

## **Teacher Self-Concept and Perceptions of Andragogy among Alternative Learning System (ALS) Teachers in the Philippines**

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### **Abstract**

Teacher self-concept and perceptions of andragogy were identified with the propositioning thought that teachers of Alternative Learning System (ALS) are stable and positive individuals who best value and deliver the tenets of andragogy and ALS in general. In this study, ALS teachers in Northern Mindanao, Philippines manifested that they have high teacher self-concept and high andragogy perceptions. It is established that there is significant correlation between the two constructs. Further, it was gathered that there are no significant differences in teacher self-concept and andragogy perceptions among the ALS teachers according to their demographics, except on age.

*Keywords:* teacher self-concept, andragogy, teacher development, alternative learning system

## **Introduction**

The Department of Education in the Philippines, being the government agency mandated to deliver quality, accessible and inclusive education, institutionalized the Alternative Learning System (ALS) for the out-of-school youth and adults, and in special cases, out-of-school children. These learners due to rare and distinctive life circumstances were not able to pursue their schooling and with ALS, they are given the second chance to develop basic and functional literacy skills and to access equivalent pathways to complete basic education (DepEd Order 13, s.2019).

ALS learners, who are aged above the regular elementary pupils and high school students in formal schools, are considered out-of-school youth and adult learners. While there may be similarities between adults and children in how they learn, many educators argue that adult learners are different from child learners in a number of ways (McGrath, 2009). For the past centuries, it has been regarded in various studies that the core of adult learning is defined as andragogy (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). The principles of andragogy which were anchored to Knowles (1980) have been long advocated in institutions with adult learners like the ALS.

The implementation of enhanced ALS K to 12 basic education curriculum or ALS 2.0 has andragogical features in learning delivery and assessment processes. These processes are heavily relied upon by the teachers – the ALS teachers, community ALS teachers, and learning facilitators. The triangle of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (CIA) is facilitated by teachers, hence a big share of the success of ALS 2.0 lies with the teachers.

The teacher self-concept among the ALS teachers has not been extensively studied to date. As a construct, teacher self-concept includes a series of beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions about aspects such as self-accomplishment in teaching, relationships with students and with other teachers, and the reinforcing value of the teaching profession (Villa &

Calvete, 2001). Learning institutions can find the assessment of teacher self-concept a useful tool for evaluating an important factor of the climate of the organization.

In this study, the teacher self-concept and perceptions of andragogy were identified with the propositioning thought that an ALS teacher is a stable and positive individual who best values and delivers the tenets of andragogy and ALS 2.0 in general. From this, a point of reference can be derived for future professional developmental trainings with the teachers in ALS Northern Mindanao, Philippines, especially with the support of the new law, the Republic Act No. 11510, or the Alternative Learning System Act.

### **Teacher Self-Concept**

The ALS teachers' perceptions of themselves (or self-concept) and of their teaching can affect their actual instructional andragogy. This is rooted in the premise that teacher self-concept denotes a general self-perception of teaching competence (Yeung, et. al., 2016). It was established that teachers' genuine professional development has to begin with a change in their perceptions and beliefs related to teaching and learning. There is a significant positive correlation between teacher self-concept and valuing of learning, suggesting that teachers' competence and beliefs about teaching were related to their valuing of student learning.

Consequently, Kareem and Ravirot (2014) purported that understanding self-concept will assist teachers in adjusting to the world and enable them to work with confidence. This understanding will contribute towards the satisfaction of teachers in their professional area.

Villa and Calvete (2001) developed a Teacher Self-Concept Evaluation Scale and validated a six-factor model with series of confirmatory factor analyses: (a) competence; (b) interpersonal perceptions; (c) satisfaction; (d) taking of risks and initiatives; (e) self-acceptance; and (f) relationships with learners.

### **Andragogy – Adult Learning**

Knowles (1980) originally defined andragogy as the art and science of helping adults to learn. It was furthered by Henschke (1998) as cited by McGrath (2009) that andragogy is a scientific discipline that studies everything related to learning and teaching which would bring adults to their full degree of humaneness. Andragogy is centered on the idea that the facilitator does not possess all the knowledge and that learners are encouraged to participate in the session by utilizing their own experiences.

