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Challenges Among Out - of - School Youth in Select Municipalities in Misamis Oriental

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ABSTRACT

Out-of-school youth (OSY) face significant challenges such as poverty, low quality of life, and limited access to education and employment, making it essential to understand their conditions to develop effective support and protection programs. The main purpose of the study was to determine the challenges among Out - of - School Youth in select municipalities of Misamis Oriental for the School Year 2025-2026. Specifically, this aimed to describe the respondents' profile; find out the respondents' level of challenges and determine the significant relationship between the respondents' challenges and each of their profiles. A descriptive-correlational design was used and the respondents of the study are the 150 OSY from Jasaan, Villanueva, and Tagoloan. A patterned, modified questionnaire and purposive sampling were used. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, while Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (r) was used for the relationship between the variables. Findings revealed that most of the respondents were 21–25 years old, female, high school graduates, and the family income was P 9,999 and below. As to the respondents' level of challenges, low quality of life was the highest, with behavioral problems as the lowest. Hence, there was a significant relationship between the respondents' challenges and their profile on the highest educational attainment and family monthly income, but not significant on age and sex. It is concluded that the challenges faced by OSY were the low quality of life, which requires immediate support and appropriate enforcement. Consequently, it is recommended that educational institutions, LGU DSWD, and the ALS strengthen educational support programs to assist OSY with low educational attainment and provide livelihood assistance to those who belong to low- income families.

INTRODUCTION

The need to identify the challenges experienced by out-of-school youth is crucial to understand the reasons they drop out of school and to highlight the risks, thereby pushing for legal protection, monitoring, and safer alternatives. Understanding these challenges enables solutions that prevent future generations from facing the same fate and supports the development of effective strategies to help gain access to education and employment. Out-of-school youth often face many connected problems that make daily life difficult. They usually struggle with low quality of life, lack of basic skills, and behavior challenges that affect how they grow and fit into society. Without access to education, many of them are forced to work in unsafe and exploitative environments, where they are at risk of physical, emotional, and social harm.

The Philippine law, Republic Act No. 7610, was created to protect children from abuse, exploitation, and dangerous work. However, despite this protection, many out-of-school youth still end up in harmful jobs because of poverty, limited education, and few opportunities. Studying their real-life experiences helps reveal the gap between what the law promises and what these young people actually face, and it helps identify better ways to support and protect them.

Education is a basic right and an important part of both personal and national development. Yet, many young

people in the Philippines leave school early, especially in poor communities where families struggle financially and access to quality education is limited. While more students are enrolling in school, dropout rates remain high. Reports from the Department of Education and Child Hope Philippines (2024) show that lack of money and limited family support are major reasons why students stop going to school.

Out-of-school youth often deal with financial problems, lack of learning resources, and limited opportunities. These challenges can lead to lower life satisfaction, fewer job options, and a higher risk of harmful behavior. Many come from low-income families and may also face responsibilities like early marriage or caring for children. Peer influence, cultural expectations, and low interest in school can also push them to drop out. Overall, out-of-school youth face many barriers that affect their happiness, safety, and future. These challenges show the need for stronger support systems, better access to education, and programs that help them build skills and create better opportunities for their lives.

The complex relationship between OSY characteristics and their sense of fulfillment is explored in this study.

Researching low quality of life is important because it sheds light on how illnesses, therapies, and other aspects of life affect people's well-being. Better healthcare interventions, resource allocation, and the creation of

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policies that satisfy societal demands relating to quality of life are made possible by this knowledge. Lack of social and life skills is critical since they affect mental health, academic achievement, and general well-being and are essential for both professional and personal growth. Communities and people may overcome obstacles, encourage constructive behavior, and build stronger bonds by realizing the importance of life skills education. Further, the researcher believes that there is a need to study behavioral issues, dangerous workplaces, and exploitation experiences for a number of reasons. It makes it possible to establish efficient treatments to safeguard employees by providing a deeper understanding of the intricate interactions among employment, health, and well-being. Making workplaces safer, healthier, and fairer requires an understanding of how these factors affect human behavior, mental and physical health, and productivity. There is a need for research that would provide policies and programs to meet the unique requirements of school youth in their lived experiences. This ultimately improves their well-being and helps create a more just society. It is for this reason that this study is proposed. It seeks to explore the out-of-school youth profile and their challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents literature and related studies from books, articles, periodicals, journals, and other sources that served as the basis for the present study. It includes the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, and family monthly income, and the challenges of out - of- school youth that also include low quality of life, lack of life and social skills, behavioral problems, and a work environment that comprises the physical, sexual, and economically exploitative work.

Challenges of Out - of - School Youth

Children impacted by the conflict now have better access to education thanks to the UNICEF program. In 2021, more than 18,000 students were given temporary classrooms so they could keep going to school despite the fighting in their communities. The World Bank has also supported the Philippine education system by providing financial help.

Moreover, the lack of facilities in schools can also contribute to the kind of education the children will have in school. Even the outside noise is enough for the children to be disturbed in their focus. Yet, the biggest consideration is the textbook and instructional materials to be used by the teachers. This enhances learning processes.

Low Quality of Life

The social, behavioral, environmental, and policy sciences are the foundations of the field of quality-of-life studies. It is a subset of the social indicator's movement, which had its start in the 1960s in sociology and economics. The idea that social well-being cannot be limited to only

economic measures was contested by this movement (Uysal *et al.*, 2025).

