

Awareness of Mabalacat City College Students on the Availability of Financial Aids Offered by Commission on Higher Education

Sarah Mae M. Castro¹, Daniel De Leon², Lj Queen Beatriz M. Dizon³, Rovic L. Dizon⁴, Ricardo S. Jimenez, DBA⁶,
Ricardo S. Jimenez, LPT, DBA⁷

¹Institute of Business and Computing Education, Mabalacat City College, Mabalacat City, Pampanga, Philippines
castrosarahmae04@gmail.com

²Institute of Business and Computing Education, Mabalacat City College, Mabalacat City, Pampanga, Philippines\
deldaniel.213@gmail.com

³Institute of Business and Computing Education, Mabalacat City College, Mabalacat City, Pampanga, Philippines
ljdizon1018@gmail.com

⁴Institute of Business and Computing Education, Mabalacat City College, Mabalacat City, Pampanga, Philippines
roviCDizon00@gmail.com

⁷Research Management Office/College of Business Studies, Pampanga State University. Bacolor, Philippines
rsjimenez@dhvsu.edu.ph

Abstract: This study explores the awareness of Mabalacat City College (MCC) students regarding financial aid programs offered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), emphasizing the importance of such programs in mitigating financial barriers to higher education. The objective is to assess students' awareness levels, identify influencing factors, and examine how they access information about these programs. Using a quantitative research design, the study surveyed 352 randomly selected students, analyzing their demographic profiles, awareness levels, and sources of information. Results reveal that while students are generally aware of CHED financial aid programs, knowledge of specific initiatives, such as the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) and CHED Merit Scholarship Program, remains limited. Social media and school announcements emerged as primary information sources, though gaps in clarity and accessibility persist. The study concludes that enhancing communication strategies, through targeted outreach and interactive platforms, is essential for improving awareness and ensuring equitable access to financial aid opportunities for students.

Keywords—Financial Aid Programs, Commission on Higher Education, Student Awareness, Influencing Factors

1. INTRODUCTION

Governmental bodies are essential in building a better and bolder society for youths, especially students living within a community. Among the various resources provided by the government, money is crucial, as it fulfills one's everyday needs. Based on Qi et al. (2022) the concept of college student financial aid is defined both broadly and narrowly. In a broad sense, it is the different forms of financial aid provided by the government while in a narrow sense, it is the financial aid provided by the government. Despite the conceptual range, financial aid is a form of economic support to help university students with financial difficulties and to complete their studies.

Prior to starting college, one of the biggest worries is money. Students benefit greatly from financial assistance in a number of ways. Consequently, college students are fully aware of the advantages that come with being a part of the UniFAST TES program. These advantages include the influence on their perseverance, which inspired and motivated them to complete their degree, the favorable effect on their academic performance, and the increased financial capacity that allows them to cover the various costs associated with attending college (Purigay, 2020).

With the presence of the Commission on Higher Education or the CHED, students came across with the different programs suitable for them. The scholarships being offered by students to student are Student Financial Assistance Programs

(StuFAPs), Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST), Foreign Scholarship and Training Programs (FSTP), Faculty Development Program (FacDev), CHED K-12 Transition Program Management Unit, and Grants-In Aid to Undergraduate Filipino Students Participating in International Conferences and or Seminars.

Moreover, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube play a crucial role in assisting students. They provide timely updates on deadlines, offer tips and advice from fellow students and experts, and keep students informed about the government aids being offered. This integration of social media further enhances accessibility and awareness among student communities.

However, despite these advancements, students still face various issues when applying for financial aid. Narayan (2020) highlights the complexity of the college financial aid process for students and families. The process involves researching and selecting from a wide range of options,

including need-based grants at various levels (federal, state, institutional), merit-based scholarships from institutions and other organizations, and student loans from federal or private sources.

In addressing these challenges, this analysis aims to delve deeper into how the government supports students' financial needs, what are the processes they follow, exploring different types of aid offered and students' experiences in obtaining them. By understanding each student's perspective among all these, we aim to foster better connectivity between the government and students, improving existing systems.

Furthermore, this study presents opportunities for enhanced understanding of application processes, informed decision-making regarding educational journeys, and awareness of students associated with government financial aid. Additionally, it contributes valuable insights into the experiences of students who have received government financial aid, guiding policy improvements and empowering future applicants with knowledge about the availability of possible financial aids that they can acquire or currently acquiring.

1. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As students transitioned to college, financial aid emerged as a critical component for enrollment and persistence until graduation (Albert, 2023). College affordability served as a primary barrier for students and their families, particularly low-income and minority students (Carales, 2020; Herbaut & Geven, 2020; Long & Riley, 2007). The study highlighted that financial aid is a tool for students, specifically those who were in college or will go to college since one of the obstacles they are experiencing is in terms of insufficient money or income that they need to pursue their studies.

Based on Qi et al. (2022) the concept of college student financial aid is defined both broadly and narrowly. In a broad sense, it is the different forms of financial aid provided by the government while in a narrow sense, it is the financial aid provided by the government. Despite the conceptual range, financial aid is a form of economic support to help university students with financial difficulties and to complete their studies. This study emphasizes the difference between the definition of financial aid in both general and specific. In a general term it focuses on the different forms of financial aids that a government provides while in a specific term, it is basically the financial aid or money that a student gets from the government. And even though there is somewhat a difference, a financial aid is simply to support a student financial need in terms of education.

StuFAPs (Student Financial Assistance Programs) refers to financial aid provided by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to students who face financial difficulties but are determined to pursue their higher education. (DepED, 2021). CHED Estatistikolar is a government-funded

scholarship designed to address the shortage of statisticians in the Philippines. It is offered among third and fourth

year students pursuing Statistics as their degree. The SIKAP program offers teaching and non-teaching personnel in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including former staff, the chance to pursue advanced degrees at selected universities and colleges in the country.

The Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES), under the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931), supports eligible students in CHED-accredited institutions by assisting with tuition fees and other related expenses. Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) is a government financial aid that is granted in some schools (Lopez et al., 2024). A research study found that the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) gives significant financial assistance to students by covering their academic expenses, such as tuition fees and school materials (Capinig et al., 2023). These two research studies give an emphasis to one of an example or type of a government financial aid known as Tertiary Education Subsidy or the TES giving the students the ability to study without using any money from their pockets. This means that the government will shoulder the expenses starting from their tuition fees as well as the needed school materials.

The UniFAST TES program is recognized for its significant support to students in many ways. Those who are aware of its benefits feel more motivated to complete their education, experience positive effects on their academic performance, and have increased financial capability to cover school expenses (Purigay, 2020). The statement in this study that one way that the students are being supported is with the help of the UniFAST TES program of the government where they are given scholarships. And this scholarship simply motivates the students who were aware of it, making them more persevere and determined to study.

Research by Purigay in 2020 states that the Tertiary Education Subsidy helps students to be motivated to finish college and be active in discussions and other academic tasks, which can lead to better academic achievement. This study also puts the idea that the TES or Tertiary Education Subsidy is a key in the continuous motivation among students who are studying college and are achieving to finish it. This program shows that it can lead a student in a positive way which is to be better in studying.

Awareness of the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) is crucial for enhancing student persistence and academic success. The TES, implemented under the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, aims to provide financial assistance to deserving students in the Philippines, thereby promoting equitable access to education. Research indicates that students who are aware of TES features tend to exhibit higher levels of persistence in their studies, as financial support alleviates stress and fosters responsible financial management (L. et al., 2022) (Bulilan, n.d.).

According to Joensen & Mattana (2021), receiving financial aid substantially increases the number of students going to college, their determination to pursue their education, and their overall financial success in life. The study accentuates the essentiality of financial aids among students wherein it increases the number of students going to college to continuously study and get the long-term success they are pursuing

in life.

When it comes to the subject of student experiences with government financial help, a comprehensive investigation is necessary, considering a wide variety of aspects such as the application process, the influence of financial aid on academic results, and the roles of various parties involved in the financial aid system. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process is a complex topic, and adult learners' understanding of it is an Issue of interest for Taylor and Bicak's (2019) study. The study emphasizes the difficulties adult learners encounter by highlighting the confusion and unfamiliarity of financial aid jargon, which may make it more difficult for them to finish the application procedure.

Kaniki & Hoh (2020) found that a lack of accurate information about financial aid opportunities negatively impacted university access for Tanzanian students. It is critical to examine who seeks financial aid assistance and information, as financial aid offices must understand student issues to adequately train and staff offices appropriately (Bryant & Taylor, 2023).

According to Purigay (2020), beneficiaries of the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) identified two main problems with the program: late release of funds and limited enrollment slots on the CHED portal.

According to Ermenc et al. (2019), educational institutions are facing a growing need for staff with special educational backgrounds and a greater sense of accountability for the success and inclusion of their students. As a result, students with special needs should be treated as more integral members of departments and schools by receiving individualized and differentiated assistance as well as in-person evaluation.

