

Volume 2-Number 1-2020-1

MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM (ALS) PROGRAM

MA. MELISSA D. ALBINO¹

Department Of Education-Bureau of Curriculum Development, San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan

DR. ERNIE V. ESTRELLA²

St.. Francis De Asisi Montessori School Inc. Plaridel, Bulacan

Abstract

Despite the increasing school dropouts every year, there is the Alternative Learning System (ALS) of the Department of Education (DepEd). ALS caters the learning needs of the out-of-school children, youth and adults. However, ALS is considered as second class in terms of curriculum, programs, implementers, learning materials, venues, and the like.

There are two major programs on ALS that are being implemented by the DepEd, namely the Non-formal Education program (NFE) and the Informal Education (Infed) program. Under the NFE are the Basic Literacy Program (BLP) and the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) System. ALS programs are modular and flexible. This means that learning can take place anytime and in any place, depending on the convenience and availability of the learners. It happens outside the classroom, is community-based, is usually conducted in community learning centers, barangay multi-purpose halls, libraries or at home, managed by ALS learning facilitators, such as Mobile Teachers, District ALS Coordinators, Instructional Managers at an agreed schedule and venue between the learners and Learning Facilitators.

The study is all about how ALS in the National Capital Region (NCR) was enhanced through monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an integral part of every program, project or activity. It plays an important part in measuring the quality of every

program, and helps to attain the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 by 2030 which is quality education. DepEd needs to enhance and intensify the existing policies of the monitoring and evaluation component of ALS. In this study, the researcher used quantitative research in order to describe the characteristics of the target population. The researcher used the eight (8) DepEd division offices in NCR. The study used two (2) sets of modified monitoring instruments to determine the effectiveness of ALS program implementation in NCR. There are two sets of instruments: M&E 001 (ALS Implementers) and M&E 002 (ALS Learners).

In view of the foregoing significant findings of the study, the conclusions are the qualification standards, roles and functions, competence, and capability are not a guarantee for an effective learning facilitators; limited implementation of the ALS programs such as BLP and A&E Programs also show significant effect in the whole implementation of ALS; the number of frequency of monitoring and evaluation of ALS programs shows significant effect to the quality of ALS programs; the level of satisfaction of learners can also be measured in the venue and learning facilitators; and likewise, the attainment of the learners can be measured to the achievement of the learning goals and objectives.

Based on the significant findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher recommends that the existing ALS monitoring and evaluation process be reviewed to meet the needs of the DepEd monitoring team; that the policy on the ALS monitoring and evaluation be enhanced in order to be useful to the needs of the DepEd monitoring team; and that the implementation of policy on ALS monitoring and evaluation be intensified by conducting capability building program for the monitoring team. From this study, the researcher will help DepEd to decide on the enhancement of the existing policies.

Introduction

The Department of Education (DepEd) has two (2) basic education systems. It has the formal basic education which caters the learning needs of school-age children and youth. On the other hand, the Alternative Learning System (ALS), is mandated to address the essential education needs of out-of-school youth and adults who have not been to school at all or those who have dropped out of school especially those living in far-flung and isolated communities of the country.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution states that the government must promote non- formal, informal and indigenous learning systems as well as independent and self-learning and other forms of learning programs for out-of-school youth to address their learning needs in the community. This implies the significance of the alternative learning system to offer both non-formal and informal education nationwide.

There are about 17 million out-of-school youth and adults nationwide (Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey, 2013). Less than 1% of these target beneficiaries are catered by the ALS implementers. The completion rate and passing rate of the ALS learners are particularly higher among the ALS secondary level learners.

Approximately 30% of the ALS elementary enrollees attempted this certification test at least once, and 18 percent eventually passed the test. In contrast, 55 percent of the ALS secondary enrollees took the test and 28 percent eventually passed it. A large share of learners did not try to take the certification test and remained unaccredited (ALS MIS data 2015).

Some of the problems that need to be put an end to are the high dropout rates, low passing grades, lack of skills in language, and lack of intervention for those with special needs. These issues in turn contributed to a high percentage of illiterate people and out-of-school youth. The Philippines, through DepEd's Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS), envision the attainment of a universal functional literacy by 2015.

The goals of EFA 2015 ALS are eradication of illiteracy, promotion of continuing education and implementation of integrated programs. Its target is the offering of excellent quality education in non-formal and informal education as an alternative for basic education. The ALS is an instrument to uphold the learners' desire for further enhancement of their learning and meaningful participation in the community and society.

