Review and Assessment of Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (SGP-PA) and Expanded SGP-PA: Evidence of Performance in the First Two Years

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List of Acronyms

4Ps	–	*Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program
AY	–	academic year
CHED	–	Commission on Higher Education
COA	–	Commission on Audit
DSWD	–	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ESGP-PA	–	Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
HEI	–	higher education institution
JMC	–	Joint Memorandum Circular
OLS	–	ordinary least squares
PhilHealth	–	Philippine Health Insurance Corporation
PIDS	–	Philippine Institute for Development Studies
PMT	–	proxy means test
SGP-PA	–	Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
SUCs	–	state universities and colleges
TB	–	tuberculosis

Abstract

Making higher education more accessible for the poor serves the equity objective. Until today, the main policy tool to achieve this objective is funding public higher education institutions. This paper assesses a new initiative of the Philippine government called the Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (SGP-PA) implemented starting 2012. SGP-PA has two important unique features: (1) it is well targeted to identified *Pantawid Pamilya* households and (2) it provides a grant amount that is sufficient to cover all regular education expenses including living allowance.

Comparing the academic performance of grantees to that of their peers, the results show that grantees from poorer socioeconomic background had only poorer grades during the first year. They were already performing at par in Math and even better in Science and English, compared to nongrantees, starting their second year. The study also highlights the importance of entrance exam scores in the academic performance of both grantees and nongrantees. Finally, the study documents the challenges faced by the program and provides recommendations on how to address these challenges.

Introduction

Making higher education more available to poor but capable students is an important objective of any government. To date, the main policy tool to achieve this objective is funding public higher education institutions (HEIs). However, despite the increase of publicly funded HEIs in recent years, the number of state universities and colleges (SUCs) is not correlated with the attendance of the poor in HEIs (Orbeta et al. 2016). It has also been shown that the returns to higher education continues to be high (Paqueo et al. 2012), hence, completing higher education remains to be a good investment and making the poor complete higher education is a proven strategy of breaking the cycle of poverty.

In 2012, the Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (SGP-PA) was implemented through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 09, Series of 2012. Implementers of the program are select SUCs, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Department of Labor and Employment.

The SGP-PA is a new initiative of the Philippine government to provide poor but capable students with access to higher education. It aims to increase the number of higher education graduates among poor households through direct provision of financing for their education in selected SUCs. The SGP-PA has two important features that make it different from other grants-in-aid programs: (1) it is well targeted to identified poor households and (2) the grant is sufficient to cover all regular education expenses including living allowance.

When the program was first implemented during academic year (AY) 2012–2013, there were 4,041 beneficiaries from identified and classified poor households in 609 focus municipalities covered by the DSWD's *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program (4Ps). Participating in the program were 35 top-tier SUCs. The program was later expanded in AY 2014–2015 by funding another 36,412 beneficiaries under the Expanded SGP-PA (ESGP-PA), bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 40,453. During this time, all the 112 SUCs across the country were on board.

An SGP-PA grantee receives a yearly grant of PHP 60,000 in total. This includes PHP 10,000 per semester for tuition and other fees, PHP 2,500 per semester for textbooks and other learning materials, and PHP 3,500 per month for 10 school months as stipend.

This paper evaluates the performance of the SGP-PA grantees in the first two years and that of the ESGP-PA grantees in the first year of program implementation. The initial assessments of both the SGP-PA and ESGP-PA can serve as a baseline and barometer to evaluate the performance of the program thus far. The assessment also aims to recognize how observations on student performance and feedback from stakeholders may improve current implementation for later waves of the program and other grants-in-aid initiatives that may be conducted after the SGP-PA. It also describes the implementation issues and specific interventions done by SUCs to help grantees cope with life in the university. An analysis of select dropout cases is also presented. The study also documents the challenges that the program is facing and provides recommendations on how to address these challenges.

Generally, the assessment intends to produce an empirical documentation and analysis of tertiary education's affirmative action in the Philippine context. It specifically aims to:

1) document progress in program implementation;
2) identify and document bottlenecks and implementation issues that have arisen in the first wave of the program and check if these issues have been addressed during the second wave;
3) identify interventions that can be proposed to enhance implementation and improve the likelihood that the program achieve its objectives;
4) determine the relationship between entrance exam scores and academic performance to ascertain the importance of entrance scores in the selection of grantees; and
5) compare the relative academic performance of grantees relative to their peers.[1]

Literature Review

The SGP-PA is a form of affirmative action—a type of intervention for disadvantaged groups in society. This literature review will focus on affirmative action for socially and economically disadvantaged students.

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[1] Peers refer to the batch mates of the grantees in the same course, who are not under the SGP-PA or ESGP-PA.

Affirmative action in theory

The social background of a child or a student as a reason for educational stratification is said to be more important in the earlier parts of the educational ladder (Mare 1981). However, gaps in tertiary education are still an observed phenomenon and affirmative action has been one of the most popular ways of addressing this problem (Desai and Kulkarni 2008).

Affirmative action "regulates the allocation of scarce positions in education, employment, or business contracting to increase the representation in those positions of persons belonging to certain population subgroups" (Fryer and Loury 2005, p. 147). It is a way of inducing a shift in demand for those in the identified group (Fryer and Loury 2005). Desai and Kulkarni (2008) point out that there are widening socioeconomic differences in higher levels of education despite educational growth.

In education, affirmative action is used as an intervention to increase the educational attainment of marginalized members of society in the form of scholarships or financial aid and reserved quotas in competitive colleges. The goal is to ensure increased returns to education for the targeted group. It is, therefore, common to have analogous policies in place in the labor market.

Debates continue about the efficacy of affirmative action programs. Bertrand et al. (2007) highlighted two main arguments against affirmative action—inefficient targeting and mismatch hypothesis. The first argument applies more to affirmative action that targets different racial groups. The concern is that the more advantaged individuals from the targeted groups are displacing less advantaged individuals from the nontargeted group. The second argument, which is the mismatch hypothesis, posits that the targets of affirmative action policies are being placed in an academic environment where they are not prepared for, which then lead to high dropout rates and poor performance in the job market. Greenberg (2002) pointed out a few additional arguments made by those that oppose affirmative action, including stigmatization and stereotyping the beneficiaries, devaluing merit manifested in test scores, and promoting special group rights rather than equal rights.

Affirmative action in practice

There are numerous examples in the literature of affirmative actions in education. Majority of studies are from the United States and are race-

based cases, such as those for Latinos and black Americans (Alon and Tienda 2005; Arcidiacono 2005).

A similar class-based affirmative action is implemented in India— the caste-based affirmative action. The approach in India is twofold. First, specific quotas are reserved for lower-caste members (the *dalits* and *adivasi*) and, second, programs to reduce the cost of education, such as the provision of scholarships, fellowships, and other necessary school materials, are implemented (Desai and Kulkarni 2008). However, the study of Desai et al. found that the success rates for the dalits did not improve, implying that affirmative action did not help this particular group at the college level. They further noted that educational inequalities will continue until the dominant groups attain educational saturation at any given educational level. Still, they acknowledged that affirmative action may have had some impact, but the results are ambiguous.

Bertrand et al. (2007) conducted a similar study with a focus on engineering college in India. They found that those who were admitted through an affirmative action program benefited from attending engineering college despite starting academically worse off compared to their peers. The study, however, noted within-group disparities, observing that "while lower-caste members do benefit from the policy, it is the economically better-off among them who benefit the most" (Bertrand et al. 2007, p. 4). Within-groups disparities were also noted in Malaysia, where ethnic affirmative action was implemented for tertiary education and employment using quotas for university admission and scholarships. Lee (2012) found that the quota system increased access to and completion of tertiary education, but differences persisted within race groups. This system, however, has led to progressive distribution and intergenerational mobility as 58 percent of scholars had fathers who attained only primary schooling. However, Lee (2012) noted that it is unclear if the distribution of benefits has been done in a systematic way that balances merit and socioeconomic background.

Arcidiacono (2005), on the other hand, found that the income level of the student (or student's family) did not affect the advantages that black students in the United States derived from affirmative action. He did note, however, that the advantages only occurred at high-quality schools. He also found that affirmative action had little effect on the future earnings of the student who benefited from affirmative action. Arcidiacono (2005, p. 1479) noted that "While the effects of affirmative

action in higher education on expected earnings is small, removing affirmative action programs would have effects on the distribution of blacks at top-tier schools and the percentage of blacks attending college."

Alon and Tienda (2005) found that the likelihood of college completion of minorities increased as the selectivity of the institution attended increased. Their study recommended that affirmative action should be promoted at selective institutions.

Aubel's (2011) study on Afro-descendant women in Brazil found that affirmative action in the form of a quota system was an entry point into universities. The subjects in her study noted that for the policy to be effective, that is, for them to stay in school and complete their degrees, financial assistance would have to be an attached component of the program. Most beneficiaries of the policy had to attend night classes to work during the day. Degrees that offered night courses were limited to "less prestigious majors" and, in effect, had little impact on the improvement of earnings of the targeted group.

