

An Evaluation of the Teacher Education Scholars: Lessons After Ten Years

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Abstract

This descriptive research study was designed to determine current performance of the scholarship beneficiaries who graduated from WMSU CTE School Years 2001-2010, particularly in identifying employment profile, trends in career development, evaluating the scholarship program and exploring the relevance of the scholarship to the present employment. Purposive sampling was done in tracking down graduates to participate in the survey and series of focus group discussions. Findings revealed that there is high employability among graduate scholars while career diversion from their graduated courses is minimal. Pursuit of advance studies and participation in related trainings are generally carried out, however majority still occupied low teaching ranks. Graduates appraised the scholarship program as reasonably strict but highly beneficial for needy students. Scholarship grants were generally relevant to their current occupation but with evidence that it was highly relevant among respondents working in the education sector. Most graduates attributed their present working attitude and competitiveness as results gained from the experiences of being scholars, improving their self-confidence and promptness in finishing tasks or submitting requirements. They further suggested that the scholarship program could improve more in management efficiency especially in processing applications and information dissemination of available scholarship benefits to students. Graduates also agree that as graduate scholars, continuing services may be reciprocated to their benefactors as their way of repaying the privilege received as scholars.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Tracer Study, Scholars, Employability, Mixed Design, Western Mindanao State University

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Introduction

As a catalyst to Philippines 2000, the Western Mindanao State University through its various course programs endeavors to produce quality graduates for the multi-faceted role in the challenging task of effecting national re-direction and re-construction. It endeavors to cater to the needs of its cultural-pluralistic clientele coming from the different barangays, cities and municipalities within and even beyond Region IX. It has persevered in producing open-minded, competent, and responsible, globally competitive members in our society for the past 100 years through various relevant programs, projects and community service-oriented activities in four areas of Instruction, Research, Production and Extension.

Cognizant of the fact that there are students, particularly scholars who excel academically and there are too, so-called “poor but deserving” scholarship beneficiaries who are in earnest quest for quality education, enrolled in the Teacher-Education Program in the College of Teacher Education. After earning a degree, factors that had probably insured them good employment and better standards of living can be examined to find similarities or differences in the method of equipping college students to become exemplary teachers.

Scholars who are funded by the school or granted by National Government Organizations (NGOs) and other government agencies enjoy free tuition fees, whether partial or full and other supplemental benefits such as allowances, or stipend and sometimes access to learning materials or recognition from political sponsors (Orbeta Jr & Lanzona, 2008). For the past years, the scholarship policy of the Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) allows the utilization of academic, non-academic and other scholarship grants offered or applied by students to foremost support financial expenses incurred in the pursuit for

tertiary education. It recognizes and supports academic achievement and non-academic outstanding performances of undergraduate students (WMSU Scholarship, 2014). Often, however, scholarships funds are so limited that they are only given to the most talented or qualified needy students.

Scholarship applicants are awarded if deemed meritorious and upon availability of sufficient funds from the sponsor or from the school's budget (Banta, & Associates, 2002). Other students are given grants from government organizations such as Sanguniang Kabataan, political personalities, foundations, private and government agencies such as Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Curriculum Initiative for Teacher Education (CITE) and Metrobank. Students can avail the continuance of the scholarship until graduation as long as they qualify and meet the conditions given by the program.

However, in the span of time when scholars have completed the curriculum requirements of the chosen academic program, graduates have no obligation to pay back the cost of education born by their respective sponsors, not even to the school. As for the College of Teacher Education (CTE), scholars are expected to become the exemplary teachers considering that they have excelled either in academic achievement or non-academic performance.

