

Challenges and Opportunities Among Out-of-School Youth in Jasaan Misamis Oriental

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ABSTRACT

Out-of-school youth are individuals who are not enrolled in formal education and often face challenges related to limited opportunities. This study is to determine the level of life challenges and opportunities among out-of-school youth in the select district of Jasaan, Misamis Oriental. Specifically, it seeks to examine the respondents' level of life challenges; ascertain the level of life opportunities; determine the significant relationship between life challenges and each of their profiles and find out the significant relationship between life opportunities and each of their profiles. A descriptive-correlational research design with universal sampling was used. Data were collected from one hundred sixty (160) respondents through researcher-made questionnaires. Statistical tools included mean, percentage, standard deviation, and Pearson r Correlation was employed.

Key findings showed that poor mental health obtained the highest mean among the life challenges, interpreted as challenged, while gender inequity was the lowest, interpreted as challenged. For life opportunities, public-private partnerships got the highest mean, while scholarships and sponsorships got the lowest mean, both interpreted as high. A significant relationship was found between respondents' profiles, life challenges and life opportunities. The study concludes that addressing gender inequality and strengthening scholarship programs are vital for improving youth development outcomes. It suggests that when challenges are high, opportunities tend to be limited. Thus, it recommends that future initiatives must focus on reducing challenges and enhancing opportunities through scholarships, mentorship, and gender-equity strategies.

Keywords: challenges, opportunities, out-of-school youth

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Out-of-school youth (OSY) remain a major concern in the Philippines, with over 4 million aged 16–24 disengaged from formal education (PSA, 2021). This issue has long-term effects on individuals and society, limiting job opportunities and slowing economic growth. While OSY is a nationwide problem, it is especially severe in rural areas like Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, where poverty, geographic isolation, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to digital tools create barriers to education. Many youths leave school to support their families through farming or fishing, making economic survival a priority over learning (DepEd, 2022).

The pandemic worsened these challenges, as online and modular learning excluded those without internet access or devices (Roque, 2022). Beyond structural issues, OSY often face emotional struggles such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety, which hinder reintegration. These factors perpetuate poverty and social exclusion, increasing vulnerability to risky behaviors.

At the community level, high OSY rates reduce human capital, limit participation in social development, and stall local economic progress. Education drives growth, and its absence deprives communities of skilled, innovative youth.

This study examines the challenges faced by OSY in Jasaan—focusing on education access, dropout rates, skills training, financial instability, mental health, and gender inequality. It aims to identify strategies to help OSY reintegrate into education or secure meaningful employment, guiding policies and programs for their social inclusion.

Literature and Related Studies

Studies on out-of-school youth (OSY) in the Philippines reveal significant challenges such as limited access to quality education, high dropout rates, lack of skills training, financial instability, poor mental health, and gender inequality. Conversely, opportunities like alternative learning systems, technical-vocational education, scholarships, public-private partnerships, and skills-matching programs provide pathways for OSY to reintegrate into education or employment.

Respondents' Profile

OSY represent a diverse group influenced by sex, age, civil status, employment status, family income, and number of siblings. Many aspire to return to school or pursue livelihood opportunities despite educational setbacks (Bautista et al., 2025).

- **Sex:** Gender shapes OSY experiences. Males often leave school due to economic pressures, while females face early pregnancy or domestic roles (UPPI & DRDF, 2021). Gender-responsive programs—such as reproductive health education for girls and vocational training for boys—are essential (UNFPA, 2024). Female OSY often experience lower life satisfaction due to caregiving burdens and stigma (Lagyab & Lumapenet, 2024).
- **Age:** OSY aged 15–24 span adolescence to early adulthood. Older youth (20–24) are more likely to remain disengaged due to income needs (PSA, 2024; Ebuña, 2024). Younger OSY benefit from academic bridging programs, while older youth prioritize livelihood training and life skills (USAID, 2022; ChildHope, 2023).
- **Civil Status:** Early marriage and teenage pregnancy are major dropout causes among females, while males often leave school to provide for families (ChildHope, 2023). Flexible learning and support services are vital for reintegration.
- **Employment Status:** Many OSY are unemployed or in informal, low-paying jobs, prioritizing income over education (Education Development Center, 2023). Employment readiness programs integrating life skills and technical training are crucial (USAID, 2022). Aligning interventions with labor market demands helps bridge education and economic inclusion (Bautista et al., 2023).
- **Family Monthly Income:** Financial hardship is a primary barrier to education. Families earning below ₱12,030 are categorized as poor, while those earning ₱12,030–₱24,060 are low-income (Garcia, 2021). These groups are most vulnerable to educational exclusion, often forcing youth into informal work (USAID, 2022).

- **Number of Siblings:** Larger families face resource constraints, often prioritizing basic needs over education. Older siblings, especially girls, may assume caregiving roles, reducing school participation (PSA, 2022; Bansagan & Panganiban, 2023). Interventions like community childcare and flexible learning can help alleviate these pressures.

