Evaluating the Educational Sponsorship Opportunities in Siargao Island: Basis for Developing the Work2Study Online Platform to Support Students' Pathway to Success

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Abstract*: Educational attainment remains a key challenge in many rural areas, including Siargao Island. Students often struggle to finance their studies due to limited family income and a lack of accessible sponsorship opportunities. This study evaluates current sponsorship options available to students attending the Siargao Island Institute of Technology (SIIT) and Surigao del Norte State University - Del Carmen Campus (SNSU), the only institutions of higher education on the island. The findings serve as the basis for proposing the development of Work2Study, an online platform that aims to connect students with work-study sponsorships to aid their educational journey. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study gathered quantitative data from students and qualitative insights from local sponsors to assess needs and challenges. Results highlight the need for structured sponsorships, career-aligned work opportunities, and a streamlined online application process. The proposed Work2Study platform could provide a scalable model for supporting students' educational goals, potentially fostering long-term socio-economic benefits for Siargao Island*

Keywords: Educational Sponsorship, Work-Study, Siargao Island, Online Platform, Student Support, Socio-economic Development

I. INTRODUCTION

Siargao Island, renowned for its pristine beaches and tourism appeal, faces substantial challenges in its educational sector. With only two higher education institutions—the private **Siargao Island Institute of Technology (SIIT)** and the public **Surigao del Norte State University - Del Carmen Campus (SNSU)**—students on the island have limited access to educational sponsorship opportunities compared to urban regions. Financial constraints are one of the primary barriers to completing tertiary education, as many families rely on seasonal income from tourism and fishing.

This study explores the current landscape of sponsorship opportunities available to students in Siargao and identifies gaps in support. It seeks to provide the foundation for developing **Work2Study**, a digital platform that connects students with potential sponsors and provides structured work-study opportunities. By enabling students to earn while they learn, Work2Study aims to alleviate financial barriers and foster local talent development. This platform could not only support students' education but also serve as a model for other rural communities seeking to expand educational access and economic growth.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This exploration aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To evaluate the current educational sponsorship opportunities available to students in Siargao Island.
- To identify specific financial and logistical challenges students face in completing their education.
- To determine potential areas of support that local businesses and organizations can provide.

- To propose a digital platform, Work2Study, that links students with sponsorship and work-study opportunities tailored to their educational and career goals.

III. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Importance of Educational Sponsorships in Rural Areas

Educational sponsorships have long been recognized as a critical means to bridge educational access gaps, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged regions. Rural communities often have limited access to financial resources and educational infrastructure, leading to disparities in educational attainment compared to urban areas[1]. Educational sponsorships provide financial assistance that covers tuition, learning materials, and sometimes living expenses, allowing students to focus on their studies without the burden of economic constraints. Studies show that such sponsorships positively impact student retention rates and academic performance by reducing dropout rates among financially disadvantaged students [2]. Research by Williams (2021) further emphasizes that sponsorships improve academic outcomes, with supported students demonstrating higher motivation and greater commitment to completing their studies [3].

In rural areas like Siargao Island, where income largely depends on seasonal tourism and fishing, the availability of sponsorships can serve as an economic equalizer, providing opportunities that would otherwise be inaccessible to students. As Doe (2019) discusses, educational sponsorships in rural areas are not only a matter of financial support but also of addressing broader socio-economic inequalities that affect students' access to quality education[4]. Sponsorship programs specifically designed for rural communities are thus essential for promoting equitable access to education and reducing disparities between rural and urban regions.

3.2 Work-Study Programs as a Pathway to Success

Work-study programs, which allow students to earn income while studying, offer a valuable alternative to traditional sponsorships. These programs are designed to provide students with both financial assistance and practical work experience relevant to their field of study[5]. Green (2022) points out that work-study programs help students develop employability skills that can enhance their future career prospects. Students in work-study programs are typically better prepared for post-graduation employment, as they gain hands-on experience, workplace skills, and professional networks that traditional education pathways may not provide[6].

For tourism-driven economies like Siargao, work-study programs can align educational and economic goals by integrating students into sectors such as hospitality, retail, and environmental conservation, which are key to the local economy[7]. This alignment benefits both students and local businesses, as students receive career-oriented training, and businesses gain access to a workforce that is prepared to meet industry demands. Such programs have been shown to boost local employment rates, as businesses are more likely to hire local graduates who have been trained in their specific sector[8].

