Untold Success Story of Open High School Program: It's Socio-Economic Implications

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Abstract

The uncover untold success stories of the Open High School Program (OHSP) and examine its socio-economic implications on its graduates. To achieve this, the research adopted a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design, wherein both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously, analyzed independently, and integrated during the interpretation phase. This approach provided a comprehensive multidimensional understanding of how OHSP influences the socio-economic development of its learners. Quantitative data were collected through structured survey questionnaires to assess the level of OHSP implementation and its correlation with various aspects of graduates' socioeconomic progress. Complementarily, qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews offered valuable insights into the personal experiences and success stories of OHSP graduates. Statistical revealed a significant positive correlation between the effective implementation of OHSP and improvements in graduates' financial stability, employment, health and wellbeing, educational advancement, and social support systems. These findings suggest that the program plays a pivotal role in enhancing learners' overall life outcomes. Qualitative findings further highlighted the program's transformative impact. Graduates reported experiencing educational empowerment, career advancement, and enhanced social well-being. Many emphasized that OHSP served as a lifeline, offering an alternative route to education for students who faced barriers in traditional schooling. The program's flexibility allowed them to balance work and study, fostering financial independence and personal growth. Given these findings, it is recommended that future research delve deeper psychological and emotional dimensions of the OHSP experience. Exploring how the learning environment affects students' self-esteem. motivation, mental health, and overall academic engagement will further strengthen the program's design and support mechanisms.

Keywords: Open High School Program (OHSP), Alternative Education, Flexible Learning, Non-traditional Schooling, Distance Education, Modular Learning



I. Introduction

The Open High School Program (OHSP), institutionalized through DepEd Order No. 46, s. 2006, was created to address the educational needs of learners who are unable to attend regular classes due to economic hardship, personal responsibilities, or geographical limitations. A growing body of primary research literature underscores both the strengths and challenges of the program. Valdez and Sy (2019) noted that while OHSP successfully promotes flexible learning, its effectiveness is often undermined by the lack of teacher training and inconsistent monitoring, which negatively affects student engagement and learning outcomes. Similarly, Alegado (2021) found that students from low-income families often struggle to access the learning materials and digital tools needed to keep up with the program, highlighting a significant equity gap.

National-level studies such as those by Llego and Cabansag (2020) emphasized that although OHSP contributes to improving access to education, technological disparities—particularly poor internet connectivity and insufficient infrastructure—remain a barrier to full implementation. The global shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic brought further attention to these issues. UNESCO (2020) reported that in many developing countries, flexible learning programs like OHSP risk reinforcing educational inequalities if students are not supported with adequate resources and guidance.

In terms of learner experiences, Dela Cruz and Peralejo (2021) revealed that many OHSP students experience social isolation and reduced motivation due to limited peer interaction and teacher support. Colaste et al. (2025) also emphasized that student success in OHSP heavily depends on self-discipline and parental involvement—factors that are often insufficient in economically disadvantaged households. Locally, in General Santos City, DepEd General Santos (2023) acknowledged that students face challenges such as limited digital access and inconsistent instructional delivery. Furthermore, teachers have expressed difficulty managing both their regular teaching loads and the demands of OHSP facilitation, affecting the program's overall quality.

OHSP plays a crucial role in providing alternative learning opportunities, its implementation is challenged by systemic, technological, and socio-economic factors. The program's success depends not only on its flexible structure but also on the presence of adequate support systems for both students and teachers. This research seeks to examine these issues in the context of General Santos City, contributing to a deeper understanding of how OHSP can be improved to ensure equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education for all learners.

1.1 Objective of the Study

This study explored the untold success stories and socio-economic impact of the Open High School Program (OHSP) at New Society National High School. It examined how well the program was implemented in terms of accessibility, flexibility, instructional quality, student engagement, and outcomes. It also assessed the socio-economic development of OHSP graduates in areas such as financial stability, employment,

social support, health, and career aspirations. The study aimed to find out if there is a significant relationship between program implementation and graduates' socio-economic development, highlight inspiring success stories, and offer recommendations to improve the support provided by OHSP.