Life Challenges Among Out-of-School Youth

Out-of-school youth (OSY) face multiple challenges that hinder their potential. Limited access to quality education and high dropout rates result in poor knowledge and skills development, while financial instability perpetuates poverty. Mental health issues and gender inequality further restrict opportunities for personal and professional growth. Despite these barriers, OSY deserve equitable chances to overcome these obstacles.

Limited Access to Quality Education

OSY often lack access to quality education due to resource gaps and the digital divide, worsened by the pandemic (ChildHope, 2021). Rural schools face overcrowded classrooms, insufficient materials, and outdated teaching methods, reducing learning outcomes (Susulan, Talipan, & Matolo, 2022; Zamora & Dorado, 2024). Government programs like Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program provide financial aid, but comprehensive strategies are needed to ensure equitable education.

High Dropout Rate

Dropout rates remain high, especially in higher education, primarily due to financial difficulties despite initiatives like the Free Tuition Act (Bravo, 2023). Other factors include health issues and transfers. CHED reported a 35.15% dropout rate in 2023–2024, slightly lower than the previous year's 40.98%, reflecting persistent retention challenges.

Skills Development

Modern education emphasizes practical skills for employability. Policies like India's NEP 2020 integrate vocational training into curricula to bridge gaps between academic learning and industry needs (Jain, 2023). Studies stress the importance of technological skills, creativity, and collaboration for success in a rapidly evolving job market (Lukose & Sharma, 2022).

Financial Instability

Financial instability remains a major barrier to education in the Philippines. National education spending often falls short of global standards, creating resource gaps that affect quality (Tenazas, 2022). As of 2024, about 10.7 million Filipinos aged 5–24—roughly 25% of this age group—were out of school, with the majority aged 20–24 (PSA, 2024). This exclusion perpetuates poverty and limits employment opportunities.

To address this, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) was institutionalized under RA 11510 as a flexible option for OSY (Gatchalian, 2024). However, only 9% of targeted learners are enrolled, and over half fail to complete due to economic constraints and family obligations (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2024). While ALS offers opportunities, systemic barriers continue to hinder sustained participation.

Poor Mental Health

Mental health issues among Filipino youth have worsened post-pandemic. DepEd reported over 400 student suicides and 2,000 attempts during the pandemic (Ramos, 2023). UNICEF (2021) found that one in five adolescents considered suicide, with economic stress and educational exclusion as major triggers. Despite the Mental Health Act, access to care remains limited, especially in rural areas (WHO, 2023). OSY are particularly vulnerable due to lack of safe spaces and support networks. Without integrated

programs combining education, livelihood, and psychosocial support, poor mental health will persist, reinforcing cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Gender Inequality

Despite progress, gender disparities in education remain. Girls from marginalized communities face barriers such as early marriage, lack of sanitation facilities, and cultural norms favoring boys' education (UNESCO, 2020). Gender stereotypes also limit opportunities in STEM fields, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive teacher training (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Additionally, school-related gender-based violence disproportionately affects girls, requiring stronger policies and community engagement to ensure safe and equitable learning environments (Global Education Monitoring Team, 2023).

Life Opportunities Among Out-of-School Youth

Out-of-school youth (OSY) have access to various initiatives aimed at addressing their challenges and improving their quality of life. Programs such as Alternative Learning Systems (ALS), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), scholarships, public-private partnerships (PPPs), social welfare services, and skills-matching programs create pathways for education, skills development, and employment (USAID & EDC, 2024).

Alternative Learning Systems

ALS provides flexible education for those outside formal schooling. Institutionalized through RA 11510, ALS offers adaptable programs for underserved communities, promoting lifelong learning and equitable access (Pascual et al., 2020). DepEd's ALS 2.0 roadmap focuses on improving quality and preparing learners for Industry 4.0 (DepEd, 2020).

Technical Vocational Education and Training

TVET bridges the gap between education and employment. Aligned with the Philippine Development Plan and Industry 4.0, TVET enhances employability and addresses skills gaps (Edralin & Pastrana, 2023; ADB, 2021). Continuous adaptation ensures relevance in a rapidly changing labor market.

Scholarships and Sponsorship

Scholarship programs like CHED's SSP and PESFA reduce financial burdens for low-income students, covering tuition and living expenses (CHED, 2020). Corporate initiatives such as SM and Ayala scholarships also support academic achievement and personal growth (WhatALife, 2020).

Public-Private Partnerships

PPPs improve infrastructure and service delivery through collaboration between government and private sectors. The Philippines' PPP framework has facilitated investments in education and other sectors, promoting innovation and efficiency (ADB, 2020; PPP Monitor, 2021).

Social Welfare Services

Programs like Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino provide conditional cash transfers to improve access to education and health (DSWD, 2020). The Sustainable Livelihood Program and Kalahi initiatives empower communities through capacity-building and inclusive development (DSWD, 2021; ADB, 2022).

Skills-Matching Programs

Skills-matching programs address job-skills gaps by aligning training with industry needs. Initiatives like A Future That Works establish Sector Skills Councils to identify labor market demands (Raagas, 2023). Platforms such as YouthWorks PH provide career roadmaps and labor market data for informed decisions (Orbeta & Corpus, 2022). The Balik Probinsya program promotes rural employment by matching skills with local industries (DILG, 2021). These efforts reduce unemployment and foster inclusive growth.