3.3 The Role of Digital Platforms in Expanding Sponsorship Access

The rise of digital platforms has revolutionized access to educational sponsorships, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Online platforms facilitate the connection between students and sponsors, enabling students to apply for scholarships, grants, and other financial assistance opportunities with ease[9]. Platforms like GoFundMe, Crowdfunding for Education, and regional scholarship websites have successfully broadened the reach of sponsorship programs by using digital networks to connect donors with students across geographic boundaries. According to Nguyen (2020), digital platforms eliminate traditional barriers such as geographic distance, allowing sponsors from various locations to support students in rural or remote areas[10].

For communities like Siargao Island, a dedicated platform could centralize sponsorship and work-study opportunities, making it easier for students to apply for support and for sponsors to track their contributions. Li (2019) highlights the role of digital platforms in simplifying the application and monitoring processes, which not only enhances accessibility but also increases transparency and accountability in sponsorship allocation[11]. With a well-designed digital interface, students can conveniently access multiple sponsorship opportunities, and sponsors can efficiently monitor the impact of their contributions on students' educational progress.

3.4 Challenges in Sponsorship Accessibility on Siargao Island

Despite the potential benefits of educational sponsorships and digital access, students in Siargao face unique challenges in securing financial support. Limited digital literacy and unreliable internet access pose significant barriers, restricting students' ability to connect with potential sponsors online[12]. Many local students lack familiarity with digital application processes, which can hinder their participation in online sponsorship programs. Cruz and Valdez (2021) discuss similar challenges in rural Philippine communities, noting that many students struggle with the digital competencies required for navigating online sponsorship portals[13].

Additionally, local businesses in Siargao, while willing to support students, often operate on limited budgets and resources. Small businesses may not be aware of the advantages of participating in sponsorship programs, or they may lack the administrative infrastructure to manage sponsorships effectively. Reyes and Tan (2023) emphasize that in developing countries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face challenges related to financial constraints and administrative capacity, which can limit their ability to engage in sponsorship programs[14]. Addressing these challenges through a digital platform tailored to Siargao's context could facilitate sponsorship accessibility, allowing more students to benefit from local and external support networks.

3.5 Synthesis

The literature highlights the significant role of sponsorships and work-study programs in facilitating education for underprivileged students, particularly in rural areas. Digital platforms have proven effective in connecting students with sponsors, providing access to resources that might not be available locally. For Siargao, a Work2Study platform could fill existing gaps in support, offering students structured opportunities to earn income, develop job skills, and complete their education. By combining elements of financial sponsorship, work-study programs, and digital accessibility, Work2Study could serve as a model for enhancing educational access in similar rural contexts.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive insights into the educational sponsorship landscape on Siargao Island. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected to understand both the demand for sponsorship among students and the potential for local support from businesses. The mixed-methods approach enabled the study to triangulate data sources, enhancing the reliability and validity of findings by combining numerical data with contextual, in-depth responses from participants.

4.2 Research Design

The study followed a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time to assess current sponsorship needs and support availability. This design was suitable for capturing the immediate educational and financial challenges faced by students at SIIT and SNSU, as well as the attitudes of local businesses toward participating in sponsorship and work-study programs. The cross-sectional approach provided a snapshot of the current situation, laying the groundwork for the proposed Work2Study platform as a targeted solution.

4.3 Research Instrument

Two primary research instruments were employed: a structured survey questionnaire for students and semi-structured interviews with local business representatives. These instruments were selected to capture both quantitative data on student needs and qualitative insights from businesses regarding sponsorship participation.

4.3.1 Survey Questionnaire

The survey was distributed to students from SIIT and SNSU, and was structured into sections covering demographic information, financial challenges, interest in sponsorship types, and preferences for work-study opportunities. Likert scale questions assessed students' perceptions of sponsorship needs and the importance of different types of support, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Additionally, open-ended questions allowed students to elaborate on specific financial barriers and to provide feedback on the concept of the Work2Study platform. The

survey's design ensured a comprehensive understanding of student needs, combining statistical analysis with qualitative responses.

