

Factors influencing learners completion of Alternative Learning System (ALS) program

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Abstract

This study examined the factors influencing learners' motivation, barriers to completion, and the effectiveness of support mechanisms in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in Suyo, Ilocos Sur. Specifically, it identified (1) factors motivating learners to enroll and continue in ALS, (2) barriers encountered in completing the program, and (3) learners' perceptions of available support mechanisms. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed involving 108 ALS learners. Quantitative data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. Qualitative data were gathered through interviews and thematically analyzed to explain and validate the quantitative results. Findings revealed that learners were generally highly motivated. Convenience and accessibility, financial and practical considerations, and personal growth emerged as the strongest motivational factors. Qualitative results highlighted flexible schedules, affordability, the opportunity to work while studying, intrinsic goals, family aspirations, and support from teachers, peers, and the community. Although barriers were rated as having low overall influence, academic challenges related to modular learning - particularly portfolio completion, lesson comprehension, time management, and balancing responsibilities - were identified as the most significant obstacles. Support mechanisms were perceived as highly effective, especially instructional and socio-emotional support from teachers and flexible learning arrangements. The study concludes that while ALS effectively addresses the needs of out-of-school youth and adult learners, strengthening learner-centered instruction, academic guidance, and sustained motivational support is essential to improve completion rates.

Keywords: adult learners, Alternative Learning System, completion barriers, educational persistence, learner motivation, out-of-school youth, support mechanisms

Factors influencing learners completion of Alternative Learning System (ALS) program

1. Introduction

Education remains a key driver of social mobility and poverty reduction; however, millions of individuals worldwide remain excluded from formal schooling. Out-of-school youth (OSY) and adults (OSA) are particularly affected by poverty, early employment, family responsibilities, and displacement, especially in marginalized communities where structural inequalities perpetuate educational exclusion. Globally, an estimated 251 million children and youth remain out of school, reflecting persistent disparities between low- and high-income countries and reinforcing what the World Bank describes as a global “learning crisis” (Cipriano, Ha, Wood, Sehgal, Ahmad et al., 2024). These limitations of traditional schooling models highlight the need for flexible and inclusive learning systems.

In the Philippines, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) provides non-formal education opportunities for OSY and OSA through the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) program (Osawa, 2021). Strengthened by Republic Act No. 11510, ALS institutionalized support for marginalized learners and expanded flexible delivery modalities. Despite these reforms, learner completion remains a significant challenge, with financial constraints, work obligations, family responsibilities, and school-related risks contributing to attrition (Cipriano et al., 2024; Osawa, 2021). These issues are evident in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, where only 931 of 1,394 or 66.78% of ALS enrollees completed the program in SY 2024–2025, and in Suyo District, which recorded only 95 of 160 or a 59.4% completion rate from SY 2022–2023 to 2024–2025. These figures reveal a gap between access and successful completion.

In response, this study examines the factors influencing ALS learner completion in Suyo District, considering both external conditions (e.g., socioeconomic constraints and institutional support) and internal learner factors (e.g., motivation and persistence). The findings aim to inform context-responsive Learning Delivery Plans and strengthen inclusive education practices within Ilocos Sur and the broader Philippine education system.

2. Methodology

Research Design - This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, consisting of two phases: an initial quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase intended to explain and contextualize the quantitative findings. In this approach, quantitative data are collected and analyzed first, after which qualitative data are gathered to interpret significant results, emerging patterns, and unexpected outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Integration occurs during the interpretation stage, where qualitative explanations enhance the understanding of quantitative trends, thereby strengthening the study’s validity, credibility, and explanatory power. This design is particularly appropriate for educational research contexts where both numerical measurement and contextual understanding are required (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Locale - The quantitative phase involved 108 current and former ALS learners, while 10 learners were purposively selected for the qualitative interviews. Participants were identified through the Learner Information System (LIS) during School Years 2022–2023 to 2025–2026 and had participated in ALS learning sessions for at least three months. The study was conducted in Suyo, Ilocos Sur, a geographically isolated, upland, and predominantly rural area where access to formal education is limited. Within this context, the ALS program serves as a vital alternative education pathway for out-of-school youth and adults.

Research Instrument - The quantitative instrument, a structured survey questionnaire adapted from the works of Tomarong and Rañoa (2022) and Osawa (2021), consisted of Likert-scale items measuring motivation, learning experiences, challenges, program support, and factors influencing completion. The instrument was revised and validated by five ALS educators, achieving high validity with mean ratings ranging from 3.93 to 3.99. Pilot testing

with 25 ALS learners in the Tagudin District further refined the questionnaire. A qualitative interview protocol with open-ended questions was developed based on the quantitative findings to gain deeper insights into learners' motivation, experiences and the factors affecting program completion.

Data Collection Procedure - The data collection for this study Factors Influencing Learners Completion of Alternative Learning System (ALS) Program was conducted systematically to ensure validity, reliability, and ethical compliance. The process began with the preparation of the research instruments, including a structured survey questionnaire designed to collect quantitative data on learners' motivation for enrolling in ALS, factors influencing program completion, and the effectiveness of support mechanisms provided. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the College Research Ethics Committee to ensure adherence to ethical standards, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect for participants' rights. Formal permission to conduct the study was then secured from the Department of Education, Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. Separate approval was obtained from the Tagudin District for the conduct of pilot testing among respondents who met the inclusion criteria. Similar requests were submitted to the District Supervisor, school heads, and ALS teacher in the Suyo District to formally obtain authorization to implement the main study in the respective community learning centers.

