

# Direct Cost of Journalism Education

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper is focused on the financial expenditures of the undergraduate students in a State University in the Philippines. The methodology used in this study is the actual calculation. The study utilized the descriptive research design to determine the total direct cost of journalism education as it presents the total cost of expenditures per year level. Findings revealed an obvious budgetary constraint for families to send their children to school. Ratio of income to educational direct cost further implies the necessity of some financial assistance/aid in the form of scholarships, grants from the local government and or loans to be given by different organizations, companies, and unions that would help students in countering soaring college education costs.

**Key words:** Direct Cost, Education, Journalism, State University

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important factor in the Philippines. A college degree has now become a necessity to land a high-paying job, but quality education comes with a price.

A report from GMA News Philippines cited that 10-15 percent of colleges and universities increase their tuition every year, making it more difficult for parents to send their children to college (Infographics, 2014). How much is the overall cost of four years in college? Does it really make sense to calculate the cost of a particular course at a state university? Further, does it make sense trying to analyze the factors contributing to discrepancy in total direct costs for each level of education? These questions would be the focus of this paper.

Direct cost refers to the costs of education that are directly visible (Becker, 1994); they include all money expenditure incurred on different items by the student. From society's perspective, the direct costs of education include the value of the time of teachers (measured in salaries paid) and the value of the physical resources (books, materials, rental value of buildings and equipment, etc.) used in the education process. Whereas, from the individual's perspective, these direct costs are the fees families actually pay, plus other out-of-pocket expenses for books, transportation, school uniforms, etc. (Murnane, 2001). Direct cost analysis is not customarily done (or at least not customarily published) by either the private or

public institutions particularly in state universities. So, why should anyone care about this direct cost analysis at individual or student level?

This paper is focused on the above concrete questions about existing financial expenditures of the undergraduate students in a State University. It specifically aimed to describe the profile of the student respondents in terms of their number of family members specifying the number of students in a family, parents' occupation, other sources of income and annual family income; and to determine the total cost of journalism education.

## Cost of Education in the Philippines

There are 2,247 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines, and 88% of them are private colleges and universities. Of the country's 2.9 million higher education students, 1.74 million (60%) are enrolled in private schools (Commission on Higher Education, 2014).

Education in the Philippines is inexpensive, if based on currency value compared to the cost of education in leading Asian countries like Japan, Singapore and even Thailand. However, it is expensive for Filipinos who earn lesser than their Asian counterparts. Nevertheless, Filipinos value education like a hidden treasure—the key to success. Most indigent families strive to send the eldest or the smartest child to school in order to redeem and uplift their financial condition. Most of these families have at

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least one or two members who are able to acquire schooling.

At present, the cost of education is still affordable and Filipinos, poor and rich alike, still enjoy its benefits. But one must be aware that students in public schools have cheaper expenses than those in private schools, particularly those in international schools. Public elementary and secondary schools are provided and subsidized by the government for free. Private elementary and secondary schools are comparatively expensive. And even more expensive are the school fees for foreign students. Tuition fees in universities and colleges also vary on the type and location of the school. Private universities and colleges are much higher than those of public/state universities.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) currently estimates that, on the average, a student in a private school will pay 237,600 pesos (€4,200) for a four-year course. On average, however, public schools are not much cheaper. The CHED reckons that tuition for a complete four-year course costs 233,600 pesos (Robles, 2012).

Compared with what a typical Filipino household earns, the costs of higher education are stiff. According to the official Philippines' 2009 Family Income and Expenditure Survey, the average family's annual income is a mere 206,000 pesos. The survey notes that for the families in the bottom 30% the average is only 62,000 pesos (Robles, 2012).

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The methodology used in this study is the actual calculation. The main data inputs come from official university accounting and registrar reports as well as survey questionnaires that were distributed to the BS Journalism students.

### **Research Design**

The study utilized the descriptive research design to determine the total direct cost of journalism education as it presents the total cost of expenditures per year level.

### **Respondents of the Study**

The subjects of the study were the Bachelor of Science in Journalism students of the Laguna State Polytechnic University Los Baños Campus (LSPU-LBC).

A total of 34 students from first year to fourth year level participated in answering the survey questionnaires.

### **Gathering Instrument**

This study was conducted using a questionnaire which was designed by the researcher consisting of two parts. The first part obtains the profile of the BS Journalism students in terms of their year level during the first semester of the academic year 2009-2010, the number of family members, specifying the number of students in a family, parents' occupation, other sources of income and annual family income. The second part gathers the student's direct cost allocation in terms of expenditures on miscellaneous items, expenditures in the purchase of books, uniforms (including departmental shirt, sports vests, costumes etc.) stationary items (including paper and other school supplies e.g. bags, shoes, folders, pencils, ball pens, markers, staplers, notepads, paper clips, pen, etc.) and other charges (e.g. computer rentals, printings, photocopying, projects, researches and other requirements, field trips etc.) daily allowance for food and transport.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The survey was administered by the researcher and 34 students participated in completing the questionnaires during the classes. The students were assured that the main objective of the researcher was to find out the total direct cost of their education in taking BS Journalism course. They were also informed that their participation in the survey would help them, and their teachers would know and become aware of their expenditures while studying. Hence this reminded them of the essentials of proper budgeting. Students were encouraged to ask questions at any time during the process.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics/analysis was used to compute the arithmetic means of all the data gathered, using tables to present the results vividly.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the major findings of the study. The data on the profile of journalism students were gathered through the questionnaires distributed

to the respondents considered in the study. For better understanding, the data were tabulated and are presented based on the order of frequency counts and percentage distributions from the highest to lowest values.

