



Influencing Variables to the Competencies of Learners in the Accreditation and Equivalency Test of Alternative Learning System

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to determine the variables that influence the learners' competencies in Alternative Learning System (ALS). Specifically, it aimed to determine: the Accreditation and Equivalency (A and E) test takers' socio-demographic characteristics; the ALS Instructional Managers' (IM) socio-demographic characteristics; the extent of use of the mode of A and E program delivery by the IMs; the competencies of the learners in the A and E test based on overall results; the learners' initial literacy level; whether the learners' competency in A and E is significantly influenced by their socio-demographic characteristics; whether the learners' competencies in the ALS A and E test is significantly influenced by the Instructional Managers' socio-demographic characteristics; whether the learners' competencies in ALS A and E are significantly influenced by the Instructional Managers' extent of use of the mode of A and E program delivery; and whether the learners' competency is significantly influenced by their initial literacy level. The study employed descriptive-correlational research design utilizing four (4) instruments. There were 1,824 ALS learners and 79 ALS Instructional Managers completely

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enumerated respondents of the study. In statistical tools, descriptive statistics and multiple regression were used. It was concluded in the study that: the face-to-face mode of delivery is the most preferred by the ALS Instructional Managers and ALS learners do not possess the needed competencies in the Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity. Further, ALS learners have not gained much competence in their formal school attendance and the learners' competency in the areas of the A and E test were not outcomes of the influence of variables such as their socio-demographic characteristics, IMs' socio-demographic characteristics and initial literacy level.

Keywords: Alternative learning system; learners' competencies; accreditation and equivalency; socio-demographic characteristics.

ACRONYMS

<i>A and E</i>	: <i>Accreditation and Equivalency;</i>
<i>ALIVE</i>	: <i>Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education in Alternative Learning System;</i>
<i>ALS</i>	: <i>Alternative Learning System;</i>
<i>ALS-DAP</i>	: <i>Alternative Learning System for Differently-Abled Persons;</i>
<i>APEL</i>	: <i>Assessment/Accreditation of Prior Education and Learning;</i>
<i>APL</i>	: <i>Assessment of Prior Learning;</i>
<i>ARH</i>	: <i>Adolescent Reproductive Health;</i>
<i>BALS</i>	: <i>Bureau of Alternative Learning System;</i>
<i>BLP</i>	: <i>Basic Literacy Program;</i>
<i>BNFE</i>	: <i>Bureau of Non-formal Education;</i>
<i>CAR</i>	: <i>Cordillera Administrative Region;</i>
<i>CHED</i>	: <i>Commission on Higher Education;</i>
<i>CLC</i>	: <i>Community Learning Center;</i>
<i>DDU</i>	: <i>Deprived, Depressed, and Underserved;</i>
<i>DepEd</i>	: <i>Department of Education;</i>
<i>EFA</i>	: <i>Education for All;</i>
<i>FBLP</i>	: <i>Family Basic Literacy Program;</i>
<i>FLEMMS</i>	: <i>Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey;</i>
<i>FLT</i>	: <i>Functional Literacy Test;</i>
<i>GO</i>	: <i>Government Organization;</i>
<i>ICC</i>	: <i>Indigenous Cultural Community;</i>
<i>IM</i>	: <i>Instructional Manager;</i>
<i>IP</i>	: <i>Indigenous People;</i>
<i>LGU</i>	: <i>Local Government Unit;</i>
<i>LSDS</i>	: <i>Learning Support Delivery System;</i>
<i>MDG</i>	: <i>Millennium Development Goal;</i>
<i>MIMAROPA</i>	: <i>Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan;</i>
<i>NCIP</i>	: <i>National Commission on Indigenous People;</i>
<i>NGO</i>	: <i>Non-government Organization;</i>
<i>OOSC</i>	: <i>Out-of-school Children;</i>
<i>OSY</i>	: <i>Out-of-school Youth;</i>
<i>PASUC</i>	: <i>Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges;</i>
<i>PIS</i>	: <i>Personal Information Sheet;</i>
<i>PLA</i>	: <i>Prior Learning Assessment;</i>
<i>PLAR</i>	: <i>Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition;</i>
<i>POSCYD</i>	: <i>Philippine Out-of-school Children and Youth Development Project;</i>
<i>RBI</i>	: <i>Radio-based Instruction;</i>
<i>RPL</i>	: <i>Recognition of Prior Learning;</i>
<i>SOCCKSARGEN</i>	: <i>South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, General Santos;</i>
<i>TESDA</i>	: <i>Technical Education and Skills Development Authority;</i>
<i>UNESCO</i>	: <i>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;</i>
<i>VINFL</i>	: <i>Validation of informal and non-formal learning;</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