According to Millea et al. (2018), on one hand, studies have shown that students are more likely to be retained year after year or to finish their education if they receive higher financial aid. The school can't provide the student their financial aid until they meet all the requirements (Kantrowitz, 2018)

Nguyen et al. (2019) look into how grant funding affects students' persistence and degree completion through a systematic review and meta-analysis. Their results highlighted the beneficial effects of grant aid on student outcomes and emphasized the critical role that financial

assistance plays in promoting students' success in higher education. Similar to this, Angrist et al. (2022) explored the marginal effects of merit aid for low-income students and concluded that merit-based financial aid significantly affects bachelor's degree completion rates, especially for those students who might not have continued with a four-year degree in the absence of such assistance.

Christensen et al. (2024) stated that the Financial Aid Office is a crucial strategic partner for Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) activities when it comes to institutional support. Their work emphasized how important it is to collaborate together to ensure that SEM initiatives are implemented successfully, with the

Financial Aid Office being a key component in assisting with student enrollment and success.

Furthermore, Perlow et al. (2021) exposed the hidden inconsistencies in the financial aid information that college students with disabilities may access, and they advocated for systemic adjustments to guarantee the financial aid system is fair and accessible. Furthermore, Dynarski et al. (2022) explored the complicated relationship of student choices, financial assistance, and college costs, providing insights into the ways in which financial aid policies and programs influence students' academic choices, attainment, and outcomes after college.

Over the past decade, there has been a development of various digital tools and interventions aimed at providing college and financial aid guidance and support to students facing socio-economic challenges, who have historically encountered difficulties in accessing such resources. (Corwin et al., 2020)

Since everyone can have access to the internet, information can be shared through different social media platforms which is quicker to disseminate because of the large number of people who uses these platforms. Social Media is the most powerful and effective way for sharing information and marketing. (Conduct Science, 2024) With just one click, one information can reach many people in just a short period of time. Multimedia content greatly improved the sharing of articles across about informational, lifestyle, and entertainment (Yang, et al., 2023)

Announcements are one-way type of communication to deliver messages to all users about important and urgent information. (University of York, 2024)

Social media is a platform that disseminates the information quickly, which is why it is easier to be updated with the news and information. (Raju, 2024)

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Financial aid as being served by the government through the government staffs are basically one of the important things

that helps motivate the youth in terms of education. According to the theory of Becker developed in 1962 which is entitled as Human Capital Theory, human capital basically helps in the improvement of a student through financial aids which is a key to productiveness in different tasks. The theory also provides the insight that financial aids enhance the student's way of studying including their skills, behavior, and knowledge.

Based on the study of Schultz (1961), education and training within formal settings are essential for enhancing production capacities. Furthermore, he regards the allocation of resources towards developing human capital as a fundamental criterion for enrollment in educational programs. This simply tackles that skills, knowledge and experiences are all interrelated to education.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

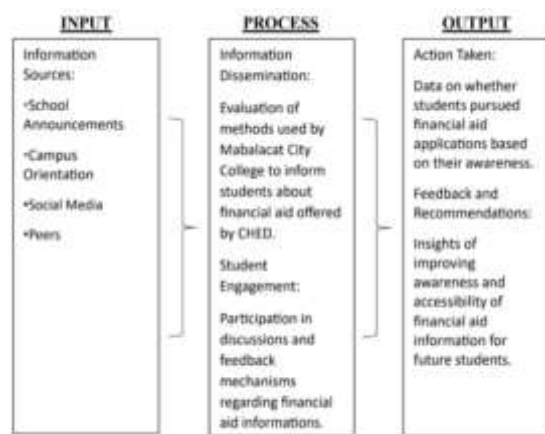


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

The study titled "Awareness of Mabalacat City College Students on the Availability of Financial Aids Offered by the Commission on Higher Education" presents a model paradigm to outline its conceptual framework consisting of the factors influencing students' awareness of financial aids.

The IPO or the (Input-Process-Output) model serves as the foundation of the conceptual framework in order to interpret the relationship of the different factors under the input, process and output.

The input basically comprises of the information sources starting from the announcements being given by the school, orientations held by the campus, social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and many more and as well as classmates or friends.

On the other hand, to support the factors the process must consist both the dissemination of the information about the methods used by the Mabalacat City College in terms of informing the students about the financial aids being offered by the Commission on Higher Education. Additionally, participation or engagement of students can help them be aware of the financial aids offered.

The final part which is the output in the framework is the data on whether students pursued financial aid applications based on their awareness, feedback, and recommendations. This output also includes insights on improving awareness and accessibility of financial aid information for future students.

