



Employment Outcomes Of The Scholar Graduates Of Tarlac State University

Evangeline D. Guiang¹, Sharmaine G. Beltran², and Laarni T. Capinding³

¹Student Affairs and Services, Tarlac State University, Tarlac, Philippines

²Department of Bachelor of Secondary Education, College of Education, Tarlac State University, Tarlac, Philippines

³Professional & Continuing Education Department and Bachelor of Secondary Education Department, College of Education, Tarlac State University, Tarlac, Philippines

Abstract: This study was conducted to determine the employment outcomes of the scholar graduates of Tarlac State University (TSU) from 2018-2022. It also offers a comprehensive analysis of the profiles, academic achievements, scholarship access, and board examination performance of the scholar graduates. These scholar graduates were recipients of several scholarship programs, the CHED-Tulong-Dunong Program being the most popular source of financial assistance. Of the 1,386 scholar graduates, 532 participated in the study by completing an online survey that was uploaded using Microsoft Forms. The highest number of scholar graduates came from the College of Education and the College of Business Accountancy. Out of the 347 scholar graduates who took the licensure examination, 303 passed the examination. Many of the respondents are currently employed, majority of them holding permanent positions. Other employment statuses include contractual employment, job orders, temporary employment, casual positions, and probationary roles. A small number of these scholar graduates are unemployed because of lack of work experience. The college competency that was deemed very necessary in their job was communication skills followed by critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In terms of the graduates' reasons for accepting and staying in the job, salaries and benefits are the most significant factors for them. To enhance the degree programs, it was recommended that TSU must align its curriculum with industry standards to make the students more prepared and equipped before venturing into the labor market. A stronger partnership with local and international companies must be given full attention to improve the students' practical and realistic skills and experience. While pointing out areas for enhancement in academic preparation, professional preparedness, and administrative procedures, respondents generally conveyed gratitude for the opportunities provided by the TSU scholarship program. TSU can use these insights to enhance its degree programs and research support systems in the future.

Index Terms – Employment Outcomes, Scholar Graduates, Graduate Employability.

I. INTRODUCTION

For Filipino families, education is the only way to break away from poverty. But education, as the only hope for a better life, has been elusive to Filipino youth. The 2017 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) of the Philippine Statistics Authority revealed that about 9% of the estimated 39.2 million Filipinos were out-of-school children and youth, aged 6 to 24 years. The survey showed that one of the reasons for not attending schools by the bottom 30% and top 70% of the population was the high cost of education or financial concern (18% and 13% respectively). Similar findings were revealed in the 2018 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). MPI showed that from 2016 to 2017 educational attainment consistently had the highest incidence of deprivation among families, that is, 6 out of 10 families were deprived of basic education. This further means that 6 out of 10 families had at least one family member that did not complete basic education (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018).

This deprivation of education contributed to the pressing unemployment problem in the Philippines. The report entitled Employment and Poverty in the Philippines (Rutkowski, 2015) cited two interrelated root causes of in-work poverty. These are the low education of the poor and the scarcity of productive job opportunities. The report suggested that better education and skills would reduce poverty. In other countries, studies also showed how lack of education can result in unemployment. Kyzsaikal and Nazarbekova (2011) in their study entitled "Lack of Education Today – Unemployment Tomorrow" arrived at the conclusion that the main cause of unemployment is poor education leading to low incomes which leads to the vicious cycle of low income leading to poor education and poor education in its turn leads to unemployment. One recommendation that resulted from this study was for the Ministry of Education of Bishkek to put up programs that will inspire students to study well like the offering of scholarships to various universities that will cover tuition fees and a living allowance, among others.

More studies have shown how crucial education is as an instrument in poverty reduction and in the enhancement of human welfare. Omoniyi (2013), in his study of the role of education in poverty alleviation and economic development, emphasized education as one of the fundamental factors of achieving sustainable economic development by investing in human capital. Hence, his study concluded that education is indispensable to economic development and poverty eradication. This means that no economic development is possible without education. Furthermore, Mesa (2007) mentioned in her study on the inequality of education in the Philippines, that equal access to education improve the poor's social and economic mobility. That is why in the Philippines, Filipino parents work hard to send their children to school because they view higher education as an investment and to secure a job and improve their socio-economic status. According to Rojas and Rojas (2016) parents even engage in different kinds of loans for their children to graduate in a certain degree. Payment of tuition fees is an experience that bring Filipino families in a tight situation, but the dream to earn a profession is steadfast and admirable among the Filipino youth.

The above surveys and studies showed that there are many Filipino families who cannot support their children through college because they are financially incapable. Securing funds for the educational needs of their children proved to be very difficult. This is where scholarship grants and educational assistance programs play a big role in helping the Filipino youth attain their dream of a better future through education.

The Philippine government, seeing the need to help the Filipino youth to have access to quality education and to become professionals, created a special program called Free Tuition 2017. This made tuition fees free in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) for Academic Year (AY) 2017 – 2018. But miscellaneous and other school fees were not covered in this program. To fully help the Filipino youth, the Philippine Government, through the Senate and the House of Representatives, passed Republic Act 10931, known as the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act". This is an expansion and enhancement of Free Tuition 2017. The Act is to make higher education accessible to all Filipino youth by providing free tuition and other school fees in State Universities and Colleges (Seventeenth Congress, First Regular Session, 2016). With this Act, it shows how the government promotes and protects the right of all students to quality education at all levels.

Tarlac State University (TSU) is among those State Universities and College (SUCs) who is a recipient of the state funding based on RA 10931. The Act had given the Filipino youth a new hope for a brighter future. Other than this form of grant, there are other number of scholarship programs offered to TSU students by different private and public organizations. Some of these scholarship programs are the Department of Science and Technology – Science Education Institution (DOST- SEI), PLDT-Smart Foundation Inc. (2G-Gabay Guro Program), Scholarship Program for Differently Abled Individual, and other privately-funded scholarship programs. With these scholarship programs, students have a better chance to finish higher education. The financial aid received from these programs will equalize the opportunities of students from upper-income and lower-income to be integrated into the academic institutions and will help in their overall college persistence (Cabrera, Nora and Castaneda, 1992).

To monitor the impact of different scholarship programs, a tracer study is needed to seek and evaluate the effectiveness of the scholarship programs. Most tracer studies conducted in the Philippines were institutional tracer studies, that is, conducted by schools, colleges or universities where according to

Schomburg, H. (2016), the most common topics covered are questions on study progress, the transition to work, work entrance, job career, use of learned competencies, current occupation and bonds to the education institution (school, center, university). For a long time, the importance of tracer studies has been recognized. Authors like Ramirez, Cruz and Alcantara (2014) suggested that higher education institutions (HEI) can contribute meaningfully by conducting tracer study for the purpose of quality assurance and to establish efficient and sustainable learning environment for continuous development of students and alumni. Not only are tracer studies useful in providing feedback from graduates for the improvement of curricular offerings but are also requirements for accreditation of study programs or projects.

Examples of findings from institutional tracer studies contained information such as in-demand jobs, type of graduates who are most employable, and academic experiences (Catanduanes State Colleges, 2007). In the study of Heidemann (2011), 45 German higher education institutions concluded that tracer studies provide information about the entry into the labor market and workforce as well as retrospective evaluations of study programs.