Table 1 shows the profile of the journalism students in terms of their number of family members specifying the number of students in a family, parents' occupation, and other sources of family income. Based from the data gathered, driving a passenger vehicle such as tricycle and jeepney, carpentry/ construction and vending are the common livelihoods of the students' family. Such livelihood sources are generally considered within the low-income levels.

Most of the journalism students are from an average family size composed of five members. Although in terms of the number of students who are currently enrolled in particular school (i.e. elementary, high school and college), being three per family as the most number may provide some implications to the family specially the parents who shoulder so much of the bills/expenses in financing their children's education.

Other than the present livelihoods of the family, only four students or about 12% of the total population of the student respondents have other sources of income including apartment rental, mini store and engaging in working while studying. The remaining 30 or 88% do not have other income sources at all.

**Table 1.** Profile of the Journalism Students

Characteristics	Category	Frequency (Percentage)
<b>Father's occupation</b>	Driver (tricycle, jeepney)	13 (38.2)
	Construction Worker/Carpenter	7 (20.6)
	Others (i.e., fisherman, storekeeper)	4 (11.8)
	Government employee	3 (8.8)
	Farmer	3 (8.8)
	Vendor (i.e., fish, vegetable)	2 (5.9)
	Deceased	2 (5.9)
<b>Mother's occupation</b>	Housewife	16 (47.1)
	Vendor (i.e., fish, meat, vegetable)	12 (35.3)
	Government employee	4 (11.8)
	Others (i.e., caterer, dressmaker)	2 (5.9)
<b>Number of family members</b>	Five	10 (29.4)
	Four	7 (20.6)
	Six	6 (17.6)
	Seven	4 (11.8)
	Eight	4 (11.8)
	Three	2 (5.9)
	Nine	1 (2.9)
<b>Number of students in the family</b>	Three	13 (38.2)
	Two	11 (32.4)
	Four	4 (11.8)
	One	4 (11.8)
	Five	2 (5.9)
<b>Other sources of income</b>	None	30 (88.2)
	Apartment rental	2 (5.9)
	Mini store	1 (2.9)
	Working student	1 (2.9)

**Table 2.** Direct Cost of Journalism Education per Year Level vs. Annual Family Income

Items	Direct Cost Allocation in Philippine Peso (PhP)				
	1 <sup>ST</sup> Year	2 <sup>ND</sup> Year	3 <sup>RD</sup> Year	4 <sup>TH</sup> Year	Overall
<b>Total Amount of Tuition Fee per Year</b>	4,600.00	4,600.00	4,500.00	2,100.00	15,800.00
<b>Total Miscellaneous Fees</b>	8,140.00	7,140.00	7,140.00	7,140.00	29,560.00
<b>Estimated Direct Cost</b>	25,711.40	24,982.00	30,900.00	38,900.00	165,853.40
<b>Total (Estimated) Direct Cost</b>	38,451.40	36,722.00	42,540.00	48,140.00	211,213.40
<b>Estimated Average Annual Family Income</b>		144, 168.33			576, 673.33

Table 2 presents the estimated direct cost of journalism education per year level, and the combined all year levels including the total amount of tuition and the miscellaneous fees versus the estimated annual family income.

Based on the data gathered, fourth year has the biggest amount of expenditures in all years of schooling. Though based from the survey results, it is explicitly stated that students are experiencing some hard ups in financing their needs in order to meet all the basic requirements of the course and in particular, financing their projects, researches, attending in seminars/workshops, field trips and other school activities and so they would not be surprised of their rising debt levels as they reach the last year of their course, which is considered to be the most expensive of all.

Results also revealed that with an average estimated annual family income of one hundred forty four thousand, one hundred sixty eight pesos and thirty three centavos (P144, 168.33) and an average estimated direct cost of forty one thousand, four hundred sixty three pesos and thirty five centavos (P41, 463.35) for each level of schooling means that about 29% of the annual family income goes to the education and the remaining one hundred two thousand, seven hundred four pesos (P102, 704.00) is the only amount allotted for the consumption towards other basic needs (i.e. education of other siblings, food, clothing, housing, water, electricity etc.) for the entire year.

Similar to this case of combining the cost of all year levels (from first year to fourth year) and estimating the average family income for four consecutive years, survey result indicated that about 37% of that family income goes to financing BS Journalism education.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Given the ratio of income to educational direct cost, there is an obvious budgetary constraint for families to send their children to school. This further implies the necessity of some financial assistance/aid in the form of scholarships, grants from the local government and or loans to be given by different organizations, companies, and unions. Without educational assistance, there would be a nationwide decline in school enrollment among families. But despite of the disparate income-to-cost gap, some students are able to cope. Some families are becoming sacrificial in putting education as prime family spending. Other families may resort to creative means or to be flexible to augment educational budget.

Rising costs are challenging families particularly the parents who are sending their children in colleges or universities across the nation. Posted tuition and fees have been increasing as the prices of other basic needs and commodities are also rising and are now at levels that, without assistance, go beyond the reach of many students and families. Behind the price increases are growing pressures on parents to meet at the least the financial needs of their children's education.

Yet, the Philippine society has a clear and vital interest in meeting those needs. Post-secondary education, particularly at the baccalaureate level, is both a vehicle of growth, stability and competitiveness for community and the nation, and a key to economic opportunity for individuals.

From the question posed at the beginning of this research study: "Does it make sense to calculate the cost of a particular course at a state university?" the answer would be soundly affirmative. And this is not

just an individual family concern. It is the concern of society and of the government.

While everybody should care about this, the ensuing fact simply states that higher/ college education is a dream that is definitely worth achieving despite the high costs. And while some individual success stories should spur others to rise above the financial limitations to get them to their goals, there should be a comprehensive national program that would help out in countering soaring educational costs.

### **Competing interests**

The author declares that she has no competing interests.

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