

Addressing Absenteeism Among ALIVE MEP Learners Through School-Initiated Interventions

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ABSTRACT

A significant problem that has influenced the successful execution of the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) program is absenteeism because irregular attendance ruins the flow of learning the Arabic language and developing Islam values. This action research study discussed how School-Initiated Interventions (SIII) could curb absenteeism among ALIVE learners in Popantay Elementary School, in School Year 2025-2026. The research design was pre-test-post-test descriptive action research that used 32 ALIVE learners and their parents. The primary research tool that was used to gather quantitative data of learner attendance pre- and post-intervention was the attendance monitoring sheet. Parent survey

questionnaires, parent interview guide questions, and teacher observation logs were used to collect the supporting qualitative data. The pre-intervention results showed that high rates of irregular and chronic absenteeism, which were mainly caused by household duties, health issues, low motivation among learners, lack of parental control and poor coordination between home and school. After new and student centered interventions, such as Project CONNECT-ALIVE (Communication Network for Cooperative Engagement to Nurture Consistent ALIVE Attendance) for parent-teacher communication, Project LINK-ALIVE (Leadership Initiative for Nurturing Knowledge and ALIVE Participation) for adviser coordination, Project ATTEND-PLUS (Attendance Through Encouragement, Rewards, and Positive Learner Support) for attendance recognition via incentives, and Project ENGAGE-ALIVE (Enhancing New Games and Activities for Greater Engagement in ALIVE Learning) for interactive ALIVE classroom activities, post-intervention outcomes indicated a high attendance rate of 86.6 percent on average. Findings based on qualitative research also revealed greater motivation among learners, enhanced parental engagement, and more favorable classroom atmosphere. This research finds that School-Initiated Interventions are a successful tool in overcoming the problem of absenteeism among ALIVE learners and suggests on-going home-school collaboration and these interventions to make sure that the attendance and involvement of the learners in the ALIVE program improves in the long-run.

Keywords: *Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE), learner absenteeism, school-initiated interventions, attendance improvement, parental involvement, learner engagement*

INTRODUCTION

Students' attendance at school and their classes plays a decisive role in achieving the desired result from education and training activities." Absenteeism is a persistent challenge because poor attendance negatively affects academic progress, the achievement of mastery in learning, and overall educational goals — including development of fundamental skills and values through instruction. (Akkuş & Çinkir, 2022).

The same case applies to the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) is a program aimed at preserving Arabic language and Muslim culture by integrating Arabic language and Islamic values education into the basic education curriculum, providing Muslim learners opportunities to develop competence in Arabic literacy and acquire Islamic values as part of their schooling. (Department of Education [DepEd], 2015)) Since language learning will require exposure on a routine basis and that the Islamic values are developed over time due to the constant interactivity, the continuity will be crucial to the effectiveness of the program. In Popantay Elementary School, absenteeism among the 32 ALIVE students has been an issue of concern. It is having reported widening gaps in learning, unequal progress in the mastering of the Arabic language, and weak internalization of Islamic values by students who frequently miss classes. Such differences do not only undermine the academic performance of students but also hinder translating Islamic values to the daily lives of students both in school and outside the school environment.

Absenteeism has been rampant in the ALIVE program, which is explainable by a combination of various factors. They include the lack of parental supervision, lack of motivation in the case of learners, family responsibilities that conflict with school schedules, and a lack of credible enforcement strategies in the organizational environment. Consistent with the previous study, half of the participants identified pupil's attitude towards Madrasah as one of the main challenges they face; citing absenteeism as one of their major concerns of the learner in ALIVE schools. (Sali & Marasigan, 2020).

These determinants continue to hamper the participation of learners and the academic performance in general unless mechanisms of intervention are put in place strategically. To address these concerns, the school saw the need to have a transition towards the application of innovative strategies through School-Initiated Interventions (SII) to improve attendance rates and achieve greater learner engagement. These strategies include the creation of more effective communication programs between parents and teachers, use of culturally responsive learning programs, implementation of incentive-based attendance programs and the application of learner-centered pedagogies that will help to make classroom experiences more meaningful and enjoyable. In line with the Agile Action Research Framework, the proposed research focuses on exploring the possibilities of SII plans, implementation, reflection and refinements to reduce absenteeism among learners in the ALIVE program. It is a foregrounding strategy, whereby the teachers are allowed to employ strategies, gather feedback, and adjust the interventions based on the observed results.

