

# Longitudinal Study on Free Education Act (Republic Act No. 10931) on the Quality of Higher Education in the Philippines

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*Abstract* — A good education is one of the most important things an individual can pursue. The study determined the impact of FHE (Free Education Act) Act or Republic Act No. 10931 in CAPSU (Capiz State University) in terms of enrolment, choice of courses, faculty service, facility, and their personal assessment on the quality of education offered by CAPSU and yearly completion rate (cohort survival rate). A descriptive research design was used in the study. Data were gathered through a pilot-tested self-made questionnaire from 100 tertiary students who availed the FHE Program. The result showed that the students primarily enrolled in the University because of the free tuition. The students were satisfied with the services of the faculty. The students' level of satisfaction have “moderately” positive impact in terms of school facilities such as the classrooms, laboratories and library which are very essential in learning. As of the choice of course, result showed that 37 out of 100 respondents (40%) were from BSBA department 35 out of 100 respondents (33.3%) were from the BSHM department and there were 28 out of 100 respondents from the BSSW department (26.7%). Their choice of courses may be dependent on the programs available as well as the demands for work. Nowadays, business-related courses are more attractive to the students because of the vast prospects of employment. It is recommended that the university shall strengthen its implementation of the FHE Act through giving priorities on the faculty development program.

*Keywords* — *Quality Education, Free Education Act, State Universities and Colleges, Quantitative Research Design*

## I. Introduction

A good education is one of the most important things an individual can pursue. There are many aspects in the life of a person that will improve if one has earned higher education. Studies in Sociology have shown that one of the most prominent factor in social mobility among low economic status families is giving their children appropriate education. This often results to an upgrade in the social status of their children and the entire family as well. This is due to the fact that having a higher education would redound to acquiring well-paying jobs, better opportunities, and eventually, a better life. It also makes a person smarter than someone without one. There are many ways in which education can benefit people.

Hence, it is an assumption that free higher education is indeed important to many poor families. In the early years, most of our ancestors received no formal training at all because education during those times was only available to the upper class. Tutors and private academies only trained the few that could afford an education, which increased the value of it. Education played a major role in our history it was one of the major issues that separated the wealthy from the poor. (*Free Education in the Philippines: The Continuing Saga "A nation cannot be built without education."* (Taylor-Kamara, 2010) Renato I. Virola). Moreover, Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world and for self-enlightenment. This is so because quality education equips one with capability to interpret things rightly and applying the gathered information in real life scenarios. Quality education entails the following aspects; learning resources, technology, program enrolled, modules done, lecturing methodology, attachments, qualifications, co-curricular activities, performance awards, students and lecturers' perspective in the institution operating management also their opinions and appraisal toward education (Hammond, 2013).

As of current, CAPSU is one of the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the region. A tertiary institution that provides sustainable education program. A university driven by the core values of excellence, leadership, and innovation, and aims to become a center of excellence in higher education. The advent of the Free Higher Education (FHE) Act is bound to promote education and increase the number of students able to attend in college in all SUCs. The concern of this survey investigation is to assess how FHE Act contributed on the quality of education in CAPSU as one of the SUCs in Region 6.

### **Literature Review**

This study uses impact to quantify the significance of a RA10931 in all SUCs and/or its adverse impact by assessing the survival rate during the most recent few years. The university is ranked higher the higher the effect factor. It is one method you can use to assess how well a topic area is performing. Schools and universities may create efficient intervention plans to lower the dropout rate in our nation.

The consequences that an organization or intervention (policy, program, project, product, technology, or measure) has on society or the environment outside the organization are referred to as impacts, according to Maas and Liket (2011). For the HEI context, a number of definitions of "impact" have been put forth. Research impact is defined as "an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academics" under the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) (REF, 2016, para. 1). The impacts of sustainability initiatives at HEIs, according to Koehn and Uitto (2014, p.624), include "real-world changes in ecological sustainability, policies, and people's well-being." Thomas and Ormerod (2017) make a distinction between conventional academic impacts (like scholarly influence) and non-academic impacts.

