

Attitudes of Alternative Learning System Learners Toward Learning the English Language

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Abstract

Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a parallel learning system in the Philippines that offers an alternative learning process to the current formal education. Its goal is to assist out-of-school youth and adults (OSYA) in learning basic literacy and numeracy and to provide them with the opportunity to complete basic education. This study aimed to assess the learning attitude—cognitive, affective, and behavioral—among ALS learners towards the English language as it is a part of their program. Quantitative-descriptive design was used in this study with 300 learners in the ALS Learning Centers around Angeles City, all of whom are between the ages of 18 and 50. Researchers used an adopted 45-item 5-point Likert scale survey to gather data. It was found in this study that the respondents have positive attitudes toward the English language in the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of attitude. This study also found a significant difference in attitude across profiles based on the learners' age and gender in the cognitive and behavioral aspects. Consideration for the inclusion of different types of ALS learners is recommended, as well as the external factors that affect the attitudes of ALS learners in language learning. The result of this study brought new information to the existing body of knowledge and contributed significant details in the field of the Alternative Learning System.

Keywords: *alternative learning system, attitude, English language, out-of-school youth, basic education*

Introduction

Throughout history and time, English has become the most influential and widely spoken language across the globe. Its influence has transcended each individual through trade, foreign affairs, and globalization. As a global lingua franca, the English language has found its way to inject itself into various mediums, such as printed texts, advertisements, and entertainment (Clement, 2011). The influence brought monumental changes in politics, the economy, medicine, science, and technology (Xue & Zuo, 2013). Simply put, English has become the language of power and authority throughout human history.

Today, the English language stands strong and serves many purposes in every aspect and context of life, such as in the community, academia, and society. Among these three contexts, academia holds a unique purpose and prowess in the English language. According to the report of the University of Winnipeg (n.d.), 142 countries placed English as a mandatory subject of their national education policy in public education instruction, and this

means that the world perceives the English language as a practical, beneficial, and purposeful language to acquire and learn by generation after generation.

The Philippine Constitution (1987) Article XIV Section 7, the English language performs functions in communication and instruction provided by law in the country. Moreover, English is the language of law and commerce, as well as school and government instruction. The Philippines treats English as the language of hope and opportunity for the Filipino people. The strength and proficiency of Filipinos in using the English language have been the driving force for the country's economic development (Cabigon, 2015), leading to a great emphasis on English language learning among schools in the country.

Furthermore, the Philippines has been progressive in English language teaching and learning. It is the primary medium of instruction except for some subjects that are designed and intended to be taught

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in the national language, Filipino, and in the regional language or the mother tongue language involving the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education. The need and the attitude to learn English in the country is of high importance as it is perceived as the door that could open many opportunities for career, professional advancement and development, and overseas-related employment. In this way, the country provides extensive support to all Filipino learners to ensure that every Filipino will have equal opportunities in the changing times.

In this present study, the primary focus was on a particular instruction that combined both formal and informal sources of knowledge involving the English language among the learners in the Philippines, which was the Alternative Learning System or ALS. The Republic Act No. 11510 (2020), or the Alternative Learning System Act, is a parallel learning system whose goal is to provide opportunities for out-of-school children and adults to improve their knowledge, life, skills, and readiness for higher education. ALS combines formal and informal knowledge and skills embedded in the ALS K-12 Basic Education Curriculum (DepEd, 2020). The target learners of ALS are those that need to learn basic literacy skills, such as reading, writing, and simple numeracy skills, and are 16 years old and older and beyond the primary school age.

In addition, Alternative Learning System promotes lifelong learning opportunities based on the ALS K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC), which takes a holistic, integrated, and intersectoral approach, and provides pathways across modes of learning that will ensure learners become caring, self-reliant, independent, productive, and patriotic citizens by allowing such learners to pursue further education after participating in the ALS program and passing the accreditation and equivalency assessment (Parrocha, 2021). Alternative Learning System is considered a viable second-chance program that benefits its learners, but it must constantly improve to help learners reach their full potential (Igarashi et al. 2020).

By understanding that the ALS system is designed for learners to acquire basic and functional literacy,

which involves practical skills essential in integrating oneself into a civilized society, the researchers wanted to obtain their attitudes toward learning the English language. Therefore, in this study, the researchers investigated ALS learners' attitudes toward learning the English language.

Types of Education in the Philippines

Education in the Philippines is of utmost importance and highly valued by most Filipinos. The education sector receives the highest allocation and highest increase in budget from the government among all other sectors (DepEd, 2022). There are several education programs in the Philippines; some are formal, informal, non-formal, and ALS. As defined by the Republic Act No. 9155 (2001) under Section 4, formal education refers to “a systematic and deliberate process of hierarchically structured and sequential learning corresponding to the general concept of elementary and secondary level of schooling” and in order for the learners to advance in the next level of formal education, a certification or a diploma is needed. Also, under Section 4, informal education is described as a lifelong process of learning of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from daily life experiences at home, community, workplace, and from life itself of every individual. Next, non-formal education pertains to any organized system of instruction being delivered outside the framework of formal education instruction whose goal is to deliver selected forms of learning resources depending on the type of learners. Lastly, ALS or the Alternative Learning System, as mentioned earlier in the study is a parallel or alternate instruction to the existing formal education system whose intended target learners are out-of-school youth and adults (OSYA) that need to acquire and learn basic literacy skills.