The four original core assumptions of Knowles (1980) are as follows: (a) concept of self-directedness; (b) role of past experience; (c) readiness to learn; and (d) practical orientation to learning. Two additions are on (e) learners' need to know the worthiness of learning and (f) internal motivation to learn which were added by Knowles, Holton, and, Swanson (1998).

The delivery of ALS in the Philippines has engrained these assumptions. The administration of diagnostic tests (e.g. Assessment of Basic Literacy, Functional Literacy Test), usage and monitoring of learning tracking templates (e.g. Recognition of Prior Learning, Individual Learning Agreement) and, the inclusion of Life Skills in the enhanced curriculum are apparent manifestations of andragogical concepts.

### **Research Questions**

This study identified the levels of teacher self-concept and perceptions of andragogy of the ALS teachers in the 14 schools divisions in DepEd Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. How are the ALS teacher-respondents characterized in their teacher self-concept specifically in:

- 1.a. Competence as Mobile Teacher;
- 1.b. Interpersonal Perception;
- 1.c. Initiatives and Acceptance of Risks;

- 1.d. Relationship with Learners in ALS;
  - 1.e. Satisfaction as Mobile Teacher; and
  - 1.f. Self-acceptance?
2. How are the ALS teacher-respondents characterized in their perceptions of andragogy in terms of:
  - 2.a. Concept of Self-Directedness;
  - 2.b. Role of Past Learning Experience;
  - 2.c. Readiness to Learn;
  - 2.d. Practical Orientation to Learn; and
  - 2.e. Internal Motivation?
3. Are there significant differences in the teacher self-concept and perceptions of andragogy if the ALS teacher-respondents are categorized according to their demographics?
4. Is there significant relationship between ALS teacher-respondents' teacher self-concept and valuing of andragogy?

## **Research Methodology**

### **Sampling**

An online survey through Google Forms was conducted for this study. With the perceived convenience in doing online survey, there was no sampling procedure done in this study. A complete enumeration that involved 526 ALS teachers and community ALS implementers in DepEd Northern Mindanao, Philippines participated in the online survey. In sum, 526 respondents were involved in this research study.

The decision to involve all ALS implementers is to represent the region. Northern Mindanao is geographically expansive that it covers five big provinces, nine cities, and one island-province. The total number of learners handled by these implementers at the time the study was conducted is 47,963.

As a background, ALS teachers are regularly paid teachers in DepEd. They enjoy all the benefits (i.e. allowances, bonuses) like the rest of the teachers in the department. They report both in schools and in community learning centers. On the other hand, community ALS implementers, who in nature are volunteer-teachers, are mostly supported in the form of an honorarium by the local government to which the budget is traceable to the special education fund (SEF). They provide additional instructional manpower to the ALS teachers to accommodate more learners in their locality.

### **Data Collection**

This study was conducted in the midst of public health pandemic (i.e. COVID-19) which most areas in Northern Mindanao, Philippines were placed under community quarantine. Hence, an online survey was done through Google Forms.

The survey tool is adapted from the Teacher Self-Concept Evaluation Scale of Villa and Calvete (2001). Slight modifications were done to make the items more relatable to ALS setting. On the other hand, the items on the perceptions of andragogy are researcher-made hinged on the actual premises of Knowles' Assumptions of Andragogy (1980).

Prior the actual online survey, the questionnaire was content—and face—validated by three experts (e.g. one education program supervisor for ALS, one education program education specialist for ALS, one university research professor). Moreover, the tool was pilot-tested and subjected to reliability test. It achieved internal consistency to measure the constructs posed in the study ( $\alpha=.95$ ,  $p=.05$ ).

The Google Forms has three parts: the first is on sociodemographic profiling, the second is on teacher self-concept and perceptions of andragogy, and the third which consists of one open-ended questions to simulate written interview on the constraints of the ALS teachers in the delivery of their sessions. The second part was in Likert scale which ranged from 4 (This strongly describes me.) to 1 (This does not describe me at all.).

## **Ethical Issues**

As a protocol in conducting research surveys, the participants were informed on the purpose of the study and their consent was secured as well. They were assured of the concealment of their responses and that the results of this study will not be used as data to mean their achievement and productivity as ALS teachers.