Ofoha & Iwuchukwu (2018) traced and determined how 222 nursing graduates from online distance learning (ODL) of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) were performing in their workplaces. The researchers also corresponded with the managers/immediate supervisors of organizations where the graduates were employed. The results revealed most NOUN graduate nurses exemplified a high level of professional competency, and a significant number of employers had a high perception of the 222 graduates who came from ODL. It was also found that the Nursing program of NOUN and course materials were highly rated, but clinical practicum exercise of infrastructure was rated the least.

Gines (2014), in a tracer study of Philippine Normal University (PNU) graduates from batches 2009-2011, pointed out that tracer studies are an essential source of information to know what happened to the graduates and that findings can be used as an initial basis in PNU's endeavor to redefine its mission, development of Teacher Education curriculum, and show how course programs can be adjusted to exhibit institutional goals. The said study revealed that 95.07% of the respondents claimed they received adequate training in their undergraduate program. This was significantly related to the tasks they perform in their current employment. The respondents also affirmed the opportunity they received to teach in an actual class was essential in honing their skills. It was also found out that the graduates' level of satisfaction with the University's services, learning environment, and facilities were generally high; however, there was only moderate satisfaction with computer laboratories.

All the above tracer studies specifically targeted their graduates from specific programs. The data from these studies revealed how effective the curriculum in their programs is and how employable their graduates are. The studies above also support the significance of tracer studies in recognizing and addressing the curriculum's strengths and weaknesses, quality, and relevance with the needed competencies in the local and international job market.

Few tracer studies were conducted on the effectiveness of scholarship programs provided by different private and public institutions. The aim to collect information on the conditions of the scholarship grantees during and after their studies and to evaluate the impact of the scholarship programs for the improvement of the scholarship schemes are seldom performed.

One scholarship program that does regular tracking of their scholars is the Science Education Institute (SEI) of Department of Science and Technology (DOST). DOST is mandated by Executive Order No. 128 and by virtue of Scholarship Act of 1994, to provide grants-in-aid to deserving students to pursue bachelor's degrees or training in Science and Technology areas. DOST-SEI conducted tracer studies to monitor the impact of scholarship programs and assess the effectiveness of the scholarship programs. The tracer report yielded data that 6 out of 10 scholar graduates were already employed within six months after graduation, and 8 out of 10 landed a job one to two years after graduation. This translated to an employment rate of 83.6%. DOST-SEI also reported that there was positive and negative feedback from scholar graduates; nonetheless, majority of the scholars had positive feedback and testified that they had an advantage in searching for job as a DOST-SEI scholar. DOST-SEI (2020) further argued that the conduct of tracer studies among scholar graduates is an important means to better understand the long-term effects of scholarship programs being implemented.

The related literature and studies in this study helped the author identify the research gap that is still unexplored in tracer studies. One research gap identified is the lack of data as to the success of scholars in board examinations and data or information on the completion and employment rate of graduate scholars. The completion and employment rates of the scholars in board examinations may serve as indicators of the success and effectiveness of the scholarship programs. It is on this premise that the pursuance of this study is based. Data collected from this study will be used to contribute to the accreditation processes like Institutional Accreditation by AACCUP and Institutional Sustainability Assessment by CHED. Data will provide valuable information on the present situation of the graduate scholars particularly on the employment situation outcomes of scholarship programs. Specifically, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Determine the demographic characteristics of the scholar graduates of classes 2018 to 2022
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Sex
 - 1.3. Civil Status
2. Determine the education profile of the scholar graduates in terms of:
 - 2.1 Bachelor's degree program
 - 2.2 Year Entered
 - 2.3 Graduation Cohort
 - 2.4 Honor(s) or Award(s) Received
 - 2.5 Scholarship Program Availed
 - 2.6 Professional Licensure Examination Passed
3. Determine the employment data and work characteristics of scholar-graduates in their respective employment area
4. Determine the level of satisfaction of the contribution of the degree programs to the personal and professional growth of the scholar graduates
5. Determine the advantage of being a TSU scholar graduate as a qualification for work opportunities
6. Gather feedback from the scholar graduates on how to enhance programs

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used descriptive research design to trace and determine the completion rate, employability, and board exam performance of scholar graduates from Class 2018 to 2022. Below are the details of the study's methodology and procedures:

On instrument

The study adapted the Graduate Tracer Study Questionnaire crafted by the Commission on Higher Education. The questionnaire was accessed online by the graduates using Microsoft Forms. It was composed of three parts: (1) general information; (2) employment data; (3) contribution of the degree program to the scholar graduates' professional growth as well as their suggestions on how to improve the graduate program they finished.

On participants and sample size

The population in this study were scholar graduates from five cohorts: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. These are graduates who were recipients of scholarship programs other than that of the scholarship granted under RA 10931 better known as "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act." All scholar graduates were considered as respondents to avoid low response rate in the survey.

On data collection

To gather the data, the study adapted the tracer study questionnaire crafted by the Commission on Higher Education. The questionnaire was uploaded online using Google forms as platform for online survey. The following strategies were also taken into account during the gathering data: (a) collaborating with TSU Student Affairs and Services departments such as Admission and Registration, Career Education and Job Placement Services, and Scholarship and Finance Assistance to gather the names of the scholar graduates; (b) using the media to promote the tracer study; and (c) using the "snowball technique," which involved

asking friends of graduate scholars who graduated with them for their addresses; Facebook and other social networks were used.

On data analysis

The data analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS (Statistical Analysis for the Social Sciences).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section analyzes the data collected in the study, focusing on the current circumstances of graduate scholars, particularly their employment outcomes as a result of the scholarship programs. The participants include scholar graduates from 44 programs offered across nine colleges at Tarlac State University.

3.1 Profile of Scholar Graduate Participants

Table 1 presents a detailed breakdown of the scholar graduates' degree programs and specializations across various colleges, based on a total sample size of 532. The College of Education earned the highest percentage of scholar graduates accumulating 40.2% of the total sample. Within this college, the Bachelor of Education program emerged as the most represented, accounting for 8.1% of the respondents.

Furthermore, the College of Business and Accountancy is one of the other colleges with a prominent representation, which accounted for 14.7% of scholar graduates, with the most popular program being the BSBA in Financial Management (3.8%). Similarly, the College of Engineering accounted for 11.8% of the respondents, with BS Civil Engineering (3.9%) as the leading program. Moreover, smaller proportions were observed in the College of Arts and Social Sciences with 10.2% of scholar graduates, the College of Computer Studies with 8.5%, the College of Public Administration and Governance with 8.5%, the College of Science with 4.7% and the College of Criminal Justice Education with 1.7%. These distributions highlight the respondents' wide range of academic specializations, with a significant emphasis on business and education fields, which reflects the population's diverse academic interests.