Gender Inequality and Opportunities

Gender inequality remains a challenge for marginalized youth, as cultural norms often restrict girls' access to education and employment. Social Capital Theory suggests that strengthening networks can overcome these barriers through interventions like TVET, skills-matching programs, and gender-inclusive policies. Opportunities for OSY are rooted in social capital. Expanding ALS provides flexible learning, TVET equips practical skills, scholarships reduce financial barriers, PPPs create economic opportunities, social welfare services offer support, and skills-matching programs connect youth to jobs. These strategies empower OSY to overcome systemic challenges and achieve personal and professional growth.

Figure 1 illustrates the study framework: respondents' profiles (sex, age, civil status, employment status, family income, number of siblings) influence life challenges (limited education access, dropout, skills gaps, financial instability, poor mental health, gender inequality) and life opportunities (ALS, TVET, scholarships, PPPs, welfare services, skills-matching). Guided by Social Capital Theory, the study examines relationships between profiles, challenges, and opportunities.

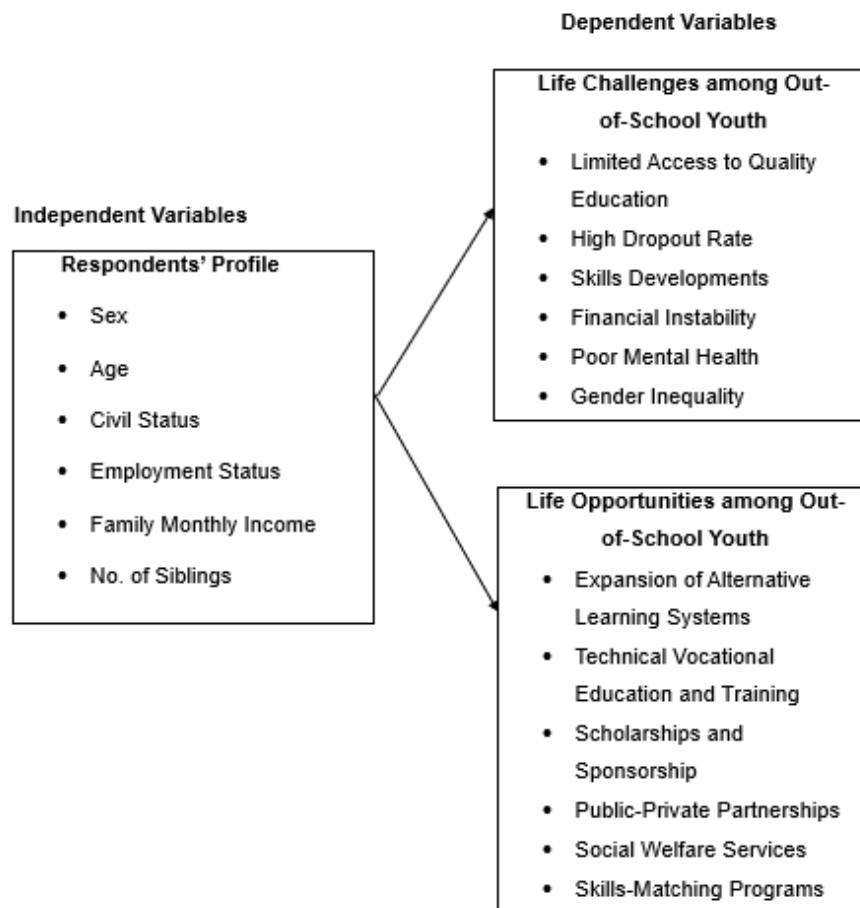


Figure 1. Schematic Presentation Showing the Interplay Between Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the level of life challenges and opportunities among out-of-school youth in select districts of Jasaan, Misamis Oriental during the School Year 2024-2025.

It specifically answered the following problems:

1. What is the respondents' profile in terms of sex, age, civil status, employment status, family monthly income and number of siblings?
2. What is the respondents' level of life challenges based on limited access to quality education, high dropout rate, skills development, financial instability, poor mental health and gender inequality?
3. What is the respondents' level of life opportunities with regard to expansion of alternative learning systems, technical vocational education and training program, scholarship and sponsorship, public and private partnerships, social welfare services and skills-matching programs?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' life challenges and each of their profile?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' life opportunities and each of their profile?

Hypothesis

Problems 1, 2, and 3 were hypothesis-free. Based on Problems 4 and 5, the null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

H01: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' life challenges and each of their profile.

H02: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' life opportunities and each of their profile.

Significance of the Study

This study identifies the challenges and opportunities faced by out-of-school youth (OSY) in Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, providing insights for interventions, programs, and policies. Its significance extends to:

- Municipal Level: Findings will guide local government officials and barangay leaders in creating effective youth-focused policies and community initiatives.
- Educational Level: Results will assist DepEd district offices, school supervisors, curriculum planners, and TESDA in improving formal and alternative learning programs and vocational training.
- Individual Level: OSY will benefit from information on alternative education pathways such as ALS, TVET, and digital literacy programs.
- Future Research: Serves as a reference for researchers exploring related topics and additional influencing factors.

