

Profiling Out-of-School Youth as Basis for Developing Effective Community Extension Programs

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Abstract

This study aimed to profile out-of-school youth (OSY) in the Municipality of Barbaza, Antique, Philippines and identify the factors affecting their non-enrollment as a basis for developing responsive community extension programs. The study was anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and guided by the Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model. A descriptive research design was employed to determine the demographic characteristics of out-of-school youth and the factors contributing to their educational disengagement. Data were collected using a validated researcher-made survey questionnaire administered to 818 identified out-of-school youth aged 11–24 years through total enumeration sampling. Frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that most respondents were male, aged 16–18 years, single, had reached the high school level, and were employed. Financial constraints emerged as the most significant factor affecting non-enrollment, followed by employment opportunities, family responsibilities, and lack of interest in schooling. These results indicate that socioeconomic challenges remain the primary barriers to educational participation among out-of-school youth. The study further found that many respondents discontinued their education during secondary schooling and entered employment or livelihood activities due to economic necessity. Overall, educational disengagement was largely influenced by financial limitations, employment demands, and family-related obligations. The study concludes that addressing the educational and socioeconomic needs of out-of-school youth requires responsive interventions that combine educational support, skills development, livelihood opportunities, and youth empowerment initiatives. Based on the findings, the SIGLA (Skills and Innovation for Growth, Livelihood and Advancement of Barbaza Out-of-School Youth) Program was proposed to enhance employability, financial literacy, and community participation among beneficiaries. The study supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 8, and 10 by promoting educational inclusion, employability, and reduced inequalities. It also contributes to educational, socioeconomic, community, and institutional sustainability through evidence-based community extension programming.

Keywords: Community Extension Programs, Educational Disengagement, Financial Constraints, Out-of-School Youth, Socioeconomic Challenges, Sustainable Development Goals, Youth Development, Youth Empowerment

1. Introduction

Out-of-school youth (OSY) remain a persistent educational and social concern worldwide and in the Philippines. Educational disengagement limits opportunities for personal development, employability, and socioeconomic advancement. Despite efforts to improve educational access, many young people remain outside the formal school system due to financial difficulties, family obligations, employment demands, and other barriers. While previous studies have examined school dropout and non-enrollment, limited localized evidence exists regarding the profile and circumstances of OSY in Barbaza, Antique. This study addresses this gap by profiling out-of-school youth, identifying factors affecting their non-enrollment, and generating evidence for responsive community extension programs.

1.1 Background of Out-of-School Youth and Educational Non-Enrollment in Barbaza, Antique

Education is a fundamental driver of individual and societal development. However, educational exclusion remains a major challenge. UNESCO (2024) reported that approximately 273 million children and youth worldwide are out of school, while the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2024) reported that about 10.7 million Filipinos aged 5–24 years were classified as out-of-school, representing 25% of the population in this age group (PSA, 2024). Educational disengagement is

commonly associated with poverty, family responsibilities, lack of financial support, employment demands, and limited educational opportunities. These conditions often reduce educational participation and restrict future socioeconomic opportunities. Community extension programs can help address these challenges through educational support, skills development, and livelihood interventions. However, effective programs require a clear understanding of the characteristics and needs of target beneficiaries. Given the limited information on OSY in Barbaza, Antique and the scarcity of studies using localized data to guide extension initiatives, this study seeks to provide an evidence-based foundation for community interventions.