A metareview of gender-based and race-based affirmative action in education and employment was conducted by Holzer and Neumark (2006). Some of the consolidated findings from the studies they found include support for the "mismatch hypothesis". When a student is admitted to a university for which they are less qualified, it could lead to worse educational and employment outcomes. They noted that, "The combined results of these studies support the notion that, on average, affirmative action in university admissions generates no harm, and probably some gains, in graduation rates and later earnings for minorities who attend more elite colleges and universities. This conclusion, though, might mask some potentially important variation in the distribution of effects of affirmative action" (Holzer and Neumark 2006, p. 479).

Pedrosa et al. (2007) explained what they call "educational resilience" among beneficiaries of affirmative action at a Brazilian university. They observed that students coming from a disadvantaged environment, in socioeconomic and educational terms, perform relatively better than those coming from higher socioeconomic and educational strata. Caste-based affirmative action for Master of Business Administration students in India show somewhat different results from those obtained in Brazil. Chakravarty and Somanathan (2008) observed that beneficiaries of affirmative action had, on average, considerably lower undergraduate college marks than their peers, a result that persisted in the first year of

the program. The gap diminished in the second year, but it is argued that this observation can only be partially attributed to catching up as students can take electives in second year, which may have easier grading policies. The authors then noted that the beneficiary students come in with, on average, weaker academic backgrounds and are heavily penalized for this in the job market.

Program Background

Selection of grantees

For the first round of SGP-PA, the beneficiaries were selected from the 609 focus priority cities and municipalities identified by the National Anti-Poverty Commission and the DSWD. Six potential beneficiaries were identified from each city or municipality and were ranked according to their proxy means test (PMT) scores.[2] These beneficiaries are endorsed to CHED after being validated by DSWD.

According to program rules, the grantees had to fit the general requirements for eligibility and comply with documentary requirements to become part of the program. A grantee should:

1) be identified as a 4Ps beneficiary;
2) be not more than 30 years of age at the time of selection;[3]
3) be physically and mentally fit;
4) be a high school graduate or equivalent;
5) not be covered by other higher education scholarship/public institution grants;
6) pass the entrance exam and academic requirements set by the leading SUC;
7) pass the requirements set by the national SGP-PA committee; and
8) enroll/shift/transfer to CHED priority programs preferably in the leading identified SUCs most accessible from their residence.

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[2] PMT scores are computed based on readily measurable socioeconomic household characteristics. These are used as an alternative indicator of socioeconomic status when the direct measure—in this case, income—is much more difficult and, hence, expensive to measure.

[3] For the pilot implementation, the age criterion was relaxed to accommodate those up to the age of 35.

The grantee also had to submit the following documentary requirements:

1) accomplished SGP-PA application form;
2) certification from DSWD that he/she is a 4Ps beneficiary;
3) birth certificate certified by the National Statistics Office or the local civil registrar;
4) health certificate issued by any government physician;
5) Form 138 or has passed the Philippine Educational Placement Test; and
6) signed commitment of participation.

The commitment of participation includes clauses stating that the grantee shall take full load in each term and complete the program within the prescribed four-year period. The grantee is also expected to maintain a satisfactory academic performance in accordance with the "policies and standards of the SUC". The program intends to award the grant to those who are expected to be the first college graduate in their household. To achieve this, the DSWD must sift through the millions of eligible 4Ps households available in the *Listahan*—a roster with some 10 million households which are the 4Ps beneficiaries. The selection process has also been made very open to accommodate even those who have been out of school for a long period and are married. Proportional regional allocation of slots was also considered.

The ESGP-PA has made some changes to the eligibility requirements. Potential grantees should only be out of school for a maximum of five years, a cap that was not in place for the first batch. The age ceiling of 30 was also strictly enforced for the second batch of grantees.

Methodology

Data collection

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) collaborated with select SUCs to obtain data on the grantees and their peers. Eight SGP-PA–implementing SUCs and another eight ESGP-PA–implementing SUCs were selected to collaborate with PIDS on the study. Each SGP-PA SUC was given a PHP 300,000 grant to collect data for four semesters while each ESGP-PA SUC received a grant of PHP 225,000 to collect data for two semesters. The SUCs were asked to

submit data for both the grantees and their peers. All SUCs were also asked to submit a report on their experiences and issues they encountered while implementing the SGP-PA and ESGP-PA.

Participating SUCs (Table 1 for SGP-PA and Table 2 for ESGP-PA) were selected based on the total number of grantees, expression of interest to participate, and nomination of a collaborating faculty-researcher or department as certified by the school head.

Due to delays in the processing of the Memorandum of Agreement between PIDS and the SUCs, only four SGP-PA SUCs and five ESGP-PA SUCs were analyzed in this report (marked with asterisk in Tables 1 and 2). Data from the rest of the SUCs will be used for further analysis. Data submissions for both SGP-PA and ESGP-PA include demographic profile, entrance exam scores, and semestral grades for AY 2012–2013 and AY 2013–2014 (SGPPA) and AY 2014–2015 (ESGP-PA) of grantees and their peers.

Data cleaning was done by the PIDS team and any encoding errors, duplicate entries, or incomplete information were returned to the SUCs for correction.

Methods of analysis

Profile of students. Select demographic and socioeconomic variables of the grantees and their households were compared with those of their

Table 1. Selected SGP-PA state universities and colleges

	Higher Education Institution	Number of SGP-PA Grantees
1	Davao del Norte State College*	204
2	Southern Philippines Agri-Business and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology*	123
3	Mindanao University of Science and Technology*	204
4	Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology	254
5	Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University	104
6	West Visayas State University*	246
7	Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology	241
8	Palawan State University	97

SGP-PA = Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
* refers to state universities and colleges whose data were analyzed
Source: Authors' compilation

Table 2. Selected ESGP-PA state universities and colleges

	Higher Education Institution	Number of ESGP-PA Grantees
1	Capiz State University*	863
2	Carlos Hilado Memorial State College*	119
3	Guimaras State College*	93
4	Western Visayas College of Science and Technology	472
5	West Visayas State University *	527
6	Visayas State University	259
7	Caraga State University	364
8	Surigao del Sur State University*	582

ESGP-PA = Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
* refers to state universities and colleges whose data were analyzed
Source: Authors' compilation

peers. Test on difference of means was performed to ascertain whether there are differences that are statistically significant between the two groups. These differences are important because socioeconomic profiles are expected to affect academic performance.

Entrance exam scores and semestral grades of students. The means and the standard deviation of entrance exam scores and semestral grades were obtained for both groups. Like the profile analysis, test on difference of means was performed to determine whether any difference that may exist between the two groups was statistically significant. The test was done for the students' entrance exam scores and their semestral grades for score subjects in Sciences, Math, and English. The entrance exam score is expected to provide an indication of their relative readiness for higher education at the point of entry. The semestral grades, on the other hand, indicated how they are faring in banner subjects.

Relative academic performance controlling for entrance exam scores and other socioeconomic characteristics. To provide evidence on the relative academic performance of grantees and their peers, regression analyses of semestral grades on banner courses controlling for entrance exam scores and other socioeconomic characteristics were done. These analyses were expected to provide richer analysis of relative

academic performance controlling for known important determinants that cannot be done with bivariate analyses. Four models are constructed and are specified as follows:

Model 1: $Grade_{ij} = \propto +\beta_1 EntranceExamScore_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$

Model 2: $Grade_{ij} = \propto +\beta_1 EntranceExamScore_i + \beta_2 Grantee_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$

Model 3: $Grade_{ij} = \propto +\beta_1 EntranceExamScore_i + \boldsymbol{\beta X_i} + \varepsilon_{ij}$

Model 4: $Grade_{ij} = \propto +\beta_1 EntranceExamScore_i + \boldsymbol{\beta X_i} + \beta_3 Grantee_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$

where $Grade_{ij}$ is grade for individual i for subject j
j is the subject (Math, Science, and English);
$Grantee = 1$ if SGP-PA/ESGP-PA grantee, 0 otherwise;
X is a vector of socioeconomic and demographic variables;
ε_{ij} is the error term

The dummy for grantees is included in two of the models to capture any differences in academic performances between the two groups (grantees and peers) that are not explained by the entrance exam scores and socioeconomic characteristics. These socioeconomic variables are the following: age at entry into the SUC, gender, civil status, household income, educational attainment of parents, and gap between high school and college.

Results and Analysis

SGP-PA

Most SGP-PA grantees are female, 19.7 years old on average, and have been out of school for two years. Table 3 gives the complete profiles of the grantees and their peers.

