A Study of Challenges in Delivering Instruction, Learning Resources, and Student Attitudes: The Case of ALS Program

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Abstract: This study evaluated the implementation of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in Magsaysay District 1, Misamis Oriental, with a focus on identifying challenges faced by program implementers. Utilizing descriptive approach, the research involved 118 participants in which there were 43 implementers and 75 learners. Stratified random sampling with an online randomizer ensured a representative sample. Data collection employed a researcher-developed questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using the weighted mean. The findings revealed significant challenges for implementers, including limited availability of physical classrooms, insufficient internet access, and inadequate training for ALS mobile implementer. These challenges can hinder the ability of ALS programs to deliver quality education. Without proper classrooms, learning environments might be less conducive. Limited internet access restricts the use of online resources and potentially innovative teaching methods. Inadequate training for mobile teachers can lead to knowledge gaps and potentially less effective instruction. Based on these findings, the study recommends improvements in resource allocation and a more comprehensive approach how to address these challenges.

Index Terms-**:** Alternative Learning System Implementation, Assessment, Challenges Encountered

I.INTRODUCTION

The Philippines' Alternative Learning System (ALS) program offers an importance sustenance for out-of-school youth and Indigenous students who are seeking educational opportunities. By providing basic education, functional literacy, and life skills, ALS bridges the gap for those facing challenges like poverty, distance, and cultural barriers that prevent them from going to school and attending classes (DepEd, 2021)

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of this ALS program. Ramirez et al. (2017) documented a generally positive perception among participants, while de la Cruz et al. (2018) highlighted perceived value of this program for future endeavors. Garcia and Sanchez (2019) further emphasized the program's cultural sensitivity and flexibility, particularly for Indigenous students. However, these studies also identified shortcomings, including limited access to learning materials (Ramirez et al., 2017), discrimination (de la Cruz et al., 2018), and challenges adapting to teaching and the learning process.

This existing research paints a promising picture of the ALS how the ALS program bring impact to its stakeholders, but a crucial gap remains in our understanding of the specific challenges faced by program implementers. While studies acknowledge resource limitations and inadequate teacher training (Oliva & Sadsad, 2021) but there is a need for a deeper exploration of these limitations and challenges.

This study aims to contribute insights to the community of researchers, educators, and ALS implementers by identifying the specific challenges that the program implementers encountered, we can propose targeted solutions and advocate for improvements. This study sought to answer the specific research question as to the level of challenges encountered by implementers of ALS program in terms of delivering instruction, learning resources and student attitudes towards learning This, in turn, will strengthen the ALS program's capacity to deliver inclusive and effective ALS learners.

II   RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

This study was anchored to the two key theories to understand the challenges encountered by ALS program implementers. Niklas Luhmann's Social System Theory (1971): This theory views the ALS program as a social system with interconnected components – implementers, learners, resources, and policies. Luhmann emphasizes communication and information flow within these systems. Challenges can arise from communication breakdowns or difficulties adapting to changing environments. By analyzing the interactions between these components, we can identify areas where communication or resource allocation needs improvement, ultimately reducing challenges faced by implementers.

Lev Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (1978). This theory suggests that cultural and historical factors can create challenges in implementing inclusive education programs. In the Philippines, societal marginalization can lead to diverse cultural practices and beliefs among students, impacting their learning styles and needs. Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of social interaction and collaboration in learning. Therefore, challenges may arise if the social and cultural context of learning is not adequately considered. This theory highlights the need for implementers to go beyond simply modifying curriculum or teaching methods, but also to foster a more inclusive learning environment that takes into account students' cultural backgrounds (Núñez, 2021)

These theories directly connect to the research objectives of exploring the challenges faced by implementers in delivering effective instruction, providing adequate learning resources, and promoting positive student attitudes. This can help how communication breakdowns or limited resources can hinder effective instruction. Cultural-Historical Activity Theory highlights the need for culturally responsive teaching methods that consider the diverse needs of students. Furthermore, this can identify issues related to resource allocation and distribution within the ALS program. This theory emphasizes the importance of providing resources that are culturally relevant and accessible to students from diverse backgrounds.