Scope and Limitation

The study focuses on life challenges and opportunities among 160 OSY in a selected district of Jasaan, Misamis Oriental during SY 2024–2025.

- Independent Variables: Respondents' profile (sex, age, civil status, employment status, family monthly income, number of siblings).

- Dependent Variables:
 - Life Challenges: Limited access to quality education, high dropout rate, skills development gaps, financial instability, poor mental health, gender inequality.
 - Life Opportunities: Expansion of ALS, TVET programs, scholarships, public-private partnerships, social welfare services, and skills-matching programs.

Definition of Terms

- Age: Number of full years lived; OSY are typically aged 15–24, not enrolled in formal schooling or employed.
- Challenges: Obstacles hindering OSY from achieving their potential.
- Civil Status: Legal marital category (single, married, separated, widowed, divorced).
- Employment Status: Labor market position (employed, unemployed, not in labor force).
- Expansion of ALS: Flexible educational programs providing access to learning outside traditional schools.
- Family Monthly Income: Total household income per month before deductions, including wages, business earnings, remittances, and other sources.
- Financial Instability: Lack of consistent financial resources affecting access to education and essential services.
- Gender Inequality: Disparity in opportunities and resources based on gender, limiting access to education and training.
- High Dropout Rate: Significant number of students leaving formal education before completion due to socioeconomic or personal barriers.
- Limited Access to Quality Education: Inadequate educational opportunities caused by poor infrastructure, lack of materials, and insufficient qualified teachers.
- Number of Siblings: Total count of brothers and sisters in the household, regardless of age or birth order.
- Opportunities: Programs and initiatives designed to help OSY overcome barriers and achieve success.
- Out-of-School Youth (OSY): Young people aged 15–24 not enrolled in formal education due to economic, social, or personal circumstances.
- Profile: Characteristics such as age, sex, civil status, employment, and family income that describe respondents.
- Poor Mental Health: Psychological challenges like anxiety and depression affecting OSY's well-being and productivity.
- Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborative arrangements between government and private organizations to support OSY through education and training.
- Scholarships and Sponsorship: Financial assistance to reduce economic barriers and support education or training.
- Skills Development: Process of acquiring technical, vocational, and soft skills for employability and personal growth.
- Skills-Matching Programs: Initiatives aligning OSY skills with labor market demands for better employment opportunities.

- Social Welfare Services: Support programs such as cash transfers, healthcare, and housing to improve OSY living conditions.
- Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET): Specialized programs providing practical skills for employment in specific industries.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methods and procedures used in the study: research design, sample setting, study population, sample size calculation and sampling technique, research instrument, data collection procedure, statistical treatment of the data, and ethical clearance used for the analysis of the study.

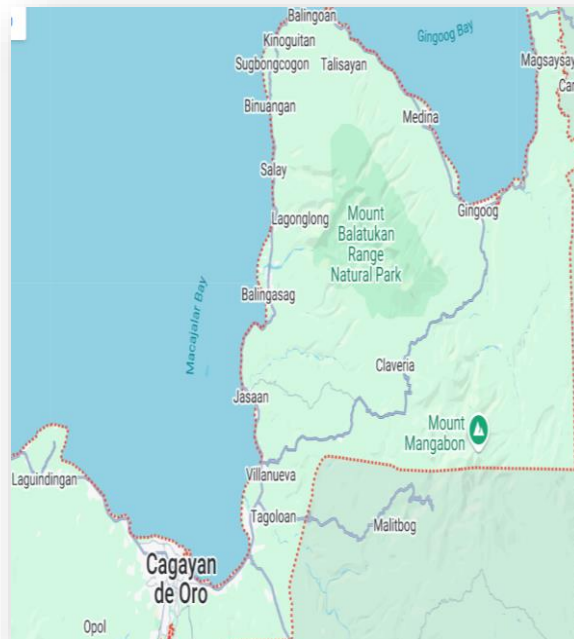
Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational design to describe and analyze the life challenges and opportunities of out-of-school youth (OSY) and their relationship to demographic profiles. Quantitative data were gathered through a structured survey and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean) and correlation tests.

- Independent Variables: Sex, age, civil status, employment status, family monthly income, number of siblings.
- Dependent Variables:
 - Life Challenges: Limited access to quality education, high dropout rate, skills development gaps, financial instability, poor mental health, gender inequality.
 - Life Opportunities: Expansion of ALS, TVET, scholarships, public-private partnerships, social welfare services, and skills-matching programs.

Study Setting

The research was conducted in Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, a first-class municipality located 28 km east of Cagayan de Oro City. Jasaan has 15 barangays, a population of about 57,055, and an economy driven by agriculture, fishing, trade, and industry (notably Philippine Sinter Corporation). It is also known for cultural heritage sites like the Immaculate Conception Church and natural attractions such as Sagpulon Falls and Agutayan Island. The municipality's blend of rural and industrial development makes it an ideal setting for studying OSY challenges and opportunities.



Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Misamis+Oriental/>

Figure 2. The Location Map of the Study

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were all one hundred sixty (160) out-of-school youth from the municipality of Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines, who were not enrolled in any formal educational institution at the time of the study. Specifically, they were residents of the barangays Luz Banzon, Kimaya, Aplaya, Solana, Bobuntugan, San Antonio, Jampason, Lower Jasaan, Upper Jasaan, San Isidro, Danao, and Corrales. The respondents were identified through a combination of ALS records, barangay registries, and referrals from community leaders and youth officers, ensuring inclusive representation regardless of prior ALS engagement.

Table A

Distribution of Respondents

Barangay	Respondents
A	14
B	15
C	10
D	15
E	17
F	16
G	13
H	18
I	13
J	9
K	11
M	9
Total	160

Sampling Technique

The study used universal sampling, including all out-of-school youth in Jasaan, Misamis Oriental for SY 2024–2025 who share common characteristics: youth status, residence in Jasaan, and non-enrollment in formal schooling.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire with three parts was used:

- Part I: Respondents' demographic profile (sex, age, civil status, employment status, family income, number of siblings).
- Part II: Researcher-adapted items on life challenges (limited access to education, dropout rate, skills development, financial instability, poor mental health, gender inequality) using a rating scale aligned with SDGs.
- Part III: Researcher-made items on life opportunities (ALS, TVET, scholarships, PPPs, social welfare services, skills-matching programs).

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through expert review by five specialists in education, social work, and youth development. Reliability was tested via pilot study with 30 respondents, yielding Cronbach's alpha values of 0.961–0.967, indicating excellent internal consistency across all variables.

Categorization of Variables and Systems of Scoring

To facilitate the interpretation and analysis of the data gathered, the system of scoring is as follows:

Part I. Respondents' Profile

Respondents' Profile was categorized according to:

Sex

Male

Female

Age

21-24 years old

15-20 years old

Civil Status

Single

Married

Widowed

Separated

Employment Status

Employed

Unemployed

Family Monthly Income

15,000 and above

12,000-14,000

8,000-11,000

5,000-7,000

Number of Siblings

7 and above

5-6

3-4

0-2

Part II. Life Challenges

Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.26 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Challenged
3	2.51 – 3.25	Agree	Challenged
2	1.76 – 2.50	Disagree	Slightly Challenged
1	1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Not Challenged

Part III. Life Opportunities

Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.26 – 4.00	At all Times	Very High
3	2.51 – 3.25	Most of the Time	High
2	1.76 – 2.50	Sometimes	Low
1	1.00 – 1.75	Never	Very Low

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured a recommendation from the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, PHINMA–Cagayan de Oro College, and obtained approval from the Municipal Mayor of Jasaan. Permission was also sought from barangay captains to identify respondents. Coordination with community leaders, ALS coordinators, and youth organizations facilitated survey distribution. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured. Clear instructions were provided to respondents.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) to summarize respondents' profiles and responses. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was applied to determine significant relationships between respondents' profiles, life challenges, and life opportunities.

Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the Local Government Unit. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw anytime. Confidentiality was maintained by using codes instead of names, and data were securely stored. No identifying information appeared in reports. Academic integrity was upheld through accurate reporting and proper citation. The study adhered to ethical standards to protect participants' rights and dignity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion on the respondents' challenges and opportunities in Jasaan, Misamis Oriental. The data that were gathered are presented in tabular form for better appreciation.

Results

Problem 1. What is the respondents' profile in terms of sex, age, civil status, employment status, family income and number of siblings?

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	22	13.75
Female	138	86.25
Total	160	100.00

Out of 160 respondents, 138 (86.25%) were female and 22 (13.75%) were male, indicating strong female representation. This suggests that women were more accessible or engaged in programs, possibly due to openness to social initiatives or greater vulnerability to issues under study. Consequently, findings may reflect more of the female OSY experience, highlighting gender-specific concerns such as household financial burdens and access to inclusive education (Reyes, 2020).

The low male participation may be due to involvement in informal work or limited engagement in community programs, underscoring the need for targeted strategies to reach male OSY. Gender imbalance reveals gaps in inclusivity, as current interventions may favor females while unintentionally excluding males. Addressing these disparities is essential for equitable youth development (Ramos, 2021).

Table 2**Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Age**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
21-24 years old	71	44.37
15-20 years old	89	55.62
Total	160	100.00

Of the 160 respondents, 89 (55.62%) were aged 15–20, while 71 (44.37%) were aged 21–24. The majority being in their mid-to-late teens suggests early school-leaving, likely due to financial hardship, lack of access to quality education, or family obligations. This age group remains eligible for reintegration through ALS or TVET, presenting strong potential for targeted interventions such as awareness campaigns and peer mentoring (Santos, 2021).

