

Implementation Of the UniFAST Scholarship Program in Private Higher Education Institutions in Masbate: Challenges and Effectiveness

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Abstract — The government's scholarship programs aid students in achieving their professional goals by fostering their dedication to completing their higher education degrees. This study aims to assess the extent of implementation of the UniFAST programs of selected private higher education institutions in the City of Masbate, Masbate. The study employed a descriptive-analytic correlational method research design. The study's population consists of 319 student beneficiaries and 20 school administrators from the private higher institutions of Osmeña Colleges and Liceo De Masbate. A total of 339 respondents. The data was collected through a survey and analyzed using frequency tables, simple percentages, weighted means, and Spearman Rank Coefficient Correlations. The study revealed that the UniFAST program implementation faced challenges, with respondents from Osmeña Colleges and Liceo De Masbate agreeing that the program's implementation is hindered by various intervening factors, with an average weighted mean of 3.71, respectively. The UniFAST program's implementation was found to be effective, with an average weighted mean of 3.94, according to both implementers and students' grantees. Moreover, the data found a significant correlation between the respondents' perceptions of problems met and suggested measures, with a computed coefficient of correlation (r_s) of 1.18, indicating that they are highly associated with one another. Thus, the researcher recommends that the institutional administrators should conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that focuses on administrative inefficiencies and communication gaps to address the identified intervening factors effectively.

Keywords — *UniFAST Program, Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs), Student Financial Assistance*

I. Introduction

In recent years, the Philippine government has ensured that all students at the tertiary level have free access to education, especially those underprivileged students, which gives them the opportunity to pursue college degrees through free tuition and exemption of other fees from state and local universities and colleges nationwide. Therefore, the Philippine government has

intensified its efforts to promote equitable access to quality tertiary education through various scholarship and financial assistance programs. Among these, the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST), which serves as the primary mechanism for implementing Republic Act No. 10931, also known as the “Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act.” The UniFAST program consolidates and harmonizes all government-funded student financial assistance programs to ensure streamlined, effective, efficient, and transparent support for the students in pursuing their degrees in higher education. While the implementation of UniFAST programs in public higher education institutions (HEIs) has gained considerable attention, the experiences of private HEIs in maintaining smooth delivery of implementation remain less explored. It can be observed that the private college institutions accommodate a significant portion of the country’s tertiary learners and are able to face various challenges in accessing and managing the government financial aid initiatives. Thus, assessing how these institutions implement UniFAST programs is essential in identifying gaps, best practices, and areas for improvement to maximize student benefits and support national education goals.

Owen (2008) Averred those subsidies to education are often justified by arguing that society derives political benefits from education, in terms of individuals who perform better as citizens. Since these benefits are external to the students and therefore do not provide him with incentive to invest further in his education. Society must devise a means of subsidy that will induce students to continue to their education and thereby improve the workings of political democracy. Chin Shing Yin (2010) stated that the underlying principle for state subsidy of higher education would be the perception of investment in human capital. Besides the financing of higher education is also guided by the principles of equity. It would allow the low-income group student who are capable to carry on their study in higher education without financial burden. Whether it is sensible from an economic viewpoint depends very much on its benefits, in other words, the cost benefit.

According to Ching Hui-Shih (2012), arranges subsidies for private colleges annually with excellent academic performance. In order to justify if government subsidies can enhance the quality of education based on Article 13 of the Taiwan fundamental law of education states that “The government and the people may conduct education experiences as needed and strength research and assessment of education to improve education quality and promote education development”. U. Laix, et.al (2011) pointed out in their research that the better the school performance of private universities, the more the government subsidy will be and these lead to more disclosure of financial information. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between school performance of private universities and government subsidies. Moreover, financial information, disclosure of private universities and colleges also has positive relationship with government subsidies. Asuncion, et.al. (2017), the importance of investing higher education cannot be over emphasized. It can affect individual’s income as well as the nation’s progress in terms of the quality of its labor force. However, the participation rate in the Philippines in the higher education over several decades has remained relatively stagnant compared with other neighboring countries like Thailand and Korea. Part of participation rate can be attributed to poverty issues as well as the

financing problems of the able students who lack sufficient funds to cover the cost of education. Avery (2004) emphasized that financial assistance in the form of subsidy play a significant role to alleviate the educational expenses of students enrolled in the higher education institutions. To allow citizens full access to quality education buy providing adequate funding and to increase the participation rate in tertiary education, the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act.