As to student attitudes, both theories can provide insights into the challenges of fostering positive student attitudes. Social System Theory suggests that poor communication or a lack of support from the system can create a demotivating learning environment. Cultural-Historical Activity Theory highlights the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment that respects students' cultural backgrounds and learning styles. By determining the challenges through the lens of these theories, we can gain a deeper understanding of the root causes and develop more effective solutions to improve the ALS program for both implementers and students.
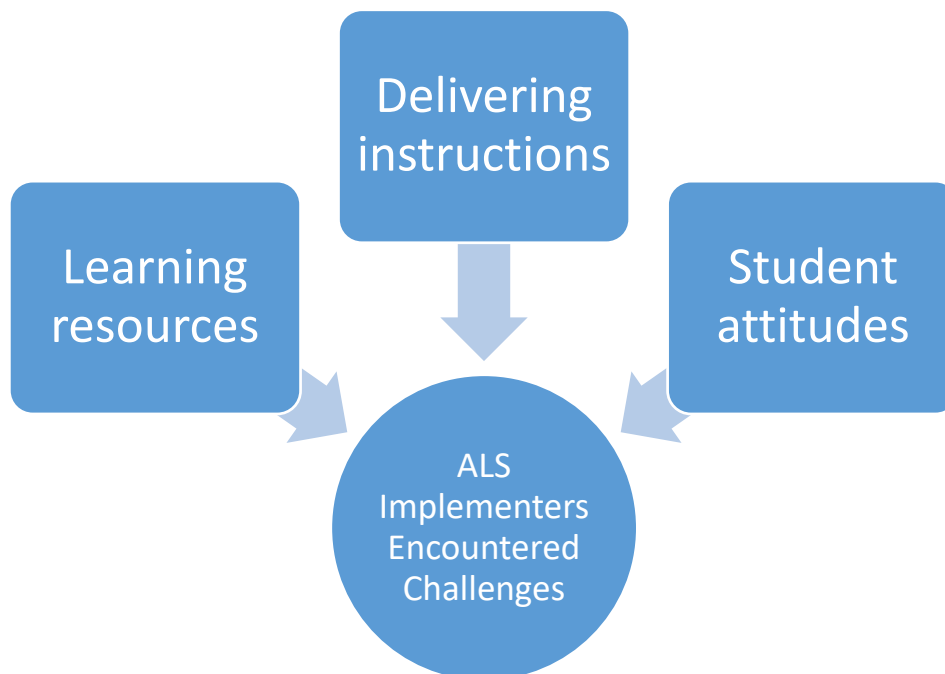
Figure 1. Research Flow of the Study

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive designs. Specifically, it determined challenges faced in delivering instruction, providing learning resources, and promoting student attitudes towards learning. The participants of the study involved a total of 118 participants from Magsaysay District I, Division of Misamis Oriental. This included 43 ALS teachers and 75 secondary learners undergoing Accreditation and Equivalency. Stratified random sampling with Cochran's formula was used to ensure a representative sample across the eleven educational centers within the district.

A researcher-developed survey questionnaire, with a Cronbach Alpha value of .980, was utilized for data collection. The questionnaire addressed challenges in delivering instruction, learning resource, and student learning attitudes. It underwent validation by three education experts: a College of Education professor from Caraga State University, and two ALS District Coordinators and Mobile teachers from Magsaysay District II. Following their feedback, the questionnaire was revised, and a pilot test was conducted with ALS implementers and learners in Magsaysay District 2 for reliability testing. Due to the lack of permanent learning centers, internet access, and technology in the area, printed questionnaires were distributed to participants during researcher visits.

Data collected from the questionnaires was tabulated, tallied, and scored for statistical analysis. Descriptive was applied to analyze and interpret the data, requiring data scoring and quantification. Specific statistical tools, such as weighted mean, was used to analyze the challenges faced in delivering effective instruction, providing adequate learning resources, and fostering positive student attitudes towards learning.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section the presents the results and discussions regarding the level of challenges encountered by ALS implementers in Magsaysay District I, Misamis Oriental. This is to answer as what level of challenges encountered by implementers of the Alternative Learning System in delivering effective instruction, providing adequate learning resources, and promoting positive student attitudes toward learning? Analyzing these challenges, it could help the implementers of the program to suggest areas for improvement

Table 1 provides a comprehensive assessment of the challenges faced by implementers of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) while striving to deliver effective instruction. These indicators reveal the nuanced landscape of hurdles encountered within the ALS program.

