

Improvement of Comprehension Skills of Alternative Learning System (ALS) Learners Through Reading-Focused Session

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Abstract: Reading comprehension skills among Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners play a vital role in educational development, enabling individuals to understand various forms of written information. This study shed light on the profile of ALS Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) learners and their reading comprehension skills. It highlighted the significant differences based on profile variables and identified their challenges in developing reading comprehension skills. The proposed project offered a comprehensive approach to enhance reading comprehension among ALS A&E learners. This study utilized a descriptive method, involving a sample of 90 ALS A&E learners from various ALS centers. Data were collected through survey questionnaires and interviews. Descriptive statistics were employed to provide statistical descriptions of the variables and indicators studied. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the study's respondents were predominantly teenagers and young adults, with a noticeable lack of middle-aged adults. Moreover, female respondents exceeded male respondents, and most of the respondents came from low-income households. The respondents agreed on the importance of further enhancing reading comprehension skills among ALS learners. Furthermore, the study indicated that factors such as age, sex, and socioeconomic status had minimal or insignificant influence on the reading comprehension skills of ALS learners. The research also identified challenges faced by ALS learners in their pursuit of improved reading comprehension skills, emphasizing the necessity for specialized reading-focused sessions to effectively address the challenges and enhance these skills.

Keywords: Comprehension skills; Reading-focused session; Alternative learning system; Learners

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1. Introduction

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) offered by the Department of Education (DepEd) functions as a parallel learning system, offering a practical alternative to traditional formal education. It serves as a viable option for individuals who face barriers to accessing education within formal school settings. ALS non-formal education takes place beyond the confines of a traditional classroom and is typically community-oriented, with sessions held at community learning centers, barangay multi-purpose halls, libraries, or even at home. These sessions are overseen

by ALS learning facilitators, such as mobile teachers, district ALS coordinators, and instructional managers, who coordinate agreed-upon schedules and venues for learning between the learners and facilitators. ALS encompasses a wide range of knowledge and skills, drawing from both non-formal and informal sources ^[1]. ALS offers avenues for Out-of-School Youth and Adults (OSYA) to enhance their fundamental literacy skills and acquire practical knowledge, enabling them to access comparable educational pathways ^[2]. The Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) program stands as a significant component within the ALS framework. This program addresses the needs of individuals who seek to develop literacy skills and pursue further education at both secondary and tertiary levels.

In relation to this, the DepEd administers the Presentation Portfolio Assessment through the Curriculum and Teaching Strand and the Bureau of Alternative Education (BAE). This assessment replaces the traditional A&E test. Education Program Specialist II for ALS, along with Inter-District Validators, will conduct face-to-face evaluations that include oral reading and writing proficiency tests (in both Filipino and English), as well as interviews. Division qualifiers are required to exhibit proficiency in oral reading and writing in both Filipino and English languages ^[3].

Reading comprehension involves the act of deriving meaning from a written passage. The objective is to develop a comprehensive grasp of the content presented in the text, rather than relying solely on individual words or sentences for understanding ^[4]. Reading is an essential skill that enables learners to access and comprehend information effectively ^[5]. Children in impoverished neighborhoods, those with limited English proficiency, hearing, or language impairments, and those whose parents struggled with reading are at higher risk of starting school with deficiencies, leading to early setbacks ^[6]. Some ALS adult learners may have learning disabilities affecting their reading comprehension. Health issues or disabilities can also affect an adult learner's ability to focus or comprehend information, which can have a significant impact on their overall academic performance. According to Abadzi ^[7], illiterate adults' working memory may be too brief for efficient reading. Financial constraints are another significant challenge that prevents adult learners from pursuing further education or vocational training, which may limit their career prospects. Plus, social stigma or discrimination based on their status as adult learners can also pose a significant challenge.

ALS learners may have varying levels of literacy, which would affect their reading comprehension skills. The session should take into account the learners' existing literacy level to ensure that it is tailored to their needs. The reading-focused session should be designed to meet the specific needs of ALS learners. It should include activities that engage the learners and help them to develop their reading comprehension skills. These activities could include reading exercises, comprehension questions, and discussions.

