

**Exploring the Implementation of Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE)
Program in Montalban Rizal: A Qualitative Inquiry**

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Abstract -The study aimed to explore the implementation of Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) in Montalban Rizal in terms of the Asatidz experiences in Teaching Delivery, Professional Growth, and Community Linkage/Partnership and the challenges encountered in the program implementation among the ALIVE public schools in Montalban, Rizal. The study utilized an exploratory qualitative method that was more concerned with gathering different data through interviews, open conversation, and thematic analysis. The data were collected through a researcher-made interview guide question containing subjective questions concerning the implementation of the ALIVE Program in Montalban Rizal. The experience of the Asatidz in the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal revealed its results from actual semi-structured interviews. It was found that the three major themes emerged relative to the participant's responses listed as Strategies in teaching ALIVE with a sub-theme of culture and values, Enhancing the Arabic Language, and Support from the Local Government Unit (LGU) with a sub-theme of Parents Group. In teaching ALIVE, most of the Asatidz find it difficult to impart Arabic language and Islamic values education to the students for several reasons. One of these is the diversity of learners, which is why they resorted to different strategies and methods of teaching their Muslim students. Asatidz teachers must really know the Arabic language and master it, especially pronunciation. It is an addition to their knowledge of learning the Arabic language very well since most of them are not professional teachers. In the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program, the stakeholders show their support, especially the Local Government Unit (LGU) and the parents group. The participants revealed the main challenges in the implementation of the program, and the categorized themes were Lesson Planning and Language Barriers. The Asatidz learned to cope with the challenges they encountered in the implementation of the ALIVE Program through the categorized themes, which are attending training and seminars and asking assistance from other Asatidz. Through this research, the researcher found out that the Asatidz must participate in different programs and workshops, which are included in the Proposed Action Plan.

Keywords: *Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program, Asatidz, Culture and Values, Local Government Unit, Arabic Language, Parents Group, Lesson Planning, Language Barrier, Training and Seminars*

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, a predominantly Catholic nation, has around six million nine

hundred eighty-one thousand and

seven hundred ten minority Muslim residents, comprising 6.4% of the national population—mostly concentrated in the Islands of

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Mindanao and some parts of Luzon and Visayas (Sali & Marasigan, 2020).

Education is a universal right, a fundamental concept fostering equal opportunities for learners regardless of race, ethnicity, cultural group, and religious affiliation. It is seen as an important point of “entry for broader reforms” and as an instrument for “social improvement” in understanding a state’s relevant historical, political, cultural, and social context (Juhaidi et al., 2024).

Education is not just about academics; it also aids in personal growth. It encourages creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning. It instills values, ethics, and character traits that contribute to becoming responsible and productive members of society. In an increasingly interconnected world, education promotes global awareness and encourages individuals to become responsible global citizens. It highlights global issues, fosters cultural appreciation, and encourages participation in addressing global challenges.

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In accordance with Presidential Decree (PD) 1083, A Decree to Ordain and Promulgate a Code Recognizing the System of Filipino Muslim Laws, Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines, which provides that “the State shall consider the customs, traditions, beliefs, and interests of national cultural communities in the formulation and implementation of state policies.” Also, in support of Republic Act (RA) 6734, An Act Providing for an Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which provides the need to establish, maintain, and support a complete and integrated system of quality education and adopt an educational framework that is meaningful, relevant, and responsive to the needs, ideals, and aspirations of the people in the region”, and of the 1996 Peace Agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front, the Department of Education implements the Madrasah Education Program (MEP).

For instance, the District of Montalban, Division of Rizal, spearheaded the Madrasah Education Program through the organization of ALIVE (Arabic et al. Education), where classes were attended by Muslim learners and handled by the Asatidz or Muslim teachers. The Asatidz were responsible for upgrading basic education by teaching the Arabic language and Islamic values, which were vital in the propagation of Muslim culture,

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tradition, and Islamic faith. Only a few studied the Madrasah Education Program, and this is the reason for the researcher to explore and examine its implementation. Aside from that, the ALIVE Program is a new program implemented in his workstation.

