Assessing Students Learning Readiness in Accelerated Learning Program in Mekelle City IDPs

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Abstract
This explanatory sequential mixed-method study is carried out to assess the status of students' learning readiness and to explore how the triggering factors influence the students' readiness in the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Schools in Mekelle IDPs sites. The Research is conducted in two primary schools, Adihaqi and Meserete. These primary schools are purposely selected to achieve the aim of the assessment focusing on ALP schools students' learning readiness status within unsuitable learning vicinity. A mixed methods research design is used. Target respondents include all ALP schools going children; out of a total of 100 respondents all (100%) fill questionnaire data for the study and 5 participants participate in interview. In addition, Tigray Education Bureau supervision and Imagine one day ALP coordinator's report document analysis is used to triangulate the result. The results of the study shows that the description of the students' readiness to learning showed, low 53.5%, medium 41.5% and high set 5% respectively. The description of the document and interview analysis also indicates low learning readiness. The result of the finding indicates that students' learning readiness is low and the triggering factors that influence learning readiness are shortage of the scholastic, Covid-19 personal protective materials for individual ALP student, [much more massive curriculum what does it mean?], easily damaged temporary learning spaces, lack of providing nutrient food and lack of support from all concerned body Therefore, special measures should be taken by IDPs, government and other stakeholder to solve the triggering factors that influence students' learning readiness such as ensuring all learning services have adequate, Covid19 sanitation facilities and attractive environment for learning.
Keywords: ALP, IDPs, Students' Readiness
DOI: 10.7176/RHSS/13-7-04
Publication date: April 30th 2023

1. Introduction
UNHCR (2021) report shows that 82.4 million people are internally displaced across the world and it also indicates that 48 million were displaced as a result of conflict and violence (69.4% in Sub-Saharan Africa) by the end of 2020 and 20 million of them are children under 15 years' old who need exceptional attention and education as indicated the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2021). In Ethiopia, 23.5 million people, including 12.5 million children, 5.6 million women and 4.1 million persons with disabilities, who urgently need humanitarian assistance in 2021. This number is twice of the people who were in need in 2020 due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), desert locust infestation, and inter-communal violence. The conflict in Tigray region which erupted in November 2020 by Federal Government of Ethiopia, Amhara militia and Eretria forces have created a major humanitarian crisis with large part of the region's 5.7 million inhabitants who are in need of emergency assistance and 1.4 million children become out of school (UNICEF, 2021).

This study focused on assessing to the status of students' learning readiness and to explore how the triggering factors influence the students' readiness in the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Schools in Mekelle IDPs sites. In Mekelle City, many families displaced from their homeland and disrupted their livelihood due to the Tigray war. Specifically, the researcher wanted to explore students' readiness to learn and the major triggering factors within that exists at inconvenient environment for kids.

The factors that influence students' learning readiness include internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are factors that arise within the child itself, such as activeness, interaction with each other, motivation and so on. While external factors are factors that come from outside of the children, such as parent support, schools' conducive environment, school leaders, teachers, school facilities and infrastructure. Students' learning readiness is the conditions that precede learning activity. Students are required to be ready to learn, to be able to accept assignment that is given by the teacher both physically and psychologically. It is the readiness to learn as a picture of the beginning of a learning activity that makes him/her ready to give a response/ answer.

One indicator of the success of each student in determining the outcome of learning in school can be seen from the results it achieves. But to achieve this it is not an easy thing. Due to the success of learning is influenced by many factors, such as internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are factors that Arise from within the child itself, such as health, mental, intelligence, motivation and so on. Whiles external factors are factors that come from outside of the child, such as family environment, community, friends, teachers, media,

facilities, and infrastructure (Surya, 2004). According Khotimah (2012) stated that the readiness to learn to have a significant effect on student learning outcomes. As with Alawiyah (2013) stated that the readiness to learn has nothing to do with students' interest in learning. While, Komalasari (2012) stated that the readiness to learn can enhance students' understanding.