This study aims at not only increasing the attendance levels, but also strengthening the association of the learners to the ALIVE program. By fostering a productive learning environment, placing emphasis on the importance of Islamic pedagogy, and enhancing the relationships with parents, the SII School Initiated Intervention aim to advance both the academic results and the character growth. Overall, the study is in line with the overall goal of ensuring that ALIVE students receive a consistent, meaningful, and value based Islamic education through sustained class attendance and participation.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a pre-test and post-test descriptive action research design to assess absenteeism and evaluate the effectiveness of School-Initiated Interventions (SII). Attendance patterns were compared before and after the intervention using an Attendance Monitoring Sheet. The action research followed a cyclical process of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Supporting instruments included a Parent Survey Questionnaire and Interview Guide to capture home-related factors, and a Teacher Observation Log and Reflection Journal to document learner behavior and classroom dynamics.

Research Locale

The study utilized data from 32 ALIVE learners of Popantay Elementary School (SY 2025–2026) and their parents or guardians. Attendance data were recorded using official and weekly monitoring sheets to compare pre- and post-intervention patterns. Additional data were gathered through parent surveys and interviews to capture home-related factors and perceptions, while teacher observation logs and reflection journals documented learner behavior and engagement. These sources provided a comprehensive basis for analyzing absenteeism and evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The study utilized researcher-developed instruments to measure attendance and evaluate the effectiveness of School-Initiated Interventions (SII). The primary tool was the Attendance Monitoring Sheet for pre- and post-test comparison, supported by a Parent Survey Questionnaire, Parent Interview Guide, and Teacher Observation Log/Reflection Journal to capture parental factors, learner behavior, and intervention outcomes.

Research Instruments

Sheets of Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Monitoring Sheet was designed to record and compare learners' attendance during pre- and post-intervention phases. It captured daily presence and absence, absenteeism trends, and improvements during the intervention period, providing quantitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the School-Initiated Interventions (SII).

Parent Survey Questionnaire

The Parent Survey Questionnaire was developed to gather data on parental involvement and factors contributing to learner absenteeism in ALIVE classes. It included items on parents' awareness of ALIVE, learners' daily responsibilities, motivational factors, and issues such as distance, scheduling, and supervision. The instrument utilized both multiple-choice and scaled-response questions to collect quantitative and attitudinal data.

Parent Interview Guide

The Parent Interview Guide served as a qualitative tool to capture in-depth insights from selected parents regarding absenteeism. It focused on causes of absenteeism, recommendations to improve attendance, effects of intervention strategies at home, and parent-teacher communication practices. The interviews provided rich narratives to complement and deepen the quantitative findings.

Observation Log / Reflection Journal of Teacher

The Teacher Observation Log and Reflection Journal were used to document weekly classroom observations during the intervention. It recorded learners' participation, motivation, behavior, attendance changes, parent-teacher interactions, implementation challenges, and overall progress. This tool provided descriptive evidence to support and enrich the evaluation of intervention outcomes.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure that the quality of the instruments used in the study is maintained, the following steps have been followed: a. Expert validation - ALIVE coordinators, educational supervisors and seasoned teachers went through the instruments so as to make it clear, relevant to the content and to be used by the target learners and parents. b. Pilot Testing- Pre-test of the instruments was done on a small sample of parents and learners. There was feedback that helped in perfecting wording, order of items and the way the instructions were to be given before the actual data collection.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data collected during this action research were subjected to both quantitative and qualitative data analysis instruments to fully investigate the level of absenteeism among the ALIVE learners prior and after the application of the School-Initiated Interventions (SII).

Main - Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were obtained mainly in the form of the Attendance Monitoring Sheets taken at the pre- and post-intervention times. The analysis of these data was made with the help of descriptive statistical tools, namely:

- a.) Addresses frequency counts to find out the numbers of the learners in each attendance category
- b.) Percentages to illustrate the percentage of learners with regular, irregular, moderately irregular and highly irregular attendance.
- c.) Mean attendance rate to see how the general level of attendance was like prior to and post intervention.