As mentioned in the previous section, the selection process was made lenient to accommodate those who have been out of school longer and those that are married. This is reflected in the profile of the grantees vis-à-vis their peers. The grantees have a higher proportion of married students compared to their peers. They are also older, with almost 20 percent of them above the age of 22 as opposed to the peers' 2.5 percent.

Table 3. Profiles of the SGP-PA grantees and their peers

Characteristics	Peers (in %)	Grantees (in %)	Significance
Gender			
Female	53.1	60.42	***
Civil status			
Married	0.73	1.81	
Age at entry			
Average (in years)	17.1	19.7	***
15–18 years old	81.72	27.99	
19–22 years old	15.74	52.34	
23–26 years old	1.79	15.73	
27 years old and above	0.75	3.93	
Father's education			
None	0.34	0.16	
Elementary level or graduate	12.42	53.06	
High school level or graduate	38.57	39.87	
Vocational	1.89	0.16	
College level	19.8	4.87	
College graduate	26.98	1.88	
Mother's education			
None	0.05	0	
Elementary level or graduate	8.94	43.89	
High school level or graduate	38.18	46.52	
Vocational	0	0.31	
College level	17.05	5.56	
College graduate	35.77	3.71	
Type of high school attended			
Public	76.84	91.53	***
Average annual income of household (in PHP)	171965.3	51156.32	***
Per capita	18869.88	4489.132	***
Average household size	5.7	9.3	***
Year graduated from high school			
Before 2008	4.81	13.75	
2008	3.11	7.17	
2009	4.91	11.75	

Table 3. (continued)

Characteristics	Peers (in %)	Grantees (in %)	Significance
2010	13.09	17.13	
2011	8.96	17.13	
2012	65.12	33.07	
Average gap between high school and college (in years)	0.94	2	***

SGP-PA = Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
*** Significant at the 1-percent level
Source: Authors' computation

On average, the grantees have also been out of school longer—twice the time their peers have been out of school. Disaggregation shows that 13.75 percent of the grantees graduated high school before 2008, meaning, they have been out of school for five years or more. Unsurprisingly, most grantees graduated from a public high school.

The grantees' parents have lower educational attainment compared to the peers' parents. For instance, 87 percent of the peers' fathers have had at least some high school education as opposed to only 47 percent of the grantees' fathers, while 91 percent of the peers' mothers have had at least some high school education as opposed to only 56 percent of grantees' mothers. Although the program was intended to cater to poor households that do not have any college graduates, 1.9 percent and 3.7 percent of the grantees' fathers and mothers, respectively, have completed college.

The profile also reflects the economic disadvantage of the grantees compared to their peers. The grantees came from substantially larger households with an average household size of 9.3 while that of the peers' is only 5.7. On average, the annual income of a peer's household is three times that of a grantee's household.

The grantees of the first wave of the program are found to be academically behind their peers upon entry into university or college. The entrance exam scores of grantees are 6.61-percentage points lower than those of the peers, a difference that is significant at 1-percent level. Figure 1 shows the mean scores of both groups and their respective confidence interval.

Figure 1. Entrance exam scores of SGP-PA grantees and their peers
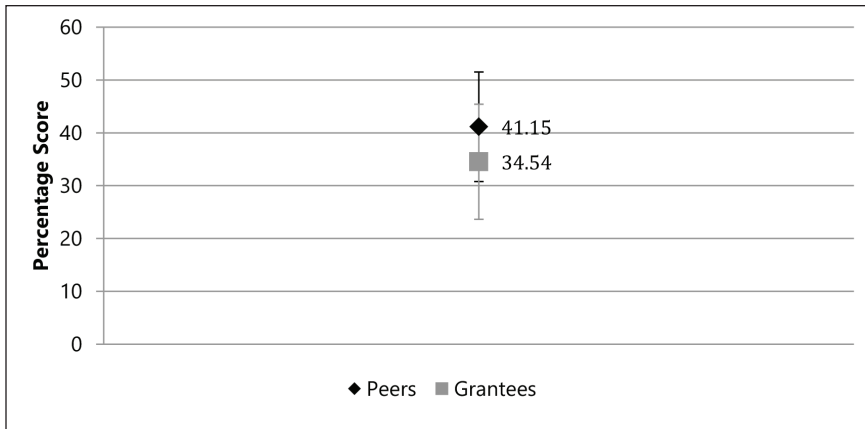
SGP-PA = Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Source: Authors' computation

Despite the fact that grantees are behind their peers initially, they are able to catch up by the first semester of the second year, except in English where a four-point difference remains by the second semester of the second year.[4] Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the difference in means between the two groups for English, Math, and Sciences. The black bars denote that peers are performing better than the grantees and the gray bars denote that the grantees are performing better than the peers. The absence of a bar signifies that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups, implying that both groups are performing equally. Graphs on means and standard deviations are given in Appendix 1.

ESGP-PA

Most ESGP-PA grantees are female entering the university at 18 years old, on average. Table 4 shows the differences in the profiles of grantees and peers, on average.

ESGP-PA grantees are older by half a year, on average, compared to their peers. However, the average time gap between high school and college/university between the two groups are approximately the same. Upon disaggregation, a bigger percentage of the peers compared to the

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[4] Raw grades were collected for grantees and peers, ranging from 50 to 100 with single point increments. Passing grade is 75.

Figure 2. Difference in means between SGP-PA grantees and peers for English and Math
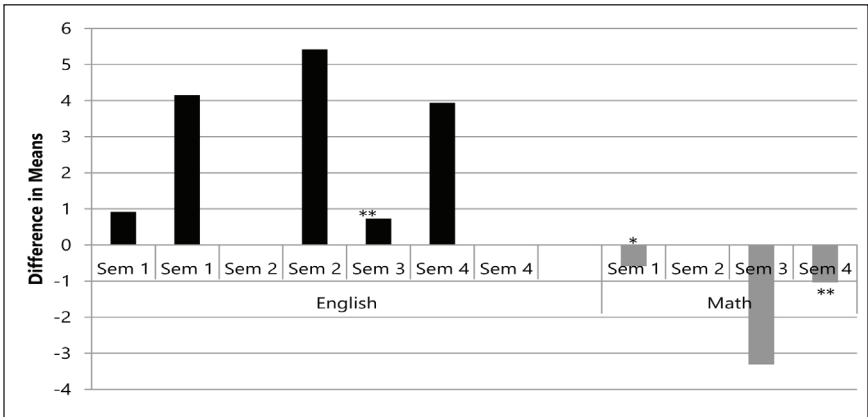
SGP-PA = Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Note: Bars are significant at the 1-percent level, ** at 5 percent, * at 10 percent, and no bar is statistically insignificant.
Source: Authors' computation

Figure 3. Difference in means between SGP-PA grantees and peers for Science

SGP-PA = Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Note: Bars are significant at the 1% level, * at 10%, and no bar is statistically insignificant.
Source: Authors' computation

Table 4. Profiles of the ESGP-PA grantees and their peers

Characteristics	Peers (in %)	Grantees (in %)	Significance
Gender			
Female	58.76	67.46	***
Civil status			
Married	0.64	0.21	*
Age at entry			
Average (in years)	17.6	18.1	***
15–18 years old	77.45	67.9	
19–22 years old	19.02	30.27	
23–26 years old	2.67	1.54	
27 years old and above	0.86	0.29	
Father's education			
None	1.34	0.31	
Elementary level or graduate	25.41	46.3	
High school level or graduate	45.51	44.11	
Vocational	0.9	1.41	
College level	13.22	5.05	
College graduate	13.62	2.81	
Mother's education			
None	0.4	0.1	
Elementary level or graduate	19.11	31.2	
High school level or graduate	50.63	54.83	
Vocational	0.21	0.46	
College level	15.04	8.64	
College graduate	14.61	4.76	
Type of high school attended			
Public	91.58	94.53	***
Average annual income of household (in PHP)	75,672.14	47,622.77	***
Per capita	14,402.99	7,061.443	***
Average household size	6.08	7.2	***
Year graduated from high school			
Before 2010	4.08	1.68	

Table 4. (continued)

Characteristics	Peers (in %)	Grantees (in %)	Significance
2010	3.53	5.5	
2011	4.4	7.22	
2012	9.87	10.17	
2013	22.11	26.98	
2014	56.01	48.45	
Average time gap between high school and college (in years)	1.26	1.269	

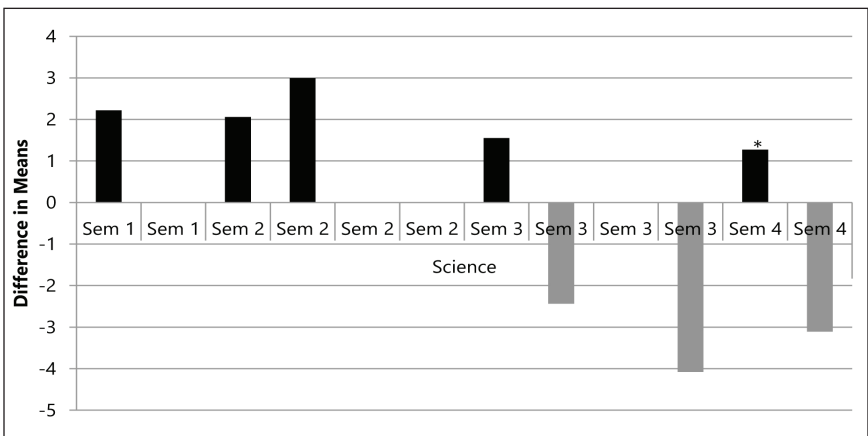ESGP-PA = Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Note: *** Significant at the 1-percent level, * at the 10-percent level
Source: Authors' computation

grantees have graduated high school five or more years ahead before entering university. Changes were made to the program guidelines for the second wave by only allowing potential grantees that were at the most 30 years of age.[5]

The economic disadvantage of the grantees vis-à-vis their peers, as expected, persists. The average annual household income of the peers is 1.6 times higher than that of the grantees', with the per capita income of the grantees' households only half of the peers'. The grantees typically come from a bigger household with 7.2 members, on average, compared to their peers' households that have an average of 6 members.