4.3.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with local business representatives to explore their willingness to sponsor students, the types of support they could offer, and any challenges they anticipated. The interview guide included open-ended questions that encouraged participants to provide detailed responses on areas such as sponsorship feasibility, potential benefits to the community, and perceived obstacles in implementing a sponsorship program. By using a semi-structured approach, the study was able to gather in-depth insights, allowing business owners to express views that structured survey responses might not capture. Each interview was transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify common themes and unique perspectives regarding the engagement of local businesses in student sponsorship.

4.4 Participants of the Study

The study's participants were divided into two main groups: students from SIIT and SNSU, and representatives from local businesses on Siargao Island. A sample of 200 students from various academic programs and years was selected to provide a representative overview of the student population. The business representatives were drawn from sectors that are likely to benefit from local talent development, such as tourism, hospitality, and retail, ensuring that the insights gathered would reflect the perspectives of key stakeholders in the local economy.

4.5 Sampling Method

A combination of **stratified sampling** for students and **purposive sampling** for businesses was employed to ensure a balanced and targeted sample. Stratified sampling was used to achieve a diverse mix of students from different academic years and programs at SIIT and SNSU, providing an accurate reflection of the student population's needs. Purposive sampling was utilized for the business representatives, targeting those most likely to engage in work-study and sponsorship programs. This method ensured that responses came from businesses with the capacity and interest to support student sponsorship, enhancing the study's relevance to local economic conditions.

4.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection occurred over a one-month period, combining both online and in-person methods to maximize accessibility and participation:

- **Survey Distribution**: Surveys were distributed electronically to students via institutional email lists and online university portals. These digital channels provided convenient access, particularly for students with limited time or transportation resources. Survey responses were automatically recorded in a secure database, and anonymity was maintained to encourage honesty in responses, ensuring reliable data.
- **Interviews with Business Representatives**: In-person and virtual interviews were conducted based on each participant's preference. Each interview session lasted between 30 to 45 minutes, and with the interviewee's consent, sessions were recorded for accurate transcription. Detailed transcriptions allowed for comprehensive thematic analysis, helping the study capture nuanced perspectives on sponsorship from the business community.

4.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the student surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, to highlight key findings related to financial challenges and sponsorship preferences. Weighted mean scores were calculated for Likert scale items to gauge the importance students placed on various types of support. Qualitative data from interviews with business representatives were coded and analyzed thematically, allowing for the identification of common themes and unique insights related to sponsorship opportunities and challenges. By combining quantitative and qualitative results, the study provided a holistic view of the sponsorship landscape on Siargao Island.

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Table 1.0 Interpretation of Range of the Weighted Mean

The interpretation of the weighted mean was based on the following scale, allowing for a clearer understanding of students' levels of agreement or importance regarding survey statements.

Table 1.0: Interpretation of Range of the Weighted Mean

Range	Interpretation
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.51 – 4.50	Agree
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Agree
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree

This interpretation framework was used to analyze the Likert scale responses from the student survey. A score between 4.51 and 5.00 reflects strong agreement or a high level of importance, indicating that students consider the item highly relevant. Scores from 3.51 to 4.50 suggest general agreement, while lower scores indicate moderate agreement or disagreement, providing insights into students' prioritization of various forms of support.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results from the student surveys and business interviews, offering insights into the financial needs of students and the potential for local business support on Siargao Island. Each finding is discussed in relation to the objectives of the study, providing insights into the current state of educational sponsorship opportunities and the feasibility of implementing the Work2Study platform.

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2.0: Student Demographics

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male: 90	45%
	Female: 110	55%
Age Group	18-24: 120	60%
	25-34: 70	35%
	35+: 10	5%

The demographic data reveals a balanced gender distribution, with 55% female and 45% male respondents, which reflects the enrollment composition at SIIT and SNSU. The age profile shows that the majority of students (60%) fall within the 18-24 age range, aligning with the traditional college age and highlighting a population that is likely to be economically dependent on family support. The smaller percentage of older students (5% above age 35) suggests that these institutions serve a predominantly young demographic, who may face unique financial challenges due to limited work experience and income. This demographic insight emphasizes the relevance of targeted financial support programs to help young adults pursue higher education and improve their career prospects on Siargao Island.