According to Gupta and Singhal (2017), the fundamental components of the HEI system have an impact (as proposed by Lozano et al., 2013b). These fundamental elements' sustainability efforts have a broader social, environmental, and economic impact (Gupta and Singhal, 2017). Effects on SD manifest in convoluted paths, especially in the fields of science and education (Koehn and Uitto, 2014). They may manifest themselves over a long period of time, far from the HEI's site, or at the systems level. They may be direct, indirect, planned, unintended, positive, or negative (Lebeau and Cochrane, 2015). According to Bowen (2018, p. 26), "For people, the benefits of higher education are realized over adult lifetimes, often fifty to sixty years following college graduation. Its intricacy makes measuring impacts difficult, and as a result, impacts are typically not systematically taken into account as part of sustainability assessments in higher education. For society, the impacts may last for millennia (Yarime and Tanaka, 2012).

Impacts in this survey are, therefore, really opposite to the above mentioned studies and it has to be understood as the effects that an SUC specifically to Capiz State University Pilar Campus has inside of its organizational or academic boundaries – namely, on its increase of enrolment, choice of course, cohort survival rate, and quality of entrants.

## II. Methodology

The descriptive quantitative research approach was applied in this study. In data gathering and collecting, unstructured interviews were employed using open questions. The data collected in descriptive quantitative includes more than words are their reactions, attitudes and behavior. The data coming from interview and variety of secondary data (registrars file) were treated in rigorous analysis. In the selection of the participant, convenience sampling was utilized. Three processes were blended throughout the study: collection, coding, and analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A modified questionnaire were also utilized to acquire first hand data specifically on the personal information/opinion/assessment of the students. Students' enrolment and Cohort Survival Rate was also adopted in support and stood as secondary data.

## III. Results and Discussion

The descriptive-quantitative data analysis determined the impact of Free Education Act (Republic Act No. 10931) on the Quality of Higher Education in CAPSU-Pilar Campus.

Table 1 shows the responses of the respondents when asked whether they enrolled in CAPSU-Pilar because of the free tuition. Among the 100 respondents, 91 answered 'Yes' while there are 9 respondents with a 'No' answer. Respondent's emphasizes that, personal choice is the main reason for enrolling in the said university.

**Table 1. Student's responses whether enrolled because of the free tuition or not.**

Did you enrol in CAPSU-Pilar because of the free tuition?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	91	91%
No Personal choice	9	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

This simply means that the law is really beneficial to college students. Moreover, the manner by which the Free Education Act was disseminated to the target scholars was effective. Students from rural areas who are poor but are willing to enroll in college and earn a degree were given this opportunity. Thus, in the study of Laura W. Perna, et.al (2017). Free tuition will provide minimal increases in financial assistance to low income students. Free tuition programs may increase college awareness and use of other source of available aid, but restrictions on the institutions students will likely limit program benefit to attainment in the absence of other educational reforms.

Table 2 revealed the courses taken by the respondents. The data shows that 37 out of 100 respondents (37%) were from BSBA department 35 out of 100 respondents (35%) were from the BSHM department and there were 28 out of 100 respondents from the BSSW department (28%).

**Table 2. Courses taken by the respondents.**

COURSE	Frequency	Percent
BSBA	37	37%
BSHM	35	35%
BSSW	28	28%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Their choices may imply that they are more inclined to business-related courses. Probably because opportunities for such courses abound even in urban communities. Local businesses are sprawling and most of these involve the hiring of new graduates. But, in the study of Laura W. Perna, et.al. (2017) whether they improve college-related outcomes for students who would not enroll and complete college without the program is not yet known. Additional attention is needed to understand both the positive and potential negative consequences of free tuition programs with different designs and structures, using data that track students as they move from high school into college, progress within the initial college (including in and out of remedial coursework), transfer to other colleges, persist to program and degree completion, and transition into the labor force

Table 3 shows the responses of the respondents when asked by personal questions related to the college being attended. The result showed the respondents were very likely to continue attending the same college next year ( $M=2.09$ ,  $SD=0.753$ ) and will likely recommend it to other students ( $M=1.49$ ,  $SD=0.502$ ).