## **Data Analyses**

All responses were organized in MS Excel which is a feature of utilizing Google Forms. The data were coded and migrated to IBM SPSS for the following analyses: (1) means and standard deviation identified the ALS teacher-respondents' teacher self-concept and perceptions of andragogy; (2) analysis of Variance (ANOVA), set at .05 alpha level, where significant differences in the teacher self-concept and perceptions of andragogy were established as the ALS teacher-respondents were categorized according to their specific grouping; (3) Pearson Product Moment of Correlation (PPMC), set at .05 alpha level, where relationship between ALS teacher-respondents' teacher self-concept and valuing of andragogy was established.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **ALS Teachers' Levels of Teacher Concept and Perceptions of Andragogy**

It is reported that the ALS teachers have high teacher self-concept in terms of (1) competence as mobile teacher; (2) interpersonal perception; (3) initiatives and acceptance of risks; (4) relationship with learners in ALS; (5) satisfaction as mobile teacher; and (6) self-acceptance. These results manifested that our teachers have high regard and confidence of their own teaching competence in their sessions in the Alternative Learning System. This also means that they can adjust with the challenges present in ALS curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

This is a very remarkable finding because there were random anecdotal reports gathered from field monitoring activities that ALS teachers are insecure in their teaching assignment in DepEd. Being in a non-formal school system, ALS teachers are essentially working in conditions where the structure and support are not as defined as in the formal school system. The result negates the anecdotal reports, substantiating that our ALS teachers are secured in their own concept and professional practices as teachers.

On the other hand, the weighted means for the levels of andragogy perception is also high in the following areas: (1) concept of self-directedness; (2) role of past learning experience; (3) readiness to learn; (4) practical orientation to learn; and (5) internal motivation. These ALS teachers understood the concepts of andragogy with respect to the tenets of Knowles (1980). They are really involved and resolved in helping out-of-school youth and adults to finish second chance education.

Corollary to this, it is collected in non-structured interviews that our ALS teachers can relate very well to their learners. They understood that these learners are family persons and workers already, so utmost learning flexibility must be employed. Some ALS teachers shared that they even work in the evenings to entertain calls from their learners who have queries on the learning tasks. This characterizes that the teachers understood the value of andragogy with the type of learners in ALS.

### **Teachers' Profile and their Teacher Self-Concept**

The profiling of the ALS teachers covered the following: (1) age; (2) sex; (3) educational attainment; (4) length of service; and (5) performance rating. It was revealed that most of our ALS teachers are younger in the teaching service (age bracket at 18-37), and this suggests energy and enthusiasm in the delivery of ALS programs. Across all age brackets, our ALS teachers have high teacher self-concept.



According to sex, females dominated over males. Both sexes exhibited high teacher self-concept.

With reference to their educational attainment, our ALS teachers are mostly graduates of bachelor's degree in elementary education by a very large margin. Being generalists pose a huge challenge among our ALS teachers because they are expected to facilitate learning competencies in ALS junior high school level. In our context, our ALS teachers are like multigrade teachers.

Eighty-nine of our ALS teachers have completed their master's degree, and this shows their tenacity to improve themselves as a professional. All in all, our ALS teachers manifested high teacher self-concept.

About the length of service among ALS teachers, there are 42 of them who have served six years and above while the majority are fresher breed of professionals to have served 1-5 years yet. Both groups demonstrated high teacher self-concept.

The case is different for the volunteer teachers, the community ALS implementers or CAIs, because ideally, they do not stay long in ALS as their services are rendered charitable in nature. It is surprising to see CAIs serving more than six years in ALS. Albeit the situation, the CAIs exhibited high teacher self-concept, except for the three CAIs who have served ALS for more than 10 years which showed moderate level of teacher self-concept.

Lastly for performance rating, most ALS teachers were rated very satisfactory while there is also a good group who were rated outstanding. They have high teacher self-concept. It is revealing though that 11 ALS teachers have settled for satisfactory only. Consequently, these are the same teachers who have moderate level of teacher self-concept.

### **Teachers' Profile and their Perceptions of Andragogy**

This study revealed that all ALS teachers have high level of andragogy perceptions. This result is consistent with sex, educational attainment, length of service, and performance rating.

Hence, ALS teachers have high level of perception of andragogy regardless of their sociodemographic profiles. They understood the concepts of adult learning and self-directed learning styles of adult learners especially in ALS.