The attendance rates were calculated with the help of the standard formula:

$$\text{Attendance Rate (\%)} = \left(\frac{\text{Number of Days Present}}{\text{Total Number of School Days}} \right) \times 100$$

The obtained attendance rates were then attributed to the predetermined attendance descriptors (Regular, Moderately Irregular, Irregular, and Highly Irregular). The effectiveness of the School-Initiated Interventions in the reduction of absenteeism was determined by a comparative analysis of the pre-test and post-test results. Attendance trends were presented using simple tabulation and graphical summaries to make them easy to interpret.

Others – Supporting (Qualitative Data Analysis)

The Parent Survey Questionnaires (open-ended responses), Parent Interviews, and the Teacher Observation Logs and Reflection Journals provided the qualitative data. The thematic analysis was used to analyze these data and the steps followed are as follows: a) Familiarization of data by means of repeated reading through answers to the questions and observations. b) coding of common ideas in reference to causes of absenteeism, parental involvement, learner motivation, and school support. c) Sorting codes by theme e.g.: household duties, health, parenting problems, parental oversight and school organization. d) Themes interpretation to justify and explain the quantitative attendance outcomes. The combination of the qualitative results served to confirm the numeric trends and to get a better understanding of the contextual and behavioral aspects that could affect the absenteeism of learn Quantitative and Qualitative Results Integration. Results of the two sets of data were triangulated to make the findings credible and consistent. The conclusions about the effectiveness of the intervention strategies were strengthened by the qualitative evidence of parents and teacher observations that proved the quantitative attendance improvements.

Table 1. *Student Attendance Data During the Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Periods by Attendance Category*

Attendance Category	Attendance Rate (%)	Description
Regular Attendance	90% and above	Learner consistently attends ALIVE classes with minimal to no absences.
Irregular Attendance	80% – 89%	Learner shows occasional absences but maintains relatively stable attendance.
Moderately Irregular Attendance	70% – 79%	Learner frequently misses classes and shows inconsistent attendance patterns.
Highly Irregular Attendance	Below 70%	Learner regularly incurs absences and is at high risk of academic disengagement.

Cited: The attendance classification presented in this table is based on the Department of Education's guidelines on learner attendance monitoring and classroom assessment Department of Education (DepEd). (2015). Policy guidelines on classroom assessment for the K to 12 basic education program (DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015). Pasig City, Philippines: Department of Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 *Attendance Rate Before the Implementation*

Attendance Category	Description	Attendance Rate (%)	No. of Learners
Regular Attendance	Learner consistently attends ALIVE classes with minimal to no absences.	90% and above	9
Irregular Attendance	Learner shows occasional absences but maintains relatively stable attendance.	80% – 89%	9
Moderately Attendance	Irregular Learner frequently misses classes and shows inconsistent attendance patterns.	70% – 79%	5
Highly Attendance	Irregular Learner regularly incurs absences and is at high risk of academic disengagement.	Below 70%	9

Table 2 *Attendance Rate During the Implementation*

Attendance Category	Description	Attendance Rate (%)	No. of Learners
Regular Attendance	Learner consistently attends ALIVE classes with minimal to no absences.	90% and above	22
Irregular Attendance	Learner shows occasional absences but maintains relatively stable attendance.	80% – 89%	10
Moderately Attendance	Irregular Learner frequently misses classes and shows inconsistent attendance patterns.	70% – 79%	0
Highly Irregular Attendance	Learner regularly incurs absences and is at high risk of academic disengagement.	Below 70%	0

Table 3 *The effectiveness of the implemented innovative strategies focused on ALIVE learners*

Innovative Strategy Focused on Learners	Attendance Outcome Indicator	No. of Learner s Affected	Effectiveness Level	Percentage
Project CONNECT-ALIVE (Communication Network for Cooperative Engagement to Nurture Consistent ALIVE Attendance) for parent-teacher communication	Learners attending at least 6– 7 ALIVE sessions due to regular follow-ups and coordination	32	100%	Highly Effective