2. Literature review

The term "Alternative Learning System" was introduced by policymakers in the Philippines to encompass a broader range of educational approaches beyond formal schooling. It incorporates elements from alternative schools, adult education, informal learning, and lifelong learning. ALS classes were held in approximately 4,467 community learning centers spread across the country. Aspiring learners, primarily out-of-school youths and adults, underwent assessments through basic and functional literacy tests. Individuals who did not pass the basic literacy test were enrolled in the Basic Literacy Program. The remaining individuals were assigned to either elementary or high school levels. The DepEd assigned mobile teachers to cater to the needs of basic literacy learners ^[8].

Over the last decade, the Philippines has made impressive strides in enhancing its public basic education system. However, approximately half of Filipino students still do not complete the full basic education. While reducing the dropout rate remains a primary focus for the Philippine DepEd, there is also a need to enhance

the educational and employment opportunities for those who have already left school. For the past fifty years, DepEd has implemented separate educational systems for young individuals and adults who have not completed formal basic education. The current iteration of this initiative, known as the ALS, consists of two main components: the Basic Literacy Program and the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program ^[9]. Educating a group of adult learners presents unique challenges and requires continuous pedagogical growth. Adult learners enter the classroom as independent individuals with their own expectations and a readiness to assess the teaching they receive. Unlike young children, adult learners often have numerous questions for the teacher, which also serves as a method to evaluate the teachers' competence ^[10]. Nonetheless, numerous ALS learners may encounter difficulties with reading comprehension attributed to various factors, including limited book accessibility, inadequate prior education, and learning disabilities. Reading comprehension comprises sub-processes and component skills, which can be expected to improve with exposure to written materials ^[11].

According to McNamara ^[12], several strategies have been developed to enhance the comprehension of local text excerpts. These strategies include bridging and connecting various components of the text, relating the text to personal experiences and everyday activities, mastering the rhetorical structure and genre of texts, engaging in social interactions with experts, tutors, and peers, and employing processes like asking questions, reflection, and summarization. Furthermore, reading-focused sessions can be designed to teach specific strategies for improving reading comprehension, such as activating prior knowledge, making predictions, and summarizing. ALS learners face unique challenges when it comes to comprehension skills, but through reading-focused sessions, these skills can be enhanced. By engaging in structured and intentional reading exercises, ALS learners can improve their ability to understand and retain information. Through reading-focused sessions, learners can also expand their vocabulary, improve their grammar, and enhance their critical thinking skills. To enhance comprehension skills through reading-focused sessions in the ALS program, educators can incorporate various strategies such as using distinct types of reading materials, providing pre-reading activities, encouraging active reading, facilitating discussions and questioning, and providing post-reading activities.

3. Research objectives

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the reading status of ALS Accreditation and Equivalency (ALS A&E) learners to enhance reading comprehension.

Specifically, this research has the following specific objectives:

- (1) To determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and socioeconomic status.
- (2) To assess the reading comprehension of ALS A&E in terms of the ability to identify the main idea and key details, ability to sequence a passage into an ordinal series, ability to answer direct recall questions, ability to make inferences/predictions, and ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary.
- (3) To determine the significant difference in reading comprehension when grouped according to profile variables.
- (4) To identify the issues and challenges in reading comprehension of ALS A&E learners.
- (5) To propose a project to enhance the reading comprehension of ALS A&E learners.

4. Methods

4.1. Research design

The descriptive method was utilized to establish an in-depth understanding of the respondents' perspectives, which served as the basis for the suggested reading interventions to enhance their comprehension skills.

Through the descriptive method, statistically significant data that answered the question were obtained and valid conclusions were derived from the gathered information.

4.2. Respondents and sampling

The study comprised 90 ALS A&E learners from District ALS Centers and Community Learning Centers in the Rosario West District, as shown in **Table 1**. The selection of respondents was done using a random sampling method, which ensures that each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample.

Table 1. Profile of learners

| Age | Number of students | Sex | | Socioeconomic status | | |
|----------|--------------------|------|--------|----------------------|--------|------|
| | | Male | Female | Low | Middle | High |
| 13–20 | 42 | 24 | 18 | 40 | 2 | 0 |
| 21–28 | 27 | 15 | 12 | 27 | 0 | 0 |
| 29–36 | 12 | 3 | 9 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| 37–44 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 45–52 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Above 52 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 90 | 43 | 47 | 88 | 2 | 0 |

4.3. Questionnaire

A three-part survey questionnaire checklist was created for this study. Part 1 was used to collect information about the respondents' profiles. Part 2 was used to assess the reading comprehension of ALS A&E learners. Part 3 consisted of essay questions that identified issues and challenges in the reading comprehension of ALS A&E learners.