The research instruments underwent systematic validation procedures, including assessments of content, construct, and face validity by expert validators. A pilot test was conducted prior to the main data collection, during which participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed. Feedback from the validation and pilot testing phases was used to refine and finalize the instruments. Participants were subsequently identified, and informed consent was obtained before the actual data gathering commenced. Consistent with the sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, data collection was carried out in two consecutive phases. The **quantitative phase** was implemented first, during which a structured survey questionnaire was administered in paper format to 108 current and former ALS learners in the Suyo District who had participated in ALS learning sessions for at least three months. Respondents were selected using convenience or quota sampling. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires, provided clarification when necessary, and retrieved the completed forms for analysis. The quantitative data served as the basis for identifying trends, patterns, and significant factors related to ALS program completion.

Following the analysis of the quantitative results, the **qualitative phase** was conducted to explain, elaborate, and contextualize the initial findings. A qualitative interview protocol was developed based on the quantitative results and used in individual interviews. It contained open-ended questions designed to elicit rich narrative data on learners' experiences, perceived challenges, learning environments, support systems, and suggested strategies for improving program completion. This sequential use of closed-ended and open-ended instruments enabled the qualitative findings to meaningfully explain the quantitative results. Ten (10) learners were purposively selected from the survey respondents to represent diverse experiences and perspectives relevant to the quantitative findings. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in quiet and private locations such as community learning centers, classrooms, and barangay halls. With participants' prior consent, audio recordings were used to ensure accurate documentation. To maintain anonymity, each participant was assigned a unique code consisting of initials and numbers, which was used throughout transcription and analysis.

After data collection, quantitative data were encoded and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to generate descriptive and inferential results aligned with the study's objectives. Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, categories, and emerging themes that explained the quantitative findings. Data integration occurred during the interpretation stage, where qualitative insights were used to clarify and enrich the quantitative results, consistent with the explanatory intent of the research design.

Data Analysis - The data analysis was conducted in two distinct and sequential phases, with integration

occurring during the interpretation stage. In the first phase, quantitative data obtained from the survey questionnaire were encoded and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. These statistical measures were used to determine learners' levels of motivation, identify factors influencing ALS program completion, and assess perceptions of program effectiveness. Mean scores were computed for perception-based items to summarize overall responses and identify prevailing trends and patterns related to ALS program completion in the Suyo District.

Following the quantitative analysis, the second phase involved the analysis of qualitative data collected through individual interviews. Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis, which entailed systematic coding, categorization, and the development of themes based on recurring patterns and significant statements. The resulting themes provided in-depth explanations of learners' motivations, experiences, challenges, and perceived strategies that support program completion, particularly in relation to the quantitative findings. Integration of the quantitative and qualitative results occurred during the interpretation phase, where qualitative themes were used to explain, clarify, and contextualize the statistical results. This explanatory integration strengthened the credibility and depth of the analysis by linking numerical trends with learners' lived experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This sequential process allowed quantitative findings to guide qualitative inquiry, producing an integrated interpretation that deepens understanding of learners' experiences and program outcomes.

Data Categorization - In analyzing and interpreting the data, the following norms served as guides and references for classification and interpretation. For **Motivations for Enrolling and Factors Influencing ALS Completion**, responses were interpreted using a five-point scale: 5 – Very High (VH) for mean scores ranging from 4.21–5.00, 4 – High (H) for 3.41–4.20, 3 – Moderate (M) for 2.61–3.40, 2 – Low (L) for 1.81–2.60, and 1 – Poor (P) for 1.00–1.80. For the **Effectiveness of Supports Provided in the ALS Program**, interpretation followed a five-point effectiveness scale: 5 – Very Highly Effective (VHE) (4.21–5.00), 4 – Highly Effective (HE) (3.41–4.20), 3 – Effective (E) (2.61–3.40), 2 – Less Effective (LE) (1.81–2.60), and 1 – Not Effective (NE) (1.00–1.80). For the **Level of Validity of the Research Instrument, Instructional Worksheets, Learning Management System (LMS), and Academic Learning Support and Remediation Program (ALSRP)**, a four-point scale was used: 4 – Highly Valid (HV) (3.50–4.00), 3 – Valid (V) (2.50–3.49), 2 – Fairly Valid (FV) (1.50–2.49), and 1 – Not Valid (NV) (1.00–1.49).

Ethical Clearance - This study strictly adhered to established ethical guidelines throughout the entire research process to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants. The researcher is committed to upholding core ethical principles, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, fairness, transparency, and fidelity. Informed consent was prioritized. All participants were provided with complete and accurate information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and anticipated benefits before any data collection took place. For vulnerable populations, such as out-of-school youth, additional safeguards were observed. Age-appropriate language was used during the consent process, and when necessary, assent was obtained from the learner, accompanied by consent from their ALS teacher, parent, or guardian. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and all participants retained the right to withdraw at any time without fear of penalty or negative consequences, in full compliance with ethical research standards.

Ensuring anonymity and privacy, no personally identifiable information was linked to participant responses. Learners were assigned unique aliases or code names consisting of initials and numbers, which were used in all data documentation to safeguard their identity. All data was collected anonymously, and any identifying information was removed during the analysis phase, handled securely and used strictly for academic purposes. It upheld data security and confidentiality, digital files were saved in password-protected folders, while physical copies of the data were kept in locked cabinets. When the research was completed, the data were disposed of responsibly following the school's recommended data disposal protocols. Digital files were erased through secure methods such as reformatting, while printed materials were shredded and discarded in a manner that prevents retrieval.

