

Alternative Learning System Formal Education in Jail Student Learning Experiences

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Abstract:- The purpose of this study was to explore the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Students Learning Experiences in jail in Zamboanga City in terms of describing the student's learning experiences taking Alternative Learning System in jail, identifying the challenges experienced of the student's taking Alternative Learning System in jail and gain an in depth understanding on how do the students in jail continue to learn in the presence of these challenges. The study employed a qualitative design utilizing a case study method and purposive sampling. This was administered to three (3) of the students under ALS program in the jail and found that their experiences were good in terms of (1) overcoming their obstacles and personal growth; (2) increasing their interest in learning due to teachers' motivational strategies and support; (3) overcoming their hesitations due to the feeling of inappropriateness of education; (4) and experienced a long-term impact of education. However, the inmates also posted challenges despite of the positive experiences they receive from their teachers under ALS program in term of educational preparedness, struggling in comprehension and understanding, open-minded teachers and jail personnel and education for better future living. Thus, it is concluded that the ALS Program provides a realization of educational value to each of the inmates inside and a motivation as well to become a more responsible person even after breaking laws. It is also an indication that implementing ALS Program inside the Jail provided an equal opportunity for all. This study recommends further, by conducting a research on understanding the barriers faced by learners with diverse geographic and socio-economic backgrounds, more in-depth local representative studies are encouraged to inform evidence-based policymaking for the betterment of education for ALS learners.

Keywords:- Formal Education, Alternative Learning Experiences, Jail.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adhering to the philosophy that a well-rounded individual through proper education and guidance ensures a productive and responsible citizenry, thus, the Inclusive Education has grown to become a diligent and dedicated unit in providing related services. One of the beneficiaries of its programs is the Zamboanga City Jail through the delivery of Alternative Learning System (ALS) Program and other vocational trainings and personality development.

Alternative Learning System education act in the Philippines gives more Filipinos who have little to no chance of attending school to receive and finish basic education. It expands the rights of every Filipino to learn, opening more opportunities for growth and development. Accomplishing basic education lets students with special situations and needs

move on to pursue their studies and eventually jumpstart their careers. Alternative Learning System (ALS) has been integrated into the Department of Education in the Philippines as a parallel program to formal basic education. However, the education sector has been facing challenges in the implementation of ALS across regions because the implementers were graduates of Secondary, Elementary, and Early Childhood Education. Competencies acquired in college do not match with the competencies of the Alternative Learning System. In Northern Mindanao areas, there is no academic institution that offers such program. And so, implementers within the region need further training to make them aligned with and congruent to the services they are rendering. In 2016, CHED has come up with a draft of the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs) for the Bachelor of Alternative Learning System program. Through a memorandum order (CMO no. 83, series of 2017), CHED released these PSGs to higher education institutions so that the degree program can have a legal basis. In the third quarter of 2020, the House of Representatives approved at the third and final reading of House Bill No. 6910 or the Alternative Learning System Act (Philippine News Agency, 2020). So far, there is no response and development from the Philippine Senate. The late crafting of these important policies had made HEIs reluctant to offer ALS as a degree program and yet it's been a long time DepEd has been deploying implementers in the field whose backgrounds and degrees are not really for alternative learning system.

The Alternative Learning System is a program under the Department of Education that offers out-of-school youth and adults a chance to acquire basic literacy and complete basic education. Serving as a practical alternative to formal education, ALS combines both non-formal and informal learning methods. Malapitan said the ALS program not only offers an accelerated learning route for inmates who did not complete their traditional schooling but also acts as a catalyst for their swifter reintegration into society. The Alternative Learning System is a ladderized, modular non-formal education program in the Philippines for dropouts in the elementary and secondary schools, out-of-school youth, nonreaders, working Filipinos and even senior citizens. It is part of the education system of the Philippines but an alternative to the regular classroom studies where Filipino students are required to attend daily.

Education in the jail community serves as the backbone of correctional rehabilitation. As a matter of fact, education is in itself what rehabilitation in correctional facilities is all about. It is the central program from where all significant programs revolve. It promotes values, skills, standards and principles: matters that equip the most dangerous sector of our society to reform and recuperate from an undisciplined past.

According to Jacobi (2008), research on incarceration and educational access continues to reveal the stark reality for many adjudicated youths: without access to educational opportunities recidivism is probable. Yet conventional methods of teaching critical reading, writing, and thinking skills are not always successful for juveniles who have found little success (or hope) in traditional schooling. Jacobi argues that alternative literacy practices can effectively supplement conventional general education and vocational training courses by engaging juveniles through creativity, critical self-awareness, and a shift in how audience and authorship are understood. This research indicates that literate activity such as writing workshops, zine networks, peer and professional mentoring, and increased engagement can meet the unique needs and expectations of youth offenders while also working toward the democratic principles held by many correctional educators and the general public. It has been suggested that specific pedagogical approaches and practices for engaging juveniles by reviewing existing programs across the United States and articulates five core educational and life skills outcomes that can emerge as students learn to write beyond the sometimes-limiting notion of school.

