023). The Department of Education should also provide support to teachers to enhance their teaching capabilities, especially the necessary materials and interventions (Purcia and Castante, 2023). The MTB-MLE program plays a vital role in learners' development, especially in language acquisition (Gr, 1992).

How do you engage parents and the local community in supporting MTB-MLE?

On the matter of engagement to parents and local community, responses say that "One strategy to engage parents and the local community in supporting MTB-MLE is to organize PTA and community meetings, which serve as venues to address concerns and ask for feedback in clarifying misconceptions about MTB-MLE." These meetings provide a platform to address concerns, clarify misconceptions, and gather feedback about MTB-MLE (Cabansag, 2016).

Another response says that “Involving parents in developing localized learning materials; encourage community members to share local stories; and organize literacy programs and reading sessions.” Engaging parents in developing localized learning materials ensures cultural relevance and contextual appropriateness. In addition, encouraging community members to share local stories promotes cultural preservation and provides authentic learning experiences for students. Moreover, organizing literacy programs and reading sessions promotes a culture of literacy within the community.

In the aspect of obtaining support from local leaders, responses say that “Seek support from local leaders and stakeholders for resources. And promote home-based learning using Mother Tongue through parent coaching. Engaging local leaders and stakeholders can help secure resources and support for MTB-MLE initiatives. Likewise, promoting home-based learning using the Mother Tongue through parent coaching extends learning beyond the classroom.

These strategies emphasize the importance of collaboration between schools, families, and the community to create a supportive environment for MTB-MLE (Family, Parent, Teacher Engagement in Education, 2024). By actively involving parents and community members, schools can foster a sense of ownership and ensure the success of MTB-MLE programs (Adhikari et al., 2017; Gittelsohn et al., 2018).

Have there been modifications in the curriculum to better integrate MTB-MLE? What improvements do you suggest?

Based on the administrators' and policymakers' responses, there have been modifications to the curriculum to integrate MTB-MLE, specifically by adopting localized content. They suggest further improvements can be made through regular updates of materials and enhanced teacher training.

To improve curriculum integration and address the need for adequate resources, responses say that “To enhance the integration of MTB-MLE in the curriculum, it is necessary to ensure that teachers have access to adequate resources, including textbooks, learning materials, and technology in the mother tongue.” According to Purcia and Castante (2023) that teachers should take part in the implementation/revision of the MTB-MLE curriculum, since they are at the helm of the program implementation. This ensures that the curriculum is practical and relevant to the classroom environment.

Another response says that, “Yes, the curriculum has been adopted to include localized content; further improvement can be made by regularly updating materials and enhancing teachers' training.” And “Development of culturally relevant materials that reflect the local context and student experiences.” To redefine the curriculum guide, learning activities, and assessments based on the most essential learning competencies suitable for MTB-MLE implementation (Purcia and Castante, 2023).

How does your school or office work with local government units, NGOs, or educational institutions to support MTB-MLE?

Based on their responses, it says that “By seeking support for learning materials, training programs, and community-based language initiatives. And “Schools and offices collaborate with various stakeholders to develop and support MTB-MLE, such as helping to upgrade school facilities to better accommodate this program (e.g., providing better classroom resources and technology).” The responses indicate that schools and offices engage with local government units, NGOs, or educational institutions to support MTB-MLE through learning materials, training programs, and community-based language initiatives. Additionally, schools and offices collaborate with various stakeholders to develop and support MTB-MLE, such as helping to upgrade school facilities to accommodate this program better, like providing better classroom resources and technology.

According to Cabansag (2016), these collaborations are crucial for supplementing resources and expertise, and for ensuring the sustainability of MTB-MLE programs. To strengthen these partnerships, administrators and policymakers could consider involving local stakeholders in the planning and implementation of MTB-MLE programs. This collaborative approach can help address challenges such as multilingual environments, difficulty in translation, and inadequacy of instructional materials (Cabansag, 2016).