Thus, this study was conceptualized to determine the current performance of the CTE scholarship beneficiaries and to explore the relevance if the scholarship to the present employment. Specifically, to identify the latest trends of career and on-going participation of the recipients of the university's scholarship program after completion of their degree programs, how the CTE scholars perceive the relevance of their scholarship to their current occupations, the difference across graduates who are in the education industry on in the non-teaching jobs, and finally Suggest or enumerate options to improve the CTE scholarship program, to support excellence in Teacher Education programs

Methodology

A descriptive research design was utilized employing both

quantitative and qualitative approaches. Survey questionnaires and series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were primarily used to gather data and information regarding scholarship beneficiaries. Documentary analysis was done to determine the total type of scholarships, the number of scholars and the existing policies on Scholarships adapted by the school. Respondents were chosen through purposive sampling to get the desired sample of the study before the FGD was initialized.

The study was conducted foremost in Zamboanga City, locating graduates who are teachers in the different schools in the city or are still residing within nearby locations. Non-teaching graduates were located through referrals from co-alumni. Consequently, the area of inclusion included the rest of the cities and municipalities of Zamboanga Peninsula such as Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay. Respondents were tracked down primarily from referrals and contacts of graduates listed in the Admissions Office. Other respondents were located through the social networking in the internet and some were reached through air mails.

The respondents were either academic or non-academic scholars who have graduated from the College of Education during the school years 2001 to 2010. A total of 106 graduate scholars participated in the study, accumulating at least 38% of the estimated scholars' population from SY 2001 to 2010. Due to the difficulty of locating graduates who were previous scholars, distribution of survey forms was limited to graduates residing within Zamboanga City and nearby provinces and those graduates who were just on vacation within the research locale. Most scholars particularly from School Years 2001 to 2004 were difficult to trace because no existing registry of records was found. Estimation was done to provide approximate number of scholars for the lack of data based on the CTE records.

To determine the current performance of the CTE scholarship beneficiaries who graduated from School Years 2001-2010, and to explore the relevance of the scholarship to the present employment, the research instruments – Questionnaire Checklist and Interview Guide that were constructed by the researcher were referred to the panel of experts for validation. The Checklist was divided into four (4) parts. Part A included the Personal Information of the respondents, Part B, Degree Graduated and Scholarship Profile, Part C Employment History and Currents Working Status and Part D included Evaluation of Scholarship Program.

Data collection initiated by collecting the list of scholars from the WMSU Registrar's Office and Scholarship Office. Policies on scholarship were reviewed and collated for identification. Letter of communication was sent to the respondents of the study along with the survey questionnaires, which were either mailed or given thru assigned enumerators in each division of Zamboanga Peninsula. FGDs were done soon after surveys were collected and collated for data analysis.

Results

Employment History and Current Profile

Table 1 shows the history of Employment after graduation of CTE scholars. As seen in the given table, a greater part of the graduates have experienced employment after completing their degree. As much as 91% of them said they were employed right after graduation while mostly (less than 6 months) after (39%) graduation, and some (even less than a month) after graduation (29%). Yet, there were also a few who waited for as long as two years before they were employed (18%). The highest reason for this delay was primarily due to prioritizing the Licensure Exam for Teachers (LET). Some did not want to work yet or there was no hiring or job vacancy then. Other reasons included time spent looking for the right job, family issues, pursuit of graduate studies, and a few who were diverted from the teaching career.

When asked on the usual tools they used in finding jobs, majority relied on referrals (90.32%), and some from job placement offices (14%). A few credited finding jobs through the internet (8.6%) and newspapers (4.3%).

Moreover, almost all are employed (98.1%), with only two graduates currently unemployed during the time of interview. As much as 86% are working in the education industry, while about thirteen graduates are working in a non-teaching occupation. Reasons for choosing a non-teaching occupation included having bigger income, contentment to present job/dedication, personal choice, contented to just earn, and belief of fate in current job.

Majority of those employed has a regular or permanent status

(75%), and most are working within Zamboanga Peninsula (60%). Gross monthly salary is estimated at Php 15,000.00 to 25,000.00 (60.4%), and around 31% of them earn less than Php 15,000.00. Average estimated salary is at Php 16,503.79 with the least earned monthly salary of Php 5,000.00 to the greatest earned salary of Php 40,000.00.