The formal basic education cannot accommodate all learners with different learning needs and styles. Many children, youths and adults cannot access basic education in the formal school system. There is a constant increase in the number of out-of-school children, youth and adults in the Philippine society yearly because of early pregnancy, lack of financial support, broken family, and the like (World Bank, 2016).

It cannot be solved overnight but DepEd is trying to discover the right and possible solutions for the problems. Since ALS programs are implemented nationwide and the DepEd must ensure that the indicators such as access, efficiency and quality of these programs are achieved, monitoring and evaluation of the said programs plays an important role in planning and making decisions for improving project performance and enabling timely and appropriate action to implementation issues and concerns.

This study will be conducted in order to review the performance of selected levels on the structure of DepEd. The National Capital Region (NCR) is good parameter to determine the implementation of the Alternative Learning System as an option for formal basic education.

Statement of the Problem

The general problem of the study is: How may the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the National Capital Region (NCR) be enhanced through monitoring and evaluation?

Specifically, this study required answers to the following problems:

1. How may the DepEd officials engage in the ALS programs be described in terms of :
 1. qualification standards ?
 2. roles and functions ?
2. How do the DepEd officials and learners choose the:
 1. ALS programs
 2. venue
 3. learning facilitators/learners
3. How do the DepEd officials appraise their capability and competence?
4. What is the frequency of monitoring and evaluating being done by DepEd officials on ALS programs?
5. What is the level of satisfaction of learners in terms of :
 1. learning modality ?
 2. learning module ?
 3. learning facilitator ?
 4. learning venue ?
 5. learning assessment ?
6. What policy recommendation may be proposed for efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of ALS Programs?

Methods

This study made use of quantitative research method. It employed a questionnaire as the technique in data collection. Quantitative research scientifically documents current information, lasting products or other occurrences that can be determined directly by researchers today.

Quantitative research is used to define the attributes of a population without answering the questions about how, when or why the characteristics happened. It analyzes data to describe,

show and summarize it in a meaningful way, offering a window through which raw data can be glimpsed and comprehended clearly by different researchers.

In addition to this, quantitative study is one in which information is collected without changing the environment. Furthermore, the quantitative research is aimed at casting light on current issues or problems through a process of data collection that enables them to describe the situation more completely than was possible without employing this method.

This method meets the objective of this study, which is to explore the effect of the monitoring and evaluation in the quality of the ALS program in selected divisions in NCR. This involves the quality of ALS monitoring and evaluation in terms of the following indicators: (1) demographic profile of the ALS implementers (education program supervisor 1- in-charge of ALS, public schools district supervisor, education program specialist II for ALS and district ALS coordinator, (2) learning intervention such as learner's choice of venue and learning facilitator and learning facilitator's choice of venue and learners, (3) implementation of the program, (4) capability and competence, (5) monitoring, (6) evaluation, and (7) learner's level of satisfaction of the implementation of ALS program.

The study depicted the various factors affecting the quality of the ALS programs at a given point in time using a locally constructed questionnaire.

The eight (8) DepEd Division Offices in the National Capital Region (NCR) were involved in this study. The researcher chose these divisions in terms of the following criteria: number of population, number of years in operation, academic performance of the learners, and number of ALS implementers.

The researcher approached the eight (8) education program supervisors 1- in-charge of ALS, sixteen (16) education program specialists II for ALS, sixteen (16) public schools district supervisors and sixteen (16) district ALS coordinators.

The study used the ALS monitoring and evaluation policy of the Department of Education to determine the effectiveness of the ALS program implementation in National Capital Region. This was adapted in the ALS monitoring and evaluation tools.

There are two set of instruments: M&E 001 and M&E 002. The first instrument is divided into six (6) parts: Part I- Qualification Standards of the ALS implementers, Part II-Learning Intervention , Part III-Implementation of the Program, Part IV-Capability and Competence, Part V-Monitoring, and Part VI-Evaluation. The respondents of this instrument are the ALS implementers. The second instrument measures the level of satisfaction of the learners.

The researcher personally administered and retrieved the questionnaires from the respondents during the national workshops/trainings and community learning centers visits. This is to

eliminate the possibility that the respondents will make mistakes in the manner by which they answer the questions, or will leave some items unanswered which will adversely affect the outcome of the study. The process ensured 100 percent retrieval of questionnaires, together with the help of the ALS implementers in the NCR. The researcher guided the respondents in answering the questionnaires. The researcher completed the required number of respondents after two (2) weeks.