According to Ramón-Arbués *et al.* (2022), a complex and multidimensional notion, quality of life (QOL) has been used to analyze a variety of aspects of people's lives, such as their living conditions, social interactions, financial independence, psychological and physical well-being, and personal views. Participants who reported moderate amounts of physical activity or who had a healthy body weight scored higher on the physical health area of QOL. In addition to being negatively correlated with screen time, higher scores in the social relationships' domain of QOL were also directly connected with smoking, alcohol consumption, and low body weight. Those who lived alone or were overweight had poorer psychological domain QOL.

Children in the Philippines may be forced to put employment before school since many families find it difficult to provide for their basic needs. Low-income students may feel pressured to drop out of school in order to make ends meet, frequently taking on occupations that conflict with their academic schedules. In addition to having an effect on the individual student, this cycle of poverty also keeps larger socioeconomic gaps in communities alive. During crucial transitional times like going from middle school to high school, many students express feeling cut off from their teachers and the curriculum. Fostering student retention requires making the learning environment more stimulating and encouraging. The effects of school dropout are not limited to the individual; they have a substantial impact on young people and society at large (Child Hope, 2024).

Lack of Life and Social Skills

Graduates living in cities showed stronger skills like self-control, self-awareness, and positive views about their future compared to those in provincial areas. Students from vocational and preparatory schools also reported higher satisfaction with their experiences. Those who joined a national follow-up program showed improvement in all areas of social and emotional learning (Helms *et al.* (2021).

Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) helps reduce inequality and gives young people and adults the tools to build better schools and safer, healthier, and more fair communities, as noted by Niemi (2020). These include the core competencies of self-awareness, which is the ability to identify one's emotions and evaluate one's strengths and weaknesses; self-management, which is the ability to control one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors; social awareness, which is the understanding of the culture, beliefs, and feelings of others; relationship skills, which is the ability to work with peers and build meaningful relationships; and responsible decision making.

Behavioral Problem

The term behavior is difficult to define and can be defined in a variety of ways. In general, behavior refers

to any action or function a person performs in any given situation. It is clear that students' misbehaviors impede the efficiency and effectiveness of instruction as well as the learning of both students and their peers. Numerous studies have looked at the reasons behind this disruptive behavior in order to develop intervention techniques because such an environment has an impact on both the academic performance of the students and the general performance and efficiency of the teachers (Jacob & Aloka, 2023).

Typically, issues with behaviors include tardiness, skipping class, bullying, fighting, and stealing. Attack and destruction of the school prefects, taunts directed against teachers, smoking, not wearing uniforms, using profanity in class, not completing assignments, disturbing the classroom, and unethical behavior. The home environment, broken families, poor parent-teacher interactions, social media use, unsupervised mobile and TV use, classroom and school environments, teacher-centered learning, and social connections and friends both inside and outside of school are some of the numerous ways students misbehave in the classroom (Wo & Akinola, 2020).

Healthy living situations in which parents and children get along well would also help to address the issue of misconduct (Zhu & Shek, 2021). A healthy home setting where kids get along well with their parents and witness positive parent-child relationships might not have as many behavioral issues. Additionally, they believe that effective parenting may address their children's behavioral issues. Teenagers' well-being can also be significantly influenced by the quality of the relationship between parents and their children's progress.

Experienced Hazardous Work Environment

P.D. on March 13, 1973. R.A. was revised by No. 148; 679, The Law on the Labor of Women and Children. The P.D. 148 simplified the intricate R.A. provisions. The 679, which gave ambiguous age restrictions for several kinds of activities. The new law states that P.D. 148, "no child below 14 years of age shall be employed by any employer, except where the child works directly under the sole responsibility of his parent or guardian, involving activities which are not hazardous in nature and which do not in any way interfere with his schooling." According to the same Act, "any person between 14 and 18 years of age may be employed in any non-hazardous undertaking." The late nineteenth-century social reform movements were largely responsible for the emergence of laws that limited the employment of minors. Despite the long-held belief that labor was necessary for a child's upbringing, the rise of industrialism progressively altered attitudes toward and the nature of employment. It was becoming clear that children were being assigned the unhealthiest jobs in factories, which was physically damaging to them. Demands for reform resulted from growing knowledge of the exploitation and abuse that come with child labor. The two movements grew together between 1830 and

1930, with pressure for mandatory schooling and child labor laws growing at the same time.

When Act No. 3071, "An Act to Regulate the Employment of Women and Children in Shops, Factories, Industrial, Agricultural and Mercantile Establishments, and Other Place of Labor in the Philippine Islands, to Provide Penalties for Violations Hereof and for Other Purposes," was passed into law on March 16, 1923, during the American Regime, the Philippines' concern for the predicament of working children began. In 1925, this Act was put into effect by the Women and Child Labour Section of the Inspection Division of the then-Bureau of Labour.

On June 18, Republic Act No. 2714 was passed, creating the Bureau of Women and Minors under the Department of Labor. This bureau took over the role of enforcing laws related to women and child labor. In 1987, it was later renamed the Bureau of Women and Young Workers. The main goal of this office was to ensure fair job opportunities, safe working environments, and proper enforcement of labor laws for women and young people. It was also given the task of conducting studies and recommending policies to improve working conditions for these groups.

One month after the Labor Code was enacted, another important law was passed on December 10, 1974. This was Presidential Decree No. 603, also known as the Child and Youth Welfare Code, which further strengthened the country's commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of children and young people.

The new law codified many measures for the welfare of all children and went into force on June 5, 1975. P.D. However, this provision should be read in conjunction with the Labour Code, which permits the employment of children under the age of 15 only if under the direct and sole responsibility of their parents or guardians. Section 603 permits the employment of children under the age of 16 for "light work which is not harmful to their safety, health or normal development and which is not prejudicial to their studies."

