Training Needs Assessment of Monkayo District Alternative Learning System: Basis for Community Extension

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative descriptive study aimed to assess the training needs of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners in Monkayo District, Philippines. The research utilized a structured approach to gather information that describes ALS learners' demographic profiles and training preferences. The study revealed that most ALS learners are female, aged 18-35, and unemployed, with a strong inclination towards practical, skills-based training. The findings emphasized the importance of tailoring training programs to ALS learners' specific needs and abilities, highlighting the demand for vocational courses such as computer applications, agriculture, and trade skills. The research also identified a keen interest in literacy and numeracy, emphasizing the need to balance practical skills with essential academic competencies. The outcomes of this study aspire to empower ALS stakeholders in their pursuit of excellence and innovation in alternative education, ultimately enriching the educational experience of learners and fostering positive social change within communities. This research serves as a catalyst for informed decision-making and strategic planning within the ALS community, providing empirical insights to inform the design and implementation of targeted training interventions.

INTRODUCTION

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) represents a vital avenue for individuals who have been deprived of formal education to acquire knowledge and skills, Arzadon & Nato (2015) and Tindowen, Bassig & Cagurangan (2017). In addition, Baccal & Ormilla (2021) emphasized that ALS serves as a beacon of hope, offering education to those who have missed out on traditional schooling due to various circumstances. As ALS continues to evolve, ensuring the effectiveness of its programs becomes paramount, necessitating a systematic assessment of training needs among learners, educators, and facilitators, Ebora & Guillo. (2018).

This quantitative research study aims to explore the training needs of ALS personnel as a basis for developing a comprehensive community extension program. By delving into the quantitative aspects of training requirements, this study seeks to provide empirical insights that can inform the design and implementation of targeted training interventions.

Through employing quantitative research methodologies, such as surveys and statistical analysis, this study endeavors to capture a comprehensive understanding of the training needs landscape within the ALS framework. Through the systematic collection and analysis of quantitative data, the study aims to uncover trends, patterns, and correlations that can guide the development of evidence-based training programs (Ali, 2020).

Furthermore, by contextualizing the findings within the broader educational landscape, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on inclusive education and lifelong learning. By bridging the gap between research and practice, the outcomes of this study aspire to empower ALS stakeholders in their pursuit of excellence and innovation in alternative education.

The Monkayo College of Arts, Sciences and Technology community extension program holds the promise of enhancing the capabilities of the Alternative Learning System Programs in Monkayo District, thereby improving the delivery of quality education services to learners across diverse communities. Through rigorous quantitative

analysis, this study endeavors to identify key areas of competence, knowledge gaps, and skill deficiencies among ALS learners and personnel.

In essence, this research study serves as a catalyst for informed decision-making and strategic planning within the ALS community. By leveraging quantitative research methodologies, the researchers aim to pave the way for a more responsive and dynamic approach to addressing the training needs of ALS learners and personnel, ultimately enriching the educational experience of learners and fostering positive social change within communities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive research design to assess the training needs of Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners in Monkayo, Davao de Oro, Philippines. A descriptive research design is a structured approach used to gather information that describes a phenomenon, situation, or population. It focuses on answering questions like what, when, where, and how, rather than exploring why something happens (Siedlecki, 2020). The descriptive approach was chosen to systematically describe the training experiences of the participants and identify their further training needs, providing a clear picture of the current status and gaps in the training they have received. Moreover, frequency distribution was used to organize and visualize the data, helping to identify patterns and trends in the learners' training experiences (Manikandan, 2011).

This study is grounded in Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which posits that learning is an iterative process where knowledge is generated through the transformation of experience. According to Kolb (1984), effective learning involves a cyclical process comprising concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This theory is particularly relevant to the Alternative Learning System (ALS) as it emphasizes hands-on, practical learning.

The participants in this study were 25 ALS learners from Monkayo, selected through purposive sampling. This method ensured that the study included only those learners who had already attended some form of training, making it possible to accurately evaluate both the trainings they have undergone and the additional training they require. The relatively small but focused sample allowed for a detailed exploration of the training needs specific to this group.

Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire, which was divided into three key sections. The first section gathered information on their demographic information, second are the types of training the participants had previously attended. The last section focused on identifying areas where the participants felt further training was necessary to enhance their skills and competencies. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face, with the researchers providing clear instructions to ensure that the participants understood each question. This method facilitated a high response rate and accurate data collection. The data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency distribution.

The research was conducted in Monkayo, Davao de Oro, a municipality known for its active ALS programs that aim to provide educational opportunities to out-of-school youth and adults. This location was chosen because of its vibrant ALS community and the pressing need to assess and improve the training provided to these learners. The findings from this study are expected to inform the development of more targeted and effective training programs for ALS learners in Monkayo and similar communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part includes the discussion of the result of the study. The demographic profile of ALS learners, as presented in Table 1, provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the learners. It includes data on gender, age, employment status, disabilities/health impairments, and training status. The table reveals that the majority of the learners are female (84.0%) and fall within the age range of 18-35 years old (80.0%). Additionally, it shows that a significant portion of the learners are unemployed (56.0%) and do not have any disabilities or health impairments (84.0%). Moreover, the data indicates that a high percentage of learners have received skills-related

training (92.0%), emphasizing the importance of tailoring the training programs to their specific needs and abilities.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of ALS Learners

Profile	Frequency Count	Percentage
Sex		
Male	4	16.0
Female	21	84.0
Total	25	100.0
Age		
18-35 years old	20	80.0
36-55 years old	4	16.0
56 years old and above	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0
Employment Status		
Employed	11	44.0
Unemployed	14	56.0
Total	25	100.0
Disabilities/ Health Impairments		
Visual Impairment	2	8.0
Auditory Impairment	1	4.0
Learning Difficulties	1	4.0
None	21	84.0
Total	25	100.0
Training Status		
With Skills-related Training	23	92.0
Without Skills-related Training	2	8.0
Total	25	100.0

The skills training attended by ALS learners, as depicted in Figure 1, highlights the frequency count of various training programs. It provides a clear overview of the types of skills training that the learners have participated in. The data shows that the most attended training programs are Bread and Pastry Production, Food and Beverage Services, and Organic Agriculture Production, each with the highest frequency count.

Table 2. Trainings Attended

Skills-Training	Frequency Count
Animal Production	3
Animation	2
Basic Computer Literacy	1
Beauty Care	1
Bread and Pastry Production	5
Driving	3
Emergency Medical Services	1
Events Management Services	3
Food and Beverage Services	5
Front Desk Services	1
Housekeeping	2
Organic Agriculture Production	5
Shielded Metal Arc Welding	2

The data in Figure 1 reveals a clear preference among ALS learners for practical, skills-based training. A strong inclination towards vocational courses such as computer applications, agriculture, and trade skills is evident. This suggests a desire for immediate employability and economic independence. While the data indicates a high demand for these specific areas, it is equally important to recognize the foundational role of literacy and numeracy in overall skill development. This suggests a keen interest in these areas and emphasizes the potential for further development and enhancement of skills in these domains. The data serves as a valuable resource for identifying the most sought-after training areas and tailoring future programs to address the specific needs and preferences of ALS learners. To effectively address the learners' needs, training programs should prioritize a balance between practical skills and essential academic competencies, ensuring learners are well-equipped for both the job market and continued learning.

Figure 1. Training Needs of ALS Learners

CONCLUSION

The demographic profile of ALS learners indicates that the majority are female, aged 18-35, and unemployed. Additionally, a significant portion of the learners do not have any disabilities or health impairments. Moreover, there is a high percentage of learners who have received skills-related training, highlighting a strong preference for practical, skills-based training. The most attended training programs are Bread and Pastry Production, Food and Beverage Services, and Organic Agriculture Production.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on these findings, it's important to design training programs that meet the specific needs of ALS learners. These programs should focus on both practical skills and basic academic knowledge to provide a complete education. It's essential to balance practical skills with literacy and numeracy, which are the foundation for all learning. Future programs should also focus on the areas that ALS learners are most interested in. Preparing learners for jobs and further education is key, and this can be done by offering a well-rounded education. The "Skills Enhancement and Employability Program" will help ALS learners gain practical skills, essential academic knowledge, and the support they need to find jobs or continue their education. This program aligns with the findings of the needs assessment and aims to address the specific needs and preferences of ALS learners in Monkayo District.

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