



PROJECT TALIMANSI: A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ALALAY SA PAGBASA AT TALIPAPA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

It is the responsibility of every academic institution to integrate all their programs to promote social relevance. Through the Office of Community Extension and Outreach Program (CEOP) of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges (MVGFC), this was concretely realized through the Alalay sa Pagbasa (ASP) of the Institute of Teacher Education (ITE) one year ago. The central theme of this paper is to examine the preliminary effects of Project Talimansi on the quality of life of parents at Talipapa Elementary School (TES) who are participants in ASP. ASP is a program of CEOP in Barangay Talipapa that aims to address the learning gap caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. To address this concern, MVGFC gathered the parents of non-readers from TES students and implemented the ASP. To provide tangible and effective support to the parents, MVGFC launched a livelihood training that resulted in the creation of Talimansi Dishwashing Liquid.

This research aimed to answer the following comparative questions: socio-demographic characteristics of respondents based on age, gender, livelihood, and others; their previous situation; current situation; the impact of Talimansi on themselves, family, community, income, relationship with children, and relationship with spouse; and suggestions to further improve the Talimansi project. The researchers utilized qualitative methods through interviews following the interview guide and focus group discussions to gather data.

The Project Talimansi has had a significant impact on the economy of the four parents who participated in the Alalay sa Pagbasa in Talipapa Elementary School. With the help of the project, they have acquired additional income ranging from P500.00 to P1,500.00 within two to three days. Their earnings depend on the amount of Talimansi they can sell. For instance, if they sell 30 liters, they earn P500.00, but if they sell all 50 liters, their income reaches P1,500.00. It is noteworthy that within a week, their lowest earnings can reach P1,000.00 and their highest can reach P3,000.00. The desire for higher earnings inspires and motivates the parents to continue striving in making Talimansi.

To broaden the scope of the findings, future studies may include additional questions and analyses to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of parents under the ASP project. The insights from this research can serve as a basis for future changes and improvements in the integration of academia, community, and extension programs.

Keywords: *Community Extension and Outreach Program; Non-Readers; Alalay sa Pagbasa; Livelihood Program; Academic Integration*

INTRODUCTION

Development is about people, about expanding their choices to lead lives they value, about enlarging opportunities for a full life which can only be guaranteed by empowering people, especially empowering the poor, distressed, deprived, destitute, and marginalized people in all fronts (Barkat et al, 2016). Therefore, to achieve this, Higher Education Institutions or HEIs have been given the mandate and responsibility not only to provide quality education but also to contribute to the improvement of society through community extension services or CES. Hence, CES should be integrated into the mission and vision of all HEIs as it strengthens their teaching and research programs in collaboration with the community.

Community extension services play a vital role in the development of communities, including aspects of teaching and learning. It serves as a bridge between the institution and the community, facilitating the transfer of knowledge, skills, and technology from the academic sector to the community. The aim of extension work is to enhance the capabilities and advancement of individuals and communities by providing them with necessary opportunities, tools, and resources to become more empowered and resilient.

The impact on people's lives and the communities they serve is the true measure of the effectiveness of CES. The primary determinant of CES success is whether those in leadership positions are willing to accept and support the community's needs at the expected time of implementation. The foundation of CES usually consists of the following: values, scholars, and services that respond to the genuine needs of the community they serve, using knowledge from various disciplines with the spirit of collaboration and voluntarism; and extension research focused on the health, education, and employment status of each individual as well as their family and community, through the utilization of various disciplines and fields of existing knowledge. Thus, the effectiveness of any CES can only be achieved through collective action.

On July 11, 2019, Barangay Talipapa officially became the adopted barangay of MVGFC through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Then, on August 6, 2022, MVGFC held a meeting attended by members of the Barangay Council, Sangguniang Kabataan, barangay workers such

as Day Care advocates, Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS), Barangay Peace and Order (BPO) personnel, and leaders from different zones (purok), as well as representatives from various sectors including PTA, Senior Citizens, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Parents Committee, and Barangay Pastoral Council. The main objectives of the meeting were to identify needs and challenges, recommend projects and potential solutions, and recognize available resources and capabilities to collectively address these issues.

During the needs assessment process in this conscientization initiative, the organizers followed a critical pedagogy approach, which has been a subject of interest for education researchers and practitioners for the past fifty years due to its potential to promote more equitable, democratic, and student-centered education, while also contributing to a more just world (Parkhouse, 2016). This approach involves dividing the participants into four groups based on their specific sectoral needs, ensuring that their voices and perspectives are heard and considered. The method used in this gathering facilitated a productive workshop where, after an hour of discussions, the participants collectively identified three key issues that required attention: livelihood, waste management, and educational deficiencies, particularly concerning reading skills, which were further exacerbated by the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The inclusion of Melo's perspective, which highlights how those living in poverty and violence are especially susceptible to vulnerabilities that hinder their social mobility and perpetuate exclusion (Melo, 2018), sheds light on the importance of addressing these issues in a comprehensive manner. By integrating various methodologies such as critical pedagogy and participatory needs assessment, this initiative can take a more holistic and inclusive approach to find solutions for the identified problems and work towards building a more just and equitable community. Other methodologies related to critical pedagogy and participatory research could also be employed to gain deeper insights into the root causes of the identified issues and to foster greater community involvement and empowerment in finding sustainable solutions.