The researcher wants to determine and explore the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban, Rizal. The challenges encountered in the implementation should also be identified to provide a comprehensive enhancement for the program's betterment

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study described the lived experiences of the Asatidz in the **“Exploring the Implementation of Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal: A Qualitative Inquiry.”** Specifically, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of the Asatidz on the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal in terms of:
 - 1.1 Teaching Delivery
 - 1.2 Professional Growth
 - 1.3 Community Linkage/Partnership

2. What are the challenges of the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal?
3. What are the strategies to address the challenges encountered in the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban, Rizal?
4. What action plan can be proposed based on the result of this study?

METHODOLOGY

This research used an exploratory qualitative method, which was more concerned with gathering different data through observation about the implementation of the ALIVE Program in Montalban, Rizal. It also utilized interviews and open conversations between the researcher and respondents based on the provided questionnaire, enabling the current viewpoint of challenges and implementation of MEP-ALIVE.

The study focused on six (6) public elementary and junior high schools in Montalban, Rizal. It used exploratory case study analysis, which gathered an in-depth understanding of the research participants through interviews. The participants were eight (8) Asatidz from selected ALIVE public schools in the District of Montalban, Division of Rizal.

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Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling method in which the researchers rely on their judgment for the identification and selection of participants in order to get information-rich cases related to the interest of the study.

Consideration of the ethics and values in research reminds the researcher's responsibility to acknowledge literature sources, keep public information, and protect privacy as well as the welfare of human subjects (Masson & Bramble, 2007).

To secure the information consent of the participants in this study, the questionnaire opens with a letter describing the purpose of the study. The participants were assured that the identity of their school was treated with utmost confidentiality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1: Experiences of the Asatidz on the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal in terms of Teaching.

Theme: Strategies for Teaching ALIVE

Sub-theme: Culture and Values

The Asatidz welcomes the implementation of ALIVE because students become aware of Islamic culture and values as well as religion. However, in teaching ALIVE, they find it difficult to impart ALIVE to the students due

to several reasons. One of which is the diversity of learners, which is why they resorted to different strategies to teach their students. Some of the teacher states that, *"when you teach in ALIVE, you really need to use different strategies so that they can understand more easily, especially in the Arabic language."* This is supported by a statement of P4 by saying that, *you must have many strategies to use in teaching ALIVE because every student is different. They should really understand especially the students as in zero knowledge of their values and the Arabic language because almost grow-up in the Christian community makes them forget their tradition and culture."* P5 also said that, *"Children really need to be taught one on one, especially in Arabic language because it is necessary to teach the child properly, it is because once the child is given something wrong, it will have a different meaning. In Islamic values, we remind them the do's and don'ts according to our culture."* Education and culture are intimately and integrally

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connected. The cultural patterns of the society specifies its educational patterns. For example, if the society has a spiritual patterns of culture then the educational patterns will also emphasize the moral and the spiritual values of life. (Kapur, 2018). Culture has played a significant role in man's life in adjusting to the natural and social environment, in developing his personality and in the communication process. It is through education that an individual becomes aware of the various modes of conduct that are suitable to that culture. The purpose of education is to inform the individual about the nature of culture and how to follow those cultural patterns; norms, values, ways of communication, rules, standards, policies, and behavioral conduct.

According to Tiongzon et al. (2018), the Asatidz or Madrasah teachers showed laudable expressions of service to Muslim learners. They are considered ambassadors of goodwill in bridging the gap that separates the unknown from the known and in guiding

Muslim children to a better and brighter future spiritual values of life.

The Asatidz's experiences in implementing Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) in Montalban Rizal in terms of Professional Growth.

Theme: Enhancing Arabic Language

For their professional growth, Asatidz must really know the Arabic language and master it, especially the pronunciation. They must be very careful when pronouncing the Arabic language since what they are saying will be absorbed by the students. It is an addition to their knowledge of learning the Arabic language very well since most of them are not really professional teachers, as seen from their demographic profile. One of the participants states that, *"you need to study what you are going to teach because if you pronounce it wrong and that's what comes to their mind, then it turns out that it's wrong, the children's understanding is wrong. In teaching ALIVE, you must also learn as an Asatidz, especially the Arabic language is one of the most difficult to teach, you must go through*