Older OSY were less represented, indicating reduced engagement due to employment or family responsibilities. Flexible, career-focused programs and psychosocial support are essential for this group (Delos Reyes, 2022). Age-sensitive planning is critical to address evolving needs and prevent long-term disengagement (Cruz, 2020). These findings highlight the urgency of early intervention and inclusive programs that cater to both younger and older OSY.

Table 3**Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Civil Status**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Single	49	30.62
Married	91	56.87
Widowed	9	5.62
Separated	11	6.87
Total	160	100.00

Among 160 respondents, 91 (56.87%) were married, indicating that early marriage is a major factor in school discontinuation. Household responsibilities, financial obligations, and child-rearing often take precedence over education, making formal schooling difficult. This underscores the need for community-based and alternative programs tailored to married youth (Reyes, 2020).

The lowest frequency was 11 (6.87%) separated respondents, suggesting either a small actual number or reluctance to disclose due to stigma. Separation often brings emotional strain and financial instability, creating barriers to education. Supportive interventions addressing these challenges are essential (Caab et al., 2024).

Overall, civil status strongly influences educational engagement. Married and separated OSY require targeted, flexible programs that consider their unique circumstances to promote reintegration and personal development.

Table 4**Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Employment Status**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	100	62.5
Unemployed	60	37.5
Total	160	100.00

Among 160 respondents, 100 (62.5%) were employed, indicating that most OSY work to support themselves and their families. Employment often takes priority over education, making flexible learning options essential to prevent long-term disengagement. Programs integrating work and study—such as modular classes and livelihood-linked training—are critical for this group (Bautista, 2025; DOLE, 2020). Many employed OSY work in informal or low-skilled jobs that provide immediate income but lack stability and growth. Without adaptable education systems, these youth remain trapped in a cycle where financial necessity outweighs academic advancement. Aligning education with their realities ensures not only survival but also upward mobility.

Table 5**Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Family Monthly Income**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
₱15,000 and above	11	6.87
₱12,000-14,000	19	11.87
₱8,000-11,000	38	23.75
₱5,000-7,000	92	57.5
Total	160	100.00

Among 160 respondents, 92 (57.5%) belonged to households earning ₱5,000–₱7,000 monthly, indicating that most OSY come from poor families. Economic hardship limits access to school supplies, transportation, and nutrition, forcing many youth to prioritize work over education (USAID, 2022). Poverty creates a cycle where short-term income needs outweigh long-term educational goals, leading to low-paying jobs with limited mobility.

The lowest frequency was 11 (6.87%) from families earning ₱15,000 and above, suggesting that higher-income households provide better access to educational resources and stability. These findings confirm that poverty is closely linked to school non-participation (FIES, 2021). Addressing financial barriers through scholarships, feeding programs, transportation subsidies, and livelihood assistance is essential to reduce OSY rates and promote equitable education.

Table 6**Distribution of Respondents' Profile in terms of Number of Siblings**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
7 and above	4	2.5

5-6	19	11.87
3-4	101	63.12
0-2	36	22.5
Total	160	100.00

Among 160 respondents, **101 (63.12%) belonged to families with 3–4 siblings**, indicating that moderately sized households still experience financial strain. Limited resources often force parents to prioritize basic needs over education, leading some children to drop out or work to support the family. Larger families dilute resources and parental attention, increasing vulnerability to school discontinuation (Bansagan & Panganiban, 2023).

The lowest frequency was **4 (2.5%) from families with 7 or more siblings**, suggesting that while large families are less common, they face even greater challenges in sustaining education. PSA (2022, 2024) reports that families with more than four children are more prone to financial strain, often requiring older siblings to leave school for caregiving or income generation. These findings underscore the need for family-inclusive policies and targeted interventions—such as scholarships, feeding programs, and livelihood assistance—to ensure equitable educational access regardless of household size.

Problem 2. What is the respondents’ level of life challenges based on limited access to quality education, high dropout rate, skills development, financial instability, poor mental health and gender inequality?

Table 7

Summary of the Respondents’ Level of Life Challenges

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Limited Access to Quality Education	3.25	0.89	Challenged
High Dropout Rates	3.23	0.75	Challenged
Skills Development	3.25	0.98	Challenged
Financial Instability	3.22	0.86	Challenged
Poor Mental Health	3.26	0.77	Highly Challenged
Gender Inequality	3.18	0.66	Challenged
Overall	3.34	0.82	Highly Challenged

Legend: 3.26-4.00 – Strongly Agree/Highly Challenged 1.76 – 2.50 – Disagree/Slightly Challenged
 2.51 – 3.25 – Agree/Challenge 1.00 – 1.75 – Strongly Disagree/Not Challenged

The study examined six major challenges: limited access to quality education, high dropout rates, skills development gaps, financial instability, poor mental health, and gender inequality. The overall mean

score of 3.34 (SD = 0.82), interpreted as Highly Challenged, indicates that respondents face significant barriers to learning and well-being. These findings reflect systemic issues worsened by pandemic disruptions, supporting Santos et al. (2021) on the impact of remote learning limitations and emotional distress.