In response, MVGFC initiated a series of activities to address the challenges, one of which is the Alalay sa Pagbasa program focused on parents. According to a study, the implementation of adult education programs has been evaluated, and the findings show some successes (Keja-Kaereho et al, 2016). MVGFC also organized a seminar-workshop on Selling Process and Livelihood Opportunities in collaboration with the Institute of Business Management (IBM) and the Junior Marketing Association (JMA). This event took place on November 4, 2022, at the church in Talipapa. The objective of the gathering was to provide essential knowledge to participants about the selling process and microfinance, as well as practical steps on how to enhance livelihood opportunities. This was immediately followed by a training day on December 13, 2022, about using CANVA with the assistance of faculty members from the Institute of Information and Communication Technology and Institute of Teacher Education. During this session, parents first learned how to use Zoom and other contemporary technologies, resulting in their own brand design for their Talimansi product.

On the other hand, the significant decrease in the number of parents of non-readers in TES was noticed. To support the MVGFC High School Department, which has been advocating for the Alalay sa Pagbasa, a training on making dishwashing liquid from calamansi was conducted on March 23, with the aim of maintaining the participation of the four participants until the end of the program and helping them in the aspect of livelihood that does not require a large capital. The Project Talimansi has made a significant impact on the economy of four parents participating in the Alalay sa Pagbasa at Talipapa Elementary School. Through the project, they have gained

extra income, ranging from P500.00 to P1,500.00 within a span of two to three days. Their earnings are directly related to the quantity of Talimansi they manage to sell. For example, selling 30 liters yields P500.00, but if they manage to sell all 50 liters, their income increases to P1,500.00. Notably, their weekly earnings can range from a minimum of P1,000.00 to a maximum of P3,000.00. As a result of their aspiration for higher earnings, the parents are motivated and inspired to continue their efforts in producing Talimansi.

Why did MVGFC undertake this initiative? The place of empowering people includes services related to health, psycho-education programs, media, and literacy. Socio-economic development can be achieved through seminars on small businesses, entrepreneurship training, and livelihood programs (FEU CEOP, 2020). Additionally, Humanization is the ultimate vocation and destiny of man. This can be achieved through the process of conscientization, a process of becoming aware of the contradictions existing within oneself and in society, and of gradually being able to bring about personal and social transformations (Freire, 1975). The focus of this paper is to study the preliminary effects of Talimansi on the quality of life of parents from TES who are participants in Alalay sa Pagbasa (ASP). In general, it aims to address the following questions: socio-demographic characteristics of respondents based on age, gender, and government-acquired training; their previous situation; their current situation; the outcomes of Project Talimansi on themselves, family, community, income, relationship with children, and relationship with spouse; and recommendations to improve Project Talimansi.

Through this study, community leaders can develop policies and programs that respond to educational, and livelihood needs in their respective areas. The knowledge about the problems faced by students and their parents can also be utilized by the current administration to address challenges or weaknesses resulting from the learning gap in a school or institution. This paper highlights the importance of academic integration in extension activities. It will also raise awareness among teachers about the status of students and their parents. In this way, teachers can address the needs of students within the school setting. It will also help parents understand the steps they can take to address their children's reading weaknesses by improving their inherent abilities. On the other hand, students will better understand the importance of reading, the significance of having a close relationship with their parents as their first teachers, and their teachers as their second parents. Lastly, this will be beneficial to current researchers and serve as a basis for future studies. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct additional inquiries to further deepen the study on the effects of Project Talimansi.

Research Questions

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents?
2. What are the social-assistance acquired from the government?
3. What is their previous situation and their current situation?
4. What are the outcomes of Project Talimansi on themselves, family, community, income, relationship with children, and relationship with spouse?
5. What are the recommendations to improve Project Talimansi?

METHODOLOGY

This research involved four parents who participated in Alalay sa Pagbasa at Talipapa Elementary School, Barangay Talipapa, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, during the Academic Year 2022-2023. It utilized a qualitative form of research, specifically employing an interview guide and focus group discussion. These methods were chosen to gather reflective, perceptual, and comparative information regarding the effects of Project Talimansi on the participating parents. From these responses, a comparative analysis was conducted, seeking common answers based on the thematic content of the questions. The gathered data was analysed and interpreted using the analytical and perceptual skills of the researchers, based on the reflections of the respondents.