Prior to the implementation of the study, formal letters of approval were obtained from the Department of Education, Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, as well as from the District Supervisor, school heads and teachers of the ALS Community Learning Centers in the Suyo District. A separate approval was also secured for the conduct of the pilot study in Tagudin District. These permissions are vital in ensuring that the research is conducted in full compliance with DepEd regulations and with respect for the authority and involvement of local education stakeholders. This research was self-funded, with no sponsorship from government or private entities. The researcher commits to honest and accurate reporting of findings. No data were fabricated, misrepresented, or manipulated. The final findings were presented through detailed narrative summaries supported by direct participant quotations, thereby enhancing credibility, authenticity, and trustworthiness in the research results.

Participants were treated fairly and equitably, regardless of their background. Equal opportunity to participate were offered, and selection was based on participants' relevant experiences or recommendations from ALS teachers, ensuring ethical and purposeful sampling. The research was conducted in full alignment with the ethical standards of the college, the Department of Education's research protocols, and applicable national research and data privacy laws. Key principles, including fidelity, integrity, protection of participant rights, and transparent communication, guided every stage of the study. By prioritizing ethical responsibility and maintaining the trust of all participants, this research sought to produce findings that are not only valid and reliable, but also socially and educationally meaningful in addressing ALS program completion in the Suyo District, Division of Ilocos Sur.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Level of Motivation of Learners for Enrolling in the ALS Program

The findings indicate that ALS learners in the Suyo District demonstrate an overall high level of motivation to enroll in the program. Learners' desire for learning was rated High, with a sub-mean of 4.14, reflecting a strong interest toward knowledge acquisition and skill development. The highest-rated item, "I feel satisfied when I understand something new," obtained a mean score of 4.33, which is Very High, and this underscores intrinsic satisfaction as a key motivational driver, consistent with intrinsic motivation theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Likewise, the statement "I enrolled in ALS to improve my reading and writing skills" recorded a mean of 4.21, rated as Very High, highlighting strong goal-oriented motivation, particularly in literacy development (Delos Santos, 2025; Osawa, 2021). Other indicators related to enjoyment of learning and skill enhancement obtained mean scores ranging from 4.00 to 4.09, all of which are descriptively rated as High, further demonstrating that learners perceive ALS as a meaningful avenue for growth (Idulsa Jr. & Luzano, 2024).

Motivation related to self-improvement was also rated High, with a sub-mean of 4.01. The strongest driver was the desire to complete basic education, as the item "I want to finish elementary or high school" obtained a mean score of 4.95, which is Very High. This finding positions ALS as a critical alternative pathway to educational credentials (Osawa, 2021). Indicators related to achievement and personal fulfillment obtained mean scores ranging from 4.14 to 4.17, which are interpreted as High, suggesting that self-efficacy and accomplishment are central motivators (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In contrast, improving oneself primarily for family considerations obtained a mean score of 3.08, which is Moderate, indicating that this factor is less influential and that learners are chiefly motivated by personal educational goals.

Motivation in terms of personal growth was rated Very High, with a sub-mean of 4.37. The strongest indicator, "I enrolled in ALS so that I can go to Senior High School/college/TESDA/abroad," obtained a mean score of 4.74, which is Very High, demonstrating that learners view ALS as a gateway to further education, skills training, and expanded opportunities (Delos Santos, 2025). Similarly, aspirations for a better future recorded a mean of 4.40, rated as Very High, while indicators related to dream fulfillment obtained mean scores ranging from 4.18 to 4.34, confirming that long-term goals and upward mobility strongly influence enrollment decisions (Idulsa Jr. & Luzano, 2024).

Motivation linked to emotional and psychological needs was rated High, with a sub-mean of 3.82. Learners highly valued the supportive environment of ALS, particularly the feeling of being respected and accepted, which obtained a mean score of 4.91, rated as Very High. Comfort and confidence compared to regular schooling recorded mean scores ranging from 4.24 to 4.33, further emphasizing the importance of a safe and inclusive learning climate (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022). Age-related concerns obtained a mean score of 3.32, which is Moderate, while fear of learning recorded a mean of 2.28, which is Low, indicating that positive emotional experiences - rather than avoidance of formal schooling - primarily motivate participation.

Convenience and accessibility emerged as the strongest motivational dimension, rated Very High, with a sub-mean of 4.57. Flexible scheduling obtained a mean score of 4.94, and fewer class days recorded a mean of 4.92, both of which are Very High, underscoring the importance of adaptable learning arrangements for learners balancing work and family responsibilities (Delos Santos, 2025). Proximity of learning centers and minimal disruption to daily routines obtained mean scores ranging from 4.25 to 4.44, further reinforcing the central role of accessibility in sustaining participation. Motivation related to family and social issues was rated High, with a sub-mean of 3.65. Teacher encouragement was particularly influential, as it obtained a mean score of 4.79, which is Very High, highlighting educators as key social motivators (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022). Support from family and peers obtained mean scores ranging from 3.50 to 3.93, which are rated as High, and also contributed positively. However, becoming a role model recorded a mean score of 2.16, which is Low, suggesting that personal advancement outweighs broader social-image considerations.