Tigray Education Bureau learning assessment documents I, II, and III, which were developed by the directorate of national examination administration and assessment, indicates that there was very low students' academic achievement (2008-2010). The studies also depict that among the major triggering factors for students' low learning achievement are various in types. They are stated as internal or external, or personal or out side effects. They are also categorized as school factors, social factors, economic factors, home factors, and readiness factors and so on. Among the different types of factors stated above, low students' learning readiness is found to be a major factor (TREB, 2010).

As mentioned earlier, under suitable and comfortable learning environment, the three consecutive learning assessment results indicate that learning readiness is the major factor. Therefore, the aim of this research is to assess what influences the students' learning readiness at internally displaced children in Tigray who are exposed to various kinds of social exclusion such as luck of food, shelter, safeguarded material for Covid-19 and spatial exclusion. Consequently, these conditions expose students to high risk for learning readiness than before. In short, the rationale of this study is assessing the status of students' learning readiness and to explore how the triggering factors influence the students' readiness in the Accelerated Learning Program Schools in Adihaqi and Meserete primary school of Mekelle internal displaced peoples (IDPs). Hence, the researcher attempted to answer the following basic research questions.

1. What is the status of Accelerated Learning Program school students' learning readiness in Mekelle City IDPs?
2. Explore how the triggering factors influence the students' readiness in the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Schools in Mekelle IDPs sites?

2. Review of Literature

The most common definition of Internal Displacement Peoples (IDPs) is the one presented by the UN Secretary-General in 1992, which defines it as "persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country" (Forced Migration Online 2012).

Conflicts force people to leave their homes. One of the measures of the severity of a conflict in addition to casualties and duration is the extent to which people have been displaced from their communities. In this recent survey by the researcher conflict-affected from different zone, especially from west, northern-west and central zone internally displaced people affected by conflict had been displaced in Tigray regional state (UNHCR, 2020). In fact, when people living in countries with conflict were asked about their greatest fears, fear of displacement was among their top three concerns after losing a loved one and economic hardship but above death, physical injury and sexual and gender-based violence. In Tigray conflict affected all zones about 1.7 million people internally displaced and, large numbers of refugees found in Mekelle and Shire site (UNHCR, 2021). Displacement is a time tested coping strategy for escaping the effects of conflict. When people do not feel safe in their communities and when other coping strategies (such as hiding or negotiating with warring groups) do not work, they flee. There are two basic ways in which conflicts displace people Save the Children (2020).

- First, civilians may be 'caught in the crossfire' of disputes between dissatisfied groups and government forces (or sometimes conflicts between insurgent groups). They may flee their communities once the bombs start to fall or armed groups attack their village.
- A second way in which conflicts displace people is when displacement is an explicit strategy or objective of an armed group.

Sometimes insurgent groups seek to de-populate an area so that they can carry out illicit activities, as in Tigray where civilians are often displaced by Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), Amhara militia and Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF). Thus, in Tigray, criminal violence had an explicit objective of forcing people to leave their homes; this ethnic cleansing in Tigray regional state is not an accidental incidence, but to demoralize the people deliberately. And finally, people leave conflict areas because of the disruption of economic and social life. Conflicts create disorder with markets, supply lines, and infrastructure. Consequently, people lose their jobs, are afraid to work in their fields, and cannot send their children to schools. Thus, they move to areas where they feel that they can survive and secure. The Tigray conflict was intensified after the November 2020 bombing of the ENDF, Eritrean Defense force, Amhara militia military forces at the western and south- western zone of Tigray, where over a million people left their home and fled to Sudan, Shire and Mekelle IDPs sites. Most of them said they left their home because they were afraid and when they had seen criminal death, physical injury and sexual and gender-based violence. (UNHCR, 2021)

To achieve a good result, a student needs to have the readiness to learn that is needed in the teaching learning process and doing of day to day tasks, both physical readiness, mental preparedness and readiness in terms of cognitive. This is true also of students and teachers who act as the subject of education in the teaching process should always equip them with preparations for the learning activities.