The peers' parents are more highly educated compared to the grantees' parents, with 73 percent of their fathers and 80 percent of their mothers having had at least some high school education compared to the grantees' 53 percent and 68 percent, respectively. Just like the first wave, a small percentage of the grantees' parents have completed college.

The grantees' disadvantage compared to their peers is mainly economic. Not only do they enter university at around the same age, they also do not have a disadvantage in terms of the length of time they may have been out of school between high school and college. Academically, the grantees compete well with their peers upon entry into the university, even scoring higher in the entrance exams, on average (Figure 4). The

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[5] Age range in the data for ESGP-PA grantees is from 15 to 30.

grantees, on average, scored 4.3-percentage points higher than their peers. This is statistically significant at the 1-percent level.

The academic advantage of the grantees over their peers remains during the first year of studies except for some subjects like Math where the grantees fell behind their peers in the second semester (Figures 5 and 6). Graphs on means and standard deviations can be found in Appendix 2.

Difference between SGP-PA and ESGP-PA grantees

Changes have been made to the selection process beginning the second wave of the program. Table 5 shows how the profiles of the grantees have changed from the first batch (SGP-PA) to the second batch (ESGP-PA).

The changes in the profiles are notable. For the second batch, there is a higher percentage of female grantees and a considerably smaller share of married grantees. The ESG-PA grantees are 1.5 years younger when they enter university compared to their SGP-PA counterparts and have a smaller gap between high school and college. More of the second batch of grantees graduated from public high schools compared to the first batch.

Economically, the second batch is better off than their earlier counterparts in terms of average annual per capita income. They also come from smaller households, with the SGP-PA household having, on average, two more people than the ESGP-PA household.

Figure 4. Entrance exam scores of ESGP-PA grantees and their peers
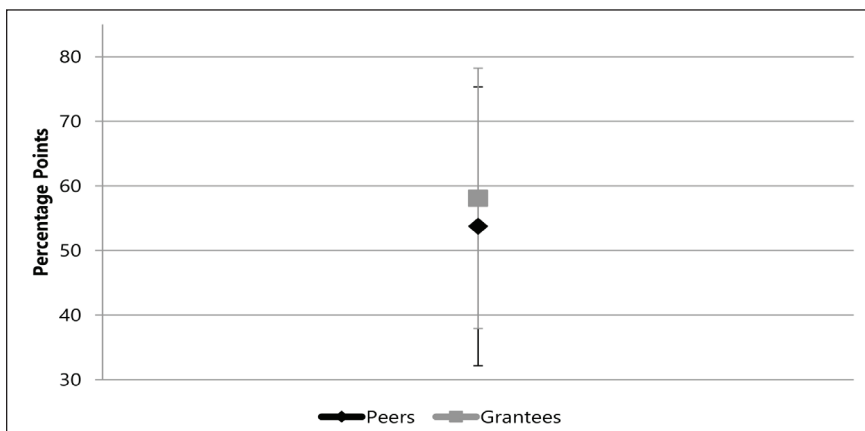
ESGP-PA = Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Source: Authors' computation

Figure 5. Difference in means between ESGP-PA grantees and peers for English and Science
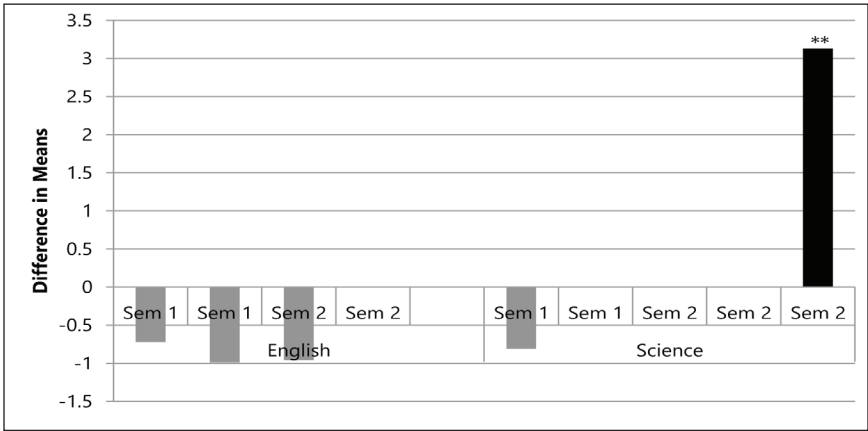
ESGP-PA = Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Note: Bars are significant at the 1-percent level, ** at 5 percent, and no bar is statistically insignificant.
Source: Authors' computation

Figure 6. Difference in means between ESGP-PA grantees and peers for Math
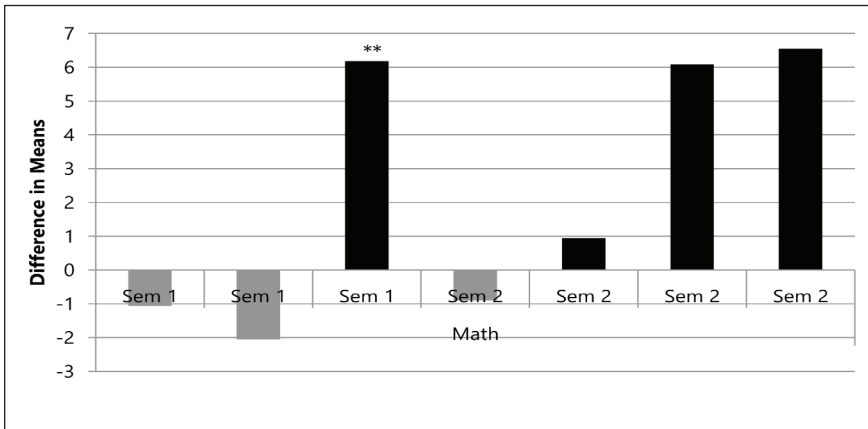
ESGP-PA = Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Note: Bars are significant at the 1-percent level, ** at 5 percent.
Source: Authors' computation

The parents of the ESGP-PA grantees have a higher level of educational attainment with 53 percent of fathers and 68 percent of mothers having at least some high school education, compared to 47 percent and 56 percent, respectively, for the SGP-PA parents.

Table 5. Profiles of SGP-PA and ESGP-PA grantees

| Characteristics	SGP-PA (in %)	ESGP-PA (in %)	Significance
Gender			
Female	60.42	67.46	***
Civil status			
Married	1.81	0.21	***
Age at entry (in years)	19.7	18.1	***
Father's education			
None	0.16	0.31	
Elementary level or graduate	53.06	46.3	
High school level or graduate	39.87	44.11	
Vocational	0.16	1.41	
College level	4.87	5.05	
College graduate	1.88	2.81	
Mother's education			
None	0	0.1	
Elementary level or graduate	43.89	31.2	
High school level or graduate	46.52	54.83	
Vocational	0.31	0.46	
College level	5.56	8.64	
College graduate	3.71	4.76	
Type of high school attended			
Public	91.53	94.53	***
Average annual income of household (in PHP)	51,156.32	47,622.77	*
Per capita	44,89.132	7,061.443	***
Average household size	9.3	7.2	***
Average gap between high school and college (in years)	2	1.3	***

SGP-PA = Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
ESGP-PA = Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Note: *** Significant at the 1% level, * at the 10% level.
Source: Authors' computation

Academically, the second batch appears to compete better academically with their peers compared to the first batch. They have better entrance exam results, scoring 23-percentage points higher, on average, than their SGP-PA counterparts. This is significant at the

1-percent level. In their first year of studies, the ESGP-PA grantees obtained higher marks than their SGP-PA counterparts. The difference decreases during the second semester (Figure 7).