Moreover, the formal education system in the Philippines follows the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum, which branches out in Early Childhood, Elementary, Junior High School, Senior High School, and the ALS program under the Department of Education (DepEd). The UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (2011) defines Early Childhood Education (Kindergarten/Pre-School) as organized instruction for young children that provides learning and educational activities with holistic development to

reinforce children's early cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. Elementary or Primary Education (Grades 1 - 6) is the stage wherein learners are provided with step-up educational activities that strengthen the rudimentary skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Also, in primary education, learners need to establish the foundation of learning and understanding of vital areas of knowledge and personal development as they prepare for the next stage, lower secondary education. Junior High School (Grades 7 - 10) is the lower secondary education, while Senior High School (Grades 11-12) is the higher secondary education. The learners of lower secondary education, starting from Grades 7 to 8, are exposed to Exploratory TLE or Technical Livelihood Education. They are immersed in the Specialized TLE as they transition to Grades 9 to 10. Meanwhile, higher secondary education offers learners four main tracks: academic, technical-vocational-livelihood, sports, and arts and design. The ALS program is also under the K-12 education curriculum. It is divided into six learning strands involving essential subjects such as English and Filipino for communication, scientific and arithmetic skills, digital literacy, and personal development (DepEd, 2022).

Additionally, once the learners finish their secondary education, the DepEd expects them to be career-ready, business-ready and prepared for higher education or college (DepEd, 2015). Moreover, learners who wish to pursue higher education must enroll in state colleges and universities. Higher Education consists of three stages: undergraduate, post-graduate, and doctoral. It is also classified into three types: college or university, public or private, and secular or religious (Granada, 2021). Thus, higher education maximizes the learning potential of Filipino learners as they navigate their lives around the opportunities that await them.

Although formal education seems to be the most promising type of education in the Philippines to achieve one's dream and improve life, there are still other alternatives to formal education. With the aforementioned informal, non-formal, and ALS programs, Filipinos who happened to meet phases of their life under unfavorable circumstances, thus

compromising the educational aspect of their life, will still be able to return to the path of the academic world and acquire the fundamentals of knowledge most especially in these times where basic literacy is critically needed to find and land into a job, and this is why Filipino learners strive to engage themselves in such educational programs to secure a career for their future life (Valeza et al., 2017).

Despite the efforts made by the government to ensure every Filipino citizen will have access to quality and safe education, a report from the Philippine News Agency (2021) detailed a great deal of out-of-school youth is increasing throughout the years and now even more pronounced due to the global pandemic brought by the COVID-19 virus. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2018) noted the most common reasons Filipino youth quit school. The reasons are family matters, lack of personal interest, high cost of education, employment or looking for work, and financial concerns (Bersales, 2018). Such an issue is becoming a perennial concern in the country, which means that even if the Philippines have types of an educational system that is centered around the idea of providing support for out-of-school youth - it is not guaranteed that everyone will benefit from as long as the issues mentioned above are not taken into consideration by the government as well as school administrators and policymakers.

Alternative Learning System

Despite educational issues and concerns, the country still envisions an ideal future for its learners. It believes that education is crucial to a country's development and advancement. With the growth of science and technology, globalization and the internalization of education have become challenges that every country must address. One of today's educational tasks is encouraging students to develop 21st-century abilities (Greenhill, 2010; cited by Tindowen et al., 2017). As a result, public and private schools must focus on conveying the fundamentals and ensuring that pupils acquire a set of critical thinking and reasoning skills. In the Philippines, they have adopted EFA (Education for All), the Alternative Learning System (Rodriguez, 2015; cited by Tindowen et al., 2017).

The Philippine government's Department of Education launched the Alternative Learning System (ALS) initiative in 2004, intending to offer free primary education to school dropouts across the country. The nationwide average of the target population enrolled in ALS in 2015 was less than 10%, and enrollment in Manila was around 6% (Mehra et al., 2021). The ALS program is a non-formal education program provided to respondents at no cost—referred to as "learners" from this point. Enrollment in ALS allows students to take the government-sponsored ALS Accreditation and Evaluation (A&E) Exam, equivalent to graduation from the formal education system. ALS aims to reach and assist learners in ways tailored to their specific requirements by implementing various programs using diverse delivery methods (Mehra et al., 2021).

The phrase "Alternative Learning System" was coined by Philippine policymakers to encompass overlapping concepts and practices of alternative schools, adult education, informal learning, recognition of prior learning, and lifelong learning (Arzadon & Nato, 2015). ALS programs are held in approximately 4,467 community learning centers around the Philippines. Basic and functional literacy examinations are administered to new out-of-school students and adults. Those who fail the basic literacy test will be sent to the Basic Literacy Program.

As cited by Tindowen et al. (2017), the commitment to EFA aims was adopted in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and Dakar, Bangladesh, in 2000. In 2001, the government adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and in 2003, the Decade for Literacy. Despite this educational goal, the country continues to have a high rate of dropouts, with 62 percent of Filipino students dropping out, totaling 11,000,000 (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2010).

The implementation of ALS paved the way for marginalized groups such as children, women, people with special needs, and Indigenous people communities to assert their educational rights, as well as out-of-school youths (OSY) who did not complete their primary education due to financial and support issues. Many studies have found that

globalization benefits educated, talented, and mobile employees (Abinales & Dolan, 2012); as cited by Tindowen et al. (2017), and marginalized individuals that lack access to education are unlikely to profit from modernity. In addition, the program also emphasized that it is a parallel learning system that offers a viable alternative to existing formal education instruction by incorporating both non-formal and informal knowledge and abilities.

Furthermore, the literature suggested that ALS provides an opportunity for OSY and individuals to gain essential life skills and 21st-century abilities that will help them manage and adapt to environmental changes (Le Clus, 2011). As a result, students in the ALS program are already prepared with 21st century skills necessary for professional and personal development.

Pedagogical and Andragogical Practices in ALS

In the field of academe, pedagogy and andragogy are applied in terms of diagnostic of needs, learning climate, and role of their experience; the pedagogy and andragogy models are essential assumptions about the characteristics of learners that consider the whole-person approach (Delahaye et al., (1994), as cited by Aris et al., 2012). Pedagogy describes the classic instructional technique based on teacher-directed learning theory, while andragogy covers the self-directed learning approach (Knowles, 1980, as cited by Aris et al., 2012).

