

## Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP): Its Effect on the Career Development of Grantees in Conner, Apayao

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**Abstract:** This Study Investigated the Effect of The Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) On the Career Development of Graduate School Grantees in Conner, Apayao During the Academic Year 2025–2026. The Research Aimed to Assess the Extent of ASAP's Implementation and Measure the Level of Career Development of The Respondents in Terms of Career Awareness, Career Planning, Career Decision-Making, And Career Preparation. Additionally, The Study Examined Whether There Was a Significant Relationship Between the Program's Implementation and The Career Development of Its Beneficiaries. A Descriptive-Correlational Research Design Was Used, with 153 Officially Recognized ASAP Graduate School Beneficiaries Participating Through Total Enumeration Sampling. Data Were Collected Using a Researcher-Made Questionnaire Divided into Sections Covering Program Implementation and Career Development Indicators. The Analysis Involved Frequency and Percentage Distributions, Weighted Means, And Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson R). Findings Indicated That ASAP Was Moderately Implemented Across Key Areas, Including Communication, Accessibility, Educational Support, Management, And Its Contribution to Academic Performance. Respondents Demonstrated Moderate Career Awareness and High Levels of Career Planning, Decision-Making, And Preparation. However, The Study Found No Significant Relationship Between the Extent of ASAP Implementation and The Respondents' Career Development. Correlation Results Showed Very Weak Positive and Negative Associations That Were Statistically Non-Significant, Suggesting That ASAP's Implementation Had Minimal Influence on the Career Development Dimensions Assessed. The Study Concluded That While ASAP Effectively Helps Reduce Financial Barriers Enabling Students to Continue Their Education, Career Development Is Influenced More Profoundly by Other Factors Such as Personal Motivation, Academic Experiences, Professional Exposure, And Environmental Conditions. To Enhance the Program's Impact, The Study Recommends Strengthening Coordination and Monitoring Mechanisms, Fostering Collaboration Among Stakeholders, And Implementing Targeted Career Development Activities. These Improvements Aim to Better Support the Academic and Professional Growth of ASAP Beneficiaries, Potentially Increasing the Program's Contribution to Their Long-Term Career Success.

**Keywords:** Apayao Student Assistance Program, educational assistance, career development, graduate school students, career awareness, career planning, career decision-making, career preparation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a cornerstone of national development, social mobility, and economic progress, equipping individuals with knowledge, skills, and values essential for career advancement and poverty reduction. Governments worldwide implement educational assistance programs to ensure equitable access to quality education, covering expenses such as tuition, transportation, and school supplies. Research highlights their importance: Dynarski & Scott-Clayton (2013) found that financial aid improves access and persistence in higher education, while Tomlinson (2017) emphasized its role in employability and career readiness. Globally, countries like Finland, Singapore, and Japan have

successfully adopted scholarship systems that foster academic achievement and workforce preparedness. The OECD (2018) underscores that educational investment strengthens human capital and enhances productivity.

In the Philippines, despite government initiatives, many students especially in rural areas face financial barriers. Agencies such as CHED, DSWD, and LGUs provide scholarships to address these challenges. One local initiative is the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP), which supports students in the province by easing financial burdens and promoting inclusive education. Apayao's socio-economic conditions make such programs vital for sustaining

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academic pursuits. ASAP reflects the provincial government's commitment to human capital development, enabling students to focus on academics and career preparation. Theoretical frameworks reinforce this significance: Becker's Human Capital Theory (1964) views education as an investment in productivity and employability, while Super's Career Development Theory (1990) highlights the influence of educational support on career planning and decision-making.

However, in Conner, Apayao, limited empirical evidence exists on ASAP's impact on career development, with reports focusing mainly on financial allocations rather than career outcomes. Thus, this study aims to evaluate the effect of ASAP on grantees' career development in Conner, Apayao assessing program implementation, career development levels, and the relationship between the two. Findings are expected to inform improvements in scholarship programs and strengthen their role in educational and professional advancement.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to determine the effect of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) on the career development of grantees in Conner, Apayao. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

### 1. What is the status of the respondents in terms of:

- 1.1 Academic Status
- 1.2 Graduate Program
- 1.3 Year Level
- 1.4 Type of Institution; and Employment Status?