Ahmad, Nadia, et.al (2019) determined the higher education subsidy in Malaysia as to the benefit incidence analysis. Using the data obtained from the household expenditure survey 2009-2010. Findings revealed that the students from the lowest income, quintile received 22.5% of the total subsidy, while students who belong to the highest income quintile received nearly 20% of the total subsidy. The findings suggest that the various initiatives is translated into a less progressive outcome of education subsidy but still with no attentive towards free education realization. In addition, Combs (2018) made a study on the state subsidy composition in higher education policy and impacts. The findings showed that subsequent effect changes in demand between educational resources and amenities may have on institutions. It considers the role of college migration with respect to state subsidies and students' outcomes. State subsidies impact college choice, and in turn alter the distance students migrate to attend college. The study of Virola (2019) focus on free education in the Philippines as a Continuing Saga. The study examined and assess the effects of the law in our educational system. According to the researchers, providing sufficient funds is not enough; the government must give meaning to the title of the new law, which as the provision of quality education. This program is an investment in the nation's most precious resource. Findings revealed that quality education empowers people and levels the playing field; it is one of the best tools for poverty alleviation, social equity and inclusive growth. In conclusions, the evidence from this research suggest that young people are becoming increasingly focused on the labor market opportunities that a degree provides. One of the recommendations of the study it would have also been more efficient and could push higher education institutions to enhance their quality had financial assistance been given directly to students.

Maga-Ao, et.al. (2019) studied on the utilization of the CHED-UniFAST Tertiary Education Subsidy by the students of a state university, Philippines. Findings revealed according to the data S.Y. 2018-2019. In sample size, 336 students, 77% have a family income of ₱10,000 and below. The items purchase by the students in decreasing order were 21% cellphone; 20% laptop, 20% boarding house fee, 19% food/groceries, and 13% clothes/shoes. Only 16% of the respondents had bank accounts; 88% sent money to parents while 10% did not inform parents. The students gave priority to products they found helpful to their studies but were not affordable without subsidy. It is therefore concluded, that the top five items are considered to be the basic needs of a student to tackle college degrees in Philippine State universities; subsidy was used according to purpose; requirements of TES subsidy were mostly met. TES has initially addressed an expanded and equal access to quality tertiary education; and one of the means on how the Philippine Education System upholds the Quality Education for All. Similarly, Purigay (2020) assessed the implementation of Unified Students Financial Assistance System for Tertiary

Education as basis for a proposed action. The results of this study are as follows: This study found out that the TES program has a positive effect on students' persistence to finish their college degree. It also helps them to engage and focus on their lessons and different school activities that contribute to their academic performance. Furthermore, the amount of money that the TES provided to the students enables them to support their educational needs and relieve student's financial burden in school. Based from the results of the study, the researcher established a comprehensive action plan that will support the TES program to further improve its implementation. Fuentes (2021) conducted qualitative research on the transitional experiences of tertiary education subsidy grantees. Using the Matrix analysis, the results revealed that prior to inclusion to the TES grant the participants indicated a positive impact of the grant to their family and personal economic capacity; participants reported the problems they encountered such as delayed release of fund and difficulty in the enrollment of new cash card; the grantees claimed that they are thankful for the said grant and expressed their gratitude to the government.

This study aims to assess the extent of implementation of the UniFAST programs of selected private higher education institutions in the City of Masbate, Masbate. Thus, it seeks answers to the profile of the student beneficiaries enjoying the free education program in terms of number of grantees, school, age, gender, course taken, requirements, and income of the parents. Additionally, it seeks answers about the problems met by the grantees as perceived by themselves. Moreover, it also seeks answers on the suggested measures offered to improve the implementation of the program. Lastly, this study seeks answers to the significant correlations of perceptions between and among the students' grantees. The findings will provide insights for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders seeking to enhance the delivery of financial aid and ensure inclusive, quality education for all.

