

STUDY SKILLS AND SCIENCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAM (“PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM”) JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL BENEFICIARIES IN ZAMBALES, PHILIPPINES

Edna Marie D. Punzalan

Research Scholar, Ramon Magsaysay Technological University, Iba, Zambales, Philippines

ABSTRACT

The Philippines’ Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) was patterned after the Conditional Cash Transfer program in Latin American and African countries. With the 4Ps’ goals of reducing poverty and empowering the poor, the government has invested in the primary and secondary education of children by providing cash assistance among the poorest households. Almost a decade after its initial implementation in 2008, the expectations on this program are high. Hence this paper (1) provides a comparison of the study skills and (2) presents an analysis of Science academic performance, Science class attendance, and daily allowance, among junior high school students in two hundred fifty (250) 4Ps and three hundred thirteen (313) non-4Ps families in school districts of three northern municipalities that differ in economic classification in Zambales province. The students’ self-rating of their study skills focused on (1) textbook reading, (2) note-taking, (3) memory, (4) test preparation, (5) concentration, and (6) time management following Congos’ Study Skills Inventory. The results illustrate the (1) causal effect of 4Ps on the students’ study skills, Science academic performance, and Science class attendance, and (2) relationship between study skills and Science academic performance. The findings are discussed to reflect on the effectiveness of 4Ps to address poverty relative to its implications to study skills and Science academic performance.

KEYWORDS: *Conditional Cash Transfer Program, 4Ps, Junior High School Students, Study Skills, Zambales*

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INTRODUCTION

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) of the Philippine government was patterned after the Conditional Cash Transfer Program of Mexico, Brazil, and African countries. These countries were the first to implement the program by providing cash to extremely poor families who consequently had to commit to their family’s education and health care. The success of the Conditional Cash Transfer program in these countries led to the adoption of its design and implementation in the Philippines. As the implementing agency, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) envisions 4Ps as a poverty reduction and social development strategy of the Philippine government with (1) social assistance and (2) social development as its two main objectives. The social assistance component of the program is intended to serve as a short-term poverty alleviation measure by providing cash grants to alleviate the poor family’s immediate needs. Social development entails breaking the cycle of poverty across many generations among the poorest

families. To attain these two objectives, the Philippine government invested heavily on health, nutrition, and education of beneficiaries whose families are (1) residents of the poorest municipalities; (2) living under conditions equal to or below the provincial poverty threshold (3) with children from 0-14 years old and/or with a pregnant woman at the time of assessment, and (4) bound to agree to the program's terms and conditions. The health component of the program entitles each family beneficiary to receive PhP 6,000 annually (or PhP 500 monthly) for health and nutrition expenses. The education component provides PhP 3,000 for the educational expenses for one school year (or PhP 300 monthly for 10 months) for each child. The program provides educational grant for a maximum of 3 children for each family beneficiary. The family beneficiaries are consequently expected to commit their time and use the financial grant to provide for the family members' health care and children's education whereby: (1) pregnant women must avail of pre- and post-natal care and childbirth must be attended by a trained medical practitioner; (2) parents must attend family development seminars; (3) children aged 0-5 must undergo regular preventive health checks and get immunization; (4) children aged 3-5 must attend day care or preschool classes at least 85 % of the time; (5) children aged 6-14 must enroll in elementary or high school and attend at least 85 % of the time; and (6) children aged 6-14 must receive de-worming pills twice a year. The family beneficiaries who comply with the program requirements are entitled to receive the grant for at most 5 years (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act of 2010). In 2013, five years after the program's formal implementation, Reyes, Tabuga, Mina, and Asis (2015) reported the impact of 4Ps on school enrollment, targeting, and poverty. Their study presented an analysis of school attendance among children in 4Ps and non-4Ps families, their reasons for not attending school, and child labor, among others, and was particularly significant considering that the beneficiaries can only participate in the program by at most five years.

This article seeks to establish empirical evidence that despite their chronic poverty, children in 4Ps families not only attend school to comply with the program's requirements, but by attending school, they get the maximum intangible benefit of acquiring study skills that will lead to better academic achievement and prepare them for decent employment. In the Philippines and overseas, the demand is high for jobs related to Science and Technology. The Science curriculum requires good study skills that will develop the students' knowledge and understanding as they actively engage in scientific inquiry about the natural world or as they encounter new and emerging technologies. Studies have shown that academic performance is related to study skills among undergraduate students (Bulent, Hakan, Aydin, 2015) and among university students (Pepe, 2012). Study skills are strategies and techniques that enable the learner to make the most efficient use of their time, resource, and academic potential abilities (Ayesha & Khurshid, 2013). Textbook reading, note-taking, memory, test preparation, concentration, and time management are the study skills assessed in this article. Textbook reading requires a student to read text, process it using higher order thinking skills to analyze, synthesize, solve problems, and recreate new meaning from the text (Hermida, 2009). Note-taking is a skill where students in a class write the main points from a lecture given by a teacher or by another student (Harboe & Von Mullen, 2009). Memory requires remembering core ideas, facts, or concepts from a course or lecture, being able to apply them, and to transfer knowledge (Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, & Willingham, 2013). Test preparation entails both material preparation and mental preparation using smart study techniques (Bonaccio & Reeve, 2010). Concentration involves keeping the mind on the material being read or studied. Exclusion and focusing are the two major skills required for concentration (Hassanbeigi, Askari, Nakhjavani, Shirkhoda, Barzegar, Mozayyan, Fallhzadeh, 2011). Time management is the strategy of apportioning time efficiently and effectively to do everything that needs to be done while studying (Hassanbeigi et al., 2011).

This study was undertaken to assess the study skills and academic performance in Science of junior high school students in 4Ps and non 4Ps families in the school districts of Santa Cruz, Candelaria, and Masinloc Zambales. Specifically the study answered the following questions:

- Is there a significant difference in the students’ profile as to: (1.1) Study skills; (1.2) Science academic performance; (1.3) Daily allowance; and (1.4) Science class attendance, when attributed to (a) economic status; (b) school districts; and (c) interaction of economic status and school districts?
- Is there a significant relationship between the extent of study skills and average grade in Science among students in: (2.1) 4Ps; and (2.2) Non-4Ps families?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study followed the descriptive-correlational method in a 2x3 factorial completely randomized design with economic status (non-4Ps and 4Ps) and school districts (municipalities of Santa Cruz, Candelaria, and Masinloc in Zambales, Philippines) as factors. Following this method, the study skills of the 4Ps and non-4Ps students were assessed using Dennis H. Congos’ Study Skills Inventory questionnaire that consists of 6 sections including textbook reading, note-taking, memory, test preparation, concentration, and time management. There were 8 items in textbook reading, 5 in note-taking, 9 in memory, 13 in test preparation, 10 in concentration, and 6 in time management. Scoring the questionnaire was done using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Almost Always), 4 (More than half of the time), 3 (About half of the time), 2 (Less than half of the time) and 1 (Almost never).

The 250 students from 4Ps families were purposively selected after verification of their records from the DSWD. The stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of the 313 non-4Ps students. There were 86 non-4Ps and 84 4Ps from Santa Cruz; 117 non-4Ps and 79 4Ps students from Masinloc; 110 non-4Ps and 87 4Ps from Candelaria, Zambales. The survey was conducted in the secondary schools in Zone I, Division of Zambales in the Districts of Santa Cruz, Candelaria, and Masinloc. These schools were chosen because they represent the typical public secondary schools in northern Zambales. The schools in each district are situated in three neighboring municipalities that are distinctly similar in culture but differ in income classification (Department of Finance Order No. 23-08 dated July 29, 2008). Santa Cruz and Masinloc are first class municipalities with an average annual income of 55 million pesos or more from revenues and receipts. Candelaria is a third class municipality with an average income of 35 million but less than 45 million pesos. The academic performance of the students from the first to third grading periods was determined from the documentary analysis of student’s Form 138 from the class adviser. Interpretation of student’s grade was based on the Department of Education’s DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015. Students’ class attendance was obtained from the documentary analysis of the DepEd School Forms SF2 and SF3. The difference in the extent of study skills, Science academic performance, daily allowance, and class attendance was tested using the analysis of variance in a 2x3 factorial completely randomized design with economic status and school districts as factors. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to describe the relationship between the extent of study skills and the Science academic performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Extent of Study Skills

For all the study skills measured, the non-4Ps scored significantly higher on the extent of textbook reading, note-taking, memory, test preparation, concentration, and time management compared to the 4Ps beneficiaries (Table 1).

Table 1: Difference in the Extent of Study Skills of non-4Ps and 4ps Beneficiaries

Study Skill	School District	Non-4ps	4ps	Sources of Variation (P-Value)		
		Mean*	Mean*	Economic Status	School District	Economic Status X School District
Textbook Reading	Santa Cruz	3.67 ± 0.34 ^a	3.51 ± 0.13 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.01
	Candelaria	3.49 ± 0.28 ^a	3.43 ± 0.28 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.01
	Masinloc	3.48 ± 0.16 ^b	2.86 ± 0.32 ^d	0.00	0.00	0.01
Note-taking	Santa Cruz	3.80 ± 0.17 ^a	3.77 ± 0.18 ^c	0.04	0.00	0.10
	Candelaria	3.88 ± 0.19 ^a	3.84 ± 0.17 ^c	0.04	0.00	0.10
	Masinloc	3.51 ± 0.08 ^b	3.17 ± 0.21 ^d	0.04	0.00	0.10
Memory	Santa Cruz	3.64 ± 0.22 ^a	3.56 ± 0.25 ^d	0.00	0.00	0.01
	Candelaria	3.53 ± 0.22 ^b	3.38 ± 0.21 ^e	0.00	0.00	0.01
	Masinloc	3.47 ± 0.08 ^c	2.97 ± 0.22 ^f	0.00	0.00	0.01
Test Preparation	Santa Cruz	3.67 ± 0.15 ^a	3.66 ± 0.19 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Candelaria	3.65 ± 0.20 ^a	3.53 ± 0.21 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Masinloc	3.52 ± 0.07 ^b	3.05 ± 0.20 ^d	0.00	0.00	0.00
Concentration	Santa Cruz	3.71 ± 0.12 ^a	3.49 ± 0.14 ^d	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Candelaria	3.54 ± 0.12 ^b	3.43 ± 0.08 ^e	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Masinloc	3.68 ± 0.11 ^c	3.05 ± 0.17 ^f	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time Management	Santa Cruz	3.55 ± 0.09 ^a	3.18 ± 0.12 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Candelaria	3.25 ± 0.12 ^a	3.18 ± 0.12 ^d	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Masinloc	3.56 ± 0.09 ^b	2.76 ± 0.12 ^e	0.00	0.00	0.00

*- Means in a column and across rows followed by the same letter are not significantly different at the 0.05 alpha level of significance

The non-4Ps in Santa Cruz scored highest in textbook reading, memory, test preparation, and concentration. The non-4Ps in Candelaria and Masinloc scored highest in note-taking and time management respectively. The 4Ps beneficiaries in Santa Cruz scored the highest in textbook reading, memory, test preparation, concentration, and time management (tied with Candelaria). The extent of textbook reading, memory, test preparation, concentration, time management skills respectively were significantly affected by the economic status, school district, and the interaction of economic status and school district.

Academic Performance in Science

The average grades in Science from the First to Third Grading periods were significantly higher for the non-4Ps than the 4Ps beneficiaries ((Table 2).

Table 2: Difference in the Academic Performance in Science of non-4Ps and 4Ps Beneficiaries

School District	Average of First to Third Grading Periods		Sources of Variation (p-Value)		
	non-4Ps*	4Ps*	Economic Status	School District	Economic Status x School District
Santa Cruz	86.74±4.25 ^a (Very Satisfactory)	84.90±4.51 ^d (Very Satisfactory)	0.00	0.00	0.12
Candelaria	85.04±4.44 ^b (Very Satisfactory)	82.72±4.94 ^e (Satisfactory)	0.00	0.00	0.12
Masinloc	83.44±5.67 ^c (Satisfactory)	79.58 ± 5.46 ^f (Satisfactory)	0.00	0.00	0.12

*- Means in a column and across rows followed by the same letter are not significantly different at the 0.05 alpha level of significance

The non-4Ps students' average grades in Science from First to Third Grading periods were significantly higher in Santa Cruz (86.74, Very Satisfactory) followed by those in Candelaria (85.04, Very Satisfactory) and Masinloc (83.44, Satisfactory). The average grades of the 4Ps beneficiaries were significantly higher in Santa Cruz (84.90, Very Satisfactory) than in Candelaria (82.72, Satisfactory) and Masinloc (79.58, Satisfactory).

Daily Allowance

The daily allowance given by parents to the children was significantly higher among the non-4Ps than the 4Ps beneficiaries (Table 3). For the non-4Ps, daily allowance was significantly the highest in Candelaria (PhP 25.23) followed by Masinloc (PhP 23.40) and Santa Cruz (PhP 22.43). The daily allowance was significantly the highest in Candelaria (PhP 23.64) followed by Masinloc (PhP 22.31) and Santa Cruz (PhP 21.86) among the 4Ps beneficiaries.

Table 3: Difference in the Daily Allowance (PhP) of non-4Ps and 4Ps Beneficiaries

School Districts	Daily Allowance (PhP)		Sources of Variation		
	non-4Ps*	4Ps*	Economic Status	School District	Economic Status x School District
Santa Cruz	22.43±0.82 ^a	21.86±0.79 ^d	0.00	0.00	0.47
Candelaria	25.23±0.25 ^b	23.64±0.63 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.47
Masinloc	23.40±0.65 ^c	22.31±0.73 ^f	0.00	0.00	0.47

* - Means in a column and across rows followed by the same letter are not significantly different at the 0.05 alpha level of significance

Class Attendance

The frequency of class attendance from the first to third grading period was significantly higher among the non-4Ps than the 4Ps beneficiaries (Table 4).

Table 4: Frequency (Days) of Class Attendance of non-4Ps and 4Ps Beneficiaries

School Districts	Class Attendance (days)		Sources of Variation (p-Value)		
	non-4Ps*	4Ps*	Economic Status	School District	Economic Status x School District
Santa Cruz	89.81 ± 2.90 ^a	89.32 ± 2.92 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.03
Candelaria	99.02 ± 5.43 ^b	96.82 ± 5.96 ^d	0.00	0.00	0.03
Masinloc	89.99 ± 6.44 ^a	86.54 ± 6.71 ^c	0.00	0.00	0.03

*-Means in a column and across rows followed by the same letter are not significantly different at the 0.05 alpha level of significance

The frequency of attendance among the non-4Ps was significantly higher in Candelaria (99.02 days) than in Masinloc (89.99 days) and Santa Cruz (89.81 days). The frequency of attendance was significantly higher in Candelaria (96.82 days) than in Santa Cruz (89.32 days) and Masinloc (86.54 days) for the 4Ps. The significantly higher frequency of class attendance among the non-4Ps (93.12 days) than the 4Ps beneficiaries (91.05 days) was also the effect of the interaction of economic status and the school location. According to DepEd Order No. 23, s. 2016 (School Calendar for School Year 2016-2017), the first quarter consists of 54 days and the second and third quarters consist of 48 days each for a total of 150 days.

Relationship between Study Skills and Science Academic Performance

Table 5 shows that there was a significant positive correlation between the extent of textbook reading ($r = 0.27, p \leq 0.01$), concentration ($r = 0.22, p < 0.05$) skills respectively and average Science academic performance of non-4Ps students in Santa Cruz, Zambales. For the 4Ps beneficiaries, there was a significant negative correlation between time management skills ($r = -0.25, p < 0.05$) and average Science academic performance.

Table 5: Relationship between Extent of Study Skills and Average Science Academic Performance from the First to Third Grading Period of non-4Ps and 4Ps Beneficiaries

Study Skills	School Districts	non-4Ps		4Ps	
		r	p-Value	r	p-Value
Textbook Reading	Santa Cruz	0.27 ^{**}	0.01	0.12 ^{ns}	0.28
	Candelaria	0.27 ^{**}	0.00	0.12 ^{ns}	0.25
	Masinloc	0.09 ^{ns}	0.33	-0.17 ^{ns}	0.13
Note-taking	Santa Cruz	0.14 ^{ns}	0.21	0.07 ^{ns}	0.51
	Candelaria	0.16 ^{ns}	0.09	0.20 ^{ns}	0.07
	Masinloc	0.04 ^{ns}	0.69	-0.23 [*]	0.04
Memory	Santa Cruz	0.19 ^{ns}	0.08	-0.02 ^{ns}	0.88
	Candelaria	0.28 ^{**}	0.00	0.17 ^{ns}	0.10
	Masinloc	0.07 ^{ns}	0.43	-0.20 ^{ns}	0.08
Test Preparation	Santa Cruz	0.20 ^{ns}	0.07	0.02 ^{ns}	0.85
	Candelaria	0.27 ^{**}	0.01	0.29 ^{**}	0.01
	Masinloc	0.10 ^{ns}	0.29	-0.12 ^{ns}	0.28
Concentration	Santa Cruz	0.22 ^{**}	0.04	0.01 ^{ns}	0.96
	Candelaria	0.15 ^{ns}	0.13	0.30 ^{**}	0.01
	Masinloc	0.05 ^{ns}	0.56	-0.27 [*]	0.02
Time Management	Santa Cruz	0.18 ^{ns}	0.11	-0.25 ^{**}	0.02
	Candelaria	0.19 [*]	0.05	0.20 ^{ns}	0.07
	Masinloc	-0.10 ^{ns}	0.28	-0.25 [*]	0.02
^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 alpha level of significance [*] Correlation is significant at the 0.05 alpha level of significance ^{ns} Correlation is not significant					

In Candelaria, Zambales, there was a significant positive correlation between the extent of textbook reading ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), memory ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$), test preparation ($r = 0.27$, $p \leq 0.01$) skills respectively and average Science academic performance of non-4Ps students. There was a significant positive correlation between the extent of concentration skills ($r = 0.30$, $p \leq 0.01$) and the average Science academic performance of 4Ps beneficiaries. In Masinloc, Zambales, there was a significant negative correlation between the extent of note-taking skills ($r = -0.23$, $p < 0.05$), concentration ($r = -0.27$, $p < 0.05$), time management ($r = -0.25$, $p < 0.05$) skills respectively and the average Science academic performance of 4Ps beneficiaries.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the significantly higher score in the extent of study skills of non-4Ps than 4Ps beneficiaries, Congos' Study Skills Inventory indicated that both the non-4Ps and 4Ps beneficiaries described their textbook reading skills in terms of looking for main ideas while reading and getting the meaning of new terms being encountered for the first time. Their note-taking skills were taking notes in lectures and comparing notes with one or more other students to check completeness and accuracy. Reviewing notes more than once or twice for exams and quizzes, and understanding notes rather than memorizing were the memory skills that were given the highest score by the non-4Ps and 4Ps beneficiaries. The test preparation skills that obtained the highest score for the non-4Ps were getting help from classmates, tutors, instructors or leaders and by eating well-balanced meals daily. For the 4Ps beneficiaries, the test preparation skills with the highest score were getting help from classmates, tutors, instructors or leaders and doing all homework. Studying where it is quiet when trying to learn and remember something was the concentration skill of non-4Ps and 4Ps beneficiaries. When they sit down to study, they remind themselves about their intention to study. The extent of time management skills of non-4Ps was described in terms of starting papers and projects before they are due and using lists

such as daily “to do” lists, assignment lists, etc. to organize academic and personal activities. For the 4Ps beneficiaries, they start papers and projects before they are due, use a calendar book for recording daily and weekly upcoming academic and personal activities, and study at least 2 hours for every hour in class.

This study shows that students’ economic status significantly affects their levels of academic achievement. However, residing in a first class municipality does not guarantee high-paying permanent jobs or non-permanent jobs to working members of both non-4Ps and 4Ps families. Some students from low income have difficulties to understand or learn as fast as others. Their stressful lives may also affect their grades because the children are left on their own and no one cares about their success or failure in school (Jensen, 2013). On the contrary, high income students have been found to have significantly higher test scores than the low income students (Gottlieb, 2002). Poverty significantly affects the resources available to students causing many students struggle to reach the same academic achievement levels of students not living in poverty (Lacour&Tissington, 2011). It was proposed that high school students whose families are 4Ps beneficiaries maintain a minimum passing grade to continue getting cash grants. Resolution 18 issued by the 4Ps National Advisory Committee in January 2014 provides that student beneficiaries who repeat a grade level should be dropped from the program. This provision would ensure that high school student beneficiaries would study hard to at least get promoted to the next higher grade level (Ronda, 2014).

Students in non-4Ps families have significantly higher daily allowance compared to 4Ps recipients. In terms of income, without the cash grant, each person from 4Ps families had about PhP 7,740 to cover his or her expenses for the entire six months based on data for the first semester of 2011. This is below the poverty threshold of PhP 9, 300 for one semester in 2011 (Maligalig & Albert, 2008).

On the average, students in non-4Ps families recorded an average attendance of 62.08 % compared to 60.70 % among 4Ps beneficiaries, both lower than the 85 % requirement. Lower school attendance among 4Ps beneficiaries may be associated with a number of factors such as hunger, distance of school from home (Valeroso, 2012) and allowing children in high school to work to earn income for their families (Maligalig & Albert, 2008). The 4Ps families spend the largest share of their household budget on food with only a smaller share to education (Reyes et al., 2015).

The positive association indicates that a significant improvement in the extent of study skills had a positive effect on the Science academic performance of both non-4Ps and 4Ps beneficiaries in Santa Cruz and Candelaria. However the negative association indicates that a significant improvement in the extent of study skills had a negative effect on the Science academic performance of students in 4Ps families in Masinloc, indicating that living in a first class municipality does not immediately guarantee an improvement in academic performance. Despite living in a first class municipality, students in 4Ps families are more likely enrolled in low-performing schools.

In conclusion, this study showed that in a third class municipality, there was a significant positive relationship between the 4Ps students’ extent of study skills in test preparation and concentration respectively and their Science academic performance. In contrast, in a first class municipality, there was a significant negative relationship between the 4Ps students’ extent of study skills in note-taking, concentration, and time management respectively and their Science academic performance. The effect that 4Ps has on improving study skills in relation to Science academic performance, and the difference in scores given to study skills, average grade in Science, class attendance, and daily allowance across school districts may be attributed to the unsafe environments, limited exposure to books and language (Lauer, 2010), state of school infrastructure, availability of school facilities, and the qualification of the teachers teaching Science.

Promptness in the processing and distribution of financial assistance may have major implication on the 4Ps beneficiaries' compliance with the conditions of the program.

While it was reported that for students who struggle socioeconomically as well as academically, being in school for 90% of the time or more helps increase the achievement within the classroom (Morris, 2014), determinants of students' motivation to improve the extent of their study skills from about half of the time to almost always, and their academic performance from satisfactory to very satisfactory could be an area for further research.

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