Motivation driven by financial and practical needs was rated Very High, with a sub-mean of 4.39. The strongest factor was the cost-free nature of ALS, which obtained a mean score of 4.95, rated as Very High, emphasizing affordability as a major driver of access (Osawa, 2021). Reduced transportation expenses recorded a mean score of 4.71, employment-related credential needs obtained a mean of 4.68, and the ability to work while studying registered a mean of 4.08, further demonstrating the program’s practical advantages (Mahinay & Manla, 2025). Finally, personal barriers and life circumstances showed only Moderate influence, with a sub-mean of 2.71. Health concerns, caregiving responsibilities, and age were not primary enrollment drivers. The only relatively stronger factor was ALS flexibility in balancing commitments, which obtained a mean score of 3.70, rated as High, indicating that adaptability supports—but does not dominate—learner motivation.

Table 1
Summary on the level of motivation of learners for enrolling in the ALS program

Motivations for Enrolling in ALS	Mean	DR
1. Desire for Learning	4.14	H
2. Self-Improvement	4.01	H
3. Personal Growth	4.37	VH
4. Emotional or Psychological Needs	3.82	H
5. Convenience and Accessibility	4.57	VH
6. Family and Social Issues	3.65	H
7. Financial or Practical Needs	4.39	VH
8. Personal Barriers and Life Circumstances	2.71	M
Grand Mean	3.96	H

Legend: VH-Very High, H-High, M-Moderate, L-Low, P-Poor

The results in Table 1 show that ALS learners in Suyo District are generally highly motivated to enroll in the program, reflecting positive motivation across eight key categories. Motivation varied across dimensions, with Convenience and Accessibility rated highest with a mean score of 4.57, interpreted as Very High, highlighting the importance of flexible schedules, fewer class days, accessible learning centers, and minimal disruption to daily routines (Delos Santos, 2025; Osawa, 2021). Financial or Practical Needs with a mean of 4.39 and Personal Growth with a mean of 4.37, were also rated very high, indicating that learners are motivated by affordability, the ability to work while studying, and aspirations for further education and improved life opportunities (Delos Santos, 2025; Idulsa Jr. & Luzano, 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Other categories, including Desire for Learning having a mean of 4.14, Self-Improvement with a mean of 4.01, Emotional or Psychological Needs with a mean of 3.82, and Family and Social Issues with a mean of 3.65, were rated high, showing that intrinsic motivation, skill development,

emotional support, and social encouragement also contribute positively to participation (Calo & Salvaña, 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2020). In contrast, Personal Barriers and Life Circumstances scored lowest with a mean of 2.71, interpreted as Moderate, suggesting that factors such as health, age, and caregiving responsibilities have limited impact, likely due to the flexible structure of ALS (Osawa, 2021). Overall, the findings indicate that learners are primarily driven by the program's practicality, accessibility, and opportunities for personal growth, underscoring the importance of maintaining flexible, supportive, and learner-centered ALS initiatives to enhance motivation, engagement, and completion.

3.2 Degree of Seriousness of the Barriers Encountered in the Completion of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Program

The findings indicate that most barriers to ALS completion are perceived as low to minimal, except for academic and program-related demands. Financial barriers were generally rated as Poor with a sub-mean of 1.74, suggesting that economic constraints are not a significant obstacle. The lowest rating was for feeling burdened by ALS costs (1.24), while lack of financial resources (2.11) and difficulty meeting basic needs (1.96) were rated Low. These results reflect the free or low-cost structure of ALS and the accessibility of Community Learning Centers (CLCs), consistent with research indicating that financial barriers in ALS are substantially lower than in formal education (Delos Santos, 2025; Osawa, 2021). The seriousness of **lack of motivation or loss of interest** was **Moderate** with a sub-mean of 2.69. Some learners reported difficulty staying motivated (3.34) and occasional reduced interest in continuing (2.91), often due to competing responsibilities or fatigue (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022). However, low ratings for lack of lesson engagement (1.89) and absence of clear personal goals (2.60) suggest that most learners find ALS meaningful and goal-oriented (Villenes, 2018). Overall, motivational challenges appear situational rather than persistent.

Work-related barriers were also **Moderate** with a sub-mean of 2.72. Prioritizing job-seeking (3.10) and the need to work for family support (2.91) occasionally affect attendance (Delos Santos, 2025). However, lower ratings for fatigue (2.57) and schedule conflicts (2.29) indicate that most learners manage employment alongside ALS, benefiting from its flexible structure (Osawa, 2021). **Negative peer influence** was generally **Low** with a sub-mean of 2.35. Experiences of negative peer behavior (1.32) and discouragement (2.42) were minimal, though moderate ratings for peer pressure or limited encouragement (2.80–2.88) suggest occasional influence (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022). Nevertheless, intrinsic motivation and clear educational goals appear to outweigh peer-related challenges (Villenes, 2018).

In contrast, **program requirements and academic challenges** were rated **Very High** with a sub-mean of 4.20, making them the most serious barrier. Difficulty completing requirements (4.55) and managing time for modules and tasks (4.49) highlight substantial workload and time-management pressures (Osawa, 2021). Difficulty understanding lessons (4.02) and stress from workload (3.73) further indicate cognitive and emotional strain. These findings underscore the need for strengthened academic support, simplified materials, flexible pacing, and time-management guidance (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022).