RESULTS

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Categories	Frequency
Age	30 – 45 Years Old	4
Education	Elementary	1
	High School	0
	College	3
Marital Status	Married	2
	Live-in	2
Number of Children	1 Child	0
	2 children	1
	3 children	0
	4 children	3
Government Assistance Received	4Ps	1
	In-kind assistance	3
Job/ Source of Income	Others (Farming, Carpentry, Mechanic)	4
Daily Family Income	P400 – P500	4

Table 2. Talimansi production, marketing, and income per household

Capital	Production Period	Output	Market Price	Selling Period	Total Sales	Less Capital	Net Income	Projected Monthly Income
P200.00	30-40 minutes	35liters	P 35.00	2-3 days	P1,225.00	P200.00	P 1,025.00	P 10,250.00
P250.00	1 hour	50 liters	P35.00	2-3 days	P1,750.00	P250.00	P1,500.00	P 15,000.00

Table 3. Economic Effect of the Talimansi Project

	Before The Project	After the Project
Addition source of income	Laundry Work Snail and Frog Collecting	Talimansi Dishwashing Liquid
Income within 2-3 days	P50.00- P300.00	P500.00- P1, 500.00

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the interviews, it appears that the age of the four parents ranges from 30 to 45 years old. Three of them have completed college education, while one has only finished elementary school. Two of them are married in church ceremonies, while the other two are living together. The four of them have no regular source of income. The interviews also revealed that their breadwinners have other sources of income, such as being a mechanic, farmer, and carpenter, earning around P400.00 to P500.00 per day. Among the four parents, three of them have four children, while one has only two. Regarding the government aid and training they received, one of them is a beneficiary of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), while the other three received in-kind assistance from the government once a year.

The interviews further revealed that their previous situation involved being unemployed and doing laundry work at home. According to them, "I only do laundry for two to three days, and I earn P150.00." They mostly rely on their spouses, especially for the budget needed to meet their daily needs such as electricity bills and expenses for their children's education. However, despite their efforts, they still struggle to support their children's education. One parent mentioned, "My child only brings bananas and water for lunch. Sometimes, they don't attend school because their classmates make fun of them, calling them 'monkey'." Due to their similar socio-economic situations, all four parents were forced to involve their children in farming activities such as collecting snails and catching frogs and tadpoles to sell in the market along Kapitan Pepe and Vergara Highway. "My child asked why they need to study if they can already earn P50.00 to P150.00 from collecting snails," added one parent.

With the introduction of Talimansi Dishwashing Liquid the four parents have become more financially comfortable to some extent. They are no longer solely dependent on their spouses' income and laundry work. According to one parent, "I can now provide some allowance for my child. It's like I've become more diligent." Another parent added, "I can now even buy lipstick." Table shows the simple Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) of the project. They mentioned that they are able to sell 34 to 50 liters of Talimansi every week at a price of P35.00 per liter. The capital required to produce 34 to 50 liters is only P200.00 to P250.00.

According to the interviews, it is evident that their lives have improved since Project Talimansi became a part of their lives. "Before, I couldn't afford to get a proper haircut because we had to tighten our belts," one of the interviewees said. They also commonly mentioned that they have realized they can run a business on their own. "Before, I could only dream of becoming a business owner, but now it has come true because of MVGFC," another parent testified. Aside from improving their personal well-being, they can now purchase household items like an electric fan and a refrigerator. Two out of the four parent participants were even able to acquire installment tricycles from RUSI, which they now use for their livelihood and delivering Talimansi

Dishwashing Liquid to Gapan and Jaen. Additionally, their children now have new pencils, rulers, erasers, notebooks, bags, shoes, and socks for the upcoming school year. Reflecting on their experiences, one parent said, "This is what it's like when you have even a small income. It turns out that being able to buy small necessities is already satisfying."

As for the impact of Project Talimansi on their families, the four parents are now more financially capable of handling their daily expenses. One of them jokingly said, "I am no longer just a laundry worker." The interviews also revealed that they can now afford to eat three meals a day. They no longer rely solely on jute leaves, moringa, and sardines for their meals, but they can now enjoy pork or chicken meat two to three times a week. A significant discovery after the interviews is that, apart from having enough food, their families are now eating at the right time.

Regarding the project's effect on their community, it appears that they are no longer engaged in unnecessary gossip and rumors. If there are conversations among their fellow parents, it now revolves around how they make their Talimansi Dishwashing Liquid. "Some people even ask me to teach them, but I tell them I have to ask permission from MVGFC first," explained one parent. The interviews also revealed that their regular customers are their own neighbors.