Table 1
Degree and field of specialization of scholar graduates

Response	n	%
College of Education		
Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	3	0.6
Bachelor Elementary Education	43	8.1
Bachelor of Physical Education	15	2.8
BSED English	31	5.8
BSED Filipino	26	4.9
BSED Mathematics	20	3.8
BSED Sciences	17	3.2
BSED Social Sciences	31	5.8
BTLE major in Industrial Arts	4	0.8
BTVTED major in Food and Service Management	15	2.8
BTVTED major in Food and Service	6	1.1
BSED Technology and Livelihood Education	2	0.4
BTTE major in Food and Service Management	1	0.2
BTTE major in Civil Technology	3	0.6
Sub-total	214	40.2
College of Business and Accountancy		
BS Accountancy	14	2.6
BS Accounting Information System	14	2.6
BS Accounting Technology	3	0.6
BS Entrepreneurship	0	0.0
BS Hospitality Management	8	1.5
BS Hotel and Restaurant Management	2	0.4
BSBA Business Economics	0	0.0

Response	n	%
BSBA Financial Management	20	3.8
BSBA Marketing Management	17	3.2
Sub-total	78	14.7
College of Engineering		
BS Civil Engineering	21	3.9
BS Electrical Engineering	15	2.8
BS Mechanical Engineering	10	1.9
BS Industrial Engineering	10	1.9
BS Electronics Engineering	7	1.3
Sub-total	63	11.8
College of Arts and Social Sciences		
AB Communication	24	4.5
AB English Language	15	2.8
AB Psychology	15	2.8
Sub-total	54	10.2
College of Computer Studies		
BS Computer Science	5	0.9
BS Information System Specialized in Business	10	1.9
Analytics		
BS IT Specialized in Technical Service	12	2.3
Management		
BS IT Specialized in Web and Mobile	6	1.1
Application		
BS IT Specialized in Network Administration	12	2.3
Sub-total	45	8.5
College of Public Administration and Governance		
Bachelor of Public Administration	33	6.2
Sub-total	33	6.2
College of Science		
BS Nursing	5	0.9
BS Chemistry	13	2.4
BS Food Technology	1	0.2
BS Mathematics	0	0.0
BS Environmental Science	6	1.1
Sub-total	25	4.7
College of Architecture and Fine Arts		
BS in Architecture	10	1.9
Bachelor of Fine Arts	1	0.2
Sub-total	11	2.1
College of Criminal Justice Education		
BS Criminology	9	1.7
Sub-total	9	1.7

Note. N= 532

Table 2 reflects the distribution of respondents, with 56.2% comprising scholar graduates from 2022. This predominance may be attributed to increased enrollment during previous years and the impact of delayed graduations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among the graduates of 2020 and 2021. Additionally, the smaller proportions from earlier cohorts can be explained by the implementation of the K to 12 programs, which resulted in a two-year gap in college enrollment. During this transition period, no first-year college students were admitted, leading to a significant decrease in the number of graduates for those years.

Table 2
Distribution of the scholar graduates by year of graduation

Year Graduated	n	%
2022	299	56.2
2021	43	8.1
2020	50	9.4
2019	133	25.0

Note. N=532

Table 3 presents the distribution of academic honors received by the respondents at graduation. The majority of honors recipients, 26.9% graduated as cum laude, followed by 5.5% who achieved magna cum laude, and a notable but rare 0.2% who earned the distinction of summa cum laude. These numbers highlight the university's academic integrity and a significant proportion of high-achieving students.

However, the data also reveals that a substantial 67.5% of the respondents graduated without honors. This observation warrants a closer examination of the factors that may impact academic performance, particularly among scholar-graduate students.

Table 3
Distribution of academic honors of the respondents

Academic Honors	n	%
Summa Cum Laude	1	0.2
Magna Cum Laude	29	5.5
Cum Laude	143	26.9
None	359	67.5

Note. N=532

Table 4 reveals that only 11.1% of respondents were recognized with non-academic awards. Among these, leadership awards were the most common, accounting for 6.6% of the total. This was followed by journalism awards with 2.3%, academic distinction/excellence with 0.9%, culture and arts awards with 0.6%, athletics awards with 0.4%, and loyalty awards with 0.4%. Particularly, the majority of respondents with 88.9% did not receive any form of non-academic recognition.

Table 4
Non-academic Awards of the Respondents

Non-academic Awards	n	%
Leadership Award	35	6.6
Journalism Award	12	2.3
Academic Distinction/Excellence	5	0.9
Culture and Arts Award	3	0.6
Athletics Award	2	0.4
Loyalty Award	2	0.4
None	473	88.9

Note. N=532

Table 5 presents the respondents' access to various scholarship programs provided by the university, emphasizing the pivotal role of financial aid in enabling students to pursue higher education. The most widely utilized scholarship was the CHED-Tulong Dunong Program, which supported 51.3% of scholar graduates. The Commission on Higher studies (CHED) of the Philippines launched this initiative with the intention of giving eligible and worthy Filipino students financial aid so they can complete their studies within the country.

Other significant scholarships include the Cong. Noel Villanueva Scholarship, which supported 14.7% of scholar graduates and the TES/Listahan, accessed by 14.1% of scholar graduates. Both programs reflect targeted support for students in specific economic or geographic areas, particularly those within the 3rd District of Tarlac Province. The TES/Listahan program is frequently linked to recipients of the Philippines'

"Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program" (4Ps), a conditional cash transfer program, which specifically highlights government initiatives to support neglected sectors.

Moreover, 9.0% of scholar graduates profited from the TSU-University Scholar Program, reflecting institutional recognition of academic excellence. The aim of this program is to encourage students to maintain high standards of achievement by rewarding exceptional academic achievements. Additionally, the institution offered scholarships through the TSU-College Scholar Program, which benefited 5.6% of scholar graduates, and the TSU-Investment and Student Scholarship Fund, which benefited 4.5% of scholar graduates.

The institution also provided assistance to students who excelled in areas other than academics. For example, the TSU-Performing Arts Scholarship rewarded 0.8% scholar graduates for their artistic and cultural contributions, and the TSU-Athletic Scholarship Program awarded 1.3% of scholar graduates. The university's comprehensive approach to financial assistance is reflected in these initiatives, which recognize not only the academic and educational side of excellence but also the extracurricular accomplishments as essential elements of student success.

Beyond these prominent programs, smaller yet impactful scholarships significantly contributed to addressing the diverse needs of scholar graduates. For instance, the DOST-SEI Scholarship, which supported 4.1% of scholar graduates, was specifically designed for academically talented students pursuing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. The program likely contributed significantly to the development of advanced skills and competence among beneficiaries by encouraging excellence in these specialized fields. Additionally, these programs strongly correspond with national priorities, especially when it comes to improving workforce development and education in areas that are vital to the advancement and innovation of the nation.

Meanwhile, less common scholarships, such as the OWWA EDSP, accessed by 0.2% of scholar graduate, and the Scholarship for Differently Abled Individuals, also awarded to 0.2% of scholar graduate, demonstrate inclusivity within financial aid systems by targeting specific populations, such as children of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and persons with disabilities. Additionally, the SIFI Scholarship and the Philippine Army Finance Producers Integrated Cooperative (PAFPIC) Scholarship were each awarded to 0.2% scholar graduate.

Other rare scholarships include the SAGIP Scholarship, received by 0.4% of scholar graduates, the DIWA Partylist Scholarship, awarded to 0.4% of scholar graduates, the SM Foundation Inc. Scholarship Program, received by 0.4% scholar graduates, the Yokohama Tire Philippines Inc. Scholarship Program, which supported 0.4% scholar graduates, and the Tarlac Mac Enterprise Inc. Scholarship Program, also accessed by 0.4% scholar graduates.