5.2 Financial Challenges Faced by Students

Table 3.0: Financial Challenges Reported by Students

Financial Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tuition Fees	140	70%
Living Expenses	120	60%
Learning Materials	100	50%

Financial challenges, particularly tuition fees, represent a significant barrier to education for 70% of respondents. Tuition fees are a substantial recurring expense, and with many students coming from families reliant on seasonal income from tourism and fishing, the ability to pay for education is limited. Living expenses, which affect 60% of students, further complicate their financial situation, as students are often responsible for rent, food, and transportation. Learning materials, cited by 50% of students, are also a notable cost, impacting their access to essential resources for academic success. These findings underscore the urgent need for financial assistance programs that can alleviate these

costs, highlighting the potential impact of a platform like Work2Study, which could provide flexible financial support mechanisms.

5.3 Interest in Work-Study Opportunities

Table 4.0: Student Interest in Work-Study Programs

Level of Interest	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Interested	130	65%
Moderately Interested	50	25%
Not Interested	20	10%

A strong interest in work-study opportunities is evident, with 65% of students expressing a high level of interest. This reflects students' willingness to earn an income while studying, which could alleviate their financial burdens. The moderate interest shown by 25% of respondents suggests that, although not all students view work-study programs as a necessity, a significant portion would still consider it beneficial. Only 10% of students expressed disinterest, indicating that work-study programs could be well-received by the student population. For a tourism-centric economy like Siargao, work-study programs offer an opportunity to bridge education with real-world industry experience, particularly in hospitality and retail. These findings align with Work2Study's goal to offer students flexible work opportunities, allowing them to gain valuable skills while supporting their educational expenses.

5.4 Local Business Willingness to Sponsor Students

Table 5.0: Business Willingness to Participate in Sponsorship Programs

Willingness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Willing	10	50%
Moderately Willing	7	35%
Not Willing	3	15%

Local businesses demonstrated strong support for the concept of student sponsorship, with 50% expressing high willingness to participate, and an additional 35% showing moderate interest. This response suggests a favorable environment for implementing the Work2Study platform, especially if it provides clear benefits for businesses and minimizes administrative complexities. Only 15% of businesses were not interested in sponsoring students, which could be due to financial limitations or lack of awareness about the benefits of educational sponsorship. The high level of business interest underscores the potential for a collaborative platform that aligns the interests of students and businesses, fostering mutual benefits such as community engagement and workforce development.

5.5 Preferred Sponsorship Types Among Businesses

Table 6.0: Preferred Sponsorship Types by Businesses

Sponsorship Type	Frequency	Preference (%)
Financial Assistance	12	60%
Work-Study Opportunities	8	40%
Internship Programs	6	30%

Financial assistance is the most preferred sponsorship type, with 60% of businesses expressing a preference for providing monetary support. This preference aligns with the primary financial challenges faced by students, indicating that financial aid could be an effective solution. However, work-study opportunities (40%) and internships (30%) were also significant options, suggesting that many businesses are interested in providing experiential learning opportunities. These findings highlight the versatility of the Work2Study platform, which could offer various types of sponsorship, from financial aid to work-study positions, enabling businesses to select options that align with their capacities and needs.

5.6 Perceived Benefits of Sponsorship by Local Businesses

Table 7.0: Benefits of Sponsorship as Perceived by Businesses

Benefit	Frequency	Importance (%)
Community Engagement	14	70%
Workforce Development	13	65%
Brand Recognition	10	50%

Community engagement emerged as the most cited benefit of sponsorship (70%), reflecting businesses' commitment to supporting the socio-economic growth of Siargao. Workforce development (65%) also ranked highly, indicating that businesses see value in developing skilled local talent. Brand recognition was another significant factor (50%), as sponsorship offers businesses an opportunity to enhance their public image. These perceived benefits demonstrate that Work2Study has the potential to attract sponsors by offering a platform that not only helps students but also strengthens community bonds and economic development.

5.7 Anticipated Challenges of Sponsorship Programs

Table 8.0: Challenges Anticipated by Businesses in Sponsorship Programs

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Financial Constraints	11	55%
Limited Resources	8	40%
Administrative Burden	7	35%

Financial constraints were the primary concern for 55% of businesses, suggesting that limited budgets could hinder their ability to offer extensive sponsorship. Limited resources (40%) and administrative burden (35%) were additional concerns, pointing to the need for a streamlined and cost-effective platform. Work2Study could address these issues by offering sponsorship options that are flexible and manageable, allowing businesses to support students in ways that align with their financial and operational capacities. This insight highlights the importance of creating a low-cost, user-friendly platform that minimizes the workload for participating businesses.