The statistical analysis and treatment of data involved were frequency, percentage and weighted mean for the status of the program. To measure the level of effectiveness of the ALS programs, the Four-Point Likert Scale was used and indicated as follows:

Scale	Descriptive Rating
3.60 – 4.00	Excellent
2.60 – 3.59	Good
1.60 - 2.59	Fair
1.00 - 1.59	Poor

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to enhance the Alternative Learning System (ALS) implementation in the National Capital Region (NCR) through monitoring and evaluation by identifying the factors affecting the quality of the ALS.

a. Qualification Standards

All of the fifty-six (56) respondents are qualified to be an ALS implementer in terms of education, experience, training and eligibility. Around 41% of the respondents were in their doctoral degree or graduated from their doctoral decree plus the number of their years in service and the number of hours of trainings show that these have a significant effect on the implementation of ALS programs.

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the qualification standards in terms of educational attainment, number of years of experience, number of trainings attended and number of eligibilities.

Table 2.

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Demographic Profile of the ALS Implementers in terms of Qualification Standards

No.	Criteria	Frequency				Mean	Interpretation
		4	3	2	1		
1	Education	23	13	17	3	3	Good
2	Experience	22	18	12	4	3.04	Good
3	Training	23	11	14	8	2.88	Good
4	Eligibility	2	13	41	0	2.30	Fair
Total Mean					2.81	Good	

b. Roles and Functions

The fifty-six (56) respondents rated their role from 1-4 and 4 being the highest and 1 is the lowest. There are nine (9) roles identified by the researcher. The highest role they rated was the related task or services while the lowest role they rated was planning. However, most of the roles were rated good. The ALS implementers were confident in saying that they are doing their roles for the ALS.

The frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the demographic profile of the ALS implementers in terms of roles and functions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Demographic Profile of the ALS Implementers in terms of Roles and Functions

No.	Criteria	Frequency				Mean	Interpretation
		4	3	2	1		
1	Planning	32	19	5	0	3.48	Good
2	Advocacy and Social Mobilization	35	16	5	0	3.54	Good
3	Instructional Supervision	35	15	6	0	3.52	Good
4	Research and Development	35	15	6	0	3.52	Good
5	Linkage and Network	33	17	6	0	3.48	Good
6	Management of Information and Related Administrative Functions	35	14	7	0	3.50	Good
7	Monitoring and Evaluation	36	14	6	0	3.54	Good
8	Technical Assistance	37	14	5	0	3.57	Good
9	Related Tasks or Services	43	9	4	0	3.70	Excellent
Total Mean					3.54	Good	

c. ALS Programs

Around 96.43% or 54 of the respondents identified that they were implementing the Basic Literacy Program (BLP) and 100% identified that they were implementing Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program. However, some of the specific programs for both BLP and A&E were not implemented due to some factors.

Table 4 shows the frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the Basic Literacy Program (BLP) and the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program and their various modalities.

Table 4.

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Implementation of ALS Programs in terms of Basic Literacy Program (BLP) and Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program No. ALS Programs

No.	ALS Programs	YES		NO	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Basic Literacy Program (BLP)	54	96.43	2	3.57
1.1	Family Basic Literacy Project (FBLP)	7	12.5	49	87.5
1.2	Arabic Language and Islamic Values (ALIVE)	38	67.86	18	32.14
1.3	Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education	10	17.85	46	82.14
2	Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program	56	100.00	0	0
2.1	Arabic Language and Islamic Values (ALIVE)	29	51.79	27	48.21
2.2	Radio-Based Instruction (RBI)	4	7.14	52	92.86
2.3	Computer-Based Instruction (CBI)	43	76.79	13	23.21

d. Venue

Based on tables 5 and 6, learners did not choose their learning venue while the learning facilitators chose their preferred or available venue. However, there were some learning facilitators who let the learners choose their venue of learning especially if the venue was far from the community learning center.

The frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the learning intervention in terms of learner's choice and learning facilitator's choice are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

e. Learning Facilitators/Learners

The tables 5 and 6 showed that learners cannot choose their learning facilitators. On the other hand, most of the learning facilitators cannot also choose their learners.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Learning Intervention in terms of Learner's Choice

No.	Component	YES		NO	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Venue	15	26.79	41	73.21
2	Learning Facilitator	16	28.57	40	71.43

Table 6

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Implementation of ALS Programs in terms of Learning Facilitator’s Choice

No.	Component	YES Frequency	%	NO Frequency	%
1	Venue	41	73.21	15	26.79
2	Learner	17	30.36	39	69.64

f. Capability and Competence

The capability and competence showed low ratings in all criteria. The lowest among the criteria was the number of trainings attended in international and regional settings.