4.4. Data collection

This research employed multiple methods of data collection, including a self-structured questionnaire and an interview guide, to assess the reading comprehension levels of ALS A&E learners and explore their difficulties in improving their skills. The questionnaire aimed to provide a detailed personal profile of the respondents while assessing their current reading comprehension levels. The interview guide helped to gather data on the challenges faced by the learners.

4.5. Data analysis

The backgrounds and experiences of students were studied by recording, tabulating, and quantitatively analyzing their profiles. Selected respondents were interviewed to collect the challenges faced in reading comprehension, and their responses were analyzed and discussed in the final analysis of the study. Descriptive statistics was employed to statistically describe the variables and their indicators in this study. Specifically, weighted mean, Kruskal-Wallis *H* Test, and Mann-Whitney *U* Test were used in most of the data analysis.

4.6. Ethical consideration

A meeting was arranged with each community learning center's respondents and their consent was obtained to ensure their willingness to participate in this study. To safeguard the confidentiality of the participants, all collected data remain confidential. Furthermore, the Data Privacy Act was complied with to ensure that the

respondents' information remains secure and private.

5. Results and discussion

The results provided an overview of the respondents' profiles and presented an assessment of the reading comprehension skills of ALS A&E learners. It further identified a significant difference in reading comprehension when learners are grouped according to profile variables. This study aimed to address the issues and challenges in reading comprehension faced by ALS A&E learners and proposed a project that seeks to enhance their reading comprehension skills, thereby offering potential solutions and improvements in their educational journey. This section presented, analyzed, and interpreted the pertinent data gathered. The data presented in the tabular analysis are supported by textual interpretations.

5.1. Profile of the respondents

5.1.1. Age

The age of the population refers to the average or range of ages within a given group, indicating the demographic composition, and serving as a key variable in analyzing and interpreting research findings. **Table 2** shows the age of the respondents in this study.

Table 2. Age of respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| 13–20 | 42 | 46.7 |
| 21–28 | 27 | 30.0 |
| 29–36 | 12 | 13.3 |
| 37–44 | 7 | 7.8 |
| 45–52 | 1 | 1.1 |
| Above 52 | 1 | 1.1 |
| Total | 90 | 100.0 |

5.1.2. Sex

This variable is crucial for understanding potential sex-based differences and their implications in various research contexts. **Table 3** shows the profile of respondents according to sex.

The data show there are more female respondents than male respondents, indicating that there is a higher proportion of women participating compared to men. This suggests that more women were engaged in the study or data collection process than men. This coincides with the study by Rabourn *et al.* ^[13], that adult learners demonstrate higher levels of academic engagement and possess more positive perceptions of teaching practices and interactions with others. However, they tend to have limited interaction with both peers and faculty members and perceive their campuses as lacking supportiveness.

Table 3. Sex of respondents

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------|-----------|----------------|
| Male | 40 | 44.4 |
| Female | 50 | 55.6 |
| Total | 90 | 100.0 |

5.1.3. Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status refers to an individual’s or a group’s position in society based on their economic resources, education, occupation, and social standing, which influences access to opportunities and resources. **Table 4** shows the socioeconomic status of respondents.

Table 4. Socioeconomic status of respondents

| Socioeconomic status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Low income | 87 | 96.7 |
| Middle income | 3 | 3.3 |
| Total | 90 | 100.0 |

Most of the respondents came from low-income households, while only a small number of them belonged to middle-income households. This suggests that most respondents in the study were from low-income backgrounds. Out-of-school youths may be motivated to pursue education to achieve their personal and professional aspirations, particularly after experiencing difficulties in life. The findings were similar to the results of the study by Atilano *et al.* ^[14], education can equip individuals with the essential skills and knowledge needed to enhance job opportunities, boost self-confidence, and attain improved social and economic mobility.