The Project Talimansi has had a significant impact on the economy of the four parents who participated in the Alalay sa Pagbasa in Talipapa Elementary School. With the help of the project, they have acquired additional income ranging from P500.00 to P1,500.00 within two to three days. Their earnings depend on the amount of Talimansi they can sell. For instance, if they sell 30 liters, they earn P500.00, but if they sell all 50 liters, their income reaches P1,500.00. It is noteworthy that within a week, their lowest earnings can reach P1,000.00 and their highest can reach P3,000.00. The desire for higher earnings inspires and motivates the parents to continue striving in making Talimansi.

According to their statements, making Talimansi is not difficult, and it can be completed in 30 to 40 minutes if we are only talking about the mixing process. When transferred to plastic bottles, it may take longer, around an hour.

The interviews also revealed that their relationship with their children has improved. Aside from serving as a bonding activity, they also teach their children how to make Talimansi. On Saturdays and Sundays, their children are also their partners in delivering the product orders. "The arrival of Talimansi was good because my child is no longer just using the cellphone," explained one parent. "My child also became like that when he started selling. I gave him all the earnings he made. He was so happy, and since then, he always helps me on Saturdays and Sundays. He also became more diligent in his studies," added another parent.

When it comes to their relationship with their spouses, it appears to have improved because they have become partners in supporting the entire family, and there are fewer fights and misunderstandings that are often rooted in financial problems. "My partner even invited me to get married, but I said it's still early. Let's save up first, and it'll be just right for the town wedding in February 2024 at Mayor's office," explained one participant who has a partner. Additionally, the interviews revealed that two parents are also partners with their husbands in delivering Talimansi to Gapan and Jaen, while the other two parents are partners with their husbands in delivering Talimansi to Barangay Ibabao Bana and Barangay Palagay.

The result also validates the process of conscientization, a process of becoming aware of the contradictions existing within oneself and in society, and of gradually being able to bring about personal and social transformations (Freire, 1975).

Conclusions

The study on the effects of Project Talimansi on the lives of the four parents who participated in Alalay sa Pagbasa at Talipapa Elementary School showed significant results. First and foremost, positive changes in the participants' conditions were clearly observed. Because of Project Talimansi, their knowledge and skills in livelihood have improved, and they were assisted in growing their livelihoods.

Secondly, the study also successfully demonstrated that Project Talimansi is effective in various aspects of their lives. It contributed to strengthening their families and communities, resulting in an increase in their income. Moreover, the study revealed that the participants had better relationships with their children and spouses, owing to the additional knowledge and understanding of various aspects of their lives.

Lastly, it is important to note that the participants expressed a strong desire to continue and make Project Talimansi a long-term endeavor. They demonstrated their support and trust in the project by sharing their recommendations. They wish to expand the number of beneficiaries and further enhance the programs and services it provides to the community.

Overall, this study confirms the importance and impact of Project Talimansi on the participants. It has shown the potential for positive changes in the lives of the parents who were part of Alalay sa Pagbasa. Based on the findings, continuous support and development of the project will be crucial to further amplify its significance in society.

Recommendations

Here are the gathered recommendations from the researchers regarding this study to strengthen and expand Project Talimansi further:

1. To ensure the successful implementation of Project Talimansi and to specifically cater to the parents of non-reader pupils at Talipapa Elementary School, it is essential for the Local Government of Cabanatuan and MVGFC to establish a comprehensive General Memorandum of Agreement (GMOA). This GMOA will serve as the foundation for a deepened relationship and enhanced cooperation between the two parties, focusing on empowering and supporting the parents in their efforts to improve their children's reading abilities.
2. To ensure the successful implementation of Project Talimansi, it is recommended to have a General Memorandum of Agreement (GMOA) that includes the City Social Welfare Department (CSWD), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and MVGFC. The GMOA will create a clear system and linkage between agencies from the level of livelihood assistance to marketing. This will uplift local workers and farmers, ensure appropriate government support, and execute the project with adequate knowledge and coordination. The goal is to guarantee the project's development and success, resulting in broader benefits for beneficiaries and the entire community.

3. These agreements should also incorporate systematic training to strengthen and expand the quality and quantity of Project Talimansi. The agreement should include identifying training needs, creating courses, and implementing programs aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of the beneficiaries and project personnel. This will make the project more effective and successful, promoting further livelihood and progress within the local community.

To ensure the quality of education during and after the pandemic, continuous study and response to the recommendations are crucial. Advancing meaningful changes and broader support from the government and institutions will contribute to the successful education of students. With the help of their parents and appropriate support, the challenges can be alleviated, and their education will become more joyful and successful.

For future researchers conducting studies, they may focus on incorporating other aspects, such as the impact of technology on education or the implications of the pandemic on students' mental health. It is also beneficial to carefully study different contexts and conditions of respondents, including students from various educational levels, cultures, and economic backgrounds. This way, their findings will be more comprehensive and insightful, aiding in shaping more effective steps for the future of education.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

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