What are your future plans to strengthen and sustain MTB-MLE implementation?

Based on the responses, it says that “To strengthen and sustain the implementation of MTB-MLE, the school should emphasize strategies for actively involving parents in the educational process, fostering their understanding and support for this program; the plans include teacher training, localized material development, community involvement, and stakeholder partnership; and continue curriculum development, teacher training, and assessment to monitor

learners' progress." The administrators and policymakers' responses indicate several key plans to strengthen and sustain MTB-MLE implementation. They emphasized strategies for actively involving parents in the educational process, fostering their understanding and support for the program. They plan to include teacher training, localized material development, community involvement, and stakeholder partnerships. And the continuing curriculum development, teacher training, and assessment to monitor learners' progress. To ensure the success and sustainability of MTB-MLE, according to Purcia and Castante (2023) that in the aspect of teacher training and support, provide ongoing professional development and support to teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge in MTB-MLE instruction. In the part of curriculum development and localization, regularly update and refine the curriculum to include localized content and relevant learning materials (Purcia and Castante, 2023). In the community engagement, Cabansag (2016) emphasized that actively involve the community in supporting MTB-MLE through various initiatives, such as community meetings, literacy programs, and cultural events. Additionally, foster strong partnerships with local government units, NGOs, and educational institutions to leverage resources and expertise (Cabansag, 2016).

3.7. Opportunities Provided by MTB-MLE

3.7.1. For Teachers

In what ways have you observed MTB-MLE improving students' academic performance and comprehension?

Based on the responses it says that "Quizzes, summative tests, pre-tests, and post-tests will measure their knowledge and whether they understand the lesson well." And "Better understanding promotes learners' vocabulary development and improves comprehension." The teachers' responses suggest that MTB-MLE improves students' academic performance. They can observe these through quizzes, summative tests, pre-tests, and post-tests can measure students' knowledge and understanding of the lesson. They see that better understanding promotes learners' vocabulary development and improves comprehension through MTB-MLE.

Another response says that "They participate more actively and are more confident in expressing their thoughts;" and "they can express more using their mother tongue. Teachers' responses suggest that students participate more actively and are more confident in expressing their thoughts. In addition, students can express themselves more effectively using their mother tongue.

These observations align with research indicating that MTB-MLE leads to better retention, improved understanding, and increased self-confidence among students (Cabansag, 2016). By using the mother tongue as the language of instruction, students can actively participate in the learning process because they understand what is being discussed and what is being asked of them ("Difficulties and Challenges in Teaching Science: The Aftermath of MTB-MLE," 2019). The MTB-MLE program plays a vital role in learners' development, especially in language acquisition (Gr, 1992).

How has MTB-MLE influenced students' class participation and communication skills?

Based on the responses, which says students' "Express their own experiences;" and "they are more likely to participate in the class and are more confident in answering the questions using their mother tongue." These responses suggest that students can express their own experiences more readily. Moreover, they are more likely to participate in class and are more confident in answering questions using their mother tongue.

Another response that says, "Through MTB-MLE, it influences students' class participation, more engaging and interactive, and pupils have confidence." This shows that MTB-MLE makes class participation more engaging and interactive, building students' confidence.

These observations align with findings that MTB-MLE leads to benefits such as expressing better ideas and building self-confidence (Cabansag, 2016). By using the mother tongue, students feel more comfortable and confident in expressing themselves, which promotes a more engaging and interactive learning environment ("Difficulties and Challenges in Teaching Science: The Aftermath of MTB-MLE," 2019).

How does MTB-MLE help students appreciate and retain their cultural identity?

According to the responses it says that "the MTB-MLE helps students appreciate and retain their cultural identity. They feel comfortable, boost their confidence, and engage actively during our class discussions;" and "by integrating indigenous stories, traditions, and values into lessons." It shows that MTB-MLE helps students feel comfortable, which boosts their confidence and encourages active engagement in class discussions. In the field of cultural integration, MTB-MLE integrated indigenous stories, traditions, and values into lessons that connects students to their heritage.