For decades, the worldwide objective of addressing and eliminating illiteracy has been introduced. This was the thrust of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) "education for all" (EFA) as part of the world's Millennium Development Goal [1-4]. The EFA program includes other ranges of instructional programs that can be adapted to make functional illiteracy available to all people around the globe in each nation [5-7]. In the Philippines, All academic matters are managed by DepEd, whose task is to safeguard and encourage each Filipino's right to quality, equity, culture and comprehensive fundamental education. (www.deped.gov.ph/mandate).

The Philippine government's commitment to this EFA program was overseen by institutionalizing instructional programs to address dropout rates and rates of literacy [8,1]. Every Filipino has the right to free fundamental schooling, which is why the state of the Philippines offers instructional programs that include instructional possibilities outside the classroom that assist to promote learning for certain communities, such as illiterate adolescents and out - of-school youth (OSY) [9-12]. These programs complement the country's present formal education scheme and thus provide an alternative way for learning delivery. The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is one such program. The Department of Education (DepEd) defined the Alternative Learning System of Education as the "other hand" of fundamental education [13-16]. ALS addresses the learning requirements of school leavers, adults and other types of learners who may be classified as "deprived, depressed, and underserved" (DDUs). ALS collaborates as a non-formal education program with the DepEd's concern about the accessibility, equity, and quality of fundamental education for all learners. It offers an alternative way for those who were unable to attend or finish the formal education track to acquire their primary or secondary school diploma through the Accreditation and Equivalency (A and E) program [17,18]. The A and E program provides opportunities for young people to continue their pursuit of higher education [19,20]. The youth's pursuit of continuing their education after A and E program can open up countless opportunities of finding a job [21,13].

The A and E test is being conducted annually by DepEd through the Bureau of Alternative

Learning System (BALS) and the DepEd Cotabato Division regularly registered not less than a thousand ALS learners to take the said test for the past years. The typical data that were available about the performance of the test takers in A and E test takers of Cotabato Division were restricted to the number of passers and their scores in each part of the test [22-24]. There are also very limited data that are research-based about the competencies of the A and E test takers and explorative interventions in studying the underlying factors that are related to their performance in the aforementioned standardized test.

In recognition of the underlying need for researches that would complement the deficiency in studies made about the ALS learners' competency in A and E test, the researcher conducted this research. This research focused on micro issues that determined the variables that influenced the ALS learners' competency in the A and E test.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research was to determine the variables that influence the learners' competencies in Alternative Learning System.

Specifically, it aimed to:

1. Determine the Accreditation and Equivalency test takers' socio-demographic characteristics in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Last grade/year attended
 - d. Frequency of taking the ALS A and E test;
2. Describe the ALS Instructional Managers' (IM)socio-demographic characteristics
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Years of teaching in ALS
 - d. Position/designation
 - e. Highest educational attainment
 - f. Trainings/seminars attended related to ALS implementation
 - g. Mode of transportation;
3. Determine the extent of use of the mode of A and E program delivery by the IM.