Table 1.
History of Employment after Graduation

Employed after graduation	n	%
Yes	95	90.48
No	10	9.52
Time lag after graduation and employment		
less than 1 month	28	28.87
1 to 6 mos.	38	39.18
7 to 11 mos.	7	7.22
more than 1 yr to 2 yrs	17	17.53
more than 2 yrs	7	7.22
Reasons for time gap between obtaining degree and employment		
	Ranking (n=32)	
LET review	1st	
don't want to work	2nd	
no hiring and no vacancy	3rd	
time spent for application	4th	
availability of the position	4th	
applied	4th	
family responsibility	4th	
Tutoring	4th	
review for career Prof. exam	5th	
continuing education	5th	
served as missionary	5th	
worked in canning company	5th	
served sponsors	5th	
Tools used in finding jobs		
Referrals	84	90.32
newspapers/posters	4	4.30
internet/text messages	8	8.60
job placement office	13	13.98

Table 2 depicts the employment profile of graduates working in the education sector as teachers, including career development of pursuing advance studies and participation in trainings. There are a greater number of respondents with Teacher 1 position (76%). Only 2 have a higher position of Master Teacher 1 and Principal. A few have ranks on Instructor (7.2), while there are also 9.6% teachers with substitute or Visiting Lecturer (VL) status.

Most have pursued advance studies (61.4%), and only 37% had participated in work related trainings. As much as 63.3% said they have not attended trainings yet. Considering the bulk of graduates with Teacher 1 status, attendance to trainings may not have been issued to them or it might also mean most of low ranking teachers do not want to participate in trainings.

Tracking down graduate scholars and evaluating the effects of the scholarship program to them as students and as part of the working economy reveals a positive impression of their alma mater. There is high employability for graduate scholars while career diversion from their graduated courses is minimal. Nevertheless, most scholars have been immediately employed in less than a year and only a few have chosen to remain unemployed. The intention to find practical and regular jobs is observed, which have been a motivation of students being scholars.

The pursuit for advance studies is high despite having limited trainings. Although most graduates are still on the low level of teaching status, there is a high trend in pursuing promotions as most of them undergo continuing education. Teachers who do not have intentions to participate in trainings are more or less bound with a controlled motivation. This can be defined as a desire for training that is not initiated and governed by the self (i.e. regulated by external rewards or sanctions) (Gegenfurtner, Festner, Gallenberger, Lehtinen, & Gruber, 2009.). There may be less motivation among teachers to participate in trainings by themselves and may have been regulated, considering that most are still on the lower ranks. Structural equation modeling revealed that autonomous motivation positively predicted teacher intentions to participate in relevant training and to implement innovation in the future, while controlled motivation did not (Gorozidis, & Papapioannou, 2013).

Evaluating teachers' rank across the scholarship funding and degree graduated reveals similarities in accruals of position. Externally funded scholars have more graduates working with Teacher 1-3 ranks, likewise for internally funded scholars. There is however more Instructors /Visiting Lecturers and Substitute Teachers in the Elementary Education program whose scholarships were funded by the school. This may imply that scholars funded by the university are more likely to be employed by the school itself after finishing their degrees. There is no basis though on why there are more elementary education graduates than secondary education graduate scholars who are working in SUCs.

Table 2.
Graduate Teachers' Career Profile and Development

Position/Rank (n=83)	N	%
T1	56	75.9
T2	2	2.4
T3	2	2.4
MT1	1	1.2
Principal	1	1.2
Substitute/VL	8	9.6
Instructor 1,2,3	6	7.2
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Pursued advance studies (n=83)		
Yes	51	61.4
No	32	38.6
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Work related trainings participated (n=79)		
No	50	63.3
Yes	29	36.7

Table 3 depicts the percentage of respondents with work related trainings and advance studies by their field of specializations. It is relevant for teachers to participate in trainings related to their courses and expertise. However data revealed a low percentage of respondents who affirmed to have participated in trainings. Looking into field of specializations, only graduates of Elementary Childhood Education (ECE) have majority of yes responses. Major in English graduates have 50% of work related trainings and the rest have mostly none.