**Table 3. Impact of the Free Education Law on the quality of higher education in CAPSU-Pilar Campus at to the personal assessment.**

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT	Mean	SD	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Extent to continue attending the college	2.09	0.753	VERY LIKELY
Extent of recommending the university to others	1.49	0.502	LIKELY
TOTAL	1.79	0.628	VERY LIKELY

*Note:* Interpretation is based on the following scale: 1-Extremely likely, 2-Very Likely, 3-Somewhat Likely, 4-Not so Likely, 5-Not at all likely.

This may indicate that students personally experienced the positive effect of this free education law on them. They appreciated the fact that they are enrolled in college for free. That is why, they have made the decision to continue and finish their degrees. Furthermore, they feel that they have the moral obligation to share the blessing of this free education act. This conforms and promote to the theory of human capital posits that capital is not limited to financial and physical assets, but exists under other forms, explaining the difference between economic growth and investment in traditional forms of capital (Becker, 1975; Mincer, 1981; Schultz, 1961). This form of capital is referred to as human capital ‘because people cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health, or values in the way they can be separated from their financial and physical assets’ (Becker, 2007, 248). Education is an example.

Table 4 shows the responses of the respondents when asked questions with regard to the services rendered by the faculty in CAPSU-Pilar Campus under the Free Education Law/Act. Results revealed that the respondents were satisfied with the personal ( $M=2.91$ ,  $SD=0.922$ ) and

professional qualities ( $M=2.69$ ,  $SD=0.907$ ) as well as the teaching methods ( $M=3.11$ ,  $SD=0.984$ ), of the instructors/professors. The respondents were satisfied with the faculty services in CAPSU-Pilar Campus under the Free Education Law/Act ( $M=2.90$ ,  $SD=0.938$ ).

**Table 4. Impact of the Free Education Law on the quality of higher education in CAPSU-Pilar Campus as to the faculty services.**

FACULTY SERVICES	Mean	SD	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Satisfaction with the teaching staff in terms of personal qualities	2.91	0.922	SATISFIED
Satisfaction with the teaching staff in terms professional qualities	2.69	0.907	SATISFIED
Satisfaction with the teaching staff in terms of teaching methods used	3.11	0.984	SATISFIED
TOTAL	2.90	0.938	SATISFIED

*Note:* Interpretation is based on the following scale: 1-Extremely satisfied, 2-Very satisfied, 3-Satisfied, 4-Nuetra, 5-Dissatisfied, 6-Very dissatisfied, and 7-Extremely dissatisfied.

The respondents' level of satisfaction are indicative of the effort of the university to cater to the needs of the students. The faculty members have displayed personal and professional qualities expected of them, although there is still room for improvement. Thus, in a study conducted by Garcl a-Aracil, in eleven European Countries, found that student satisfaction across different European Countries was relatively stable despite the differences in education systems. The study further realized that contacts with fellow students, course content, learning equipment, stocking of libraries, teaching quality and teaching/learning materials have significant influence on the students' satisfaction. Wilkins & Balakrishnan found that quality of lecturers, quality and availability of resources and effective use of technology have significant influence on students' satisfaction in transnational higher education in United Arab Emirates. *IM Salinda Weerasinghe, R. Lalitha, S. Fernando (2017)*

Impact of the Free Education Law on the quality of higher education in CAPSU-Pilar Campus as to the school facilities as assessed by the respondents is shown in table 5. Results reveal that the respondents were satisfied on the impact of Free Education Law on the quality of higher education in CAPSU-Pilar Campus as to the school facilities. Respondents were satisfied with the classroom facilities, laboratory facilities, library facilities and the library services provided by the said college ( $M=2.97$ ,  $SD=1.086$ ) but particularly got the highest mean with the laboratory ( $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=1.597$ ) and library facilities ( $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=0.998$ ).