### 2. What is the extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP)?

3. What is the level of career development of the respondents in terms of:

- 3.1 Career Awareness;
- 3.2 Career Planning;
- 3.3 Career Decision-Making; and
- 3.4 Career Preparation?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and the level of career development of the respondents?

## 3. HYPOTHESIS

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and the level of career development of the respondents.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the effect of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) on the career development of its grantees in Conner, Apayao. The descriptive approach was used to assess the extent of

ASAP's implementation and the respondents' career development levels across career awareness, planning, decision-making, and preparation. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive research suits studies that aim to describe current conditions or characteristics. The correlational method was applied to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the program's implementation and the career development of the respondents. This design was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to evaluate the program's implementation and explore its association with the career development of student beneficiaries without manipulating variables.

### 4.2. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Apayao State College specifically in the Graduate School Department located in Malama, Conner, Apayao.

### 4.3. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the graduate school students who were officially recognized beneficiaries of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) residing in Conner, Apayao during the Academic Year 2025–2026.

### 4.4. Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire as the primary tool to gather data on the effect of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) on the career development of grantees in Conner, Apayao. The questionnaire comprised four parts: Part I covered respondents' employment and academic status; Part II evaluated the extent of ASAP implementation across areas like communication, accessibility, timeliness, support sufficiency, management, monitoring, transparency, coordination, and academic participation; Part III assessed career development levels in awareness, planning, decision-making, and preparation; and Part IV collected respondents' suggestions for program improvement. To ensure reliability, the questionnaire was pilot tested with a similar group, and internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's Alpha. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded during analysis to ensure accurate and consistent interpretation of responses

### 4.5. Data gathering Procedures

The researcher first sought permission from the Office of the Provincial Governor of Apayao and other concerned authorities to conduct the study. After securing the necessary approvals, the researcher coordinated with the identified respondents who were officially recognized beneficiaries of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) residing in Conner, Apayao.

The questionnaires were distributed personally to the respondents enrolled in different higher education institutions. Before answering the questionnaire, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that all information gathered

would be treated with utmost confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes only.

After the retrieval of the questionnaires, the responses were checked, consolidated, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools necessary for the study.

**4.6. Statistical Analysis**

The following statistical tools were used in analyzing the data gathered in the study:

Frequency and Percentage These were used to describe the status of the respondents in terms of

employment status and academic status. Weighted Mean This was used to determine the extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and the level of career development of the respondents. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) This was used to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and the level of career development of the respondents.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents along academic status in terms of graduate program.**

Graduate Program	F	%
MST	47	30.10
MAED	26	16.70
MPA	32	20.50
MBA	7	4.50
MSN	11	7.10
MLIS	2	1.30
PhD	21	13.50
DPA	5	3.20
DBM	2	1.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by graduate program, showing that the largest group (30.10%) were enrolled in the Master of Science in Teaching (MST) program. Other significant enrollments included Master in Public Administration (20.50%), Master of Arts in Education (16.70%), and PhD (13.50%). Smaller percentages were in nursing, business administration, public administration, library science, and business management programs. The data suggest

that most ASAP grantees focus on education-related graduate studies, likely to enhance their professional qualifications and career opportunities. This supports Gary Becker's Human Capital Theory, which posits that individuals pursue higher education to improve skills and employability, a finding consistent with other studies highlighting graduate education's role in career advancement and specialization.

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents along academic status in terms of year level.**

Year Level	F	%
1 <sup>st</sup> year	81	51.90
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	61	39.10
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	11	7.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents were first-year graduate students (51.90%), followed by second-year (39.10%) and third-year students (7.10%). This suggests that many ASAP beneficiaries are newly enrolled in graduate programs, reflecting increased participation in advanced education.

The high number of first-year students implies that educational assistance programs like ASAP effectively encourage graduate studies despite financial barriers. This aligns with research showing that such support programs enhance access to higher education and promote student persistence and engagement.