5.2. Reading comprehension of ALS A&E

5.2.1. Ability to identify the main idea and key details

The ability to identify the main idea and key details is an essential aspect of reading comprehension. It involves understanding the central message of a text and the supporting information that helps to explain and develop it. **Table 5** shows the identification of the main idea and key details, with the mean, standard deviation (SD), and interpretation.

Table 5. Identifying the main idea and key details

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|--|------|------|----------------|
| Identify important information | 3.40 | 0.73 | Moderate |
| Identify the supporting details | 3.38 | 0.68 | Moderate |
| Summarize ideas | 3.38 | 0.73 | Moderate |
| State the main idea or topic sentence in a paragraph | 3.27 | 0.78 | Moderate |
| Distinguish between main ideas and supporting details | 3.27 | 0.75 | Moderate |
| Look for patterns in the details to analyze and organize information | 3.21 | 0.81 | Moderate |
| Look for the repetition of ideas | 3.21 | 0.76 | Moderate |
| Identify the central theme | 3.13 | 0.78 | Moderate |
| Composite mean | 3.28 | 0.47 | Moderate |

The data shows that identifying important information, supporting details, and summarizing ideas had the highest mean. It suggests that learners have a good grasp of the main ideas and supporting details in the texts they read. The findings coincide with the study of Sukmawati ^[15], which entails incorporating the following elements to enhance the content: (1) Additional information to provide a thorough explanation of the main supporting details; (2) More examples to vividly illustrate the major supporting details; (3) Greater specificity

to make the material engaging and captivating for the audience.

The skills that had the lowest mean score were identifying the central theme of a text, as well as analyzing and organizing information by recognizing patterns and connections within the details. It involves understanding the main message or idea that the author is trying to convey. In correlation with the study by Malamon ^[16] for certain learners, acquiring skills related to comprehension can be more difficult. Understanding the connections between sentences within a text is crucial for comprehending the overall concept conveyed (higher-level skills).

5.2.2. Ability to sequence a passage into an ordinal series

Sequencing is an important skill in reading and writing, as it helps to clarify the relationships between ideas and to create a coherent and cohesive text. **Table 6** presents the sequence passage as an ordinal series.

Table 6. Sequencing passage into an ordinal series

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|------|------|----------------|
| Transition words and phrases | 3.38 | 0.74 | Moderate |
| Present ideas in a logical sequence based on their relationship | 3.38 | 0.74 | Moderate |
| Understand the structure of a text and how it is put together | 3.37 | 0.74 | Moderate |
| Organize information and ideas in their own writing | 3.36 | 0.74 | Moderate |
| Arrange ideas from macro to micro | 3.31 | 0.73 | Moderate |
| Organize events or ideas in the order in which they occur, from earliest to latest | 3.29 | 0.66 | Moderate |
| Present ideas in order of their importance, with the most important ideas presented first or last | 3.22 | 0.68 | Moderate |
| Sequence a passage into an ordinal series | 3.19 | 0.69 | Moderate |
| Composite mean | 3.31 | 0.43 | Moderate |

The table shows transition words and phrases, present ideas in a logical sequence based on their relationship, and understanding the structure of a text and how it is put together had the highest mean score. The respondents recognized the value of using those items in reading comprehension skills. In line with the study of Lin ^[17], the enrichment reading program serves as a vital strategy to enhance reading comprehension, writing skills, textual analysis, and creativity skills, and to overcome challenges in reading.

The lowest mean scores were obtained in skills such as identifying the central theme of a text, analyzing information by recognizing patterns and connections, and organizing information based on patterns and connections. These findings indicate that readers may face challenges with these specific skills. It is consistent with the study of Carr and Harris upon investigating students' reading challenges ^[18], it was found that certain individuals face difficulties in comprehending texts due to their inability to identify the main idea or central theme.

5.2.3. Ability to answer direct recall questions

The ability to answer direct recall questions is a basic reading comprehension skill that involves retrieving specific information directly from the text. **Table 7** illustrates the responses to direct recall questions.

