

Community Perception of Non-Beneficiaries on the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program in the Municipality of Bansalan, Davao Del Sur

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Abstract. This study aimed to evaluate community perceptions of non-beneficiaries regarding the effectiveness of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in the Municipality of Bansalan, Davao del Sur. Despite numerous evaluations of SLP beneficiaries, limited research exists on how non-beneficiaries perceive its effectiveness, which this study sought to address. Specifically, the research examined the socio-economic profiles of respondents and their perceptions of the program's impact. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-comparative survey design, the study employed simple random sampling to ensure fair representation and gathered data from 99 respondents. Statistical tools, including frequency, relative frequency distribution, mean, and ANOVA, were applied for data analysis. The results indicated that the community perceives the DSWD-SLP as significantly beneficial, with an overall mean effectiveness score of 4.22, interpreted as "very high". This suggests that even non-beneficiaries recognize the positive contributions of the program toward sustaining livelihoods in the local community. Furthermore, socio-economic profile factors, including age, gender identity, civil status, educational attainment, and monthly income, were found to have no significant influence on community perceptions of the program's effectiveness. The major conclusion is that the DSWD-SLP has garnered broad community support and visibility, extending beyond its direct beneficiaries. Practically, this implies a positive public perception that may support the program's expansion and improved targeting. Socially, it highlights the importance of inclusive program awareness and transparency, which can enhance community trust and cooperation in future livelihood.

Keywords: Sustainable Livelihood Program; Community perception; Effectiveness; DSWD.

1.0 Introduction

The livelihood sector in the Philippines has faced significant challenges, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when numerous small businesses ceased operations due to limited financial capital. According to Albert et al. (2020), the pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities and significantly impacted informal and low-income households, highlighting the need for robust safety nets and livelihood recovery programs. In response to such challenges, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) implemented the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), which aims to provide economic opportunities through microenterprise development and employment facilitation.

The SLP offers financial assistance ranging from 10,000 to 15,000 to individuals and groups, intending to promote self-sufficiency among poor and marginalized sectors. Globally and locally, studies have explored the effectiveness of livelihood assistance programs. Yulianti and Isaskar (2018) examined livelihood assets and strategies in the arid Pantura region of East Java, revealing that households heavily depended on social networks and remittances due to unsustainable asset use and poor access to natural resources. Similarly, Naganag (2022) focused on SLP beneficiaries in the Philippines, assessing their readiness based on age, income, and social support systems. Beneficiaries reported optimism toward microenterprise opportunities, particularly as a recovery mechanism during the pandemic. While such studies provide valuable insights into the experiences of program recipients, there remains a limited exploration of the perspective of non-beneficiaries – individuals who are eligible but remain outside the program’s direct support structure. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Sustainable Livelihood Program in Bansalan, as perceived by non-beneficiaries.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Sustainable Livelihood Program in Bansalan, as perceived by non-beneficiaries. By focusing on this often-overlooked group, the research aims to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the program's inclusivity and social impact. The significance of this research lies in its potential to provide evidence-based recommendations for program enhancement, support the design of inclusive policies, and guide the allocation of resources toward more equitable and sustainable development outcomes. By including non-beneficiaries, this study contributes to a more inclusive understanding of community needs and the program’s capacity to foster resilience across different social sectors.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-comparative survey design to gather and analyze data regarding the community's perception of non-beneficiaries toward the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). This design allows for the identification and description of patterns, similarities, and differences in perceptions without manipulating variables. A questionnaire adapted from the study by Dawood and Leng (2016) was used to collect data. The study design supports comparison across specific groups while maintaining a non-experimental approach, making it suitable for investigating perceptions within a defined population.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1. Socio-Economic Profile Data of the Respondents in Bansalan, Davao del Sur

Table 1 presents the socio-economic profiles of respondents from Barangays Poblacion Dos, Alegre, and Managa in Davao del Sur. The age distribution shows that the majority of respondents (61.0%) belong to the 18–30 age group. This is followed by those aged 31–40 (23.0%) and 41–60 (16.0%). These results suggest that the respondents are primarily composed of younger individuals, which may reflect the active working-age population in the area. In terms of gender, 59 respondents (59.0%) identified as male, while 38 (38.0%) were female, and 3 (3.0%) preferred not to disclose their gender. This indicates a male-dominated respondent group, a factor that may influence household roles and decision-making dynamics in the study areas. Regarding marital status, 56 respondents (56.0%) reported being single, 38 (38.0%) were married, and 6 (6.0%) were widowed. These findings reveal that a majority of the respondents are not currently married, which may correlate with the observed younger age distribution. In terms of monthly income, a significant portion of respondents (43 individuals or 56.0%) earn less than PHP 4,000 per month, placing them in the low-income bracket. Meanwhile, 33 respondents (38.0%) earn between PHP 4,000 and PHP 15,000 per month, and only six respondents (6.0%) earn above PHP 15,000 per month. These findings underscore the prevalence of poverty or near-poverty conditions among the respondents. The Department of Social Welfare and Development’s Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) aims to support individuals in such low-income households. The results align with previous findings (Corpus et al., 2019), which highlight that many working-age individuals – particularly women – are either underemployed or not part of the labor force, contributing to household economic vulnerability. Educational attainment data shows that the highest proportion of respondents are at the college level (44.0%), followed by college graduates (24.0%), high school graduates (12.0%), high school level (9.0%), elementary graduates (6.0%), and those at the elementary level (5.0%). This distribution indicates a relatively high educational background among respondents, which may affect their ability to seek employment and participate in livelihood programs. Overall, the socio-economic profile of the respondents reveals a predominantly young, male, single population with low income but moderate to high

educational attainment. These factors play a crucial role in shaping their participation in livelihood initiatives and access to resources.