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deep learning because it is difficult to make mistakes because the Qur'an is written only in Arabic. Since we have been stuck for a long time due to the pandemic, we really need to refresh in strategies and making lesson plans. Then, we need to adjust we are multigrade in KVES. You really need to go back to basics so that you can teach ALIVE especially in the Arabic language. It is good that DepEd gave seminars. Professional development provides an opportunity for teachers to grow their knowledge and sharpen their skills, which can lead to better student outcomes. Teachers need to keep up with the changing times, enhance their knowledge and skills, improve their teaching practices, and ultimately lead to better learning outcomes for their students. Teachers can learn through participation in various courses, in school, when they reflect on their teaching, and in observation of and reflection on other's teaching in cooperation with colleagues (Postholm & Vennebo, 2019). As the participant experiences teaching ALIVE,

especially in teaching the Arabic language, you need to have a deep understanding of it to teach it properly and correctly to Muslim learners.

The Asatidz's experiences in implementing Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) in Montalban Rizal in terms of Community Linkage/Partnership.

Theme: Support from Local Government Unit (LGU)

Sub-theme: Parents Group

Any program without support from the concerned agencies or organizations will not be possible. The Department of Education (DepEd) works closely with the national government in creating and implementing inclusive education programs for Muslim learners. Abdullah (2018) Here, the ALIVE program is supported by the different sectors, one of which is the Local Government Unit. The LGU provided everything that it could for the success of the program, not only for the LGU but also for the parent group. Parents are active in this program by joining the group chat for any updates. As stated by the participants, *"here at Kasiglahan, our coordinator and principal even the other*

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teachers are supportive to the program. The same goes for many Muslim parents and our LGU. With the parents, we always update the GC about our status and schedule. The support will not be lost, especially here at the school, you can see how tirelessly they guide us, especially our coordinator, they provide all our needs, as well as the parents. In the LGU, they are okay, they provide for our needs. As for the LGU, there is something there, so it's good that I'm here in San Isidro with Kap (captain), when Kap (captain) found out that we had a problem with delayed wages, he gave us an allowance.)

Another statement from the participants is that, "80% of the parents are very supportive, although there are 20% who still need to be made to understand the importance of this program in the development of their children. Also, we always conduct a Parent-Teacher Conference because everyone needs to be involved, especially the parents because this is for their children."

Challenges encountered by Asatidz on the implementation of the Arabic Language and

Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal.

Theme 1: Lesson Planning

As a teacher, in general, good lesson planning is essential to the process of teaching and learning. A teacher who is prepared is well on his/her way to a successful instructional experience. The development of interesting lessons takes a great deal of time and effort. (Faruon, 2020). A lesson plan is a written guide for teachers to achieve the intended learning outcomes. According to extensive empirical work, every teacher needs to follow a lesson plan for effective teaching, student learning, and classroom management to fulfill the learning outcome because it is labeled as the "hidden world of teaching" or "quality improvement activity" (Saad, 2011; Shen et al., 2007). Lesson planning is one of the challenges of the Asatidz in the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal. As stated by the participants, "One more thing, because I handle Arabic Language, I'm having a really hard time making a lesson plan for that." It is supported by P7: "The first time I taught here at ALIVE, I didn't know how to teach at school because we teach differently at the Mosque compared to here at ALIVE. In the Mosque, what is the content of the Qur'an this is what you will explain, here you have methods to

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follow like a lesson plan, there is still a lack of seminars, especially since I am just starting to teach, so many seminars are needed.” A teacher is treated as a sailor on the boat without rubber in the classroom when she has no deep-seated knowledge of designing lesson plans using the basic theories and concepts of curriculum, learning, and assessment. More specifically, a teacher in the classroom fails to stay on track and is unable to disseminate the learning outcomes of a lesson when he has no lesson plan (Iqbal, 2021).

Theme 2: Language Barrier

Altum (2023) mentioned that language is a fascinating phenomenon that serves purposes beyond merely facilitating communication. It has the innate capacity to mold our views, beliefs, and interpersonal interactions. Language has a significant impact on how we see ourselves, communicate with others, and negotiate the complex dynamics of our social fabric, whether in personal or societal circumstances. Language might be the entire reason humans have evolved the way they did. Language is also a storehouse of culture, lifeways, and knowledge (Koyfman, 2021).