Relative academic performance controlling for entrance exams scores and socioeconomic characteristics

The objective of the program is to increase the number of higher education graduates among poor households and to employ them in high value-added occupations. Critical in the successful completion of the program is academic performance in specific courses. The relative performance of grantees and their peers in banner courses was compared to gauge the likelihood that grantees complete college. The performance of the grantees was compared to that of their peers controlling for entrance exam scores and socioeconomic characteristics. Entrance exam scores indicate the baseline academic preparation when entering university while the socioeconomic characteristics indicate the kind of likely support they can expect from home.

Analyzing the role of entrance exams in academic performance has an independent importance. Administering admission exams is the easiest way of gauging a student's ability and likelihood to complete a

Figure 7. Difference in means of semestral grades between SGP-PA and ESGP-PA grantees
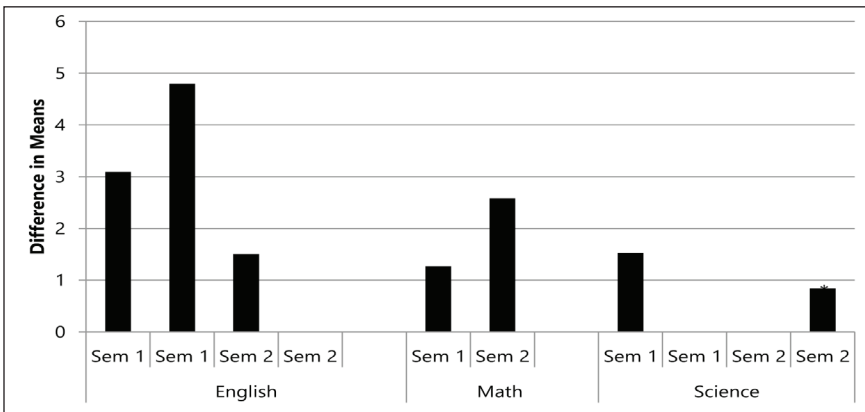
SGP-PA = Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
ESGP-PA = Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation
Note: Bars are significant at the 1-percent level, * at 10 percent, no bar is statistically insignificant.
Source: Authors' computation

degree. For some fields of study, for instance, entrance exams have been found to predict both graduation and the number of study credits taken (Häkkinen 2004).

To assess the relationship between entrance exam scores and academic performance, a regression was run with end-of-year grades (first and second year) for English, Math, and Sciences as dependent variables. The subjects were analyzed separately as different preference and aptitude may factor in the performance for the different subject categories. Four models are constructed as described in the Methodology. Table 6 shows the results for the first year and Table 7 for the second year for Models 2 and 4. Complete results for all models are given in Appendix 3.

The relationship between entrance exam scores and the semestral grades of students is positive for all subjects and statistically significant for most models. In Math, the relationship is consistently strong and statistically significant for both models and for both years. In the first year, every percentage point increase in entrance exam score led to a 0.04–0.06 increase in the end-of-year semestral grade. The impact of entrance exam scores is larger for the second year; semestral grades in Math increase by 0.10–0.13 points for every point increase in the entrance exam scores.

For Sciences, the effect is significant for both models in the first and second years. The magnitude of the impact is considerably higher for the Sciences in the second year, ranging from a 0.07- to 0.37-point increase for every percentage point increase in entrance exam scores.

The significant effect of entrance exam scores in English persists for all models and in both years. The magnitude of the coefficient for the second year is higher than the effects during the student's first year of education, ranging from 0.16 to 0.21 for every percentage point increase of entrance exam score.

Turning on to relative performance of grantees and peers, the regression analyses results reveal no significant difference in the first-year academic performance only for controlled entrance exam scores. However, when the other socioeconomic characteristics were also controlled, there is a significantly poorer performance for grantees compared to their peers. The performance in the second year, however, tells a completely different story. While no significant difference is still found when controlling for entrance exam scores only, the grantees are shown to perform better in Sciences and English when other socioeconomic characteristics are controlled for. There is no significant

Table 6. OLS results for first year academic achievement

Dependent Variable	Math				Science				English			
	Model 2		Model 4		Model 2		Model 4		Model 2		Model 4	
Independent variables	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.04 ***	0.02	0.06 ***	0.01	0.06 ***	0.00	0.10 ***	0.01	0.05 ***	0.00	0.04 ***	0.01
Grantee	0.22	0.17	-0.78 **	0.33	-0.24	0.21	-0.86 **	0.37	-0.16	0.16	-0.72 **	0.28
Age			0.11	0.08			0.42 ***	0.10			-0.24 ***	0.07
Log of HH income			0.34 **	0.18			1.07 ***	0.22			0.46 ***	0.15
Married			-0.70	2.12			2.25	2.43			0.28	1.94
Female			0.40	0.34			0.86 **	0.40			1.58 ***	0.29
Father had at least some high school			0.06	0.35			0.33	0.37			0.67 **	0.30
Mother had at least some high school			0.37	0.38			0.49 *	0.41			0.39	0.32
Gap between high school and college			-0.10	0.10			-0.36 ***	0.12			0.16 *	0.09
SUC			-0.49 ***	0.14			0.73 ***	0.14			0.36 ***	0.11
Program wave	0.37 *	0.22	2.32 ***	0.39	-2.84 ***	0.39	-2.43 ***	0.46	-0.95 ***	0.22	-1.03 ***	0.36
Constant	80.41 ***	0.43	73.66 ***	2.90	86.11 ***	0.78	61.94 ***	3.43	84.64 ***	0.41	82.24 ***	2.48
No. of observations	3519		1028		2581		635		4069		384	
Adj. R-squared	0.0273		0.0901		0.0621		0.2202		0.0365		0.213	

OLS = ordinary least squares; HH = household; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

Table 7. OLS results for second year academic achievement

Dependent Variable	Math				Science				English			
	Model 2		Model 4		Model 2		Model 4		Model 2		Model 4	
Independent Variables	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.10 ***	0.02	0.13 ***	0.04	0.07 *	0.04	0.37 ***	0.09	0.16 **	0.1	0.21 ***	0.07
Grantee	0.78	0.52	0.57	0.79	0.24	1.10	5.72 **	2.45	1.58	1.3	3.75 **	1.59
Age			0.29 **	0.12			0.05	0.23			-0.18	0.22
Log of HH income			-0.67 **	0.41			-0.47	0.59			-0.47	0.46
Married			-1.94	4.50			0.00	(omitted)			2.39	3.09
Female			0.76	0.60			-0.33	0.88			2.45 ***	0.80
Father had at least some high school			-0.44	0.70			-0.94	1.22			0.62	1.09
Mother had at least some high school			-0.90	0.70			0.39	1.27			0.38	1.10
Gap between high school and college			-0.11	0.16			0.02	0.31			-0.26	0.28
SUC			0.00	(omitted)			0.00	(omitted)			0.00	(omitted)
Constant	80.41 ***	0.40	78.12 ***	5.03	80.59 ***	1.90	67.50 ***	9.11	79.90 ***	3.2	82.90 ***	7.31
No. of observations	335		184		116		63		129		120	
Adj. R-squared	0.079		0.1547		0.0174		0.1904		0.0443		0.1428	

OLS = ordinary least squares; HH = household; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

difference for Math. It appears that while the grantees did not perform as well during the first year, they are able to overcome whatever deficiency they have in the second year and even surpassed the average performance of their peers in Sciences and English and perform at par in the case of Math. The results imply that poor socioeconomic status and entrance exams only affect the grantees' performance in the first year but these are no longer a disadvantage in their second year.

Experience of SUCs in Implementing the Program

The SUCs were asked to document any implementation or programmatic issues they encountered during the first and second waves of the program, including any interventions implemented. The documentation served to identify bottlenecks in the implementation and recognize strength and weaknesses in program design.

Programmatic and implementation issues
Below are some of the recurring issues brought up by the SUCs in terms of bottlenecks and programmatic and implementation issues:

1. Compromising university regulations to accommodate the grantees
    SUCs found that some university regulations had to be relaxed in order to take in or use up the slots allocated to them. CHED Memorandum Order No. 9, series of 2012, which contains the guidelines used in the pilot stage, states that SUCs are to "administer admission examination or other appropriate admission requirements in line with the objectives of the DAP". However, SUCs have had to waive entrance exams or lower the passing score for the entrance exams to allow more potential grantees to qualify. The guidelines have been relaxed for the ESGP-PA with section 8.4.3 of the Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2014-1 stating that SUCs must "administer flexible admission policies at no cost to students".