Results also revealed how accessible and updated the library resources are under the Free Education Law in CAPSU-Pilar Campus. It shows that the library resources are moderately accessible ( $M=2.60$ ,  $SD=0.765$ ) at the same time, moderately updated ( $M=2.73$ ,  $SD=0.815$ ).

**Table 5 Impact of the Free Education Law on the quality of higher education in CAPSU-Pilar Campus as to the school facilities.**

SATISFACTION ON SCHOOL FACILITIES	Mean	SD	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Classroom Facilities	2.94	1.262	SATISFIED
Program Laboratory facilities	3.21	1.597	SATISFIED
Library facilities provided by the College	3.21	0.998	SATISFIED
Library Services and facilities provided by the College	3.12	1.076	SATISFIED
Library Resources provided by the College	2.60	0.765	MODERATELY ACCESSIBLE
Updated Library resources of the College	2.73	0.815	MODERATELY UPDATED
TOTAL	2.97	1.086	SATISFIED

*Note:* Interpretation is based on the following scale: 1-Extremely satisfied, 2-Very satisfied, 3-Satisfied, 4-Neutral, 5-Dissatisfied, 6-Very dissatisfied, and 7-Extremely dissatisfied.

Generally, the students' level of satisfaction are indicative of a positive impact in terms of certain school facilities such as classrooms, laboratories and library resources. However, the library resources need to be improved in terms of access and updating. In relation to the study of Mark Schneider (2003), School facilities directly affect teaching and learning. Poor conditions make it more difficult for teachers to deliver an adequate education to their students, adversely affect teachers' health, and increase the likelihood that teachers will leave their school. This study documented how teachers in Chicago and Washington, DC rated their working conditions and perceived those conditions affected their job performance and teaching effectiveness. Teachers evaluated their surroundings (e.g., degree of overcrowding, availability and adequacy of specialized facilities, and physiological factors). They reported facing daily problems with their buildings. Significant numbers were dissatisfied with their facilities. Teachers noted the inadequacy or lack science, music, and art classrooms. Significant numbers rated physical education and recreational facilities as not very or not at all adequate.

**Table 6. Impact of the Free Education Law on the quality of higher education in CAPSU-Pilar Campus as to the other support services.**

<b>SATISFACTION ON OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>VERBAL INTERPRETATION</b>
How helpful are the support staff, in general?	2.61	0.815	<b>MODERATELY HELPFUL</b>
How satisfied are you with the registration procedures?	2.65	0.914	<b>SATISFIED</b>
How satisfied are you with the enrolment procedures?	3.12	0.967	<b>SATISFIED</b>
How satisfied are you with the RESPONSE of support service offices to your requests?	3.07	1.007	<b>SATISFIED</b>
How satisfied are you with the cleanliness and variety of food items available in the cafeteria?	3.22	1.088	<b>SATISFIED</b>
How satisfied are you with the HEALTH services offered by the school?	2.98	1.092	<b>SATISFIED</b>
How satisfied are you with the accommodation?	3.08	1.041	<b>SATISFIED</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>0.989</b>	<b>SATISFIED</b>

*Note:* Interpretation is based on the following scale: 1-Extremely satisfied, 2-Very satisfied, 3-Satisfied, 4-Neutral, 5-Dissatisfied, 6-Very dissatisfied, and 7-Extremely dissatisfied.

The figures for the respondents' satisfaction with various support services are included in the table. It demonstrates that support staff members are generally of a moderately helpful nature (M=2.61), SD=0.815). The table specifically shows that the respondents are satisfied with their respective support services, including registration processes (M=2.65, SD=0.914), enrolment procedures (M=3.12, SD=0.967). Support services offices' responses to requests (M=3.22, SD=1.088), Health services (M=2.98, SD=1.092), and accommodations (M=3.08, SD=1.041). This suggests that, as a whole, the respondents' support services provided by the school are adequate to meet their needs and successfully address their demands.