With the aforementioned scenarios, the researcher is prompted to conduct a study to find out if the Alternative Learning System student experiences in Zamboanga City Jail, Philippines. Specifically, it aims to describe their experiences while in jail and determine the significant events that led to change their life inside the jail. Moreover, this study also aims to identify some challenges while taking Alternative Learning System in jail.

A. Statements of the Problem

The study aims to determine the Alternative Learning System formal education in Jail. Student Learning Experiences. More specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

- Describe the student's learning experiences taking Alternative Learning System in jail.
- Identify the challenges experienced of the student's taking Alternative Learning System in jail.
- How does the students in jail continue to learn in the presence of these challenges?

B. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is to describe the Alternative Learning System Formal Education in Jail. Student Learning Experiences of Zamboanga City Jail. Furthermore, this study, will also identify the challenges experienced of the Alternative Learning System student in jail. The participants of the study should be a representative of the Alternative Learning System students in Zamboanga City Jail, willing to share candidly about their learning processes and experiences during their stay, have a stay in jail for at least two-three years and a graduate of Alternative Learning System in Jail. The participants will be maximized to 3 inmates in order to serve relativity of the study.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will be utilizing the case study design method of research through the use of interview, responses of open-ended questions, and photos in order to determine the experiences and challenges of the students in jail taking Alternative Learning System. The interview and responses will be utilized and using a thematic narrative analysis of Riessman (2008).

This research design is appropriate for this undertaking as it determines the participants' experiences under study using in-depth interview and analysis. Phenomenology is used to recognize phenomena and emphasize personal involvements and understand the structure of those lived experiences.

Furthermore, this study will be conducted from May 2024 to June 2024 at Zamboanga City Jail, Zamboanga City, Philippines. Three inmates from Zamboanga City Jail, Zamboanga City, will be purposefully chosen as participants of the study in order to generate corroborated results from the inmates' responses. Researchers-made semi-structured interview questions will be utilized as research instrument which will be validated by experts in the field of criminal justice education, language, and research.

A. Population and Participants of the Study

Participants of the study will be inmates of Zamboanga City Jail, Zamboanga City, Philippines. Each of the participants will be using not the real names.

Furthermore, this study, will also identify the challenges experienced of the Alternative Learning System student in jail. The participants of the study should be a representative of the Alternative Learning System students in Zamboanga City Jail, willing to share candidly about their learning processes and experiences during their stay, have a stay in jail for at least two-three years and a graduate of Alternative Learning System in Jail. The participants will be maximized to 3 inmates in order to serve relativity of the study.

B. Sampling Design

This study will be using purposive sampling method. Nickolopoulou (2023), explained that, purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling.

C. Research Instrument of the Study

This study Will be utilizing the Researcher-made semi-structured interview questions as a primary instrument used in data gathering.

D. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher strictly followed the guideline of the Department of Education before the commence of the data gathering. Initially, the researcher sought the permission from the Division of Zamboanga City and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Pagadian City. The researcher is also mindful with all of those agreements given and reminded during the data gathering.

The instrument used in data gathering was a guided question. The guided question was made up of 10 different thoughts on challenges and experiences of the inmates in order generate the reliable responses from the participants. This was conducted in a face-to-face interview. During the selection of the participants, the criteria was used and must be satisfied. Further, the researcher sought the consent of the participants by giving a letter of consent.

Upon receiving the approval request from the Zamboanga City Division Office and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Pagadian City, the researcher initiate the gathering of data. The researcher presented the approved request letter to the Zamboanga City Jail personnel to inform them the purpose.

After the gathering of data, the researcher applied the thematic analysis for analyzing, interpreting, conclusion and recommendations.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The responses from incarcerated individuals participating in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) reveal a significant positive impact on their personal development and outlook on life. The participants of this study are inmates of Zamboanga City Jail, Zamboanga City, who are currently detained for violations of Republic Act 9165, known as The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. For privacy reasons, the names of the participants in this study are pseudonyms.

➤ Cases 1

Mark – A male 43 y/o, resident of Tituan, Zamboanga City. Married and has 10 Children. He was detained due to drugs since 2021 up to present. At first, he was hesitant joining the ALS program due to his age. As he joins the interview, he was touched. He uses his children as a motivating factor and he wants to be a role model to them. During the class engagement, he used to take down notes. He likes mathematics and some theories. It boosted his moral while joining the ALS. ALS, providing him all the necessary support like school supplies. As he said; there is no obstacle to them in learning since their teachers and BJMP Personnel's are approachable. He believed, that ALS in jail is effective since there is no cutting of classes. ALS to him is very important and make him a better person in life.