1.2 Themes and Insights on Demographic Characteristics and Factors Affecting Non-Enrollment Among Out-of-School Youth

The literature consistently identifies out-of-school youth as a vulnerable population exposed to unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion. Educational disengagement is influenced by interconnected economic, social, family, and personal factors. Dumadag et al. (2023) identified financial difficulties, weak family support, and negative academic experiences as major determinants of school dropout and non-enrollment among Filipino youth. Education contributes significantly to youth development by enhancing knowledge, skills, leadership, social capital, resilience, and employability. Moreover, skills development and technological competencies improve employment opportunities and job creation among young people, highlighting the importance of education and training in promoting economic participation (Bapir et al., 2025). Studies further indicate that structured educational and community-based interventions improve youth participation and life outcomes. School non-enrollment is associated with economic hardship, family obligations, geographic barriers, poor academic experiences, and declining motivation. Demographic characteristics such as age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and employment status also influence educational participation and access. Profiling these characteristics helps identify vulnerable groups and supports the development of targeted interventions. Financial constraints remain one of the most frequently cited causes of school discontinuation because economic hardship limits the ability of families to support educational expenses. Dumadag et al. (2023) emphasized that inadequate financial support significantly contributes to educational disengagement. Family responsibilities, including caregiving, household management, and income-generating activities, also interfere with school participation (Cimene et al., 2023; Desai et al., 2024). Likewise, employment demands often compel youth to prioritize immediate income over continued education. In addition, diminished motivation and lack of interest in schooling contribute to educational disengagement, particularly when students experience boredom or negative academic experiences (Dumadag et al., 2023). Community extension programs and youth empowerment initiatives have been recognized as important mechanisms for addressing educational and socioeconomic challenges. Universities play a crucial role in societal development through community extension activities that address local needs and promote inclusive growth (Cristobal, 2023). Effective interventions are generally grounded in community needs assessments and beneficiary profiling, enabling institutions to design responsive educational, livelihood, and developmental programs.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Out-of-School Youth and Educational Disengagement

Global studies consistently show that school dropout and non-enrollment are influenced by socioeconomic, family, institutional, and personal factors. Contreras-Villalobos et al. (2023) found that socioeconomic disadvantages and school conditions contributed to educational discontinuation in Chile. Putrik et al. (2024) identified social, health, and family-related conditions as predictors of dropout in the Netherlands. Ozdemir et al. (2024) highlighted the influence of family circumstances, economic challenges, academic difficulties, and social factors in Türkiye, while Psyridou et al. (2024) emphasized academic performance, motivation, behavior, and well-being in Finland. Similar findings were reported by Kim et al. (2023) and studies conducted in South Africa, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the United States, and Australia, all highlighting poverty, family responsibilities, employment pressures, low motivation, and limited educational resources as key contributors to educational disengagement. Similarly, Jo and Kim (2023) reported that out-of-school youth experience complex transitions to adulthood, particularly in relation to educational attainment and work experiences. Their findings emphasize the challenges faced by young people outside formal schooling as they navigate employment opportunities and social integration. Within the Philippine context, Dumadag et al. (2023) found that financial support, family relationships, boredom, and deviant behaviors significantly influenced dropout among youth. Supporting these findings, Potane et al. (2024) concluded through a systematic review that student dropout behavior is influenced by a combination of financial difficulties, family circumstances, academic challenges, and institutional factors, highlighting the complex nature of educational disengagement. Alvarez (2024), Albert et al. (2024), Calo and Salvaña (2024), Mahinay et al. (2025), Ignatowski (2024), Carbaja (2023), Morte (2024), and Campoy and Campoy (2022) similarly identified poverty, family obligations, limited educational opportunities, low motivation, and socioeconomic challenges as major barriers to educational participation. These studies also highlighted the positive role of the Alternative Learning System (ALS), community-based interventions, and collaborative partnerships in supporting educational re-engagement among out-of-school youth.

1.4 Ecological Systems Theory and Conceptual Basis for Understanding Out-of-School Youth Non-Enrollment

This study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which explains that human development is shaped by interactions among multiple environmental systems. These include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, which collectively influence an individual's opportunities, decisions, and development. The theory is relevant because educational participation among out-of-school youth is influenced by interconnected environmental factors such as family financial conditions, parental support, peer relationships, community circumstances, employment opportunities, and broader socioeconomic conditions. Examining these influences provides a framework for understanding the demographic characteristics and non-enrollment factors affecting OSY in Barbaza, Antique and supports the development of responsive community extension programs. The study is further guided by the Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model. The framework links demographic characteristics and factors affecting non-enrollment as inputs, data collection and analysis as processes, and the profiling of OSY, identification of non-enrollment factors, and development of community extension programs as outputs.