The manner by which the university caters to the needs of the students through their support services has a positive impact on the students as proven by their being satisfied. However, the moderately helpful staff assistance may be explained by the fact that not all requests of the students may be catered by the staff. There are limitations to the provisions or help from the university. Sometimes, students develop that misconception of free education act to the point that they think



that their being scholars would afford them all the benefits associated with it. While in the study of Adriana Perez- Encinas (2016), support services provided by institutions in each country were defined by and aligned with the type of student mobility. In the U.S., while some international student support offices also include enrollment management functions, most focus on providing immigration and employment advising services, and programs that promote academic success, international understanding, acculturation sessions and campus and community engagement.

Table 7 data showed the reasons of the respondents in choosing their courses under the Free Education Law/Act on the quality of higher education on CAPSU-Pilar Campus. Out of 100 respondents, 35 respondents (35%) believed to have a greater career opportunity in the future that led them to choose the course they have right now. On the other hand, 24 out of 100 respondents (24%) have a goal to build their own businesses in the future. Moreover, 22 out of 100 respondents (22%) chose their courses personally, while 7 out of 100 respondents (7%) chose their course to help other people, 3 out of 100 respondents (3%) wanted to gain more knowledge on a specific field, 3 out of 100 respondents (3%) loves the course they chose and another 3 out of 100 respondents (3%) chose the course since they believed it can help them be professional in the future. And lastly, another 3 out of 30 respondents (3%) chose the course since they have no other choices.

**Table 7. Respondent’s reason in choosing their courses in college.**

Why did you choose your course?	Frequency	Percent
Self-choice	22	22%
Career Opportunity	35	35%
Build my own business	24	24%
To help other people	7	7%
To gain more knowledge	3	3%
I love this course	3	3%
I want to be a professional	3	3%
No choice	3	3%
TOTAL	100	100%

Obviously, most students enrolled in college for the possible career placement after graduation. Filipinos in general have this mentality of working after graduation. The ultimate aim of being in college would be able to land a job. Interestingly, the second top answer is on putting up own business. This indicates that the thrust of the government on convincing the new generation to be entrepreneurs is quite effective. It is explained in the study of Sandra E. Strasser et.al (2002), a subset of career, includes the criteria *compensation, job availability and growth, and job requirements*, both compensation and job requirements are important elements with respect to a students career choice.

Table 8 data showed the overall experience of the respondents under the Free Education Law/Act on the quality of higher education on CAPSU-Pilar Campus. Out of 100 respondents, 42 respondents (42%) have had an excellent experience with this college. Seven (24) out of 100 respondents (24%) said they've had a good experience, 22 out of 100 respondents (22%) responded to have had a very good experience, 9 out of 100 respondents (9%) had a fair experience and 3 out of 100 respondents (3%) have said to have had a poor experience.

**Table 8. Overall experience of the respondents under the Free Education Law/Act on the quality of higher education on CAPSU-Pilar Campus**

<b>What is your overall experience with this college?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Excellent	42	42%
Very good	22	22%
Good	24	24%
Fair	9	9%
Poor	3	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The excellent experience of the respondents signals a very positive impact. This means that human resources as well as services (in terms of academic and non-academic) in CAPSU-Pilar have responded to the needs of the students. The school and her personnel was able to touch the lives of these students. This conform to the study of Dunja Mestrovic (2017), improvements can be planned across all dimensions of higher education service quality. Although students satisfaction is more important determinant of future behavioural intentions (i.e. positive word of mouth), higher education service quality should not be neglected due to its positive indirect impact on students' behavioral intentions.

School's response on the needs of the students during the pandemic as assessed by the respondents is shown in table 9. Results show that 94 out of 100 respondents (94%) agreed that the school responded well to the needs of the students during the pandemic while 6 out of 100 respondents (6%) were uncertain and probably unaware about the school's responses as to the needs of the students especially during the pandemic.

**Table 9. School's response on the needs of the students during the pandemic.**

<b>Did the school respond well to the needs of the students during the pandemic?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	94	94%
Uncertain	6	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Most universities do not have experience dealing with pandemic such as COVID-19. Aside from effecting a positive impact on the academic lives of students, the university was able to affect the lives of their students during the pandemic. Probably, aside from the academic support, students have felt and experienced emotional and social support. For this reason, a majority of them indicated that the university responded well to their needs during the pandemic. This conforms with the study of Takako Izumi (2020) the universities had significantly changing the styles, systems and methodologies of education, research and contributing to society.