Overall, the main objective of this paradigm is to show the interrelationship of the informations mainly focusing on the awareness as well as the availability of financial aids toward students.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main objective of this study was to ascertain students' awareness on the availability of financial aids offered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). In specific, this research aimed to respond to the following:

1. What is the demographic information of the students with regards to:

- 1.1. Age;
- 1.2. Sex;
- 1.3. Year Level; &
- 1.4. Institute

2. What is the current level of awareness among Mabalacat City College students regarding the financial aids provided by CHED?

3. Which particular CHED financial aid programs are students at Mabalacat City College aware of?

4. How do Mabalacat City College students typically learn about the financial aids offered by CHED?

5. What factors contribute to the level of awareness among students about CHED's financial aid programs?

4. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Methods and Techniques of the Study

The study was conducted in quantitative form using a survey distributed through an online link among the students of Mabalacat City College (MCC). The survey contained questions that helped the researchers identify, assess, and analyze the relationship between the availability of financial aid from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the students' awareness of it. The questions addressed various factors affecting the level of awareness among students, such as the familiarity with each financial aid programs, their knowledge of the different types of financial aids offered by CHED, how they learned about these financial aids, and the factors that contributing to their awareness. A descriptive

research design was utilized to explore the factors influencing the level of awareness among Mabalacat City College students receiving government financial aid.

5.2. Research Locale

The study was conducted at Mabalacat City College in Pampanga, a local college and an institution of higher learning. The school comprised four different institutes: the Institute of Business and Computing Education (IBCE), the Institute of Teaching Education (ITE), the Institute of Arts and Sciences (IAS), and the Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Management (IHTM). The institution had two infrastructures: the main site or permanent one, located on Rizal Street, Dolores, Mabalacat City and the other site, or extension, located in Barangay Dapdap, Mabalacat City.

5.3. Respondents

The respondents of the study were selected students of Mabalacat City College whose awareness of the financial aid programs offered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was assessed. They were chosen to evaluate their level of awareness regarding the availability and accessibility of these financial aid opportunities. To ensure a representative sample, the researchers employed simple random sampling. The appropriate sample size of 352 students was determined using the Raosoft calculator, based on a population of 4,163 students. This sampling method ensured that each student had an equal chance of being selected, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

5.4. Instrument

The researchers created a survey questionnaire as a medium to gather the information needed from the respondents. The questionnaire was validated by three different experts around the campus, each of whom provided specific comments for the improvement of the questionnaires handed to them. The survey consisted of five parts: Part 1 - Demographic Information, Part 2 - Level of Awareness with the Financial Aid provided by the CHED, Part 3 - Awareness on the Specific CHED Programs, Part 4 - How Students Learned about CHED Financial Aids and Part 5 - Factors Contributing to the Level of Awareness on CHED's Financial Aid.

Before proceeding to the actual distribution of survey questionnaires, the researchers conducted a pilot testing consisting of 30 students from the different institutes around the campus to test if the questions created were acceptable.

5.5 Data Collection

The data required for this study was gathered through an online survey instrument. The survey was developed and administered using Google Forms, a secure and user friendly platform. The data collection procedure proceeded as follows: Firstly, the survey was meticulously designed to capture pertinent information regarding Mabalacat City College

students' awareness on the availability of financial aid programs offered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

5.6. Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

To gather the necessary data, a structured questionnaire was developed, focusing on various aspects such as the types of financial aid available, the application processes, eligibility criteria, and the effectiveness of information dissemination on campus. A total of 352 students from different academic programs participated in the survey, with respondents selected through a random sampling to ensure representation from various year levels and fields of study. The questionnaire was distributed both online and in printed form, accommodating different preferences and ensuring broader participation.

The data were categorized based on key variables such as the level of awareness, sources of information, and perceived effectiveness of information dissemination. Respondents were asked where they had learned about the financial aids, with options including school orientations, official CHED announcements, social media, peers, and classmates. In addition, students rated the effectiveness of the methods used by MCC and CHED to disseminate information using a four-point Likert scale. Demographic information, including year level, course program, and socio-economic status, was also gathered to explore possible correlations with awareness levels. The data were then analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, were used to summarize responses.