Pedagogy in learning is when students' intellectual capital is thought to improve their critical thinking skills and offer them better access to higher economic prospects when they pursue a university degree (Matricano, 2019; Andrews et al., 2020). Andragogy, on the other hand, is the preferred method of instruction for adult learners in higher education (MacKeracher, 2004; Pratt, 1988). Knowles' andragogy theory aimed to emphasize the uniqueness of adult learning. It is the preferred method of instruction for adult learners in higher education (MacKeracher, 2004; Pratt, 1988; El-Amin, 2020). Knowles' andragogy theory aimed to emphasize the uniqueness of adult learning. Knowles (1984) (as cited by El-Amin, 2020) reiterated that adults are self-motivated and take responsibility for their role in the learning process.

The formal education took place in the Alternative Learning System; thus, it is Pedagogical as it uses practical and formal knowledge. It also is andragogical for it tackles non-formal education—learnings about real-life situations; outside the four-cornered classroom. Alternative Learning System (ALS), also known as primary education's "other side." The ALS program combines non-formal education with the accreditation and equivalency (A&E) test, which results in a high school diploma or an elementary school diploma. It focuses on the learning needs of school leavers, adults, and other marginalized learners described by the law as "deprived, depressed, and underserved" (DDUs). Classes for ALS are available in 4,467 community learning centers across the Philippines (Arzadon & Nato, 2015).

English as a Core Component of ALS Education

Integrating the English language subject into the ALS curriculum is a fundamental preparation for ALS learners to acquire and improve their linguistic literacy and competence in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension (Nemenzo, 2019). Supporting the fact that English has been the most spoken language for many years globally as a native, second, or foreign language, many students from various walks of life need to learn the language in order to be competitive enough for career, business, or pursuance of higher education and become ready for the challenges of globalization. It has become a 'must-have' skill, especially if you want to work, open a business, or study in countries where English is the dominant language (Estliden, 2017).

Locally, most schools in the Philippines are observed to use English as a medium of instruction (Manalastas & Batang, 2018). The language has been used in the country for many years regarding education, whether in public or private schools. Almost all of the areas and fields of specialization require English competency. Hence, it is the primary instruction medium in the K-12 curriculum. The first learning strand or Learning Strand 1 of the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum for the Alternative Learning System (ALS - K to 12) of DepEd, is English communication skills, and this focuses on developing the ability of OSYA to use

critical thinking in processing the information as well as using such information effectively. It covers the five main macro skills in the English language: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing (DepEd, 2017).

In addition to the ALS - K to 12 curricula of DepEd, the significance of having communication skills as the first learning strand is that language serves as a foundation of communication and a medium of thought. Established basic level competencies in communication skills are achieved through a spiral progression: changing the type of material, length of the material, choice of words and language structure, and concept load. Learning and understanding other learning strands will be much easier if learners can develop their communication skills.

Moreover, the first stated one of the programs in Republic Act No. 11510 (2020) under Section 8 is the Basic Literacy Program which aims to eliminate illiteracy among OSYA via developing reading, writing, and numeracy skills. It shows how vital basic literacy skills are, for it is the foundation of lifelong learning in different fields. Getting illiteracy out of the learners' path allows them to learn more and improve their quality of life.

Teaching English in ALS Education

Teaching the English language in ALS education focuses more on the five macro skills in English, which involve listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing, compacted into one learning strand with the title Learning Strand 1: Communication Skills: English. The design of the English subject curriculum in ALS education is focused on teaching the English language for practical purposes such as telephone calls, understanding religious homilies, listening to the weather forecast, and other everyday-life tasks that deal with the use of the English language (DepEd, 2017). The main goal of Learning Strand 1 is to provide ALS learners with the ability to access, understand, and communicate. Critically evaluate and effectively utilize information from a range of sources in order to be a competent member of one's family, community, nation, and globe and participate in community and economic development initiatives.

With the idea of contextualizing learning using real-life scenarios, ALS learners are immersed in active and experiential learning. Abad and Galleto (2020) revealed that in Dapitan City, Zamboanga, there is a high level of support mechanism in instructional materials in ALS. However, they also pointed out that the instructional materials need improvement and financial support for excellent implementation of instructional materials in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, Arpilleda (2018) noted four main problems faced by mobile ALS teachers in Surigao del Sur: lack of instructional materials, absence of permanent learning centers and facilities, and irregular attendance of the learners. It is highly recognized that these issues and problems hinder the quality of instruction and content in every lesson.

Furthermore, a recent study done by Ravina (2022) among ALS teachers and ALS learners regarding the concept of service learning in English language learning revealed that the best way for both teachers and learners to master English lessons is through the process of self-reflection or evaluating oneself about the learnings that they have acquired. In addition, Ravina (2022) found that service learning is one of the effective ways for learners to understand and deepen their understanding. ALS learners learn best when they apply their knowledge to their community through volunteering, community service, and civic engagement. In this sense, ALS learners could enhance their skills in English communication by engaging in communicative activities within their community.

Attitude Toward Language Learning

Another critical component of this study involved the concept of language and attitude. There is a plethora of studies about attitudes toward learning the English language. In the study of Paola-Ross (2013), it was revealed that attitudes play an essential role in the level of motivation of second language learners. Hence, second language learners with a positive attitude toward the language perform better due to their high motivation level (Paola-Ross, 2013). Moreover, Estiyani (2014) pointed out that high-performing and low-performing second-language learners have positive attitudes toward second-language learners. Such positive attitudes influence and increase the learners' motivation in language learning. In addition, Wulandari (2013)

found the importance of maintaining positive attitudes in saving and enriching a critically endangered language, such as in her study, the Javanese language.

