

Research Article

The Social Amelioration Program (SAP) Effects on the Academic Performance of Business Administration Students of Universidad de Manila

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ABSTRACT

The Social Amelioration Program (SAP) of the City of Manila was implemented as a response to the economic distress brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It aimed to provide financial assistance to low-income families, including students, to alleviate the economic burden and ensure continuity in education. This study explores the effects of SAP on the academic performance of the College of Business Administration (CBA) students of Universidad de Manila. Moreover, this research investigates whether the financial aid provided by SAP has contributed to the students' requirements to regular attendance, and enhance learning engagement. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from student surveys with qualitative insights from interviews with beneficiaries. The quantitative aspect evaluates changes in students' grades, attendance records, and financial stress levels before and after receiving SAP. The qualitative segment focuses on students' perceptions regarding the sufficiency and accessibility of the financial aid, as well as the ability to allocate the resources effectively for educational expenses. Preliminary findings suggest that SAP has played a crucial role in alleviating financial stress among Business Administration students. The aid enabled students to afford essential academic resources such as internet connectivity, books, and school supplies, which contributed to their overall academic performance. Additionally, the program has indirectly improved mental well-being by reducing anxiety related to financial constraints, thereby allowing students to focus more on their studies. However, challenges remain in the disbursement process, with some students reporting delays in receiving funds or issues regarding eligibility criteria. Despite its positive impact, the study highlights that SAP alone may not be sufficient to fully address the academic challenges faced by students in business administration programs. Other socio-economic factors, including family responsibilities and employment obligations, continue to affect students' academic outcomes. The findings suggest that while SAP serves as a critical short-term intervention, long-term solutions such as sustainable scholarship programs and employment opportunities for students should be explored to ensure consistent academic success. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on student welfare policies and economic assistance programs in Manila. It emphasizes the importance of government support in higher education and the need for efficient, transparent, and sustainable financial aid systems. Future research may expand on comparative analyses between SAP recipients and non-recipients to further validate its impact on student academic performance.

Keywords: Social Amelioration Program (SAP), Academic Performance, Financial Assistance, COVID-19 Pandemic, Business Administration Students, Universidad de Manila, Student Welfare, Mixed-Methods Research, Educational Aid, Financial Stress, Learning Engagement, Government Support, Higher Education, Scholarship Programs, Socio-economic Factors

1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a cornerstone for personal growth, societal development, and national progress. In the Philippines, where economic inequality remains a pressing issue, government initiatives aimed at reducing the financial burden on students have become essential. One such initiative is the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) of the City of Manila. Designed to provide financial assistance and social support to marginalized and low-income families, the program gained significant attention during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was during this period that the challenges of distance learning, digital access, and economic hardship exposed the vulnerabilities of students, particularly those enrolled in public institutions such as the Universidad de Manila (UDM).

The Universidad de Manila, a city-funded institution offering free tertiary education, has a large population of students from low-income families. Many of these students, especially those in the Business Administration program, face daily struggles

balancing academic responsibilities with financial realities. The City of Manila's SAP was implemented to provide temporary relief to residents affected by economic disruptions. Initially aimed at helping families cope with pandemic-related losses, its continued distribution of financial support—whether through cash aid, food packs, or tuition subsidies—has become a lifeline for many students. This support is presumed to have various effects on students' well-being, academic motivation, and performance.

This study seeks to explore the extent to which the Social Amelioration Program influences the academic performance of Business Administration students at Universidad de Manila. While financial support is generally assumed to have positive effects on student performance, there remains a gap in understanding how this specific local government initiative affects academic outcomes in a sustained and measurable way. It is crucial to determine whether SAP directly contributes to improved grades, reduced dropout rates, or better classroom engagement—or if the effect is negligible due to other overriding factors such as family responsibilities, mental health issues, or lack of academic preparedness.

The rationale behind this study is grounded in the need for evidence-based assessments of government assistance programs. By focusing on Business Administration students, the research narrows its scope to a specific and significant segment of UDM's population. These students are often expected to be future entrepreneurs, public administrators, or corporate professionals. Their educational success—or lack thereof—could directly influence the city's long-term economic landscape. Therefore, understanding how well SAP supports their academic journey could inform future policy decisions, not only within Manila but also in other urban centers implementing similar programs.