Inference for having lesser trainings may indicate low interest for career development or may just suggest that graduates have not been given opportunity to participate in trainings considering that most are regular teacher employees. When evaluated against specializations, graduates of ECE may have had more work related trainings that could have arisen from the need of specialization for childhood education.

With regards to advance studies, majority have pursued continuing education except for graduates of major in Filipino (33.3%). The highest affirmative responses for advance studies are graduates in SPED specialization (80%).

Table 3.
Work Related Trainings & Advance Studies by Field of Specialization

Field of Specializations	Work Related Trainings	Advance Studies
Percent of Yes Responses		
Biological Sciences	41.7	57.1
Gen. Ed	25.0	54.5
English	50.0	78.6
Social Science	28.6	71.4
SPED	16.7	80.0
Math	16.7	57.1
ECE	80.0	60.0
Filipino	25.0	33.3
Total	38.2	57.1

Evaluating College Scholarship

Previous scholars who graduated with the degree of Education were also evaluated on the basis of their judgment on how the scholarship program is relevant to their present jobs. More than 50% answered relevant, and there are also about 40% who answered highly relevant. Only 5 respondents found no relevance for the previous scholarship to their current employment. More or less, most responses were from relevant to highly relevant, indicating that the scholarships they enjoyed during college has significance on their chosen career. An in-depth analysis on the relevance of scholarships availed to present career can be found in cross sectional study based on their job's type of industry.

As shown in figure 1 when responses are grouped into work industry, particularly those in the education industry and in non-teaching occupations, relevance of their scholarships differ much in frequencies. Respondents working in the education industry either responded relevant or highly relevant, whereas those in non-teaching industry have either responded with relevant or irrelevant. Graduates working in the

education sector have a mean response of 1.5 within the highly relevant category, while those in the non-teaching industry have mean response of 2.1 under the relevant category. Although there is only slight difference in responses, yet the inclination for those in the non-education industry is relevantly on the average as compared to those in the education group.

Statistical analysis on significant differences indicates a highly significant difference of responses. Using independent t-test, results was $t=-3.023$, $df=102$, p -value of 0.003 at 0.05 level of significance. It implies that there is great difference of how respondents viewed their previous scholarship on the basis of their work industry.