Furthermore, an attitude has three interrelated components, which are cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Stangor, 2022; Santillan, 2012). In language learning, the cognitive aspect of learners' attitudes has implications for language learning. A study by Bruen (2015) examines cognitive dissonance theory using a 'structured controversial dialogue' among foreign language learners. The study by Bruen (2015) found that using controversial dialogue that tackles controversial themes helps learners be linguistically competent in specific areas such as vocabulary, nouns, verbs, grammar, and adjective endings. Thus, the relationship between cognition and attitudes in language learning revolves around the idea of the perception, thought, and ideas toward the language and its entirety.

Moreover, in terms of the affective aspect, Lisa Barrett introduced the Theory of Constructed Emotion, formerly known as the Conceptual Act Theory. The theory states that language plays a vital role in emotion because it assists the conceptual understanding of the world to make meanings in a particular context or situation (Lindquist et al., 2015). Moreover, Conceptual Act Theory predicts that language and emotion are intertwined to help a person to understand emotional representations, such as facial expressions and body gestures, and abstract concepts like anger, fear, disgust, and others in a particular language (Lindquist et al., 2015).

Ultimately, the behavioral aspect of language learning and acquisition had been explored by B.F Skinner. He theorized that children acquire language through the positive reinforcement of adults who already know the language. In simple terms, he argued that children learn language through the behavior of adults around them (Sturdy & Nicoladis, 2017). Therefore, behavior and language affect one another. Krauss and Chiu (2013) emphasize in their study that language is the principal vehicle for transmitting cultural

information, which is embedded in individuals' social behavior.

Gender and Language

The relationship between gender and language has primarily been investigated in reference to the disparities between the language of men and women from various perspectives and techniques. By addressing the results of numerous studies, basic definitions of gender and sex have been provided and addressed.

Gu (2013) said that language exists in a social environment that is constantly changing; in addition to being influenced by gender, it is also governed by social, cultural, and psychological aspects. As a result, dynamic, all-encompassing studies on language and gender should be done. He was also able to see the flaws and how much more significant language similarities between men and women are than language differences. Gygax, P. (2019) also asserted Gu (2013) and recommended to utilize these categories as a jumping-off point for researchers who are interested in a specific facet of gender differences.

According to Xia (2013), language reflects, records, and transmits social distinctions. As a result, it is not surprising to see gender disparities reflected in language as most societies distinguish between men and women in a number of distinct ways.

Gender differences—indeed—affect the linguistic usage of gender, especially with the proper use of words and nuances that make it unfair for both genders to be recognized. For instance, in the cases of women, Muhammed (2020) said that there will be other changes in the future as more people participate in social life, business, academic sectors, and so forth. The language changes can reflect the rise in women's status in society. Menegatti (2017) supported this statement, proving that the vocabulary choices of daily communication reflect the substance of gender stereotypes, which state that women should exhibit communal/warmth features and males should exhibit agentic/competence traits. As a result, the status and power imbalances in society that are connected to the corresponding social roles are discreetly reproduced through language.

In language learning, Maulina M. (2015) found that male and female students appeared to be conscious of their linguistic needs. They frequently use techniques that enable them to regulate their own learning by planning and evaluating learning, as well as techniques that enable them to master the target language through practice, reasoning, and analysis.

Sarabi-Asiabar, A. et. al. (2015) also discovered that male students were more likely than female students to employ the kinesthetic learning style, whereas female students favored the aural learning approach. Understanding the different learning preferences of students at educational institutions is beneficial since it enables pupils to improve their learning and solves common learning issues.

Sociolinguistically, there is a difference in gender and language but that doesn't mean it will be congruent with the learning acquisition of both genders. Teachers need to take the initiative to modify their teaching strategies so that boys have an equal opportunity to close the language learning gap (Wightman, M. 2020).

Thus, students should be aware of their own learning styles in order to choose the best learning strategies, and instructors should be aware of their students' preferences in order to apply teaching strategies that are compatible with their learning preferences (Sarabi-Asiabar, A. et. al., 2015).

Age and Language

It is generally viewed by many that younger learners acquire language easier compared to adult ones. Anyone who knows a child or has encountered one before might notice that most, if not all, learn a language at a fast rate. There are instances when a one-year-old can already speak their hearts out with reasonable ease.

Although not accepted by everyone, one of the many explanations behind this is Eric Heinz Lenneberg's Critical Period Hypothesis which suggests that there is a specific growth stage or age range that an individual can learn a language with native-like fluency. This particular period is from early childhood to adolescence. Another notable hypothesis regarding this matter is the Language

Acquisition Device or LAD, a hypothesis proposed by Noam Chomsky. This hypothesis claims that there is an innate, hypothetical tool in the human brain that helps children quickly learn and understand language.

However, Hyland & Hyland (2019, as cited in Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2019) stated that despite age playing a significant part in language learning, there are still other factors compared to it that can affect language acquisition in greater extent namely motivation, learners’ capabilities, amount of exposure to the target language, socioeconomic status, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Based on their findings, Ozfidan & Burlbaw (2019) suggested that the differences in teaching-learning process among children, adolescents, and adults were influenced by their experience, cognitive abilities, and maturity.

Another study that relates with the aforementioned suggestion is from Sepasdar & Soori (2020) wherein they looked into the preferred language learning strategies of students from four educational levels: primary school (10-12 years old), guidance school (13-15), high school (16-18), and university (19-23). The results show that the learners’ preferred language learning strategy differs depending on the age group.

In this present study, the researchers explored the importance of the English language in the Alternative Learning System through the examination of attitudes toward the language. The researchers specifically aimed to assess the attitudes of ALS learners toward the English language and identified the significant differences of attitudes with their profiles.

