

Problems Encountered among Teachers in Alternative Learning System

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Abstract

The Alternative Learning System serves as a lifeline for learners who cannot access formal education, making it essential to explore the problems encountered among ALS teachers. This study examined the problems encountered among teachers in the Alternative Learning System and how these problems correlate to their profiles. Specifically, it determined the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, position, years of teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training; assessed the level of problems encountered among teachers across four key areas; funding, learning materials, support for teachers, and infrastructure; and identified significant relationships between the teachers' profile and the problems they encountered. This study involved one hundred seventy-two (172) ALS teachers as respondents using descriptive-correlational research design and universal sampling was the method employed. Data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient.

Findings revealed that the majority of ALS teachers aged between 25 to 34 years old, female and holding the position as Community ALS Implementer. Most respondents had a Bachelor's degree, 1-3 years of teaching experience and attended lesson planning training. Among the problems encountered, support for teachers got the highest mean which is interpreted as High while learning materials got the lowest mean rating which is also interpreted as High. There is a significant relationship between the respondents' profile and the problems encountered in all variables. The study concluded that teachers will undergo professional development program in the use of learning materials. The theory on teacher-role context fit suggest that the alignment between teachers' professional profile and the demands of their teaching environment influences the severity of problems they encounter in their role. Therefore, it is recommended to implement structured and differentiated support systems, strengthen professional development beyond basic lesson planning, and ensure equitable provision of teaching resources in improving instructional quality and program sustainability in reaching underserved learners.

Keywords: Alternative Learning System, problems encountered

1. Introduction

The Alternative Learning System (ALS), institutionalized under Republic Act No. 9155 and strengthened by Republic Act No. 11510, was designed to provide flexible and inclusive education for out-of-school children, youth, and adults, but its teachers face numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness. Key issues include a scarcity of resources such as classrooms and learning materials, limited professional development opportunities due to logistical and financial constraints, and a lack of recognition and support

compared to teachers in the formal education system. Reports from DepEd and studies such as Santos (2019) highlight that these problems negatively affect the quality of instruction and teacher morale. While DepEd has issued orders emphasizing resource provision and continuous training, the implementation gaps remain a barrier to success. Addressing these concerns requires comprehensive policy reforms, financial and structural support, and continuous evaluation to ensure that ALS teachers are adequately equipped to fulfill their roles. Ultimately, strengthening ALS through these measures is essential for improving teacher effectiveness and sustaining the system's mission of broadening access to education in the Philippines.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the problems encountered by the teachers in the Alternative Learning System in the Division of Misamis Oriental for the School Year 2025-2026. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondent's profile in terms of age, sex, position, teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training?
2. What are the problems encountered by the respondents in alternative learning system considering the funding, learning materials, support for teachers and infrastructure?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the problems encountered by the respondents in ALS and each of their profile?

Significance

The study explored the problems encountered by ALS teachers in delivering education to out-of-school learners, emphasizing the importance of addressing these barriers to strengthen inclusivity and effectiveness. Its findings are valuable to multiple stakeholders: the Department of Education can use them to design strategies that support teachers and improve learner outcomes; Division and District ALS Focal Persons can leverage evidence-based data to advocate for resources and professional development initiatives; Education Program Specialists can tailor training programs to teachers' specific needs; and Public Schools District Supervisors can provide targeted support to enhance teacher satisfaction and learner engagement. Moreover, mobile teachers can apply the study's insights to overcome challenges in reaching diverse learners, while future researchers may use its findings as a basis for further studies on teacher training, community involvement, and long-term literacy impacts. Overall, the study highlights that addressing ALS teachers' challenges through coordinated support and reforms can significantly improve the system's effectiveness and sustainability.