Family-related barriers were generally **Poor** with a sub-mean of 1.68. Caring for family members (1.51), household responsibilities (1.63), irregular attendance due to family obligations (1.82), and lack of family support (1.76) were minimal concerns. This suggests that learners are able to balance domestic responsibilities with ALS participation, supported by flexible scheduling (Calo & Salvaña, 2024). Similarly, **bullying or teasing** was rated **Poor** with a sub-mean of 1.23. Feeling unsafe (1.02), experiencing bullying (1.10), or being teased for joining ALS (1.23) were rarely reported, indicating a respectful and inclusive learning environment (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022).

Distance and accessibility barriers were also **Poor** with sub-mean of 1.47. Indicators such as travel distance (1.49), transportation costs (1.44), and unreliable transport (1.49) suggest that CLCs are accessible and strategically located (Osawa, 2021). Barriers related to **lack of parental or guardian guidance** were **Low** with a

sub-mean of 2.28. While some learners reported limited guidance (2.12–2.44), family support appears generally sufficient to sustain engagement and persistence (Calo & Salvaña, 2024).

Health-related barriers were minimal with a sub-mean of 1.16, indicating that illness or physical conditions rarely disrupt attendance. This aligns with studies showing that health concerns have limited impact when programs provide flexible attendance policies (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022). Barriers associated with **change of residence** were also **Poor** with sub-mean of 1.19, suggesting that relocation rarely interrupts participation. Flexible scheduling and responsive administrative support enable continuity despite mobility (Osawa, 2021).

Class schedule incompatibility was **Low** with a sub-mean of 1.81. Learners generally reported that ALS schedules are flexible and compatible with daily responsibilities, reinforcing the program’s learner-centered design (Calo & Salvaña, 2024). Barriers related to **fear of the ALS teacher** were negligible with a sub-mean of 1.06. Learners reported minimal anxiety in interacting with teachers, indicating positive teacher–learner relationships that promote engagement and help-seeking behaviors (Villenes, 2018). Likewise, **jealous spouse or partner** was **Poor** with a sub-mean of 1.22. Indicators of discouragement or restriction were rarely reported, suggesting that personal relationships generally support, rather than hinder, participation (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022).

Table 2
Summary on the degree of seriousness of the barriers in the completion of learners of the ALS program

Factors Influencing ALS Completion (Barrier)	Mean	DR
1. Financial Support/Financial Difficulties	1.74	P
2. Lack of Motivation/Loss of Interest	2.69	M
3. Work Commitments/Employment/Looking for Work	2.72	M
4. Negative Peer Influences	2.35	L
5. Program Requirements/Academic Challenges	4.20	VH
6. Family Matters/Responsibilities	1.68	P
7. Bullying/Teased by an Acquaintance/Neighbor	1.23	P
8. Home Far from CLC/Accessibility of School	1.47	P
9. Lack of Parental Guidance	2.28	L
10. Health-related/Illness	1.16	P
11. Change of Residence	1.19	P
12. Class Schedule Not Compatible with Free Time	1.81	L
13. Fear of Teacher	1.06	P
14. Jealous Spouse	1.22	P
Grand Mean	1.91	L

Legend: VH-Very High, H-High, M-Moderate, L-Low, P-Poor

Table 2 shows the degree of seriousness of barriers affecting ALS program completion, with mean scores ranging from 1.06 to 4.20 and a grand mean of 1.91, interpreted as Low. This indicates that most barriers minimally influence learners’ ability to complete the program, except for **Program Requirements and Academic Challenges**, which had the highest mean of 4.20 interpreted as Very High, highlighting that academic demands - such as understanding lessons, completing modules, managing time, and meeting outputs - pose the most significant challenge. Moderate influence was observed for **Work Commitments/Employment** with a mean of 2.72 and **Lack of Motivation/Loss of Interest** at 2.69, suggesting that job responsibilities and fluctuating motivation occasionally affect attendance but do not consistently prevent completion. Low-impact barriers included **Negative Peer Influences** with a mean of 2.35, **Lack of Parental Guidance** at 2.28, and **Class Schedule Incompatibility** at 1.81, while Poor or minimal influence was noted for **Financial Difficulties** at 1.74, **Family Responsibilities** at 1.68, **Distance from CLC** at 1.47, **Bullying** at 1.23, **Jealous Spouse** at 1.22, **Change of Residence** at 1.19, **Health Issues** at 1.16, and **Fear of Teacher** at 1.06. Overall, these results suggest that ALS learners in the Suyo District are resilient and committed, with academic requirements representing the primary barrier, emphasizing the need for targeted support, clear instruction, and manageable workloads to improve completion rates (Calo & Salvaña, 2024; Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022; Osawa, 2021; Villenes, 2018).

3.3 Effectiveness of the Supports Given to ALS Learners

In terms of the program support, learners perceive instructional support in the ALS program as Very Highly

Effective obtaining a sub-mean of 4.65, indicating that it significantly facilitates comprehension, engagement, and successful completion. High ratings for opportunities to ask questions (4.81), teacher assistance in understanding lessons (4.80), and personalized help for difficult topics (4.79) demonstrate strong teacher responsiveness and individualized guidance. Regular feedback (4.66) and engaging teaching methods (4.62) further reinforce effective instructional delivery. The alignment of learning pace with learners' abilities (4.21) reflects differentiated instruction responsive to diverse learning needs. These findings are consistent with studies showing that personalized guidance, formative feedback, and learner-centered strategies enhance motivation, persistence, and retention in non-formal education (Calo & Salvaña, 2024; Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022; Villenes, 2018). Overall, instructional support emerges as a critical factor in strengthening learner confidence and academic success.