Theoretical Framework

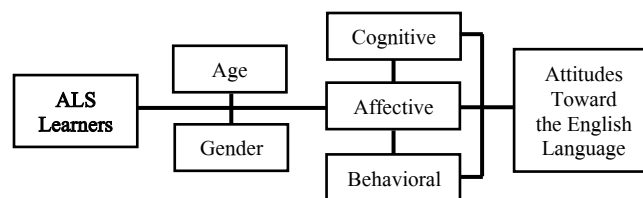
The Self-Perception Theory will be utilized in this study to integrate a theoretical model developed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960). Logan and Hodges (2012) define Self-Perception Theory as a process wherein individuals interpret their attitudes by assessing their behaviors. It involves a self-introspection or a self-reflection of one's attitudes and behavior towards a particular thing or situation.

Moreover, the researchers aimed to exemplify the theory of self-perception by utilizing a model developed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) called the 'tripartite model of attitudes.' The tripartite model of attitudes is designed to describe and explain a person's undiscovered attitudes and behaviors by looking at the three types of attitudes that involve the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects (Kaiser & Wilson, 2019). Such manifestations are indicators for predicting the attitude of a person. Houwer et al. (2016) define cognitive or cognition as the overall process that is perceived by sensory organs, such as inputs that are transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used. Concerning the tripartite model, the cognitive aspect can be measured when a person perceives the object and verbally expresses their thoughts.

Furthermore, the second component of the tripartite theory is the affective aspect. According to Brett et al. (2012), affective refers to the feelings and attitudes associated with emotions. The tripartite model's affective aspect is examined through a person's expressions toward an object. Ultimately, the behavioral aspect of the tripartite model revolves around the idea that behavior can be observed when a person is physically involved with the object or when a person's attitude toward the object suggests physical involvement (Kaiser & Wilson, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Attitudes of ALS learners toward the English language being investigated based on the tripartite model of attitudes



The presented conceptual model above was the envisioned flow of the study. The demographic profile, such as age and gender learners, were included as factors in investigating their attitudes toward the English language. The researchers also

examined the significant difference between the demographic profile of the ALS learners and their attitude toward the English language. Moreover, the researchers examined the attitudes by looking at each dimension of attitude, which involves the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Furthermore, the researchers assessed the attitudes of the ALS learners through an adopted 5-point Likert scale that was aimed to elicit cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses from ALS learners toward the English language.

Research Objectives

A recent study by Latoja (2022) found that ALS learners' attitudes toward schooling are rated as fair, which means that ALS learners perceive learning as neither critical nor insignificant. Attitudes are essential in establishing good study habits to achieve good academic performance; however, it was concluded that attitudes and study habits do not significantly affect academic performance (Latoja, 2022). Moreover, Mamba et al. (2021) emphasize the idea that ALS learners have unfavorable attitudes and orientations toward learning through a descriptive correlational study that tests the college readiness of ALS learners. Furthermore, he discovered that the negative attitude of ALS learners affects their college readiness; hence ALS learners find it challenging to integrate into higher education. With such studies about the attitudes of ALS learners toward learning, the researchers wanted to further the study by investigating their attitudes toward learning the English language.

In this study, the researchers aimed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To identify the respondents with reference to their:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Gender;
2. To assess the attitudes of respondents toward the English language by examining the following aspects of attitudes:
 - 2.1 Cognitive
 - 2.2 Affective;
 - 2.3 Behavioral;
3. To identify the significant difference in the attitudes of the respondents across profiles.
 - 3.1 Age

3.2 Gender

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant difference between the age of the learners and their attitudes toward the English language.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the gender of the learners and their attitude towards the English language.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was quantitative and descriptive. A quantitative research design provides statistical, mathematical, and numerical analysis of data obtained through surveys, questionnaires, polls, and existing statistical data that undergoes the process of computation (Babbie, 2010). Moreover, a descriptive research design is used to collect data on a particular condition of a phenomenon by exploring its variables (Anastas, 2008). Through an adopted survey questionnaire, the researchers extracted information from the respondents, such as the profile of the respondents expressed only in age and gender and their attitudes towards the English language under the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects.

Lastly, the significant difference in the respondents' attitudes across the age was examined by employing Independent T-test. Gerald (2018) defined Independent T-test as a statistical tool that could measure the presence of significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups. While, the significant difference in the respondents' attitudes across the genders was examined by employing ANOVA test or the analysis of variance that could determine the significant difference among groups (Kim, 2017).

Table 1. Table of Interpretation

Likert Scale	Interval	Interpretation	Alternate Interpretation
1	1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree	Negative
2	1.80-2.59	Disagree	Somewhat Negative
3	2.60-3.39	Neutral	Fair
4	3.40-4.19	Agree	Somewhat Positive
5	4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree	Positive

Table 1 presents the table of interpretation by Pimentel (2010) as a guide for the interpretation for the obtained mean scores in the assessment of the attitudes of ALS learners. The table shows a 5-point Likert scale with its interval, interpretations and alternate interpretations.

Ethical Consideration

In accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, the researchers ensured all the data collected from the respondents as well as their identity were strictly confidential. The research objectives were also disclosed to the respondents. The researchers also made sure that classes were not disturbed during the collection of data. An informed consent was created for the respondents to know that answering the questionnaire was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any moment they wish. In addition, the researchers guaranteed to not make the respondents feel pressured in any way while answering. The collected data were also guaranteed by the researchers to be exclusively used for research

purposes only. Lastly, the results of the study will be shared to the respondents if the respondents requested such information.

Results and Discussion

This study presented important key findings that can help in improving the teaching and learning process of the English language in the Alternative Learning System. The results of the assessment of attitudes of ALS learners toward the English bring forth significant implications that may help ALS educators in applying suitable teaching techniques and methodologies that are structured according to the learners’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral needs towards the English language; and for the most part, the ALS learners in forming introspective reflections on their way of thinking, feelings, and behaviors towards the English language.

