

Financing Education through the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)*

Brian O. dela Torre

Balamban Elementary School

Mahayag South District

Division of Zamboanga del Sur, Region IX – Zamboanga Peninsula

Republic of the Philippines

Abstract

This study endeavoured to find out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, from the viewpoint of its beneficiaries and to recognize the changes it brought forth to education. Respondents, selected through purposive sampling, were asked through a researcher-made questionnaire of their perception and suggestions for the 4Ps, and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of 4Ps. The study revealed that 4Ps contributed greatly to the school's performance indicators. This study also raised the awareness of the school personnel and the recipients of the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Furthermore, the study concludes that 4Ps certainly helped its recipients and the school with 4Ps enrollees. It is therefore recommended that the program be continued but improved to ensure the attainment of its objectives.

Key Words: Conditional Cash Transfer, education, schools, *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program*.

1. Introduction

In the Philippines, just like other countries, the right to education has been hindered by poverty. Poverty has been one of the major problems and societal concerns in the country. As defined by Crossman (2014), poverty is a condition in which people lack the basic things in order to survive such as food, shelter, water, clothes and education. In a report by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in 2014, it is said that Philippines' poverty rate eased to 24.9% in the first half of 2013 from 27.9% of the same period in 2012. Despite this good news, Filipinos continue to suffer from the effects of poverty in the country.

Sad to note, most of the problems and difficulties of Filipinos are rooted in poverty. Many families are left deprived of their basic needs and are therefore forced their children to stop going to school and help them instead in their livelihood. With this as main ground, the Philippine government initiated a program called the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* or 4Ps, both to address poverty and in response to the country's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The program aims to provide cash assistance to the poor to alleviate their immediate needs (short term poverty alleviation) and to break the intergenerational transmission and cycle of poverty by investing heavily in human capital development (Department of Social Welfare and Development [DSWD], 2014). Beneficiaries of this program are expected to use the assistance especially for educational and health purposes.

Fernandez and Ofindo (2011) described the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)* as a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program that transfers cash to beneficiary families if they follow the its conditionalities. Just like other CCT programs, the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* aims in reducing and alleviating existing poverty by supplementing the income of the poor to address their current consumption poverty, especially in the education and health of their family members while making them follow certain conditionalities that can boost their human development investment and ensure its compliance so that they can have more opportunities in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty in the long run.

The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* helps in accomplishing the Philippines' commitment in addressing five of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These MDGs include: (1) eradicating extreme poverty; (2) achieving universal primary education; (3) promoting gender equality and empowering women; (4) reducing child mortality; and (5) improving maternal health. According to government estimates, in 2009, about 26.5 percent of Filipinos were living below the poverty line, significantly lower than the 33.1 percent recorded in 1991, the baseline data.

The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* targets the poorest households in the poorest areas of the country. Households must meet stages of criteria at the time of registration to become eligible for the cash grants. First, must be residents of poor areas targeted by the program. Second, must be truly being poor. Third, there must be a pregnant woman or at least have one child aged 0-14 years in the household. Four, must be dedicated in complying with the programs conditionalities (Fernandez & Olfindo, 2011).

Velarde and Fernandez (2011) also added that impact of *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* in improving the educational and health outcomes can aid and support beneficiaries in attaining a better and quality living in the future. Like the lessons learned from other CCT programs, 4Ps is also intended to fill gaps in the educational and health outcomes amongst children, aside from providing them with immediate poverty relief. The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program*, like other Conditional Cash Transfers, employed for varied but interrelated purposes today, has proven to have impact in education, either directly, by means of the educational and health grants of the program, or indirectly, by uplifting the total human condition of its recipients.

Considering these aforementioned points, this study was undertaken to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) from the viewpoint of its beneficiaries and to recognize the changes it brings forth to education.