Learners also rate the learning resources and tools as Very Highly Effective with a sub-mean of 4.39. A supportive and respectful learning environment (4.92) and flexible learning options, including schedule choice (4.87), are particularly valued, underscoring the importance of accessibility and adaptability in sustaining participation (Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022). High satisfaction with teaching quality (4.83) and clarity of learning materials (4.44) further indicates that instructional resources are relevant and comprehensible. Although access to digital tools received a relatively lower mean (3.25), this limitation does not substantially diminish overall engagement. Collectively, these findings affirm that quality materials, flexible arrangements, and a positive learning climate enhance participation and completion, while improvements in digital access could further optimize outcomes (Calo & Salvaña, 2024; Villenes, 2018).

Social-emotional support received a sub-mean of 4.88, interpreted as Very Highly Effective, highlighting its central role in fostering motivation, resilience, and persistence. Learners reported strong emotional and motivational support from teachers (4.92) and consistent encouragement to continue despite challenges (4.91). Increased confidence and responsibility (4.87), strengthened motivation (4.90), feelings of safety (4.87), and a sense of purpose (4.83) collectively indicate that ALS promotes a psychologically supportive environment. These findings reinforce existing literature emphasizing that positive teacher - learner relationships and consistent encouragement are essential for sustained engagement and completion in alternative education programs (Calo & Salvaña, 2024; Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022; Villenes, 2018).

Learners likewise perceive academic and goal-oriented support as Very Highly Effective with a sub-mean of 4.81. Preparation for the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) examination (4.92), guidance in setting learning goals (4.73), and support in improving study habits (4.75) indicate structured academic mentoring that promotes self-directed learning and goal attainment. Respondents also reported enhanced future educational and career opportunities (4.86), achievement of educational goals (4.84), and support in balancing learning with work and family responsibilities (4.76), reflecting ALS's flexible, learner-centered framework. These outcomes align with research demonstrating that structured goal-setting and academic guidance improve persistence and completion in adult education contexts (Calo & Salvaña, 2024; Tomarong & Rañoa, 2022; Villenes, 2018).

Overall, support and satisfaction within the ALS program received the highest rating with a sub-mean of 4.90, interpreted as, Very Highly Effective. Learners affirmed strong overall support in staying in the program (4.98), teacher support (4.95), and responsiveness to individual needs (4.93), indicating personalized and holistic guidance. High willingness to recommend ALS (4.95) and satisfaction with the education received (4.77) further demonstrate trust in program quality. Support for practical challenges such as internet access, financial constraints, and family concerns (4.82) reflects attention to contextual barriers. Consistent with prior research (Calo & Salvaña, 2024), these findings confirm that integrated academic, emotional, and practical support mechanisms significantly enhance engagement, retention, and completion.

Table 3 shows that learners perceive support in the ALS program as highly effective across five dimensions, with mean scores ranging from 4.39 to 4.90 and a grand mean of 4.73 interpreted as Very Highly Effective. **Overall Support and Satisfaction** received the highest rating of 4.90, followed by **Social-Emotional Support** at 4.88, highlighting the value on learners emotional and motivational encouragement that fosters confidence, persistence,

and resilience, consistent with research showing that supportive learning environments enhance engagement and performance in ALS programs (Salcedo & Paglinawan, 2025). **Academic and Goal-Oriented Support** with a mean of 4.81, emphasizes structured guidance in goal-setting, study habits, and exam preparation, reflecting the importance of clear instructional pathways for learner progression. **Instructional Support** at 4.65, demonstrates learners’ appreciation for clear explanations, engaging teaching methods, and individualized feedback, aligning with studies advocating differentiated and responsive instruction (Quiñones, 2024). **Learning Resources and Tools**, with a slightly lower mean of 4.39, indicate overall satisfaction while highlighting opportunities to improve access, completeness, and technological support (Delos Santos, 2025). Overall, the findings confirm that ALS in the Suyo District provides comprehensive, learner-centered support - including instructional, emotional, academic, and practical guidance - that promotes engagement, satisfaction, and successful program completion, underscoring the critical role of teachers, structured guidance, and flexible learning arrangements in sustaining learner motivation and outcomes.

Table 3

Summary on the level of effectiveness of the supports provided to the ALS learners

Effectiveness of Support Provided	Mean	DR
1. Instructional Support	4.65	VHE
2. Learning Resources and Tools	4.39	VHE
3. Social-Emotional Support	4.88	VHE
4. Academic and Goal-Oriented Support	4.81	VHE
5. Overall Support and Satisfaction	4.90	VHE
Grand Mean	4.73	VHE

Legend: VHE-Very Highly Effective

3.4 Factors Affecting the Learners’ Motivation, Barriers, and Level of Effectiveness of the Support Programs for ALS Learners

The experiences of ALS learners in Suyo District reflect the combined influence of motivational, social, practical, and instructional factors that shape both enrollment and persistence in the program. The interview results further reveal that these influences are deeply rooted in learner’s lived realities, including economic necessity, family responsibilities, age-related barriers, past educational disruption, community relationships, and personal aspirations for self-improvement and dignity. Motivation to enroll in ALS is not driven by a single factor but by a convergence of needs such as the desire for stable employment, the aspiration to support one’s family, the need for flexible and accessible education, and the search for belonging within a supportive peer and community environment. At the same time, persistence in the program is shaped by learner’s struggles with work demands, household and childcare responsibilities, emotional fatigue, self-directed modular learning, and time-management pressures. These challenges are mediated by the presence of strong support systems, particularly teacher-led emotional, instructional, and material support, as well as peer encouragement and community acceptance. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that ALS participation in Suyo District is a socially embedded process, where motivation, barriers, and support mechanisms interact dynamically to influence learner’s decisions to enroll, persist, and complete the program. This integrated perspective provides a strong foundation for analyzing learner’s motivation, the barriers they encounter, and the effectiveness of the support mechanisms within the ALS framework.