➤ Case 2

Saymon – A male 25 y/o. resident of Ayala, Zamboanga City. Single and detained due to drugs since last 2022 to present. Initially, he was shy, as soon it was started, he was relieved. He volunteered in joining ALS, gone through the process. He was motivated even he was in jail. Because of ALS, his week in jail is very fine. He is very interested to finish his ALS education. All help was given to them, like school supplies. Sometimes it's difficult for them, but they are free to ask questions. It's different type of teaching for them that needs focus. His understanding in education is very good, education to him is very important in life.

➤ Case 3

Greg - A 29 y/o, resident of Canelar, Zamboanga City. Married and detained due to drugs last 2021 to present. He is very thankful for the opportunity of ALS in jail. He was chosen and undergone screening. He was motivated because, its the dream of his parents to finish study. He is listening and sometimes asking questions. He is into values education. It took away his shyness and learns to grow. Almost everything they need in schooling was provided. Sometimes if he did not understand, he is asking questions. He is very sure that education is something to embrace for a good life.

A. Problem 1: Describe The Student's Learning Experiences Taking Alternative Learning System in Jail.

Student Learning Experiences in the Alternative Learning System in Jail.

➤ Theme 1: Overcoming Initial Hesitations

Initially, many students felt shy and hesitant to join the Alternative Learning System (ALS) due to personal reasons such as age and the incarceration environment. However, the supportive and encouraging atmosphere created by the teachers helped them overcome these initial reservations. Participants consistently highlighted that the kindness and

intelligence of the teachers made them feel more comfortable and willing to engage in the learning process. *Mark said, "At first, I was shy, and hesitant to learn due to age, but experience and good motivation with the help of our teachers." Saymon agreed, noting, "Noong una po, medyo mahiya po ako, pero po nong mapansin ko po mabait at magaling ang nagtuturo, nakaramdam po ako ng kapanatagan sa aking pag-iisip." (At first, I was a little bit shy, but I noticed they were all nice and smart teachers, and I felt at ease in my mind). Greg also supported Mark and Saymon's sentiments, stating, "My experience joining ALS made me feel thankful for this kind of opportunity in my life."*

These observations imply that teachers in the ALS program within the correctional setting are not merely imparting educational content but are also serving as sources of inspiration and instruments for fostering good character and positive perspectives among the students. This underscores the crucial role of teacher interaction in overcoming initial hesitations. Training educators to be supportive and empathetic can significantly improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

According to Duwe (2017), supportive educators are critical in raising motivation for continued education within correctional facilities. Their empathetic and encouraging approach significantly enhances inmates' engagement and commitment to learning, contributing to their personal development and rehabilitation. This emphasizes the transformative power of education when delivered in a supportive and nurturing environment, particularly within the challenging context of incarceration.

➤ Theme 2: Engagement and Motivation

The enthusiasm for education among ALS (Alternative Learning System) students who are incarcerated is remarkably high. Despite the challenges of being in jail, these students are driven by various internal motivations, including the desire to set a positive example for their children, fulfill their parents' dreams, and prepare for a better future upon their release. *Mark, an incarcerated student, stated, "In spite of life challenges, I used my children as motivation to pursue education simply because I want to become a role model to them. For education is a must to embrace."* This highlights the significant influence of familial responsibilities and aspirations on the educational pursuits of inmates.

Similarly, Saymon expressed, *"Na motivate po ako ng ALS kahit nandito po ako sa loob ng jail at least nakapag-aral po ako"* (I was motivated by ALS even though I am in jail; at least I was able to study). This sentiment illustrates how ALS programs can inspire incarcerated individuals to engage in learning, despite their limited freedom.

Greg shared, "I was motivated to pursue education to fulfill the dream my parents had for me." His statement underscores the importance of fulfilling familial expectations and dreams as a powerful motivator for education, even in restrictive environments.

These testimonies imply that many ALS students in jail are fully motivated and committed to their education. They believe that by doing so, they can become role models for their children and honor their parents' aspirations. The pride and engagement these students exhibit in their studies reflect their determination to overcome their circumstances. Supporting this, Panitsides and Moussiou (2019) explained that 'learning for the sake of learning' is a strong motivator, influenced by

personal and situational factors. The differences in educational and professional backgrounds among offenders also play a role in their motivation. Furthermore, Manger and Eikland (2013) noted that prisoners motivated to engage in education are often driven by the desire to plan for their future or prepare for life after release. This motivation is also linked to the opportunity to build competence and acquire new knowledge and skills.

In summary, ALS students in jail show high enthusiasm for education, driven by personal motivations such as family, future aspirations, and the intrinsic value of learning. Despite their incarceration, they remain engaged and proud of their educational achievements, seeing it as a crucial step towards a better future.

➤ *Theme 3: Structured Learning Routine and Subject Interest*

Each individual jailed student taking ALS has its own different desire in learning. Some adheres to mathematics and problem-solving theories, finish their basic education and others gaining exemplar values that would serve them as wisdom and meaningful learning upon the release from prison. The most important impact is, they are all interested in finishing their ALS education besides of the hardship and chaos situation in jail.