Table 1 *Mean Distribution of the Challenges Encountered by Implementers of the Alternative Learning System in Delivering Effective Instruction*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The ALS curriculum is well-designed and easy to implement.	4.45	Agree
2. The quality of teaching in the ALS program is consistently high.	4.06	Agree
3. The availability of technology resources makes it easier to deliver effective instruction.	3.88	Agree
4. The level of engagement among students in the ALS program is high.	3.94	Agree
5. The lack of physical classrooms poses a challenge in delivering effective instruction.	3.85	Agree
6. The limited access to an internet connection hinders the effective delivery of instruction.	3.48	Neutral
7. The lack of teacher training in online teaching methods is a barrier to delivering effective instruction.	3.48	Neutral
8. The absence of personalized feedback for students hinders their progress.	3.39	Neutral
9. The large class sizes in the ALS program make it difficult to deliver effective instruction.	3.18	Neutral
10. The use of outdated materials and resources make it difficult to deliver instruction that is relevant and engaging.	3.30	Neutral
Overall Mean	3.70	**Agree**

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Strongly agree; 3.50-4.49 Agree; 2.50-3.49 Neutral; 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree; 1.00-1.49 Strongly disagree

The study's findings, with an overall mean of 3.70, indicate a general agreement about the effectiveness of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program. Key aspects such as the curriculum's design and ease of implementation received a rating of 3.45, denoting agreement with its adequacy. Additionally, a score of 4.06 demonstrates how well-regarded the ALS program's teaching quality is, enhancing the program's efficacy.

However, the study also highlights areas of concern, particularly regarding class sizes. The rating of 3.18, categorized as neutral, suggests challenges in delivering effective instruction due to large class sizes. This aspect necessitates attention to ensure the overall effectiveness of the ALS program is not undermined. The implications of these findings are significant for educational policymakers and program administrators. While the ALS program is generally effective and well-received, it requires continuous improvement, especially in managing class sizes to enhance instructional quality. This insight should guide future efforts to refine and strengthen the ALS program, ensuring it remains a viable and effective alternative education system.

These outcomes resonate with wider discourse on challenges in alternative learning as supported by (Huang et al., 2020; Leiba & Getz, 2019). Addressing these concerns is fundamental to refining the ALS program's efficacy and fostering a more supportive learning environment for both educators and learners.

Table 2 presents a comprehensive overview of the challenges implemented by the Alternative Learning System (ALS) implementers in providing adequate learning resources. The evaluation, through various indicators, highlights the complexities ALS educators face in ensuring effective learning environments.

Table 2 *Mean Distribution of the Challenges Encountered by Implementers of the Alternative Learning System in Providing Adequate Learning Resources*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The ALS program provides sufficient learning resources for students.	4.48	Agree
2. The availability of technology resources makes it easier to provide adequate learning resources.	4.27	Agree
3. The limited funding for materials and resources poses a challenge in providing adequate learning resources.	3.91	Agree
4. The lack of physical classrooms poses a challenge in providing adequate learning resources.	3.61	Agree
5. The lack of access to a wide range of educational materials and resources hinders the provision of adequate learning resources.	3.61	Agree
6. The limited access to internet connection hinders the provision of adequate learning resources.	4.03	Agree
7. The absence of updated and relevant learning resources hinders effective learning.	3.21	Neutral
8. The lack of training for teachers in using new learning resources poses a challenge.	3.18	Neutral
9. The large class sizes in the ALS program make it difficult to provide adequate learning resources.	3.36	Neutral
10. The use of outdated materials and resources make it difficult to provide relevant and engaging learning resources.	3.61	Agree
Overall Mean	**3.73**	**Agree**

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Strongly agree; 3.50-4.49 Agree; 2.50-3.49 Neutral; 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree; 1.00-1.49 Strongly disagree

A high mean score of 4.48 demonstrates the implementers' unwavering agreement that the ALS program provides adequate learning resources. The availability of technology resources is perceived as crucial in providing adequate learning materials, with a mean score of 4.27. However, challenges arise due to limited funding for resources, the absence of physical classrooms, with a mean score of 3.61, and the lack of access to diverse educational materials with the same mean score of 3.61 - all of which agree.