Table 2. Profile of ALS Learners

Profile	N	%
Gender		
Male	155	51.7 %
Female	142	47.3 %
Transgenderers	3	1.0 %
Age		
18-24	225	75.0 %
25 and above	75	25.0 %

The present study involved a total of 300 ALS learners. There were 155 males (51.7%), 142 females (47.3%), and 3 transgenderers (1%). This table shows that the majority of the respondents of the present study were males, followed by females, and transgender being the least in the sample size. The low number of transgenderers may imply in the present study that there are only few transgenderers

that are studying in the Alternative Learning System. Considering the heteronormative topics in ALS, Moore (2016) then drew comparisons between this and their experiences in the LGBT English class. The LGBT class was not automatically inclusive; LGBT members often encountered difficulties trying to fit in.

There were 225 (75%) that were 18 - 24 years old respondents involved, and there were above 25 years old (25 - 50) which represented 25% of the total sample population. According to Index Mundi (n.d.), 15 - 24 years old are considered to belong to the early working age, while 25 - 54 years belong to the prime working age. Moreover, in terms of the

age of the respondents, those who were 18 - 24 years old had the highest representation of the age group, compared to those who were above 25 years old. In this present study, it may be suggested that younger ALS learners tend to enroll more in the Alternative Learning System than older ALS learners.

Table 3. Cognitive Aspect of Attitude towards the English Language

Statement	Mean	SD
1. Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.	4.40	0.896
2. Being good at English will help me study other subjects well.	4.28	0.822
3. I have more knowledge and more understanding when studying English.	3.98	0.916
4. I look forward to studying more English in the future.	4.24	0.835
5. Studying English helps me get new information in which I can link to my previous knowledge.	4.10	0.896
6. *I cannot summarize the important points in the English subject by myself.	2.70	1.137
7. *Frankly, I study English just to pass the exams.	2.74	1.219
8. In my opinion, people who speak more than one language are very knowledgeable.	3.89	1.055
9. Studying English helps me communicate in English effectively.	4.10	0.992
10. *I cannot apply the knowledge from an English subject in my real life.	3.10	1.307
11. Studying English makes me able to create new thoughts.	4.06	0.986
12. I am able to think and analyze the content in the English language.	3.79	0.936
13. *I am not satisfied with my performance in the English subject.	2.82	1.000
14. *In my opinion, the English language is difficult and complicated to learn.	2.89	1.116
15. The English subject has content that covers many fields of knowledge.	3.79	1.017
Overall	3.66	0.443

The ALS learners' cognitive aspect of attitude toward the English language obtained an overall mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.443. The minimum mean score is 2.70, while the maximum mean score is 4.4.

Table 3 discusses the assessment of the ALS learners' cognitive aspect of attitude toward the English language. The respondents have a positive attitude in terms of the cognitive aspect. This finding opposed the results of Abidin et al. (2012), who found that their respondents responded negatively to the cognitive aspect of attitude towards the English language. The lowest mean score was under the 6th statement: "I cannot summarize the important points in the English subject by myself." Using the table of interpretation

devised by Pimentel (2010), the researchers interpreted the mean score of the 6th statement as 'neutral,' which meant that the respondents had a fair judgment on the given statement. ALS learners' fair judgment on the 10th question may mean they are unsure if they can condense the lessons from the English subject.

Additionally, the highest mean score was under the first statement, "Studying English is important because it will make me more educated." The researchers interpreted the mean score of the first statement as "strongly agree," which meant that the participant's response to the first statement was optimistic. ALS learners' positive response denotes that they believe in the importance of the English language, which can help them enrich their minds.

ALS learners demonstrated enthusiasm in the cognitive aspect of their attitude. Wang (2021) argued that teachers serve as a key figure for the learners to support their cognitive development in the classroom and this also develops strong interpersonal relationships between the teachers and the learners. Therefore, the proper structure of the

content of each lesson should place an emphasis on the cognitive domain. Asserting prominence in the cognitive domain in the curriculum takes the advantage of the positive attitudes of the ALS learners towards the English language.

Table 4. Affective Aspect of Attitude towards the English Language

Statement	Mean	SD
1. I feel proud when studying the English language.	4.18	0.874
2. I feel excited when I communicate in English with others.	3.95	0.913
3. I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.	3.41	1.003
4. Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable.	3.89	0.910
5. To be inquisitive makes me study English well.	3.71	0.869
6. Studying English makes me have good emotions (feelings).	3.72	0.964
7. *I prefer studying in my mother tongue rather than any other foreign language.	2.81	1.121
8. I enjoy doing activities in English.	3.50	1.167
9. *I do not like studying English.	3.11	1.396
10. I wish I could speak English fluently.	4.05	1.075
11. I am interested in studying English.	4.22	0.887
12. Studying English makes me feel more confident.	3.98	0.988
13. *To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class.	2.22	1.151
14. Knowing English is an important goal in my life.	4.12	0.916
15. I look forward to the time I spend in English class.	4.00	1.003
Overall	3.66	0.446

The ALS learners' affective aspect of attitude towards the English language gained an overall mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.446. The minimum mean score was 2.22, subject to the 13th statement. The maximum mean score was 4.22, subject to the 11th statement.

Table 4 evaluated the affective component of attitude toward the English language among ALS learners. Regarding the affective aspect, the respondents have a positive attitude since their response displayed an interest in learning English. The study by Ong (2020) among senior high school students in the Philippines shares similar results in the affective aspect of attitude. The lowest mean score was subject to the 13th statement, "To be honest, I really have little interest in my English class," which falls under the category of "disagree" or somewhat negative judgment. It may be agreed

that ALS learners were interested in devoting themselves to learn something from English.

Moreover, the highest mean score under the 11th statement, "I am interested in studying English.," falls under the "strongly agree" judgment. The responses of the ALS learners were in conjunction with their judgment of their positive interest in studying the English language. Similarly, the study of Uysal and Gokce (2021) derived the same results. They noted that instrumental motivation, such as the importance of the English language in professional, personal and academic development, plays a crucial role in learning.