II. Methodology

Research Design. This study used the combination of descriptive-analytic correlational method and documentary method of research to determine the profile of the UniFAST grantees, problems met and Suggested measures for improvement of the implementation. Hence descriptive method was utilized. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) descriptive research described, a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible. It gives meaning to the quality and standings of facts that are going on. For instance, information about a group of persons, a number of objectives, a set of conditions, a class of events, a system of thought or any other kind of phenomenon or experience which one may wish to study.

Population. The Population of the study are composed of 215 students of Osmeña Colleges and 10 implementers. Liceo De Masbate has 104 students and 10 implementers. A total of 339 respondents.

The Respondents and Sampling. The researcher used the Slovin's Formula in order to determine the correct sample of respondents. Purposive sampling was used in the number of implementers because all of them are included as respondents.

Instrument Used. The main instrument used is the survey questionnaire and rating scale in gathering the needed data. This instrument was constructed by the researcher with the assistance and guidance of the thesis adviser. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part one was on the profile of the grantees, Part two are the problems encountered and Part three are the suggested measures to improve the implementation. The instrument was validated by three sets of jurors composed of School Coordinators and School Administrations.

Variables and Procedure. The researcher conducted an intensive reading in order to gain information on the topic in mind. Through readings it widened his insights on the topics regarding implementation of government programs. He reads some literature and studies found in the journals, professional magazines, books and internet materials.

After rigorous readings, the idea came to mind to choose the topic that has something to do with the Aids-grant given to students in college, especially the UniFAST. The four-year implementation of this program has been enjoyed by the grantees. Hence assessment is needed at this point in time.

Ethical Issues. Through written correspondence, the researcher considered obtaining consent from the appropriate parties to carry out the study. Any use of rude, discriminatory, or improper language was rigorously banned in the survey questionnaire used for the study. The respondents' names and other confidential information were classified as "optional," giving them the opportunity to divulge only the most basic information. The respondents gave their full consent to participate in the survey.

Statistical Measures. The data gathered will be subjective to statistical treatment, especially through the following measures.

To determine the profile of students' grantees, the frequency count, percentage is used. Additionally, to determine the extent of perceptions on problems met and suggested measures, the weighted mean is used. Furthermore, to determine the correlations of perceptions of the respondents, the Spearman Rank Coefficient Correlations is utilized.

The data is interpreted using the following rating scale:

Likert Scale Verbal Interpretation

Option Range	Problems met	Suggested measures
4.5 – 5.0	Strong Agree	Very Effective
3.5 – 4.9	Agree	Effective
2.5 – 3.49	Moderately Agree	Moderately Effective
1.5 – 2.49	Less Agree	Less Effective
1.0 – 1.49	Least Agree	Not Effective

III. Results and Discussion

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

TABLE 1.1
NUMBER OF GRANTEES

Indicators	Number of Grantees
Osmeña Colleges	1,467
Liceo De Masbate	741
Total	2,208

As shown on the table 1.1 the number of grantees was 1,467 for Osmeña Colleges and 741 for Liceo De Masbate, with a total of 2, 208 grantees.

TABLE 1.2
NAME OF SCHOOL

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Osmeña Colleges	225	66%
Liceo De Masbate	114	34%
Total	339	100

Table 1.2 revealed the number of students who were surveyed from the two selected private higher institutions in the City of Masbate for the completion of this study. Among these two schools, Osmeña Colleges has the highest percentage of participating student grantees which comprised approximately 66% of the total while 34% of the 339 respondents are from Liceo De Masbate.

TABLE 1.3
AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
20-21 years old	92	27%
22-23 years old	106	31%
24-25 years old	115	34%
26 and above years old	26	8%
Total	339	100

It can be gleaned from the table that 34% or 115 of the respondents are aged 24-25 years old. Respondents whose ages range from 22-23 years old comprises 31% or 106 of the total. There are only 26 whose ages range from 26 and above years old. The data implies that the majority of the respondents ages from 22-25 years old.

TABLE 1.4
SEX OF THE RESPONDENTS

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Male	92	27
Female	247	73
Total	339	100

Table 1.4 revealed that most of the respondents are female which comprised 73% of the total. There are only 27% or 92 respondents who are male respondents.