These findings emphasize the critical significance of well-equipped learning environments. While commendable strides have been made, addressing resource-related challenges, including funding, physical spaces, and the currency of materials, is paramount. These outcomes align with broader conversations on the role of resources in effective education as mentioned by (Barton, 2020; Kennedy & Archambault, 2012), emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to ensure an inclusive and empowering ALS program.

Table 3 presents a comprehensive overview of the challenges encountered by implementers of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in cultivating positive student attitudes towards learning. Through a range of indicators, this evaluation provides valuable insights into the intricacies that influence students' perceptions of their learning experiences.

Table 3 *Mean Distribution of the Challenges Encountered by Implementers of the Alternative Learning System in promoting positive student attitudes towards learning*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The ALS program is effective in promoting positive student attitudes toward learning.	4.48	Agree
2. The use of technology resources makes it easier to promote positive student attitudes toward learning.	4.36	Agree
3. The limited access to internet connection hinders the promotion of positive student attitudes towards learning.	3.45	Neutral
4. The lack of physical classrooms poses a challenge in promoting positive student attitudes toward learning.	3.82	Agree
5. The absence of extracurricular activities hinders the promotion of positive student attitudes toward learning.	3.58	Agree
6. The limited resources for guidance and counseling hinder the promotion of positive student attitudes toward learning.	3.52	Neutral
7. The lack of parental support hinders the promotion of positive student attitudes toward learning.	3.42	Neutral
8. The lack of personal interaction and feedback hinders the promotion of positive student attitudes toward learning.	3.39	Neutral
9. The large class sizes in the ALS program make it difficult to promote positive student attitudes toward learning.	3.45	Neutral
10. The use of outdated teaching methods and resources hinders the promotion of positive student attitudes toward learning.	3.30	Neutral
Overall Mean	**3.68**	**Agree**

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Strongly agree; 3.50-4.49 Agree; 2.50-3.49 Neutral; 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree; 1.00-1.49 Strongly disagree

The finding that the overall mean score for challenges in promoting positive student attitudes within the ALS program is 3.68 (Agree) suggests that ALS implementers face moderate challenges in this area. This has important implications for improving the program's effectiveness. Challenges faced by implementers might hinder student motivation and decrease their overall engagement in the learning process. Difficulties promoting positive attitudes could indicate a less than ideal learning environment that may not be conducive to fostering a love of learning.

Implementers distinctly acknowledge that the ALS program is effective in promoting positive student attitudes toward learning. evident in a mean score of 4.48. The integration of technology resources emerges as a significant enabler in fostering positive attitudes, evident from a commendable mean score of 4.36. These findings highlighted the multidimensional nature of factors that shape student attitudes toward learning. While substantial steps have been achieved in leveraging technology and recognizing program efficacy, these results emphasize the necessity to address challenges related to resource constraints, class sizes, and pedagogical approaches. These results was supported with broader discussions on the intricate interplay between teaching, resources, and student engagement of (Finn & Zimmer, 2012; Roorda et al., 2011).

IV. CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the study conducted in Magsaysay District 1 revealed both strengths and weaknesses of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program. The curriculum impressed with its well-designed and easy-to-implement nature, and available learning resources were adequate considering funding constraints. Additionally, implementers reported positive student attitudes towards learning, indicating a positive impact on student motivation. However, the program also faces challenges. The lack of dedicated classrooms creates logistical hurdles for instruction. Furthermore, limited internet access hinders the effective integration of technology into the learning process. This may necessitate additional training for teachers in online teaching methods to bridge the gap.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study recommendation are drawn.

1.   To foster a more inclusive learning environment, implementers may prioritize creating safe and supportive spaces for all students. This includes identifying and providing targeted support for learners seeking alternative educational pathways.

2. Given the limitations of internet access, exploring alternative technological solutions may benefit both learners and teachers. The ALS implementer may collaborate with local government to secure suitable facilities like classrooms or buildings within barangays to serve as learning centers.
3. Mobile teachers may use engaging extracurricular activities relevant to students' lives to further promote positive attitudes towards learning.
4. Future research may examine the implementation of the ALS program in other districts, incorporating different variables to provide a broader understanding of its effectiveness across diverse settings.

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