On June 17, 1992, in accordance with the U.N. The government passed R.A. CRC. 7610, "An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination, Providing Penalties for Its Violation and For Other Purposes". However, R.A. 7610 received praise for its novel measures protecting children in particularly trying situations; it received harsh criticism for its clauses on working children, which drastically altered the Philippine law's ban on child labor.

The current state policies and legislation governing the preservation and advancement of the rights of child workers are still dispersed among the many laws of the nation, even after a number of revisions to the previous laws on child labor. This chapter makes an effort to explain each of these regulations in a way that will help the reader comprehend the legal safeguards afforded to the nation's underage laborers experiencing hazardous work.

Physical

The International Labor Organization emphasizes that hazardous work for children can cause severe physical and psychological injuries, as well as death. Slavery and economic or sexual exploitation may result from it. Additionally, it restricts children's fundamental rights by denying them access to healthcare and education in almost all cases

A study by Weldeyesus and Alemu (2023) they found that child labor is still common and often begins at a very young age. Lot of children are exposed to dangerous and harmful working conditions. The findings of the study suggest that children from households with low and unstable incomes, as well as those living in difficult conditions, are more likely to face greater risks in their work environments. In contrast, families with higher levels of education, better access to transportation, and wider community resources were better able to protect their children from harm. These results highlight the importance of promoting age-appropriate employment opportunities, increasing community awareness about the risks of child labor, and strengthening the involvement of local leaders and organizations in providing meaningful support. The study showed that factors such as low household income, unstable sources of income, and difficult living conditions increase the risks children face at work. On the positive side, families with better education, access to transportation, and more resources were able to reduce the level of harm their children experienced. The researchers highlighted the need for age-appropriate job opportunities, community education about the dangers of child labor, and stronger support from local leaders and organizations.

According to UNICEF (2020), millions of families around the world they are struggle when it comes in financial and this often puts children at risk. At the start of 2020, nearly 160 million children were involved in child labor, which means about one in every ten children globally. Almost half of these children were working in dangerous jobs that threaten their health and development. Children are often pushed into labor because their families are facing poverty, sudden illness of a caregiver, or the loss of the main source of income. These situations force families to make difficult choices that can affect a child's safety and future. The repercussions are severe. Child labor can cause severe physical and psychological injuries, as well as death.

Sexual

The International Labor Organization emphasizes that child labor can cause severe physical and psychological injuries, as well as death. Labor laws are meant to make sure all workers are treated fairly and with respect. These rules protect people from being treated unfairly because of their gender, race, religion, or disability. Government workers play a key role in protecting children because they often see cases of child labor in their communities first. Their knowledge of the law helps keep children safe and ensures their rights are protected.

Weldeyesus and Alemu (2023) found that child labor is still common and often starts at a young age. Many children work in unsafe and harmful conditions, especially when their families struggle with low or unstable income. Families with better education and access to basic services, like transportation, are more able to protect their children from these risks. The study suggests the need for safe, age-appropriate work options, community awareness about the dangers of child labor, and stronger support from local leaders and organizations.

UNICEF (2020) reports that many families around the world face serious financial problems, which can put children at risk. In 2020, about 160 million children were involved in child labor, or nearly one in ten children globally. Almost half of them worked in dangerous jobs that threatened their health and growth. Children often work because their families are poor, a caregiver becomes sick, or the main source of income is lost, forcing families to make hard choices that affect a child's safety and future.

Economically Exploitative Work

The primary causes of hazardous work to children, as determined by Fors (2024), can be roughly classified as either macroeconomic, microeconomic, or other household factors. While economic growth and globalization are macroeconomic determinants, household poverty, market inefficiencies, and the influence of education on outcomes are microeconomic issues. Altruism and cultural norms are two more pertinent parental and household components that are covered. Following that, the study gives a summary of laws, programs to reduce poverty, and educational opportunities that are intended to prevent child labor.

A number of issues have been brought up regarding the usage of child labor in Ghana's fishing industry. Some contend that child labor should be outlawed because it puts children's lives in danger, while others contend that using children for agricultural labor helps them grow socioeconomically. About 104 out of 242 students participated in various fishery activities, such as sorting, selling, dressing, and smoking fish, according to Kwadzo and Annan's (2022) study, which aimed to evaluate the nature of child labor in Ghana and investigate its effects on the academic outcomes of junior high school students in the Elmina community in the Central Region of Ghana. On average, the students were found to be working 3.3 days a week for 12.3 hours.

Munai is a municipality located in Lanao del Norte, Philippines. It is predominantly rural and known for its diverse cultural heritage, primarily inhabited by the Maranao ethnic group. According to the 2020 census, Munai has a population of approximately 35,020 people. The area is characterized by rolling hills, agricultural lands, and several barangays, each contributing to the municipality's socio-economic activities. Agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood, with many residents engaged in farming and related activities.

Munai's educational infrastructure consists of various

public elementary and secondary schools. These schools face challenges typical of rural settings, including limited access to modern educational resources, inadequate infrastructure, and occasional disruptions due to socio-political factors. Despite these challenges, educators and the community have a strong commitment to providing quality education.

Chudgar *et al.*, (2022) discovered significant negative correlations between reading and numeracy fundamental skills and involvement in hazardous child labor. Additionally, it discovered a negative correlation between economic labor participation and core reading skills. Lastly, the study discovered a negative correlation between core skills and heavy household chores. It talks about the ramifications of these findings, which present a very alarming image of the difficulties the world community has in ensuring that every child learns the fundamentals and more. To better understand the detrimental effects of child labor on foundational learning and the possible policy solutions to alleviate these consequences, it is essential to systematically define, document, and measure child labor.