2. Research Questions

This study evaluated the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) and its impacts on the school. Thus, it answers following questions:

2.1. What is the profile of the school with *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) enrolees in terms of:

- a. Retention rate
- b. Drop-out rate
- c. Cohort survival rate
- d. Average daily and monthly attendance
- e. Yearly and monthly enrolment
- f. Participation rate in classroom meetings, school programs, *Brigada Eskwela*, and school projects
- g. Promptness in paying school and classroom dues
- h. Pupils' nutritional status

2.2. What are the strengths of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps)?

2.3. What are the weaknesses of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps)?

2.4. What are the opportunities of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps)?

2.5. What are the threats of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps)?

2.6. What are the suggestions of the respondents for *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps)?

- a. 4Ps Recipient-Respondents
- b. Teacher-respondents

3. Research Design

The study used the descriptive-evaluative method. It assessed the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* or 4Ps in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

4. Research Respondents

The respondents of this study are all the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) recipients of Barangay Bag-ong Balamban, Mahayag, Zamboanga del Sur with children enrolled from Kindergarten to Grade VI for School Year 2014-2015 at Balamban Elementary School. There are 105 4Ps recipient-respondents of this study. In profiling the school with *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) enrolees, ten teachers of Balamban Elementary School are the teacher-respondents.

5. Research Instrument

Utilization of researcher-made questionnaire was employed to ensure the veracity and reliability of the respondents' responses. It was pilot-tested and the result of the reliability test is 0.9 which makes the questionnaire internally-consistent. Face validity was also employed when the questionnaire was reviewed by teachers and the 4Ps Municipal Links.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1. Profile of the school with 4Ps enrollees

The study looks into some significant information about the 4Ps beneficiaries of Balamban Elementary School where their children are enrolled. For the school year 2014-2015, it had a pupil population of 257, where 120 are male and 137 are female. It has eleven teachers and is headed by an Elementary School Principal – I. The “before 4Ps” data are taken from school years 2007-2008 to 2010-2011. The “after 4Ps” data are taken from school year 2011-2012 to school year 2014-2015. Ten (10) teachers were involved in the profiling of the school with 4Ps enrollees.

Retention Rate refers to the magnitude of pupils who repeat a grade level. This determines the degree of pupils in a particular school year who continued to be in the same grade level in the next school year. The school's retention rate decreased from 4.10% of the enrolment to 0 after the implementation of the program in 2015. This shows that the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) is instrumental in sending all pupils to the next higher level of education. According to the teachers, this can be attributed to the attendance threshold of the program. This explains that if a pupil is 85% absent or more of the monthly school days, they will not be given the allotted educational grant for that month. It strengthens the supposition that a better attendance leads to better academic time and better learning.

The Simple Dropout Rate calculates the percentage of pupils who do not finish a particular grade level. This does not include those pupils who finish a grade level but do not enrol in the next grade level the following year. The percentage of pupils who leave school during the year for any reason as well as those who complete the previous grade level but fail to enrol on the next grade level the following school year to the total number of pupils enrolled during the previous school year. The school's drop-out rate decreased from 2.70% of enrolment to 0 after the program's implementation in 2010. According to teachers, one of the reasons pupils dropped out from their classes is when they accumulated many unexcused absences. This will lead them to feel shy and insecure and then they dropped out of school. The program's attendance threshold lessens the chances of pupils' absences leading them to have lesser absences.

The Cohort Survival Rate computes the percentage of group of pupils who are able to reach Grade VI. This is used to assess the internal efficiency and “wastage” in education. This is the percentage of enrollees at the beginning grade in a given school year who reached the final grade of elementary level according to the 2006 Inter-Agency Committee on Education Statistics. The school's cohort survival rate increased from 68.20% to 96.30% after the implementation of the program. This data is due to the lesser number of dropped-out and retained pupils. It means that after the implementation of the program more pupils were able to finish Grade I to Grade VI leading to a higher number of elementary graduates.