Mark shared, "Mathematics, learning to solve problems using theories, fascinated me the most." His interest in mathematics highlights how problem-solving and theoretical learning can captivate students and provide a sense of intellectual achievement. Saymon explained, **"Kaya po ako interesado pumasok sa ALS dahil gusto ko po makapagtapos ng pag-aaral" (I am interested in joining ALS because I want to finish my study).** His statement underscores the fundamental desire to complete education, which serves as a strong motivator for many incarcerated learners. **Greg stated, "Values, anything that teacher see interested and how to give our life with values."** This reflects a focus on moral and ethical education, which can guide inmates to lead better lives post-release.

These observations simply imply that, ALS in jail has a very high potential responses to mold the learners even in the extreme situations of their life for instance in jail. The competences and commitments of an ALS teachers on teaching and learning process could always be at its peak threshold in order to deliver the application in each subject by exploring some methods and strategies. Learners in jail, are motivated to absorb the challenges in each subject, like solving problems and applying the theories in real-life situations, perhaps it is the interest of the students.

Vandala (2019) stressed the importance of correctional education in improving offenders' cognitive skills. Steurer, Linton, Nally, and Lockwood (2010) identified key cognitive skills such as speaking, writing, reading, listening, and quantitative reasoning. Since many offenders are illiterate or have inadequate reading and writing skills, access to various correctional education programs can significantly enhance these skills. Improved cognitive abilities can, in turn, help offenders secure employment opportunities upon their release (Keena & Simmons, 2014).

In summary, ALS students in jail show varied and profound interests in their educational pursuits. Whether it's a fascination with mathematics, a desire to complete basic education or a quest for moral values, these students are driven to learn despite their circumstances. The role of ALS teachers is pivotal in this process, as they must deliver high-quality

education that can be practically applied, helping students overcome challenges and prepare for a better future.

➤ *Theme 4: Personal Growth and Overcoming Obstacles*

One of the biggest challenges faced by inmates is the lack of a support system. However, involvement in ALS (Alternative Learning System) education within jail provides inmates with personal growth opportunities, enabling them to socialize and build self-esteem. This newfound confidence helps them cope with obstacles such as missing their families, allowing them to focus on their educational endeavors.

Mark shared, "It had helped me a lot, it had boosted my morality, I became more confident as a person." His experience highlights how ALS education can significantly enhance an inmate's self-esteem and moral outlook.

Saymon thought, **"Kaya ko po naisipan pumasok sa ALS para may matutunan po ako sa araw-araw na nandito po ako sa loob ng jail. Malaking tulong ang ALS sa tulad ko po"** (I think, I want to join ALS to learn something new every day while I am inside the jail. ALS is a big help for someone like me). His statement emphasizes the daily benefits and the continuous learning that ALS provides, making incarceration more productive and meaningful.

Greg opened up, **"It took away my shyness, learning things helps me to grow."** This indicates how education can help inmates overcome personal insecurities and promote personal development.

This can be explained that ALS in jail is something that can uplift the inmate's individual personality by expressing it through self-confidants and boosting their demeanor with other inmates. It is also an achievement to them what they imparted from ALS in jail and a good impact to them. Inmates also gaining interpersonal growth and an edge compared to other inmates who are not an ALS students.

According to Maier and Ricciardelli (2022), discussed; by paying attention to the more positive or productive forms of change that can take place in prison, we gain a better and much-needed understanding of how prisoners adapt to and navigate their time in prison. That prisoners appear to find positive narratives of self-change even as they experience hostility and negativity in prison demonstrates clearly that prison adaptations are complex and nuanced, and that on an individual level, prisoners find meaningful ways to adapt to and make sense of their incarceration. In addition, Kheswa (2014) revealed in his study, that the inmates reported improved self-esteem and self-efficacy. This implies that rendering of relevant psycho-educational programmes to the offenders may guarantee successful integration to the society and minimal chances to recidivate because of the skills acquired.

➤ *Theme 5: Support, Resources, and Long-Term Impact*

The positive feedback from inmates participating in the ALS (Alternative Learning System) program underscores the importance of supporting prison education with the necessary resources to achieve its highest potential. This support is crucial for the rehabilitation and successful reintegration of incarcerated individuals into society. Efforts to expand and improve these programs can yield significant benefits for both the inmates and society at large.