Wang (2021) stated that teachers who portray emotions while teaching English stimulates friendliness, provokes constructive emotive reactions, and gets the learners together. Highlighting the affective domain in the content of

each lesson is important for ALS learners to express their feelings which can help to address their

emotional needs as they integrate themselves studying the English language.

Table 5. Behavioral Aspect of Attitude towards the English Language

	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	*Speaking English anywhere makes me feel worried.	3.02	1.111
2.	Studying English helps me to have good relationships with friends.	3.59	1.606
3.	I like to give opinions during English lessons.	3.70	0.884
4.	I am able to make myself pay attention while studying English.	3.82	0.852
5.	When I hear a student in my class speaking English well, I like to practice speaking with him/her.	4.01	0.836
6.	Studying English makes me have more confidence in expressing myself.	4.00	0.909
7.	Studying English helps me to improve my personality.	4.11	0.886
8.	I delay my English homework as much as possible.	3.26	1.198
9.	*I am not relaxed whenever I have to speak in my English class.	3.09	1.092
10.	*I feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students.	3.02	1.118
11.	I like to practice English the way native speakers do.	3.86	0.920
12.	I wish I could have many English-speaking friends.	3.69	0.962
13.	*When I miss the class, I never ask my friends or teachers.	3.34	1.184
14.	*I do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when English is.	3.27	1.146
15.	*I do not pay any attention when my English teacher is explaining the lesson.	3.66	1.266
	Overall	3.56	0.448

The ALS learners' behavioral aspect of attitude toward the English language acquired an overall mean score of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.448. The minimum mean score was 3.02, subject to the 1st statement. The maximum mean score was 4.11, subject to the 7th statement.

English language as a tool to help them develop their character.

Table 5 explained the behavioral aspect of the attitude of the ALS learners toward the English language. In this present study, the overall mean score of the behavioral aspect was interpreted as "agree" or somewhat favorable judgment. The 1st statement earned the lowest mean score, which states, "Speaking English anywhere makes me feel worried," and the mean score corresponded to the "neutral" or fair category of interpretation. Based on the response, it may be inferred that ALS learners were unsure about their confidence in their oral skills in the English language. However, Batang and Manalastas (2018) argued that pupils' confidence levels might not necessarily correlate with their linguistic ability. The 7th statement obtained the highest mean score, "Studying English helps me to improve my personality." ALS learners viewed the

Khan et al. (2020) reported that the teaching practices of teachers in a language classroom do have a significant impact on the behavior of the language learners. It is important for ALS teachers to recognize the behaviors of the ALS students as they teach the lesson. Each of these aspects of attitudes must be respected by ALS teachers to secure a productive teaching and learning environment in the Alternative Learning System.

Significant Differences in the Attitudes of the Respondents Across Profile

Table 6. Significant Difference across Age

Age	Mean	t	df	p
Cognitive*				
18-24	3.61	5822	-	<.001
25 and above	3.81			
Affective				
18-24	3.65	-0.295	298	0.768
25 and above	3.67			
Behavior*				
18-24	3.52	-2.833	298	0.005
25 and above	3.69			

The value for the significant difference across age was obtained by utilizing the *independent* t-test. The significant difference (p) in the attitudes across the age of the ALS learners in the cognitive aspect obtained a value of <.001 with t-test value (f) of 5822. The affective aspect gained a significant difference value of 0.768 with a t-test value -0.295, and a value of 298 degrees of freedom. The behavioral aspect earned a significant difference value of 0.005 with a t-test value -2.833, and with a value of 298 degrees of freedom. Table 5 displays the significant difference of attitudes across profiles in terms of age of the ALS learners. Among the three aspects of attitudes, only the cognitive was found to have a significant difference between 18-24 and 25 and above.

The null hypothesis in age was rejected because there was a statistically significant difference between 18-24 and 25 and above in the cognitive and behavioral. It implied that older ALS learners tend to have a more positive attitude in the cognitive aspect than the younger ALS learners. This is because the mean of 25 and above learners was 3.81 which was higher than 18-24 years old ALS learners which was 3.61. This may mean that older ALS learners have more affirmative thoughts, beliefs, and attributes towards the English language than the younger ALS learners.

It also implied that in the behavioral aspect, the mean of 25 and above learners was 3.69 which was higher than 18 - 24 years old ALS learners which was 3.52. In this sense, older ALS learners have a more positive attitude in the behavioral aspect of

attitude. Likewise, this may mean that older ALS learners have more favorable actions and behaviors toward the English language than younger ALS learners.

According to Dong and Ren (2013), age is a significant factor in second language acquisition. It was stated that older language learners have an advantage in learning than younger learners; however, in the final stage of acquisition, younger learners outperformed the older ones. Younger ALS learners' attitudes in the cognitive and behavioral aspects may be at slight disadvantage compared to the older ALS learners' attitudes, but it may also imply that with an adequate amount of exposure in the English language, younger ALS learners may do significantly better in studying the English language. Nevertheless, both age groups may still do better as long as they are immersed in using the English language as early as possible (Dong & Ren, 2013).

This finding may mean that ALS learners need extra motivation to build positive attitudes in learning the English language. Oga-Baldwin et al (2017) found that intrinsic motivation inclined with external factors such as teacher support and engaging environment is required for young language learners to achieve better performance in language learning. Therefore, ALS learners themselves would be able to amplify their attitudes in the cognitive aspect by assessing their needs and requesting learning support from ALS teachers and their learning environment.

Table 7. Significant Difference across Gender

Gender	Mean	f	df	p
Cognitive				
Male	3.57			
Female	3.75	6.8736	2, 297	0.001
Transgender	3.98			
Affective				
Male	3.66			
Female	3.65	0.0625	2, 297	0.939
Transgender	3.73			
Behavior				
Male	3.51			
Female	3.62	2.7762	2, 297	0.064
Transgender	3.27			

The value for the significant difference across gender was obtained by utilizing the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The significant difference of the ALS learners across gender, the cognitive aspect obtained a significant difference value of 0.001 with an ANOVA value 6.8736, and a value of 2, 297 degrees of freedom. The affective aspect gained a significant difference value of 0.939 with an ANOVA value 0.0625, and a value of 2, 297 degrees of freedom. The behavioral aspect earned a significant difference value of 0.064 with an ANOVA value 2.7762, and with a value of 2, 297 degrees of freedom. Table 6 exhibits the significant difference between the attitudes and the gender of the respondents. According to the data presented on the table, there is a significant difference between the gender on the cognitive aspect.