Scope and Limitations

This study limited its scope on the problems encountered among ALS teachers in the Division of Misamis Oriental during the School Year 2025-2026. The respondents were the one hundred seventy-two (172) ALS teachers in the division mentioned above. The independent variables were limited to the respondent's profile in terms age, sex, position, teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training. Further, the dependent variables were also limited only to the problems encountered in ALS considering funding, learning materials, support for teachers and infrastructure.

2. Literature Review

The Department of Education has taken steps to strengthen the Alternative Learning System (ALS) through policies like DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2020, which introduced the enhanced ALS 2.0 curriculum to improve education for out-of-school learners. However, studies such as Buenaventura (2020) and Santos (2022) reveal persistent challenges, particularly the lack of resources and limited access to professional development, which leave many teachers underprepared for the demands of ALS instruction. These findings stress the need for targeted interventions to address these gaps and support teachers effectively. Republic Act No. 11510, or the Alternative Learning System Act of 2021, further reinforces this by mandating adequate resources and training opportunities, institutionalizing stronger support for ALS teachers to enhance their capacity in delivering quality education.

Respondents Profile

Demographic factors such as age, sex, position, teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training greatly influence the challenges and effectiveness of ALS teachers. Cruz and Morales (2021) emphasized that age and teaching experience shape adaptability, with younger teachers often excelling in technology use while experienced ones develop resilience and innovative strategies. Similarly, Ramirez (2023) highlighted how teaching experience and position affect problem-solving and access to resources, noting that coordinators and administrators often have greater training opportunities compared to mobile teachers. Meanwhile, Santos (2019) stressed the importance of continuous pedagogical training and professional development, pointing out that well-trained teachers are better equipped to meet curriculum demands and address diverse learner needs. Together, these studies reveal that understanding teacher profiles is essential for designing targeted interventions, equitable support systems, and effective policies that enhance the capacity of ALS educators.

Problems Encountered in Alternative Learning System

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) continues to face major challenges, particularly the chronic shortage of resources, inadequate professional development, and insufficient recognition of teachers. Buenaventura (2020) highlighted that the lack of materials and facilities hampers effective instruction, while Santos (2019) emphasized that limited training opportunities weaken teachers' capacity to adopt innovative strategies. These gaps are further compounded by funding constraints, which restrict the development and dissemination of research and the adaptation of innovative practices to support ALS delivery. Learning materials, as Santos and Doe (2021) noted, are crucial for engaging learners and improving instructional quality, while Rodriguez (2023) stressed that updated resources also contribute to teachers' professional growth. Moreover, studies show that teacher support and infrastructure remain pivotal: Santos (2021) pointed to stress caused by scarce resources and poor facilities, and Dela Cruz (2022) underscored that well-equipped environment not only enhance teaching effectiveness but also improve retention and job satisfaction. Collectively, these findings highlight that addressing resource shortages, strengthening teacher support, and investing in infrastructure are essential to improving ALS outcomes.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research method to examine the problems encountered by Alternative Learning System (ALS) teachers and their relationship with demographic factors such as age, sex, position, teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training. Using structured questionnaires, data were gathered from 172 ALS teachers in the Division of Misamis Oriental for the School Year 2025–2026, focusing on challenges related to funding, learning materials, teacher support, and infrastructure. The descriptive part provided a clear picture of existing conditions, while the correlational analysis, guided by Davis (2020), identified significant relationships between teacher profiles and the problems faced. The results offer valuable insights into resource needs and inform targeted interventions to enhance teacher performance and strengthen equitable educational opportunities in ALS.

Participants

The respondents of this study were the one hundred seventy-two (172) teachers in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Division of Misamis Oriental during the School Year 2025–2026. They were distributed to all ALS community learning centers in the following districts: Villanueva North District, Villanueva South District, Claveria Central District, Claveria West District, Tagoloan East District, Tagoloan West District, Jasaan North District, Balingasag North District, Balingasag Central District, Opol East District, and Opol West District. These teachers were categorized as district ALS focal person, mobile teachers and community ALS implementers who worked directly with out-of-school youth and adult learners.