1.5 Research Gaps in Profiling Out-of-School Youth and Developing Community Extension Programs

The reviewed literature demonstrates that financial constraints, family responsibilities, employment demands, and motivational factors significantly influence school dropout and non-enrollment. Although substantial international and local research has examined educational disengagement and alternative learning programs, most studies have focused on broader regional or national contexts, urban settings, or Alternative Learning System participants. Limited research has specifically examined the demographic profile and factors affecting non-enrollment among out-of-school youth in the Municipality of Barbaza, Antique. Furthermore, few studies have utilized localized demographic information as a basis for designing responsive community extension programs. These gaps underscore the need for context-specific evidence that can guide educational institutions, local government units, and community organizations in developing interventions tailored to the needs of local out-of-school youth. This study addresses these gaps by generating localized data to support evidence-based extension programming.

1.6 Alignment of Out-of-School Youth Development and Community Extension Programs with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns primarily with:

SDG 4 – Quality Education, as it addresses barriers to educational participation and seeks to support the educational re-engagement of out-of-school youth.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, as the study examines employment-related factors affecting non-enrollment and proposes skills development, livelihood, and employability initiatives.

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities, as the study focuses on marginalized youth who experience educational and socioeconomic disadvantages.

The proposed community extension initiatives contribute to expanding educational opportunities, improving employability, and reducing barriers that limit youth participation in learning and productive economic activities.

1.7 Importance of Profiling Out-of-School Youth to Educational, Socioeconomic, and Community Sustainability

The study contributes primarily to educational sustainability by generating evidence that can support interventions promoting continued learning and educational inclusion among out-of-school youth. It also contributes to socio-economic sustainability by identifying barriers related to poverty, employment, and family obligations and by informing livelihood, skills development, and employability programs that can enhance economic participation. In terms of community sustainability, the findings provide a basis for collaborative action among educational institutions, local government units, families, and community organizations in addressing youth educational disengagement. The resulting evidence-based extension programs can strengthen youth empowerment, community participation, and long-term social development. Finally, the study contributes to institutional sustainability by supporting the development of responsive and data-driven community extension programs that address local needs and improve the effectiveness of educational outreach initiatives.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive research design. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), descriptive research is a quantitative approach used to systematically describe the characteristics and conditions of a particular population. This design was appropriate because the study aimed to determine the demographic profile of out-of-school youth and identify the factors influencing their non-enrollment during the Year 2024. Data were gathered through a survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. Since the study focused on describing existing conditions without manipulating variables or establishing cause-and-effect relationships, the descriptive design was considered suitable.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Barbaza, Province of Antique, Philippines. The locale was selected to determine the demographic profile of out-of-school youth and identify the factors influencing their non-enrollment in

school. The respondents were youth aged 11 to 24 years who were not enrolled in any formal educational institution during the Year 2024.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 818 out-of-school youth residing in Barbaza, Antique, Philippines. They were aged 11 to 24 years old, including 506 males and 312 females. Only individuals who met the criteria of being out-of-school youth and residents of the municipality during the study period were included.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed total enumeration or census sampling. Since the identified population of out-of-school youth in Barbaza consisted of 818 individuals, all qualified respondents were included. This approach allowed the researchers to obtain comprehensive and accurate data while minimizing sampling bias and ensuring representation of the entire target population.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire designed to collect information on the demographic profile of respondents and the factors affecting their non-enrollment in school. The first part of the instrument obtained information on age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and employment status, while the second part focused on factors such as financial constraints, family responsibilities, employment, and lack of interest in schooling. The questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in education and research to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Recommendations from the validators were incorporated to improve the instrument. Reliability testing was conducted through a pilot study involving 30 respondents who were not included in the actual research. Using Cronbach's alpha, the instrument obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating good internal consistency and confirming its suitability for data collection.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, approval and permission were secured from the research adviser, concerned offices, and local authorities in the Municipality of Barbaza, Antique. After obtaining authorization, the validated questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Clear instructions were provided, and participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and be used solely for academic purposes. The researchers personally administered and retrieved the questionnaires to ensure a high response rate and address any concerns raised by respondents. After retrieval, the completed questionnaires were checked, organized, and tabulated to ensure completeness and accuracy. The gathered data were then prepared for statistical analysis and interpretation.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean. Frequency was used to determine the number of respondents in each demographic category and the number of responses for each factor affecting non-enrollment. Percentage was used to describe the proportion of respondents within each category relative to the total population. Mean was used to determine the average level of influence of factors affecting non-enrollment, including financial constraints, family responsibilities, employment, and lack of interest in schooling. The interpretation of weighted mean scores followed a five-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Statistical computations were performed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS), and the significance level for inferential statistics was set at .05. The results served as the basis for drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations for community extension programs.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all respondents. Permission was secured from the appropriate authorities before conducting the research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to decline or withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by excluding identifying information from the questionnaires and reports. All collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes and were securely handled to prevent unauthorized access. The researchers ensured that the data collection process was conducted respectfully, without coercion, harm, or discomfort to participants, and that all responses were analyzed and reported with honesty and integrity.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of Out-of-School Youth