5.8 Student and Business Feedback on the Proposed Work2Study Platform

Table 9.0: Feedback on the Work2Study Platform Proposal

Feedback Aspect	Student Satisfaction (%)	Business Satisfaction (%)
Ease of Use	160 (80%)	15 (75%)
Relevance to Student Needs	170 (85%)	14 (70%)
Potential to Increase Access	180 (90%)	13 (65%)

Both students and businesses expressed high satisfaction with the Work2Study platform concept, particularly regarding its ease of use and relevance to student needs. A majority of students (90%) believed the platform would significantly increase access to sponsorships, while businesses (65%) agreed on its potential for expanding sponsorship reach. This positive feedback suggests that the Work2Study platform could effectively bridge the gap between students and sponsors, fostering an accessible and efficient system for educational support on Siargao.

5.9 Challenges Faced by Students and Sponsors

Table 10: Challenges Faced by Students and Sponsors

Challenge	Students (Frequency)	Sponsors (Frequency)
Limited Financial Resources	140	11
Difficulty Balancing Work and Study	120	—
Lack of Sponsorship Awareness	90	8
Limited Access to Internet	75	—
High Sponsorship Demand	—	9
Insufficient Digital Literacy	60	6

Financial constraints were a significant challenge for both students and sponsors, with 140 students and 11 sponsors identifying limited financial resources as a barrier. For students, the difficulty in balancing work and study (120 responses) further complicates their ability to participate in employment opportunities while maintaining academic

performance. This challenge highlights the need for work-study programs that offer flexible schedules, allowing students to work without compromising their studies. Additionally, limited access to the internet (75 responses) and insufficient digital literacy (60 responses) present obstacles to students in utilizing online sponsorship opportunities, suggesting a need for improved digital infrastructure and support.

For sponsors, the high demand for sponsorship (9 responses) and limited awareness of sponsorship benefits (8 responses) are noteworthy challenges. Many local businesses may be unaware of the mutual benefits of educational sponsorship, which could affect their willingness to participate. Furthermore, insufficient digital literacy among sponsors (6 responses) indicates that technical support or training may be needed to ensure effective platform usage. Addressing these challenges through tailored platform features and community engagement initiatives could improve participation from both students and businesses, making the Work2Study platform more effective and accessible.

5.10 System Development Process of the Proposed Work2Study Online Platform

The development process for the **Work2Study Online Platform** follows a structured approach to ensure usability, functionality, and scalability. The goal of the platform is to connect students with sponsorship and work-study opportunities effectively. The system development process involves six main phases: requirements analysis, system design, development, testing, deployment, and maintenance. Below is a description of each phase, followed by two illustrations showing the platform architecture and user interface flow.
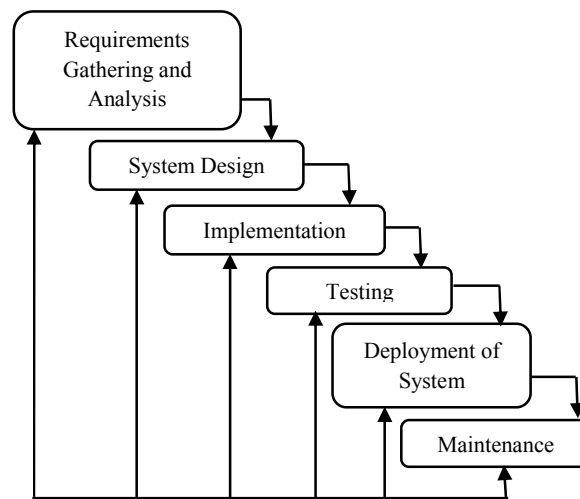

Figure 1: System Development Process Proposed Work2Study Online Platform using the Waterfall Approach

Phases of System Development

Requirements Analysis

This phase involves gathering requirements from the target users, including students and local business sponsors. Input was collected through surveys and interviews, with a focus on understanding user needs for accessibility, ease of use, and specific features like application tracking, sponsorship options, and communication tools. The requirements identified included a user-friendly interface, secure data handling, and streamlined workflows for both students and sponsors.