Another response that says, “using a student’s native language as the primary medium of instruction allows students to build upon their existing knowledge and understanding. This fosters a deeper connection to the learning material and encourages teachers to explore creative ways to bridge the gap between their mother tongue and another language.” It shows that using a student’s native language as the primary medium of instruction allows students to build upon their existing knowledge and understanding, fostering a deeper connection to the learning material.

Moreover, the responses that say, “mother tongue can provide opportunities for cultural immersion, allowing students to experience and appreciate their culture more authentically;” and “by fostering a deeper understanding of their heritage, tradition, and values.” These responses talked about Cultural Immersion and understanding of heritage wherein the mother tongue instruction can provide opportunities for cultural immersion, allowing students to experience and appreciate their culture more authentically. Additionally, MTB-MLE fosters a deeper understanding of students’ heritage, traditions, and values.

According to Chen and Gay (2020) that MTB-MLE creates a culturally sensitive environment that motivates students to engage in learning activities. By valuing and incorporating students’ cultural knowledge and experiences, MTB-MLE promotes a sense of belonging and pride in their cultural identity (Cabansag, 2016).

Does MTB-MLE allow you to be more creative and adaptable in your teaching approach?

The responses show a creative and adaptable teaching approach based on the responses that say, “Storytelling incorporates stories and folktales from pupils.” And “Yes, using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction allows teachers to build upon students’ existing knowledge and understanding. This fosters a deeper connection to the learning materials, encouraging teachers to explore creative ways to bridge the gap between the mother tongue and other languages.” Teachers incorporate stories and folktales from their pupils, which personalizes the learning experience and makes it more culturally relevant. Moreover, using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction allows teachers to build upon students’ existing knowledge and understanding. This fosters a deeper connection to the learning materials, encouraging teachers to explore creative ways to bridge the gap between the mother tongue and other languages.

MTB-MLE encourages teachers to be more liberal and innovative in the classroom by making use of minority languages (Teachers’ Use of MTB-MLE Strategies in Multilingual Lower Primary School Grades of Chongwe Rural District, 2024). Strategies such as the translation of the target language to the mother tongue, the utilization of multilingual teaching, and the improvisation of instructional materials written in the mother tongue are used (Lartec et al., 2014).

How has MTB-MLE contributed to your development as an educator?

The teachers’ responses suggest that MTB-MLE has contributed to their development as educators, as they say that “As an educator, through our lessons, we deliver well and effectively understand and provide professional development; it has enhanced my skills in developing contextualized learning materials and deepened my understanding of students’ cultural backgrounds; and educators are encouraged to explore new methods and approaches, leading to a more dynamic and evolving teaching profession.” Based on their responses, the MTB-MLE enables educators to deliver lessons effectively and understand their students better. It also improves the skills in developing contextualized learning materials and deepening understanding of students’ cultural backgrounds. Moreover, it prompts educators to explore new methods and approaches, leading to a more dynamic and evolving teaching profession.

These contributions align with the idea that teachers should take part in the implementation/revision of the MTB-MLE curriculum since they are at the helm of the program implementation (Purcia and Castante, 2023). The Department of Education should provide support to teachers to enhance their teaching capabilities on the use of MTB-MLE instruction, especially the necessary materials and interventions that will be utilized in delivering instructions more effectively (Purcia and Castante, 2023).

3.7.2. For Parents

Has MTB-MLE made it easier for you to help your child in their learning?

Based on the responses, it says that “Not much, it’s easier to understand when the lessons are in English; and Not much, children are more familiar with English terms.” The parents’ responses indicate that some find it *not much* easier to help their children with learning through MTB-MLE, with some suggesting that English is easier to understand or that children are more familiar with English terms.