**Table 3: Frequency distribution of respondents along academic status in terms of type of institution**

Type of Institution	F	%
Public	110	71.90
Private	43	28.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows that most respondents (71.90%) were enrolled in public higher education institutions,

while 28.10% attended private institutions. This preference for public institutions is attributed to lower

tuition fees, greater accessibility, and government-supported educational services. The findings highlight the importance of financial considerations in graduate education and suggest that programs like ASAP play a crucial role in reducing educational costs and improving access for students in public institutions. This supports

Gary Becker's Human Capital Theory, emphasizing education as an investment in skills and opportunities, and aligns with studies showing that educational assistance enhances access and persistence in higher education, particularly in the Philippine context.

**Table 4: Frequency distribution of respondents along employment status**

Employment Status	F	%
Regular	81	52.90
Contractual	39	25.50
Unemployed	33	21.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 reveals that most respondents (52.90%) were employed, followed by contractual workers (25.50%), and 21.60% were unemployed. This indicates that many ASAP beneficiaries pursue graduate studies to enhance professional qualifications, career advancement, and job stability. Employed and contractual workers often seek further education to improve skills, meet promotion criteria, and secure permanent employment, while unemployed students aim

to boost employability. The findings highlight the role of educational assistance programs like ASAP in helping students overcome financial and work-related challenges to continue their education. These results support Human Capital Theory and align with studies emphasizing the importance of financial and institutional support in promoting educational persistence and professional growth.

**Table 5: Mean distribution of the extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP)**

Statements	Mean	DI
The implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) in the school is not clearly defined.	2.50	SI
The objectives and guidelines of ASAP are effectively communicated to students.	3.71	HI
Some eligible students are not properly identified or selected for the ASAP.	2.24	SI
The application process for ASAP is accessible and easy to understand.	3.65	HI
Financial assistance under ASAP is often delayed.	2.33	SI
The amount of assistance provided through ASAP is sufficient to support students' needs.	3.82	HI
The program does not adequately cover students' educational expenses (e.g., tuition, supplies, transportation).	2.24	SI
School administrators effectively manage the implementation of ASAP.	3.86	HI
There is limited coordination between the school and local government units (LGUs) in implementing ASAP.	3.12	MI
Beneficiaries are regularly informed about updates and requirements of the program.	3.50	HI
Monitoring and evaluation of ASAP beneficiaries are not conducted regularly.	2.24	SI
Feedback from beneficiaries is considered in improving the program.	3.63	HI
The implementation of ASAP is inconsistent throughout the academic year.	2.43	SI
The program promotes equal opportunity for financially disadvantaged students.	3.58	HI
ASAP has minimal effect on improving student attendance and participation in school activities.	2.58	SI
ASAP helps reduce students' financial burden in pursuing their education.	3.44	HI
The selection process of beneficiaries lacks fairness and transparency.	2.34	SI
Proper documentation and record-keeping are maintained for ASAP implementation.	3.73	HI
The program does not significantly strengthen collaboration between the school and stakeholders.	2.25	SI
ASAP contributes to improved academic performance of student beneficiaries.	3.84	HI
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>MI</b>

Table 5 shows that the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) was moderately implemented overall, with a mean score of 3.05. Respondents positively rated aspects such as effective management by school administrators, improved academic performance, sufficient financial assistance, proper documentation, and clear communication of program objectives. Negatively worded indicators like

unclear implementation, delayed financial assistance, inadequate coverage of expenses, and irregular monitoring received low agreement, suggesting these issues were not prevalent. However, moderate concerns were noted about limited coordination between schools and local government units. Overall, ASAP was seen as providing valuable educational support that aided students in continuing their studies and reducing

financial burdens, though improvements in coordination and stakeholder collaboration are needed. These findings align with Human Capital Theory and support the

importance of well-managed educational assistance programs for academic and professional development.