Table 7. Answering direct recall questions

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|--|------|------|----------------|
| Recall information immediately after it has been presented | 3.36 | 0.75 | Moderate |
| Understand and identify key concepts | 3.33 | 0.70 | Moderate |
| Notice the small and important details that make up a larger picture | 3.26 | 0.86 | Moderate |
| Ability to store new information | 3.18 | 0.73 | Moderate |
| Use memory techniques such as visualization, association, and repetition | 3.12 | 0.73 | Moderate |
| Utilize a short amount of time to answer questions | 3.10 | 0.77 | Moderate |
| Retrieve and organize information | 3.10 | 0.72 | Moderate |
| Re-access the retained events and information | 3.09 | 0.66 | Moderate |
| Composite mean | 3.19 | 0.53 | Moderate |

The indicators that attained the highest mean scores are related to the ability to recall information right after it has been presented, understand and identify key concepts, and notice the small and important details that make up a larger picture. They had a strong capability to retain and recall information immediately after it was presented to them. In the study of Silor *et al.* ^[19], memory retention was highly sensitive to the pattern of trials used during training. Training distributed over time was superior to training presented with little or no rest intervals in generating long-term memories.

The table also presents that the average scores obtained for the abilities related to utilizing a short amount of time to answer questions and retrieve and organize information were low. These findings indicate that there may be difficulties for individuals in academic performance that require fast thinking, efficient memory retention and recall, and suitable time management skills. In support of Gipps' study ^[20], she discovered that the challenges that significantly impact reading comprehension included difficulties in grasping the central theme of the text, unfamiliarity with terminology, inadequate understanding of word functions, and insufficient knowledge of their appropriate application.

5.2.4. Ability to make inferences/predictions

This ability involves reasoning logically, considering all available information, and using this information to make informed decisions or judgments. **Table 8** presents information about the ability to make inferences or predictions.

Table 8. Making inferences/predictions

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|------|------|----------------|
| Draw logical conclusions based on information presented in a text | 3.34 | 0.58 | Moderate |
| Identify implicit ideas or themes in a text | 3.30 | 0.63 | Moderate |
| Evaluate information based on prior knowledge | 3.23 | 0.69 | Moderate |
| Reflect on and regulate one's own thinking processes | 3.20 | 0.66 | Moderate |
| Understand and interpret information | 3.17 | 0.77 | Moderate |
| Use clues from the text and what they know from previous experiences | 3.14 | 0.77 | Moderate |
| Make predictions about what might happen next in a text based on contextual clues | 3.07 | 0.75 | Moderate |
| Analyze information, evaluate evidence, and reasoning logically | 3.01 | 0.71 | Moderate |
| Composite mean | 3.19 | 0.45 | Moderate |

The skills that received the highest mean scores in the data analysis were the ability to identify implicit ideas or themes within a text, draw logical conclusions based on the presented information, and evaluate the latest information based on prior knowledge. Those skills suggest that individuals with these abilities are in a favorable position to achieve success academically and professionally. Consistent with the study of Black ^[21], comprehension is described as a cognitive process where readers actively build understanding by engaging with the text, drawing upon their prior knowledge, past experiences, the information presented in the text itself, and the perspective they adopt in relation to the text.

It can be gleaned from the table that making predictions about what might happen next in a text based on contextual clues, analyzing information, evaluating evidence, and reasoning logically obtained a low mean score. These skills were essential for success in tasks such as critical analysis, problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication. The study’s findings were consistent with Holgado ^[22], who stated that reading comprehension refers to understanding the text that has been read, which is a complex skill that requires the use of various strategies to make inferences, conclude, and use critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate information.

5.2.5. Ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary

Table 9 shows information about the ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary.

Table 9. Identifying unfamiliar vocabulary

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|--|------|------|----------------|
| Use resources such as dictionaries or glossaries to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words | 3.29 | 0.69 | Moderate |
| Recognize and understand a greater number of words | 3.27 | 0.78 | Moderate |
| Use contextual clues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words | 3.26 | 0.70 | Moderate |
| Infer the meaning of the unknown words based on the surrounding context | 3.23 | 0.72 | Moderate |
| Identify the word or phrase that has the closest meaning or opposite meaning to the unknown word | 3.21 | 0.74 | Moderate |
| Identify meaning through word roots and affixes | 3.18 | 0.79 | Moderate |
| Identify the appropriate word or phrase that fits the pattern | 3.18 | 0.84 | Moderate |
| Use a graphic organizer to achieve a deeper understanding of specific vocabulary words | 3.02 | 0.82 | Moderate |
| Composite mean | 3.21 | 0.52 | Moderate |

Based on the table, recognizing and understanding a greater number of words, using resources such as dictionaries or glossaries to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words, and using contextual clues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words had the highest mean. This can lead to improved reading comprehension and academic or professional success. The study by Woolley found that difficulties in understanding text can be derived from the failures to know the meanings of words or concepts, capture factual information, infer about content, and form relationships among content presented in the text ^[23].