TABLE 1.5
COURSE TAKEN OF THE RESPONDENTS

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
BEED	122	36
BSED	217	64
Total	339	100

It can be gleaned from the table that most of the courses taken by the respondents are BSED which comprised 217 or 64% of the total, while 36% of the respondents are taking BEED course.

TABLE 1.6
REQUIREMENTS OF THE GRANTEES OF UniFAST

Indicators	Requirement
Osmeña Colleges	Residency
Liceo De Masbate	Residency

In the School institutions of Osmeña Colleges and Liceo De Masbate, Table 1.6 showed that residency is the only requirement.

TABLE 1.7
INCOME OF THE PARENTS

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Php 20,000-30,000	42	12
Php 31,000-40,000	49	14
Php 41,000-50,000	60	18
Php 51,000-60,000	33	10
Php 61,000-70,000	44	13
Php 71,000-80,000	29	9
Php 81,000-90,000	59	17

Php 91,000-100,000	13	4
Php 101,000 and above	10	3
Total	339	100

Table 1.7 demonstrated that the majority income of the parents' respondents ranges from Php 41,000-50,000 or 18% from the total. Of the total, 42 Or 12% earn an income of Php 20,000-30,000 and 59 or 17% have income of Php 81,000-90,000. Only 10 or 3% earn Php 101,000 and above. Therefore, the data concludes that the majority of the parents' income ranges from Php 31,000-50,000 and Php 81,000-90,000 respectively.

Financial assistance in the form of subsidy plays a significant role to alleviate the educational expenses of the students enrolled in the private higher educational institutions all over the Philippines, especially in Osmeña Colleges and Liceo De Masbate, Masbate City. Based from the findings of this study the profile of grantees established a comprehensive data. It is widely recognized that quality education is an inalienable right of all Filipinos and it is the policy of the state to protect and promote the rights of all students to quality education. However, not all students in the private higher education are not entitled to this privilege since the slots are limited, unlike in the public institutions that they enjoyed the free tuition.

The government in recognition of their complimentary role in the educational system may provide aid to the programs of the private schools in the form of UniFAST subsidies. Students have the right to receive primarily through competent, relevant quality education in line with national goals and conducive to their full development as person with human dignity.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTERS AND STUDENTS' GRANTEES ON THE PROBLEMS MET IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UniFAST PROGRAM

TABLE 2

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTERS AND STUDENTS GRANTEES ON THE PROBLEMS MET IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UniFAST PROGRAMS OF SELECTED PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN MASBATE CITY

Indicators	Osmeña Colleges and Student Grantees			Liceo De Masbate and Student Grantees			Overall		
	$\bar{x}W$	Rank	Int.	$\bar{x}W$	Rank	Int.	$\bar{x}W$	Rank	Int.
Not all students are entitled for free education.	3.97	10	A	3.61	7	A	3.79	9	A
The number of beneficiaries are limited.	4.11	3	A	3.57	8	A	3.84	6.5	A
Late release of subsidy.	4.10	4	A	3.62	6	A	3.86	5	A
Lack of additional support from parents.	4.03	7	A	3.84	3	A	3.94	3.5	A
Boarding house payment is becoming higher.	4.26	1	A	3.94	1	A	4.1	1	A

Distance of residence of students.	4.22	2	A	3.88	2	A	4.05	2	A
Allocations given by the government not properly utilized.	4.09	5	A	3.56	9.5	A	3.83	8	A
Students don't give importance to their studies.	4.0	8.5	A	3.68	5	A	3.84	6.5	A
Low performance of students in their academic subjects	4.07	6	A	3.81	4	A	3.94	3.5	A
Requirements were not met.	4.0	8.5	A	3.56	9.5	A	3.78	10	A
Total $\bar{x}W =$	40.85			37.07			38.97		
Average $\bar{x}W =$	4.09		A	3.71		A	3.90		A

Table 2 shows the indicators, group of respondents' weighted mean, rank and the interpretation of the data with an overall average mean. As shown on the table, the total weighted mean as to the perceptions of respondents coming from Osmeña Colleges was 40.85 with an average weighted mean of 4.09. As perceived by respondents of Liceo De Masbate, as to the total weighted mean was 37.07 and the average weighted mean of 3.71. Interpretations of the group of respondents, "Agree".