**Table 10. Respondent's mode to augment the student's need in school.**

<b>Do you need to work part-time to provide to augment your needs in school? YES or NO. Why?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	74	74%
Yes	26	26%
Extra Income	4	4%
Sustain my personal needs	6	6%
To help my family	16	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 11. Respondent's response on the college's measures to biases against students.**

<b>Do you think the college takes enough measures to biases against students?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	79	79%
No idea	21	21%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 12. Respondent's feedback on areas that need improvement.**

<b>Please provide us with additional feedback on areas that need improvement</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Classroom improvement	9	9%
Implement face to face class	7	7%
Internet access to students	19	19%
Needs more time for us to use the laboratory	13	13%
<b>NONE</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10 data revealed the respondent's mode to augment the needs in school. The result shows that 74 out of 100 respondents (74%) answered 'No', which implies they don't need to work part time to augment their needs in school. On the other hand, 26 out of 100 respondents (26%) answered 'Yes' with reasons of collecting extra income (4%), sustain personal needs (6%) and help their family (16%).

Most of the students indicated they need not work part-time since they feel that the support they get from the government is adequate. Only a quarter responded that they need to work for extra income, for their personal need and as a means to help their family. These responses would indicate that these students solely depend on government support. Furthermore, this shows that this free tuition act may save them and their families from future poverty. The impact is surely towards social mobility and poverty alleviation.

Table 11 result shows the respondent's responses on the school's enough measures to biases against students as to Yes or No. The data revealed that 79 out of= 100 respondents (79%) agreed that the college takes enough measures to biases against students while 21 out of 100 respondents have 'No Idea' (21%).

The awareness and observation of students on the impartial manner of selecting them and providing them the necessary services is a very positive impact of this free education act. It further proves that the administration, faculty and staff are aware of their roles in support of the proper implementation of this act.

Table 12 shows the additional feedback of the respondents on the areas they think needs an improvement. There were 52 out of 100 respondents (52%) who responded 'NONE' when asked about their feedback. While, 19 out of 100 respondents (19%) requested to have an internet access when in the school premises. 13 out of 100 respondents (13%) requested to have more time to use the laboratory. Moreover, 9 out of 100 respondents (9%) are requesting for classroom improvement and 7 out of 100 respondents (7%) are requesting to implement a face-to-face class.

Generally, the feedback on areas for improvement is within the normal level. Almost one-half of the respondents indicated varied areas for improvement, yet the other half is mostly satisfied.

### **TOTAL ENROLMENT DATA OF CAPSU-PILAR CAMPUS FOR 5 YEARS**

Table 13 shows the enrolment data in CAPSU-Pilar Campus for the past 5 years. Since the academic year is divided into two semesters, the researcher separated the enrolment data. In the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018, there are 999 enrollees, while on the second semester of the said academic year, 10 students transferred in, 65 students transferred out and 2 students were dropped out which left a total enrollees of 942. Moreover, in the following academic year 2018-2019, 34 students transferred in, 64 students transferred out and 3 students dropped out which left a total enrollees of 909 students only. While the total number of enrollees had decreased in the second semester since there are 70 students who transferred in with 2 dropped outs and only 10 students transferred in which now has a total enrollee of 847 students. Furthermore, in the academic year 2019-2020, there are 105 new enrollees, only 23 students transferred out with 1 dropped out which now has a total enrollees of 928 students. However, the number of enrollees in the second semester decreased as 40 students transferred out with 12 dropped outs and only 68 new students enrolled with now 876 total enrollees. In academic year 2020-2021, 367 new students enrolled in the college for the first semester, 56 transferred out with 14 dropped outs. The total enrollees this time was 1173. On the second semester, there are 32 students who transferred out and 2 students dropped out, additionally, 20 new students enrolled in the college which led to a total of 1159 enrollees. Lastly, in the academic year 2021-2022, there are no students who transferred out but, there is 1 who dropped out with 367 new students. The total number of enrollees for the first semester on the said academic year is 1515. While, on the second semester, there are 14 new students, 51 students transferred out and there are 8 dropped outs which now has a total enrollees of 1456 students.