Mark, Saymon, and Greg's experiences highlight the critical role that adequate resources and support play in their educational journey. Mark noted, **"We were provided with all**

things we needed during our educational journey such as pencil, paper, module, and etc." Similarly, Saymon explained, *"Halos lahat po ng pangangailangan ay binigay nila, tulad ng lapis, papel, module at marami pa po iba"* (Almost all we need was given to us, like pencil, paper, modules, and more). Greg also emphasized, *"Modules, paper, pencil, etc.... almost everything we needed was provided to us."*

These statements indicate that ALS teachers and BJMP (Bureau of Jail Management and Penology) personnel are very supportive, ensuring that inmates have the necessary school supplies and other vital resources to succeed in their educational endeavors. This support is essential for achieving the objectives of their instructional design frameworks and provides a strong foundation for inmates upon their release from prison. The support from ALS teachers and BJMP personnel helps create an environment where inmates can feel respected and treated as adults, fostering their development and recognizing their potential. Also, It's very clear indication that prison education like ALS programs has to be supported by the government with resources needed to establish its highest accomplishment. These are essentials for rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society. Efforts to expand and improve these programs can lead to positive outcomes and long-term impacts for both incarcerated individuals and society as a whole. This aligns with Britton's (2024) assertion that prison education should provide a space where individuals feel normal, respected, and valued, which is essential for their personal growth and rehabilitation.

Additionally, Maximino (2014) highlighted the long-term benefits of correctional education programs, noting that participation in these programs is associated with a 13 percentage-point reduction in the risk of reincarceration three years after release. This finding emphasizes the effectiveness of correctional education in reducing recidivism and promoting successful reintegration into society.

The ALS program in Zamboanga City Jail demonstrates the significant positive impact that well-supported prison education can have on inmates. Providing the necessary resources and creating a supportive learning environment are crucial for the success of these programs. The efforts of ALS teachers and BJMP personnel not only aid in the educational achievements of the inmates but also lay a strong foundation for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Expanding and improving prison education programs like ALS should be a priority for the government. Such initiatives can lead to positive outcomes for incarcerated individuals, reducing recidivism rates, and contributing to the overall well-being and safety of society. The experiences of inmates like Mark, Saymon, and Greg serve as powerful testimonials to the transformative potential of education within the prison system.

B. Problem 2: Identify The Challenges Experienced By The Student's Taking Alternative Learning System In Jail.

Challenges Experienced of the Student's Taking Alternative Learning System in Jail.

➤ *Theme 1: Educational Preparedness*

There are many explanations in inmate's participation in ALS in jail and some other trainings which may be related to previous experiences and educational preparedness for learning. However, many important reasons related specifically to the prison context for example; attitude and perceptions of prison staff and teachers, the prison environment itself; and program availability. *Mark, expressed; "Nothing at all, we are all comfortable with the help of BJMP Personnel who prepared the venue". Saymon, said*

"May mga bagay na medyo mahirap, maintindihan, pero dahil Malaya naman po kami magtanong naging madali ang lahat". (There are things a little bit difficult to understand, but because we are free to ask, it was all easy for us). Greg, claimed; "Sometimes when something I don't understand but with approachable teacher, we are able to ask freely".

The statements of the inmates imply that ALS teachers and BJMP personnel are very kind, supportive, and easily relate to the necessities of the inmates at any time. This supportive attitude triggers the motivation of inmates in the learning process. It can be noted that the preparation of the learning environment by BJMP personnel ensures that inmates are comfortable and ready to learn. This preparation minimizes distractions and creates a conducive atmosphere for education. Second, the freedom to ask questions and the approachability of teachers make it easier for inmates to overcome difficulties in understanding the material. This open communication fosters a more effective learning process. Third, the supportive and kind attitude of ALS teachers and BJMP personnel significantly motivates inmates. When inmates feel supported and understood, they are more likely to engage actively in their education.

According to Farley (2017), prison officers are in a day-to-day contact with prisoners and their attitudes towards them affects how successfully complete education or training programs. Prison officers have the capacity to enhance or undermine the goals of the prison where they work and to either motivate or de-motivate prisoners.

The involvement of supportive ALS teachers and BJMP personnel is crucial in the educational success of inmates. Their kindness, approachability, and readiness to meet the needs of inmates create a positive learning environment that significantly enhances motivation and engagement. This supportive atmosphere is essential for helping inmates overcome challenges in their educational journey and contributes to their overall rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society.

The statements from inmates like Mark, Saymon, and Greg highlight the importance of a supportive prison environment in fostering education. By ensuring that inmates have access to necessary resources and maintaining an open line of communication, ALS teachers and BJMP personnel play a vital role in the inmates' educational and personal development.

➤ *Theme 2: Struggling Comprehension and Understanding*

The capacity to read and comprehend with understanding is essential in our daily life. Nevertheless, it takes on greater significance when applied to ALS in jail. This leads to lifelong education because it affects the inmate's overall personality. There is no doubt that the comprehension of few inmates entails a very low processing and decoding individual words and comprehending the content and drawing inferences, and relating the information to prior knowledge and experience.

Mark, expressed; "Nothing at all, we are all comfortable with the help of BJMP Personnel who prepared the venue". Saymon, said "May mga bagay na medyo mahirap, maintindihan, pero dahil Malaya naman po kami magtanong naging madali ang lahat". (There are things a little bit difficult to understand, but because we are free to ask, it was all easy for us). Greg, claimed; "Sometimes when something I don't understand but with approachable teacher, we are able to ask freely".