The data also implied that the combined perceptions were rating specifying the weighted mean, rank and interpretation. For indicator one, rank 1 had 4.1 on problem, boarding house is becoming higher with an interpretation of agree. The remaining indicators had a weighted mean of 4.05 down to lowest 3.78. The average weighted mean was 3.90, with an overall interpretation of agree. The five major problems with their weighted mean were; boarding house payment is becoming higher, 4.1, rank 1; distance of residence of students, 4.05, rank 2; lack of additional support from parents, and low performance of students, both had a weighted mean of 3.94; late release of subsidy, 3.86, rank 5. Other indicators had a weighted mean of 3.84, 3.83, 3.79 and 3.78 with rank of 6, 5, 8, and 9, respectively. They perceived that number of beneficiaries are limited; students don't give importance to their studies; allocations given by the government were not properly utilized; not all students are entitled for free tuition and requirements were not met.

Problems in the implementation of these two programs cannot be avoided since there are many intervening factors that arises on the part of the beneficiaries. These are realistic situations that should be attended and be minimized in terms of allocations of funds; distance of residence of the students as the second major problems because they came from other municipalities and far-flung barangays. Those students residing in the cities are being prioritized in the selection. In terms of additional support of parents, it become a problem if the parents have no permanent jobs or the income from farming and fishing is limited and are enough for their daily subsistence. In addition to these problems, students don't give importance to their studies and there is a low performance in their academic subjects and these are alarming because they don't take advantage of these

opportunities given by the government. Allocations of funds are not properly utilized because they use them for other purposes than prioritizing for their educational expenses.

SUGGESTED MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIFAST PROGRAM

TABLE 3
PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTERS AND STUDENTS GRANTEES ON THE SUGGESTED MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIFAST PROGRAMS OF SELECTED PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN MASBATE CITY

Indicators	Osmeña Implementers and Student Grantees		Colleges and Liceo De Masbate and Student Grantees	Liceo De Masbate and Student Grantees		Overall			
	$\bar{x}W$	Rank		Int.	$\bar{x}W$	Rank	Int.	$\bar{x}W$	Rank
Request more slots from CHED for additional beneficiaries.	3.99	6	E	4.18	2	E	4.09	2	E
CHED should be updated in the release of funds.	4.02	5	E	4.35	1	E	4.19	1	E
Parents should give additional financial support to students.	4.07	3.5	E	3.78	10	E	3.93	9	E
The school administrator should procure additional materials such as books, and journals, etc.	4.17	1	E	3.81	5	E	3.99	5	E
Students should look for a boarding house nearer to the school premises.	4.13	2	E	3.92	7	E	4.03	4	E
Funds for free education should be properly utilized.	4.07	3.5	E	4.0	3	E	4.04	3	E
Absenteeism of students should be minimized.	3.98	7.5	E	3.81	8.5	E	3.90	10	E
Increase performance of students.	3.98	7.5	E	3.97	4	E	3.98	6	E
Updated requirements of the students should be submitted to the school.	3.97	9	E	3.90	6	E	3.94	8	E
Return service of the students to the school are encourage.	3.96	11	E	3.94	5	E	3.95	7	E
Internet connection should be present.	3.97	10	E	3.73	11	E	3.85	11	E
Total $\bar{x}W$ =	44.31			43.39			43.89		
Average $\bar{x}W$ =	4.3		E	3.94		E	3.99		E

Table 3 shows the indicators for the suggested measures with their corresponding perceptions as shown by weighted mean and interpretations. As indicated in the table, all indicators had an interpretation of effective as to their weighted mean as perceived by the two group of

respondents based on the total weighted mean for Osmeña Colleges, 44.3 average of 4.3 and for Liceo De Masbate, total of 43.39, average of 3.94 for the eleven indicators.