The frequency distribution and descriptive measure of the capability and competence in terms of number of years working in ALS and trainings attended from international to school level trainings are presented in table 7.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Capability and Competence in terms of Number of Years Working in ALS and Trainings Attended

No.	Criteria	Frequency				Mean	Interpretation
		4	3	2	1		
1	Years working as ALS Implementers	7	22	21	6	2.53	Fair
2	Number of trainings attended (International)	0	0	4	52	1.07	Poor
3	Number of trainings attended (National)	10	22	15	9	2.59	Fair
4	Number of trainings attended (Regional)	0	0	4	52	1.07	Poor
5	Number of trainings attended (Division)	4	26	21	5	2.52	Fair
6	Number of trainings attended (District)	0	0	11	45	1.2	Poor
7	Number of trainings attended (CLC)	0	12	25	19	1.88	Fair

g. Perceived Competence

82% or 46 of the respondents perceived themselves as competent in doing their job. Only 2 of the respondents rated themselves as fair in doing their job.

The frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the capability and competence in terms of perceived competence are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Capability and Competence in terms of Perceived Competence

4	Frequency			Mean	Interpretation
	3	2	1		
46	8	2	0	3.79	Excellent

h. Monitoring the ALS Programs

The overall rating on the monitoring of ALS programs was fair. The number of frequency showed that they were not doing regular monitoring to the field.

The frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the monitoring in terms of times they conduct monitoring the ALS programs in the community learning centers are described in table 9.

Table 9

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Monitoring in terms of No. of Times Monitoring the ALS Program in the Community Learning Centers

No.	Criteria	Frequency				Mean	Interpretation
		4	3	2	1		
1	Learning Facilitators	5	5	37	9	2.11	Fair
2	Community Learning Centers	15	4	32	5	2.52	Fair
3	Learning Modules	13	6	29	8	2.43	Fair
4	Supplies and Materials	13	6	27	10	2.39	Fair
5	Information and Communication Technologies	12	4	20	20	2.14	Fair
6	Learning Sessions	15	6	29	6	2.54	Fair
Total Mean						2.36	Fair

Evaluation of the ALS Programs

The overall rating on the evaluation of the ALS programs was good. The respondents showed in the data that they were evaluating the ALS programs more often.

Table 10 shows the frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the evaluation in terms of number of times of evaluating the ALS programs as perceived by the respondents.

Table 10.

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Evaluation in terms of Number of Times of Evaluating the ALS Programs in the Community

No.	Criteria	Frequency				Mean	Interpretation
		4	3	2	1		
1	Learning Facilitators	32	24	0	0	3.57	Good
2	Community Learning Centers	40	16	0	0	3.71	Excellent
3	Learning Modules	0	38	18	0	2.68	Good
4	Supplies and Materials	7	28	21	0	2.75	Good
5	Information and Communication Technologies	34	14	8	0	3.46	Good
6	Learning Sessions	16	32	8	0	3.14	Good
Total Mean						3.22	Good

j. Learning Modality

The learners rated the ALS learning modality as excellent. They were satisfied in the learning sessions being conducted.

Table 11 shows the frequency and percentage of the satisfaction level of learners in terms of the implementation of ALS programs.

Table 11

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Satisfaction Level of Learners in terms of the Implementation of ALS Programs

No.	Criteria	Frequency				Mean	Interpretation
		4	3	2	1		
1	Do the lessons meet the learning goals of the learners?	23	14	3	0	3.5	Good
2	Are the lessons discussed during the learning sessions relevant to daily life?	33	5	2	0	3.78	Excellent
3	Are the learning sessions interesting?	32	6	2	0	3.75	Excellent
4	Are the learning modules interesting?	30	6	3	1	3.63	Excellent
5	Are the learning modules allowed to be taken home if needed?	12	12	10	6	2.75	Good
6	Are you allowed to choose your learning facilitator?	7	8	13	12	2.25	Fair
7	Are you allowed to choose the venue of your learning sessions?	7	10	14	9	2.38	Fair
8	Do you discuss your learning plans/agreements with your facilitator?	4	10	15	11	2.18	Fair
9	Does the learning facilitator schedule enough learning sessions for the learners to attend?	7	13	18	2	2.63	Good
1	Do the lessons meet the learning goals of the learners?	23	14	3	0	3.5	Good
2	Are the lessons discussed during the learning sessions relevant to daily life?	33	5	2	0	3.78	Excellent
3	Are the learning sessions interesting?	32	6	2	0	3.75	Excellent
4	Are the learning modules interesting?	30	6	3	1	3.63	Excellent
5	Are the learning modules allowed to be taken home if needed?	12	12	10	6	2.75	Good
6	Are you allowed to choose your learning facilitator?	7	8	13	12	2.25	Fair
7	Are you allowed to choose the venue of your learning sessions?	7	10	14	9	2.38	Fair
Total Mean						3.22	Good