- a. Face to face
 - b. Modular approach
 - c. Radio-based instruction;
4. Determine the competencies of the learners in the A and E test based on overall results and in the following areas:
 - a. Filipino communication skills
 - b. English communication skills
 - c. Mathematics and Science
 - d. Sustainable use of resources and productivity
 - e. Expanding one's world views
 - f. Essay;
 5. Determine the learners' initial literacy level in:
 - a. Reading
 - b. Numeracy
 - c. Writing
 - d. Listening and speaking;
 6. Determine whether the learners' competency in A and E is significantly influenced by their socio-demographic characteristics;
 7. Determine whether the learners' competencies in the ALS A and E test is significantly influenced by the Instructional Managers' socio-demographic characteristics;
 8. Determine whether the learners' competencies in ALS A and E are significantly influenced by the Instructional Managers' extent of use of the mode of A and E program delivery; and
 9. Determine whether the learners' competency is significantly influenced by their initial literacy level.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The result of this study would offer benefits to the learners, implementers, and program supervisors of ALS including the researcher and other researchers who would be doing research related to ALS as indicated:

To the learners: The learners being referred to here are those who are enrolled currently in ALS and are about to take the next A and E test. Upon determining the learning strand/s in the test to which the previous test takers performed low or fairly, they would be the beneficiaries of learning interventions needed that would improve their performance in A and E test strands.

To the ALS implementers: They would be able to implement teaching interventions that would improve the performance of the learners in A and E test by modifying the interventions that were used for the previous ALS learning program implementation. Further, they would be provided with data or factors that are not being considered or given attention to but are of significance to the A and E test takers' performance.

To the ALS program supervisors: The findings of this study could be used as benchmark to conceptualize various development programs for ALS learners, implementers, and stakeholders that would bring progress to the competitiveness of learners in the A and E test.

To the researcher: As an ALS implementer, the researcher could benefit from this study by personally having a deeper understanding of the variables related to the competencies of the learners in A and E test, and would have credit in being a frontrunner in the presentation and application of development programs in ALS implementation to DepEd Cotabato Division based on the results and recommendations that are presented herein.

For other researchers: The literature cited and the result of this study could be used as part of the literature of their future research. They could also use this study to develop related research/es by incorporating variables that are lacking or not presented in this paper.

1.3 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study was on the factors comprising the ALS A and E test takers and implementers' socio-demographic characteristics extent of use of the mode of A and E program delivery, initial literacy level of the learners, and learners' competencies in ALS Accreditation and Equivalency (A and E) test. This was limited to ALS A and E secondary level test takers in the Cotabato Division of DepEd on April 24, 2016. The A and E test takers in jail were not included as respondents of this study because of the restrictions pertaining to the disclosure of their identities.

1.4 Operational Definition of Terms

Accreditation and Equivalency refers to the program of Alternative Learning System of providing diplomas in basic education equivalent to that of the formal school of the Philippine government's education system.

Alternative Learning System refers to the community-based system of education for the out-of-school children, youths and adults that was parallel to the formal education system of the Department of Education.

Competencies refers to the proficiency of Alternative Learning System learners in Accreditation and Equivalency test.

FLEMMS refers to the survey that seeks to gather information on the basic and functional literacy status, educational skills qualifications of the population, and exposure to mass media.

Implementers refers to DepEd teachers implementing ALS programs.

Initial Literacy Level refers to the initial literacy level of ALS enrollees in reading, numeracy, writing, and listening and speaking determined through the ALS Functional Literacy Test.

Instructional Managers refers to the DepEd teachers facilitating instructions on ALS learning sessions

Learners refers to the enrollees of Alternative Learning System.

Learners' Competencies refers to the competencies of ALS learners in the A and E test.

Mode of Delivery refers to the mode used by the instructional managers in the delivery of ALS programs such as face to face, modular approach and radio-based instruction.

Out-of-school Youth refers to the 15-24 youths that are out of school or not enrolled in any other educational program.

Out-of-school children refers to children aged 7–14 years who are not enrolled in formal school

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study employed descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive research design (as defined by Calderon and Gonzales, [25] in this study would involve purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulation of data about the variables herein and then

making interpretation with the aid of statistical methods. Descriptive research is a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena [26]. This research design has a limited control over extraneous variables, no manipulation of independent variable and susceptible to threats and internal validity [27]. Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. Correlational research design was also utilized in describing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of this study.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the province of North Cotabato. North Cotabato province has two DepEd Divisions, Kidapawan City Division and Cotabato Division. It was conducted particularly at DepEd Cotabato Division only which covered its fifty-one (51) districts implementing ALS programs.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 1,824 of the ALS learners who took the A and E test in secondary level last April 24, 2016. The DepEd ALS implementers, who are District ALS coordinators and Mobile Teachers, were also the respondents of the study.