II. Methods

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design, which involved collecting both

quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analyzing them separately, and then merging the findings for a more comprehensive understanding. This approach was deemed appropriate to fully explore the impact of the Open High School Program (OHSP) on the socio-economic development of its graduates. By using this method, the study was able to capture not only numerical data regarding employment, education, and income, but also personal experiences and narratives that brought context and depth to the statistical results.

The participants of the study were 100 graduates of the OHSP from New Society National High School who completed the program between 2006 and 2011. This time frame was selected to ensure that respondents had adequate post-graduation experience to reflect on the influence of the program in their lives. Due to the difficulty in locating some alumni, the researchers used snowball sampling, where initial participants helped identify other former students. For the qualitative part of the study, five graduates were selected through purposive sampling to participate in in-depth interviews. These individuals were chosen based on their ability to provide detailed and meaningful insights into how the OHSP shaped their personal and professional lives.

Data gathering was conducted using two primary tools. The first was a self-made survey questionnaire designed to collect quantitative data on indicators such as job stability, income, further education, and general well-being. The second was a semi-structured interview guide used to gather qualitative data through personal interviews, allowing participants to narrate their experiences in their own words. Before data collection, both tools were reviewed and validated for clarity and reliability. Survey questionnaires were distributed either in person or through online platforms like Google Forms, depending on the accessibility and availability of participants. In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face or via video calls, depending on the preference of the interviewees. All interviews were recorded with consent and later transcribed for analysis.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. To assess relationships between variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, which helped determine whether the components of OHSP implementation were significantly associated with the socio-economic status of the graduates. Meanwhile, the qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. This process involved coding the transcripts and identifying key themes that emerged from the participants' narratives, such as career progress, educational attainment, and personal growth. The final stage of the analysis involved integrating both sets of findings to draw conclusions that reflect both the breadth and depth of the graduates' experiences.

To ensure the ethical integrity of the study, informed consent was obtained from all participants. They were assured of their anonymity, and all data were kept confidential. Participants were also informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequence. Overall, the chosen methodology allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the OHSP's effectiveness and its lasting influence on the lives of its graduates.

III. Results and Discussion

The level of implementation of the Open High School Program (OHSP) based on five key indicators: Program Accessibility, Program Structure and Flexibility, Instructional Quality, Student Engagement and Satisfaction, and Program Outcomes. The findings indicate that all aspects of the OHSP have been strongly agreed, with mean scores ranging from 4.28 to 4.42. Among these, Program Outcomes received the highest rating (4.42), suggesting that students experience significant benefits from the program in terms of their overall academic and professional growth. Similarly, Instructional Quality (4.41) and Program Structure and Flexibility (4.36) were rated highly, demonstrating that the curriculum and teaching methods are effectively supporting student learning. Meanwhile, Student Engagement and Satisfaction (4.28) and Program Accessibility (4.31) also scored positively, indicating that students find the program both inclusive and beneficial to their educational experience.

The overall mean score of the OHSP implementation is (4.36), reinforcing that the program is successfully meeting and exceeding expectations across all assessed dimensions. The high ratings suggest that the OHSP is effectively designed and implemented to provide quality education to its learners. The consistency of high mean scores across all indicators indicates a well-balanced approach to accessibility, flexibility, instructional quality, engagement, and outcomes. These findings highlight the program's effectiveness in catering to students' diverse needs and ensuring positive educational experiences. However, continuous improvement and periodic evaluations should be conducted to sustain this high level of implementation and further enhance the program's impact on learners.