Table 5
Scholarship Programs received by the respondents

Scholarship Programs	<i>n</i>	%
CHED-Tulong Dunong Program	273	51.3
Cong. Noel Villanueva Scholarship	78	14.7
TES/Listahan	75	14.1
TSU-University Scholar	48	9.0
TSU-College Scholar	30	5.6
TSU-Investment and Student Scholarship Fund	24	4.5
DOST-SEI	22	4.1
Gabay Guro Scholarship Program	13	2.4
GELIO Scholarship Program	8	1.5
BUTIL Partylist Scholarship	8	1.5
TSU-Athletic Scholarship Program	7	1.3
TSU Performing Arts	4	0.8
Gov. Yap Scholarship	3	0.6
Belmont Softgel Pharma Corp	3	0.6
4Ps Scholarship	3	0.6

Scholarship Programs	<i>n</i>	%
Municipal Scholarship	3	0.6
TSU Student Journalism Scholarship	3	0.6
Luis Co Chi Kiat Foundation Inc. (LCCKI)	3	0.6
CTISIP-CSWD	3	0.6
TSU Student Leadership Scholarship	2	0.4
TSU Alumni Association Inc. Scholarship	2	0.4
CHED Full Merit Scholarship Program	2	0.4
SAGIP Scholarship	2	0.4
DIWA Partylist Scholarship	2	0.4
SM Foundation Inc Scholarship Program	2	0.4
YOKOHOMA Tire Philippines Inc Scholarship Program	2	0.4
Tarlac Mac Enterprise Inc. Scholarship Program	2	0.4
OWWA EDSP	1	0.2
SIFI	1	0.2
Philippine Army Finance Producers Integrated Cooperative (PAFPIC)	1	0.2
Scholarship for Differently Abled Individuals	1	0.2

Note: Multiple Responses

Table 6 displays the distribution of respondents based on their participation in and results from the board examination. A total of 57% of the respondents successfully passed the board examination, while 8.3% failed. In addition, 34.8% have not yet taken any board examinations.

Table 6

Respondents' board examination participation and results

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Yes, I passed the examination	303	57.0
Yes, I failed the examination	44	8.3
No, I have not yet taken any examination	185	34.8

Note. N=532

Table 7 presents a comprehensive analysis of graduates' performance in various board examinations, revealing a high overall success rate. Of the 347 examinees, 303 successfully passed their respective exams, achieving an 87% overall passing rate. Among these, the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers had the highest number of passers, with 95% graduates. This was followed by the Civil Service Examination (Professional Level), with 51% passers.

Other results include civil engineers with 79% passers, registered electrical engineers with 80% passers, and certified public accountants with 82% passers. There are also several fields that achieved a 100% passing rate, including criminologists, mechanical engineers, chemical technicians, chemists, nurses, architects, and electronics technicians. Additionally, the Civil Service Examination for the Sub-Professional Level had 6 passers, reflecting an 86% passing rate. On the other hand, the Electronics Engineer Examination had a lower passing rate, with 2 out of 5 examinees (40%) succeeding. Unfortunately, the lone examinee for the Master Plumber Examination did not pass. These findings suggest areas for possible improvement in specific fields and show the graduates' capabilities across a range of disciplines.

Table 7
Performance of the graduates in various board examinations

Examination Taken	Passed		Failed	
	n	%	n	%
Professional Teachers	194	95	11	5
Civil Service Examination (Professional)	19	51	18	49
Civil Engineers	15	79	4	21
Registered Electrical Engineers	12	80	3	20
Certified Public Accountants	9	82	2	18
Criminologist	9	100	0	0
Mechanical Engineers	9	100	0	0
Chemical Technicians	7	100	0	0
Civil Service Examination (Sub-professional)	6	86	1	14
Psychometrists	6	86	1	1
Chemists	5	100	0	0
Electronics Engineers	2	40	3	3
Nurses	5	100	0	0
Architects	4	100	0	0
Electronics Technicians	1	100	0	0
Master Plumbers	0	0	1	1

Note. N= 347

In terms of the graduates' employment status, Table 8 shows that 87% of the respondents are currently employed. The majority hold regular or permanent positions in their respective workplaces. Additionally, other employment statuses include contractual employment (18.8%), job orders (8.1%), temporary employment (4.9%), casual positions (1.7%), and probationary roles (0.9%). Among the respondents, 8.8% are currently unemployed, 3.4% are self-employed, and 0.8% have never been employed.

Table 8
Employment profile of respondents by type and status

Status of employment	n	%
Regular or Permanent	280	52.6
Contractual	100	18.8
Job Order	43	8.1
Temporary	26	4.9
Casual	9	1.7
Probationary	5	0.9
Not Employed	47	8.8
Self-employed	18	3.4
Never employed	4	0.8

Note: N=532

Table 9 outlines the respondents' reasons for unemployment. The most common reason mentioned by 75% of respondents is a lack of experience in securing a job. Tied at 50% are the lack of job opportunities and family-related concerns. Additionally, 25% of respondents indicated that they are pursuing advanced or graduate studies, while others prioritized health-related concerns. These findings provide insight into the various factors influencing unemployment among graduates.

Table 9
Reasons for unemployment

Response	n	%
Lack of work experience	3	75.0
No job opportunity	2	50.0
Family concern	2	50.0
Pursue advance or graduate studies	1	25.0
Health related reasons	1	25.0

Note. N=4

Table 10 presents the relevant college skills utilized by self-employed graduates in their work. Communication skills were the most frequently reported among the 18 self-employed graduates, with 83.3% of respondents indicating they use these skills in their work. It only shows the important role communication plays in their daily operations. Human relations and problem-solving skills were also commonly cited, with 55.6% of respondents. Followed by entrepreneurial skills, with 44.4% of graduates relying on these skills, while critical thinking skills were reported by 38.9% of respondents. Lastly, 27.8% of the self-employed graduates reported using information technology skills. These results indicate the importance of communication, human relations, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills in self-employment, as they help graduates to communicate effectively and engage with customers in addressing conflicts and negotiating agreements that lead to the success of their business ventures.

Table 10
Relevant college skills utilized by self-employed graduates in their work

Response	n	%
Communication skills	15	83.3
Human relation skills	10	55.6
Problem-solving skills	10	55.6
Entrepreneurial skills	8	44.4
Critical thinking skills	7	38.9
Information technology skill	5	27.8

Note. N=18

The distribution of respondents' employment across various sectors is shown in Table 11. The education sector employs the largest number of respondents, with 37.2% of the total. Other sectors include business process outsourcing (BPO) with 8.3%, manufacturing with 7.1%, and construction with 5.6%. The government and public service sector also employs 5.4% of respondents, followed by financial services (5.2%), and retail and trade (4.6%).

Sectors include technology and IT (3.5%), hospitality and food services (3.5%), and real estate (4.4%) have lower percentages. Other sectors, including healthcare and medicine, consulting, utilities, testing laboratories, transport and logistics, marketing, agriculture, and miscellaneous categories, have fewer respondents, with percentages ranging from 1.2% to 3.1%.

Overall, this distribution shows a variety of sectors in which the graduates are employed, with a clear concentration in education and BPO, while a smaller percentage of graduates are found in specialized fields like healthcare, consulting, and agriculture.

Table 11

Respondents' employment across various sectors

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Education	179	37.2
Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)	40	8.3
Manufacturing	34	7.1
Construction	27	5.6
Government and Public Service	26	5.4
Financial Services	25	5.2
Retail and Trade	22	4.6
Real estates	21	4.4
Hospitality and Food Services	17	3.5
Technology and IT related	17	3.5
Healthcare and Medicine	16	3.3
Consulting and Professional Services	13	2.7
Utilities Industry	8	1.7
Testing Laboratories	7	1.5
Transport and Logistics	6	1.2
Marketing	4	0.8
Agriculture	4	0.8
Others	15	3.1

Note. N=481. Responses of employed and self-employed

As shown in Table 12, most respondents prefer to work locally rather than overseas. Only 3.7% of the respondents have chosen to work overseas, whereas 96.3% have secured local employment. Due to the lack of employment opportunities and lower wages in the country, some graduates typically choose to go abroad in search of higher-paying positions. On the other hand, graduates have several reasons for choosing local employment. The high costs of legal requirements for working abroad, the challenge of adjusting to a new environment, and the proximity to family and other social support systems are a few examples.