After the implementation of the program, the school's average daily attendance increased from 82.60% to 94.50%, school's average monthly attendance increased from 81.20% to 94.30%, school's monthly enrolment increased from 82.30% to 96.20% and school's yearly enrolment increased from 83.70% to 95.60%. This could be a noted effect of the educational grant and conditionalities of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps). These conditionalities help improve the enrolment and school attendance rates of children. Furthermore, according to the respondents, attendance and enrolment of their children to school is very important and essential on their being beneficiaries of the 4Ps. It is a must and necessity as members of the program. Since they are receiving the grants, they have the capacity on sending their children to school and buying them their supplies and needs. Children who are attending pre-school and day care centers, elementary school and secondary must have an attendance of not less than 85% of that month's school days (Fernandez & Ofindo, 2011). Conditionality plays a very essential role in CCT programs. Conditionality needs to be included in the program because cash transfer, by itself, will not be strong enough to increase school attendance significantly and sustainably.

The quality of education and schooling would have to be enhanced when governing any cash transfer programs aimed at a continual reduction of poverty (Son & Florentino, 2008). The conditionality on the pupils' attendance is the most visible and most felt benefit derived from the implementation of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps). According to teachers, there were lesser absences of pupils because parents encouraged their pupils to be always in school or else they might not meet the attendance threshold per month. It has also been noted that because parents were more informed and more careful in the health condition of their children, lesser pupils became sick leading them to be absent from their classes. Also, pupils' academic performance was noted to have improved because of their attendance in their classes.

After the implementation also, parents' attendance and participation in classroom meetings increased from 77.80% to 95.00%, parents' participation in school programs increased from 75.80% to 91.40%, parents' participation in *Brigada Eskwela* increased from 80.90% to 96.70% and parents' participation in school projects increased from 78.50% to 92.80%. According to the respondents, this is because they also wanted to be part of the learning experiences of their children. As long as there is no work in the farm and they have extra time, they will help and attend in any volunteer work that the school needs. Attendance during meetings and programs were found to be helpful in their monitoring and nurturing of their children.

Parent involvement may contribute to increased support to the school, providing resources for possible crises with other bureaucracies and in the ever-present and important concerns of bond issues. Parent involvement at schools can also provide valuable additional resources for school operations in terms of "volunteer" time and "free" services rendered. Parent involvement is found to influence positively the pupils' school success; that is, that by being involved, parents can become more familiar with the children's formal education and better equip to reinforce at home the principles and concepts of the learning process. Finally, parents' participation in planning may help schools create programs more suited for the needs of the children (Herman & Yeh, 1980).

The parents' promptness in paying school dues and promptness in paying classroom increased from 64.30% to 88.00% and 60% to 87.50%, respectively, after the implementation of the program. It is true that there is the "no collection policy" imposed by the Department of Education to the public schools, however these are Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) fees and donations that were decided and voted by the majority of parents and deemed as important in the improvement of the school and the classrooms. As observed by teacher-respondents, parents pay their school and classroom obligations as soon as they received their cash grant. It leads to faster implementation of school and classroom projects thus making the pupils benefit from it earlier before the implementation of the program. For the parents, is it just and appropriate to pay their obligations as soon as they receive the grant to minimize the chances of them misusing the grant that is for the education of their children and in every Family Development Sessions (FDSs) their 4Ps Municipal Link is always reminding them that first and foremost, the grants is for the education and health of their children. Other needs and obligations should be considered only after they are done paying their school and health obligations.

The pupils' nutritional status (Percentage of Normal pupils) increased from 82.70% to 93.60% after the implementation of the program. As anticipated, 4Ps increased the health services consumption among the poor households as they have additional income to pay for the health-related costs; and improve the children's nutritional status through increased household income, provision of free and periodic check-ups, various counselling and other monitoring components of 4Ps (Reyes & Tabuga, 2012). This is due to the availability of food allowance because of their membership in the program making food and rice easier to purchase. Also according to 4Ps recipient-respondents, they are encouraged by the program's Municipal Links to plant and own a vegetable plot in their homes to make sure that they eat nutritious foods.

6.2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

This discusses the result of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) by the program recipient-respondents through a researcher-made questionnaire. The questionnaire measures the degree of awareness of the respondents to the different facets of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps). A **highly aware** response means that the respondents are totally aware of strength, weakness, opportunity or threat of the program.

The result of the SWOT Analysis provides us a better understanding of the program. It can be utilized as basis for a better and more effective implementation by reinforcing and highlighting the program's strengths and opportunities and reducing or decreasing its weaknesses and threats.

A carefully planned and properly implemented 4Ps may lead to achievement of its goals, objectives and outcomes and may help in improving the country's quality of education both in direct and indirect routes.

6.2.1 Strengths of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps)

Strengths of the program are the internal positive characteristics that give it an advantage over others. Based on initial interviews and related literature, the strengths of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) was assessed in the following areas; (1) awareness of objectives, (2) awareness of the selection procedure, (3) clarity of implementation procedure, and (4) frequency and thoroughness in monitoring.

6.2.1.1 Awareness of Objectives. The respondents are **highly aware** of the goal and the objectives of the 4Ps. Hence, one of the strengths of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* is respondents' awareness of the program's objectives. According to the respondents, they are oriented on the different phases of the program, most especially in the reasons on the selection of the objectives and goal of the program. The 4Ps Municipal Links, which is attached to the DSWD, explained thoroughly what are expected of the program and of the recipients. They also believe that these goals and objectives will be achieved. They also added that outcomes for health, nutrition and education were clearly achievable however economic and poverty alleviation would be achieved in a slower pace.

It goes to say that the agency in charge of crafting the goal, objectives and expected outcomes of the program had done their duty in informing and explaining them to the beneficiaries. It is a good indication of the support of the beneficiaries in attaining the expected outcomes of the program.

6.2.1.2. Awareness of the Selection Process. The respondents are **highly aware** of the selection process in identifying the program's recipients because the DSWD explained it to them and considered the selection procedure as fair. Thus the respondents' 4Ps selection procedure is one of 4Ps strengths. According to the respondents, when they are notified that they are 4Ps recipients, the selection procedure was explained to them and they also were able to ask questions on the merit of their selection. Based on the explanations, they were also able to realize that the selection procedure of the program is fair and reasonable. This ensured that the program recipients knew the process and procedure of selecting its recipient. This would lessen the charges of irregularities and unfairness.

6.2.1.3 Clarity of Implementation Procedure. The respondents have **very clear** understanding of the program's implementation procedure which is well-done since the process is very detailed and follows an organized and coherent flow. It means that the "Clarity of the Implementation Procedure" of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) is one of its strengths. This means that the respondents understood the ways and details of the program's implementation and the things to be done and to be avoided. This assumption was supported by the respondents during the follow-up interviews. They said that even though in the beginning of the program implementation there were misunderstanding and confusion, they were solved after a dialogue and another meeting with the personnel concerned. Right now, the recipients know by heart the implementation procedure, the guidelines and the dos and don'ts and what are expected of them to accomplish and prepare.

6.2.1.4 Frequency and Thoroughness in Monitoring. The respondents have **very clear** understanding of the program's monitoring because its reason and procedure are clearly explained and in detail thus frequency and thoroughness in monitoring is one of the strengths of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps). According to the respondents, the best manifestation of the program monitoring is the monthly Family Development Session (FDS) with their 4Ps Municipal Link. In that half day activity, their compliance with the program's conditionalities was assessed and other recipients could verify and confirm their actions that might or might not be acceptable to the program. Also, the Municipal Links can be accessed any time if there is mismanagement of funds and/or misbehaviour that was committed by the recipients through texts or calls and the concerned Municipal Link can then have her investigation on the matter.

It shows that the respondents are aware of the schedule and methods of monitoring of their consumption and disbursements of the program grants. It will lead to respondents to be responsible; not to do things and acts that will make them break the program's conditionalities.

6.2.2 Weaknesses of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps). Weaknesses of the program are the internal negative characteristics that place it at disadvantage relative to others.

The weaknesses of the program are measured in terms of the following: (1) proneness to corruption, (2) lapses in selection procedure, (3) understanding of the conditionalities, (4) non-compliance of implementation, and (5) reactive monitoring.

6.2.2.1 Proneness to Corruption. Corruption is form of dishonest or unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit from it. The grand mean of proneness for corruption of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) is **2.60**. The respondents had conflicting answer in the items under it. In the item “it is prone to corruption by its bureaucracy”, the respondents answered unlikely on this item. However in the item “it is prone to corruption by its recipients”, the respondents answered likely.

According to the respondents, with the rigid monitoring of the program flow in the higher level, corruption might not happen and they trust those above them to follow their pledge and duties. However, they said that they, sometimes, likely corrupt or realign the grant which is for education and health to other expenditures most especially for buying food, clothing and on repair of their houses by not paying first their obligations in the school. This means that the “Proneness to corruption” is one of the weaknesses of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps).

6.2.2.2 Lapses in selection procedure. The respondents said that it is **likely** that the selection procedure had lapses, allowed unqualified people to be recipients and is not comprehensive enough to include all those who really are in need, especially those who have no permanent residence or houses. Unqualified recipients, according to the respondents, are those who are known “richer than them” in the community, those who own sizeable farms and lands, who are professionals and have stable and higher monthly income. They also added that even if the selection is fair, there are still lapses and the procedure included those who really are in need. However, it only happened in the first months of the program implementation as they observed and knew of families that had been delisted. It means that the “lapses in the selection procedure” is one of the weaknesses of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps).

6.2.2.3 Understanding of the conditionalities. The respondents answered that it is **likely** that recipients had little to no knowledge of the program’s conditionalities especially on the reasons and how it is implemented. According to the respondents, there are confusions and mix-ups on the compliance with these conditionalities especially at the beginning of the implementation of the program. They said, even if the personnel involved explained it thoroughly, due to human stubbornness and the inherent quality of humans in not following instructions, they did not comprehend what was explained to them and they were not able to follow what was expected of them. However, the monthly Family Development Sessions (FDS) helped a lot in ironing out this lack of understanding. The respondents also added that only a lesser number of recipients do not know and understand these conditionalities and they are causing other people to degrade the 4Ps recipients. It means that the “understanding of the conditionalities” is one of the program’s weaknesses.

6.2.2.4 Non-compliance with implementation conditionalities. The respondents said that it is **likely** that the recipients are prone to non-compliance of the program. However, the respondents disagree that the program is susceptible to non-compliance by its bureaucracy. This is because, according to them, they have high respect and regard for the system and if there is non-compliance in the higher level, it is just a small percentage of it. When asked if they, as respondents are prone to non-compliance with the implementation of the program, the respondents answered that there are times that due to the complicity of the procedure they circumvent it, especially on spending of the cash grant they are receiving. When asked in which part they feel the program implementation has gone wrong, they answered that it is in the releasing of cash grants. Sometimes, it is monthly then, every two months and sometimes quarterly. They wanted to have a fixed schedule of the release to ensure that they can pay their obligations, especially in the school, on time. It means that non-compliance with implementation is one of the program’s weaknesses.

6.2.2.5 Reactive monitoring. Reactive monitoring refers to the type of monitoring on which the person in-charge will only conduct inquiry after an event is reported to them. In the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps), reactive monitoring is employed when 4Ps municipal-link will only investigate if he/she receives complaints from the program recipients. The respondents said that it is **likely** that the monitoring is prone to abuse, encourage non-compliance and therefore defective. According to them, the grievance system of the monitoring creates a hole in the monitoring procedure. They added that because it is only when there is a complaint from the recipients that the personnel concerned will investigate, it provides for a way of non-compliance. When asked what makes this arrangement difficult to file complaint for erring recipients, they said that they are afraid that they might retaliate.

The Family Development Sessions (FDSs) are good venue; however they felt uncomfortable when they file complaint against their fellow recipients. They suggested that community people, like Barangay officials and teachers, should help in the monitoring of compliance of the recipients. It means that the reactive monitoring of the program is one of its weaknesses.

6.2.3 Opportunities of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)*

Opportunities of the program are the external positive elements that the program could exploit to its advantage. The following are considered to be the program's opportunities: (1) improvement of recipients' attitudes towards work, health and schooling, (2) improvement and revision of the program in part and as a whole, (3) poverty alleviation, and (4) increase in enrolment, survival, attendance and participation rates to the school.

6.2.3.1 Improvement of recipients' attitudes towards work, health and schooling. The respondents said it is **very possible** that the program improves their attitudes towards work, health and schooling of their children. It shows that improvement of recipients' attitudes towards work, health and schooling is one of the programs opportunities.

According to the respondents, they have become more enthusiastic in finding for work because 4Ps provides for additional income and because they are members of the Phil Health, they can send to the hospital or health centres the family members who are not feeling well. Also, the compulsory deworming and vaccination of their children ease their minds on their children's wellness. They also are enthusiastic and encouraged in sending their children to school knowing the government will help them with their financial obligations and classroom requirements.

6.2.3.2 Improvement and revision of the program in part and as a whole. The respondents said that it is **very possible** that the program can become an effective social, citizen empowerment, values-strengthening program that will also address health and educational needs. This means that Improvement and revision of the program in part and as a whole is one of the program's opportunities. They said that the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)* has lapses and loopholes but is a good program and they are helped a lot by this. They believed that the program can be revised and improved to make it better in addressing their families' needs and help the citizens in this country. They were also glad of the opportunities that the program brought for them especially in seeing that they can improve their lives by changing their bad attitudes. They are one in asking that the program be continued however revisions and improvements should be done to further enhance their lives and living conditions.

6.2.3.3 Poverty alleviation. It is **very possible** that the program can be an effective program in addressing and alleviating poverty and can break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. This shows that poverty alleviation is one of the program's opportunities.

The respondents noted that they are not as poor as before after they became members of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)*. The program's cash grants are big help to address their immediate needs especially when it comes to the schooling and health of their children. They felt that when continued and improved, they might be able to live a better life and that by sending their children to school, they will give to their children a better and brighter future compared to what they are living now. By the help of the program and their hard work and perseverance, they will be able to break the chains of poverty.

6.2.3.4 Increase in enrolment, survival, attendance, and participation rates to the school. The respondents said that is **very possible** that the program increased school's enrolment, daily and monthly attendance, completion rate, survival rate and parents' participation in school projects and programs. It means that increase in enrolment, survival, attendance, and participation rates is one of the program's opportunities because these are elements that could be used as program's advantage.

The respondents observed, they said, that there are fewer children who are not in school and they are sending their children to school every day and encourage their children to study hard and avoid absences if possible. They also noted that most of their children were able to complete their grade levels and graduated from High School. Also, because of the 4Ps, they participated in a lot of the activities and programs of the school. They also added that they now can pay on time the financial obligations and have the money to buy for their children's school projects and requirements.

6.2.4 Threats of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)*

Threats are external negative elements in the environment that could cause trouble and concern for the program. Threats to the 4Ps are expressed in the following: (1) negative perception of the program, (2) loss of funding, (3) development of “dole-out” and dependency values among the recipients, (4) misuse of funds by both the recipients and the 4Ps bureaucracy, and (5) recipients’ vulnerability to be compelled to do authorities’ demands.

6.2.4.1 Negative perception to the program. The respondents said that it is **likely** that non-4Ps recipients and politicians have negative perception of the program that may perhaps cause the program to end. It shows that negative perception by both non-recipients and politicians is one of the program’s threats.

When asked why they are fearful that negative perceptions of the program can cause it to be scrapped by the national government, they said that the government runs by satisfying the interest of the majority. Thus, people having this negative perception might persuade the government to stop the program. They are mostly fearful of the negative perception of politicians, both in the national and local levels of government especially when these politicians are very vocal on terminating the program. They just hope that if this program was stopped, the government will have a different program that can help them in their day-to-day living.

6.2.4.2. Loss of funding. The respondents said that it is **likely** that the government cost-cutting, loss of trust of national policy-makers and results of initial evaluation and assessment will cause the loss of funding for the program. Thus, loss of funding is one of the program’s threats. According to the respondents, they knew that there are many critics to the program and they wanted the budget for 4Ps to be transferred to other government projects. Also, the results of initial evaluation and assessment and the loss of trust of national policy-makers will pave the way for the scrapping of the program. Thus, losing of these funding will kill the program.

6.2.4.3 Development of “dole-out” and dependency values. The respondents said that it is **unlikely** that they are developing mendicant mentality, dependency attitudes and that they worked less and made less effort to obtain more work. Therefore, development of “dole-out” and dependency values is not a threat to the program.

One of the many criticisms against the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)* is that the recipients allegedly work less and are developing mendicancy and being dependent on the cash grant they will be receiving. When, asked about this, the respondents felt sad at this kind of criticism. They said that they are hurt by being looked down by non-recipients and even to the point of saying straight on their faces that 4Ps is useless and the recipients should work harder and not depend on the government dole-out. The respondents said that there are some who are not exerting efforts in finding and staying in work because of the program. However, they, the majority said that they are working harder because the cash grants are only additional income and will never suffice to the needs of their family. They also added that if they will be very dependent on the cash grant, their family will certainly die because the grants are not that sufficient for every family expense and its releases are sometimes delayed.

6.2.4.4 Misuse of funds by both the recipients and the 4Ps’ bureaucracy. The respondents said that it is **unlikely** that the funds are misused by the program bureaucracy and recipients. Therefore, misuse of funds by both the recipients and the 4Ps’ bureaucracy is not a threat to the program.

According to the respondents, the public should be confident and trust the 4Ps bureaucracy and its recipients that there is no misuse of funds happening. Even if there are some lapses in the monitoring procedure, the people should know that misusing these funds is also like cheating themselves for this is for the betterment of their families. Even though there really are erring recipients that misused their grants, the public should not hastily generalize that the other recipients are also doing this, since they are just a small number compared to the recipients that religiously and dutifully follow the guidelines and conditionalities of the program.

6.2.4.5 Recipients’ vulnerability to be compelled to do authorities’ demands. The respondents said that it is **unlikely** that the program is vulnerable to be used for personal reasons by politicians and persons-in-authority and that it can be used as a method of coercion and intimidation by authorities. Therefore, recipients’ vulnerability to be compelled to do authorities’ demands is not a threat to the program. According to the respondents, they were not forced to do things that they do not want because the higher-ups want them to do it. They had been members of the program for two elections now and even though there are threats of being delisted for not voting someone, it is just a rumour. For the Municipal Links and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office explain, in coordination with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), that the program is isolated and secluded from politics both local or national, that they should vote for whoever they think is better to be in that position.

Also, a Grievance System is in place to report persons who abuse their authority in compelling 4Ps members to do something.

6.3 Suggestions for the Improvement of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)

6.3.1 Suggestions from 4Ps Recipient-Respondents

To help improve the program, the following suggestions are given by the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) recipient-respondents:

The recipient-respondents of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) suggested that the program be continued. They said that the program helps their children finish elementary and even high school. The program helps improve the attendance of their children in school leading to lesser absences which means more lessons learned. It also helps the family to complete the construction of their house, comfort rooms and other necessary household fixtures. Moreover, it helped the family financially as regards their basic and school needs.

The recipient-respondents wanted the program to continue because of the knowledge they gained during the Family Development Sessions (FDS). They are also encouraged, as parents, to send their children to school; as parents, they need to improve themselves, strive to find work and stay at work.

The recipient-respondents of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) are also thankful because they automatically become members of Phil Health and are already enjoying its benefits. Some recipient-respondents wish that their children be included in the 4Ps College Scholarship. The program also helped alleviate their poverty and in their short and long term financial needs. They also added that the program is pro-poor, thus gave them the chance to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and for their children to have better future.

However, other recipient-respondents clamored for bigger cash grant because the amount is not enough. It should also be noted that some recipient-respondents lamented the delay of the cash grant and thus they wished the grant to be released in the interval of two months and in fixed dates. They also hope that the funds for the program will not be used in the coming 2016 election and that it be given to the people who really need it. Lastly, recipient-respondents are hoping that those with negative perception to the program will be able to see the benefits of the program to the beneficiaries and give constructive criticisms to help solve the problems besetting the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps).

6.3.2 Suggestions from Teacher- Respondents

The following suggestions were given by the teacher-respondents of Balamban Elementary School for the improvement of *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) as a tool in financing education:

The teacher-respondents of Balamban Elementary School would like to suggest that the selection of recipients be improved to make sure that the recipients are really entitled to receive the grant. They hope that the program will continue because they noted an increase in pupils' classroom attendance and parents' participation. They wanted the 4Ps monitoring team to also look into the quality and consistency of 4Ps recipients. Parents, sometimes, send children to school with no classroom materials and with an empty stomach. A more elaborate and closer monitoring of the compliance of the recipients, like visiting and observing the 4Ps pupils in the school, guaranteeing that the things they are buying are the things that their children need in their studies should be ensured. They also suggested that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) monitors the compliance of the 4Ps recipients and information and updates given to them should be studied properly.

The teacher-respondents also suggested that the 4Ps implementers check the participation of parents in school activities like *Brigada Eskwela* and *Pahina*. Recipients who do not follow the guidelines set by the government be disqualified. A meeting or conference between teachers and 4Ps recipients should also be held at least during every opening of classes or every semester to remind the 4Ps recipients on the things expected of them. Doing so will help improve and establish rapport and iron-out expectations between the teachers and recipients. Teachers should also be oriented on the extent of their influence as regards the monitoring of the recipients use of the cash grants.

Furthermore, to ensure that the 4Ps recipients would really pay their school and classroom obligations, program's education grants be given directly to the school. If done, payment delinquency can then be avoided. Somebody also suggested in changing the 4Ps into a livelihood program and additional cash assistance be given to address not only health and education needs.

7. Conclusions

The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) has been able to attain its intended outcomes as regards the education for its positive impact on the school's performance indicators. The government should strive hard to make these weaknesses its strengths and the strengths to greater strengths. 4Ps opened many opportunities to its recipients and to the program itself. There are many threats to the program and it should be addressed to help the program improve as a social, educational and poverty-alleviating program. It had positive effects to its recipients especially in their attitude towards the schooling of their children, in the health of the family and in striving to become better persons. The 4Ps can help the country gain knowledgeable, healthy, striving and morally-upright citizens. 4Ps made the lives of the recipients easier. Continuing the program will not only help them but also the school, the community and the country as a whole. Teachers are partners in the monitoring and implementation of the program. They should be consulted, asked and given chances to help improve the program.

8. Recommendations

Continue the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) however lapses in selection, implementation and monitoring be addressed first. Improve the implementation and monitoring of the allocation especially of the educational grant by having periodic conference with teachers and the school. Teachers and schools be empowered and encouraged to be part of any improvement and revision of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps).

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