**Table 13. Total enrolment data in CAPSU-Pilar Campus for the past 5 years.**

Year	Semester	New Enrollees	Remain	Transfer In/out/Drop out	TOTAL
2017 - 2018	1st Sem	999			999
	2nd Sem	10	932	65 – to/ 2-d	942
2018 - 2019	1st Sem	34	875	64-to/ 3-d	909
	2nd Sem	10	837	70 to/ 2 d	847
2019 - 2020	1st Sem	105	823	23-to /1-d	928
	2nd Sem	68	808	40-to/ 12-d	876
2020 - 2021	1st Sem	367	806	56-to /14-d	1173
	2nd Sem	20	1139	32 to/ 2-d	1159
2021 - 2022	1st Sem	367	1158	1-d	1515
	2nd Sem	14	1442	51-to /8-d	1456

The percentage of decrease from the first semester to second semester is the normal attrition rate which is usually 5-10%. This indicates that the university has the ability to hold their students. This enrolment data is another proof of the positive impact of the free education act on the enrolment status of CAPSU-Pilar.

### COHORT SURVIVAL RATE OF THE ENROLEES IN CAPSU-PILAR CAMPUS FOR THE PAST 5 YEARS

**Table 14. Cohort survival rate of the enrollees in CAPSU-Pilar Campus for the past 5 years.**

Current Year	Previous Year	Cohort Survival Rate
1456	1515	96.11%
1515	1159	130.71%
1159	1173	98.80%
1173	876	133.90%
876	928	94.40%
928	847	109.56%
847	909	93.17%
909	942	96.50%
942	999	94.29%

Table 14 reveals the Cohort Survival Rate of the enrollees in CAPSU-Pilar Campus for the past five (5) Academic year divided per semester. The enrollees in the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018 is 999 and the rate of survival is 94.29% which implies that the rate of enrollees has decreased up to 5.71%, thus, the number of enrollees in the second semester of the was reduced to 942 students. The survival rate of the enrollees from the second semester of academic year 2017-2018 to the number of enrollees of the first semester of the academic year 2018-2019 is 96.50% which also implies that the number of enrollees has decreased to 3.50% with now a total of 909 students. From the number of enrollees in the first semester, to the number of enrollees in the second semester, the survival rate is 93.17% which means the number of enrollees has decreased up to 6.83% with a total number of 847 enrollees. Since the number of enrollees of the second semester in academic year 2018-19 is 847 students and the number of enrollees of the next semester in the academic year 2019-2020 is 928, the survival rate increased up to 109.56%. This implies that the number of enrollees of the current semester has improved up to 9.56%. Unfortunately, the succeeding semester of the same academic year decreased the number of enrollees by 5.60%. This implies that the survival rate of enrollees from the first semester to the second semester in the academic year 2019-2020 is 94.40%. Moreover, the survival rate from the number of enrollees in the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021 has increased up to 33.90% of the previous semester. Thus, from the total number of 847 enrollees, this semester's total enrollees are 1173 students. In contrast from the last semester, the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021 has decreased up to 1.20%. This means that the rate of survival from the first semester to the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021 is 98.80% only. Furthermore, the number of enrollees of the first semester in the academic year 2021-2022 has a total of 1515 students. Compared to the last semester, the rate of survival has increased up to 30.71%. Lastly, the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022 has a total number of 1456 students. This also implies that the survival rate from the first semester to the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022 has decreased up to 3.89%. So, the total rate of survival is only 96.11%.