Table 12
Respondents' place of employment/work

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Local	463	96.3
Abroad	18	3.7

Note. N=481. Responses of employed and self-employed

As shown in Table 12, most respondents prefer to work locally rather than overseas. Only 3.7% of the respondents have chosen to work overseas, whereas 96.3% have secured local employment. Due to the lack of employment opportunities and lower wages in the country, some graduates typically choose to go abroad in search of higher-paying positions. On the other hand, graduates have several reasons for choosing local employment. The high costs of legal requirements for working abroad, the challenge of adjusting to a new environment, and the proximity to family and other social support systems are a few examples.

Table 13
Relatedness of the respondents' undergraduate degrees to their first job

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	373	70.6
No	155	29.4

Note. N=528 graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

In terms of the graduates' reasons for accepting a job, Table 14 shows that salaries and benefits are the most significant factors for fresh graduates, with 65.3% indicating this as their top priority. This is

followed by career challenges (55.1%), jobs related to special skills (51.3%), proximity to residence (30.1%), peer influence (19.9%), family influence (14.0%), and other factors (3.2%). These results suggest that fresh graduates prioritize financial stability and professional growth when choosing a job. Meanwhile, other factors such as work location and peer, or family influences play a secondary role.

Table 14
Respondents' reason(s) for accepting the job

Response	n	%
Salaries and benefits	345	65.3
Career challenge	291	55.1
Related to special skills	271	51.3
Proximity to residence	159	30.1
Peer influence	105	19.9
Family influence	74	14.0
Others	17	3.2

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

Table 15 presents the respondent's reason for staying in their job. The reason related to special skills got the highest percentage with 57.8% among the respondents. Closely followed by career challenges with 56.1 and salaries and benefits with 54.5%. Proximity to residence got 27.1%, while peer and family influence accounted for 14.4%. Other reasons were noted by 5.3% of the respondents. These may suggest that personal skills and opportunities for professional growth are key factors in influencing job retention among the respondents.

Table 15
Respondents' reason(s) for staying on the job

Response	n	%
Related to special skills	305	57.8
Career challenge	296	56.1
Salaries and benefits	288	54.5
Proximity to residence	143	27.1
Salaries and benefits	76	14.4
Others	28	5.3

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

The reasons given by respondents for changing jobs are presented in Table 16. In this table, the salaries and benefits are the most selected reason, with 45.1% having the highest rating among the respondents. Notably, 43.8% of respondents stayed their first job, indicating that the first jobs they had were probably in line with their skill set and were seen as offering challenges for their careers. Other reasons include career challenges with 31.4%, related to special skills (16.7%), proximity to residence (10.2%), and others (3.0%).

Table 16
Respondents' reasons(s) for changing job

Response	n	%
Salaries and benefits	238	45.1
No change in job	231	43.8
Career challenge	166	31.4
Related to special skills	88	16.7
Proximity to residence	54	10.2
Others	16	3.0

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

Table 17 shows the length of time graduates stayed in their first jobs. The largest proportion of respondents, 33.5%, remained in their first job for one year to less than two years, followed by 20.8% who stayed for one to six months and 13.6% for seven to eleven months. Meanwhile, 13.3% of respondents reported staying in their first job for two years to less than three years, while 7.2% stayed for three years to less than four years. Only a small percentage of respondents, 2.3%, left their first job in less than a month, while 9.3% indicated other durations. These findings suggest that most graduates tend to leave their first job within the first two years, possibly in search of better opportunities that align with their career goals.

Table 17
Tenure in first job among graduates

Response	n	%
1 year to less than 2 years	177	33.5
1 to 6 months	110	20.8
7 to 11 months	72	13.6
2 years to less than 3 years	70	13.3
3 years to less than 4 years	38	7.2
Less than a month	12	2.3
Others	49	9.3

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of “never employed” were excluded in the analysis

Table 18 shows the various channels through which respondents found their first job. Walk-in application was the common method used by 35% of respondents. This was followed by recommendations from others (29.4%) and responses to job advertisements (11.7%). Job information from friends helped 9.3% of respondents, while 5.7% found their job through online postings. A job fair organized by the Public Employment Services Office employed 3.8% of respondents, and 1.3% were employed with the assistance of the school's job placement officer. Only 1.1% of respondents chose to work in their family business.

Table 18
Channels through which respondents found their first job

Response	n	%
As walk-in applicant	185	35.0
Recommended by someone	155	29.4
Response to an advertisement	62	11.7
Information from friends	49	9.3
Online Job Posting	30	5.7
Job Fair of Public Employment Service	20	3.8
Arranged by School's Job Placement Officer	7	1.3
Family business	6	1.1
Other	14	2.7

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of “never employed” were excluded in the analysis

The level of positions graduates held in their first jobs is shown in Table 19. Over half of the respondents (55.9%) began their careers in technical, professional, or supervisory positions, many of which aligned their degrees, as reflected in Table 13. A significant gap follows, with 27.5% of respondents taking rank or clerical positions. Smaller percentages were self-employed (7.2%) or held managerial or executive roles (5.7%). Other positions reported 3.0%, while 0.8% of respondents were unemployed. These findings may indicate that the majority of graduates secure their first jobs in fields related to their education and skills.

Table 19
Respondents first job level position

Response	n	%
Professional Technical or Supervisory	295	55.9
Rank or Clerical	145	27.5
Self-employed	38	7.2
Managerial or Executive	30	5.7
Other	16	3.0

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

Table 20 displays the job positions held by the respondents in their current employment. Nearly half of the respondents (49.8%) are employed in professional, technical, or supervisory roles. Following this, 39.0% occupy rank-and-file or clerical positions, indicating that a significant portion of recent graduates are working in support roles. A smaller percentage (7.2%) are self-employed, suggesting that some graduates have pursued entrepreneurial ventures as their means of income. However, only 3.2% hold executive or managerial positions, indicating limited opportunities for high-level roles immediately after graduation. Lastly, a minimal 0.8% fall into the "other" category.

Table 20
Scholar Graduates' current job level position

Response	n	%
Professional Technical or Supervisory	263	49.8
Rank or Clerical	206	39.0
Self-employed	38	7.2
Managerial or Executive	17	3.2
Other	4	0.8
Professional Technical or Supervisory	263	49.8

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

As per the monthly salary of the scholar graduates, Table 21 shows that most of the scholars (25.4%) were receiving a salary ranging from ₦10,000 and less than ₦15,000, closely followed by 23.5% earning between ₦15,000 and less than ₦20,000 per month. Furthermore, a considerable proportion have obtained comparatively higher-paying positions, as 18.4% of scholar graduates have salaries of ₦25,000 and above. On the other hand, 12.1% are between 20,000 and less than ₦25,000, while 15.9% make between ₦5,000 and less than ₦10,000. Notably, just 4.7% make less than ₦5,000, suggesting that some scholar graduates might find it difficult to find well-paying work.