Table 1. Socio-Economic Profile Data of the Respondents in Bansalan, Davao del Sur

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
18- 30 year old	61	61.0
31- 40 year old	23	23.0
41- 60 year old	16	16.0
Sex		
Male	59	59.0
Female	38	38.0
Prefer not to say	3	3.0
Marital Status		
Single	56	56.0
Married	38	38.0
Widowed	6	6.0
Monthly Income		
Less than 4,000	43	56.0
4,000 – 15,000	33	38.0
Above 15,000	24	6.0
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level	5	0.05
Elementary Graduate	6	0.06
High School Level	9	0.09
High School Graduate	12	0.12
College Level	44	0.44
College Graduate	24	0.24
Total	100	100

3.2 Observed Sustainable Livelihood Programs in the Selected Communities of Bansalan, Davao del Sur

Table 2 presents the types of assistance provided through the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the community of Bansalan. Among the various forms of support, cash assistance emerged as the most common, with 68 beneficiaries or 68% of respondents receiving it. This was followed by skills and training assistance, received by 24 respondents (24%), while only one respondent (1%) received employment facility assistance. Additionally, a small number of respondents reported receiving combinations of assistance types: 5 respondents (5%) received both cash assistance and skills training, while two respondents (2%) received all three types of assistance. These findings indicate that cash assistance is the most frequently provided support under the DSWD's SLP in Bansalan, suggesting that immediate financial aid is prioritized in the community's livelihood strategy. The prominence of cash assistance may reflect both the urgent economic needs of the beneficiaries and the practicality of implementing financial transfers as an initial intervention. The SLP, as implemented by the DSWD, is a multi-dimensional program designed to promote sustainable income-generating activities among disadvantaged households. Its core components include capacity building, group formation, and livelihood grants. Central to this initiative is the Seed Capital Fund (SCF) grant, which provides up to PHP 10,000 per household to initiate or expand microenterprise activities, either individually or through group enterprises. In the broader context of the SLP's implementation, Reyes et al. (2020) conducted an evaluation using a matched design to compare outcomes between SCF-recipient and non-recipient Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) households. The study surveyed 2,592 CCT households from 39 cities and municipalities and found that 91% of SCF recipients engaged in group-managed livelihood projects. The results highlighted a positive impact on labor supply, though no statistically significant improvements were observed in terms of household income, savings, capital investments, or expenditures. These findings align with the situation in Bansalan, where cash assistance dominates over other SLP components such as employment facilitation or skills development. The limited uptake of employment facilities and the low number of combined interventions underscore the potential need for a more integrated approach. The Reyes et al. (2020) study highlighted several challenges, including the lack of pre-intervention data, potential self-selection bias, and non-random targeting of areas. To improve the effectiveness of SLP interventions, especially in municipalities like Bansalan, the study recommended integrating livelihood support with life skills coaching and savings mobilization, evaluating the comparative benefits of group-based versus individual livelihood models, enhancing project selection and development for better commercial outcomes, and strengthening capacity-building, monitoring, and technical support components. In summary, while the current data show that cash assistance is the predominant form of

livelihood support in Bansalan, the broader literature suggests that its impact could be strengthened through more holistic, integrated, and targeted interventions.

Table 2. *Observed Sustainable Livelihood Programs in the Selected Communities of Bansalan, Davao del Sur*

Program	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Skills and Training	24	0.24
Cash Assistance	68	0.68
Employment Facility	1	0.01
Skills and Training, and Cash Assistance	5	0.05
Skills and Training, Cash Assistance, and Employment Facility	2	0.02
Total	100	100

3.3 The Level of Perception of the Community of Non-Beneficiaries on the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and the Quality of Life in the Municipality of Bansalan, Davao del Sur

Table 3 shows that the community's evaluation of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) is overwhelmingly positive, with an overall mean score of 4.22, classified as "Very High." The program demonstrated strong performance in fostering sustainable livelihoods, particularly through financial support to microenterprises and farmers, with the highest mean score of 4.84 attributed to the provision of additional capital to farmers. However, areas such as enhancing quality of life (mean = 3.87), gender empowerment (mean = 3.91), and cultural preservation (mean = 3.92) were rated "High," indicating room for improvement. Positive feedback was also given to the promotion of environmental sustainability (mean = 3.96), financial aid for starting enterprises (mean = 4.36), service customization (mean = 4.30), and partnerships (mean = 4.35). These results affirm the program's significant impact, yet highlight the need for further enhancement in inclusivity and cultural aspects. These findings are consistent with Reyes (2014), who stressed the importance of structural interventions beyond cash transfers for lasting poverty alleviation. The study also found that program awareness was primarily disseminated through DSWD staff, and funds were commonly allocated for food and education. Respondents strongly supported the program's continuation and recommended legislative action to institutionalize it, ensuring long-term support for marginalized communities.