Moreover, this study contributes to the broader discourse on social welfare and education. With many countries grappling with the long-term effects of the pandemic on their educational systems, localized studies like this can provide insight into the real-world effectiveness of social amelioration efforts. If financial support programs such as SAP are shown to significantly improve academic outcomes, local governments may be encouraged to invest further in student-centered welfare programs.

The objectives of the study are threefold: first, to assess the perception of the Social Amelioration Program among Business Administration students at UDM; second, to determine the Effect of SAP on students Academic Performance and third, to identify possible suggestions and comments from students in relation to the program.

To achieve these goals, the research will employ a mix method of quantitative and qualitative method wherein data will be gathered through surveys and interviews. This will allow the study to capture not only measurable outcomes but also the live experiences and personal narratives of the student beneficiaries.

In conclusion, the study on the "Social Amelioration Program of the City of Manila and its Effect on the Academic Performance of Business Administration Students of Universidad de Manila" is both timely and relevant. It aims to bridge the gap between social policy and educational outcomes by analyzing the real-world impact of local government aid. Through this research, stakeholders—from city officials to academic administrators—can gain valuable insights into how best to support the academic journey of students who rely on public assistance, ensuring that no student is left behind in the pursuit of higher education.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of the study, the participants of the study, the instruments used in the study and justifications for their use, the procedures followed and the timeline for each stage of the study, how the data was analyzed, and ethical considerations of the research as well as its issues and limitations are all covered in this chapter.

Research Design. This study employs a mix method of qualitative and quantitative approach, combining data from student surveys with insights from interviews with beneficiaries. This will allow the study to capture not only measurable outcomes but also the live experiences and personal narratives of the student beneficiaries.

Sample and Sampling Techniques. This study was conducted in the College of Business Administration of Universidad de Manila during the 2nd Semester School Year 2024-2025. The respondents of this study are selected Business Administration students of UDM who are the beneficiaries of the Special Amelioration Program of the City of Manila currently. Purposive sampling was used wherein 15 students were selected to represent the sample size.

Data Gathering Procedure. The researchers utilized survey questionnaires and conducted interviews among selected students in order to gather information needed in the study. Twenty students from the College of Business Administration were given a survey form and several students were interviewed to gather additional information.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers present and analyze the results derived from the research conducted in the previous chapter of this study. This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the results obtained through survey followed by a critical discussion that contextualizes these results within the existing body of literature.

Table 1: Perception of the Respondents to the Social Amelioration Program

Item No.	Statement	Mean
1	The SAP of Manila is accessible to students and their families	4.53
2	The financial aid provided by the SAP is sufficient for our household needs	2.73
3	I am aware of the eligibility requirements for SAP	4.73
4	The distribution of SAP funds is fair and transparent	4.13
5	The SAP helps reduce the financial stress in the family	3.9

The results presented in Table 1 show the mean responses of the participants regarding their perceptions of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) in Manila. The highest mean score of 4.73 was recorded for the statement, "I am aware of the eligibility requirements for SAP," indicating that the respondents are well-informed about the program's qualifications. This is followed by a mean of 4.53 for the statement, "The SAP of Manila is accessible to students and their families," suggesting that the program is generally accessible to its intended beneficiaries. Moreover, the statement, "The distribution of SAP funds is fair and transparent," obtained a mean of 4.13, reflecting a favorable view of the program's implementation and trust in its processes.

Meanwhile, the statement, "The SAP helps reduce the financial stress in the family," had a mean of 3.93, showing that most respondents agree with its positive impact, though not as strongly as with other aspects. Notably, the lowest mean of 2.73 was recorded for the statement, "The financial aid provided by the SAP is sufficient for our household needs." This indicates that while the financial assistance is appreciated, it is perceived as inadequate in fully meeting the economic demands of beneficiary families. Overall, the data reveals that although students have a high level of awareness and accessibility to SAP and generally view the program positively, concerns remain about the sufficiency of the aid provided.

Table 2: Effect of SAP on Academic Performance

Item No.	Statement	Mean
1	The SAP has helped me afford school-related expenses	4.40
2	Because of SAP, I can focus better on my studies without financial worries	3.60
3	The SAP has allowed me to attend school more regularly	4.13
4	My academic performance has improved due to the support provided by SAP	4.53
5	I feel motivated to perform well in school because of the financial assistance	4.47

The data on Table 2, shows that the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) has had a strong positive effect on students' academic performance, as reflected in the mean ratings of their responses. The highest mean score is 4.53 for the statement "My academic performance has improved due to the support provided by SAP." This indicates that most respondents strongly agreed that the financial assistance directly contributed to their academic success, likely by easing their financial burdens and allowing them to concentrate on their studies.