Balbin (2024) examined the implementation and challenges of OHSP at Doña Francisca Lacsamana de Ortega Memorial National High School. The study highlighted that the program serves as an effective alternative mode of secondary education, accommodating learners who cannot attend traditional schools due to various constraints. In the Division of Bukidnon, a study involving 370 public school teachers evaluated the implementation of OHSP and its impact on school performance metrics such as achievement and dropout rates. The research identified challenges related to program implementation and suggested that addressing these issues could improve school performance. OHSP has also been instrumental in promoting social mobility among learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Equitable access to resources is another key aspect of program accessibility. Kizilcec et al. (2020) found out that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often struggle with access to the necessary technology and support services, which can hinder their participation in remote learning programs like OHSP. Support services, such as counseling and academic advising, are also vital. Gaeta et al. (2021) argued that the availability and

accessibility of these services significantly influence student retention and success in alternative education programs. When students cannot access these essential supports, they are more likely to disengage and drop out of the program.

Table 1. The Level of Implementation of Open High School Program

Item	Mean	SD	Description
Program Accessibility	4.31	0.78	Strongly Agree
Program Structure and Flexibility	4.36	0.69	Strongly Agree
Instructional Quality	4.41	0.71	Strongly Agree
Student Engagement and Satisfaction	4.28	0.75	Strongly Agree
Program Outcomes	4.42	0.74	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.36	0.73	Strongly Agree

The overall socio-economic development of Open High School Program (OHSP) graduates, encompassing five key indicators: Financial Stability, Employment, Social Support Network, Health and Well-being, and Educational and Career Aspirations. The results indicate that the implementation across all these areas is strongly agreed, with mean scores ranging from 4.09 to 4.47. Among these, Educational and Career Aspirations received the highest mean score (4.47), suggesting that OHSP graduates have strong confidence in their ability to pursue further education and achieve career growth. Meanwhile, Health and Well-being had the lowest mean (4.09), indicating that while graduates generally maintain good physical and mental health, there may be areas that need further support, such as access to healthcare and engagement in physical activities.

The overall mean 4.28 across all socio-economic development indicators is high, showing that OHSP graduates experience positive outcomes in financial stability, employment opportunities, social support, health, and education. These findings suggest that the program has been effective in equipping learners with essential life skills, career readiness, and academic competencies. However, while the program has provided a strong foundation, continued support through financial assistance, employment opportunities, healthcare access, and lifelong learning initiatives could further enhance the graduates' socio-economic well-being. Strengthening partnerships with industries, educational institutions, and government agencies may help sustain and improve the long-term success of OHSP graduates.

Open High School Program (OHSP), have on the financial stability, employment, social support networks, health and well-being, and educational aspirations of its graduates. Alegado (2021) emphasized how the flexibility of the OHSP enables learners to balance education with work, providing them with the opportunity to earn an income while pursuing their studies. This not only contributes to their immediate financial stability but also enhances their long-term economic prospects. Bautista and Ramirez (2019) further stressed out the socioeconomic advantages of alternative education programs, particularly in rural communities, where such programs offer students greater access to education and, by extension, better employment opportunities. Dewi and Fadillah (2020) noted that distance learning models like the OHSP have improved access to socio-economic benefits, including better healthcare and social services, which contribute to the overall well-being of learners.

Table 2. The Level of Socio-Economic Development of Learners

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Financial Stability	4.27	0.71	Strongly Agree
Employment	4.30	0.72	Strongly Agree
Social Support Network	4.27	0.87	Strongly Agree
Health and Well Being	4.09	0.75	Agree
Educational and Career Aspirations	4.47	0.63	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.28	0.74	Strongly Agree

The results presented the null hypothesis (Ho) posits that there is no significant relationship between the Open High School Program (OHSP) and the socio-economic development of its graduates. Given that the p-value is 0.001, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, and the R-value is 0.578, indicating a moderate positive correlation, we can confidently reject the null hypothesis. This rejection suggests that there is sufficient statistical evidence to support the alternative hypothesis, which claims that there is a significant relationship between the OHSP and the socio-economic development of its graduates.