2.4 Sampling Procedure

Complete enumeration was applied for instructional managers and learners of ALS 2015-2016 who took the A and E test.

2.5 Research Instrument

The instruments that were used for this study were the researcher-made questionnaire that contained data about the ALS instructional managers' socio-demographic characteristics, Management Information System (MIS) forms of DepEd ALS, A&E Test registration forms, and the Certificates of Ratings (COR) for the 2016 A&E Test. The ALS MIS forms contained data about the mode of A&E program delivery and the results of the ALS learners' performance in the functional literacy test. A&E Test registration forms contained the data about A&E test takers' profile needed for the study. The ratings of A&E

test takers in the content areas and essay can be found in the COR.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data needed for the A and E test takers' profile were gathered by retrieving the registration forms for 2016 A and E Test. The researcher coordinated to all District ALS coordinators and Mobile Teachers in order to gather the data about their socio-demographic characteristics, extent of use of their mode of A and E program delivery, and the A and E test takers' performance in the functional literacy test. The names of the subjects of the study were withheld. They were not asked to write their names on the questionnaire and their responses were handled with confidentiality. The data gathering instruments did not contain any humiliating or demeaning and unacceptable

comments that may offend any associated group. The data pertaining to the test takers' competency in A and E test were retrieved by the researcher and tabulated their scores in each strand of the test based on the A and E certificates of ratings.

2.7 Statistical Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics was employed in this study. Weighted mean, percentage and frequency distribution were used to describe the A and E test takers' characteristics, ALS Instructional Managers' profile, extent of use of mode of A and E program delivery, competencies of the learners in the A and E test, and learners' performance in the Functional Literacy Test. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 5% level.