Theoretical Framework

This study on the challenges encountered by out-of-school youth is anchored on Gudmonson and Danes (2011) Family Socialization Theory, which describes how family interactions teach people, especially young people values, attitudes, and behaviors. This theory emphasizes that families serve as the primary socializing agents who shape the values, behaviors, and coping mechanisms of children. According to this theory, the family's influence extends beyond childhood and has long-term implications for how individuals handle life challenges, make decisions, and respond to opportunities. In the context of out-of-school youth, many of the difficulties they face, such as financial struggles, lack of parental support, exposure to hazardous work environments, or vulnerability to negative peer influence, can be traced back to the quality and patterns of family socialization.

Out-of-school youth who grew up in families with limited resources or inconsistent parental guidance may develop coping strategies that prioritize immediate survival over long-term educational attainment. This idea supports the view that families play a major role in shaping the paths young people take in life. Families that value education, open communication, and resilience often help their children stay motivated to continue school, even when they face difficulties. On the other hand, when family support is weak, young people may be more likely to lose interest in school and eventually drop out. Using Family Socialization Theory, this study shows that the problems faced by out-of-school youth are not only personal or social issues but are also strongly connected to their family environment. By understanding how families influence young people, teachers, policymakers, and social workers can create programs that strengthen family support. This can help reduce dropout rates and teach young people healthier ways to cope with challenges.

This perspective also explains that young people learn their values, attitudes, and life choices mainly at home. Their views about education, money, and responsibility are shaped by their family. For out-of-school youth, decisions to leave school are often linked to family situations, such as home relationships, parents' level of education, and financial problems. For example, a young person may not be supported or encouraged to pursue further education if they are raised in a household that does not place a high value on education, or if their parents are not well educated or are struggling financially. In a similar vein, a young person may feel abandoned or uninspired and ultimately decide to drop out of school if there is a lack of open communication and emotional support in the family.

Using this approach, the study intends to investigate how family-related elements, such as parenting style, communication, values, and socioeconomic status, play a major part in the difficulties faced by youth who are not enrolled in school. Developing more successful family-based interventions, community initiatives, and policies that support juvenile growth and re-engagement in education can be made easier with an understanding of these components. The difficulties that out-of-school youth (OSY) encounter in a few localities in Misamis Oriental, the Philippines, are investigated in this study. According to studies, a substantial number of OSY come from low-income, large households with parents with little education, which may make it difficult for them to support their children's academic endeavors. Furthermore, it has been determined that a lack of parental involvement and support contributes to school dropout rates.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the idea that the challenges faced by out-of-school youth can be influenced by their profile, such as age, sex, highest educational attainment, and family monthly income. These factors are considered as potential influences on the types and severity of challenges experienced by OSY. On the other hand, the dependent variables in this study refer to the challenges encountered by OSY, which include low quality of life, lack of life skills and social skills, behavioral problems, and exposure to hazardous work environments. Hazardous work experiences among out-of-school youth can be grouped into physical, sexual, and economic exploitation. Some young people are more likely to face serious challenges because of their personal and family situations.

Age plays an important role in the kind of difficulties they experience. Younger youth may make poor decisions because they lack guidance and life skills. Older youth often feel strong pressure to earn money, which can push them into unsafe jobs or long-term poverty. This pressure can lead to stress, emotional struggles, and behavior problems. Gender also affects the challenges youth face. Boys are more likely to be placed in physically demanding and risky jobs, which can result in injuries and behavior

issues. Girls are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and may face social limits that affect their confidence and social development. Expectations linked to gender roles also influence how young people cope with being out of school.

The level of education a young person has reached is closely linked to the problems they encounter. Those with lower education often struggle to find safe and decent work, earn enough income, and understand their rights. This makes them more vulnerable to poverty and exploitation. They may also lack important life and social skills that are usually learned in school. On the other hand, those who reached higher levels of education tend to have more confidence, better problem-solving skills, and greater ability to handle life's challenges. Low family income is one of the strongest reasons why young people leave school. Financial hardship often forces them to work, sometimes in unsafe or exploitative conditions. It also limits their access to support systems and opportunities for personal growth, which can lead to stress, negative behavior, and poor life skills.

By looking at these factors, this study aims to better understand the situation of out-of-school youth in selected municipalities in Misamis Oriental and to show the need for focused programs and support that address their specific needs and living conditions.

This study assumes that the challenges faced by out-of-school youth have an impact to their profile on age, sex, family income, and educational attainment. It is believed that low family income is one of the primary causes of school dropout, limited opportunities, and poor life skills. These factors, which include low quality of life, lack of life and social skills, behavioral problems, and exposure to hazardous working conditions, are generally believed to have an effect on OSY's difficulties.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the challenges among out - of - school youth in select municipalities of 2nd Legislative District in Misamis Oriental for the School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' level of challenges based on low quality of life, lack of life and social skills, behavioral problems, and experience in a hazardous work environment on physical, sexual and economically exploitative work?

2. Is there a significant relationship between the respondent's challenges and their profile?

Scope and Limitations

The study focused on determining the challenges among out - of - school youth in select municipalities in Misamis Oriental during the School Year 2025-2026.