The moderate positive correlation of 0.578 implies that as the implementation of the OHSP improves, the socio-economic development of its graduates tends to improve as well. This result is significant because it demonstrates that the OHSP does not only provide educational opportunities but also contributes to the graduates' career advancement, income generation, job stability, and overall economic well-being. With a p-value of 0.001, we can conclude that this relationship is statistically significant, reinforcing the effectiveness of the program in positively influencing the socio-economic conditions of its graduates.

Table 3.Correlation	Results	Between	Open	High	School	Program	and	Socio-Economic
Development of the Graduates								

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Variables	N	Mean	SD	Value	Value	Interpretation	Decision
Open High School Program	100	4.36	0.50			The Implementation is extraordinary	
				0.578*	0.001		Reject Ho
Socio- Economic Development	100	4.26	0.54			The Development is extraordinary	

^{**} Significant at the 0.05

Therefore, the rejection of the null hypothesis emphasizes the importance of continuing to support and enhance the OHSP. The positive correlation observed suggests that improvements in the program's implementation could lead to even greater socio-economic benefits for its graduates. This finding can guide policymakers, educators, and administrators in their efforts to improve the program, ensuring that more learners have access to the socio-economic opportunities that the OHSP fosters. Additionally, the results can inform further research into the specific components of the OHSP that contribute most significantly to these positive outcomes. Research by UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that the digital divide remains a significant barrier, particularly in rural areas where students may lack consistent internet access. This disparity limits students' ability to fully engage with online resources and educational content, undermining the flexibility that programs like OHSP aim to provide. Similarly, Anderson and Simpson (2018) highlight the importance of making learning materials accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

The insights and findings of untold success story are revealed for the graduate Open High School Program

Qualitative findings revealed three major themes, educational empowerment and personal growth, socioeconomic advancement and career opportunities, and social relationships and well-being. Respondents emphasized that OHSP enabled them to pursue higher education, balance work and studies, improve financial stability, and develop career skills. Additionally, the program fostered confidence, self-esteem, and social connections, which positively influenced their mental well-being and overall life satisfaction.

The qualitative findings further reinforced these results, revealing three major themes in the success stories of OHSP graduates: educational empowerment and personal growth,

socioeconomic advancement and career opportunities, and social relationships and well-being. Graduates shared that the program enabled them to pursue higher education, balance work and studies, secure financial stability, and develop essential career skills. Additionally, OHSP fostered confidence, self-esteem, and social connections, positively influencing their mental well-being and overall life satisfaction. These findings highlight the transformative impact of OHSP on its graduates, demonstrating its effectiveness as an alternative learning pathway that fosters both academic and socio-economic success.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study carry several important implications for educators, policymakers, community stakeholders, and future researchers. Firstly, the effectiveness of the Open High School Program (OHSP) as an alternative learning system implies that such flexible educational models are essential in addressing the diverse needs of learners who face barriers to attending traditional schools. The strong link between program implementation and graduates' socio-economic development suggests that education systems must not only focus on academic content but also integrate life skills, career preparation, and personal development into their curriculum.

Secondly, the socio-economic gains experienced by OHSP graduates such as improved financial stability, employability, and expanded social networks highlight the potential of alternative education to break the cycle of poverty and social disadvantage. This emphasizes the need for continued investment and support in such programs, particularly in underserved communities. Schools and local governments may find value in expanding OHSPs as a strategic intervention to promote inclusive education and reduce dropout rates.

Additionally, the study underscores the importance of mental health and well-being support in alternative learning programs. Recognizing the challenges learners face outside the classroom, the program should incorporate psychosocial support mechanisms to ensure holistic student development.

Lastly, the qualitative data revealing untold success stories show the transformative power of OHSP beyond academics. These personal narratives can serve as powerful advocacy tools to inspire policy support and community involvement. The study, therefore, implies a need for ongoing documentation and evaluation of learner experiences to continuously improve the program and ensure its relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.

This study reinforces that the OHSP is not merely an academic intervention but a socioeconomic empowerment tool. Its success calls for greater institutional support, innovation in teaching approaches, and deeper consideration of student well-being in shaping future educational reforms.

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