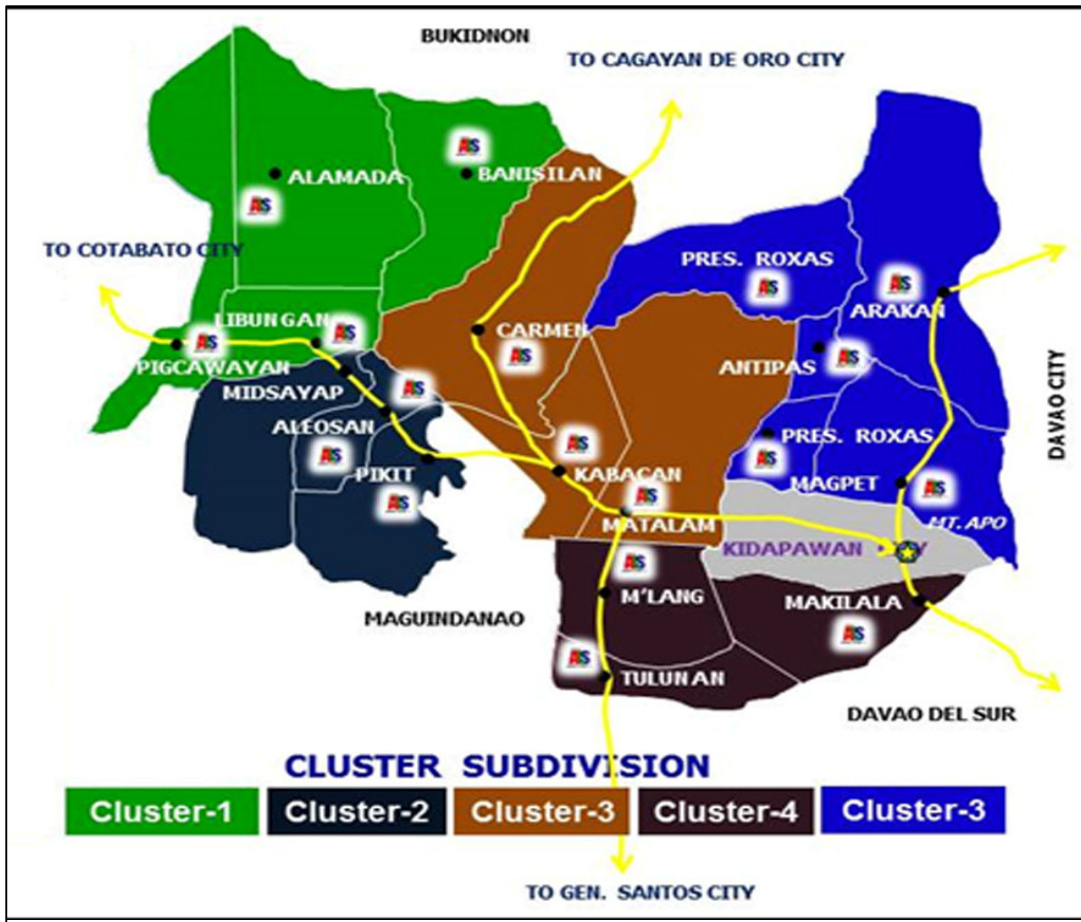


Fig. 1. Map of cotabato province showing DepEd Cotabato Division's area of ALS implementation

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Accreditation and Equivalency Test Takers' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Most of the A and E test takers were 14-26 years old. The rest were at the age bracket of 27-39 years old, 40-52 years old, 53-65 years old and there was one whose age was in the range of 66-78 years old. The minimum age qualification to be registered as an A and E test taker was 15 years old. Though it can be observed from the data that there was/were test taker/s who were 14 years old, it can be justified that the age requirement was met by the test takers at the time that the 2016 A and E test was undertaken because they were registered as early as August of 2015. The result presents that the A and E test takers were at the age that should have finished secondary level of education or have completed junior high school in the most recent K to 12 of the Department of Education. The survey conducted by FLEMMS [28] reported that there were 36 million OSC (6-14 years old) and OSYs (15-24 years old) in the Philippines. Sanchez [29] also referred the OSY population as those who were at 15-24 age group who are out of school or not enrolled in any other educational program. The result substantiated the description of target clientele and test takers of the ALS A and E test which are at least 15 years old for the secondary level test (deped.gov.ph).

In terms of gender, majority (52.5%) were female and 47.5% were male. The result implies that there are more female than male who have stopped or dropped out from attending formal school system. The result validated the report of Philippine Statistics Authority (<https://psa.gov.ph>) that the percentage of out-of-school kids and young people in all areas of the Philippines was greater among women than men [30-32].

The result revealed that the greater majority of the test takers (74.4%) had stopped or dropped out from formal school system when they were either in grade 6, 7 or 8. The result is related to the 2016 World Bank Report about the alternative and inclusive learning in the Philippines that a comparatively elevated percentage of dropouts (or non-completers, interchangeably) at secondary level was noted by the Philippine education system. It was also stated in the report that in addition to the relatively low enrolment rate at high school level,

the magnitude of non-completers at high school level is high in the Philippines.

Most of the A and E test takers (87.5%) took the test for the first time, while the 11.7% took the test twice, 0.5% took the test thrice, 0.2% took the test for the fourth time, and 0.1% took the test for the fifth time. This means that most of the A and E test takers were first time A and E test registrants. The result corroborates with the study of Judilla [33] about the performance of learners in the Five Learning Strands of the ALS in the A and E Test that majority of the takers were first time test takers.

3.2 ALS Instructional Managers' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The largest number (26.6%) among the respondents aged 30-36. It was followed by 22.8% who were 37-43 years old, 20.3% were 44-50 years old, 13.9% were 51-57 years old, 8.9% were 58-64 years old, and 7.6% were 23-29 years old. This implies that the ALS implementers in DepEd Cotabato Division are at the midst of their serviceable age being a government employee.