The null hypothesis in gender was rejected because there was a statistically significant difference between genders and attitudes in the cognitive aspect. The males gained a mean score of 3.57; females earned a mean score of 3.75, and transgenders (others) obtained a mean score of

3.98. This result was similar to the findings of Abidin et. al., (2012) in which they found that gender plays a role in attitudes towards the English language. Transgenders obtained the highest mean score which means that they have the most favorable attitudes in the cognitive aspect, and it may be implied that transgenders are interested in doing learning activities that are related to the English subject. It was also concluded by Jaekel (2015) that inclusion of LGBT in the learning may, perhaps most crucially, assist students in remaining in college, learning about significant issues and topics, and doing it in a way that is comfortable for them. Moreover, between males and females, the female ALS learners have more positive attitudes in the cognitive aspect compared to male ALS learners. Likewise, female ALS learners may enjoy studying the English language more than the male ALS learners. Harthy (2017) supported the claim in which they found that female language learners were more motivated in a language class compared to males.

Table 8. Post hoc analysis in the Cognitive Aspect when grouped according to Gender

Group	Mean difference	p
Male vs Female	-0.176	0.002
Male vs Others	-0.407	0.245
Female vs Others	-0.231	0.634

A post-hoc analysis was done for the gender and the cognitive aspect since it was found to have a significant difference. The males when compared

to females earned a 0.002 significant difference value. The comparison between males and others (transgenders) showed a 0.245 significant value.

Lastly, when female and others (transgenders) were compared, it gained a 0.634 significant value. In table 7.1, it was found that the comparison between males and females presented a significant difference.

Glowka (2014) argued that females do better than males in learning the English language since female language learners tend to have more positive motivation than males (Harthy, 2017). Female ALS learners exhibited positive attitudes in the cognitive aspect more than ALS learners and based on the literature, female ALS learners may do significantly better in the acquisition of the English language. However, this finding may imply that ALS teachers should encourage male ALS learners to build interest in learning English through engaging activities.

With the key findings mentioned, the positive attitudes of ALS learners may be beneficial to themselves. Khan (2016) concluded that positive attitudes towards learning the English language is very important. Through self-assessment anchored on the Self-Perception theory or the examination of attitudes, ALS can recognize a particular aspect of their attitude to better their learning process and attainment of the English language; ALS learners may trace dearth in the learning process and can possibly create a practice to flourish it. M. A. Cerna and K. Pavliushchenko (2015) as cited by Latoja (2022) recommended developing a good study routine because, if it's not done, it can lead to subpar academic results. They can be taught how to use techniques that enable them to regulate their own learning by planning and evaluating learning, as well as techniques that enable them to master the target language through practice, reasoning, and analysis. This gives a call for ALS Teachers to reconsider improvisations of the learning process to ensure the outcome of ALS learners as they study English language.

Finally, ALS learners' positive attitudes may also improve their personalities. According to Kaur (2014), people who can utilize the English language fluently tend to be confident in openly conversing with others, thus, giving them the opportunity to talk with various types of people. This fact can give way to learning something new

and the ability to adapt to new concepts and situations – consequently, improving one's personality. English is undoubtedly a universal language and is widely used in academe, diplomacy, various types of publishing, and numerous fields of expertise. Being able to speak such a language can increase one's confidence resulting in personality development.

Conclusion

In this study, ALS learners exhibit positive attitudes regarding the English language, as evidenced by the results that were collected, analyzed, and interpreted from the three aspects of attitudes, specifically cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

One of the most important aspects of learning a language is attitude. In general, ALS students' positive attitudes toward the language indicate that they are actively driven to study the English language. The favorable attitudes of ALS learners toward the English language are early indicators of success in the learning process inside an English class. Additionally, there was statistically proven difference between the profile of ALS learners and their attitudes. It was concluded that older ALS learners tend to have a more positive attitude in the cognitive and behavioral aspects than younger ALS learners. In terms of gender, transgender and female ALS learners have a positive attitude in the cognitive aspect as opposed to male ALS learners. However, this does not mean that older ALS students would outperform the younger ones and transgenders and female ALS learners would outrank male ALS learners since the aforementioned repertoire of literature suggests that it all boils down to the amount of exposure in the English language to attain mastery.

In the end, it is crucial for ALS teachers to continuously support ALS learners' confidence and cultivate positive attitudes toward the English language by taking into account the age, genders, cognitive, affective, and behavioral demands of the learners. Nevertheless, such positive attitudes must be maintained and consistently nurtured through instilling favorable perceptions about the English language to the learners.

Recommendations

In line with the observed positive attitudes of Alternative Learning System learners toward the English language, it is recommended for future researchers who will conduct their study on ALS learners to consider those who are enrolled in district or city jails and ALS learners who are in the modular set-up since it may require extra effort to obtain data as there may be significant information that may be extracted from them. Moreover, the researchers recommend future language researchers to conduct a rigorous observation and analysis on the exposure of ALS learners in the English language such as their prior knowledge, previous experiences, and sentiments about the language. Likewise, it may be recommended for ALS teachers to consider the cognitive, affective, and behavioral needs of ALS learners as they teach. The inclusion of external factors such as home, community, and school environment is recommended to be considered as well in assessing the attitudes of ALS learners toward the English language. Ultimately, the findings of the study may be used to improve the English language curriculum in the Alternative Learning System.

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