Project ATTEND-PLUS (Attendance Through Encouragement, Rewards, and Positive Learner Support) for attendance recognition via incentives	Learners with perfect attendance (7/7 days)	22	68.75%	Highly Effective
Project ENGAGE-ALIVE (Enhancing New Games and Activities for Greater Engagement in ALIVE Learning) for interactive ALIVE classroom activities	Learners consistently y attending classes (6– 7 days).	32	100%	Highly Effective
Project LINK-ALIVE (Leadership Initiative for Nurturing Knowledge and ALIVE Participation) for adviser coordination	Learners attending at least 6 out of 7 sessions	32	100%	Highly Effective

The research question was to find out the effectiveness of the School-initiated interventions (SII) in curbing absenteeism among the ALIVE students of Popantay elementary school. The results are summarized according to the research questions which the research dealt with. Attendance Monitoring Sheet was the primary research tool in the study. Observation of learner attendance on seven (7) days between 9th December and 17th December, 2025 showed that there was a significant improvement in attendance once the implementation of the School-Initiated Interventions was observed. The data collected after the interventions revealed that twenty-two (22) of thirty-two (32) learners registered an ideal attendance, that is attending every seven ALIVE sessions. The other ten (10) students were present in six of the seven sessions which amounted to 86 percent attendance. None of the learners was rated to be moderately irregular or chronically absent during the post-test. The overall pattern of attendance was more positive as compared with the preintervention findings where most of the learners were categorized as irregular and chronic. This establishes that the strategies that were adopted were working in terms of raising the number of regular attendance and eradicating chronic absenteeism among students of ALIVE

Evidence of support by other instruments of research

The Attendance Monitoring Sheet was the main tool of analysis, but other research tools were used to back up the findings to affirm the reasons behind the observed improvements. The questionnaire survey on post-test parents reported that parents realized that there was a tangible difference in the attendance of children following the introduction of the interventions. The majority of the parents claimed that their children had become more frequent attendants of the ALIVE classes and were more willing to take part in ALIVE activities. There was also an increased awareness of parents regarding the need to attend regularly in ALIVE classes. The interviews with parents also confirmed the results of the survey. The parents always indicated that follow-ups, reminders and structured monitoring have led to better attendance. Students who had poor results regarding their attendance were inspired and became more regular in their classes. Parents also admitted that they are now more active with the reminders and encouragement of their children to visit ALIVE. The teacher observation log indicated that learners had positive changes in their behavior in the post-test. It has been observed that there is an improvement in punctuality, learner participation during

classes in studying Arabic language and Quran, classroom interaction, and a better learning environment. The previously irregular learners were found to be regular over the period of the intervention.

All in all, the results establish that the School Initiated Interventions, especially the Project ATTEND-PLUS, Project ENGAGE-ALIVE, Project LINK-ALIVE and Project CONNECT-ALIVE, were positively and significantly effective in alleviating the absenteeism rate of ALIVE learners. The overlapping of both quantitative and confirming qualitative observations of the study proves that the interventions were effective in enhancing the attendance and engagement of the learners.

CONCLUSION

According to the results of the research, the following conclusions are made: School-Initiated Interventions proved to be effective in the reduction of ALIVE learners' absenteeism.

1. The attendance data post-intervention indicated that the regular attendance had increased significantly as well as the entire absence of chronic absenteeism. Students who were already irregular in their attendance patterns were also more regular once the interventions were implemented.
2. The attendance was made better leading to greater learner participation in ALIVE classes.
3. The increased attendance rates would allow the learners to be more engaged in Arabic language and Islamic Values Education activities which would lead to greater confidence, sustained learning and interaction in a classroom.
4. Those strategies that were learner-centered worked especially well with at-risk learner.
5. The learners with low or inconsistent attendance at the pre-intervention stage performed significantly at the posttest stage. This denotes that systematic surveillance; identification and interactive pedagogical interventions are useful in resolving attendance problems in vulnerable students.
6. The continuous attendance growth needs to be monitored and organized in schools.

The findings demonstrate the significance of attendance tracking on a continuous basis, coordination of the advisers, and systemic execution of the school-based strategies to have positive attendance results.

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