Table 21
Scholar graduates' current monthly salary

Salary	n	%
Below 5,000	25	4.7
5,000 to less than 10,000	84	15.9
10,000 to less than 15,000	134	25.4
15,000 to less than 20,000	124	23.5
20,000 to less than 25,000	64	12.1
25,000 and above	97	18.4

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

As to the relevance of the college curriculum to scholar graduates' first jobs, Table 22 reveals that 78.6% of scholar graduates indicated that their first job was related to their field of study and was relevant to their initial employment. This indicates that the curriculum offered by TSU effectively prepares most scholar graduates for workforce entry. While most scholar graduates perceived their college curriculum as relevant to their first job, 21.4% of scholar graduates reported that their college curriculum was irrelevant to their first job. This highlights the need for ongoing curriculum assessment and enhancement across various programs to ensure alignment with the evolving demands of the job market.

Table 22
Relevance of college curriculum to first job

Response	n	%
Yes	415	78.6
No	113	21.4

Note. N=528 multiple response; graduates with employment status of "never employed" were excluded in the analysis

Respondents identified key competencies from their college education that were most useful in their first job. Communication skills were the most cited (64.8%), reflecting the importance of clear interaction in the workplace. Critical thinking skills (63.2%) and problem-solving skills (61.1%) were also highly valued, emphasizing the need for analytical abilities in professional settings. Information technology skills (47.2%) and human relations skills (45.7%) were recognized by nearly half of the respondents, highlighting the need for digital literacy and interpersonal capabilities. Entrepreneurial skills were noted by 19.2%, suggesting that business-oriented competencies are less frequently applied in initial employment. Only 1.5% identified other skills, indicating that most respondents found the listed competencies relevant to their work experience.

Table 23
College competencies considered most useful in first job

Response	n	%
Communication skills	345	64.8
Critical thinking skills	336	63.2
Problem solving skills	325	61.1
Information technology skills	251	47.2
Human relation skills	243	45.7
Entrepreneurial skills	102	19.2
Other	8	1.5

Note. N=528. Multiple responses

Table 24 presents the summary of competencies gained by scholar graduates during their stay at the university. Results reflect a generally positive perception of their undergraduate education, as demonstrated by the mean scores for various skills and experiences. Based on the responses from 528 scholar graduates, the results displayed significant competencies in a variety of critical areas. The problem-solving skills ($M=3.37$, $SD=0.84$) gained the highest rating among other competencies, which suggests that the scholar graduates were equipped with strong problem-solving skills which allows them to navigate their jobs effectively. Furthermore, enhanced academic proficiency ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.88$), improved problem-solving skills ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.88$), and critical thinking skills ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.88$) also accumulated significant high mean scores which indicates that the university effectively equips students with the cognitive and analytical skills necessary for their professional development and their workplace. This is further supported by the relevance of the program to professional requirements ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.86$).

Despite significantly lower ratings for research skills ($M=3.28$, $SD=0.88$) and the premium given to research ($M=3.23$, $SD=0.85$), these scores nevertheless indicate a moderate level of satisfaction with the institution's research prospects. Similarly, academic resources are generally acceptable, but there may be room for improvement, particularly in laboratory facilities, according to library resources ($M=3.27$, $SD=0.87$) and laboratory resources ($M=3.17$, $SD=0.88$).

The scholar graduates also indicated that internationalization efforts should be strengthened by rating exposure to local communities higher ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.92$) than exposure to international communities ($M=3.13$, $SD=0.95$). Salary improvement and promotion ($M=3.16$, $SD=0.90$) and opportunities overseas ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.96$) were rated lower, suggesting that it may be difficult to find work abroad or advance in your profession after graduation.

Table 24
Competencies gained by scholar graduates from their undergraduate education in TSU

Competencies	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Enhanced academic profession	3.35	0.88
Improved problem-solving skills	3.36	0.88
Improved research skills	3.28	0.88
Improve learning efficacy	3.35	0.87
Improved communication/interpersonal skills	3.35	0.89
Improved information technology skills	3.28	0.90
Enhanced team spirit/people skill	3.34	0.88
Meeting present and future professional skills	3.30	0.89
Exposure to local community within field of specialization	3.21	0.92
Exposure to international community within field of specialization	3.13	0.95
Critical thinking skill	3.35	0.88
Salary improvement and promotion	3.16	0.90
Opportunity abroad	3.09	0.96
Personality Development	3.35	0.88

Table 25 presents the conditions and provisions experienced by the graduate scholars in their undergraduate education in the University. The teaching and learning environment ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.87$) and quality of instruction ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.84$) received high ratings, which revealed that the university provides a conducive and supportive academic atmosphere for students. Faculty expertise is also reflected in the positive rating for professors' knowledge of major subjects ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.86$), which suggests that the faculty members of the university are competent and proficient in effectively delivering course content. Moreover, strong communication and interpersonal skills ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.89$), team spirit and people skills ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.88$), and interdisciplinary learning ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.84$) emphasized the university's success in promoting collaboration, versatility, flexibility, and holistic development among its students.

A balanced learning environment is reflected in study circumstances such as class size ($M=3.26$, $SD=0.84$), teacher-student relationships ($M=3.32$, $SD=0.86$), and infrastructure and facilities ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.85$). Additionally, extracurricular activities support students' overall growth ($M=3.22$, $SD=0.88$). According to the overall data, the TSU alumni believe that their education was crucial in helping them build the competencies required for both present and future job demands. However, opportunities for improvement remain in research, international exposure, and career advancement support.

Table 25

Study conditions and provisions experienced by scholar graduates from their undergraduate education in TSU

Response	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Range of subjects offered	3.31	0.84
Relevance of the program to your professional requirements	3.36	0.86
Extra-curricular activities	3.22	0.88
Problem solving	3.37	0.84
Premium given to research	3.23	0.85
Interdisciplinary learning	3.31	0.84
Teaching and learning environment	3.35	0.87
Quality of instruction	3.33	0.84
Teacher-student relationship	3.32	0.86
Library resources	3.27	0.87
Laboratory resources	3.17	0.88
Class size	3.26	0.84
Infrastructure and facilities	3.33	0.85
Professor's knowledge of major subjects	3.34	0.86

The responses regarding the advantages of being a scholar-graduate from Tarlac State University (TSU) reflect both positive and neutral perspectives. Eighty-seven percent of scholar graduates perceived their status to be advantageous to their opportunities for employment. This suggests that being a scholar

signifies excellent academic performance, globally competitive, proficiency, persistence, dedication, and passion—qualities that employers seek and find valuable in their companies and institutions. Additionally, some emphasized that companies recognize not only just the scholar graduate but also TSU as a reputable institution, which gives them an advantage during job applications. Others stated that the university's financial assistance enabled them to concentrate on their education, which resulted in greater academic accomplishments. As a result, they were able to apply these accomplishments in their job search following their graduation.

However, a significant proportion (11%) of scholar graduates stated that their status as a scholar had a negligible effect on their employment prospects. They highlighted that work experiences, skills, and attitudes are more vital for job qualifications. Moreover, others mentioned that their companies did not specifically consider their previous status as scholar graduates in the university, while some perceived that the scholarship program they were in primarily served as financial support rather than a career advantage. Additionally, 2% of scholar graduates were not quite sure whether being a scholar graduate helped them in their journey.