The data collected from the respondents in the study were tallied, tabulated, and interpreted. The statistical analysis for this study included measures such as frequency distribution, percentage, and mean to summarize the data collected from respondents. Additionally, the standard deviation was used to assess the variability of students' responses regarding their awareness of CHED financial aid programs.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution

According to Statistics Canada (2021), a frequency distribution describes the pattern of how often each value (frequency) appears within a dataset. It encompasses both the set of all possible values for a variable and the corresponding number of times each value occurs. Frequency distributions can be visualized using tables or charts, and they can represent the data as either the raw number of observations in each category or the percentage of observations within each category. In statistics, a percentage frequency distribution summarizes data by showing the proportion of observations that fall within each category. This method is frequently used to express the relative frequency of survey responses or other categorical data points (Jove, 2022).

$$\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

*

Where:

- P = Percentage
- F = Frequency
- N = Number of Respondents
- 100 = Constant

Standard Deviation

Standard deviation is a statistical metric that quantifies the amount of variation or dispersion in a data set. It is calculated as the square root of the variance, where variance measures the average squared differences from the mean. A lower standard deviation indicates that the data points are close to the mean, whereas a higher standard deviation shows greater variability in responses (Hargrave, 2024). Using standard deviation provides deeper insights into the data, allowing the researchers to identify patterns of awareness and tailor recommendations for bridging gaps in information dissemination. This statistical measure is integral in understanding the reliability and distribution of the responses collected.

The formula for standard deviation is:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x_i - \mu)^2}{N}}$$

Where:

- σ = Standard deviation
- x_i = Each data point
- μ = Mean of the data set
- N = Total number of data points

Likert Scale

The researchers used a four-point likert scale to assess the answers to the questions. Likert scales provide a convenient way to measure unobservable constructs, and published tutorials detailing the process of their development have been highly influential, such as Clark and Watson (1995) and Hinkin (1998). Although the original Likert scale included five symmetrical and balanced points, during the years it has been used with different measurement range in terms of number of response options from two-points to elevenpoints (Taherdoost, 2019).

Range = (n-1)/n Where n = highest score on degree of agreement

5.7. Ethical Consideration

The data collected in the quantitative study were meticulously stored in Google Forms to guarantee the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents to value their

confidentiality. All collected results were handled with consent and were carefully studied. The researchers also sought approval in accordance with the sensitivity of the respondents and the research itself.

5. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the collected data and its corresponding interpretations in tables, organized in sequence according to the research questions. The results served as the foundation for formulating the study's conclusions and recommendations.

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
16-18	65	18%	3
19-21	193	55%	1
22-24	91	26%	2
25 above	3	1%	4
Total	352	100%	

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of Mabalacat City College students based on age. The majority of students (55%) are between the ages of 19-21, followed by 22-24 (26%) and 16-18 (18%). Only 1% of students are 25 or older.

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Male	141	40%	2
Female	211	60%	1
Total	352	100%	

Table 2 shows the demographic profile of students at Mabalacat City College on the topic of awareness of financial aids offered by the Commission on Higher Education. The data indicates that there were more female students (60%) than male students (40%) at the college.

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1st Year	71	20.2%	3
2nd Year	100	28.4%	2
3rd Year	67	19%	4
4th Year	114	32.4%	1
Total	352	100%	

Table 3 shows that 32.4% of 4th year students are aware of the financial aid, followed by 28.4% of 2nd year students. Only 20.2% of 1st year students were aware of the financial aid, while 19% of 3rd year students were aware.

Table 4. Institute/Institution			
	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Institute of Business and Computing Education	114	32.4%	3
Institute of Teacher Education	75	21.3%	1
Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Management	112	31.8%	3
Institute of Arts and Sciences	51	14.5%	2
Total	352	100%	

Table 4 shows the distribution of students across different institutions. The Institute of Teacher Education has the highest percentage of students (21%) followed by the Institute of Business and Computing Education (31.8%) and the Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Management (32.4%). The Institute of Arts and Sciences had the lowest percentage of students (14.5%).

DATA RESULTS (Factors)

3.5-4.0 Strongly Agree, 2.5-3.49 Agree, 1.5-2.49 Disagree, 1-1.49 Strongly Disagree

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
A. LEVELS OF AWARENESS ABOUT CHED FINANCIAL AID			
1. I am aware of the financial aid programs provided by CHED.	3.06	0.68	Agree
2. I have a good understanding of the specific requirements needed to apply for CHED financial aid.	2.72	0.75	Agree
3. I am familiar with the deadlines for applying for CHED financial aid programs.	2.64	0.77	Agree
4. I know where to find reliable information about CHED financial aid programs.	2.74	0.73	Agree
5. I have previously applied or considered applying for CHED financial aid.	2.61	0.84	Agree
Grand Mean / Total Mean	2.76	0.75	Agree

A. Levels of Awareness about CHED Financial Aids

1. I am aware of the financial aid programs provided by CHED. **Mean: 3.06 (Agree)**

Students were highly aware of the existence of CHED financial aid programs, demonstrating a strong understanding of the available resources.

2. I have a good understanding of the specific requirements needed to apply for CHED financial aid. **Mean: 2.72 (Agree)**

While students were aware of the programs, their understanding of the specific requirements for applying might need further clarification. This suggests a need for more

detailed information about eligibility criteria, application processes, and necessary documents.

3. I am familiar with the deadlines for applying for CHED financial aid programs. **Mean: 2.64 (Agree)**

Students generally understood the importance of deadlines, although there is still opportunity to improve in ensuring that everyone is fully aware of these timeframes.

4. I know where to find reliable information about CHED financial aid programs. **Mean: 2.74 (Agree)**

Students were generally confident about finding reliable information, but continued efforts to streamline access to clear and accurate information were needed.

5. I have previously applied or considered applying for CHED financial aid. **Mean: 2.61 (Agree)**

This indicates that a majority of students had already taken the first steps towards accessing financial aid, suggesting familiarity with the process.

Grand Mean/Total Mean for Set A: 2.76 (Agree)

Overall, students were generally aware of CHED financial aid programs but required additional support to fully understand the application process and specific requirements. Increased clarity regarding eligibility, deadlines, and information sources would further enhance their ability to navigate the financial aid system effectively.

Interpretation: Awareness of financial aid programs, particularly those administered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines, plays a crucial role in enhancing access to higher education. The effectiveness of these programs is influenced by how well students and their families understand the available options and the implications of financial aid on their educational choices. This understanding can significantly impact enrollment rates and academic success.

Awareness of financial aid programs expands students' choices regarding colleges, as demonstrated by Flint's study, which found that knowledge of financial aid options affects tuition levels considered by families (Flint, 1993). Programs like TRiO provide essential support in navigating financial aid applications, which can help students persist in their studies and graduate on time (Pinkston-McKee, 1990).

Many students struggle to comprehend their financial aid options, with studies indicating that a significant portion of students are unaware of their loan commitments (Sutcliffe, 2015).

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
B. AWARENESS OF SPECIFIC CHED FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS			
1. I am aware of the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) program.	2.46	0.70	Disagree
2. I am aware of the Student Financial Assistance Program (StuFAP).	2.47	0.72	Disagree
3. I am aware of the Free Higher Education (FHE) program.	2.46	0.70	Disagree
4. I am aware of the CHED Merit Scholarship Program.	2.52	0.72	Agree
5. I am aware of the SIKAP Program.	2.24	0.62	Disagree
6. I am aware of the Unified Students Financial Assistance Systems for Tertiary Education (UniFAST)	2.97	0.84	Agree
Grand Mean/Total Mean	2.55	0.72	Agree

B. Awareness of Specific CHED Financial Aid Programs

1. I am aware of the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) program. **Mean: 2.46 (Disagree)**

There was a low awareness of the TES program among students, indicating a need to improve communication and reach out about this specific financial aid opportunity.

2. I am aware of the Student Financial Assistance Program (StuFAP). **Mean: 2.47 (Disagree)**

Similar to the TES program, awareness about the Student Financial Assistance Program was low, highlighting the need for clearer communication and outreach efforts to ensure students were informed.

3. I am aware of the Free Higher Education (FHE) program. **Mean: 2.46 (Disagree)**

The awareness of the FHE program was also low, indicating a challenge in disseminating information about this crucial financial aid program.

4. I am aware of the CHED Merit Scholarship Program. **Mean: 2.52 (Agree)**

There was a higher level of awareness of the CHED Merit Scholarship program, suggesting that this program might have better outreach and communication strategies than the other programs mentioned.

5. I am aware of the SIKAP Program. **Mean: 2.24 (Disagree)**

Awareness of the SIKAP program was particularly low, requiring a focused effort to improve communication and reach about this specific financial aid opportunity.

6. I am aware of the Unified Students Financial Assistance Systems for Tertiary Education (UniFAST). **Mean: 2.97 (Agree)**

The awareness of UniFAST was relatively high, showing that this program might have effective outreach strategies or was more commonly known within the student population.

Grand Mean/Total Mean for Set B: 2.52 (Agree)

Overall, there is a mixed level of awareness about specific CHED financial aid programs, with some programs having higher awareness than others. Improving communication channels and increasing the reach of information about these programs is crucial to ensuring that students are informed about the financial assistance available to them.

Interpretation: Awareness of tertiary education subsidies and their requirements is crucial for enhancing student persistence and academic success. Research indicates that students who are well-informed about the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) program demonstrate higher levels of commitment to their studies. This awareness not only alleviates financial burdens but also fosters responsible financial behaviors among students. The following sections elaborate on the significance of awareness regarding tertiary education subsidies.