Poor Mental Health ranked highest (M = 3.26, SD = 0.77), showing its critical influence on participation and performance. This underscores the need for accessible counseling, mental health literacy, and stigma-reduction programs, consistent with WHO (2020) and Maravilla & Tan (2021).

Gender Inequality had the lowest mean (M = 3.18, SD = 0.66) but remains a relevant challenge linked to cultural biases and unequal opportunities, echoing findings from the Global Education Monitoring Team (2023) and Smith & Johnson (2022).

Overall, OSY experience substantial challenges, with mental health as the most pressing concern and gender inequality requiring sustained attention. These results call for comprehensive, equity-driven strategies to promote resilience and inclusive education.

Problem 3. What is the respondents' level of life opportunities with regard to expansion of alternative learning systems, technical vocational education and training program, scholarship and sponsorship, public and-private partnerships, social welfare services and skills-matching programs?

Table 8

Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Life Opportunities

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Expansion of Alternative Learning Systems	3.28	0.77	Very High
Technical Vocational Education and Training	3.22	0.85	High
Scholarships and Sponsorship	3.07	0.82	High
Public-Private Partnerships	3.35	0.86	Very High
Social Welfare Services	3.27	0.87	Very High
Skills-Matching Programs	3.21	0.82	High
Overall	3.23	0.83	High
Legend: 3.26-4.00 – At All Times/Very High High 1.76 – 2.50 – Sometimes/Low 2.51 – 3.25 – Most of the Time/High 1.00 – 1.75 – Never/Very low			

Table 8 shows that respondents perceived a **high level of life opportunities** (overall mean = 3.23, SD = 0.83). This indicates a generally positive view of available educational and social development programs, though access and engagement varied across different areas.

Respondents recognized opportunities such as technical-vocational training, public-private partnerships, and alternative learning systems as particularly beneficial for skill development and employability. However, scholarships, sponsorships, and social welfare services were less consistently accessed, suggesting gaps in awareness or availability. These patterns reflect both strengths in program provision and the need for improved outreach to ensure equitable access.

Consistent with DepEd (2020), findings show that many out-of-school youth value opportunities that support reintegration and personal growth. Among all variables, Public-Private Partnerships had the highest mean (3.35, SD = 0.86), indicating strong confidence in government–private sector collaborations that expand educational services—supported by PPP Center (2022) initiatives such as large-scale classroom construction.

Scholarships and Sponsorships, while receiving the lowest mean (3.07, SD = 0.82), were still viewed as highly accessible and beneficial, especially for reducing financial barriers for marginalized groups.

Other opportunities, including alternative learning pathways, social welfare services, and skills-matching programs, were also rated positively. Overall, respondents perceived opportunities as widely available, with Public-Private Partnerships seen as the strongest and scholarships remaining essential for inclusive access.

Problem 4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' challenges and each of their profiles?

Table 9

Result of the Test on the Relationship between the Respondents' Life Challenges and each of their Profile

Legend: S- Significant

NS- Not Significant

All demographic variables—sex, age, civil status, employment status, family income, and number of siblings—showed significant correlations with life challenges, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis.

- Sex: Male and female youth experience challenges differently due to gender roles and unequal

Respondents' Profile		Life Challenges					Overall
		Limited Access to Quality Education	High Dropout Rate	Financial Instability	Poor Mental Health	Gender Inequality	
Sex	r-value	0.5424	0.9560	0.9857	0.5443	0.8043	0.6387
	p-value	0.0431	0.0208	0.0108	0.0232	0.0109	0.0181
		S	S	S	S	S	S
Age	R=value	0.5443	0.8537	0.9543	0.6224	0.9012	0.6459
	p-value	0.0431	0.0315	0.0346	0.0423	0.0241	0.0292
		S	S	S	S	S	S
Civil Status	r-value	0.5272	0.9476	0.6427	0.9657	0.5982	0.6135
	p-value	0.0342	0.0326	0.0209	0.0148	0.0153	0.0196
		S	S	S	S	S	S
Employment Status	Value	0.8102	0.8731	0.9045	0.6347	0.9124	0.6891
	p-value	0.0321	0.0422	0.0172	0.0480	0.0263	0.0367
		S	S	S	S	S	S
Family Monthly Income	r-value	0.8441	0.9542	0.8734	0.6529	0.8614	0.6976
	p-value	0.0244	0.0214	0.0243	0.0361	0.0125	0.0563
		S	S	S	S	S	S
No. of Siblings	r-value	0.6342	0.6238	0.9635	0.8330	0.9652	0.6699
	p-value	0.0421	0.0224	0.0343	0.0153	0.0219	0.0226
		S	S	S	S	S	S

opportunities, requiring gender-responsive programs (UNESCO, 2020).

- Age: Older youth face more complex barriers linked to prolonged detachment and financial responsibilities, while younger youth retain more support (Delos Reyes, 2022).
- Civil Status: Married or caregiving youth encounter compounded challenges, emphasizing the need for flexible programs (Cruz, 2020).
- Employment Status: Working youth struggle with time constraints; unemployed youth face financial stress (Orbeta & Corpus, 2022).
- Family Income: Low-income youth experience greater educational and mental health challenges, confirming economic disadvantage as a key factor (Garcia, 2021).