Table 26

Response to Survey Question *“Is there an advantage of being a TSU scholar-graduate as a qualification for work opportunities?*

Response	n	%
Yes	463	87%
No	59	11%
Not Sure	10	2%

Suggestions to Enhance Degree Program in TSU

Scholar graduates provided a variety of suggestions for the enhancement of degree programs in the university. One of the main areas of improvement focuses on the curriculum and practical learning experiences. They suggested to update and align the curriculum with the industry standards to make them more prepared and equipped before they venture into the labor market. In addition to this, they highlighted the importance of incorporating more hands-on experiences such as internships, field works, laboratory works and activities, rather than focusing on mere lectures for real life applications of what they had learned in their subjects. Strengthening research opportunities and technical skill development was also emphasized, together with the need for more industry-related seminars, workshops, and training programs and activities to prepare students for professional careers.

Faculty development and student support were also identified as key areas for improvement. Scholar graduates suggested to hire more qualified professors in the colleges. The foundation of an exceptional college is the presence of effective faculty members. Consequently, it is in the best interest of the college, its students, and its community to recruit the most qualified professionals because they possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to effectively impart learning to students; thus, they will receive high quality of education. Additionally, it was suggested that enhancements be made to student mentorship and career guidance, as well as an increase in the number of scholarships that are available to students from a variety of backgrounds in order to encourage academic success.

Furthermore, scholar graduates also mentioned the enhancement of facilities and resources, specifically the laboratory equipment and classroom facilities to improve students' learning experience. Providing equal access to essential learning materials, including projectors and computers, was suggested to facilitate students' engagement with their coursework. Moreover, they also emphasized the modernization of education in TSU through integration of technology into teaching method as well as improve online learning resources.

Another recurring theme among the responses was the professional and career readiness. Establishing stronger partnerships locally and globally with companies and industries for internships and employment programs was recommended to provide students with practical and realistic skills and experience. It was proposed that more post-graduation assistance, such as job placement services, be provided to facilitate the

transition from university to the workforce. It was also stressed that integrating training in soft skills—specifically, leadership and communication—is an essential part of professional readiness.

Lastly, scholar graduates suggested various administrative and policy enhancements to improve the overall academic experience at TSU. Optimizing the scholarship application and renewal processes was identified as an essential improvement to assure access for deserving students. Additionally, improving the organization of class schedules and course offerings was suggested to enhance efficiency and convenience. Periodic reviews of instructors and curriculum were also recommended to sustain high-quality education while also adapting to changing academic and industry needs.

Being a Scholar Graduate

Many scholar graduates expressed their sincerest gratitude for the scholarship programs they had during their stay in the university. They highlighted how it alleviated their financial burdens and enabled them to complete their education despite the hardships they were going through. Some of them stated that being a scholar entails a dedication to lifelong learning and personal growth. They were driven to maintain strong academic achievement while fostering discipline and resilience at all times.

Despite these positive experiences, some respondents mentioned delays in stipend distribution, which posed challenges during their studies. Others expressed that scholarship application was hard because of slot limitations as well as unfair slots distribution. Furthermore, while scholarships helped them in funding their education, it did not necessarily provide an advantage in job applications.

Overall, respondents expressed gratitude for the opportunities provided by the TSU scholarship program while also identifying areas for improvement in academic training, professional readiness, and administrative processes. These observations can help TSU improve its degree programs and support systems for future researchers and graduates.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study offers a thorough analysis of the profiles, academic achievements, scholarship access, board examination performance, and employment outcomes of scholar graduates from Tarlac State University (TSU). Most scholar graduates were from the College of Education and the College of Business and Accountancy, reflecting a focus on education and business-related fields. A notable number of these scholars graduated with honors, indicating academic excellence. The CHED-Tulong Dunong Program was the most utilized form of financial assistance, alongside other scholarships that supported academic, cultural, and athletic achievements. Board examination performance was impressive, with an 87% passing rate, particularly in education, engineering, and accountancy. Employment outcomes were also positive, with 87% of respondents securing jobs, many in regular or permanent positions. Despite the positive employment outcomes of the graduates, some were faced with challenges like lack of experience and limited job opportunities. Due to financial constraints, social support, and family ties, the majority of scholar graduates chose to work locally. Additionally, the variety of industries that hire TSU graduates—particularly in education and the BPO sector—highlights the university's ability to prepare graduates for a range of career paths.

The findings also highlight the relevance of TSU's curriculum, with 70.6% of graduates reporting that their undergraduate degrees were aligned with their first jobs. However, the 29.4% whose degrees did not match their initial employment suggest the need for continuous curriculum review to meet changing industry demands. Salaries and benefits were identified as key factors influencing job acceptance, retention, and career transitions, with most graduates securing their first jobs through walk-in applications, recommendations, and job advertisements. Although many respondents currently hold professional or clerical positions, few have advanced to managerial roles, indicating limited immediate leadership opportunities. While TSU effectively equips graduates with essential skills such as communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving, there is a need to strengthen research engagement, expand international exposure, and enhance career development programs to promote long-term career growth. Although 87% of scholar graduates acknowledged that their scholarship status provided a competitive edge, 11% felt it had little impact, highlighting the need to align scholarship programs more closely with career preparation initiatives. Overall, TSU's positive impact on

graduate outcomes is evident, but continuous improvements in academic programs, research engagement, and career support are necessary to maintain relevance and competitiveness.

The suggestions from TSU scholar graduates offer valuable insights for enhancing the university's degree programs and overall academic experience. Key recommendations include updating the curriculum to align with industry standards and incorporating more practical learning experiences such as internships, laboratory work, and field activities. Strengthening research opportunities, enhancing technical skill development, and increasing industry-related seminars and workshops were also emphasized to better prepare students for professional careers. Additionally, graduates highlighted the need for faculty development by hiring more qualified professors and improving mentorship, career guidance, and scholarship opportunities. Upgrading facilities, including laboratory equipment, classrooms, and technology resources, was also suggested to create a more engaging learning environment that supports student success.

To improve career readiness, graduates proposed establishing stronger industry partnerships for internships and job placements, along with integrating soft skills training in leadership and communication. Administrative improvements, such as streamlining scholarship applications, optimizing class schedules, and conducting regular curriculum and faculty reviews, were also recommended to maintain high educational standards. While scholar graduates expressed gratitude for the financial support that enabled them to complete their education, concerns were raised about delayed stipend distribution, limited scholarship slots, and perceived inequities in the allocation process. Moreover, some noted that while scholarships facilitated their education, they did not necessarily provide an advantage in securing employment. Overall, these insights can guide TSU in enhancing its academic programs and support systems to better equip future graduates for success in an increasingly competitive professional landscape.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the help and encouragement of numerous individuals, this project would not have been possible. I express my gratitude to the director of the Student Affairs and Services, Atty. Gherold C. Benitez and to my two co-authors, Professor Laarni T. Capinding and Mrs. Sharmaine G. Beltran. My heartfelt thanks also to Miss Jarlene Gutierrez and Miss Nicole Caingat for assisting me in the data collection using the online survey questionnaire. And finally, I thank my family for their support in all my undertakings. To God be the glory.