Data Collection

This study employed a structured researcher-made questionnaire to gather data from selected ALS teachers in the Division of Misamis Oriental, focusing on the problems they encountered and their impact on teaching performance. The instrument consisted of two parts: Part I covered respondents' profiles, including age, sex, position, teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training, while Part II addressed issues related to funding, learning materials, teacher support, and infrastructure. Patterned and modified from existing literature and related studies, the questionnaire was further validated through expert reviews to ensure alignment with the study's objectives. With this well-structured tool, the study aimed to generate reliable data to better understand ALS teachers' challenges and guide strategic improvements in the system.

Data Analysis

This study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the responses collected from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the variables in the study. Further, Pearson (r) was used to determine the significant relationship between the respondent's problems encountered in ALS and each of their profile. This comprehensive statistical analysis provided valuable insights into the data, facilitating an understanding of the interplay between the independent and dependent variables within the Alternative Learning System (ALS).

3. Results and Discussions

Problem 1. What is the respondent's profile in terms of age, sex, position, teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training?

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Age

Category	Frequency	Percentage
55 - 64 years old	10	5.81
45 – 54 years old	20	11.62
35 – 44 years old	25	14.53
25 – 34 years old	89	51.74
21 – 24 years old	28	16.27
Total	172	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' profile in terms of age, revealing that most ALS implementers (51.74%) are 25–34 years old, indicating a workforce dominated by early-career teachers who bring energy, adaptability, and technological proficiency, but still require mentoring, professional development, and support systems to strengthen classroom management and resilience. This prevalence suggests long-term workforce stability if retention strategies are implemented, while the small proportion of older teachers (5.81%) points to fewer opportunities for mentorship and knowledge transfer, which may affect continuity and depth of program delivery. The trend highlights the importance of balancing the innovation and flexibility of younger teachers with the wisdom and experience of older educators to ensure a sustainable and effective ALS teaching workforce.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	31	18.02
Female	141	81.97
Total	172	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' profile in terms of sex, where the majority are female (81.97%) and only a small proportion are male (18.02%), indicating that women dominate the ALS teaching workforce. This strong female presence highlights their vital role in delivering alternative education through empathy, relationship-building, and nurturing approaches that enhance learner engagement and retention, yet it also underscores the need for greater representation in leadership and decision-making roles to strengthen inclusivity and sustainability. Meanwhile, the limited number of male teachers reflects a lack of gender balance, which may affect how male learners relate to role models and engage in the program; thus, fostering gender diversity could enrich teaching strategies, classroom dynamics, and learner outcomes by providing varied perspectives and role modeling within ALS.

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Position

Category	Frequency	Percentage
District ALS Focal Person	32	18.60
Mobile Teacher	26	15.11
Literacy Teacher	0	0
Community ALS Implementer	114	66.27
Total	172	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents' profile in terms of position, where the majority are Community ALS Implementers with 114 (66.27%), indicating that most ALS teachers are directly engaged in community-based instruction and outreach in barangays and remote areas to serve marginalized learners such as out-of-school youth, indigenous people, and adults. Their strong presence highlights their role in providing contextualized, inclusive, and meaningful education despite challenges like limited resources, irregular attendance, and long travel times. On the other hand, the lowest frequency is Mobile Teachers with only 26 (15.11%), suggesting a shortage of roving teachers who play a critical role in reaching distant and hard-to-access communities. This limited number may be attributed to logistical constraints, lack of transportation, and the physically demanding nature of their work, which often leads to stress and burnout. The disparity underscores the need for stronger support systems, better incentives, and strategic workforce planning to ensure that ALS can effectively reach all learners, especially those in far-flung areas.

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Teaching Experience

Category	Frequency	Percentage
10 years and above	3	1.74
7-9 years	18	10.46
4-6 years	14	8.13
1-3 years	112	65.11
Less than 1 year	25	14.53
Total	172	100

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents' profile in terms of teaching experience, where the highest frequency is 112 (65.11%) with 1–3 years, indicating that most ALS implementers are relatively new to the program and are still adapting to its unique demands such as flexibility, community immersion, and learner-centered approaches. This large presence of novice teachers may reflect DepEd's effort to expand ALS coverage through increased hiring, but it also suggests retention challenges due to workload, limited career growth, and lack of institutional support. On the other hand, only 3 (1.74%) reported 10 years or more of teaching experience, highlighting a scarcity of long-serving ALS teachers whose absence may hinder program stability, mentorship, and knowledge transfer. While early-career teachers bring energy and innovation, the imbalance between novice and experienced educators underscores the need for

structured onboarding, sustained professional development, and retention strategies to strengthen ALS implementation and ensure continuity, especially in underserved communities.

Table 5
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Highest Educational Attainment

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Doctorate Degree	1	0.58
With Doctorate Degree Units	0	0
Masters' Degree	5	2.90
With Masters' Degree Units	57	33.13
Bachelors' Degree	109	63.37
Total	172	100

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents' profile in terms of highest educational attainment, where the majority 109 (63.37%) hold a bachelor's degree, indicating that most ALS implementers meet the minimum academic qualification for teaching but may lack advanced training necessary for specialized non-formal education approaches. This highlights the need for capacity development through graduate studies and professional training in areas such as adult education, community-based learning, and flexible pedagogy to better address the diverse needs of ALS learners. In contrast, only 1 (0.85%) respondent holds a doctorate degree, revealing a significant gap in advanced academic representation within the ALS workforce and suggesting limited opportunities for research, policy advocacy, and innovation. The imbalance between bachelor's degree holders and those with advanced degrees underscores systemic barriers such as limited scholarships, lack of institutional support, and heavy workloads, which hinder professional growth. Overall, while ALS implementers fulfill baseline requirements, there is a pressing need for sustained investment in advanced education and accessible professional development to strengthen teaching quality, promote innovation, and ensure inclusivity in the Alternative Learning System.

Table 6
Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Pedagogical Training

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Classroom Management Training	36	13.04
Differentiated Instructional Training	68	24.63
Assessment and Evaluation Technique	46	16.66
Technology Integration Training.	18	6.52
Active Learning Strategies Training	20	7.2
Lesson Planning	88	31.88
Total	276	100

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents' profile in terms of pedagogical training, where the highest frequency of 88 (31.88%) was in Lesson Planning, indicating that most ALS teachers possess basic instructional planning skills essential for organizing and delivering learning effectively. While this reflects a strength in instructional organization, it also suggests the need for more advanced and specialized training in differentiated instruction, learner-centered strategies, and contextualized teaching to address the diverse needs of ALS learners, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. On the other hand, the lowest frequency of 18 (6.52%) was in Technology Integration, revealing a significant gap in teachers' professional development in using digital tools to support blended and flexible learning. This lack of training limits teachers' ability to adapt to modern, tech-dependent learning environments and highlights the urgency of prioritizing digital literacy training to ensure more inclusive, engaging, and equitable ALS education.

Problem 2. What are the problems encountered by the respondents in alternative learning system considering the funding, learning materials, support for teachers and infrastructure?

Table 7

Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Problems Encountered in ALS

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Funding	3.21	0.76	High
Learning Materials	3.14	0.86	High
Support for Teacher	3.23	0.85	High
Infrastructure	3.21	0.85	High
Overall	3.20	0.83	High