This imply that despite facing difficulties in comprehending and understanding their daily lessons, including instructions delivered by ALS teachers, inmates participating in ALS in jail are supported by faithful consideration from both ALS teachers and BJMP personnel. This support helps alleviate doubts and confusion, making the learning process more tangible and understandable for the inmates.

Cunha and Capellini (2016) defined reading comprehension as a critical talent and a complicated process with multiple cognitive and linguistic components. It necessitates integrating several cognitive and linguistic processes, including attention, memory, inference, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse. Because these processes interact and influence each other in complicated ways, reading comprehension is complex and dynamic.

➤ *Theme 3: Open-minded Teachers and Jail Personnel's*

Teachers in ALS and Jail Personnel must be prepared to cultivate attitudes in inmates that are necessary for individual learning and growth during incarceration. As educators, they should embody traits of a living democracy, including open-mindedness and reflectiveness, especially within the confines of a jail setting. Open-mindedness entails welcoming a variety of ideas and perspectives, while reflection involves active inquiry aimed at improving the quality of inmates' experiences.

Mark expressed, “Nothing at all, we are all comfortable with the help of BJMP Personnel who prepared the venue.” Saymon said, “May mga bagay na medyo mahirap, maintindihan, pero dahil Malaya naman po kami magtanong naging madali ang lahat” (There are things a little bit difficult to understand, but because we are free to ask, it was all easy for us). Greg claimed, “Sometimes when something I don't understand but with approachable teacher, we are able to ask freely.”

Based on the experiences of ALS learners, it is evident that challenges in formal education can be overcome and even leveraged with the support of facilitators and other secondary factors that synergize toward a common goal. Open-minded individuals play a key role in facilitating the delivery of learning content in any educational setting. However, it is essential to establish boundaries and guidelines regarding educational inquiries to prevent incorrect attitudes and behaviors.

Marshall, Keville, Cain, and Adler (2017) emphasized that openness to sharing one's inner thoughts is crucial for effective collaborative reflection, a process that can be cultivated through insightful reflection prior to sharing ideas. Additionally, open-mindedness encourages the surfacing and questioning of assumptions. This willingness to critically examine problems from various angles and challenge assumptions requires the open-mindedness of the independent knower, as highlighted by Ostorga (2006).

➤ *Theme 4: Access to Cognitive Queries*

Practically, cognitive skills encompass a set of thinking strategies that enable individuals to use language, numbers, reasoning, and acquired knowledge effectively. For ALS learners in jail, these cognitive skills are essential for their educational journey and overall development. In this context, ALS teachers play a crucial role in facilitating the development of these cognitive skills by addressing queries from inmates and helping them build their cognitive abilities and other skill sets.

Mark expressed, “**Nothing at all, we are all comfortable with the help of BJMP Personnel who prepared the venue.**” Saymon said, “**May mga bagay na medyo mahirap, maintindihan, pero dahil Malaya naman po kami magtanong naging madali ang lahat**” (There are things a little bit difficult to understand, but because we are free to ask, it was all easy for us). Greg claimed, “**Sometimes when something I don't understand but with approachable teacher, we are able to ask freely.**”

From these statements, it can be implied that ALS learners in jail have the opportunity to access assistance and guidance from both their teachers and BJMP personnel. The fact that they feel comfortable and free to ask questions indicates that there is a supportive and approachable environment within the jail setting. This accessibility to assistance is crucial for inmates' cognitive development and learning progress. By addressing queries from inmates, ALS teachers can clarify difficult concepts and ensure that inmates have a thorough understanding of the material being taught. This clarity enhances cognitive development by promoting deeper comprehension. Additionally, encouraging inmates to ask questions fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When faced with challenges or confusion, inmates learn to analyze situations and seek solutions, thus strengthening their cognitive abilities. Furthermore, engaging in dialogue with teachers and personnel helps inmates improve their language and communication skills. Through asking questions and expressing their thoughts, they develop the ability to articulate ideas effectively, further enhancing their cognitive capabilities.

Having the opportunity to ask questions and receive support builds inmates' confidence in their abilities. This confidence is essential for cognitive growth, as it empowers inmates to engage more actively in the learning process and take ownership of their education. The fact that ALS teachers and BJMP personnel are approachable and willing to assist inmates fosters a supportive learning environment. In this environment, inmates feel comfortable seeking help and are more likely to actively participate in their education. This supportive atmosphere is conducive to cognitive development and overall learning progress.

Thus, addressing queries from ALS learners in jail is essential for facilitating their cognitive development and overall learning progress. ALS teachers play a crucial role in this process by providing assistance, clarifying concepts, and fostering critical thinking skills through dialogue and engagement. The supportive environment created by approachable teachers and BJMP personnel encourages inmates to actively participate in their education, leading to enhanced cognitive abilities and improved learning outcomes.