The data reveal a very positive impact of the free education act on the retention of enrollees. Students tend to continue their schooling due to the availability of support in terms of tuition and allowances. While in the study of Josipa Roksa and Peter Linsley (2018) college education is a key to upward mobility, low-income students are substantially less likely to earn bachelor's degrees than their more economically advantaged peers. Prior higher education literature illuminates various factors contributing to student success, but few studies consider the role of family support after students enter higher education. We examine how two different forms of family support—emotional and financial—are related to academic outcomes (grades, credit accumulation, and persistence) among low-income college students. analyses, based on a sample of 728 first-year low-income students attending eight four-year institutions, indicate that family emotional support plays an important role in fostering positive academic outcomes. Family emotional support is beneficial for academic outcomes as it promotes psychological well-being and facilitates greater student engagement. Financial support is not related to the outcomes examined in the sample as a whole. However, interaction models point to variation by first-

generations status wherein continuing-generation students benefit more from family financial support than their first-generation peers. Presented findings offer valuable insights into the role of families in supporting low-income students in college and can inform institutional policies and practices aimed at facilitating their success.

### TOTAL DATA OF GRADUATES IN CAPSU-PILAR CAMPUS FOR THE PAST 5 YEARS

**Table 15. Total number of graduates in CAPSU-Pilar Campus for the past 5 years.**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>GRADUATES</b>
2017 - 2018	328
2018 - 2019	303
2019 - 2020	108
2020 - 2021	110
2021 - 2022	251
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1100</b>

Table 15 discloses the number of graduates in CAPSU-Pilar campus for the past 5 year. Data reveals that in the academic year 2017-2018, there are 328 graduates. In the next academic year 2018-2019, the number of graduates is 303. In the academic year 2019-2020, the number of graduates has decreased to 108 students. A total of 101 students graduated in CAPSU-Pilar campus in the academic year 2020-2021. Lastly, the number of graduates in the academic year 2021-2022 is 251 students.

The improvement on the number of graduates during the time when this free education act was implemented further proves that this is an effective program for students in the rural area like the town of Pilar. May students are afforded quality education within their reach.



## Cohort Survival Rate of the Students in Year 2017 - 2021 and Year 2018- 2022 in CAPSU-Pilar Campus

**Table 16 Cohort Survival Rate of the Students in Year 2017 - 2021 and Year 2018- 2022.**

Year	Enrollees	Graduates	Cohort Survival Rate
2017 - 2021	185	110	59.46%
2018 – 2022	335	251	74.93%

Table 16 reveals the cohort survival rate of the students, enrolled in year 2017-2021 and year 2018-2022, after four years of college. The table shows that there were 185 enrollees in year 2017 and there were only 110 graduates. This implies that this group has a survival rate of 59.46%. On the other hand, on the succeeding year 2018, 335 students enrolled in CAPSU-Pilar campus and only 74.93% of the students graduated by the year 2022. This means that there are only 251 students who graduated in college from the 335 enrollees.

The improved cohort survival rate from 2018 to 2022 clearly signals the positive impact of the free education act on the enrolment and retention of college students. Dropouts were reduced due to the financial assistance provided to the college students. However, from the study of Gupta et.al. (2018) *An incomplete or no data set on the reasons why students drop out* The interviews of university employees revealed that due to the historically grown differences among Western European HE systems, no standard definition and measurement method exists regarding student dropout. Currently, universities measure dropouts based on different characteristics regarding the (1) student's behavior (different kinds of involuntary dropout and voluntary withdrawals), (2) different institutional levels ranging from abandoning a specific course to leave the HE system level, and (3) the timing a dropout occurs. However, none of the selected universities had a withdrawal/exit form to capture the reasons behind students' dropout. The LSS experts raised their concern that availability of partial or no data presents a major challenge for LSS projects, as it prevents the detailed analysis of underlying reasons why a student's dropout occurred.

### IV. Conclusion

The author should clearly explain the important conclusions of the research highlighting its significance and relevance. ((Times New Roman, Font Size 12)

1. CAPSU Pilar was able to deliver the free education act fully well. The students have felt the positive impact of this law as a way for them to earn a degree despite their financial incapacities. However, they still feel that there is room for improvement in terms of school facilities.

2. The increase in enrolment, retention and cohort survival rates are indeed tangible indicators of the positive impact of the free higher education act. This may redound to more students being able to enroll and finish their college degrees.

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