Awareness of the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) is crucial for enhancing student persistence and academic success. The TES, implemented under the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, aims to provide financial assistance to deserving students in the Philippines, thereby promoting equitable access to education. Research indicates that students who are aware of TES features tend to exhibit higher levels of persistence in their studies, as financial support alleviates stress and fosters responsible financial management (L. et al., 2022) (Bulilan, n.d.).

C. HOW STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT CHED FINANCIAL AIDS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through announcements made by the school.	2.82	0.78	Agree
2. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, official websites or online portals).	2.87	0.69	Agree
3. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through word of mouth.	2.83	0.73	Agree
4. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through school-sponsored by third party seminars or orientations.	2.63	0.78	Agree
5. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through government announcements or public campaigns (e.g., TV, radio, or newspapers).	2.67	0.79	Agree
Grand Mean / Total Mean	2.76	0.75	Agree

C. How Students Learn About CHED Financial Aids

1. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through announcements made by the school. **Mean: 2.82 (Agree)**
Students primarily relied on school announcements for information about CHED financial aid programs, indicating that the school's role in disseminating this information was significant.

2. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through social media platforms. **Mean: 2.87 (Agree)**

Social media was also an important source of information, with many students agreeing that platforms such as Facebook or official websites are key sources of updates about financial aid.

3. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through word of mouth. **Mean: 2.83 (Agree)**

Word of mouth played a role in spreading awareness, as students discussed financial aid opportunities among themselves.

4. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through school-sponsored third-party seminars or orientations. **Mean: 2.63 (Agree)**

Seminars and orientations contribute to raising awareness, though this channel may not be as strong as announcements or social media.

5. I learned about CHED financial aid programs through government announcements or public campaigns. **Mean: 2.67 (Agree)**

Public campaigns and government announcements also contributed to awareness, though the score suggests this was a less common source compared to school or social media.

Grand Mean/Total Mean for Set C: 2.76 (Agree)

Overall, students learned about financial aid primarily through school announcements, social media, and word of mouth, with third-party seminars and public campaigns playing smaller roles.

Interpretation: Since everyone can have access to the internet, information can be shared through different social media platforms which is quicker to disseminate because of the large number of people who use these platforms. Social Media is the most powerful and effective way for sharing information and marketing. (Conduct Science, 2024). With just one click, one information can reach many people in just a short period of time. Multimedia content greatly improved the sharing of articles across about informational, lifestyle, and entertainment (Yang, et al., 2023)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
D. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS			
1. The school administration provides sufficient information on CHED financial aid programs.	2.70	0.67	Agree
2. The promotional campaigns or efforts by CHED are effective in raising awareness among students' sources effectively (government programs and scholarships).	2.74	0.66	Agree
3. Conversations with friends and classmates have increased my awareness of CHED financial aid programs.	2.75	0.70	Agree
4. I have actively searched for information about CHED financial aid programs on my own.	2.66	0.73	Agree
5. The availability of printed or online materials about CHED financial aids on campus has contributed to my awareness.	2.55	0.73	Agree
6. CHED's use of digital platforms (e.g., websites, social media) has increased my awareness of its financial aid programs.	2.82	0.7	Agree
7. I believe that my family or household has influenced my awareness of CHED financial aid opportunities.	2.67	0.71	Agree
Grand Mean/Total Mean	2.70	0.70	Agree

D. Factors Contributing to the Level of Awareness

1. The school administration provides sufficient information on CHED financial aid programs. **Mean: 2.70 (Agree)**
Students generally agreed that their school administration provided adequate information about CHED financial aid programs, although there was room for improvement in the amount and clarity of information.

2. Promotional campaigns or efforts by CHED are effective in raising awareness. **Mean: 2.74 (Agree)**
CHED's promotional efforts were viewed as somewhat effective in raising awareness, but further enhancement in outreach and engagement could boost this score.

3. Conversations with friends and classmates have increased my awareness of CHED financial aid programs. **Mean: 2.75 (Agree)**
Students were active in terms of sharing various information with others about the different financial aids available to them.

4. I actively search for information about CHED financial aid programs on my own. **Mean: 2.66 (Agree)**

Students were moderately proactive in seeking out information about financial aid on their own, though the score suggested that not all students take a strong initiative.

5. Information about CHED financial aid programs on campus has increased my awareness. **Mean: 2.55 (Agree)**
Campus-based information had a positive effect on awareness, but more visible or frequent communication may be beneficial.

6. Social media platforms have increased my awareness of CHED financial aid programs. **Mean: 2.82 (Agree)**

Social media significantly helped in raising awareness, with many students relying on this channel to stay informed about CHED financial aid.

7. My family or household has influenced my awareness of CHED financial aid programs. **Mean: 2.70 (Agree)**

Family influence was also a notable factor in students' awareness of financial aid options.