The respondents were one hundred fifty (150) out-of-school youth in the aforesaid municipalities and division. The independent variables are limited to the respondent's profile in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, and

family monthly income. Further, the dependent variables are also limited to the challenges of school youth based on low quality of life, lack of life skills and social skills, behavioral problems, and experience in a hazardous work environment, such as physical, sexual, and economically exploitative work. This research study was conducted among the out - of - school youth of the Municipality of Jasaan, Villanueva, and Tagoloan, which are represented in the 2nd Legislative District in Misamis Oriental.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlation method of research to investigate the challenges among out-of-school youth in select municipalities in Misamis Oriental. The descriptive research is ideal in gathering detailed, factual information; the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intent of this investigation.

According to Bhandari (2021), a correlation research design investigates the relationship between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. A correlation reflects the strength and direction of the relationships between two or more variables. The direction can be either positive or negative.

This research design of the study is appropriate because it determined the challenges experienced among the Out – of School Youth in the 2nd Legislative District in Misamis Oriental and the degree of correlations between the variables of the study.

Research Setting

This study was conducted among out-of-school youth in select municipalities in Jasaan, Villanueva, and Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental. The Philippine province of Misamis Oriental contains the municipality of Jasaan, also known as the Municipality of Jasaan, Cebuano: Lungsod sa Jasaan; Tagalog: Bayan ng Jasaan. It has 57,055 residents, according to the 2020 census. It is roughly 28 kilometers, 17 miles east of Cagayan de Oro, the country's capital. In addition to Macajalar Bay to the west, it shares boundaries with the municipalities of Villanueva, Claveria, and Balingasag. Its main rivers, Cabulig, Dumagooc, and Mandangisiao, as well as its beautiful vegetation, are able to survive despite the fact that the majority of its territory is rocky. Politically, Jasaan is divided into 15 barangays, each of which has puroks and, in some cases, sitios.

Seven of the barangays are upland: Upper Jasaan, Corrales, San Isidro, Natubo, Danao, San Nicolas, and Ignacio S. Cruz, while eight are coastal: Aplaya, Solana, Luz Banzon, Kimaya, Lower Jasaan, Bobuntugan, Jampason, and San Antonio. With 57,055 residents, Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, has a population density of 740 people per square kilometer, or 1,900 people per square mile, according to the 2020 census. It has 45,310 residents, of whom about 20% reside in the urban center. The majority of the population consists of descendants of people who arrived in the area in the middle of the 1800s.

Most of them are consanguineous and speak a distinctive dialect of Cebuano called Jasaanon, but they can also comprehend and speak Tagalog/Filipino and the regular Cebuano Northern Mindanao dialect. Binukid, Subanen, Higaonon, Hiligaynon, Ilocano and Kapampangan are the other languages variably spoken in the said municipality. Humans rely on cattle, cattle, and coconuts. Vegetables and corn, among other agricultural staples, were scarce. Through the public education system, a few national government agencies, and the local government unit, the government predominantly provided employment. The majority of trading and merchandising took place in Ubos, which is now Lower Jasaan, along a section that ended at the public market. When power was introduced in the late 1960s, Jasaan gradually transformed into an industrial community.

In Nahalinan, a community in Lower Jasaan, Resins Incorporated and Philippine Iron Construction and Marine Works (PICMW) set up shop. In the 1970s, another industrial facility, the Pilipinas Kao, was built at Luz Banzon. In Aplaya, a National Power Corporation substation has been set up. Plumb infrastructure in the municipality of Jasaan improved when pavement and widening of the national highway that extends the whole of Northern Mindanao were completed in the 1970s. At the turn of the millennium, Jasaan has gradually metamorphosed into a resort town. Entrepreneurs have capitalized on the abundance of its spring water sources. The town has spring resorts which draw visitors from neighboring areas.

The Magahats, the original inhabitants of what is now Villanueva, Misamis Oriental, named the area “Bongloy” after three large Bongloy trees that once stood on the site of the present-day town plaza and Catholic church. To the north, the neighboring town of Jasaan played a key role in the region’s early history, as it separated from Cagayan de Oro in 1830 and led evangelization efforts that extended as far as the villages of Sumilao, Linabo, and Malitbog in the province of Bukidnon.

The arrival of Christianity in Bongloy was marked by the establishment of the first church and its center of settlement at “Daanglungsod,” now known as Aplaya, Jasaan, where the remains of an ancient *kota* can still be found. A specific Captain Villanueva was led to Bongloy by Father Gregorio Parache, S.J., the parish priest of Jasaan at the time (432 local historical sources of Northern Mindanao by Father Francisco Demetrio, S. J). During the American conquest of the Philippines, Villanueva, a Mexican-American soldier, lived at Balingasag Convent. After asking Captain Villanueva to help him with the plans, Father Parache gave the captain the task of creating an irrigation and drinking water system in the Bongloy region. In honor of the captain, the Magahats started referring to Bongloy as Villanueva as they migrated eastward beneath the town of Claveria throughout the years. In the generations that followed, the word “Vanueva” was passed down orally.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were the one hundred fifty (150) out - of- school youth in select municipalities in Misamis Oriental. They are individuals who are not currently enrolled in any formal education and often face challenges in both education and employment. The information is likely relevant to the challenges among out-school-youth in select municipalities in Misamis Oriental. The table below shows the distribution of respondents.

Sampling Technique

The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to arrive at the one hundred fifty (150) respondents. Purposive sampling is a non-random method of selecting research participants based on their characteristics, experiences or knowledge relevant to the research objectives. It is also known as judgmental sampling. This research aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the challenges related to out-of-school youth in select municipalities in Misamis Oriental.