This perspective highlights a potential challenge in the implementation of MTB-MLE. While MTB-MLE aims to improve comprehension by using the mother tongue, some parents may find it difficult to assist their children if they themselves are more comfortable with English or if they perceive that their children are more familiar with English terminology. This also points to the need to involve parents in the MTB-MLE program to foster understanding and support (Purcia and Castante, 2023).

Do you think MTB-MLE strengthens the bond between schools and local communities?

The parents' response "Yes, it strengthens the relationship between the school and the community" suggests a positive perception of MTB-MLE's role in fostering stronger bonds between schools and local communities.

This aligns with the broader understanding that involving local stakeholders is crucial for the success of MTB-MLE programs (Cabansag, 2016). When schools actively engage with parents and the community, it creates a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the education of the children (Community Building and Parents Communication, 2023). This collaboration can lead to increased support for the program, better understanding of its goals, and improved outcomes for students (The Power of Engaging Families, 2020). Schools that work to integrate a diverse family population into the fabric of their school tend to have stronger connections with the community (Hiefield, 2018).

How has MTB-MLE affected your child's ability to communicate and express themselves?

Based on the responses that say, "They understand the lessons well using MTB-MLE. They expanded his ideas through MTB-MLE. They are no longer has difficulty with English language; he is more open to saying what he wants; and this has helped him in communicating and expressing himself." These observations align with research suggesting that MTB-MLE can lead to benefits such as expressing better ideas and building self-confidence (Cabansag, 2016). When children are taught in their mother tongue, they are more likely to actively participate in class and are more confident in expressing their thoughts (Cabansag, 2016).

Have you noticed an improvement in your child's understanding and appreciation of their local culture?

According to the responses that says, "MTB-MLE has helped preserve local culture and identity; and they have become more aware of their origins and are proud of their future." These observations align with the intent of MTB-MLE to promote cultural identity and heritage (Gr, 1992). By using the mother tongue in education and integrating local content, MTB-MLE can help students connect with their cultural roots, develop a sense of belonging, and appreciate the richness of their heritage (Cabansag, 2016). This, in turn, can foster a stronger sense of cultural pride and identity (Teachers' Use of MTB-MLE Strategies in Multilingual Lower Primary School Grades of Chongwe Rural District, 2024).

Do you believe MTB-MLE helps prepare children for future learning and career opportunities?

On the responses that says, "Yes. He will understand his surroundings better; Yes. Because they can learn a lot and wherever they go, they bring their culture with them; and it is because they are more connected to the community." These perspectives highlight the potential of MTB-MLE to foster a well-rounded development that goes beyond academic learning. By grounding education in the local context and culture, MTB-MLE can help children develop a deeper understanding of the world around them and a stronger sense of identity. This can empower them to become active and engaged members of their communities and to navigate future opportunities with confidence. MTB-MLE is seen as a practical and effective approach in the educational landscape that prepares generations to be better contributors in a globalized world (Cabansag, 2016).

3.7.3. For Administrators and Policymakers

Have literacy rates improved since the implementation of MTB-MLE? Can you provide data or observations?

The administrators and policymakers' responses suggest a positive impact on literacy rates since the implementation of MTB-MLE. Based on the responses that says, "Yes, literacy rates have improved as learners better understand lessons in their mother tongue, based on classroom observations and assessment results." And "Yes, from the Phil-Iri result, only a few got the frustration level." These observations are in line with the goals of the MTB-MLE program, which aims to improve learners' understanding and academic performance by utilizing their mother tongue as the primary language of instruction (Darmini, 2024). The MTB-MLE program plays a vital role in the learners' development process, especially in the language acquisition domain (Gr, 1992).

Does MTB-MLE make education more accessible for indigenous, rural, or disadvantaged students?