Grand Mean/Total Mean for Set D: 2.67 (Agree) In general, multiple factors contributed to students' awareness of CHED financial aid, with school announcements, CHED campaigns, and social media being the most impactful.

Interpretation: Announcements are one-way type of communication to deliver messages to all users about important and urgent information. (University of York, 2024)
It provides a convenient way for students to be updated about the financial aids that are available as these announcements are broadcasted to the entire campus and the pages of CHED. This is important to make sure that the information reaches everyone.

Social media is a platform that disseminates the information quickly, which is why it is easier to be updated with the news and information. (Raju, 2024)

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research indicates that students primarily depended on school announcements and social media to gather information regarding CHED financial aid programs. Word of mouth also played a crucial role in disseminating information among peers. While students exhibited varying levels of awareness about specific programs, there was a notable discrepancy in knowledge regarding the Student Financial Assistance Program (StuEAR), Free Higher Education (FHE) program, and the SIKAP Program, all of which had low awareness levels. Conversely, the CHED Merit Scholarship Program enjoys moderate awareness, while the Unified Students Financial Assistance Systems for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) program was recognized by a significant number of students.

Factors influencing awareness revealed that students generally believed the school administration provided adequate information about financial aid programs; however, they also recognized the need for improvement in the clarity and quantity of the information shared. While promotional campaigns by CHED were perceived as moderately effective, students were only somewhat proactive in seeking information independently. The availability of printed and online materials on campus, along with CHED's engagement on digital platforms, significantly contributes to their awareness. Social media, in particular, had emerged as a vital tool for keeping students informed, with many relying on it to stay updated about financial aid opportunities.

The findings highlighted a gap in awareness regarding various financial aid programs available to tertiary students, which could hinder access to education and discourage students from utilizing essential financial support. Multiple factors, including family influence, school announcements, CHED campaigns and social media, contributed to the overall awareness landscape. The impact of school announcements was primarily one-way, delivering urgent information, while social media served as a dynamic platform for the rapid dissemination of information, underscoring the importance of leveraging these channels effectively.

7. CONCLUSION

The findings highlighted a gap in awareness regarding various financial aid programs available to tertiary students, which could hinder access to education and discourage students from utilizing essential financial support. Multiple factors, including family influence, school announcements, CHED campaigns and social media, contributed to the overall awareness landscape. The impact of school announcements was primarily one-way, delivering urgent information, while social media served as a dynamic platform for the rapid dissemination of information, underscoring the importance of leveraging these channels effectively.

The study concluded that there was a significant gap in awareness among students regarding the various financial aid programs available to them. This lack of awareness presented challenges in promoting access to education and may prevented students from taking advantage of crucial financial support mechanisms. The discrepancy in awareness levels across different programs suggested that targeted outreach efforts were necessary to bridge this gap and ensure that students were informed about all available financial aid options.

Additionally, the research identified multiple factors that contributed to students' awareness of financial aid options. Family influence, school announcements, CHED campaigns, and social media interactions played pivotal roles in shaping students' understanding of the financial aid landscape. While the school administration was seen as a reliable source of

information, the effectiveness of their communication could have been

further enhanced by addressing the clarity and quantity of the information provided. The role of social media as a powerful tool for information dissemination could not be understated, as it allowed for rapid and engaging communication that resonated with the student demographic.

The findings also revealed that while students generally agreed they were aware that CHED offered financial aid, their awareness was primarily centered on specific programs such as the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) and the CHED Merit Scholarship Program. This limited scope of knowledge underscored the need for more targeted communication and outreach initiatives to enhance awareness of the broader range of financial aid options available. Addressing this gap could have empowered students to maximize opportunities that aligned with their needs, ultimately contributing to improved access to higher education.

Finally, the impact of school announcements and social media on awareness levels highlighted the need for a multifaceted approach to communication strategies. School announcements often serve as a one-way communication channel, which may not have fully engaged students. In contrast, social media offered a more interactive platform for sharing information, enabling students to actively participate in discussions about financial aid. Therefore, a combination of traditional and digital communication strategies was essential for effectively reaching students and ensuring they were well-informed about financial aid opportunities.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the impact of school announcements and social media on awareness levels highlighted the need for a multifaceted approach to communication strategies. School announcements often serve as a one-way communication channel, which may not have fully engaged students. In contrast, social media offered a more interactive platform for sharing information, enabling students to actively participate in discussions about financial aid. Therefore, a combination of traditional and digital communication strategies was essential for effectively reaching students and ensuring they were well-informed about financial aid opportunities.

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