However, based on the face-to-face interview with the Asatidz in the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program,

the language barrier is one of the challenges in teaching the Arabic language. Participant 3 shared “*Then the language barrier, because not all Muslims share the same dialect because there are Tausug, Maranao, Maguindanao and the Balik-Islam, one of our main problems especially the children who are just starting to learn the Arabic language is that they have an attitude that they don't want.*” Also, language barrier considered as one of the main problem in teaching ALIVE, she said “*One of the problems is the tribe, that we speak Tagalog, not all are Tagalog, there are Maranao, Tausug, Iranon, and others. Because in our religion, it is very difficult to deliver the lesson that we know can go wrong, so we try to make the child understand that this is what is allowed, this is what is forbidden, this is what should be, this is what is not because there is nothing here in San Jose the one who will teach the Qur'an.*”.

The Muslims in the south are also culturally linked to Muslim countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Patani of southern Thailand. They are composed of eleven ethnic groups. Each group has its language but only a few controls a political unit like a province or municipalities. Some groups speak one language with three variations, like the Maranao, Iranun, and Maguindanaon. The Sama people have one language with many

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variations, such as the dialect of the Jama Mapun and the Bangingi. (Bara, 2020)

In addition, according to Marasigan and Sali (2019), cultural variance among Muslim Filipinos, as identified in the study, is still evident today. The “ethno-religious conflict” has existed since the colonization to the contemporary period, especially among the minority groups. The colonial education system in the Philippines weakened the Madrasah Education and engendered growing friction between Muslim and non-Muslims. Therefore, all grassroots implementers of Madrasah Education must share and support common goals of achieving relevant and inclusive education for Muslim-Filipino learners. As observed, the ALIVE program implementation in public school systems has enriched cultural diversity and understanding of Islamic faith especially in a pre-dominantly Catholic nation.

According to Ashikkusaman (2023) classroom is a melting pot of diversity, where students from different linguistic backgrounds unite to pursue knowledge and academic growth. However, this diversity can present unique challenges in the form of language barriers. Language barriers occur when individuals struggle to communicate effectively due to language proficiency and understanding differences. In an educational setting, language barriers can significantly disrupt the

flow of information, hamper engagement, and limit meaningful interactions between students and educators.

SOP 3: Strategies to address the challenges encountered in the implementation of Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program in Montalban Rizal.

Theme 1: Training and Seminars

According to Jayson Gatus (2024) listening and attending seminars gains benefits such as improving communication skills, gaining new teaching pedagogy, building social skills, and renewing motivation and confidence in classroom setting. It ensures career advancement for the teachers to perform better in their work. As the interview conducted, participants stated that the training and seminars gave a lot of learning and teaching skills development. Participants 2&4 and stated that “*Then the seminar I attended, we just studied lesson planning, it helped a lot, the more seminars the better.*” Also, Participant 6 supports “*When making a lesson plan, we always ask for advice from our coordinator, then attended a seminar in Taytay, they taught us lesson planning and strategies.*”. Training development program for teachers provide personal and professional relationships that will maximize their strengths. Like what Participant 7 said, “*When I actually taught for the first time, I didn't really know the lesson plan, but when I attended a seminar, I only*

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found out after I asked our coordinator, he helped me. When I first attended the seminar, I said I wish there was always a seminar so I could learn more, I wish there was a seminar every month." As the sayings by Zig Ziglar,"the only thing worse than training employees and losing them is to not train them and keep them". The teacher training makes sense, they need to give upskilling for them to prepare their skills and learn something new about their work.

Theme 2: Assistance from other Asatidz

Collaboration is the process of working together towards a common goal. It involves individuals or groups sharing knowledge, skills, and resources to achieve a shared objective. (Malak, 2023) People are naturally collaborative. We, humans, are social beings who exist by engaging and connecting with others.

Most of the participants encountered many challenges in teaching Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education, but through assistance from other Asatidz, they coped. As Participant 2 said "Since the program was new, when we had a problem we also approached the coordinator of San Jose, we could ask them for advice on what to do because they are the ones who have a Madrasah here for a long time. I am also asking for help in lesson planning at the school, from

the teachers and the other Asatidz, I am asking for help in doing the activity and assessment in the Arabic Language because they are multi-grade." Coaching and expert support involve the sharing of expertise about content and practice focused directly on teachers' individual needs. (Darling-Hammond). In addition, other Asatidz stated the importance of an assistance to each other for individual's growth, Participant 4 said "In teaching at ALIVE, we are really asking for a guide from other Asatidz, especially in the Arabic language". Supported by Participant 5 "I am asking for advice from other Asatidz who have been here longer" and Participants 5&6 when they said "When making a lesson plan, we always ask for advice from our coordinator". Effective collaboration should empower everyone involved.