3.1.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Most respondents belonged to the 16–18 age group (29.46%), followed by those aged 19–21 (25.92%), 22–24 (22.37%), and 11–15 (22.25%). The findings indicate that out-of-school youth are distributed across all age groups covered in the

study, with the highest concentration occurring during late adolescence. The results suggest that ages 16–18 represent a critical period when young people become more vulnerable to educational disengagement. Financial difficulties, family responsibilities, and employment-related concerns may contribute to non-enrollment during this stage. The substantial number of respondents aged 19–24 further indicates that many remain outside the formal education system for prolonged periods, limiting opportunities for academic and socioeconomic advancement.

3.1.2 Sex Distribution of Respondents

Male respondents comprised 61.86% of the population, while females accounted for 38.14%. This indicates that males represent the majority of out-of-school youth in the municipality. The findings suggest that males may be more susceptible to educational disengagement due to factors such as early workforce participation and income-generating activities. This pattern is consistent with national observations reported by David et al. (2018) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (2024), which noted a higher prevalence of out-of-school youth among males. Nevertheless, the substantial proportion of female respondents demonstrates that educational exclusion affects both sexes and requires gender-responsive interventions.

3.1.3 Civil Status of Respondents

Most respondents were single (90.71%), while 7.46% were married and 1.83% were separated or widowed. The findings indicate that the majority of out-of-school youth belong to unmarried adolescent and young adult populations. The predominance of single respondents suggests that non-enrollment is largely influenced by factors other than marital responsibilities. However, the presence of married, separated, and widowed respondents indicates that family obligations and household responsibilities may contribute to educational discontinuation among some youth. These findings support the need for flexible educational opportunities that accommodate varying life circumstances.

3.1.4 Educational Attainment of Respondents

Most respondents reached the high school level (38.14%), followed by high school graduates (22.00%), elementary level (20.54%), elementary graduates (16.14%), and college level (3.18%). The findings indicate that many respondents discontinued their education during secondary schooling. The results highlight secondary education as a critical stage where learners become vulnerable to dropping out. This finding supports the study of Dumadag et al. (2023), which identified financial support, family relationships, and lack of interest in schooling as major determinants of school dropout. Similarly, David, Albert, and Vizmanos (2018) emphasized that poverty-related concerns and family circumstances often prevent Filipino youth from completing secondary education. The low proportion of respondents reaching college level further reflects continuing barriers to higher education.

3.1.5 Employment Status of Respondents

Nearly half of the respondents were employed (47.56%), while 40.22% were unemployed and 12.22% were self-employed. The findings indicate that employment is a significant aspect of the lives of many out-of-school youth. The results suggest that economic necessity compels many young people to enter the labor force instead of continuing their education. This finding is consistent with David et al. (2018), who identified employment and income generation as major reasons for educational discontinuation. PSA (2024) likewise reported employment-related concerns as common reasons for school non-attendance. The findings also indicate the need for interventions that integrate education, skills development, and livelihood opportunities.