    For the second batch, late provision of the list of grantees made it difficult for the SUCs to stick to their admission policies.
2. Lack of manpower for program management and capacity to handle additional problems

Some SUCs noted that the allocation of the total grant for administrative expenses (3%) is often insufficient to hire extra or specialized staff to deal with the special needs of the grantees. Such needs range from academic support to individualized counseling. Some SUCs have encountered behavioral problems with the grantees, which they are not equipped or trained to handle. For most SUCs, no guidance counselors are especially assigned to the grantees. The SUCs stressed that SGP-PA cases are unique and require special attention and training for the counselors to handle.

3. Academic difficulties experienced by grantees

   Most SUCs signified the need for a bridging program for the grantees—prior to the school start and in-between terms—to help them cope academically. This was particularly true for the first batch of grantees. As can be seen from the SGP-PA profile, majority of the grantees have been out of school for years and would need refresher courses even for basic learning techniques.

4. Health concerns of the grantees

   Medical and laboratory tests are typically part of the admission requirements of the SUCs. This requirement had to be waived by some schools as this would entail grantees incurring out-of-pocket expenses, which they cannot afford. Some SUCs noted that some of their grantees had undiagnosed illnesses, which manifested only later during the term. Those who required medical attention and hospitalization often sought help from the SUC (usually from the program coordinator) to settle any medical bills. Some of the grantees were found to be suffering from tuberculosis (TB) and worms. Those who had TB were allowed to go home to avail of the free TB-Directly Observed Treatment, Short-Course program at their rural health units, which then meant they had to be excused from classes for at least another month.

5. Budget allocation for out-of-term scholastic activities

   The SUCs remarked that there is no budget allocation for summer courses, on-the-job trainings, national competency exams, field trips, and thesis completion. All of these activities, some of which are conducted outside of ordinary term time, are necessary for the students to complete their degrees. Summer

courses are often required between the third and fourth year of studies. Furthermore, the grant allocation only covers four years of education. Those who take up five-year courses (e.g., engineering which is one of the priority courses the grantees can choose) will have to shoulder the expenses in the fifth year. Another issue that occasionally arises is when a grantee drops out and has to be replaced. The replacement can only use the unspent allocation of the original grantee. This means the SUC must find a replacement who is at the same year level as the original grantee; otherwise, the replacement will have to pay the fees for the years beyond the unspent allocation.

Implemented interventions

What follows are the interventions done by SUCs in response to specific issues they encountered while implementing the program. These are done to help grantees cope with life in the university.

1. Academic services

   SUCs provided additional academic services for grantees to help them cope with their lessons, especially in Sciences and Math. The JMC for the second wave includes the provision of remedial and mentoring programs in the list of responsibilities of the SUCs. This was already implemented by some SUCs in the first wave. Bridging programs for those who scored poorly in the entrance exams, remedial and tutorial classes, review classes for those undergoing removal exams, and peer mentoring were among the academic services they provided.

2. Social services

   The most recurrent behavioral problems encountered by SUCs are tardiness, absenteeism, and violation of dorm and school policies. Counseling is offered to address these problems. Counseling and monitoring are also done for problems related to bullying. The SUCs, usually in collaboration with DSWD field offices, conduct personality development activities and other social activities to help the grantees adjust to university life. Some SUCs also conduct financial literacy seminars to help the grantees properly manage their stipend.

3. Basic necessities

   Most grantees come from areas far from the SUC where they enroll; at times, they come from other provinces. SUCs help the grantees find accommodation, such as dormitories or accredited boarding houses. For SUCs that have dormitories, there are usually not enough slots to accommodate all the grantees. SUCs often have to stand in as guarantors in order for the grantees to pay the advance payment and/or deposit to secure a room in a boarding house. Some SUCs also have food provisions for the grantees through the school canteen. In this case, the grantees have prepared meals three times a day and 30 days a month during school term, and the cost of the meals is directly taken out of their stipend.

4. Health services

   Provision of financial assistance for grantees who have fallen ill or gotten into accidents varies from one SUC to another. Some SUCs have resorted to "passing the hat", with faculty and other students contributing at times. Other SUCs have offered medical coverage through their school insurance.

Program Dropouts: Analysis of Select Cases

Data for dropouts are only available for three SGP-PA SUCs. Grantees who drop out are referred to the DSWD for case management before their grant is terminated. The failure rate of the program is determined by the number of grantees who did not complete their degrees. The reasons for dropping out can be found in Figure 8.

The most commonly cited reasons for dropping out were academic difficulties, pregnancy, and disinterest in pursuing further education. Twenty-one percent of the dropouts from the three SUCs also cited personal decision. This needs further research to ascertain what it means.

Another often-cited reason was financial difficulties. Due to some birthing pains at the start of the program, there was a delay in the release of funds to the SUCs. Grantees had to wait for their stipend and had to resort to using their own money or borrowing from other people. The said delay, however, has been resolved in the second wave and the grant already covers the full cost of education.

Around 39 percent of those who dropped out can be attributed to the grantees being unprepared for tertiary education (preference to work, uninterested, terminated, and academic difficulties). This figure might be higher if the "personal decision" is decomposed.

Other reasons given for dropping out were pregnancy, health issues, and familial obligations. There are aspects of the program that go beyond the academic realm. The cultural change experienced by the grantees from being relocated to a more urbanized setting than what they have been accustomed to is a legitimate issue in the universities that were visited. These are issues to consider when designing interventions for the program.

Summary and Recommendations

The results of the initial assessment of the SGP-PA and ESGP-PA demonstrate the merit of providing tertiary financing support to students from poor households. While graduation and employment are still a few years down the road, the assessment shows that the grantees perform at par with their peers starting the second year. Their generally poorer first-year performance compared to their peers is primarily because of

Figure 8. Reasons cited for dropping out
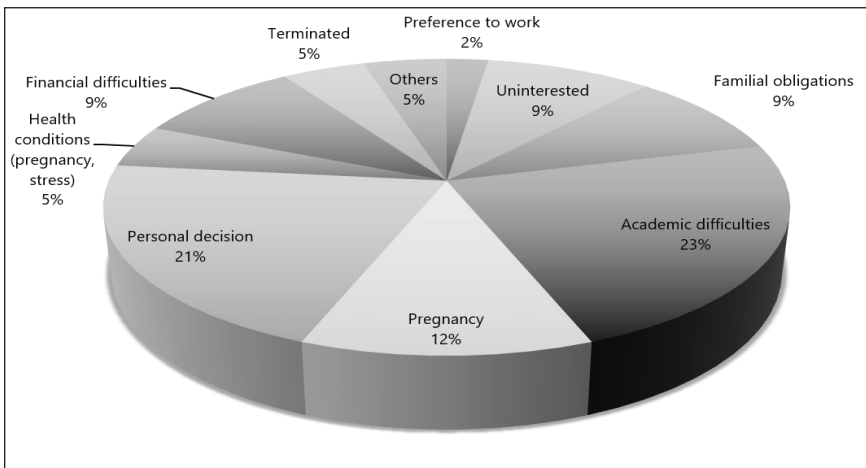
Note: N=43
Source: Authors' compilation

their poor academic and socioeconomic backgrounds. This difference, however, is no longer apparent in the second year as grantees are already performing at par with their peers.

There are implementation issues that have been identified. These issues need to be addressed to improve the performance of the program. The following courses of actions are recommended as ways forward:

1. Enforcement of entrance exams
   The relationship between entrance exam scores and academic performance has been established in the literature and in this study. Given the thrust of the program, it is important that the grantees have a relatively high likelihood of completing their degrees. Enforcing admission exams is one way of achieving this objective. Conducting the admission exams will also serve as a good baseline for the monitoring of the grantees' progress. The regression analysis shows a strong correlation between entrance exams scores and academic performance in core subjects, which underscores the importance of entrance exams scores to predict the grantees' future performance.

2. Importance of data keeping
   Monitoring the grantees' progress and comparing their performance to that of their peers over time are essential when assessing the efficacy of the program. Good data are needed in monitoring and evaluation. Creating a database and regularly updating it can facilitate faster and more reliable evaluation process. It will also allow the SUCs to track both the grantees and their regular students and design necessary interventions when and where needed.

3. Designing the selection process and interventions for the program
   The failure rate of the program is determined by the number of dropouts. There is a need to probe deeper into the reasons for dropping out. The data collected from the three SUCs indicate that at least 39 percent of the dropouts were unprepared for tertiary education, 11 percent of which were uninterested or preferred to work. This has an important implication on the selection process. It reiterates the need to identify those who are actually willing to undertake tertiary education. Other reasons given for dropping out include pregnancy, health issues, and

familial obligations. There are other aspects of the program that go beyond the academic realm, such as the cultural change experienced by the grantees from being relocated to a more urbanized setting. These are issues to consider when designing interventions for the program.

4. Cooperation with other government agencies

   A recurring problem brought up by SUCs is the health concerns of the grantees during term time, especially when they are hospitalized. Being members of a 4Ps household, the grantees should be covered by the national health insurance, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). However, some grantees are not even aware of PhilHealth and the coverage they are entitled to. It is important that they are made aware of the program and that they have a membership card to avail of the benefits without having to submit additional documentation requirements from the principal member. Guidelines on membership need to be clarified by PhilHealth, especially for grantees that are over the age of 21 and no longer qualify as dependents.