k. Learning Module

The learners rated the ALS learning module as good and excellent. It showed that learners were satisfied in the utilization of the learning modules.

Table 12 shows the frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the satisfaction level of learners in terms of the presence of leaning modules during the learning sessions.

Table 12.

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Satisfaction Level of Learners in terms of the Presence of Learning Modules During Learning Sessions

No.	Component	Yes Frequency	%	No Frequency	%
1	Do you use the learning modules in your session?	34	60.71	22	39.29

I. Learning Facilitator

Most of the learners rated the ALS learning facilitators fair and good. Some of the learners showed that learning sessions were not enough.

m. Learning Venue

The learners rated the ALS learning venue as fair because most of them cannot choose their venue of learning.

n. Learning Assessment

The learners rated the ALS learning assessment as good and excellent. It showed that learners were satisfied in the learning assessment as well as in the review sessions provided by the learning facilitators before the A&E test.

Table 13 shows the frequency distribution and descriptive measures of the satisfaction level of learners in terms of taking the A&E test.

Table 13.

Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Measures of the Satisfaction Level of Learners in terms of Taking the A&E

No.	Component	Yes Frequency	%	No Frequency	%
1	Did you take the A&E Exam?	16	28.57	40	71.43

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing significant findings of the study, the conclusions are:

1. The qualification standards, roles and functions, competence and capability are not a guarantee for an effective learning facilitator.
2. The limited implementation of the ALS programs such as BLP and A&E Programs also shows significant effect in the whole implementation of ALS because some of the specific ALS programs were not implemented fully by the ALS implementers.
3. The number of frequency of monitoring and evaluation of ALS programs shows significant effect to the quality of ALS programs;
4. The level of satisfaction of learners can also be measured in the venue and learning facilitators.
5. The attainment of the learners can be measured to achievement of the learning goals and objectives.

Recommendations

Based on the significant finding and conclusions of this study, the researcher recommends:

1. That the existing ALS monitoring and evaluation process be reviewed to meet the needs of the DepEd monitoring team;
2. That the policy on the ALS monitoring and evaluation be enhanced in order to be useful to the needs of the DepEd monitoring team; and
3. That the implementation of policy on ALS monitoring and evaluation be intensified by conducting capability building program for the monitoring team.

References

Alkin, Marvin C. (January 2012). "Evaluation Roots: An International Perspective", *Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation*, Volume 8.

Anderson, James (2016). "Paulo Freire's Philosophy of Education and our Ontological Incompleteness", *Taylor Francis Online Journal*.

Brown, Professor (2016). "Capabilities and Competencies-Toward Strategic Resonance Between Operations and Strategy Processes within Firms.

Christie, Christina A. (2013). "An Evaluation Theory Tree", *The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*.

Humphreys, Sara (2014) "Issues of Educational Access, Equity and Impact in Nigeria: The EDOREN Review of the Literature on Basic Education", *Education Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria Journal*.

King, Jean (2013). "An Update on the Latest Evaluation Theories and Models", *The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*.

Lyons, John (2014) "Paulo Freire's Educational Theory", *Cambridge Journal of Education*

Natividad, Pedro Melchor (March, 2014). "Teachers' Capability and Competence: Its Influence on the Reading Comprehension of Grade III Pupils".

Palfrey, Thomas R. (2014). "Implementation Theory", *Handbook of Game Theory*, Volume 3, 2014.

Ramsey, Kelly (2010). "Institutional Theory, *Handbook of Sociology and Social Research*.

SEAMEO Innotech (2016). "Monitoring of the Philippine Department of Education's Model Senior High School Program".

World Bank Report (May, 2016). *Alternative Learning System Study (Alternative and Inclusive Learning in the Philippines)*.