- Number of Siblings: Larger families dilute resources and increase caregiving burdens, hindering school participation (Bautista et al., 2025; PSA, 2022).

Conclusion: All profile variables significantly influence life challenges, underscoring the need for targeted, inclusive, and equity-driven interventions.

Problem 5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' life opportunities and each of their profile?

Table 10

Result of the Test on the Relationship between the Respondents'

Life Opportunities and each of their Profile

Opportunities Among Out-of-School Youth								
Profile		Expansi on of alternati ve learning systems	Techni cal Vocati oal Educat ion and Trainin g	Scholars hips and Sponsor ship	Public- Private Partners hips	Socia l Welfa re Servi ces	Skills- Match ing Progra ms	Overall 1
Sex	r- value	0.7434	0.9561	0.8527	0.5423	0.813	0.7461	0.7756
	p- value	0.0332	0.0216	0.0108	0.0231	0.0129	0.0432	0.0241
		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Age	r- Value	0.5324	0.8543	0.9563	0.6224	0.9732	0.9321	0.8117
	p- value	0.0431	0.0314	0.0342	0.0423	0.0221	0.0113	0.0307
		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Civil Status	r- value	0.5274	0.9474		0.6357	0.9382	0.6536	0.7442
	p- value	0.0332	0.0332	0.7632	0.0148	0.0243	0.0352	0.0272
		S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Employment Status	r- Value		0.8721	0.9461	0.6327	0.9144	0.6442	0.8036
	p- value	0.8124	0.0442	0.0367	0.0482	0.0262	0.0231	0.0350
		0.0321	S	S	S	S	S	S
Family Monthly Income	r- value		0.8531	0.8534	0.6539	0.8613	0.6471	0.7857
	p- value	0.8454	0.0234	0.0231	0.0362	0.0123	0.0142	0.0215
		0.0201	S	S	S	S	S	S
No. of Siblings	r- value	0.6451	0.6452	0.6732	0.8372	0.9632	0.6674	0.7385
	p- value	0.0441	0.0232	0.0326	0.0253	0.0229	0.0473	0.0325
		S	S	S	S	S	S	S

Legend: S- Significant

NS- Not Significant

All profile variables—sex, age, civil status, employment status, family income, and number of siblings—showed significant correlations with life opportunities, rejecting the null hypothesis.

- Sex: Gender roles shape access; males often join technical programs, while females face household expectations. Inclusive, gender-responsive interventions are needed (UNESCO, 2024).
- Age: Younger youth benefit from ALS, while older youth prefer career-focused training and job placement. Tailored programs are essential.
- Civil Status: Married youth prioritize livelihood programs; single youth have more flexibility for schooling (Bautista et al., 2023; Lagyab & Lumapenet, 2024).
- Employment Status: Employed youth favor short-term vocational training; unemployed youth rely on scholarships and aid.
- Family Income: Low-income youth depend on government support; higher-income youth access private or digital training (Medina, 2021).
- Number of Siblings: Larger families increase reliance on scholarships and welfare services due to resource constraints (Bansagan & Panganiban, 2023).

Conclusion: Demographic factors significantly influence access to opportunities, highlighting the need for inclusive, flexible, and equity-driven programs.

Discussion

The study found that all demographic factors—sex, age, civil status, employment status, income, and number of siblings—were significantly related to the life challenges and opportunities of out-of-school youth. Challenges such as limited access to quality education, skills gaps, financial strain, poor mental health, and gender inequality were shaped by these profiles. Opportunities such as public-private partnerships, scholarships, technical training, and social welfare services were generally viewed positively, with public-private partnerships rated highest.

Overall, the findings highlight how personal and socio-demographic factors influence both the difficulties youth encounter and the opportunities available to them. Targeted, inclusive, and context-sensitive interventions are needed to support diverse youth circumstances.

Recommendations

Support for Widowed and Unemployed Out-of-School Youth

The local government should provide job opportunities, skills training aligned with local labor needs, and social services. Counseling and psychosocial support must also be offered to help widowed youth cope with emotional and social challenges.

Address Gender Inequality in Access to Opportunities

Barangay officials, schools, and funding agencies should strengthen gender-sensitive scholarship programs to ensure fair access for all. Awareness campaigns and policies promoting inclusivity should be implemented to create equal learning opportunities.

Strengthen Scholarship and Sponsorship Programs

The Department of Education and TESDA should enhance scholarship initiatives, including the Training for Work Scholarship Program. Increased funding, simplified application processes, and wider information dissemination can help reduce financial barriers for out-of-school youth.

Alleviate Financial Instability Among Youth

LGUs and community youth organizations should expand scholarships, financial aid, livelihood training, and income-generating programs. Easier access and improved awareness can help reduce financial burdens and support educational and vocational engagement.

Expand Life Opportunities for Youth Development

Programs should focus on increasing opportunities that enhance skills, education access, and overall personal and professional growth for out-of-school youth.

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