Student Readiness to Learn Schools does not exist in a vacuum; they operate in the midst of communities made up of individual homes. For students to come to school ready to learn, it is essential that they feel safe not only within the school but also in their own homes and their community. Safe contexts where parents organize the community and rally around students allow for greater student aspirations and successes (Gaitan, 2012). The way parents and guardians interact with their children significantly impacts achievement (Stewart, 2006). Chambers and Palmer (2010) noted that students who have had stays in multiple foster homes struggle more in schools than their peers. Thus, a stable home life appears to be crucial for students to make adequate academic gains. The connection students feel with a group can positively or negatively affect their academic outcomes (Lee, et.al, 2009).

Therefore, according to UNHCR (2021) in Tigray above 1.7milion people displaced from their home because of the civil war. This condition made 1.4 million students out of school. To resolve the problem set different alternative school options by different NGO's and one of the options are Alternative learning program (ALP). Therefore, the aim of the study is to evaluate the status of ALP school students' learning readiness and, to identify how the triggering factors influence students learning readiness in ALP schools of Mekelle IDPs site.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This research was conducted at Mekelle city Accelerated Learning Program in IDPs site, with a time of execution of the research is starting from May 19/2021 up to Nov.30/ 2021. The research design used in this research is the explanatory sequential mixed method design; quantitative data are collected first and are more heavily weighted than the qualitative data. In the first phase of the study, the researcher formulated a hypothesis, collected quantitative data, and conducted data analysis. The findings of the quantitative study then had determined the type of data collected in a second phase, which includes interview, document analysis, and interpretation of qualitative data. The researcher used the qualitative analysis and interpretation to explain or elaborate the quantitative results. Mixed methods research has become popular as the newest development in research methods and in approaches to "mixing" quantitative and qualitative research. The mixed approach helps to understand the contradiction between quantitative and qualitative approaches, besides using the combination of both approaches has a great advantage in obtaining more information than using either of them (Wisdom and Creswell ,2013).

So, a mixed research is used to describe and analyze the status of students' learning readiness and to explore the triggering factors that influence students' learning readiness at ALP schools in Mekelle IDPs site.

a.   Research Variables

In this study, there are ten variables: readiness to learn with no absenteeism, follow up while the teachers teaching, students interaction in asking and answering, effort in doing class room and home works activities, the IDPs roll for student learning readiness, parent-teachers communication and follow up to their children's status, teachers support, parent support, school administrator support and conducive environment for learning respectively. These variables affect the status of students' learning readiness. The readiness to learn influenced by different triggering factors such as shortage of the scholastic, recreation, Covid 19 personal protective materials, temporary learning spaces (TLS), lack of providing nutrient food like high energy biscuit and potable water for ALP students. In addition, how it influences their motivation of learning readiness which is the most important part in this study.

The study was intended to assess the status students' learning readiness and to explore the triggering factors influence the students' learning readiness for those who attend ALP of the education in emergency programs for internally displaced children at selected Mekelle IDP sites. To do this study, the researcher employed explanatory sequential mixed research approach by collecting and analyzing questionnaire data from respondent students in phase one and collecting interview data and document analysis in phase two. According Creswell, (2014) a mixed research design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative data. Hence, this method was used at different phases of the research to obtain data on the issue. The researcher believed that the strength of each method helps to overcome the deficiencies of the other and generally obtain a higher degree of validity and reliability.

The study used both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from the ALP students. Secondary data were collected from recent Supervision Document of Imagine 1 day and Tigray Education Bureau, and Interview of parents and students. The target population of this study was all ALP students in IDPs Mekelle City of Adihaqi and Mesert primary schools site in (2021). To find out the acceptable of samples to make strong estimation of the finding from the sampling frame, the number of sample schools was determined to be 100 (100%) of the IDPs in Mekelle site ALP students, and 5 interviewees (one ALP coordinator, two students

and two parent).

The sample size of students as a whole was taken using the published table strategy (Miaoulis and Michener 1976) with the consideration of precision, confidence level and variability of population. In the case of variability, the population was homogenous because they are all students. So, all 100 students' and 5 interviewers' total 105 use as a sample size. The researcher used this sampling frame to manage the study properly and believed this sampling size is enough to make valid estimation about the status of students' learning readiness indicators of students' effort and reasons for students' low learning readiness.