Research Instrument

The instrument used to gather the necessary data was a questionnaire composed of two parts.

Part I dealt with the respondent’s profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, and family monthly income.

Part II elicited the challenges among out - of - school youth, such as low quality of life, lack of life and social skills, behavioral problems, and experience in a hazardous work environment, like physical, sexual, and economically exploitative work. This was patterned and modified from different sources found in literature and related studies. The variables have ten (10) indicators each with the options: 4 Strongly Agree; 3 Agree; 2 Disagree and 1 Strongly Disagree.

Statistical Treatment of Data

To facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data, the researcher utilized the following statistical tools.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize and describe the variables of the study.

Further, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation(r) was employed to determine the relationships between the respondents’ challenges and each of their profiles.

Ethical Considerations

Protecting the privacy of the youth who joined this study was very important. They were assured that their names and personal information would be kept confidential so they could share their thoughts honestly and freely. All out-of-school youth who participated were clearly informed about the purpose of the study, how the data would be collected, and how their information would be used. They were also told that they could leave the study at any time without any negative consequences. To

protect their identity, any personal details such as names, school names, or contact information were removed from the data. Instead, pseudonyms were used when the results were analyzed and reported.

Further, the data were stored securely, using encryption where necessary, and access was limited to authorized personnel only. This is to ensure that data is not accidentally disclosed to unauthorized parties.

Ethical approval was sought from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or ethics committee to ensure that

the research design and data handling procedures meet ethical standards and guidelines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Problem 1. 1 What is the Respondents' Level of Challenges Based on Low Quality of Life, Lack of Life and Social Skills, Behavioral Problems and Experience in a Hazardous Work Environment on Physical, Sexual and Economically Exploitative Work?

Table 1: Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Challenges on Experience on Hazardous Work Environment

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Physical	2.69	0.88	Challenged
Sexual	2.29	0.91	Slightly Challenged
Economically Exploitative Work	2.61	0.94	Challenged
Overall	2.53	0.91	Challenged

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

Table 1 shows the summary of the respondents' level of challenges and their experiences in a hazardous work environment as out-of-school youth, with an overall mean of 2.53 (SD = 0.91), interpreted as Challenged. This means that many out-of-school youth have to take informal or unsafe jobs to meet financial needs. These jobs often don't provide proper safety equipment, clear contracts, or health protections. As a result, youth are at risk of physical harm, exploitation, and abuse, especially since they may not know their rights or have support. This happens because they are usually not covered by formal labor laws or workplace standards.

The findings suggest that out-of-school youth face big challenges, including working in unsafe environments. Poverty, limited life and social skills, and behavioral issues often leave them with few job options, forcing them into hazardous work. Continuous skills training can help them understand workplace safety and find safer jobs. Community programs that teach legal rights and provide access to protective measures can further protect them from exploitation and injury. These steps can help reduce the risks of informal and unsafe work.

These results suggest that labor protection laws and education about workplace hazards are very important. This supports past efforts in the Philippines to regulate child labor through laws like P.D.148 and R.A. 679, which aimed to safeguard minors from hazardous work (Philippine Labor Code, 1952). This is consistent with the findings of international conventions by the ILO that stress minimum age and health protections for working youth (ILO, 1960). Moreover, these observations reveal that despite legislation, continuous monitoring and awareness programs remain crucial to prevent exploitation and abuse of vulnerable young workers (R.A. 7610, 1992).

The highest mean of 2.69 (SD = 0.88) was obtained by the variable Physical, which is interpreted as Challenged.

This means that respondents faced many physical challenges and dangers at work. They often handled heavy loads, operated dangerous machines, worked with toxic or flammable materials, or were in poorly ventilated and unhygienic places. These risks happen because many out-of-school youth take any available job due to poverty and lack of education, often without proper training or safety equipment. As a result, they are more likely to get injured, become fatigued, or develop health problems, especially when employers ignore safety rules.

This implies that out-of-school youth are at risk of physical harm because of unsafe work and limited safety knowledge. Regular safety training can help them learn proper work practices and avoid dangers. Community programs that teach basic occupational safety, provide protective equipment, and offer safer job options can further protect them. These initiatives can give youth the skills and knowledge to work safely and improve their overall well-being.

This supports international and national studies showing that physical risks are among the biggest challenges for working youth. The ILO (2023) warns that unsafe work can cause long-term injuries, illnesses, or even death, especially for young workers who lack safety knowledge and protective gear. Weldeyesus and Alemu (2023) found that children in manual labor often face dangerous and exhausting tasks, particularly in low-income families with limited access to education and safety training. UNICEF (2020) reported that nearly half of the 160 million child laborers worldwide work in hazardous conditions that threaten their health and development. Together, these studies confirm that poor safety practices, poverty, and lack of training make out-of-school youth physically vulnerable.

On the contrary, the lowest mean of 2.29 (SD = 0.91) was for the Sexual variable, interpreted as Slightly Challenged. This may be because sexual risks are often hidden due

to shame, fear, or lack of awareness. These risks can include trafficking, unwanted advances, or unsafe places like certain clubs. Many youths may not report these experiences, even if affected, because they are sensitive issues. Out-of-school youth may also have limited exposure to sexual risks or may focus more on immediate needs like earning money or finding shelter. Additionally, some may not fully understand what counts as a sexual risk. These factors likely explain why sexual challenges are seen as less pressing and rated only slightly challenging. The findings suggest that participants do face sexual-related challenges, but these are less severe than other difficulties. Ongoing awareness programs can help youth better understand and recognize sexual risks. Providing safe reporting channels and confidential support services can protect them and encourage them to speak up about

sensitive issues. Schools, community centers, and local governments can work together to offer these programs effectively.