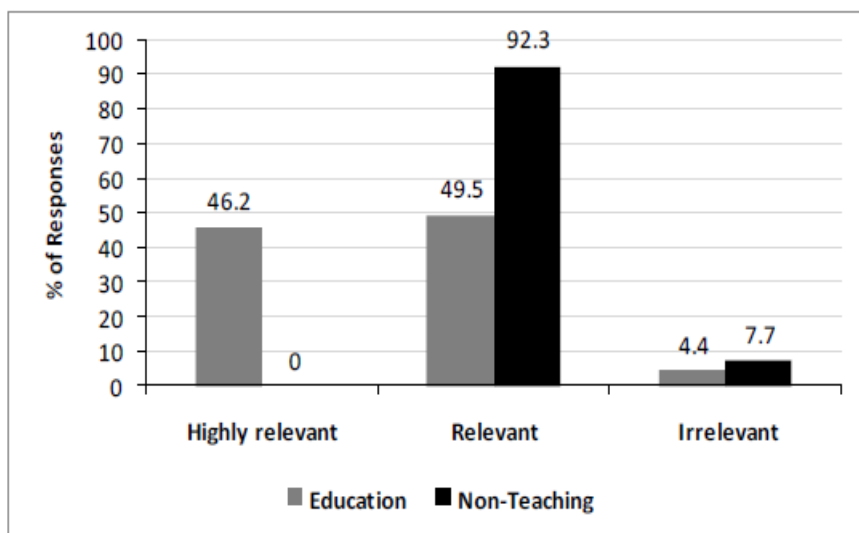


Figure 1. Percentage of Responses on Scholarship Relevance across Work Industry

Table 4 presents the responses on how scholars rated the retrospective contribution of the scholarship program to factors on improved capabilities, influence to skills and expectations as a teacher. Improvements in capabilities are on their motivation to work, confidence in abilities, ambitions for a career and interest in present work. Relating previous scholarship' contribution to such capabilities was ranked high (97.1%), indicating that the capabilities were improved out of the scholarship's training.

Similarly, the influence of the scholarship program to skills development is rated at a high degree (92.3%). These skills include critical skills, communication, management, and planning skills. Majority affirmed that the scholarship influences the development of these skills, in as much that competitiveness is evident as they strive to measure up with the conditions set by the program.

There is also a high degree (85.6%) on the relevance of the educational assistance to their expectations as a teacher. Most have said future chances on obtaining promotions; employment in institutions, achieving career goals, opportunities for overseas employment and salary increases have increased a lot out of the scholarship benefits. It is not uncommon to observe that completion of a degree as scholars indicate good standing in academic performance as a requisite for scholarship renewal.

Table 4.
Effects of Scholarship to Capabilities, skills and expectations as a teacher

Contribution of scholarship program to:	Percentage		
	Low	Average	High
Improved capabilities	-	2.9	97.1
Influence of scholarship to skills	-	7.7	92.3
Relevance of scholarship to expectations as a teacher	1.0	13.5	85.6

Table 5 presents the responses on the effect of scholarship support, student motivation, instructional characteristics and school environment.

Based on the mean responses, the perspectives for student motivation and school environment have scores of 6 lower than 7.5, indicating possible high effect of scholarship. On the other hand, instructional characteristics' average score is beyond the 7.5 demarcation for possible contributory effect. This may imply that scholarships contribute an effect to motivation and school environment, but not much on instructional characteristics. This supports the actual scholarship benefits of most students, where the educational support is more of a deduction in tuition fees and other expenses only but not much provision for learning materials are given for free.

Table 5.

Effects of Scholarship to Educational Support, Student Motivation, Instructional Characteristics and School Environment

Scholarship's Program Effect to:	Percentage			Mean	SD	Interpreta- tion
	Low	Average	High			
Educational Support	8.9	59.4	31.7	7.4528	3.47	Average
Student Motivation	5.9	52.0	42.2	6.5660	3.10	High
Instructional Characteristics	18.6	54.9	26.5	8.4528	3.67	Average
School Environment	6.9	58.8	34.3		2.66	Average

Note: Criteria for means are in opposite order; the closer scores are to 15 the lower the effect, closer to 1 indicates higher effect.

Scholarship's Contributory Factors to Present Career

Most graduates attribute financial support of the scholarship as the most contributory factor to the success in their present career. They have also noted development in communication skills, motivation and efficiency in completing tasks on time. Some even said that the scholarship helped them find a job easier. Relatively, the impressions of previous scholars on their educational assistance are positively instilled intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Aside from financial support, the attitude was developed contributing the success to the present career was the major response of the respondents when asked regarding the contributions of scholarship

The outcome of an effective educational program does not only result in the employability of its graduates, but also in the productivity of their outputs (Dooley, Payne, & Robb, 2008; Greene, Howell, & Peterson, 1997). One of the indicators on this is the working attitude and competitiveness of a graduate that may have been formed during college. During FGDs, respondents revealed that it is the necessity of maintaining grade requirements that stimulated the graduates in being competitive towards other classmates and in their academic performance. The programs have developed good study habits and were able to learn promptness and excellence while continuously leveling up to the standards provided by the scholarship program.

The impact of scholarships to students is based on the needs of the students for financing college education, as well as its attempt

to complete a college degree. Graduates' responses on identifying the impact of the scholarship program to their present careers lies more on competitiveness and discipline acquired from collegiate routines.

Finally, respondents believe that the scholarship boosts their self-confidence and it opened so many opportunities before and after graduation when asked about the value of being a scholar particularly if it was worth the effort, time, and the essential qualities it left in them after graduation.

Expectations by the Program

Graduates were asked on the expectations they had as scholars which helped them most during college days. Common response was on being a good leader with sound mind and body, having good grades, making them studious and more diligent in their studies. Empirical evidence on scholarship impact on students has evidence of positive effects on registration, full-time enrollment, and credit accumulation, even in the absence of the scholarship offer (Patel, & Rudd, 2012). Scholarship offer may be the discontinued grant or not awarded at all. Respondents generally agreed that the program helped them have a strong perspective to complete the course requirements enrolled.

Some contemplated on the issue of increasing financial support or payment of full tuition fees. These may be responses from partial educational assistance who have not met the required conditions. The need for instructional materials and free uniforms was also noted, particularly uniforms for practice teaching. This implies that supplies may have not been sufficient for some despite the tuition fee deduction.

The management for scholarship beneficiaries was perceived as reasonably strict but some also noted inconsistencies and lacked proper information dissemination. Previous scholars were well-aware on the conditions for maintenance of scholarly standing, but only a few credited awareness of existing scholarship programs as advertised by the institutional office.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Majority of the scholars believes that the scholarship program has impacted their motivation to work, increasing their confidence in their abilities, influencing ambitions to develop a career as well as gaining interest in current occupation. It is highly relevant among previous scholars to relate the impact of scholarship to improvement in capabilities and skills because they have focused much on the renewal of scholarship benefits.

There is a high effect on student motivation but not much on instructional support. Scholars have developed competitiveness and value formation being highly motivated to comply with grade requirements or the regularity of performance and service. Instructional materials and the provision of educational supplies such as books and manuals were not included in benefits. The main purpose for scholarship was intended only to provide financial education support, without other incentives except for agency funded scholars such as DOST and other grants with learning material benefits.

Students have suggested that financial assistance should be increased and management for scholarship grants must be cautiously done. Observations of non-deserving students might have caused this implication or the absence of regular coaching especially among internally funded scholars. Most expectations for financial assistance have been met, but only to the point of tuition fees deduction. Expenses not covered by the program might have caused students to still feel the financial stress of coping up with it but have managed to complete the requirements. Having a good deal of positive feedback from scholars on the aspect of financial support and student motivation clearly reveals that scholarships are helpful.

The policies used by the scholarship program from 2001 to 2010 revealed proper fiscal management, balancing the influx of sponsorship and obligatory expenses. However, scholarships have been limited to provision of financial assistance and nothing more. Students noted that provisions for instructional materials, coaching and modeling for support have not been included in educational benefits.

To improve the program, the following items such as 1) increase of financial grants, 2) proper coaching, 3) trainings and seminars, and

4) monitoring and granting of scholarships are recommended.

Most of the scholars revealed relative answers on bigger allowances or extensive financial grants released on time and effective coaching or counseling of scholars. Some respondents were only given partial education assistance and some had full scholarship benefits. Yet educational costs do not only cover tuition fees but also other miscellaneous fees and other collections made by students or college departments. This may be some of the items that scholars also wanted to be freed of. Aside from this, coaching may have not been properly done having not identified assigned persons on this.

Trainings and seminars are also deemed essential so that it would widen their scope of employability and even become accustomed to a working attitude. Some graduates wanted more of these activities because they have realized its importance in their present careers.

Lastly, the monitoring and granting of scholarship, to include careful scrutiny of deserving students, submission of pertinent documents, and background check is also recommended. Managers of the program were also suggested for enhancement and effective monitoring of scholars and most of the previous scholars agree that they are amenable that they must give back services to scholarship sponsors after graduation.

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