For this study three data collecting instruments were used. These were questionnaire, interview and document analysis. This is because the researcher strongly believes that triangulating data through various methods can best assure reliability and validity. The study followed self-administered structured questionnaire as instruments to collect data from students and an interview to ALP coordinator, two parents and two students. The other tool used for this study was document analysis that would measure students' learning readiness status in the side of supervision documents that reported from ALP Imagine one day site supervisor and Tigray Education Bureau supervision team reports.

After determining the reliability and validity of the instruments through professional face validation, the researcher proceed to administer and collect the data himself. The data and the information which were obtained from questionnaires and document analysis were regularly coded and updated on a coding framework. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (SPSS 24 software). The key descriptive statistics that were employed were frequency counts, percentage and tables. The other techniques of data analysis were document analysis, interview result and that contextually interpreted and organized according to their sources.

In this study, methods of data collection involved two phases. Because in the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, quantitative data collected first and more heavily weighted than the qualitative data. The second qualitative Phase, in order to gain more detailed view of the students' learning readiness and to explore the triggering factors that influence their learning readiness, two kinds of qualitative data were collected and analyzed: interview data and supervision documents.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section of the study, based on the responses obtained from the respondents and document analysis, the analysis and discussion of the data is presented in the following section categorized in sub topics. The following table shows the characteristics of respondents of the study in terms of sex and grade. The analyses of the item contained in the table are presented in a way that reflects their connection with the study under consideration.

Table 1: Respondents by Sex and Grade

No	Variables	Sex and Grade of Respondents				Total	
		Male		Female			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Sex	34	34	66	66	100	100
2	Grade						
	Grade 1	11	35.48	20	64.52	31	100.00
	Grade 2	10	27.78	26	72.22	36	100.00
	Grade 3	13	39.39	20	60.61	33	100.00

As it can be seen from the table above, the first item refers to the sex composition of respondents. In this regard, 34% of the participants were male and 66% of them were female. This indicates the overall composition of male and female in the IDPs site which are out of the 100 ALP students 66 were female.

As displayed in item 2 of table 1, Majority (72.22 %) Grade 2, (64.52%) Grade 1 and (60.61%) Grade 3 students got accesses in this program. This implies that the participants are almost kids. Hence, it is presumed that they can cope the ALP program and to perform their blocking learning by the civil war covered effectively.

4.2. The Student Learning Readiness in ALP schools of Mekelle IDPs Site

Readiness is an individual's condition that allows him/her to learn. There are various standards of readiness to learn for a special task. Some students who are not ready to carry out a task in the study will have difficulty or even despair. These include: readiness to learn with no absenteeism, follow up while the teachers are teaching, students interaction in asking and answering, effort in doing class room and home works activities, the IDPs role for students' learning readiness, parent-teachers communication and follow up to their children's status, teachers support, parent support, school administrator support and conducive environment for learning that influence student learning readiness. As for the research data about readiness to learn is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Students' Learning Readiness

Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	86 – 100	50	5
Medium	74 – 85	415	41.5
Low	50 – 73	535	53.5
Total		1000	100

The table and graph indicates about 50, 415, 535 Frequency 5%, 41.5%. 53.5% student respondents categorized the status of students learning readiness as high, medium and low respectively. As mentioned earlier, these data from the aspect of learning readiness, showed that students' learning readiness are at low and medium category (95%).

In addition, the document analysis in the IDPs site indicates that there are several triggering factors that influence students' learning readiness. These are the ones and best weight given to him to do with shortage of the scholastic, recreation, and Covid-19 personal protective materials for individual ALP student. Because of wind and rain, temporary learning spaces (TLS) are easily damaged. In addition to this, there is lack of providing nutrient food like high energy biscuit and potable water for ALP students. Thus, lack of enough support from all stakeholders made the students show low learning readiness.