Factors Affecting Learners’ Motivation. Learner’s motivation to enroll in and continue ALS is driven by a combination of economic goals, family-related aspirations, social encouragement, and program accessibility. Many learners perceive ALS as a practical pathway toward employment stability and improved livelihood, particularly because it enables them to earn a diploma while continuing to work. In support of these findings, the following sample excerpts are cited:

“I was motivated to enroll in ALS because my classmates are my neighbors whose age are almost the same as mine.Another is that, I needed a diploma to get permanent at my current work. I

grab the opportunity to finish high school and get a diploma because it is free and the learning center is near our home. Classes are not held everyday.” (R1).

“I was motivated to enroll because I wanted to work abroad to earn a higher income and support my family. Many jobs require a diploma, and ALS gives me the opportunity to obtain one. ALS is more convenient for me than regular school because the class schedule is flexible, classes are not held every day, and the learning center is near my home. ALS is also free, which helps me save on transportation and school expenses. (R5).

“I was motivated to enroll in ALS because I enjoy learning new things and feel satisfied when I understand something new. I want to finish high school and improve myself. ALS is more convenient than regular school because of its flexible schedule and supportive learning environment.”(R6)

These findings align with Delos Santos (2025); Osawa (2021), who noted that flexible and accessible non-formal education programs enhance learner motivation by providing practical pathways toward employment and personal development. Likewise, Tomarong and Rañoa (2022) emphasized that adult learners often enroll in alternative education programs to achieve career and economic goals. Mahinay and Manla (2025) further highlighted that intrinsic motivation, such as self-fulfillment and personal growth, plays a critical role in sustaining persistence in non-formal education.

Furthermore, family-centered motivation also emerged as a strong driving force, with learners emphasizing their desire to support their children and serve as positive role models. As further emphasized by the respondents:

“My motivation came from my children. I wanted them to see that education is important” (R3).

“I want to improve myself for my child and provide a better future while I am still young” (R8).

“I want to support my family and help them have a better future, and I believe finishing ALS will help me do that” (R2).

These findings are corroborated by Aniasco (2024); Idulsa Jr. and Luzano (2024), who identified family aspirations and support as key motivational factors in adult learning programs. De Leon (2025) likewise reported that adult learners are often motivated by the desire to serve as role models for younger family members.

In addition, social encouragement from neighbors, classmates, and teachers helped reduce feelings of shame and hesitation toward returning to school. To justify these claims, the following statements are cited:

“My neighbors kept encouraging me and telling me that it is never too late to finish my studies” (R2).

“My classmates are my neighbors, and we encourage each other, which makes attending class easier and more comfortable” (R1).

“I felt shy returning to regular school, so ALS was more comfortable for me” (R7).

The flexibility, accessibility, and inclusivity of the ALS program further strengthened learners’ motivation to enroll and persist. These results are consistent with Calo and Salvaña (2024); Hero and Gloria (2025) who found that social support networks and welcoming learning environments significantly enhance learner engagement in alternative education. Wayas and Dinoro (2023) likewise emphasized that flexible schedules contribute to sustained motivation among adult learners.

Barriers to Program Completion. Despite strong motivation, learners encountered several barriers that hindered their completion of the ALS program. Competing responsibilities related to work, household duties, and childcare were the most common challenges, often resulting in physical exhaustion and limited study time. As

verbalized by the respondents:

“After a long day at work, I feel too tired to study, and providing for my family is my top priority” (R3).

“Household responsibilities and occasional work demands affect my attendance and study time” (R5).

“Childcare responsibilities and fatigue affect my attendance and focus. I struggle to attend learning sessions, complete the modules, and portfolio requirements because of responsibilities, and some lessons are difficult to understand on my own” (R8).

These findings are supported by Villenes (2018); Casingal (2025), who reported that adult learners face multiple competing responsibilities that constrain participation in non-formal education programs.

Another significant barrier involved the difficulty of modular learning, particularly the reliance on self-study. Learners expressed feeling overwhelmed by the volume of modules and struggling to understand lessons without direct explanation. As clearly stated by the respondents:

“I prefer listening to someone explain the lessons rather than studying on my own, and adjusting to the modules has also been difficult” (R4).

“Some lessons are difficult to understand when using the modules alone” (R6).

“Sometimes I struggle to understand the lessons when studying at home” (R7).

In addition, learners described emotional fatigue and demotivation associated with unfinished learning materials. As verbalized:

“Staring at the unfinished thick modules made me feel too lazy to complete them, especially when I feel too tired from work” (R1).

“Seeing the thick modules sometimes makes me feel overwhelmed and too lazy to answer them” (R2).

“I find it difficult to complete the requirements because the modules are thick and some lessons are hard to understand” (R5).

These findings align with Osawa (2021); Salcedo and Paglinawan (2025), who reported that learners often struggle with self-directed learning in the absence of immediate instructional support. Mahinay and Manla (2025) similarly noted that excessive learning materials without sufficient guidance can reduce motivation and persistence.