In line with the overall perceptions all indicators were interpreted as effective on CHED should be updated in the release of funds, 4.19, rank 1; request more slots from CHED for additional beneficiaries, 4.09, rank2; funds for educational should be properly utilized, 4.04, rank 3; students should look for a boarding house nearer to the school premises, 4.03, rank 4; the school administrator should procure additional materials such as books and journal, etc., rank 5; increase performance of students 3.98, rank 6; return service of the students to the school are encourage, 3.95, rank 7; updated requirements of the students should be updated, 3.94, rank 8; parents should give additional financial support to the students, 3.93, rank 9; absenteeism of students should be minimized, 3.90, rank 10; and internet connection should be present, 3.85, rank 11. The total weighted mean was 43.8 and the average weighted mean, 3.99, “Agree” is the overall interpretations. Based from the findings of this study, the data implied that suggested measures offered are in consonance with the problems perceived by the respondents. These suggestions might be implemented so that problems will be solved or minimized for the improvement of the UniFAST programs, specifically in Masbate City.

In this regard, students, parents, teachers and school administrators should do their part for the success of the government financial assistance in the tertiary education. Most of all students should realize that these financial programs on students’ persistence, academic performance and financial capacity that will redound as an effective vehicle for social mobility socio-economic, political development and an instrument for their change.

DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS OF PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONDENTS ON THE PROBLEMS MET AND SUGGESTED MEASURES

TABLE 4
SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS OF PERCEPTIONS ON THE PROBLEMS MET AND THE SUGGESTED MEASURES

Indicators	Data
Computed r_s	1.18
N	11
Level of Significance	.05
Tabular Value	0.564
Interpretation of the Data	Highly Significant
Decision on the Null-Hypotheses	Rejected

Table 4 shows the significant correlations on the perceptions of respondents. The table included the indicators and data based on the computation. The table showed the computed coefficient of correlations or $r_s = 1.18$; $N = 11$, level of significance = .05 and the tabular value = 0.564.

As shown on the table, the data implied that the computed r_s is very much greater than the tabular value. The interpretation of the data is highly significant and the decision on the null-hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the study was rejected.

The researcher came to the conclusion that there is a considerable correlation between the two respondents' perceptions or that they are highly associated with one another.

IV. Conclusion

The result of this study highlighted the extent of implementation of the UniFAST programs of selected private higher education institutions in the City of Masbate. The implementation of the UniFAST programs in selected private higher education institutions is critically important for promoting equitable access to quality education. Through effective implementation of these programs, private institutions can help ensure that financially disadvantaged but deserving students are able to pursue higher education without the burden of financial constraints. According to the statistics, it indicates that the demographic profile of the respondents revealed that the number of grantees was 1,467 for Osmeña Colleges and 741 for Liceo De Masbate, with a total of 2, 208 grantees, Osmeña Colleges has the highest percentage of student grantees, majority of the respondents ages from 22-25 years old, most of the respondents are female and most of the courses taken by the respondents are BSED, residency is the only requirement needed in availing the subsidy, and the majority of the parents' income ranges from Php 31,000-50,000 and Php 81,000-90,000 respectively.

Regarding the perceptions of the implementers and students' grantees on the problems met in the implementation of the UniFAST program, the total weighted mean as to the perceptions of respondents coming from Osmeña Colleges was 40.85 with an average weighted mean of 4.09. As perceived by respondents of Liceo De Masbate, as to the total weighted mean was 37.07 and the average weighted mean of 3.71. Interpretations of the group of respondents, "Agree". This indicates that, the problems in the implementation of these two programs cannot be avoided since there are many intervening factors that arises on the part of the beneficiaries. These are realistic situations that should be attended and be minimized in terms of allocations of funds; distance of residence of the students as the second major problems because they came from other municipalities and far-flung barangays. Those students residing in the cities are being prioritized in the selection. In terms of additional support of parents, it become a problem if the parents have no permanent jobs or the income from farming and fishing is limited and are enough for their daily subsistence. In addition to these problems, students don't give importance to their studies and there is a low performance in their academic subjects and these are alarming because they don't take advantage of these opportunities given by the government. Allocations of funds are not properly utilized because they use them for other purposes than prioritizing for their educational expenses. According to Maga-ao, et.al (2019), the subsidy that the students received was not entirely utilized

for their educational or academic needs as part of it was sent to their parents or relatives for non-academic purposes, and a few used the subsidy for buying non-academic related items.