   The implementing SUCs also need to partner with the Commission on Audit (COA) to set guidelines and properly advise them on how the grant can be utilized more efficiently. For instance, for most SUCs, the tuition is below the allocated PHP 10,000. SUCs usually must return the unspent budget; they cannot use it for other school-related expenses necessary for the student to complete their degrees. As mentioned earlier, students incur additional expenses that are not covered by the grant. The savings from tuition can be used for other expenses if these can be allowed by the rules of the program and authorized by COA.

5. Grantees need additional academic support

   SUCs have noted that grantees, especially from the first batch, need academic support outside of regular scheduled classes. The grantees could benefit from attending a bridging program before school starts to prepare them psychologically and emotionally and help them catch up on basic theories and learning techniques. Tutorials are also recommended. These can be in the form of a "buddy system" between senior

students and grantees within the same degree program. These academic support systems need to be integrated into the program design to ensure that all SUCs involved can provide them to the grantees.

6. Continued monitoring of performance and tracer study
Although this study reveals telling results of the program's first and second year of implementation, there is a need for continuous monitoring and assessment of the grantees' performance in their junior and senior years relative to their peers, including graduation rates. The completion of the program is the intermediate objective and an important milestone of the program. Finally, a tracer study on the grantees' performance in the labor market would complete the story of the program's impact.

Appendixes

Appendix 1. Semestral grades of SGP-PA grantees and peers
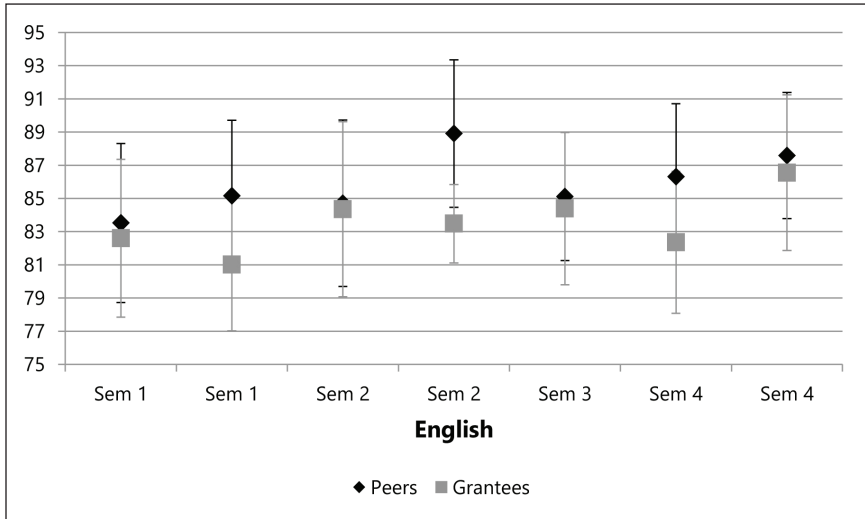
Figure 1. Means and deviation for English

Source: Authors' computation

Figure 2. Means and deviation for Math

Source: Authors' computation

Figure 3. Means and deviation for Science
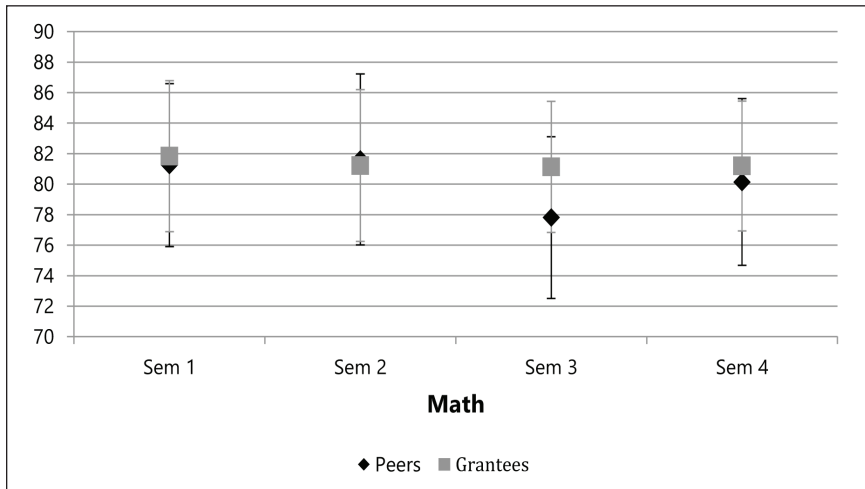

Source: Authors' computation

Appendix 2. Semestral grades of ESGPA-PA grantees and peers

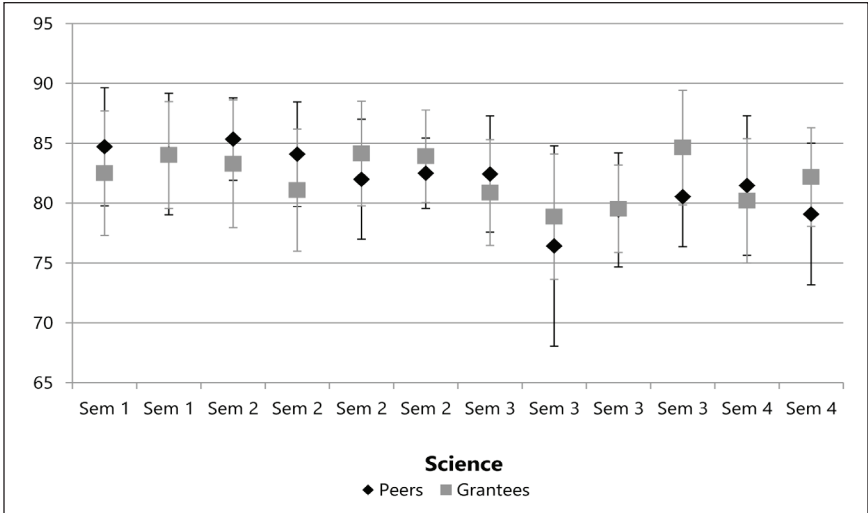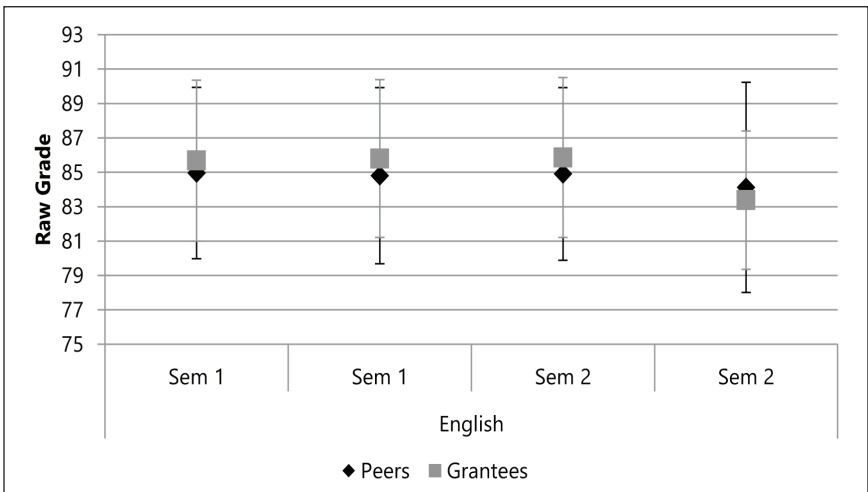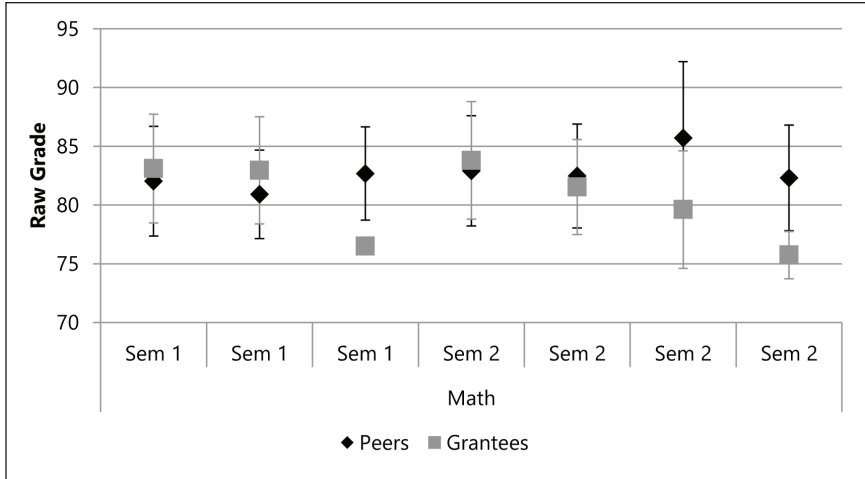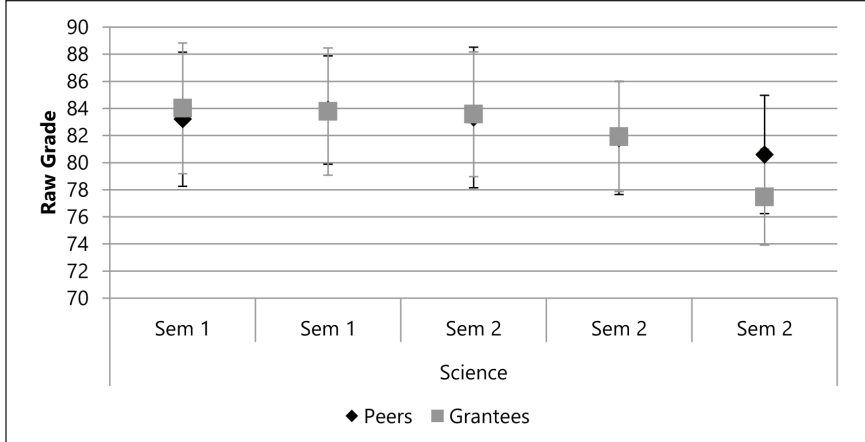**Figure 1. Means and deviation for English**