Abuzour, Lewis and Tully (2018), after completing the study suggested that, first, students must have sufficient basic knowledge to be able to transfer skills. Then, support from colleagues and adherence to guidelines helps students transfer their skills from the classroom to the workplace. Reinforcement is an important component of transfer as, without it, students and employees may perceive that the transfer is not valued and thus not bother to apply learned skills in new contexts in addition to (Benander, 2018). Educators can help beginners apply routine skills, such as information processing, in a range of unfamiliar and loosely defined situations. That will help learners practice applying their knowledge and skills in different ways.

C. Problem 3. How Does The Students Continue To Learn In The Presence Of These Challenges?

➤ Theme 1: Dedication and Focus on Learning

The teacher in ALS must be well trained, must focus and monitor the educational process, be dedicated and responsive to the students, and be inspirational that stimulates to reflect the impact of education on their life. The content of the curriculum must be accurate, stimulating, and pertinent to the students' current and future needs. The method or process must be encouraging, interesting, beneficial, and provide tools that can be applied to the student's real-life situation upon their release to the society.

Mark, said; "In my experienced, formal education here in jail it made me realized the value and importance of education in facing life journey and learned that education is factor for better person... Thank you so much!". This implies that

Mark's experiences transformative power of education, even within the confines of a jail. It underscores the importance of providing educational opportunities to incarcerated individuals, as it can serve as a catalyst for personal growth, self-awareness, and positive change. It is also a realization that education is a valuable factor in facing life's journey suggests that formal education in jail equips inmates with essential knowledge, skills, and perspectives that can empower them to navigate life's challenges more effectively, both during and after incarceration.

Saymon, supported Marks statement and said that: "Naging maganda naman po ang pananaw ko sa edukasyon dito sa natuklsan ko mahalaga bagay habang ako ay nag-aaral, napagtutunan ko emportansya ang edukasyon sa buhay ko". (I have a good outlook regarding education in here, and I discovered Its worthy thing while I'm studying. I also discovered the importance of education in my life). This mean that Saymon acknowledgment towards the contribution of that education of him becoming a better person underscores the holistic benefits of learning. Beyond academic knowledge, education fosters character development, critical thinking, and a sense of purpose, ultimately leading to personal transformation and growth.

Greg, stressed that; "I'm sure not like before, I include that education is something to embrace specially to us to live a good life". This implies a sense of gratitude towards the educational opportunities provided in jail signifies the recognition of the positive impact of education on his life. It emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and appreciating the resources and support received in pursuit of education, regardless of the circumstances.

Based from the narration of the ALS Learners, it implies that dedication and focus on learning of students to learn in school is a topic of great concern for educators today, and motivating students so that they can succeed in school is one of the greatest challenges of education. Student dedication is an essential element that is necessary for quality education thereby turns into wisdom. Thus, establishing positive relationships with students can foster a sense of belonging and support, which in turn can increase their dedication to learning, designing lessons that are interactive, relevant, and meaningful to students' lives, interests, and aspirations, thereby enhancing their motivation to participate and learn, offering academic and emotional support to students, addressing their individual needs and challenges to ensure they feel valued, understood, and empowered to succeed and

helping students set realistic goals and celebrate their achievements along the way can boost students' confidence and motivation to continue learning.

Filgona (2020), explained; getting students to learn and sustaining their interest in what they are learning should be the sole objective of teachers in the classroom. The instructor; an expert in the subject, is uniquely qualified to show students why the material is important, intellectually interesting, and valuable for them to learn. Conveying this message is an important goal of any effective instructor. Teachers' ability to engage students' interest and participation in their schooling in general.

➤ Theme 2: Importance of Education and Education for Better Future Living

The journey as an ALS teacher is always a challenging, but it deepened the understanding of others, and made their life better. Teaching in the ALS requires a tremendous amount of knowledge and patience to effectively deliver the expected content of the program. . It also requires a flexible and appropriate learning strategies and adapted tools. Learners need it to discover their talent, improve their life skills and transform their lives. *Mark, said; "In my experienced, formal education here in jail it made me realized the value and importance of education in facing life journey and learned that education is factor for better person... Thank you so much!". Saymon, narrated: "Naging maganda naman po ang pananaw ko sa edukasyon dito sa natuklsan ko mahalaga bagay habang ako ay nag-aaral, napagtutunan ko emportansya ang edukasyon sa buhay ko". (I have a good outlook regarding education in here, and I discovered Its worthy thing while I'm studying. I also discovered the importance of education in my life). Greg, stressed; "I'm sure not like before, I include that education is something to embrace specially to us to live a good life".*

The importance of ALS Education in jail is an important issue in one's life. It is the key to success in the future and to have many opportunities in their life. Education has many advantages for people. For instance, it illuminates a person's mind and thinking. It helps ALS students to plan for work or pursue a higher education. Having education in jail an area helps inmates think, feel, and behave in a way that contributes to their success, and improves not only their personal satisfaction.