Based on the responses that say, “Yes, MTB-MLE enhances access for indigenous and rural students by using familiar language in early education. And it can overcome language barriers that often hinder learning.” The administrators and policymakers’ responses confirm that MTB-MLE enhances accessibility for indigenous, rural, and disadvantaged students by using familiar language in early education and overcoming language barriers (Maher, 2011; Yang et al., 2018).

Using the mother tongue in education can help bridge the gap between home and school, making learning more relevant and engaging for students from diverse backgrounds. This is particularly important for indigenous and rural students who may come from communities where the dominant language of instruction is not widely spoken (Pulla, 2001). By providing instruction in their mother tongue, MTB-MLE can help these students build a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy, which can improve their overall academic outcomes (“Difficulties and Challenges in Teaching Science: The Aftermath of MTB-MLE,” 2019).

How has MTB-MLE helped in strengthening teacher competency and instructional effectiveness?

The administrators’ and policymakers suggest that MTB-MLE contributes to strengthening teacher competency and instructional effectiveness through the responses that say, “MTB-MLE improves teacher competency by encouraging contextualized teaching and continuous training.” And “MTB-MLE has encouraged collaboration among teachers, leading to the sharing of best practices and the development of innovative teaching strategies.” Teachers should take part in the implementation/revision of the MTB-MLE curriculum (Purcia and Castante, 2023). The Department of Education should provide support to teachers to enhance their teaching capabilities on the use of MTB-MLE instruction, especially the necessary materials and interventions that will be utilized in delivering instructions more effectively (Purcia and Castante, 2023).

How does MTB-MLE contribute to Philippine education’s alignment with international multilingual policies?

The administrators and policymakers indicate that MTB-MLE contributes to Philippine education’s alignment with international multilingual policies by through the responses that says, “It supports global alignment by promoting inclusive, multilingual education policies in line with international standards.” And “MTB-MLE aligns Philippine education with international multilingual policies by recognizing the importance of mother tongue-based education in promoting multilingualism and improving learning outcomes.” This alignment reflects a global trend towards recognizing the value of multilingualism and the importance of mother tongue-based education in achieving quality education for all. MTB-MLE is a practical and effective approach in the educational landscape that prepares generations to be better contributors in a globalized world (Cabansag, 2016).

What opportunities do you see for expanding and improving MTB-MLE in the next five to ten years?

Administrators and policymakers see opportunities for expanding and improving MTB-MLE through the responses that says, “over the next 5 to 10 years, there are opportunities for digital material development, stronger partnerships, and sustained teacher upskilling.” And “the creation of high-quality digital learning materials in various local languages to enhance accessibility and engagement.” These opportunities align with the need for ongoing support and resources to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of MTB-MLE programs (Cabansag, 2016; Gr, 1992).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings indicated that MTB-MLE positively influences language development in early-grade learners. The teachers, being at the forefront of instruction, directly witnessed and acknowledged the benefits of MTB-MLE in nurturing language skills among their students. Furthermore, MTB-MLE significantly enhanced children’s ability to analyze and apply concepts. This underscores the importance of mother tongue-based instruction in fostering cognitive development and language acquisition in the early years of education.

While perceptions on the effectiveness of MTB-MLE on language development are generally positive, the degree of agreement varies among different groups. Teachers, who are directly involved in instruction consistently perceive a more substantial positive impact on cognitive development, language, and literacy than parents and administrators. This difference highlights the importance of teachers’ firsthand experiences in recognizing the cognitive and linguistic benefits of MTB-MLE.