Source: Authors' computation

Figure 2. Means and deviation for Math

Source: Authors' computation

Figure 3. Means and deviation for Science

Source: Authors' computation

Appendix 3. Ordinary least squares results for all models

Table 1. Ordinary least squares results in Math for the first year

Dependent Variable: Math	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.04 ***	0.00	0.04 ***	0.02	0.07 ***	0.01	0.06 ***	0.01
Grantee			0.22	0.17			-0.78 **	0.33
Age					0.03	0.07	0.11	0.08
Log of HH income					0.36 **	0.18	0.34 **	0.18
Married					-0.29	2.16	-0.70	2.12
Female					0.47	0.34	0.40	0.34
Father had at least some HS					0.17	0.35	0.06	0.35
Mother had at least some HS					0.69 *	0.38	0.37	0.38
Gap between HS and college					-0.10	0.10	-0.10	0.10
SUC							-0.49 ***	0.14
Program wave			0.37 *	0.22			2.32 ***	0.39
Constant	81.08 ***	0.22	80.41 ***	0.43	75.47 ***	2.69	73.66 ***	2.90
No. of observations	3519		3519		1028		1028	
Adj. R-squared	0.0269		0.0273		0.0551		0.0901	

HH = household; HS = high school; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

Table 2. Ordinary least squares results in Science for the first year

Dependent Variable: Science	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.05 ***	0.00	0.06 ***	0.00	0.10 ***	0.01	0.10 ***	0.01
Grantee			-0.24	0.21			-0.86 **	0.37
Age					0.51 ***	0.10	0.42 ***	0.10
Log of HH income					1.24 ***	0.22	1.07 ***	0.22
Married					3.44	2.47	2.25	2.43
Female					1.09 ***	0.41	0.86 **	0.40
Father had at least some HS					0.35	0.37	0.33	0.37
Mother had at least some HS					0.29	0.42	0.49 *	0.41
Gap between HS and college					-0.40 ***	0.12	-0.36 ***	0.12
SUC					0.52 ***	0.14	0.73 ***	0.14
Program wave			-2.84 ***	0.39			-2.43 ***	0.46
Constant	80.83 ***	0.26	86.11 ***	0.78	54.64 ***	3.21	61.94 ***	3.43
No. of observations	2581		2581		635		635	
Adj. R-squared	0.0436		0.0621		0.1836		0.2202	

HH = household; HS = high school; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

Table 3. Ordinary least squares results in English for the first year

Dependent Variable: English	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.04 ***	0.00	0.05 ***	0.00	0.03 ***	0.01	0.04 ***	0.01
Grantee			-0.16	0.16			-0.72 **	0.28
Age					-0.18 ***	0.07	-0.24 ***	0.07
Log of HH income					0.55 ***	0.15	0.46 ***	0.15
Married					0.71	1.94	0.28	1.94
Female					1.58 ***	0.29	1.58 ***	0.29
Father had at least some HS					0.78 ***	0.30	0.67 **	0.30
Mother had at least some HS					0.40	0.32	0.39	0.32
Gap between HS and college					0.11	0.09	0.16 *	0.09
SUC					0.22 **	0.10	0.36 ***	0.11
Program wave			-0.95 ***	0.22			-1.03 ***	0.36
Constant	83.09 ***	0.21	84.64 ***	0.41	78.62 ***	2.33	82.25 ***	2.48
No. of observations	4069		4069		1158		384	
Adj. R-squared	0.0325		0.0365		0.0938		0.213	

HH = household; HS = high school; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

Table 4. Ordinary least squares results in Math for the second year

Dependent Variable: Math	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.09 ***	0.02	0.10 ***	0.02	0.12 ***	0.04	0.13 ***	0.04
Grantee			0.78	0.52			0.57	0.79
Age					0.29 **	0.12	0.29 **	0.12
Log of HH income					-0.69 *	0.41	-0.67 **	0.41
Married					-2.91	4.29	-1.94	4.50
Female					0.76	0.60	0.76	0.60
Father had at least some HS					-0.46	0.70	-0.44	0.70
Mother had at least some HS					-0.94	0.70	-0.90	0.70
Gap between HS and college					-0.07	0.15	-0.11	0.16
SUC					0.00	(omitted)	0.00	(omitted)
Constant	77.94 ***	0.68	77.10 ***	0.88	79.07 ***	4.85	78.12 ***	5.03
No. of observations	335		335		184		184	
Adj. R-squared	0.0755		0.079		0.0628		0.1547	

HH = household; HS = high school; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

Table 5. Ordinary least squares results in Science for the second year

Dependent Variable: Science	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.06 **	0.03	0.07 *	0.04	0.21 ***	0.06	0.37 ***	0.09
Grantee			0.24	1.09			5.72 **	2.45
Age					0.08	0.24	0.05	0.23
Log of HH income					-0.67	0.61	-0.47	0.59
Married					0.00	(omitted)	0.00	(omitted)
Female					-0.33	0.92	-0.33	0.88
Father had at least some HS					-0.86	1.27	-0.94	1.22
Mother had at least some HS					-0.48	1.26	0.39	1.27
Gap between HS and college					0.23	0.31	0.02	0.31
SUC					0.00	(omitted)	0.00	(omitted)
Constant	80.91 ***	1.39	80.59 ***	1.98	78.98 ***	7.98	67.50 ***	9.11
No. of observations	116		116		63		63	
Adj. R-squared	0.0256		0.0174		0.1247		0.1904	

HH = household; HS = high school; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

Table 6. Ordinary least squares results in English for the second year

Dependent Variable: English	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Entrance exam score	0.25 ***	0.04	0.17 ***	0.04	0.26 ***	0.09	0.12	0.10
Grantee			-5.35 ***	0.81			-5.15 ***	1.84
Age					-0.15	0.31	0.08	0.31
Log of HH income					0.16	0.58	-0.20	0.56
Married					4.25	3.19	5.28 *	3.04
Female					3.05 *	1.53	1.70	1.53
Father had at least some HS					0.86	1.36	0.04	1.32
Mother had at least some HS					0.10	1.32	-0.88	1.30
Gap between HS and college					-0.93 **	0.38	-0.78 **	0.36
SUC					0.00	(omitted)	0.00	(omitted)
Constant	75.60 ***	1.86	81.85 ***	1.79	73.51 ***	9.10	83.73 ***	9.34
No. of observations	87		87		65		65	

HH = household; HS = high school; SUC = state university and college
Note: Significant at the *10-percent, **5-percent, and ***1-percent levels
Source: Authors' computation

Appendix 4. The SUC research teams

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	Ms. May Ann P. Cabatic
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Making higher education more accessible for the poor serves the equity objective. Until today, the main policy tool to achieve this objective is funding public higher education institutions. This paper assesses a new initiative of the Philippine government called the Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (SGP-PA) implemented starting 2012. SGP-PA has two important unique features: (1) it is well targeted to identified *Pantawid Pamilya* households and (2) it provides a grant amount that is sufficient to cover all regular education expenses including living allowance.

Comparing the academic performance of grantees to that of their peers, the results show that grantees from poorer socioeconomic background had only poorer grades during the first year. They were already performing at par in Math and even better in Science and English, compared to nongrantees, starting their second year. The study also highlights the importance of entrance exam scores in the academic performance of both grantees and nongrantees. Finally, the study documents the challenges faced by the program and provides recommendations on how to address these challenges.