3.2 Factors Affecting Non-Enrollment Among Out-of-School Youth

3.2.1 Financial Constraints

Financial constraints obtained the highest weighted mean (4.62), indicating that respondents strongly agreed that economic difficulties were a major reason for non-enrollment. The findings show that educational expenses, transportation costs, school supplies, and limited household income continue to hinder educational participation. This result supports the findings of David et al. (2018), who identified poverty and insufficient household income as major barriers to school completion. Similarly, Dumadag et al. (2023) found that financial difficulties significantly contribute to school dropout and non-enrollment among Filipino youth.

3.2.2 Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities recorded a weighted mean of 4.40, indicating strong agreement that work-related factors influenced respondents' decisions not to enroll in school. The findings suggest that many youth prioritize employment and income generation over educational participation because of economic necessity. Employment provides immediate financial benefits but often limits opportunities to continue formal education. This reinforces the role of economic pressures in educational disengagement.

3.2.3 Family Responsibilities

Family responsibilities obtained a weighted mean of 4.35 and were likewise identified as a major factor affecting non-enrollment. The results indicate that caregiving duties, household obligations, and family-related responsibilities significantly influence educational participation. Consistent with the findings of David et al. (2018), family-related concerns often interfere with schooling and contribute to educational disengagement among Filipino youth.

3.2.4 Lack of Interest in Schooling

Lack of interest in schooling received a weighted mean of 3.98 and was interpreted as an important factor influencing non-enrollment. The findings indicate that personal motivation and attitudes toward education still affect participation in formal schooling. Some respondents may perceive limited benefits from education or may have experienced academic difficulties that reduced their motivation. Although this factor ranked lower than economic and family-related concerns, it remains relevant in understanding educational disengagement.

3.3 Overall Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that most out-of-school youth in Barbaza, Antique are male adolescents aged 16–18 years who reached the high school level but were unable to complete secondary education. A substantial proportion of respondents were employed, indicating that economic demands significantly influence educational participation. The results further show that financial constraints emerged as the most significant factor affecting non-enrollment, followed by employment opportunities and family responsibilities. These findings indicate that socioeconomic challenges remain the primary barriers to educational participation among out-of-school youth. While lack of interest in schooling also contributes to educational disengagement, external economic and family-related circumstances exert greater influence. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of community-based interventions that address financial difficulties, livelihood needs, family support systems, and opportunities for educational re-engagement among out-of-school youth.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that out-of-school youth in the Municipality of Barbaza, Antique are predominantly male adolescents who commonly discontinue their education during the secondary level. Many respondents are engaged in employment or livelihood activities, indicating that economic demands strongly influence educational participation. Financial constraints emerged as the primary barrier to school enrollment, followed by employment responsibilities and family obligations. These findings demonstrate that non-enrollment among out-of-school youth is largely driven by socioeconomic factors, highlighting the need for interventions that address both educational access and economic challenges.

Based on the findings, local government units, educational institutions, and community stakeholders should strengthen educational assistance, livelihood opportunities, skills training, career guidance, and community extension programs tailored to the needs of out-of-school youth. Parents and families should be encouraged to provide greater educational support, while out-of-school youth should be motivated to participate in available educational, technical-vocational, and skills development programs. The implementation of the SIGLA (Skills and Innovation for Growth, Livelihood and Advancement of Barbaza Out-of-School Youth) Program is recommended to address financial constraints, employment challenges, and family-related barriers through skills development, financial literacy, employability enhancement, and livelihood initiatives.

The study was limited to profiling out-of-school youth in the Municipality of Barbaza, Antique during the Year 2024 and focused only on demographic characteristics and factors affecting non-enrollment. It did not examine academic performance, psychological well-being, behavioral factors, cultural influences, institutional conditions, or long-term educational outcomes. The findings were based solely on the responses of the 818 identified respondents and may not be generalized to out-of-school youth in other municipalities or provinces. In addition, the accuracy of the results depended on the honesty and completeness of the responses provided by the participants.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors conducted this study in accordance with established ethical principles for research involving human participants. Appropriate permission was obtained prior to data collection, and participation was voluntary. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, and all information collected was used solely for academic purposes. The authors ensured that data collection was conducted respectfully and that participants were protected from coercion, harm, and discomfort. All data were securely handled and reported with honesty and integrity.

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