**SOP 4: Proposed Action Plan for Improving
ALIVE Implementation in Montalban Rizal**

The end view of this research is to use the findings for program enhancement. A comprehensive action plan will be crafted in consideration of the challenges in the implementation of the ALIVE Program in Montalban, Rizal. Every activity should have a detailed process that guides the administrators on the suggested enhancement of the program. The proposed action plan is according to the challenges of

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the Asatidz in the implementation of the program:

Participant 1 stated, “*The number 1 problem is the modules. Our first we are trying to find where to get the modules*”. Supported by Participants 2 and 8 said, “*Second, is the materials that the children use, they are too outdated, the contents are old, then our book 1 is to 10, it is lacking, it is really lacking as in we really don't have any reference.*” “*In the module, it's fine but the verses used according to the level of the module are not consistent.*”

For Asatidz professional development, Participants 2 said “*One more thing, because I handle Arabic Language, I'm having a really hard time making a lesson plan for that.*”. Also, with the support statement of Participant 4 “*Then, one of our colleagues who teaches the Arabic language has resigned, so right now we are teaching the Islamic Values because it is difficult to teach the Arabic language, especially if you are not an expert in teaching it.*”; Participant 5 “*We need more seminars and training to hone the teaching method.*”; and Participant 7 said that “*The first time I taught here at ALIVE, I didn't know how to teach at school because we teach differently at the Mosque compared to here at ALIVE. In the Mosque, what is the content of the Qur'an this is what you will explain, here you have methods to follow like a lesson plan, there is still a lack of seminars, especially since I am*

just starting to teach, so many seminars are needed. Then in our prayer room, we don't fit when we do Sallah (prayer) together.”

In addition, Participant 3 and Participant 4 said that “*In 7 years, the challenges I have encountered, number 1 is the prayer room, even though we have prayer rooms in every classroom, I would like to have a prayer room facility where everyone can pray strictly.*” “*One of our problems is that we don't really have a prayer room, the school find ways but there is no place to build it.*”

An action plan shall be designed according to the findings from the proposed enhancement program, utilizing the School Madrasah Education Program Action Plan 2023-2024 as a pattern.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The study shows that the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program gave a lot of experiences to Asatidz. It shows most of the Asatidz valued the importance of this program to impart the Arabic language and Islamic values to Muslim learners, but because of different hindrances in the implementation. The Asatidz used different strategies to impart their

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culture and values and enhance their understanding to teach the Arabic language effectively.

In the implementation of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) Program, the stakeholders show their support, especially the Local Government Unit (LGU) and the parent group.

2. The results of this study suggested that teaching in the ALIVE Program gave different experiences. Teachers were challenged with lesson planning and pedagogy in teaching Islamic Values and the language barrier between Muslim learners. They must be very careful, especially in teaching Arabic, since this is a complex language, so what they are saying will be absorbed by the students.
3. Through this phenomenon, the participants were able to cope by attending different training and seminars and asking for assistance from their colleagues and other Asatidz for their professional growth as Asatidz (Muslim teachers).
4. This study suggests that the Asatidz must undergo training and seminar workshops, especially in lesson planning and different pedagogy. Also, having tightened relationships with the

stakeholders will strengthen the implementation of the ALIVE Program in Montalban Rizal.

In the light of the conclusions drawn from the study, the following are hereby recommended:

1. It is strongly recommended to have a deeper understanding of not just the experiences of the Asatidz of ALIVE but to have a more specific and effective plan to strengthen the program.
2. Provide training/seminars/workshops to build Asatidz's capacity, specifically in lesson planning and pedagogy for teaching Islamic Values and the Arabic language. Integrate content and competencies that are relevant and of interest to Muslim learners.
3. Encourage the support system and collaboration involving colleagues, parents, LGUs, the community, and other stakeholders to improve the program.
4. A comprehensive action plan highlighting the program and activities to address the specific challenges in the implementation including the success indicators in each activity.
5. It is recommended, however, that future researchers study and explore the implementation of the program in different parts of the Philippines. This

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would further explain and expand the factors affecting the program.

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