Closely following this is a mean score of 4.47 for the statement "I feel motivated to perform well in school because of the financial assistance." This suggests that SAP not only supported students financially but also served as a source of motivation, pushing them to do better academically to maintain eligibility or as a form of gratitude for the support received.

The statement "The SAP has helped me afford school-related expenses" received a mean of 4.40, showing that the program successfully addressed the practical needs of students by making school expenses more manageable. This financial help played a crucial role in reducing stress and enabling students to sustain their education.

Furthermore, the statement "The SAP has allowed me to attend school more regularly" had a mean of 4.13, indicating that students experienced increased class attendance as a result of SAP. This could mean fewer absences due to lack of funds for transportation, materials, or other school-related costs.

Lastly, the statement with the lowest mean of 3.60, "Because of SAP, I can focus better on my studies without financial worries," still reflects a generally positive agreement, although with more variation among responses. While many felt the SAP helped them focus, some may still face other financial challenges beyond what SAP can cover.

Overall, the results affirm that SAP has a significant and positive impact on students' academic experiences—improving performance, motivation, attendance, and the ability to afford education.

Suggestions and Comments from the Respondents

Qualitative Feedback on SAP and its Effect on Academic Performance

The feedback gathered from students about the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) revealed a mixture of appreciation and concern. While many students were grateful for the support they received, others pointed out areas where the program could still improve.

Positive Effects. Many students shared that the SAP served as a much-needed source of financial support. It eased their day-to-day worries about how to afford school-related expenses like tuition, internet, and books. With these basic needs addressed,

they found it easier to focus on their studies, knowing they didn't have to stress about where the next peso would come from.

Several students also mentioned how the SAP reduced financial pressure not just on themselves, but on their families. For some, it meant they didn't have to ask their parents for money as often—a small but meaningful relief for households already struggling with daily expenses. Because of the financial aid, they were able to stay motivated in class, maintain good grades, and meet the eligibility requirements needed to continue receiving support.

Most importantly, many students said that SAP helped them stay on track academically. Whether it was being able to attend school more regularly or simply having peace of mind, the assistance played a key role in helping them stay focused and committed to their education.

Challenges Encountered. Despite these benefits, some students expressed that the amount of aid wasn't always enough to meet all their needs. While they were thankful, they felt that the support could be more substantial, especially with the rising costs of education and living.

Another common concern was the delayed release of funds. Several students emphasized how important it is for the aid to arrive on time, especially when deadlines for school expenses are approaching. When the release is late, the stress returns—and with it, distractions from their studies.

Some students also pointed out that the distribution process could be improved. They described it as disorganized, time-consuming, and even confusing at times. To make things easier, they suggested depositing the funds directly into bank accounts—similar to what other universities like PLM are doing. This, they felt, would make the process more convenient and less stressful.

Lastly, students recommended making better use of technology to speed up transactions and create a clearer, more reliable distribution schedule. For them, a faster and more transparent system would not only help with planning but also ensure that the aid truly supports their academic progress.

4. CONCLUSION

- a) Overall, the data reveals that although students have a high level of awareness and accessibility to SAP and generally view the program positively, concerns remain about the sufficiency of the aid provided.
- b) Overall, the results affirm that SAP has a significant and positive impact on students' academic experiences—improving performance, motivation, attendance, and the ability to afford education.
- c) Many students shared that the SAP served as a much-needed source of financial support. It eased their day-to-day worries about how to afford school-related expenses like tuition, internet, and books.
- d) Several students also mentioned how the SAP reduced financial pressure not just on themselves, but on their families. For some, it meant they didn't have to ask their parents for money as often—a small but meaningful relief for households already struggling with daily expenses.
- e) Many students said that SAP helped them stay on track academically. Whether it was being able to attend school more regularly or simply having peace of mind, the assistance played a key role in helping them stay focused and committed to their education.
- f) Several students emphasized how important it is for the aid to arrive on time, especially when deadlines for school expenses are approaching. When the release is late, the stress returns—and with it, distractions from their studies.
- g) Some students also pointed out that the distribution process could be improved. They described it as disorganized, time-consuming, and even confusing at times.
- h) Students recommended making better use of technology to speed up transactions and create a clearer, more reliable distribution schedule. For them, a faster and more transparent system would not only help with planning but also ensure that the aid truly supports their academic progress.

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