Meanwhile, the statistically significant difference in perceived effectiveness, particularly in the cognitive domain, suggests that the impact of MTB-MLE on cognitive development is viewed differently by teachers, parents, and

administrators. The observed differences in mean scores between the groups, unlikely to have occurred by chance, emphasized the need to consider these varying perspectives when evaluating and refining MTB-MLE programs. Understanding why these perceptions differ can help tailor support and resources to better meet the needs of all stakeholders and improve the overall effectiveness of the program

In addition, the MTB-MLE demonstrated a significant positive impact on socio-cultural aspects, specifically cultural identity, engagement, and heritage. The teachers recognize this influence through their direct classroom experiences, observing how MTB-MLE enhances students' sense of self, participation, and connection to their cultural roots. On the other hand, Parents also appreciate the value of MTB-MLE in promoting cultural awareness and engagement, while administrators acknowledge its role in supporting the school's mission of fostering culturally responsive education. This collective recognition highlights the comprehensive benefits of MTB-MLE in nurturing both academic and cultural development.

Finally, the challenges, solutions, and opportunities related to MTB-MLE implementation are viewed differently depending on the stakeholder. While difficulties such as managing multilingual classrooms, translating materials, and resource scarcity exist, engaging stakeholders, adapting the curriculum, developing resources, training teachers, and fostering community collaboration are key solutions. These solutions create opportunities to enhance accessibility, strengthen partnerships, empower teachers, promote cultural awareness, and advance educational equity. Therefore, a multi-faceted approach that addresses challenges while leveraging opportunities is crucial for successful MTB-MLE implementation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to give light to the findings and conclusions of the study:

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it is recommended the continued and strengthened implementation of MTB-MLE programs. To further enhance its effectiveness, consider providing ongoing professional development to equip teachers with the skills and resources needed to effectively implement MTB-MLE strategies. Invest in the creation of culturally relevant and age-appropriate learning materials in local languages. Foster strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities to support the program and ensure its cultural relevance. Adapt curriculum guides and assessments to match the specific needs and competencies of students in MTB-MLE programs. Additionally, by addressing the challenges and by means of the opportunities associated with MTB-MLE, create a more equitable and effective education system that supports the cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural development of all learners.

Building on the positive perceptions of MTB-MLE's effectiveness, particularly as observed by teachers, it is recommended in focusing on the strategies to bridge the perceptual gap between teachers, parents, and administrators. By considering the to facilitate regular dialogue between teachers, parents, and administrators to share observations, discuss student progress, and address concerns related to MTB-MLE implementation. Provide parents and administrators with concrete data and examples illustrating the positive impact of MTB-MLE on student learning outcomes, including literacy, numeracy, and socio-cultural development. Offer opportunities for parents and administrators to observe MTB-MLE classrooms firsthand, participate in workshops, and engage with students and teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the program's benefits. And design professional development programs for administrators and parents that focus on the cognitive and linguistic advantages of multilingualism and the specific pedagogical approaches used in MTB-MLE.

In order to address the significant differences in perceived effectiveness of MTB-MLE, particularly in the cognitive domain, it is recommended to have an approach focusing on evidence-based communication, targeted support, and collaborative evaluation.

Given that MTB-MLE significantly enhances cultural identity, engagement, and heritage as shown in the summary and conclusion, it is recommended that to develop and implement community-based projects that actively involve students, families, and community members in researching, documenting, and preserving local cultural heritage. Use local stories, traditions, and cultural practices to illustrate concepts in math, science, and other subjects. Organize cultural exchange programs that allow students to interact with peers from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Invite local cultural practitioners, such as artists, musicians, storytellers, and elderly people, to share their knowledge and skills with students. And promote awareness of cultural heritage.

Finally, in acknowledging the comprehensive nature of MTB-MLE implementation, it is recommended to have a strategic approach that integrates the development of targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by each

stakeholder group (teachers, parents, administrators, community members). Empower teachers to adapt the curriculum to meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of their students. Engage local communities in the development of culturally appropriate learning resources, such as storybooks, songs, and games in the mother tongue. Offer specialized training on strategies for supporting multilingual learners and promoting cross-cultural understanding. And foster strong partnerships between schools, families, community organizations, and local government agencies to support MTB-MLE implementation.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research article. Both authors have equally contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, analysis, and writing of this manuscript.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were assured throughout the research process.

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