The majority of the teacher-respondents were female (51.9%) and 48.1% were male. The result implies that there are more females than males who are engaged in ALS teaching. This is related to the study of Fernandez [34] who found out that majority of the teacher-respondents in ALS comprised females.

The number of years in teaching ALS by the teacher-respondents revealed that 59.5% were teaching ALS for 1-6 years, 26.6% for 7-12 years, 8.9% for 13-18 years, 3.8% for 19-24 years, and only 1.3% for 25-31 years. The result implies that majority of the ALS instructional managers are new in teaching ALS. This can be explained by the fact that teachers assigned in ALS are not relatively permanent as instructional managers because they are rendering services in ALS through designation orders only to which they can be reassigned back to teaching in formal school system anytime. Furthermore, the difficulty in implementing ALS programs impedes some teachers to stay as instructional managers [35,36]. This may be linked to Arzadon and Nato's finding [37] that one popular lament from ALS educators is that they teach a very varied group — from young kids (at least 10 years old) to the elderly. They also let the colleges go

where the students are and defined what they are doing as a "search and rescue".

There were 58.2% of the teacher-respondents who were holding Teacher I position, 13.9% were Teacher II, and 27.8% were Teacher III. The data imply that majority of the respondents have not yet been promoted to higher teaching positions. Further, it can be noted that there was none of the teacher-respondents who was holding a Master Teacher I position.

The greater number of the teacher-respondents (45.6%) did not earn postgraduate studies. This is seen in their highest educational attainment which was college degree. There were 30.4% who had earned Master's degree units, 17.7% had a Master's degree, and 6.3% had earned units in Doctoral degree. The result implies that majority of the IMs are pursuing postgraduate studies.

There are 38.0% of the teacher-respondents who attended 1-2 relevant trainings and seminars, 29.1% attended 3-4 trainings and seminars, 21.5% attended 5-6 trainings and seminars. The 6.3% of them had not attended any trainings and seminars, and 2.5% attended 7-8 trainings and seminars. Only 1.3% had attended 9-10 trainings and seminars, and 1.3% had attended 11-12 trainings and seminars. The result implies that IMs are not provided with much opportunity to attend trainings and seminars related to the implementation of ALS programs.

Majority of the IMs (69.6%) used private utility vehicle and 30.4% used public utility vehicle as their modes of transportation. This implies that IMs provide themselves personal vehicles for their convenience in the delivery of ALS programs especially in the far flung areas.

3.3 Extent of Use of the Mode of A and E Program Delivery

The IMs used the face to face mode of delivery in a very extensive manner (3.71 mean). Further, modular approach was extensively used (2.91) and they did not use radio-based instruction (1.46). The result implies that the IMs relatively do not accommodate the use of radio-based instruction in the delivery of ALS programs. This is related to the findings of the study of Simbajon [38] that radio-based instruction program has a small weighted mean of execution frequency due to the absence of program instructions used by ALS implementers.

3.4 Competencies of the Learners in A and E Test in the Different Areas

It was in the strand of Expanding One's World Views of the A and E test that the test takers achieved the highest rating with a weighted mean of 71.20. It was followed by Filipino Communication Skills with a weighted mean of 69.54. In English Communication Skills, it generated a mean of 64.75 and Mathematics and Science had a weighted mean of 61.61. Lastly, Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity had a weighted mean of 60.80.

The weighted mean of the learners' competency in essay writing was 2.88 which was under the scoring range of 3 (described as having an adequate response) and 2 (described as having less than adequate response). The passing score in essay writing in the A and E test was 3. However, there were learners who scored 2 but were qualified to pass the A and E test because their standard scores in the multiple choice test was in the range of 100-120. In order to qualify for a secondary level certificate, A and E test takers must meet the following requirement: standard score of 95-99 in the multiple choice test and at least 3 or 4 points in essay writing, and standard score of 100-120 in the multiple choice test and at least 2, 3 or 4 points in essay writing test.