Further these results also suggest that even limited exposure to sexual risks can seriously affect young people's safety and well-being. This agrees with studies showing that dangerous work environments, including those with sexual exploitation, can harm children both physically and mentally (International Labour Organization, 2021). It is consistent with the findings of Philippine child labor laws, which highlight the importance of protective measures and regulations to prevent exploitation (R.A. 7610, 1992). Moreover, previous research indicates that education and awareness programs significantly reduce the vulnerability of children and adolescents to sexual risks (ILO, 1960; P.D. 603, 1974).

Table 2: Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Challenges

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Low Quality of Life	2.73	0.82	Challenged
Lack of Life and Social Skills	2.51	0.82	Challenged
Behavioral Problems	2.46	0.84	Slightly Challenged
Experience on Hazardous Work Environment	2.53	0.91	Challenged
Overall	2.56	0.84	Challenged

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

Table 2 shows the summary of the respondents' level of challenges as out-of-school youth, with an overall mean of 2.56 (SD = 0.89), interpreted as Challenged. This means that the respondents experienced different forms of hardships that limited their ability to study or sustain daily living. The main reasons are financial struggles and a lack of consistent support from family and the community. Coming from low-income households, many youths cannot afford school fees, learning materials, or even basic needs. Limited income, unstable jobs, and poor access to education make it hard for them to stay in school or get skills training.

This implies that participants face big obstacles in continuing their education and personal growth. Ongoing financial support and livelihood programs could help them go back to school or join vocational training. Community learning centers, scholarships, and skills programs can also boost their motivation and readiness to return to school and improve their lives.

This finding is supported by UNICEF (2021), which showed that building over 18,000 temporary classrooms helped children in conflict-affected areas of the Philippines access education. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) provided \$300 million to improve education for marginalized youth. These programs show that financial support and better infrastructure can greatly reduce barriers to education, especially for vulnerable and out-of-school youth.

The highest mean of 2.73 (SD = 0.82) was for Low Quality of Life, rated as Challenged. This means respondents often experienced a low quality of life due

to financial struggles and unstable family situations. Many out-of-school youth had to stop schooling because they couldn't afford fees or access learning materials. Some lived in overcrowded or unsafe homes, faced health issues, or lacked parental support. These challenges are largely caused by unstable family income and the high cost of living, which make it hard to meet basic needs and continue education (Celeste & Osias, 2024).

This implies that participants face serious economic and social challenges that affect their well-being and ability to continue their education. Ongoing livelihood and educational support can help them become more self-reliant. Community support systems, scholarships, and health programs can also help improve their living conditions and overall quality of life.

This result aligns with the findings of Ramón-Arбуés *et al.* (2022), who stated that quality of life is influenced by multiple dimensions such as living conditions, psychological health, and social relationships. Similarly, Child Hope (2024) highlighted that Filipino youth from low-income families often leave school to help their families, which can keep them trapped in poverty. These studies show that financial struggles and unstable social conditions directly affect young people's quality of life and ability to stay in school.

On the other hand, the lowest mean of 2.46 (SD = 0.84) was obtained by the variable behavioral problem, interpreted as Slightly Challenged. This means that respondents faced behavioral challenges, but these were less serious than other difficulties. These issues may

come from stress, poverty, lack of parental guidance, or influence from peers. Some youth reported frequent anger, sadness, or hopelessness, while others struggled to follow rules or accept mistakes. These behaviors show a need for support in managing emotions and relationships. Ongoing counseling, mentoring, peer leadership programs, and community activities can help build emotional resilience, self-control, and prepare youth to return to school or work. Jacob and Aloka (2023) found that disruptive behavior

in students makes learning harder and affects teachers, highlighting the need for behavioral support. Similarly, Zhu and Shek (2021) showed that strong parent-child relationships and supportive homes help reduce behavioral problems in adolescents. These studies emphasize that family involvement and psychosocial support are key to addressing behavioral challenges in youth.

Problem 2. Is There a Significant Relationship between Respondents' Challenges and Their Profile?

Table 3: Result of the Test on the Relationship between Respondents Challenges and their Profile

Respondents' Profile	Challenges of Out-of-School Youth				
	Low Quality of Life	Lack of Life and Social Skills	Behavioral p\ Problem	Experience in Hazardous Work Environment	Overall
	r-value	r-value	r-value	r-value	r-value
	p-value	p-value	p-value	p-value	p-value
	Interpretation	Interpretation	Interpretation	Interpretation	Interpretation
Age	0.068	-0.087	-0.087	-0.013	-0.009
	0.412	0.288	0.288	0.878	0.916
	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Sex	0.025	0.041	0.041	0.047	0.029
	0.764	0.616	0.616	0.567	0.725
	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Highest Educational Attainment	-0.301	-0.073	-0.073	-0.203	-0.272
	<0.001	0.376	0.376	0.013	0.001
	S	Ns	Ns	S	S
Family Monthly Income	-0.215	-0.250	-0.250	-0.214	-0.357
	0.008	0.002	0.002	0.009	<0.001
	S	S	S	S	S

Legend: *significant at $p < 0.05$ alpha level; S – significant; NS – not significant