Time-management difficulties and emotional barriers such as shyness, fear of non-compliance, and reduced confidence further intensified these challenges. As clearly stated by the respondents:

“Sometimes I struggle to finish the activities because when I arrive home, I get occupied with other responsibilities and end up forgetting to complete the tasks” (R7).

“I feel shy and hesitant going to the learning center when I cannot meet the deadlines” (R1).

“Managing my time is challenging, especially when my friends invite me to play online games instead of working on my modules” (R6).

These observations are corroborated by Casingal (2025) and Delos Santos (2025), who found that emotional factors and time-management difficulties significantly hinder completion in adult learning programs.

Level of Effectiveness of the Support Programs for ALS Learners. The findings further demonstrated that the support programs provided to ALS learners were generally perceived as highly effective, particularly those centered on teacher-led interventions. Emotional support emerged as the most critical form of assistance, as teachers consistently demonstrated patience, understanding, and encouragement. As clearly stated by the respondents:

“Our teacher made me feel valued and believe that I should finish the ALS program” (R1).

“The encouragement from my teacher motivates me to continue even when I feel tired” (R2).

“The teacher’s continuous motivation helps me continue and finish the program” (R6).

These findings align with Idulsa Jr. and Luzano (2024); Tomarong and Rañoa (2024), who reported that emotional and motivational support from educators significantly enhances persistence among adult learners.

Instructional support, including repeated explanations and personalized teaching, was also essential, particularly for learners who struggled with independent modular learning. As clearly stated by the respondents:

“The teacher explains the lessons repeatedly, which helps me regain confidence in learning” (R4).

“I understand the lessons better when the teacher explains them rather than reading on my own” (R3).

“Our teacher explains the lessons clearly when I do not understand them” (R8).

These results are supported by De Leon (2025); Aniasco (2024), who emphasized that clear, repetitive, and learner-centered instruction strengthens engagement and comprehension in non-formal education.

Flexible learning arrangements and material support, such as free modules and school supplies, further enabled learners to balance education with work and family responsibilities. As clearly stated by the respondents:

“Emotional support, flexibility, and the absence of expenses help me balance motherhood and my studies” (R8).

“The flexible schedule helps me continue studying while taking care of my family” (R5).

“Our teacher delivers the modules to our home and provides school supplies that we use for free” (R1).

These findings are consistent with Calo and Salvaña (2024); Wayas and Dinoro (2023), who emphasized that flexible delivery modes and material support are crucial in enabling adult learners to succeed in alternative education programs.

Overall, the findings underscore that teacher commitment, emotional encouragement, and flexible instructional delivery are central to the effectiveness of support programs for ALS learners, affirming the conclusions of (Osawa, 2021; Villenes, 2018)

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that ALS learners in Suyo, Ilocos Sur, demonstrate strong motivation to enroll and persist in the program, primarily driven by convenience, accessibility, financial necessity, and personal growth. Flexible schedules, nearby learning centers, free learning materials, and the opportunity to complete secondary education while managing work and family responsibilities significantly sustain participation. Both intrinsic motivations (self-improvement and fulfillment) and extrinsic motivations (employment and family aspirations) influence persistence, consistent with the motivational dynamics identified by Idulsa Jr. and Luzano (2024); Ryan and Deci

(2020), which emphasizes the interaction of intrinsic and extrinsic regulation in sustaining engagement.

Despite high motivation, academic barriers remain the primary impediments to completion. Learners struggle with modular and self-directed learning, comprehension without direct instruction, and compliance with extensive portfolio requirements mandated by Department of Education policies. A clear preference for teacher-led instruction indicates limited readiness for fully independent study, echoing findings on self-regulated learning challenges in flexible ALS modalities (Hero & Gloria, 2025). While work and household responsibilities constrain study time, financial and social pressures were less pronounced in this local context, differing from broader national concerns reported by UNICEF Philippines (Osawa, 2021).

Instructional and socio-emotional support emerged as critical protective factors. Teacher patience, repeated explanations, encouragement, and flexible delivery significantly enhanced learner confidence and persistence, aligning with research on teacher efficacy and ALS facilitation (Casingal, 2025; Tachado & Tumarong, 2024). These findings reflect broader alternative education literature, including Jack Mezirow's transformative learning framework, which underscores the importance of guided facilitation in adult education contexts. Overall, learner success in Suyo District is best explained as the interaction of strong intrinsic motivation and localized instructional support. To address persistent academic barriers, the development of structured Instructional Worksheets integrated into a Learning Management System (LMS), alongside an Academic Learning Support and Remediation Program (ALSRP), is recommended as an evidence-based intervention to strengthen guided learning, enhance comprehension, and improve completion rates.

Recommendation - In the light of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded to enhance learner motivation, reduce barriers to completion, and strengthen the effectiveness of support programs for Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners in Suyo District:

- Develop simplified, learner-friendly worksheets aligned with the ALS K–12 curriculum in both print and digital formats, integrated into an LMS with guided lessons, assessments, and interactive features to support the Academic Learning Support and Remediation Program (ALSRP) while enabling future evaluation of their impact on learner engagement and program completion.
- Strengthen teacher-led academic support through regular tutorials, remedial sessions, and structured learning guides.
- Sustain emotional support and strengthen partnerships with LGUs and community organizations to ensure holistic learner assistance.
- Maintain flexible schedules, peer mentoring, and motivational activities to address competing responsibilities and sustain persistence.
- Enhance equitable access to learning resources through offline materials, shared technology, and a centralized ALS SDO Ilocos Sur digital platform with LMS integration.

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