Al-Shuaibi (2014), revealed; in short, being educated is undoubtedly being self-confident and successful in life. All in all, education is the process of acquiring knowledge and information that lead to a successful future. There are a lot of positive traits of having education; such as having a good career, having a good status in society, and having self-confidence. Education makes us view obstacles as challenges to overcome with no fear; facing new things. It is the main factor behind successful people and the merit of developed countries. Therefore, education is deemed a real success behind any future success.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A. Student Learning Experiences in the Alternative Learning System in Jail

Incarcerated students' feelings about learning can vary, but there are some common impressions. At first, they have the perception having a hesitation to education in jail such as: lack of educational opportunities, and negative perceptions of the prison environment. Upon joining ALS in jail, they felt very motivated, thankful and blessed. Some of them are felling

enthusiastically engaged. They are pushed by the strong motivating factor such as: want to be a role model of the family, desire to finish due to dreamed of his family and taking advantage of free education. They are also entertained by the kindness of ALS Teachers and BJMP Personnel's since all their questions are answered logically. Inmates, enjoyed every moment during class engagement specially on their favorite subjects. In fact, they admitted that they have overcome the many obstacles in learning, boosted their moral and gained personal development. In summary, while challenges exist, many incarcerated students appreciate the opportunity to learn and recognize its potential for personal transformation.

B. Challenges Experienced of the Student's Taking Alternative Learning System in Jail.

This study shows that many learners aspired to finish basic education and decided to enroll in the ALS programmed because of its opportunity for learning. Upon joining the ALS, learners assume, it's very challenging and would encounter issues with lessons, However, it's an irony in ALS in jail, it is full of support by the teachers and BJMP Personnel's. Moreover, some learners became very interested, due to very approachable staff. In summary, the challenges experience by the inmates taking ALS are very minimal except on the educational preparedness in which they have made few adjustments at the beginning and cope up during the later stage. Another challenge is Struggling Comprehension and Understanding of the learners which is perhaps due to its lack of access to education prior to life in jail. However, the challenges were compromise by the Open-minded Teachers and Jail Personnel's and Access to Cognitive Queries.

C. Continuation of Learning in the Presence of Challenges

Based from the findings of the study, ALS learners are dedicated and was focused in all task of learning. In addition, they simply understood the wonderful impact of being an educated person in the society. This imply, that ALS education plays a significant role in improving the quality of life of incarcerated individuals after release due to the fact improved literacy levels may enhance chances of securing employment opportunities and furthering education qualifications upon release.

V. CONCLUSION

The Alternative Learning System Program of the Department of Education in jail plays vital role in the learning experience of an inmates, specifically in overcoming hesitations, motivations to continuously grow despite of their situation, comprehension challenges and personal growth. Inmates educational preparedness and struggling comprehension and understanding are the two tangible challenges that apparently shown in this study. However, the challenges were managed by unparallel kindness and faithful consideration of the teachers and BJMP Personnel's.

Finally, ALS in jail is very successful in terms of transforming knowledge and wisdom to the inmates due to the mindset and total outlook upon the release from prison for having a good life with the aid of jail education and without reverting back to its previous bad doings or committing recidivism.

RECOMMENDATION

This study would be beneficial to the following:

A. DepEd Officials of Zamboanga City Schools Division

Results of the study will serve as their basis for awareness in designing and implementing a division-wide professional development program on Alternative Learning System that would cater to the enhancement of the professional strengths of the teachers and students. It is a way of improving the performance of teachers that will surely affect the teaching-learning process in Alternative Learning System in Zamboanga City Jail that will eventually lead to the improvement of the academic performance of the students.

B. Jail Personnel's

The results of this study can be an effective tool to the BJMP Personnel's to solve educational problems that do not have easy answers. Some of these problems include: student behavior, Jail improvement plans, and other educational issues. This study can provide motivations to BJMP Personnel's to serves as catalyst for further studies and push them to do more research in the future.

C. ALS Teachers

The teachers may benefit from this study. The study may provide them the basis and insights as to their level of understanding, thus this will provide them the baseline data to identify the good and bad experiences, extreme challenges in Alternative Learning System in jail, in order for them to design and develop an action plan and other administrative requirements, to ensure that they have a guide on what and when to do a specific task.

D. Students

This study may provide new insights to students that DepEd programs or initiatives about the phenomenon of the experiences among Alternative Learning System in Jail by providing public awareness about their experience of change during their incarceration, help young individuals to avoid criminal acts that they may regret in the future, help the people understand better their different experiences inside the jail and on how they cope up with those experiences to be a better person, encourage people not to judge them based from their past actions, but rather support them and love them, motivate inmates inside the jail to follow the rules so they would have a peaceful life and hopefully, experience change inside, and finally, help the inmates to have a more meaningful life as they experience the changes inside the jail.

E. Researchers

The results of this study may provide baseline data to future researchers pertaining Alternative Learning System Formal Education in Jail. Student Learning Experiences. This may serve as recent literature for further study.

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