Table 7 shows the summary distribution of respondents' level of problems encountered in ALS with an overall mean of 3.20 (SD=0.83), interpreted as High, indicating that challenges are consistently experienced across funding, learning materials, support for teachers, and infrastructure. Among these, Support for Teacher obtained the highest mean of 3.23 (SD=0.85), suggesting that inadequate access to resources, training, and administrative assistance is the most pressing issue, contributing to teacher stress, burnout, and reduced instructional effectiveness. In contrast, Learning Materials received the lowest mean of 3.14 (SD=0.86), still interpreted as High, showing that while problems in this area are significant, they are slightly less frequent than those related to teacher support; outdated and insufficient materials, however, remain a barrier to learner engagement and achievement. Overall, the findings highlight that ALS teachers face interconnected systemic challenges, with inadequate institutional support and insufficient learning resources as major obstacles, calling for urgent reforms to strengthen teacher support mechanisms and provide modern, contextualized materials to improve the quality and sustainability of ALS education.

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between the problems encountered by the respondents in ALS and each of their profile?

Table 8

Correlation between the Respondents' Profile and the Problems Encountered

		among Teachers in ALS				
		Problems Encountered among Teachers in ALS				
Respondents' Profile		Funding	Learning Materials	Support for Teachers	Infrastructure	Overall
Age	r-value	0.54	0.53	0.84	0.54	0.61
	p-value	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.03
		S	S	S	S	S
Sex	r-value	0.74	0.81	0.66	0.62	0.70
	p-value	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.03
		S	S	S	S	S
Position	r-value	0.82	0.94	0.89	0.57	0.80
	p-value	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.04
		S	S	S	S	S
Teaching Experience	r-value	0.94	0.99	0.95	0.86	0.93
	p-value	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
		S	S	S	S	S
Highest Educational Attainment	r-value	0.83	0.75	0.76	0.73	0.77
	p-value	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.03
		S	S	S	S	S
Pedagogical Training	r-value	0.85	0.86	0.85	0.95	0.88
	p-value	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
		S	S	S	S	S

Table 8 shows the results of the test on the relationship between the respondents' profile and their problems encountered in ALS, revealing a significant correlation between demographic and professional characteristics such as age, sex, position, teaching experience, highest educational attainment, and pedagogical training and the challenges faced in funding, learning materials, support for teachers, and infrastructure. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that interventions must be context-specific, tailored to the unique needs of different teacher groups, with younger or less experienced teachers requiring mentoring and resource support, while more experienced or highly educated teachers may need advanced training, leadership development, or policy involvement opportunities. Similarly, sex and position-related differences point to the need for gender-responsive strategies and role-specific support, while updated pedagogical training is shown to reduce difficulties by equipping teachers with adaptive strategies for addressing systemic and instructional gaps. Overall, the findings emphasize that ALS program reforms should adopt differentiated, evidence-based approaches in training, resource allocation, and support systems to enhance teacher effectiveness, morale, and sustainability, ultimately improving learner outcomes across diverse contexts.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Based on the findings, most respondents were female, aged 25–34, serving as Community ALS Implementers with a Bachelor's Degree and 1–3 years of teaching experience. Lesson planning was the most common training received. The top problem encountered was lack of teacher support, followed by funding, infrastructure, and learning materials. A significant relationship was found between respondents' profiles and the problems faced. The results highlight the need for stronger institutional and administrative support through mentoring, fair workload distribution, adequate resources, and professional recognition to sustain teacher motivation and effectiveness in serving underserved learners.

Recommendations

To support ALS teachers and enhance program effectiveness, the Department of Education in Misamis Oriental should provide learning materials aligned with the K to 12 curriculum, localized to community needs, and encourage teachers to supplement these with local resources, integrate technology, and engage in professional development. Public district supervisors and school heads should ensure timely access to essential teaching resources, guide the use of alternative and digital materials, and support the creation of contextualized lessons. Teachers are also encouraged to pursue continuous professional development focused on pedagogical training and innovative strategies to address challenges such as limited funding, inadequate learning materials, lack of support, and poor infrastructure. Partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and communities, along with peer collaboration, can further help mitigate these challenges. Since problems in ALS are significantly related to teacher profiles, interventions should be tailored to their individual experience, position, education, and training.

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