Table 3. *The Level of Perception of the Community of Non-Beneficiaries on the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and the Quality of Life in the Municipality of Bansalan, Davao del Sur*

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. Sustainable Livelihood Programs are effective in promoting sustainable livelihoods in both upland and lowland areas.	4.28	Very High
2. Additional financial capital from the DSWD helps microenterprise owners and farmers expand their businesses.	4.38	Very high
3. Through the programs of DSWD SLP, the beneficiary improves their quality of life.	3.87	High
4. Sustainable livelihood programs promote environmentally friendly practices.	3.96	High
5. Sustainable livelihood programs provide financial support to individuals for starting sustainable businesses.	4.36	Very High
6. Sustainable livelihood programs should address gender inequalities and promote women's empowerment.	3.91	High
7. Sustainable livelihood programs prioritize the preservation and promotion of traditional knowledge and cultural practices.	3.92	High
8. Sustainable livelihood programs are tailored to the specific needs and resources of each community.	4.30	Very High
9. Partnerships and collaborations with local organizations and stakeholders are vital for the success of sustainable livelihood programs.	4.35	Very High
10. Additional capital for farmers makes a big contribution to help them add more seedlings and fertilizer for their farms.	4.84	Very High
Total Mean	4.22	Very High

3.4 Significant Difference in Perception of the Community of Non-Beneficiaries on the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and the Quality of Life when Grouped/Categorized according to their Socio-Demographic Profile

Table 4 presents the F-test results assessing significant differences in the community perception of non-beneficiaries regarding the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and their quality of life, categorized by socio-demographic profile. The null hypothesis, which posited no significant difference in perception based on these variables, was tested. The analysis revealed that age was the only variable with a statistically significant effect on perception, with an F-value of 4.13 and a p-value of

0.019. This result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis for age, indicating that different age groups perceive the impact and value of the program in varying ways. In contrast, the null hypothesis was not rejected for gender identity ($F = 1.29$, $p = 0.280$), marital status ($F = 2.66$, $p = 0.075$), monthly income ($F = 0.0454$, $p = 0.956$), and educational attainment ($F = 1.21$, $p = 0.309$), suggesting that these socio-demographic factors do not significantly influence the perception of the SLP among non-beneficiaries. In summary, age emerged as the sole socio-demographic variable with a significant impact on community perception of the DSWD-SLP. While the other variables did not show statistically significant differences, they may still hold relevance in broader qualitative analyses exploring how various factors shape public perception and quality of life within the context of social welfare programs. Further research may be warranted to examine these dimensions or explore potential interactions among variables.

Table 4. Significant Difference in Perception of the Community of Non-Beneficiaries on the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and the Quality of Life when Grouped/Categorized according to their Socio-Demographic Profile

Predictor	F-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	4.13	0.019	Reject	Significant
Gender Identity	1.29	0.280	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Marital Status	2.66	0.075	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Monthly Income	0.0454	0.956	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	1.21	0.309	Fail to Reject	Not Significant

4.0 Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the perception of non-beneficiaries toward the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in Bansalan and to determine whether socio-economic characteristics influenced these perceptions. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents were male, aged 18-30, college level, single, and earning less than 4,000 monthly. These demographic characteristics suggest that a significant portion of the population remains economically vulnerable and may benefit from targeted livelihood interventions. Among the forms of SLP assistance, cash support emerged as the most common at 68%, followed by skills training at 24%, while employment facilitation was minimal at only 1%. This indicates a firm reliance on direct financial aid, which, while immediately helpful, may not guarantee long-term sustainability without complementary skills development or job placement services. The study further found that non-beneficiaries held a "very high" perception (mean 4.22) of the SLP's impact, underscoring the program's positive influence and visibility in the community even among those who were not direct recipients. Importantly, no significant difference was observed between respondents' socio-economic profiles and their perception of the program, suggesting that the SLP's perceived effectiveness transcends demographic divisions. These findings contribute to the body of knowledge by highlighting how government livelihood programs can influence community perception and indirectly foster socio-economic awareness. These results suggest that the SLP is widely regarded as effective, yet may benefit from enhancements to its employment facilitation components to address long-term livelihood stability. In summary, while the DSWD's SLP is perceived positively in Bansalan, expanding its employment-focused interventions and conducting broader evaluations can strengthen its role in addressing poverty and promoting sustainable development across communities.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author 1: responsible for conducting the research, encoding and analyzing the data, and collecting information

Author 2: responsible for reviewing the paper, mentoring, supervising, and guiding the primary author to ensure the success of this research journey.

6.0 Funding

This study was conducted without any external funding assistance from any organization or institution. The researcher personally shouldered all expenses related to the data gathering, analysis, and documentation.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author affirms that this study has no conflicts of interest. All research activities were conducted with honesty, transparency, and academic integrity, ensuring that the results remain impartial and unbiased.

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