In line with the perceptions of the implementers and students' grantees on the suggested measures to improve the implementation of the UniFAST programs, the data revealed that all indicators had an interpretation of effective as to their weighted mean as perceived by the two group of respondents based on the total weighted mean for Osmeña Colleges, 44.3 average of 4.3 and for Liceo De Masbate, total of 43.39, average of 3.94 for the eleven indicators. Based from the findings of this study, the data implied that suggested measures offered are in consonance with the problems perceived by the respondents. These suggestions might be implemented so that problems will be solved or minimized for the improvement of the UniFAST programs, specifically in Masbate City. In this regard, students, parents, teachers and school administrators should do their part for the success of the government financial assistance in the tertiary education. Most of all students should realize that these financial programs on students' persistence, academic performance and financial capacity that will redound as an effective vehicle for social mobility socio-economic, political development and an instrument for their change. Gracilla, et.al (2024) indicates that these scholarships significantly enhance educational access by lowering financial obstacles and fostering long-term social mobility through improved career prospects and economic stability.

Furthermore, as to the significant correlations of perceptions on the problems met and the suggested measures the data showed that the computed coefficient of correlations or $r_s = 1.18$; $N = 11$, level of significance = .05 and the tabular value = 0.564. As shown on the table, the data implied that the computed r_s is very much greater than the tabular value. The interpretation of the data is highly significant and the decision on the null- hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the study was rejected. Therefore, the data implies that there is a considerable correlation between the two respondents' perceptions or that they are highly associated with one another.

V. Recommendations

As an offshoot of the conclusions, the following recommendations were proposed: problems met by the respondents should be attended by all concerns in which the institutional administrators should carry out a thorough needs assessment that concentrates on administrative inefficiencies and communication gaps in order to effectively address the intervening factors that the respondents identified as raising challenges to the program's implementation; since indicators of the suggested measures were effective these should be disseminated to CHED, school administrators, students' grantees and stakeholders; students' grantees should be given special orientation on the importance of the government programs so that they be obliged to study well; The UniFast implementers should undergo regular training and capacity-building initiatives to maintain and further enhance the implementation effectiveness and ensures continuous improvement and responsiveness to the needs of both students and implementers; The UniFAST

implementers should promote active stakeholder engagement to enhance program responsiveness and accountability; and to fully comprehend how the UniFAST programs' implementation has affected the grant recipients' life, more studies need to be done.

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The Researcher

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AUTHOR’S PROFILE



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Ernel T. Flores earned a Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Filipino at Osmeña Colleges Inc. in the year 2019. He passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in the same year. While teaching at his Alma Mater for three years as a full-time junior high school teacher and a part-time instructor in the college of teacher education department, he is also pursuing his Master's degree in Education with a Major in Administration and Supervision and finished it in July 2022. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management program at Masbate Colleges.

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Jonald Blacer Sia is a distinguished academic leader and educator with expertise in education, leadership, and research. He holds multiple honorary and earned credentials, including the Doctor of Education, Doctor of Humanities, and Fellowship of the Order of Pedagogues. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Public Administration, and has completed postdoctoral studies in Strategic Management and Leadership.

Dr. Sia is a multi-awarded professional, recognized as Asia's Outstanding Dean of the Year and recipient of the Maharaja's Crown Award for International Peace Educator and the Oxford Excellence Award in Education among others. His qualifications span certifications in educational leadership, behavioral science, human resources, paralegal studies, and advanced research. He is also a certified Global Citizenship Education Trainer, Mental Health Trainer, and TESOL/TEFL educator.

He is a valued member of the Commission on Higher Education Regional Office V - Regional Quality Assessment Team (RQAT), contributing to the development and quality assurance of academic programs in the region. As a sought-after resource speaker, Dr. Sia leads professional development sessions for both teaching and non-teaching personnel.

His leadership roles include serving as Graduate School Dean, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dean of the College of Teacher Education. Dr. Sia is also an accomplished author of educational references. His influence extends to the media as a former newspaper columnist and radio DJ, engaging diverse audiences and advocating for lifelong learning.