Readiness it is to mean if someone wants to get a picture of the students' learning readiness to learn something, he should check/study the testing readiness. If an individual student lacks the readiness for a task, fails to question and answer, make absenteeism then the learning approach and learning situation will be changed until he/she develops learning readiness or until a teacher and a concerned body arranges the available resources and tasks according to the readiness of the students. Readiness to learn should reflect the type and level of readiness, for example, we may come across with students who have the rank at different classes but their pattern of mental abilities. Materials, activities, and tasks should be varied according to the readiness factor of cognitive, affective and psychomotor of various individuals. Therefore, the learning readiness is an important factor in determining the success of students in learning.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Readiness to learn with no absenteeism	100	1.56	0.556
Follow up while the teacher's teaching	100	1.51	0.559
Students' interaction in asking and answering	100	1.61	0.680
Students' effort in doing classroom & home works activities	100	1.64	0.659
The IDPs role for student learning readiness	100	1.48	0.611
Parent-teachers communication & follow up to their children's status	100	1.44	0.556
Teachers support to students' learning readiness	100	1.58	0.606
Parent support their children's learning readiness	100	1.56	0.608
School Administrator's support to their students' learning readiness	100	1.43	0.537
Role of School conducive environment to students' learning readiness	100	1.34	0.476
Valid N (list wise)	100	1.52	0.060

As is indicated in table 3 above, the mean score of respondents for all items were above the expected mean score (1.5) indicating that the students' learning readiness agreed on their dissatisfaction towards the ALP. However, comparing the ten items of the perception of the program the mean score of the appropriateness of the ALP program in IDPs Mekelle site was found meaningfully low.

In connection to this, the result of the interview made with the student, parent and ALP coordinator was consistent with the perception of ALP students' questionnaire data analysis. The entire interviewees confirmed that a significant number of students lack interest in the ALP. This was showed by more absence in the class, lack of follow up while the teacher's teaching, unjustifiable lack of participation in different activities, delay in doing classroom and homework, and lack of support from parents and other concerned bodies.

The finding of ALP at inconvenient environment was triangulated with literature and documents of Imagine one day and Tigray Education Bureau's. Accordingly, most of the literature and the documents did not expect high levels of achievements in the IDPs sites as encounter many barriers of the civil-war conscience in the children's mentality and their families' instability. The students' learning readiness in terms of student achievements was one of the crucial things. Thus, a stable home life is crucial for students to gain adequate academic achievement. The connection students feel with a group can positively or negatively affect their academic outcomes (Lee, et.al, 2009). In relation to this issue five interviewees substantiate this finding in the following ways: One of my respondents, who are an ALP facilitator in Mekelle IDPs site, said about the students' learning readiness for the IDPs as follows:

"I have been coordinating teaching learning in this IDPs school for more than 6 months. Most

children here have chosen the career of education. However, every day I collect data about the students' learning readiness in this ALP teaching learning process as indicated in the data most of the displaced children wished to have well-furnished recreational materials. But the civil war consequences have been making heavy to start a different career such as teaching or ALP nursing. But lack of educational facility has its own influence on children's readiness to learn. In addition other factors include: rape, killings, disappearances, torture, and destruction of property against defenseless civilians that happened for the past few months. No one has better learning readiness out of thinking the bad condition".

The other interviewee also said that:

"We got another alternative which enable us to go to school to learn in ALP, but there are bad impacts that influenced us, because our parents are in the war area. Therefore, we have been thinking about them rather than learning readiness. S1. from western Tigray

The Second interviewee student also said that:

I lost my father and two of my brothers and sisters. I do not know what I'm going to do now; my mother wants me to pass my time in the ALP school because she wants to make me happy. However, I like to think rather than learning readiness, I would like to go back to think about the rest of my family and now I want to think how we will continue our life with mam". S2. from Maikadera

The interviewees ALP facilitator and the interviewee students added that, the main reasons for the lack of students' learning readiness illustrated their belief that no one can have better learning readiness out of thinking unsuitable conditions because of their parents were in the war area and have seen the Consequence of the war in their bad journey until enter to the IDPs site. Therefore, they concluded that anybody thinks about their family rather than learning. A parent interviewee from the eastern zone of Tigray on his part said as follows:

"*Before children were taken to ALP school, we aware to our children about the program and we facilitate basic classroom materials and encouraging environment for kids to help students' learning readiness with ALP coordinators, but our children most of their time pass with their friend's in playing rather than attain class, working their homework and other tasks, this condition is a result of the civil war because our children's wants to refresh their minds, rather than thinking the past bad moments happened over them. Therefore, learning readiness of our kids influence by those conditions and this leads to week readiness". P1. From Estern zone Tigray (parents in IDPs)*

The other parent interviewee was also responded bellow:

In the ALP there are so many triggering factors that have a negative impact on students' learning readiness and that blocks our students intent such as, shortage of the educational material, lack of providing food, lack of potable water at refugee camp. They didn't have sufficient *Covid19 personal protective materials and* they have *psychological influence which results by the war on them, absence of refreshment materials* and *lack of basic needs such as, clothes, shoes & the temporary class didn't protect them from wind, rain and dusts. The above conditions influenced them, in having learning readiness and in having good intent. Therefore, the government and stakeholders should give a response to enhance students' learning readiness. P2. From shire*

Hence, all interviewees have also mentioned that there are many triggering factors that have a negative impact on student learning. In addition to this their family lack conducive environment for learning unequipped educational facilities. They elaborate it more like this: there should be enough support from government and stake holders such as psychological treatment, keeping in a good learning space, providing enough food and potable water, providing sufficient Covid 19 protective materials health centers, providing recreation material by coordinating with stakeholders and supporter companies and providing sufficient school material. This data/idea matches with previously sited research, student readiness to learn a school does not exist in a vacuum; they operate in the midst of communities made up of individual homes. For students to come to school ready to learn, it is essential that they feel safe not only within the school but also in their own homes and their community. Safe contexts where parents organize the community and rally around students allow for greater student aspirations and successes (Gaitan, 2012). In general, students' learning readiness was not supported by all concerned bodies in practical implementation of the ALP departures in IDPs and their teaching learning observation. As can be seen from the cumulative mean (M=1.52, SD=0.060) of the table above the students have showed dissatisfaction towards the learning readiness on ALP in Meklle IDPs site.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the prior findings and discussions, the following conclusions have been made: The purpose of this study is to assess the students' learning readiness in accelerated learning program, and explore how the triggering factors influence students' learning readiness.

The study indicated negative results about the ALP in IDPs Mekelle site. Findings from the survey, interview and document review depicted that the students' learning readiness in ALP at Mekelle IDPs site was

not as desired. Assessment of students' learning readiness is a crucial activity because it examines to what extent the ALP program runs effectively and it helps better understand to what extent the triggering factors influences students' learning readiness. Thus, readiness of students based on the three levels/parameters (low, medium and high) was found to be at medium and low level. Consequently, when it comes to the interviewees data and documentation analysis the findings similarly indicated that students' readiness to learn is very low, that is almost neutral with a cumulative mean (1.52) and SD (0.060). Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the application of the ALP during civil-war and bad conditions the students' learning readiness is really low or below average.

The government and stakeholders failed to provide enough support such as psychological treatment, keeping in a good learning space, providing enough food and potable water, providing sufficient Covid 19 protective materials health centers, providing recreation material by coordinating with stakeholders and supporter companies and providing sufficient school material. Thus, there is failure to achieve the desired objective of ALP. If students' learning readiness in ALP at IDPs sites is to be improved the following major actions should be taken into consideration:

- Special measures should be taken to solve the triggering factors that influence students' learning readiness. For instance, ensuring to have adequate learning services, Covid19 sanitation facilities and attractive environment for learning.
- A new curriculum that fit for ALP students should be developed and implemented.
- Standard temporary learning spaces should be constructed for ALP students.
- Sufficient nutrient food service: like high energy biscuit and potable water for ALP needs to be provided.

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