The use of a graphic organizer to achieve a deeper understanding of specific vocabulary words, identify meaning through word roots and affixes, and identify the appropriate word or phrase that fits the pattern were items that showed low scores. As a result, individuals may struggle to perform well on these tasks, leading to a lower score. According to Vaughn ^[24], graphic organizers also enhance reading comprehension by helping students to categorize information and to show the relationships among important concepts.

5.3. Significant difference in reading comprehension when grouped according to profile variables

This assessed the notable disparity in reading comprehension based on the categorization of individuals according to their profile variables. **Table 10** presents the findings on the differences in reading comprehension among individuals grouped by profile variables.

Table 10. Differences in reading comprehension among individuals grouped by profile variables

| Factors | <i>P</i> value | Decision on H_0 | Interpretation |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Age | | | |
| Ability to identify the main idea and key details | 0.428 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to sequence a passage into an ordinal series | 0.894 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to answer direct recall questions | 0.717 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to make inferences/predictions | 0.223 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary | 0.035 | Reject | Significant |
| | 0.347 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Sex | | | |
| Ability to identify the main idea and key details | 0.346 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to sequence a passage into an ordinal series | 0.495 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to answer direct recall questions | 0.312 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to make inferences/predictions | 0.412 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary | 0.221 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| | 0.255 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Socioeconomic status | | | |
| Ability to identify the main idea and key details | 0.588 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to sequence a passage into an ordinal series | 0.752 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to answer direct recall questions | 0.542 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to make inferences/predictions | 0.619 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| Ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary | 0.436 | Failed to reject | Not significant |
| | 0.805 | Failed to reject | Not significant |

The table shows no significant differences in reading comprehension based on age, sex, and socioeconomic status, indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for these factors. However, there was a significant difference in the ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary among the profile variables. This suggests that age may be a significant predictor of one's ability to identify unfamiliar vocabulary in a reading passage. Additionally, the study by Esmaili suggested that age-related decreases in reading comprehension may result from declines in multiple component processes rather than a single process ^[25].

5.4. Issues and challenges in reading comprehension of ALS A&E learners

ALS A&E learners face multiple hurdles that hinder the development of their reading comprehension skills. Language barriers may exist as they may speak different languages or dialects. Another issue is cognitive

barriers, and factors such as eye issues, fatigue, time constraints, family or work responsibilities, age, and lack of support from family, peers, or teachers can hinder adult learners from improving their reading comprehension and reaching their educational objectives.

5.5. A proposed project to enhance the reading comprehension of ALS A&E learners

The proposal was grounded in the findings of assessments conducted to evaluate the reading comprehension skills and challenges faced by ALS A&E learners. Emphasizing areas with low mean scores, the proposal introduces the Reading Improvement and Skills Enhancement through Reading-Focused Sessions (RICE-FGS) project. This initiative aimed to enhance reading comprehension through a comprehensive set of activities.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- (1) The survey respondents were predominantly teenagers and young adults, with very few individuals from the middle-aged adult groups. There were more female respondents than male respondents, and most respondents came from low-income households, with only a small number belonging to middle-income households.
- (2) The respondents moderately responded that there is still a need to develop reading comprehension for ALS learners.
- (3) Reading comprehension was irrelevantly influenced by the age, sex, and socioeconomic status of ALS learners.
- (4) There were some problems encountered by ALS learners in developing reading comprehension skills.
- (5) A reading-focused session was needed to address improvement in the comprehension skills of ALS learners.

7. Recommendations

Based on the different findings and conclusions of this study, the following are the recommendations:

- (1) Reading-focused sessions for the development of reading comprehension skills must be done to address the learning or reading needs of ALS learners.
- (2) There is a need to consider the use of the proposed RICE-FGS project to help learners improve their reading comprehension skills.
- (3) Research may be conducted on the RICE-FGS project in Rosario West District ALS Center.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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