### **Differences in ALS Teachers' Levels of Teacher Self-Concept and Perceptions of Andragogy according to Profile**

It was gathered that there are no significant differences in teacher self-concept and andragogy perceptions among the ALS teachers according to sex, educational attainment, length of service, and performance rating at .05 level of significance. This manifests that there is consistency among the teachers with regards to the two constructs.

However, the ALS teachers' teacher self-concept has significant difference in terms of age at .05 level of significance. Albeit all groups exhibited high level of teacher self-concept, it can be observed that the younger ones are more dynamic and flexible in the service.

### **Relationship between ALS Teachers' Levels of Teacher Self-Concept and Perceptions of Andragogy**

Furthermore, correlation analysis established that among the subscales, there is low to moderate correlation at .05 (or even at .01) level of significance.

Even with that low to moderate strength of relationship, it can still suggest that the stability of ALS teachers' teacher self-concept can manifest good perceptions of andragogy. Hence, if the ALS teacher is confident in his or her teaching ways, he or she can employ ways to help out-of-school youth and adults to learn better.

With this result, it is paramount to look after the professional development of the ALS teachers as they are very important element in the teaching-learning process. Our ALS teachers implement the programs in ALS in a unique situation. They handle all the levels: (1) basic literacy; (2) A&E elementary; and (c) A&E junior high school. Moreover, they handle all the learning strands too.

### **Constraints of the ALS Teachers in the Delivery of ALS Sessions**

The last portion in the survey gathering, which was done through Google Forms, is an open-ended question that asks the ALS teachers on their constraints in the delivery of ALS session. Their responses were coded and organized into key concepts.

The reported constraints of our ALS teachers are about their (1) struggle in teaching junior high school competencies; (2) difficulty in gathering learning materials, especially in Digital Citizenship learning strand; (3) challenges in securing a conducive learning environment; and (4) complexities in the learning motivation of ALS learners.

This reinforces that handling ALS sessions are complicated compared to handling classes in the formal school system. So, the implementation of informal education in the DepEd must be attended and supported as this will define or redefine the teacher self-concept and the perception of andragogy of the ALS teachers.

### **Conclusion**

Identifying teacher self-concept among the ALS teachers in Northern Mindanao, Philippines affirmed their high perceptions of themselves as a person with positive regard to the profession. They perceived themselves to be generally competent and satisfied as ALS teachers. Like other professionals, they have high acceptance of themselves to be limited and thus, they are open to for further development. This high teacher self-concept would hopefully erase the notion that ALS teachers are inferior and second-class to the formal

schools teachers and rather acknowledge the complementary roles of each other in the non-formal education of DepEd.

The ALS teachers highly value the andragogical element in the delivery of ALS programs to their learners, which is noteworthy because andragogy is the heart and soul of adult learning. This firmly defined the role of the ALS teachers from their counterparts in the formal school which the latter is more concerned with pedagogy.

Generally, all ALS teachers held the same level of teacher self-concept and valuing of andragogy regardless of their position and sociodemographic profile. This can mean easier collaboration among the teachers since they have harmony in terms of the two constructs investigated in this study.

Furthermore, stable teacher self-concepts can show positive andragogy views in ALS teachers. Therefore, if the ALS teacher is confident in his or her teaching methods, he or she can use strategies to aid adults and young people who are not in school in learning more effectively.

### **Recommendations**

Given the results of the study, the following are recommended: (1) strengthen the engagement of ALS teachers in their existing Continuing Professional Learning Course with University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP) to improve their content knowledge on JHS learning competencies; (2) reinforce the mentoring practices and giving of technical assistance of our Education Program Specialists in ALS (EPSAs) to the ALS teachers, especially on andragogy, in their learning sessions; (3) consistently implement informal professional sessions for ALS teachers like the Learning Action Cell (LAC) where there are opportunities in sharing best practices on instruction and assessment, clarifying common concerns, and coming up of CLC-based innovations.

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### **Biography**

Ray Butch Mahinay is the Vice President for Extension and Social Development Services at the City College of Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. Prior to this role, he served as an Education Program Supervisor for the Alternative Learning System at the Philippine Department of Education. This study received a grant from the Basic Education Research Fund of the said agency.