Table 3 presents the results of the test of the relationship between respondents' challenges in low quality of life, lack of life and social skills, behavioral problems, and experience in a hazardous work environment by out-of-school youth and each of their profiles used in the study. The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the respondents' challenges and the variables of highest educational attainment and family income was rejected. Findings revealed that the variables, highest educational attainment ($r = -0.272, p = 0.001$) and family monthly income ($r = -0.357, p < 0.001$) showed significant negative correlations with the overall challenges, indicating that those with higher education and income experienced fewer challenges. Meanwhile, age ($r = -0.009, p = 0.916$) and sex ($r = 0.029, p = 0.725$) showed no significant relationship with the overall challenges, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. Further, highest educational attainment was linked to fewer overall challenges. This means that youth with more education face fewer difficulties because schooling provides knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that improve life opportunities. Educated

youth are more likely to access safer, more stable jobs, build stronger social networks, and avoid risky work compared to those with less education. This implies that giving out-of-school youth better access to education and livelihood opportunities can help reduce their challenges. Community-based learning, vocational training, and family income support can improve their living conditions. Local governments and NGOs should also strengthen programs that build skills and provide financial support to help youth overcome poverty and lack of education. This aligns with the findings of Vayachuta *et al.* (2020), which revealed that low educational attainment among youth is closely associated with poor quality of life, behavioral problems, and lack of social and life skills. Their study highlighted the importance of combining vocational training with life skills programs to help out-of-school youth gain social stability and become economically self-sufficient. Similarly, family monthly income was linked to fewer overall challenges. Youth from higher-income families face fewer difficulties because money provides better

living conditions, education, and job opportunities. On the other hand, youth from low-income families often have to take unsafe or unstable jobs to help support their households, which limits their chances to develop skills and grow personally.

This implies that tackling economic inequality is essential to helping out-of-school youth overcome challenges. Providing livelihood support, creating jobs, and offering microfinance programs can improve family financial stability. Community income projects and family assistance programs can also promote sustainable development and reduce youth vulnerability to poverty.

This supports Casas (2023), which found that family income strongly affects out-of-school youth's access to education and stable jobs. Similarly, a Philippine study (2024) emphasized that low-income families often lack access to education, and that improving household income through livelihood programs can help youth return to school or find decent work.

Comprehensively, the data show that education and family income are key in shaping the challenges faced by out-of-school youth. Youth with more education have better skills, knowledge, and access to resources, helping them handle life's difficulties. Those from higher-income families have more financial stability, which lets them avoid unsafe or unstable jobs. In contrast, limited education and low family income lead to fewer opportunities, harder job prospects, and greater exposure to risks and hardships.

According to Lagyag and Lumapenet (2024) found that factors like parents' income, age, and education greatly affect the well-being and life satisfaction of out-of-school youth. Youth from low-income families with limited education are more likely to experience lower happiness, fewer opportunities, and restricted social mobility. This highlights how important education and family income are for improving quality of life.

The findings also indicated that age was not significantly related to the challenges faced by out-of-school youth, suggesting that both younger and older youth encounter similar difficulties. Many struggles with common social and economic issues, such as securing decent work, developing skills, and improving their overall quality of life, largely due to limited education and unstable income. This underscores the need for programs and interventions that address all age groups. Continuous training, mentoring, and community-based projects can help enhance employability, build resilience, and create opportunities for personal and social development for youth across all ages.

This aligns with the findings of Lagyab *et al.* (2024), which revealed that the majority of out-of-school youth fall within the 19–22 age bracket, where many drop out after secondary school due to economic difficulties, lack of motivation, or academic failure. Their study highlights that it's socioeconomic factors and life circumstances not age that mostly determine why youth drop out of school and the challenges they face.

The analysis showed that sex was not significantly

associated with the challenges experienced, indicating that both male and female out-of-school youth face largely similar difficulties. This similarity may stem from shared economic conditions and community-level constraints, such as limited employment opportunities, underdeveloped social skills, and exposure to unsafe or low-paying work. These findings suggest the importance of implementing gender-inclusive programs that ensure equal access to education, skills training, and employment opportunities. Promoting gender equality within community initiatives and livelihood programs can further support fair participation and help empower all young people.

This finding is consistent with the reports of the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) and Paqueo (2022), which indicate that males are more likely to leave school because of work demands or reduced interest, while females often do so due to marriage or family responsibilities. Despite these differing reasons, both groups encounter similar barriers to education and employment. These results underscore the importance of gender-inclusive programs that respond to the shared economic and social challenges faced by young people. Socioeconomic and academic factors have been shown to strongly influence why Filipino youth leave school, often outweighing simple demographic characteristics like sex (Comon & Corpuz, 2024; Dumadag *et al.*, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed that the Out-of-School Youth (OSY) generally experience a low quality of life, which emerged as the highest mean among the factors assessed. This indicates that many OSY face multiple and interrelated difficulties that negatively affect their daily living, emotional well-being, and opportunities for growth. Those with lower educational attainment tend to experience more barriers in accessing employment, livelihood opportunities, and community support. These findings emphasize the need for comprehensive interventions that address not only the individual needs of OSY but also the socioeconomic conditions of their families. Strengthening educational support, improving livelihood opportunities, and enhancing community-based assistance can significantly improve the quality of life of the OSY.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. LGUs, in partnership with TESDA, DSWD, DepEd (ALS), and NGOs, should provide livelihood programs, skills training, and short-term jobs for out-of-school youth and their families to help increase monthly family income.

2. The Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) is encouraged to sustain and strengthen existing programs that promote positive behavior, community engagement, and peer support. There should

be a continuous implementation of youth development activities, counselling sessions, and values formation program to address the behavioral problems among the OSY.

3. The Barangay Council and DepEd ALS program should implement targeted interventions that address economic barriers.

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