REFERENCES

- [1] APIS 2017 – Annual Poverty Indicators Survey. Retrieved June 20, 2021 from <https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2017%20APIS%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf>
- [2] Cabrera, A.F., Nora, A. and Castañeda, M.B. (1992). The Role of Finances in the Persistence Process: A Structural Model. *Research in Higher Education*, 33(5), 571-593. Retrieved April 13, 2021 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40196079>
- [3] Catanduanes State Colleges. (2007). CHED commissions CSC to conduct Graduate Tracer Study. Retrieved March 19, 2021 at [CHED commissions CSC to conduct Graduate Tracer Study | Catanduanes State Colleges Research Services \(wordpress.com\)](http://chedmissionscsc.com/ched-commissions-csc-to-conduct-graduate-tracer-study/)
- [4] Commission on Higher Education. (1999). CHED Memorandum Order No. 11, Series of 1999. Retrieved February 16, 2021 from CHED: [CMO-No.11-s1999.pdf \(ched.gov.ph\)](http://ched.gov.ph/CMO-No.11-s1999.pdf)
- [5] Congress of the Philippines. (2017). Republic Act No. 10931: An Act Promoting Universal Access To Quality Tertiary Education By Providing For Free Tuition And Other School Fees In State Universities And Colleges, Local Universities And Colleges And State-Run Technical-Vocational Institutions, Establishing The Tertiary Education Subsidy And Student Loan Program, Strengthening The Unified Student Financial Assistance System For Tertiary Education, And Appropriating Fund Thereof.

Retrieved on February 6, 2021 from
https://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2017/ra_10931_2017.html

[6] Commission on Higher Education. (2017). CHED, DBM Release Guidelines on Free Tuition in SUCs. CHED. Retrieved on February 10, 2021 from <https://ched.gov.ph/ched-dbm-release-guidelines-free-tuition-sucs/>

[7] Department of Science and Technology. (2015). Factsheet: Tracer Study Ondost-Sei S&T Scholar Graduates. Retrieved on February 10, 2021 from [fs_tracer.pdf \(dost.gov.ph\)](fs_tracer.pdf (dost.gov.ph))

[8] Department of Science and Technology. (2017). Tracer Study Ondost-Sei S&T Scholar Graduates. Retrieved on February 11, 2021 from [pubTracerFs32020.pdf \(dost.gov.ph\)](pubTracerFs32020.pdf (dost.gov.ph))

[9] Department of Science and Technology. (2020). The Tracer Study Report DOST-SEI Undergraduate Scholar-Graduates Batch 2018 and 2019. Retrieved on February 13, 2021 from [tracer_exit_ver4_copy \(dost.gov.ph\)](tracer_exit_ver4_copy (dost.gov.ph))

[10] European Training Foundation. (2017). Introduction to Tracer Studies. Retrieved on February 13, 2021 from ETF Europa: https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/event/Introduction%20to%20tracer%20study_EN.pdf

[11] HEART.(2014). Helpdesk Report: Scholarships: the impact and effectiveness for disadvantaged children and girls. HEART: Health & education Advice & Resource Team. Retrieved on February 14, 2021 from [Scholarships-impact-and-effectiveness-disadvantaged-children-and-girls.pdf \(heart-resources.org\)](Scholarships-impact-and-effectiveness-disadvantaged-children-and-girls.pdf (heart-resources.org))

[12] Gines A. C. (2014). Tracer Study of PNU Graduates American International Journal of Contemporary Research Vol. 4 No. 3. Retrieved May 28, 2021 from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Tracer-Study-of-PNU-Graduates-Gines/b370db616c8ebcc1d7008b970651caa06f1c3c78>

[13] Heidemann, L. (2011). Only Successful Graduates Respond to Tracer Studies: A Myth? Results from the German Corporation Project Tracer Studies. Working Papers 13, AlmaLaurea Inter- University Consortium. Retrieved May 13, 2021 at <https://ideas.repec.org/p/laa/wpaper/13.html>

[14] Isip, F.B. (n.d.). Encouraging the use of Slovin's Formula in computing sample sizes in DMS survey related projects. Retrieved March 22, 2021 at <https://independent.academia.edu/FranklinBellIsip>

[15] Kyzsaikal Isakova and Rysgul Nazarbekova (2015). "Lack of Education Today - Unemployment Tomorrow" Retrieved June 18, 2021 from https://auca.kg/uploads/Migration_Database/Lack%20of%20Education%20Today,%20Unemployment%20Tomorrow.pdf

[16] Mesa, E. P. (2007). Measuring Education Inequality in the Philippines. The Philippine Review of Economics 44(2), p. 33-70. Retrieved March 21, 2021 at [Measuring education inequality in the Philippines | Mesa | Philippine Review of Economics \(upd.edu.ph\)](Measuring education inequality in the Philippines | Mesa | Philippine Review of Economics (upd.edu.ph))

[17] Multidimensional Poverty Index of 2018 by the Philippine Statistics Authority. Retrieved June 18, 2021 from <https://psa.gov.ph/content/filipino-families-are-most-deprived-education-0>

[18] Next Step Ph. (2020). How Poverty Affects Education in the Philippines. Retrieved April 10, 2021 from Charity: ed Philippines: <How poverty affects education in the Philippines - Next Step Philippines>

[19] Ofoha, D. & Iwuchukwu, O. (2018). Employers' Perception and Expectations of Professional Competency of Distance Learning Graduates: A Tracer Study of Nursing Graduates of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). *Open Praxis*, 10(3), 265-278. International Council for Open and Distance Education. Retrieved June 3, 2021 from <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/187314/>.

[20] Omoniyi, M.B.I (2013). The role of education in poverty alleviation and economic development: a theoretical perspective and counselling implications. Retrieved June 10, 2021 from

<https://ucanapplym.s3.ap-south1.amazonaws.com/RGU/notifications/Syllabus/UG%20HONS%20CBCS/EDUCATION.pdf>

[21] Philippine Statistics Authority. (2018). Filipino Families are Most Deprived in Education. Retrieved March 30, 202 from [Philippine Statistics Authority: Filipino Families Are Most Deprived in Education | Philippine Statistics Authority \(psa.gov.ph\)](https://www.psa.gov.ph/philippine-statistics-authority-filipino-families-are-most-deprived-in-education)

[22] Ramirez, T., Cruz, L. and Alcantara, N.V. (2014). Tracer Study of RTU Graduates: An Analysis. Researcher's World: Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce 5(1), pg. 66-78. Retrieved April 22, 2021 at [*tracer_study_-_rizal-with-cover-page.pdf \(d1wqxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net\)](https://www.psa.gov.ph/philippine-statistics-authority-filipino-families-are-most-deprived-in-education)

[23] Rojas, T.T. and Rojas, R.C. (2016). College of Education Graduate Tracer Study (GTS): Boon or Bane? European Scientific Journal, 12(16), 63-78. Retrieved March 1, 2021 at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/328025482.pdf>

[24] Rutkowski, Jan J.. 2015. Employment and Poverty in the Philippines. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. Retrieved June 21, 2021 from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/26320>

[25] Sahatciu, D. (2016). The Impact of Scholarships on Student Careers: The Case of IPKO Foundation Next Generation Scholarship. Rochester Institute of Technology. Retrieved April 3, 2021 from <https://scholarworks.rit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10207&context=theses>

[26] Schomburg, H. (2016). Carrying Out Tracer Studies. Guide to Anticipating and Matching Skills and Jobs 6. Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved April 15, 2021 at [*45A4CE81F3398029C1258048005BEFB8 Vol. 6 Carrying out tracer studies.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euresco/45A4CE81F3398029C1258048005BEFB8)

[27] Schomburg, H. (2003) Handbook for Graduate Tracer Studies Retrieved June 10, 2021 from https://www.qtafi.de/images/schomburg/schomburg_2003_tracer_handbook_v2.pdf

[28] Seventeenth Congress, First Regular Session. Retrieved March 5, 2021 from https://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2017/ra_10931_2017.html

[29] Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act. Retrieved June 22, 2021 from <https://unifast.gov.ph/uniqtea.php>

[30] World Bank (2015). Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP). UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved March 9, 2021 by <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS>