

Phenomenological Lived Experiences of the 4Ps Beneficiaries

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative research explored the phenomenological lived experiences of pupil-beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) at Cosina Integrated School in Talakag, Bukidnon. Utilizing semi-structured interviews coupled with follow-up questions, and Colaizzi's method of data analysis, the study aimed to understand how the program has shaped the daily lives, motivations, challenges, and aspirations of children enrolled in Grades 4 to 6 during School Year 2024–2025. The interview lasted for ten school days lasting 30 minutes for each session. Thematic analysis revealed five overarching themes: improved lifestyle, motivation for academic success, empowerment through opportunities, aspirations for sustainable change, and future goals. Findings showed that the program enhanced pupils' access to education, health care, nutrition, and basic needs, while also fostering a sense of hope and resilience. However, concerns were raised regarding delayed allowances, program limitations, and long-term dependency. The study concluded with recommendations for policy and educational stakeholders to reinforce family development initiatives, enhance support services, and ensure sustainable poverty alleviation efforts. These insights aimed to contribute to the ongoing refinement of the 4Ps program, promoting equity and inclusion in education for disadvantaged communities.

KEYWORDS: lived experiences, motivation, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, phenomenology, pupil-beneficiaries

I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty across the globe has long been a challenge affecting millions of people. The crisis has afflicted the nation's economic, health, agriculture, and education sectors. According to Clare and Yun (2022) around 700 million worldwide live below the extreme poverty threshold. Despite its vibrant culture, picturesque tourist spots, and abundant natural resources, the Philippines still belongs as a third-world country in the global categorization of socioeconomic status (Kaharian, 2021). The Philippine Statistic Authority reported that the country's poverty rate during the first semester of 2023 was estimated to be 22.4%, which is roughly 25.24 million Filipinos living below the poverty line to cope with the inflation rate, to live comfortably, a family of four must have a monthly budget of 112, 692.

In a nation where education is deemed the cornerstone of success, people often associate poverty with their lack of education and the inability to improve their health and nutrition. As a result, many Filipino pupils opt to drop out of school to join their parents in making ends meet, contributing to intergenerational poverty in the family and the country in general according to Ta-asan of the Business World (2023).

With these dilemmas anticipated, the administration of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo implemented the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, formerly the Ahon Pamilyang Pilipino Program. The program was patterned after similar programs in Brazil and Mexico, aiming to provide health, nutrition, and educational support to its poor citizens. With its success, the succeeding presidents expanded the coverage and boosted the program budget, stipulating certain conditions that the eligible recipients must comply with.

Many studies have lauded the program's positive impact on the lives of its recipients; for instance, DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian revealed that 700,00 active members are set to be removed from the program as they have overcome the poverty threshold. Rapista (2023) has also linked the program's benefit to the desirable beneficiaries' academic achievement. However, the young 4Ps members might be dealing with several personal challenges, such as but not limited to being dismayed at the delayed issue of the allowance, pressure to be active in community activities, and discrimination from others. These personalized experiences can lead to a ripple effect within communities.

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With the geographic location and limited sources of income in Cosina, Talakag, and Bukidnon, the residents are grateful for the government's cash assistance. At present, the Cosina Integrated School has three hundred forty-five pupils in the elementary level, two hundred sixty-five (264) in junior high, and fifty (50) in the senior high school department with currently sixty (60) 4ps recipients across all grade levels. Unlike other scholarships, the program does not require specific grades from its members as they are only required to have at least an 85% attendance for the whole class month. This is the reason why other struggling families consider the program biased. They believe that the program should require specific grades from their recipients and give a chance to families whose children are performing well in school.

Other studies have also denied the program's effectiveness in poverty reduction, access to health and nutrition, and education. For instance, the Commission on Audit (Gregorio, 2022) revealed that 90% of the 4Ps program's active members still live below the poverty line. This finding challenges the program's intended goal of alleviating poverty among its beneficiaries. The report suggests a need for reassessing how the financial aid is utilized and whether it truly empowers recipients economically.

Baclig (2021) also emphasized in his study that many Filipinos cannot afford to eat healthily. His findings indicate that the 4Ps may not be effectively addressing food insecurity and proper nutrition. The study calls attention to the gap between financial assistance and actual improvement in beneficiaries' quality of life.

While Sasaki et al. (2019) discovered a decline in the academic performance and regular attendance of the beneficiaries as they go to the upper-grade level. This raises concerns about the program's long-term impact on educational attainment. Their study underscores the need for more sustainable and supportive interventions in the education of low-income pupils.

Leon (2022) also criticized the program's effectiveness and argued that many beneficiaries have developed a dependency on the program rather than making them independent in the long run. According to his analysis, many beneficiaries have become reliant on the aid instead of using it as a stepping stone toward independence. His critique challenges the program's sustainability and its true role in poverty alleviation.

Despite these issues, the program continued to provide financial support to low-income families in the country. Former President Rodrigo Duterte institutionalized the program in 2019 to create a sustainable approach to addressing poverty and improving the quality of life for many Filipinos (Official Gazette, 2019). Indeed, the government has spent millions of pesos to invest in human capital, but its extent of effectiveness, especially in the lives of its beneficiaries, still poses a concern. The beneficiaries' experiences must be revealed for the program to be implemented appropriately.

Thus, this study aimed to identify the lived experiences of pupil-beneficiaries in Grades 4, 5, and 6 of School Year 2024-2025. This study focused on the life experiences, reflections, and motivations faced by pupil-beneficiaries of the 4Ps. It aimed to provide insights into their experiences at a young age and contribute to the program's sustainability and effective implementation.

The study adopted the Human Capital Theory, Vroom's Theory of Expectancy, and Dewey's Experiential Theory to gain a better understanding of the pupil-beneficiaries' lived experiences. The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, a human capital investment in nature, is the government's answer to making a child from a financially struggling household become on par with other schoolchildren by giving cash assistance and improving their health, nutrition, and education. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a relationship between the government and the recipients to properly implement the program (Fabella & Pineda, 2019).

Victor H. Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) as cited by Sutton (2024) posits that an individual's behavior, effort, and performance are influenced by the motivation they associate with a potential reward. According to the theory, people are more likely to act in certain ways if they believe their actions will lead to desirable outcomes. As Sutton explains, motivation is shaped by the individual's expectation that their effort will result in performance and that such performance will lead to valued rewards.

The pupil-beneficiaries shaped by the 4Ps program experience a range of situations that influence their personal development. These lived experiences contribute to the formation of their values, motivation, and identity. Grounded in Human Capital Theory, the program views education as a crucial investment in enhancing individual potential and future productivity.

Vroom's Theory can help the study analyze how the pupil-beneficiaries' expectations of receiving the 4Ps allowance influence their motivation to attend school, their engagement in educational activities, and their experiences. Furthermore, the theory suggests that motivation is influenced by expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy is the belief that effort will lead to performance. In other words, a person evaluates whether the outcome of the performance is successful. Instrumentality, on the other hand, is the belief that outcomes will lead to a specific reward. It also studies whether their effort will result in the desired outcome, while valence is the belief that desirability is attached to the outcomes (Mehta, 2024).

Beneficiaries who comply with the program's conditions to receive government cash grants often undergo continuous reflection and evaluation of their actions and emotions. These reflective experiences align with John Dewey's Experiential Learning Theory, which highlights the role of experience in shaping understanding and personal growth. As Cloke (2023) explains, learning occurs when individuals actively engage with their experiences and draw meaning from them.

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II. METHODOLOGY

This study was qualitative research which used the hermeneutic phenomenology research design to deeply explore the lived experiences of 4Ps pupil-beneficiaries. This method worked well for figuring out not only what participants go through, but also how they made sense of and interpreted those experiences in their daily lives. According to Mañego (2023), hermeneutic phenomenology is all about subjective meaning and tries to find the core of their lives by thinking about and interpreting them. The study looked into the 4Ps program from the definition of Mañego, to find out the lived experiences of the 4Ps pupil-beneficiaries.

Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method was employed to analyze the lived experiences of 4Ps pupil-beneficiaries as cited in the study of Gumarang et al. (2021). In this approach, all written records were read multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. The researcher used QDA Miner, a software designed to help researchers organize, code, annotate, retrieve, and analyze collections of documents and images (Silver et al., 2024). The software was used to download the participants' answers, extract significant statements and phrases directly related to their participation in the 4Ps program. These statements were then used to formulate meanings through the Topic Modelling QDA Miner's companion tool. The meanings were subsequently clustered into themes that captured the essence of the shared experiences. From these themes, an in-depth, exhaustive description of the phenomenon was constructed. Lastly, member checking was conducted by consulting all participants to validate the findings. The study also used descriptive analysis to calculate the percentage and frequency of the coded themes; in so doing, the researcher is provided with more interpretation of the data, as it gives insight into how common or rare certain experiences are within the pupil-beneficiaries of 4Ps.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Question 1. How has being a beneficiary of the 4Ps affected your daily life and education? Can you describe how it feels to receive support through this program?

1.1 Has the 4Ps program helped you and your family with your basic daily needs such as food, school supplies, or clothing? Please describe how.

1.2 Since becoming a 4Ps beneficiary, as there been any change in how your family manages your health or nutrition? Can you give some examples?

1.3 How has the 4Ps supported you in your education, for example, in attending school regularly or having what you need to learn?

1.4 What changes, if any, have you noticed in your family life, such as your relationships at home or overall well-being, since being part of the 4Ps program?

The lived experiences of the pupils reflect a deep change in their day-to-day realities because of their inclusion in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). This theme includes multiple facets of development ranging from access to basic needs to overall family harmony. Pupils revealed that the support they received from the program not only improved their physical conditions but also lifted their confidence, hope, and sense of purpose in pursuing education.

Theme 1

Improved Lifestyle

Significant Statements	Codes	Categories	Percentage
"We have money to access for electricity, so I can study at night. I can now finish my homework even after the sun goes down" (P19, T19, L475-476)	"...access to electricity"	Improved Access to Basic Need	30
"I don't have to borrow pencils and paper from my classmates anymore. I feel more prepared and confident in class." (P4, T4, L86-87)	"...don't have to borrow pencils and paper anymore"	Educational Support and Participation	30
"I don't get sick often because I eat healthier food now. My body feels stronger, and I can attend school regularly." (P12, T12, L293-294)	"...eat healthier foods"	Improved Access to Health or Nutrition	25

Note: P means participant number, T means the sheet number in Excel, and LN means the line number

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Access to Basic Needs of 4Ps Beneficiaries

The most recurring category in the pupils' accounts was improved access to basic needs, which comprised 30% of the responses. Access to basic needs through the 4Ps program has allowed pupil-beneficiaries to attend school with fewer worries about food, clothing, and supplies, leading to better focus and participation in class. Participants voiced how seemingly simple provisions such as food, school supplies, and appropriate clothing significantly altered their school experiences.

Participant 19 shared how access to basic needs extended beyond the classroom and into their home environment, especially in supporting their learning at night: *"We have money for electricity, so I can study at night. I can now finish my homework even after the sun goes down."* (P19, T19, LN 475-476).

Likewise, Participant 20 expressed a strong sense of pride and motivation, recognizing the positive impact of the 4Ps program on their family:

"I feel proud to be a 4Ps beneficiary because it helps my family. I want to make the most of this opportunity and study well." (P20, T20, LN 501-502). Moreover, participants 7, 15, and 18 shared that meeting their basic needs brought comfort, security, and confidence in their school experiences.

"I have new pair of slippers, and I don't go to school with damaged slippers anymore. Walking to school is now more comfortable for me."

(P7, T7, LN 164-165)

"We can buy rice regularly, and I don't sleep hungry anymore. This makes me feel happy and safe." (P15, T15, LN 371-372)

"I don't feel left out anymore because I have proper clothes. I feel comfortable joining school activities now." (P18, T18, LN 449-450)

Such stories demonstrate that securing physical needs goes beyond utility; it instills a sense of pride, belonging, and motivation. Prior to receiving aid, these pupils often experienced social exclusion and academic disadvantage. Now, they participate more confidently and meaningfully in school life. These findings are supported by Fernal and Common (2024), who noted that 4Ps beneficiaries gained better access to educational resources, and by Flores et al. (2019), who affirmed that readiness to learn is bolstered by resource availability.

Educational Support and School Participation

Another category identified is the enhanced educational support and participation, comprising 30% of the responses. Pupils articulated how the program helps them to attend school consistently. They gain access to learning materials, and even enjoy electricity at home for nighttime study. Participants shared various ways the program improved their access to school supplies and materials. Participants 3, 4 and 17 mentioned being able to buy school materials through the cash assistance:

"I have my own school bag now, and I feel proud carrying it. Before, I used to borrow one from my cousin." (P3, T3, LN 60-61)

"I don't have to borrow pencils and paper from my classmates anymore. I feel more prepared and confident in class." (P4, T4, LN 86-87)

"I can now buy materials for my school projects. Before, I had to ask my classmates for extra supplies." (P17, T17, LN 423-424)

Parental encouragement and support also play a significant role in the pupils' experiences. Participant 11 shared, *"My parents tell me to study hard because 4Ps is helping us. They always remind me to do my best in school."* (P11, T11, LN 267-268). The response focused on how the program has helped him attend school consistently, gain access to learning materials, and feel more prepared and confident in his educational environment. Consistent school attendance is another positive outcome. Participant 13 stated, *"I can now go to school every day without skipping. Before, I had to stay home because we didn't have money for my needs."* (P13, T13, LN 319-320). Additionally, the program boosts pupils' excitement and confidence in school. Participant 5 mentioned, *"I feel excited to go to school because I have snacks to bring. I don't feel shy eating with my classmates."* (P5, T5, LN 112-113).

These stories reveal not only academic empowerment but also a strengthening of parent-child relationships. Parents, once overwhelmed with survival concerns, now reinforce the value of education. Participants also expressed excitement in bringing snacks to school and joining extracurricular clubs like the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts activities that enrich their learning beyond the classroom. Teachers also observe improvements in behavior and attitude, as pupils become more attentive and motivated. These insights are reflected in the findings of Flores et al. (2019), who emphasized that participation in the 4Ps program contributes to improved academic achievement among pupil-beneficiaries. Their study highlighted how the conditional cash transfers allow pupils to concentrate more on their studies by alleviating financial pressures. Similarly, the present study revealed

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increased classroom attentiveness and consistent school attendance among the participants, which aligns with Flores et al. (2019) observations.

Villaflor et al. (2022) also found that 4Ps reduces dropout rates by fostering a more supportive home environment and encouraging school participation. This resonates with the accounts of pupil-beneficiaries in this study who showed enthusiasm in attending school and participating in various activities. Moreover, the improved parent-child relationship observed in this research reinforces Villaflor et al.'s conclusion that parental involvement plays a critical role in keeping children in school.

In addition, Dumay et al. (2022) asserted that the 4Ps program enhances performance indicators by positively influencing pupils' behavior and learning engagement. The teachers in the current study affirmed this, noting significant improvements in pupils' motivation, cooperation, and discipline. The active participation of pupils in co-curricular activities such as scouting further supports Dumay et al.'s claim that the program promotes holistic development beyond academic performance.

Improved Access to Nutrition and Healthcare

Improved access to nutrition and healthcare emerged as a significant category. In the study, it accounted for 25% (5 of 20) of the participants' responses. This access was seen not merely as a benefit but as a foundational support that enabled pupils to reclaim their strength, health, and focus on school. The data revealed that when pupils' basic needs were met through proper meals and regular medical care they were less prone to illness and could participate more actively in their education.

Participant 1 shared that the cash allowance allowed them to eat before school: *"I can eat breakfast before going to school now, so I don't feel weak in class. It helps me focus on my lessons better."* (P1, T1, LN 8).

This experience was also viewed by Participant 13, who noted that they no longer had to miss school due to illness: *"I can now go to school every day without skipping. Before, I had to stay home because we didn't have money when I'm sick."* (P13, T13, LN 319-320)

For Participants 12 and 14, improved nutrition and access to medicine contributed to consistent school attendance and overall wellness saying,

"I don't get sick often because I eat healthier food now. My body feels stronger, and I can attend school regularly."
(P12, T12, LN 293-294)

"My family has money for medicine when we need it." (P14, T14, LN 345-346)

Participant 16 observed that eating regularly also led to improved classroom behavior and engagement: *"My teacher said I look happier and more focused in class. I think it's because I am eating well and attending school regularly."*
(P16, T16, LN 397-398)

These narratives illustrate how improved health conditions directly influence the pupils' ability to attend and concentrate in school. No longer burdened by hunger or untreated illness, pupils are able to devote themselves more fully to their studies. Where they once spent time helping at home or recovering from sickness, they now spend their days in the classroom while learning, participating, and growing.

The findings are supported by several studies. For instance, Bustos et al. (2023) found that participation in the 4Ps program significantly contribute to the reduction of child stunting in poor households. Their study showed that consistent access to cash transfers enabled families to provide more nutritious meals for their children. This improvement in child growth indicators highlights the long-term health benefits of sustained government support.

Villanueva et al. (2024) observed measurable improvements in the nutritional status of 4Ps beneficiaries across several regions. Their findings indicated that access to food and regular health checkups under the program led to healthier weight and height-for-age outcomes among children. These results affirm the role of the 4Ps in addressing malnutrition and enhancing children's physical well-being.

Question 2. In what ways has the 4Ps program helped you stay motivated or focused on your studies? Can you share your stories of how it has influenced your learning?

2.1 Has your family, especially your parents or guardians encouraged you more in your studies since becoming part of the 4Ps program?

2.2 Do you feel more motivated to study because the program helps lessen your family's financial burden? How has this affected your focus in school?

2.3 Has being a 4Ps beneficiary inspired you to set future goals like finishing school or getting a certain job?

2.4 Does receiving financial assistance (like cash grants or school-related support) encourage you to study harder or stay in school? Please explain how.

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In discussing the motivation for academic success, the participants expressed that their determination to study harder is deeply influenced by the support they receive from 4Ps, the encouragement of their parents, the relief from financial burdens, and their desire to achieve their dreams and help their families.

Theme 2

Motivation for Academic Success

Significant Statements	Codes	Categories	Percentage
<i>"Every time we receive support from 4Ps, my mother tells us to do well in school. This makes me more determined." (P17, T17, LN 428)</i>	<i>"Mother tells us to do well in school..."</i>	Parental Encouragement	30
<i>"Because of 4Ps, I have more courage to dream big. I know I am not alone in this journey, so I work harder in my studies." (P19, T19, LN 480)</i>	<i>..more courage to dream big"</i>	Goal-oriented Motivation,	30
<i>"Because of 4Ps, I can join school activities because we can now afford my needs. I participate more in school." (P14, T14, LN 350)</i>	<i>"I can now join school activities"</i>	Financial Motivation	30

Note: P means participant number, T means the sheet number in Excel, and LN means the line number

Parental Encouragement

Six out of 20 participants (30%) shared that the 4Ps program strengthened their long-term dreams and ambitions, fueling their motivation to study harder. Pupils expressed aspirations such as becoming a teacher, doctor, or engineer, and acknowledged that the program gave them hope and a sense of direction. For instance, Participant 12, whose parents are vegetable vendors in Cagayan de Oro City, Participant 15 and 17, whose parents are working as an on call deweeder in the farmlands around their barangay, are motivated by their parents' encouragement. Their answers show how parental support and the benefits of the 4Ps program work together to motivate them to succeed academically.

"Whenever I see my parents working hard, I feel more motivated to study. 4Ps has helped us a lot, so I want to finish school."

(P12, T12, LN 298)

"I study harder because I know my parents want me to have a better future. 4Ps is a big help to our family." (P15, T15, LN 376)

"Every time we receive support from 4Ps, my mother tells us to do well in school. This makes me more determined." (P17, T17, LN 428)

The 4Ps program helps pupils become more motivated by supporting their dreams of having better futures, such as becoming teachers, doctors, or engineers. Many participants said the program give them hope and inspire them to work harder in school, especially when encourage by their parents. Both the program's support and parental guidance play a big role in strengthening pupils' determination to succeed.

Similarly, Kamra's study (2022) found that parents and guardians who attend 4Ps parenting sessions became more nurturing, supportive, and confident in their caregiving roles. As a result, their children demonstrate improved behavior, emotional well-being, and learning outcomes. This mirrors the experiences shared by participants in the current study, where strengthened family bonds and positive home environments contribute to the pupils' increased motivation and better classroom behavior.

Goal-oriented Motivation

Goal-oriented motivation emerges from participants' recognition of the long-term value of the 4Ps program, which fuels their determination to achieve future aspirations. This form of motivation is not solely rooted in present academic gains, but rather in a forward-looking mindset shaped by the belief that education which is supported by the program can transform their lives. Six out of 20 participants (30%) explicitly articulated this perspective, demonstrating a future-focused drive toward professional and personal success. This is clearly articulated by Participants 13 and 19, who expressed how the program has inspired them to pursue their goals with greater commitment and hope for a better future.

"4Ps inspires me because I know they are helping us. I work harder so I can give back in the future." (P13, T13, LN 324)

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"Because of 4Ps, I have more courage to dream big. I know I am not alone in this journey, so I work harder in my studies."

(P19, T19, LN 480)

This goal-directed drive is also reflected in how participants frame their ambitions as a way of honoring the support received. Participant 20 reveals that his academic efforts are closely tied to a personal mission to uplift his family: *"I want to prove that the support from 4Ps is worth it, so I work even harder. I dream of becoming an engineer to help my family someday."* (P20, T20, LN 506).

Similarly, participant 7 perceives government support as both an opportunity and a responsibility, which motivates her to excel in school: *"I study harder because I know the government is supporting me. I want to show that their help is worth it."* (P7, T7, LN 169).

For participant 9, the program instills a strengthened resolve to pursue professional dreams as a path out of poverty: *"I won't give up on my dream of becoming a doctor because of 4Ps. I study even harder to lift my family out of poverty."* (P9, T9, LN 219). Participant 4 also ties her academic persistence to a concrete vision of the future. She notes that the opportunity to continue schooling has reinforced her ambition *"4Ps has helped me by giving me the opportunity to continue studying. It teaches me to work harder to achieve my dream of becoming a teacher."* (P4, T4, LN 91).

No matter how difficult the journey toward achieving one's dreams may be, pupil-beneficiaries of the 4Ps program continue to display strong academic determination grounded in gratitude and hope for a better future. The narratives of participants in this study reveal that the support provided by 4Ps is not merely financial but becomes a catalyst for long-term goal setting and personal transformation. Research of Elizalde (2024) supported the idea that targeted social interventions can significantly shape pupils' aspirations and academic drive, especially in economically challenged contexts.

Financial Motivation

The responses from participants demonstrate how the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) has significantly improved their engagement in school by easing financial burdens. 6 out of 20 participants (30%) expressed how receiving financial support motivate them to attend school more consistently and participate actively in their studies. Participant 1 explicitly stated: Participant 1 shared, *"Because of 4Ps, I now have an allowance for school and no longer skip classes. I feel more eager to attend and listen to lessons."* (P1, T1, LN 13) This reflects how financial relief allows her to attend school regularly and engages more fully in her studies. Likewise, Participant 14 expressed, *"Because of 4Ps, I can join school activities because we can now afford my needs. I participate more in school,"* (P14, T14, LN 350) indicating that 4Ps removes previous barriers that hinder her involvement in extracurriculars. Participant 18 echoed similar sentiments: *"I'm happy because I can now join school activities. Before, I couldn't participate because we couldn't afford uniform or materials."* (P18, T18, LN 454).

The ability to participate in school activities is a significant motivation for pupils like Participant 18, who, before the program, faced barriers to full involvement in school life. Participant 2 also shared, *"4Ps helps me because I now have school supplies. I study harder because I don't have to borrow pencils and paper from my classmates anymore."* (P2, T2, LN 39) The provision of basic school supplies boosts her study habits and academic focus. Participant 3 added, *"Before, I couldn't focus because sometimes I was hungry. Now, we can buy food, so I feel stronger and ready to study,"* (P3, T3, LN 65) stressing the importance of meeting basic needs for academic success. Finally, Participant 5 mentioned, *"Because of 4Ps, we can buy school uniforms. I feel more confident going to school and participating in class,"* (P5, T5, LN 117) suggests that 4Ps contributes to his increased confidence and participation in school activities.

These findings are similar with recent studies on the 4Ps, such as the evaluation by Chavez and Bulayog (2023), which revealed that 4Ps beneficiaries showed improved school attendance compared to non-beneficiaries. Similarly, the study by Ferenal and Comon (2024), reported that 4Ps support positively impacted school performance, with beneficiaries demonstrating better enrollment and graduation rates. These studies support the participants' testimonies, emphasizing that financial assistance through 4Ps facilitates greater school participation, confidence, and academic success.

Question 3. Can you tell us about a particular experience or opportunity that you were able to access because of the 4Ps program? How did it change your life?

3.1 Has the 4Ps program helped your family secure basic daily needs like food, clothing, or shelter? Can you share an experience that shows this?

3.2 Has receiving regular financial support from 4Ps helped lessen your family's financial stress or improve your budgeting? How has this changed your daily life?

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3.3 Has the program helped your family access health-related support, like medical checkups, vitamins, or health education? What difference has it made for you or your family?

3.4 Has the 4Ps program given you better access to education, for example, by helping you attend school regularly or providing school-related needs? How has this affected your learning?

Theme 3

Empowering Opportunities Through 4Ps

Significant Statements	Codes	Categories	
<i>"Because of 4Ps, we can buy rice and food. I no longer go to school hungry, so I can focus better in class."</i> (P1, T1, LN 18)	<i>"...no longer go to school hungry"</i>	Basic Needs Security,	60
<i>"I can now join my classmates in school activities because we can afford proper clothes and supplies."</i> (P16, T16, LN 407)	<i>"join my classmates in school activities"</i>	Financial Security,	20

Note: P means participant number, T means the sheet number in Excel, and LN means the line number

Empowering opportunities through the 4Ps are seen in the participants' improved basic needs, financial, health, and educational security. This includes experiences of reduced hunger, access to school supplies, better health care, and increased motivation to study. These factors contribute to greater participation and focus in school activities. The program thus plays a key role in helping beneficiaries overcome barriers to education and well-being.

Basic Needs Security

Basic needs security refers to the assurance of having sufficient food, water, electricity, and proper clothing which are fundamental necessities that enable pupils to focus on their education and daily well-being. A significant portion of the participants, 12 out of 20 (60%), shared how the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) play a crucial role in meeting these basic needs, thereby easing their ability to attend and perform well in school. Their narratives reveal that addressing these essentials contributes substantially to their academic stability and overall quality of life.

"Because of 4Ps, we can buy rice and food. I no longer go to school hungry, so I can focus better on class." (P1, T1, LN 18)

"Our family is happier because we no longer have to worry if we have food every day." (P10, T10, LN 250)

"We no longer sleep hungry, so I feel stronger and can do my assignments better." (P11, T11, LN 277)

"Because of 4Ps, we no longer have to beg for food from our neighbors. I can use my time for studying instead."
(P15, T15, LN 381)

"We now have access to water at home because of 4Ps. Life is easier, and I go to school cleaner." (P18, T18, LN 459)

"Before, it was hard to study because our house was dark at night. Now, we have electricity, and I can prepare for exams better."
(P19, T19, LN 485)

"I am able to buy a school uniform and shoes. Before, I was embarrassed because my clothes were old and torn. Now, I feel more confident in school." (P2, T2, LN 44)

"I am grateful for 4Ps because it has helped my family. My dream is to become a doctor so I can also help others someday."
(P20, T20, LN 511)

"We are able to have electricity at home because of 4Ps. Now, I can do my assignments even at night." (P3, T3, LN 70)

"My siblings and I can now eat three times a day. Our bodies are stronger, so I don't get sick often." (P6, T6, LN 148)

"Because of 4Ps, I no longer worry if I have food for school. I'm happier going to school with my friends." (P7, T7, LN 174)

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"I got a new school bag and no longer use an old bag for my things. I feel prouder going to school." (P8, T8, LN 200)

The stories shared by 4Ps beneficiaries highlight how meeting basic needs, such as food, electricity, water, and clothing, enhances pupils' focus, health, and confidence in school. Research supports this connection such as Taguiam (2024) who found that 4Ps improved pupils' quality of life and school performance, though nutritional support needs strengthening. Villaflor et al. (2022) also reported increased pupil attendance and better nutrition due to the program's support. Similarly, Flores et al. (2019) observed that pupils are more motivated to attend school, linking this to improved academic performance. These findings confirm that when basic needs are met, pupils are more equipped to succeed in school.

Financial Security

Financial security emerged as a key factor in facilitating active participation in school activities among the beneficiaries. Four out of 20 (20%) of the participants said that before they received help, they had a hard time joining school activities because they did not have enough money. The support from 4Ps helps them buy materials, join events, and attend class regularly. Their thoughts are shown below:

"Before, we had no money to buy materials for projects, so I struggled to complete them. Now, I can keep up with my classmates." (P13, T13, LN 329)

"I can now join my classmates in school activities because we can afford proper clothes and supplies." (P16, T16, LN 407)

"Before, I often skipped school because I had no lunch or fare. Now, I attend school every day and learn more." (P5, T5, LN 122)

"I am able to buy materials for my school projects. Before, I couldn't participate because we had no money to buy them." (P9, LN 94-96)

The experiences of these pupils clearly illustrate how financial support from the 4Ps program enables fuller participation in school activities by removing economic barriers. This access not only boosts their academic engagement but also fosters a sense of inclusion and confidence among peers. Smith and Todd (2021) found that financial assistance programs play a critical role in improving pupil attendance and participation in school. By reducing material deprivation, these programs help pupils attend school more consistently and with fewer distractions related to poverty. Their research emphasized that economic support allows pupils to engage more fully in both academic and non-academic aspects of school life.

Nguyen et al. (2022) highlighted that pupils who receive financial support are more likely to join extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and school events. The study showed that when basic needs are met, pupils gain the confidence and resources to participate in school-based social opportunities. These experiences contribute to stronger school belongingness and social development.

Usman and Banu (2019) observed that financial stress significantly hinders academic performance and engagement among low-income pupils. They concluded that government aid programs, such as conditional cash transfers, ease financial pressure on families and create a more stable learning environment for children. As a result, pupils become more motivated, confident, and successful in their studies.

Question 4. If you could suggest any improvements to the 4Ps program, what would they be?

4.1 Do you think the 4Ps program should provide additional support for pupils in school? What kind of school-related support would be most helpful to you?

4.2 Would it help if the 4Ps program offered more training or education on handling money, saving, or budgeting? Why do you think this is important?

4.3 During emergencies or natural disasters, do you feel the support from 4Ps is enough? What kind of disaster assistance would you suggest?

4.4 What can be improved in terms of health-related services, such as access to clinics, medical checkups, or health education through 4Ps?

4.5 Do you think the program should be stricter in monitoring attendance or compliance? How can rules be improved or better enforced?

4.6 Should the program be extended to include more families or pupils in your community? Why do you think that's necessary?

4.7 What improvements can be made to make sure families consistently meet their basic needs like food, housing, or hygiene products?

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4.8 Have you or your family experienced delays in receiving the cash grant? How important is it for the allowance to arrive on time?

4.9 Would you suggest including more livelihood or skills training programs under 4Ps? How could this help your family in the long run?

Theme 4

Aspirations and Challenges for Sustainable Change

Significant Statements	Codes	Categories	Percentage
"I hope the program can give more school supplies because pencils and notebooks run out fast." (P1, T1, LN 23)	"more school supplies"	More School Support	30
"I hope there's a way to give livelihood program for families who live far from school." (P8, T8, LN 204)	Include livelihood program	Livelihood Programs	15

Note: P means participant number, T means the sheet number in Excel, and LN means the line number

Aspirations and challenges for sustainable change are reflected in the participants' calls for expanded school support, improved financial literacy, emergency assistance, and holistic health services. This includes the need for more school supplies, teaching parents budgeting skills, providing disaster relief, and including free eyeglasses in check-ups. Participants also emphasized stricter rule enforcement, broader program reach, timely allowance distribution, and livelihood opportunities for remote families.

More School Support

While participants acknowledge that the 4Ps program eases many financial burdens, the recurring theme of needing more school support stresses that financial security does not always fully translate into sustained access to all necessary school supplies. Even with financial aid, limited allowances may need to be carefully divided among various household expenses, often leaving only a modest portion available for educational materials. This practical constraint explains why 6 out of 20 participants (30%) still express concerns over the quick depletion of basic supplies like pencils and notebooks.

In other words, although 4Ps significantly reduces financial pressure, the support may sometimes fall short of fully covering all day-to-day school needs, especially for consumable materials that require frequent replacement. This situation underscores the complexity of financial relief while it improves overall security and access, additional or more targeted provisions could further enhance pupils' academic experience and engagement. *"I hope the program can give more school supplies because pencils and notebooks run out fast."* (P1, T1, LN 23) Others expanded on this by suggesting the inclusion of feeding programs in schools, which they believed would directly improve their capacity to focus and learn. *"I wish there were more feeding programs in school."* (P10, T10, LN 255).

These viewpoints align with findings by Adelman and Taylor (2020), who emphasized the critical role of integrated school support services in addressing both academic and non-academic barriers to learning. Participants also raised concerns about their physical needs, which often go unmet and hinder full participation in school activities. Requests for slippers or shoes, raincoats or umbrellas and hygiene kits underscore the daily challenges faced by pupils in low-resource environments.

"It would be better if they gave slippers or shoes." (P11, T11, LN 282)

"I hope they can provide raincoats or umbrellas." (P12, T12, LN 308)

"It would be helpful if they can also give hygiene kits." (P13, T13, LN 334)

Bufo et al. (2021) found that providing basic necessities significantly improved attendance and overall well-being among pupils in underserved communities. Their study emphasized that when pupils' essential needs are met, they are more likely to attend school consistently and participate actively in class. This supports the idea that material support plays a crucial role in fostering both academic stability and emotional health.

One participant reflected on the potential benefits of having free tutorial sessions paired with snacks after class, revealing a thoughtful awareness of how academic and nutritional needs intersect. The suggestion highlighted how additional academic support, when combined with food, could enhance learning and encourage attendance. As Participant 17 shared, *"It would be nice if we had free tutorial sessions with snacks after class"* (P17, T17, LN 438), emphasizing the importance of addressing pupils' holistic needs to support their school success.

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Taken together, these statements suggest that the children's hopes are not simply wishful thinking but informed by tangible, day-to-day realities. They echo recent studies advocating for holistic approaches to educational support (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2021), where academic interventions are paired with material and psychosocial assistance.

Livelihood Programs

Three out of 20 (15%) participants said they want more help through livelihood programs. These programs can give families a way to earn money and support themselves, especially those who live far from schools or work opportunities. Participant 6 shared, *"I wish there are available livelihood programs,"* (P6, T6, LN 153) showing the need for more chances to earn income. Participant 8 added, *"I hope there's a way to give livelihood program for families who live far from school,"* (P8, T8, LN 204) pointing out that those in remote areas are often left out. Participant 9 also said, *"It would be great if they also helped us with livelihood programs,"* (P9, T9, LN 229) which shows that this kind of support is a common concern.

According to Capinpin (2024), giving families ways to earn money helps them become more independent and less dependent on cash assistance. Livelihood programs, such as farming tools, training, or small business support, can help parents provide for their families and build better futures. Livelihood support is especially helpful for families in areas where jobs and schools are far away. Helping them earn money from home or nearby can improve their living conditions and reduce poverty in the long run.

Question 5. What are your hopes for the future now that you are part of the 4Ps program? How has the program changed the way you view your education and career prospects?

5.1 Has being a part of the 4Ps program influenced your personal goals, like finishing your studies, helping your family, or becoming more responsible?

5.2 Has the program helped you think more clearly about what career or job you want in the future? What is your dream job, and how has 4Ps affected that goal?

Theme 5

Pupil-Beneficiaries' Aspirations for the Future

Significant Statements	Codes	Categories	Percentage
<i>"I hope I can have my own small business in the future. Because of 4Ps, I now understand the importance of education in starting a successful business."</i> (P9, T9, LN 233)	<i>"own small business in the future"</i>	Career Goals	75
<i>"I hope to help other children when I grow up. Because of 4Ps, I have learned the importance of sharing knowledge and kindness with others."</i> (P17, T17, LN 442)	<i>"help other children when I grow up"</i>	Personal Goals	25

Note: P means participant number, T means the sheet number in Excel, and LN means the line number

This theme uncovers the aspirations of pupil-beneficiaries influenced by the support and guidance of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), highlighting how it shaped their visions for the future both in terms of career and personal development. The participants expressed dreams rooted in their lived realities but elevated by the hope that education makes more accessible by 4Ps which can serve as a pathway toward personal and communal transformation.

Career Goals

The aspirations of pupil-beneficiaries reveal how the 4Ps program has profoundly influenced their career outlooks. The narratives speak of dreams once distant, now brought within reach through the encouragement and support provided by 4Ps. Whether grounded in personal ambition, familial legacy, or the desire to serve others, each career goal reflects a renewed sense of possibility, with education emerging as the cornerstone of their envisioned success. Fifteen out of 20 participants (75%) expressed a strong desire for professional stability and economic independence. Participant 4 articulated this hope concisely: *"I want to have a stable job when I grow up. 4Ps has taught me how important education is in securing a bright future."* (P4, T4, LN 105). Similarly, Participant 9, inspired by entrepreneurial ideals, shared: *"I hope I can have my own small business in the future. Because of 4Ps, I now understand the importance of education in starting a successful business."* (P9, T9, LN 233).

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Others envisioned their futures in traditional livelihoods, but with a transformative twist makes possible through education. Participant 8, aspiring to remain in agriculture, shared: *"I want to become a farmer but with better knowledge. 4Ps has taught me that education can help improve my knowledge and livelihood."* (P8, T8, LN 208). Likewise, Participant 18 saw value in pursuing a vocational path enhanced by formal education: *"I want to be a carpenter like my Tatay but with a diploma. Because of 4Ps, I realized that my future will be better if I have proper education."* (P18, T18, LN 468).

For many, the desire to serve others is central to their aspirations. Participant 7 expressed a goal of contributing to infrastructure and safety through engineering: *"I dream of becoming an engineer and building strong houses. Because of 4Ps' support, I have learned that my dream is not impossible as long as I work hard in my studies."* (P7, T7, LN 183). Participant 6 wished to protect the community, stating: *"I want to be a policeman to protect our community. Because of 4Ps, I now have more confidence in finishing school and achieving this profession."* (P6, T6, LN 157).

Healthcare was a fascinating ambition for others, motivated by compassion and service. Participant 3 shared: *"I dream of becoming a doctor to help sick people. Because of 4Ps, I am more determined to study hard because I know I have support in reaching my dream."* (P3, T3, LN 79), while Participant 10 echoed this sentiment with a similar goal: *"I want to be a nurse and work in a hospital. Because of 4Ps, I am more inspired to study hard so I can achieve this dream."* (P10, T10, LN 259).

Several participants are drawn to the teaching profession, viewing it as a way to give back and shape future generations. Participant 2 reflected this calling: *"I hope to become a teacher one day. Because of 4Ps, I now value education more and see that achieving this dream is more possible."* (P2, T2, LN 53). Others found their inspiration in creative and communicative fields. Participant 16 aspired to write and educate through literature: *"I want to become a writer and make books for children. Because of 4Ps, I now value knowledge and the impact of reading on people's lives."* (P16, T16, LN 416), while Participant 12 revealed an artistic dream: *"I hope to be an artist someday. Because of 4Ps, I have learned to improve my talent and never give up on my dreams."* (P12, T12, LN 312). Some participants expressed a passion for public service and emergency response. Participant 11 envisioned a future as a rescuer: *"I dream of becoming a firefighter. Because of 4Ps, I have learned that education is essential to becoming a skilled rescuer."* (P11, T11, LN 286).

Finally, some narratives emphasized the foundational goal of education as a means to lift oneself and one's family out of poverty. Participant 13 stated plainly but powerfully: *"I want to finish school and never experience hunger again. Because of 4Ps, I now understand that education is the key to escaping poverty."* (P13, T13, LN 338). Participant 1 echoed a similar sentiment: *"I want to finish school so I can help my family. Because of 4Ps, I now have hope that I can achieve this since I receive support for my education."* (P1, T1, LN 27). Participant 19 also emphasized self-sufficiency: *"I dream of being a store owner one day. Because of 4Ps, I have learned that hard work and education are important in building a business."* (P19, T19, LN 494).

These insights affirm that 4Ps has not only addressed the immediate needs of its beneficiaries but also opened doors to meaningful futures. The children's words collectively express a vision of empowerment, responsibility, and transformation—where education is not merely a requirement but a lifeline to a better tomorrow. Recent studies support this, showing that 4Ps enhances school attendance, fosters long-term educational aspirations, and empowers children to pursue career goals—ultimately shaping a generation that views education as a key to breaking the cycle of poverty (Orbeta et al., 2023).

Personal Goals

The narratives of the pupil-beneficiaries reveal how the 4Ps program nurtures not only academic aspirations but also deeply personal and socially driven goals. Five out of 20 (25%) participants' reflections indicate that, through consistent educational support, they have developed a growing sense of responsibility—not only for their own futures but also for the well-being of their families and communities. Beneficiaries shared that the opportunities afforded by 4Ps ignited a desire to extend the value of education beyond themselves. Participant 5 articulated this sense of familial responsibility, stating: *"I hope my siblings can also continue school. Because of 4Ps, I see how important education is, so I want to help my siblings with their studies one day."* (P5, T5, LN 131). This notion of giving back and becoming a source of inspiration within the household was also confirmed by Participant 20: *"I hope to make my parents proud one day. Because of 4Ps, I am working even harder in my studies to achieve this."* (P20, T20, LN 520). Others expressed a more outward-facing ambition. Participant 17 saw education not only as a tool for self-improvement but also to uplift others: *"I hope to help other children when I grow up. Because of 4Ps, I have learned the importance of sharing knowledge and kindness with others."* (P17, T17, LN 442).

For some, education inspired by 4Ps became a bridge to explore opportunities beyond their current environment. As Participant 15 shared: *"I dream of traveling outside our barangay. Because of 4Ps, I now believe that through education, I can reach farther places."* (P15, T15, LN 390). Participant 14 reflected a forward-thinking view of family and life stability, recognizing education as a foundation for future parenthood: *"I want to become a good parent in the future. Because of 4Ps, I have learned that good education can help provide a better life for my family."* (P14, T14, LN 364). These responses illustrate that the support

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from 4Ps fosters more than academic success—it instills a consciousness of intergenerational responsibility, empathy, and personal transformation. Through education, these children envision themselves as future leaders, caregivers, and contributors to societal good.

Recent studies support this, demonstrating that 4Ps not only improves school attendance but also nurtures long-term aspirations and self-sufficiency. For instance, Galarita and Nestal (2024) found that 4Ps beneficiaries showed increased school enrollment and a stronger sense of responsibility toward their families. Their study revealed that pupils who benefit from the program are more likely to stay in school and contribute positively at home. This reflects how the program fosters both educational continuity and personal growth.

Pareno and Elamis-Eslabon. (2022) emphasized that the 4Ps program influences the educational aspirations of pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They noted that access to regular support helps pupils see education as a realistic and attainable path out of poverty. Their findings underscore the importance of addressing both social and economic challenges in nurturing academic ambition.

Villaret et al. (2023) observed that the 4Ps program helps reduce child labor by easing the financial pressure on families. With basic needs met, children are less likely to work and more able to focus on their education and long-term goals. This demonstrates how social protection initiatives can safeguard children's right to learn and develop.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study.

1. The 4Ps program is more than a poverty-alleviation initiative, it is a catalyst for educational transformation. The 4Ps program significantly improved the daily living conditions of pupil-beneficiaries.
2. The 4Ps program has been a key driver of academic motivation among pupils. Pupils found renewed inspiration from both the support they received and the encouragement of their parents.
3. The 4Ps program has provided empowering opportunities to the pupil-beneficiaries. The program enabled its beneficiaries to access opportunities they previously missed, such as joining school events and completing projects.
4. The 4Ps program is beneficial, pupil-beneficiaries highlighted several areas for improvement to ensure its long-term effectiveness.
5. Lastly, the 4Ps program has positively shaped the aspirations of its pupil-beneficiaries by showing them the value of education and instilling hope for a better future. Most participants now envision professional careers and express a strong desire to give back to their families and communities. This shift from survival to aspiration demonstrates the transformative potential of educational support.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on what this study found and what it concluded, the following suggestions are offered for different groups that are directly or indirectly involved in helping 4Ps pupil-beneficiaries:

1. The 4Ps program may continue and expand its provision of basic needs and health-related services. Collaboration with local health and education units could further strengthen this positive impact where schools can formalize partnerships with barangay health centers, local clinics, and NGOs to assist pupils in need of medical, nutritional, or psychological support.
2. The program may sustain its assistance to the pupils' school and basic needs. Schools may have regular integration of values formation, goal-setting activities, and career talks in classroom discussions. Provide positive reinforcement and emotional encouragement to boost pupils' self-esteem. Parents on the other hand, can continue offering consistent emotional support, encouragement, and involvement in their children's schooling. Attend parent engagement sessions that focus on building their role as motivators and academic partners. These additions would further nurture the academic motivation of the beneficiaries.
3. The program maintain its comprehensive support system and explore ways to expand educational and health-related security. Schools should continue to provide inclusive opportunities that foster both academic and social development, where teachers create a supportive classroom environment where all pupils feel valued and capable. Track progress of 4Ps pupils and provide additional guidance when needed. Parents can also reinforce empowerment at home by acknowledging their child's efforts and achievements in school. Support children's participation in school activities and communicate regularly with teachers about their academic and personal growth.
4. To address the above-mentioned challenges, policymakers should consider implementing livelihood programs, on-time allowance distribution, and broader health initiatives. Continuous monitoring and community feedback mechanisms could ensure the program remains responsive and equitable.

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5. To further develop pupil-beneficiaries' aspirations, the program should incorporate career guidance, skills training, and opportunities for scholarships or internships. These efforts will help bridge the gap between pupils' goals and their future achievements. But as of now, teachers may integrate goal setting, reflective writing, and project-based learning that allow pupils to connect academic work with future aspirations. Use differentiated instruction to support diverse dreams—from vocational careers to creative pursuits. Regularly talk to pupils about their goals and provide encouragement and guidance.

Parents may also support children's career dreams by being involved in school decision-making and career planning activities. Help children visualize their future by exposing them to role models, attending school events, and fostering conversations about ambition and life direction at home. Future researchers may also conduct study on the long-term effects of 4Ps on pupils' career success and life satisfaction such as investigate how aspiration-building activities in school influence the socioeconomic mobility of 4Ps beneficiaries. They may also consider exploring the intergenerational impact of 4Ps on goal orientation and educational attainment.

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