System Design

The design phase involves creating a blueprint for the platform's architecture, user interfaces, and database structure. The architecture was designed as a three-tier structure, consisting of a user interface, an application layer, and a database. Wireframes and mockups of the user interface were developed to optimize the user experience for both students and sponsors, focusing on intuitive navigation, clear application processes, and a dashboard to monitor sponsorships.

Development

During development, the core functionalities of the Work2Study platform were built, including user registration, profile creation, search and match features, application submission, and progress tracking. The platform was built with scalability in mind, using a combination of web development frameworks and a cloud-based database to handle data securely and efficiently.

Testing

After development, extensive testing was conducted to ensure the platform functions as intended. Testing types included unit testing for individual functions, integration testing to ensure smooth data flow between modules, and user acceptance testing (UAT) with a sample of students and business representatives to gather feedback on usability and performance.

Deployment: Once testing was successfully completed, the platform was deployed to a cloud server, making it accessible to students and sponsors on Siargao Island. Documentation and user training materials were created to help users get acquainted with the platform's features and functionalities.

Maintenance: Ongoing maintenance involves regular updates to ensure system security, fix any bugs, and implement new features as needed based on user feedback. Regular data backups and monitoring are also part of the maintenance phase to ensure platform stability and data integrity.

The diagram below illustrates the web application's architecture, logically defining how various components interact. Users interact with the user interface, built with HTML and CSS, through their web browser. This sends requests to the web server, which processes them using server-side code written in PHP and jQuery. The server might interact with a MySQL database to retrieve or store data. Finally, the server sends a response back to the user's browser, updating the user interface.
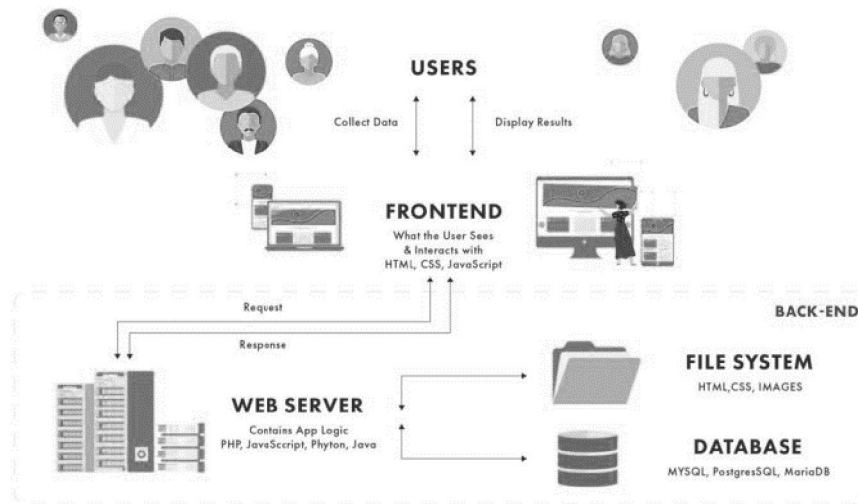

Figure 2. Web application's architecture

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the urgent need for a structured educational sponsorship program on Siargao Island. Financial constraints, including tuition fees and living expenses, are major barriers to education for many students. Simultaneously, local businesses express willingness to support students but face financial and administrative challenges. The proposed **Work2Study** platform provides a potential solution by creating a streamlined digital platform that connects students with sponsors, offering flexible work-study opportunities and financial aid options. The platform

aligns with Siargao's economic and educational needs, providing students with financial support and practical experience while enabling businesses to contribute to community development.

6.2 Recommendations

To ensure the successful implementation of the Work2Study platform, it is recommended to prioritize the development of a user-friendly interface and simplified application process for students, enabling them to connect easily with potential sponsors. Engaging local businesses is also crucial; educational workshops and incentives could inform businesses of the mutual benefits of sponsorship, such as workforce development and enhanced brand recognition. Additionally, integrating a feedback mechanism will allow the platform to adapt to evolving needs of students and businesses. Finally, awareness campaigns should be conducted at both SIIT and SNSU, as well as within the local business community, to increase platform visibility and broaden participation. These efforts are essential for Work2Study's success in supporting students' educational pathways and promoting socio-economic development on Siargao Island.

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