3.5 Learners' Initial Literacy Level

The initial literacy level of the learners was derived from their scores in the functional literacy test conducted to them upon their enrolment in ALS A and E program. The learners' average scores were distributed as follows: 85.23% in writing, 80.19% in listening and speaking, 79.27% in reading, and 77.01% in numeracy. The result implies that the learners' have low initial literacy level in numeracy. The learners' initial literacy level reflected in their performance in the A and E test is related to the findings of Judilla [33] that the test takers lowest performance in the five learning strands of the A and E was in Math and Science.

3.6 Relationship of Learners' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and their Competency in A and E in Different Areas

The combined contribution of the learners' socio-demographic characteristics did not significantly influence their competency in A and E test in the

areas of Filipino Communication Skills, English Communication Skills, Mathematics and Science, Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity, Expanding One's World Views, essay, and their overall competency [39-41]. This result implies that the learners' socio-demographic characteristics are not significant predictors of the learners' competencies in the Accreditation and Equivalency test.

The result was paralleled to the conclusion of the study conducted by Calvo [42] that socio-demographic characteristics of the ALS learners did not significantly influence their performance in the accreditation and equivalency (A and E) test.

3.7 Relationship between the ALS Instructional Managers' Socio Demographic Characteristics and their Learners' Competency in Different Areas of the A and E Test

The combined contribution of the ALS instructional managers' socio-demographic characteristics did not significantly influence their learners' competency in the area of Filipino Communication Skills. When taken singly, the ALS IMs' number of years in ALS teaching was found to be the best predictor of their learners' competency in the area of Filipino Communication Skills. This implies that the longer that the IMs are in ALS teaching, the higher is the communication skills of their learners. This was related to the finding of the study of Fernandez [34] that Teacher skills are linked to experience learning. In the case of this study, the teacher-respondents' competence as developed by their years of experience in teaching ALS produced positive result in the learners' Filipino communication skills. As cited by Senechal [43], it was also discovered that teacher experience has a significant beneficial impact on student accomplishment, with more than half of the teacher's earnings in the first few years, but substantial gains in the years to come, albeit at a slower pace.

The combined contribution of the ALS instructional managers' socio-demographic characteristics did not significantly influence their learners' competency in the area of English Communication Skills. None of the ALS IMs' socio-demographic characteristics was found to be the best predictor of their learners' competency in the area of English Communication Skills. The trend of relationship

earlier mentioned can also be observed in ALS IMs' socio-demographic characteristics in relation to their learners' competency in Expanding One's World Views and in the overall result.

The combined contribution of the ALS instructional managers' socio-demographic characteristics did not significantly influence their learners' competency in the area of Mathematics and Science, Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity and in the overall result. When taken singly, the ALS IMs' sex was found to be the best predictor of their learners' competency in the area of Mathematics and Science, Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity and in the overall result. This implies that the learners' competency in Math and Science is influenced more by female than male IMs teaching in ALS. According to Antecol, Eren and Ozbeklik [44], most of the current economics studies has concentrated on the impact of having a woman teacher on distinct educational results, particularly mathematical performance and the selection of math and science major, as well as female students, either in middle and high school. These studies have either discovered a female teacher to have a beneficial impact on the results of female student accomplishment.

3.8 Relationship between the ALS Instructional Managers' Extent of Use of the Mode of ALS Program Delivery and their Learners' Competency in A and E in Different Areas

The combined contribution of the ALS IMs' extent of use of mode of ALS program delivery did not significantly influence their learners' competency in the areas of the A and E test such as Filipino Communication Skills, English Communication Skills, Mathematics and Science, Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity, Expanding One's World Views, Essay, and in the overall result. This implies that whether the ALS programs were delivered in various modes such as face-to-face, radio-based or modular, the extent of use of these do not have significant effect in the learners' competency in the A and E test. The result contends Hagel and Shaw's (2010) claim that the sort of delivery mode selected will affect how learners interact with learning materials and how learning processes are experienced. In addition, the result of the study conducted by Judilla [45] found that delivery mode was significantly related to the rate of passers.

3.9 Relationship between the Learners' Initial Literacy Level and their Competency in A and E in Different Areas

The combined contribution of the initial literacy level did not significantly influence the learners' competency in the areas of the A and E test such as Filipino Communication Skills, English Communication Skills, Mathematics and Science, Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity, Expanding One's World Views, Essay, and in the overall result. The result implies that the learners' initial literacy level is not the best predictor of their competency in different areas of the A and E test. Desulo and Dio [46] emphasized that other variables also influence the achievement of learners. Factors influencing students' academic performance were associated with family, colleagues, college, and educators who are the most important predictors substantially associated with academic performance.

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary

The findings of the study were summarized as follows:

1. The A and E test takers were at the age that should have finished secondary level of education or have completed junior high school in the most recent K to 12 of the Department of Education. Majority were female and the greater majority had attended at least grade 8, 7 or 6. Most took the test for the first time.
2. The ALS instructional managers' ages largely was in the range of 30-36. Further, the greater number of them was female and majority were new in teaching ALS, and holding Teacher I position. It was revealed also that the greater number did not earn post graduate studies and attended 1-2 relevant trainings and seminars. And majority used private vehicle as mode of transportation in going to community learning centers.
3. The ALS instructional managers used face-to-face mode of delivery in a very extensive manner, while modular approach was extensively used. Radio-based instruction was not utilized.

4. Regarding the learners' competency in different areas of the A and E test, the highest rating was in the area of Expanding One's World Views and the lowest rating was in the area of Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity. The weighted mean of the learners' competency in essay writing was under the range of 2-3.
5. The learners' had the highest average score in writing, followed by listening and speaking, reading and the lowest in numeracy.
6. The learners' socio-demographic characteristics did not significantly influence their competency in the areas of A and E test.
7. The ALS instructional managers' socio-demographic characteristics did not significantly influence the learners' competency in the areas of A and E test. When taken singly, the ALS IMs' sex significantly influenced the learners' competencies in Mathematics and Science, Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity, and in the overall result. Also, the IMs' years of teaching significantly influenced the learners' competency in Filipino Communication Skills.
8. The ALS instructional managers' extent of use of mode of ALS program delivery did not significantly influence their learners' competency in the areas of A and E test.
9. The learners' initial literacy level did not significantly influence their competency in the areas of A and E test.

4.2 Conclusions

The objective of the study was to determine the variables that influence the learners' competencies in Alternative Learning System. Data were gathered through researcher-made questionnaire about the ALS instructional managers' socio-demographic characteristics, Management Information System (MIS) forms of DepEd ALS, A&E Test registration forms, and the Certificates of Ratings (COR) for the 2016 A&E Test. Based on the summary presented, it was concluded in the study that:

1. There are more female than male out of school youths.
2. The ALS instructional managers are comprised more of female than male, and are not given much opportunity for

promotion and relevant trainings and seminars. They offer dedicated services in the delivery of ALS programs by using their own vehicle in going to their respective community learning centres.

3. The face-to-face mode of delivery is the most preferred approach by the ALS implementers.
4. ALS learners do not possess the needed competencies in the Sustainable Use of Resources and Productivity.
5. ALS learners do not gain much competence in their formal school attendance considering that they are school drop outs or school leavers.
6. The learners' competency in the areas of the A and E test are not outcomes of the influence of variables such as their socio-demographic characteristics, IMs' socio-demographic characteristics and initial literacy level.

4.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations, which could improve the competencies of the learners in different areas of the A and E test, are presented as follows:

1. Learning interventions may be provided to the learners focusing on the areas of A and E test that the learners are less competent.
2. ALS implementers should develop programs that could improve the performance of the learners in A and E test. They should also be given more opportunities to attend relevant trainings and seminars.
3. ALS education program specialists, supervisors and officials may conceptualize various development programs that would bring progress to the learners' competency in A and E test and provide a more intensive technical assistance for ALS learners and implementers.
4. Enough budget may be allocated for the implementation of ALS programs and projects.
5. Future researches with attention to the reasons or variables such as intellectual skills, study habits and their commitment, motivation, maturity and effort to learn that influence low passing rate in A and E test and interventions that were effective in increasing the learners' competencies is recommended to be conducted.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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