**Table 6: Mean distribution of the level of career development of the respondents in terms of level of career awareness**

Statements	Mean	DI
I understand my strengths and weaknesses.	4.06	A
I am unsure about my interests and talents.	2.03	D
I am aware of different career opportunities related to my course.	3.97	A
I do not clearly know the qualifications needed for my chosen career.	2.26	D
I actively seek information about various professions.	3.75	A
I am not aware of labor market trends related to my field.	2.11	D
I understand the skills required in my preferred job.	3.71	A
I am not familiar with the educational requirements for my career goals.	2.29	D
I am aware of career paths available after graduation.	3.77	A
I do not recognize the importance of career planning.	1.83	D
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>MA</b>

Table 6 indicates that respondents demonstrated a moderate level of career awareness, with an overall mean of 2.98. They showed strong understanding of their strengths and weaknesses (mean 4.06) and were knowledgeable about career opportunities and actively sought related information. Respondents disagreed with negative statements about career planning, uncertainty about interests, and lack of awareness of labor market

trends, indicating good familiarity with career qualifications and educational requirements. These findings suggest that graduate students benefiting from educational assistance programs have a clear awareness of their professional goals and career paths. The results support Career Development Theory, highlighting the role of education in fostering career awareness and readiness.

**Table 7: Mean distribution of the level of career development of the respondents in terms of career planning.**

Statements	Mean	DI
I have clear career goals.	4.13	A
I have a step-by-step plan to achieve my career goals.	4.20	A
I set short-term academic goals.	4.08	A
I set long-term professional goals.	4.05	A
I regularly review my career plans.	3.99	A
I do not seek advice from teachers or mentors about my career.	1.99	D
I participate in activities that support my career goals.	4.03	A
I prepare academically for my future career.	3.93	A
I do not explore opportunities related to my chosen field.	2.00	D
I do not make decisions based on my future career plans.	1.69	D
<b>Category Mean</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>A</b>

Table 7 shows that respondents demonstrated a high level of career planning, with an overall mean of 3.41. They strongly agreed that they have clear, step-by-step plans to achieve their career goals and prepare academically for their futures. Negative statements about neglecting career decisions, advice, or opportunities were disagreed with, indicating positive career planning behaviors. The findings suggest that graduate students

are committed to informed academic and professional decisions that support their career aspirations. This aligns with Career Development Theory, which highlights career planning as essential to professional growth, and emphasizes the role of higher education and institutional support in fostering career readiness and long-term goal setting.

**Table 8: Mean distribution of the level of career development of the respondents in terms of career decision-making**

Statements	Mean	DI
I can confidently choose a career that aligns with my professional interests.	4.09	A
I consider multiple factors (e.g., specialization, industry demand, personal goals) before choosing a career path.	3.98	A
I do not gather sufficient information before making career-related decisions.	1.86	D
I evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different career options.	4.03	A
I feel confident about my chosen graduate program or field of specialization.	4.08	A

I can make independent decisions regarding my professional career.	4.15	A
I do not seek guidance from mentors, advisers, or professionals when making important career decisions.	1.95	D
I consider my competencies and expertise when selecting a career path.	4.08	A
I am not fully committed to my long-term professional career goals.	2.01	D
I can adjust my career plans based on emerging opportunities and challenges.	4.12	A
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>A</b>

Table 8 shows that respondents exhibited a high level of career decision-making, with an overall mean of 3.44. They expressed strong confidence in making independent, well-informed career choices and considering multiple factors before deciding. Respondents disagreed with negative statements about insufficient information gathering, lack of guidance, and

weak commitment, indicating positive decision-making behaviors. These findings suggest that graduate students are capable, committed, and adaptable in managing their careers. The results support Career Development Theory, highlighting the role of education and experience in enhancing career decision-making skills, professional identity, and employability.

**Table 9: Mean distribution of the level of career development of the respondents in terms of career preparation.**

Statements	Mean	DI
I actively strive to achieve strong academic performance in my graduate studies.	4.22	SA
I participate in seminars, trainings, and workshops related to my field of specialization.	4.18	A
I continuously develop the skills required for my future career.	4.23	SA
I engage in professional or extracurricular activities aligned with my interests.	4.34	SA
I do not prepare essential career documents such as a résumé, curriculum vitae, or professional portfolio.	1.90	D
I practice and enhance my communication and interpersonal skills.	4.11	A
I do not actively seek internship, practicum, or relevant training opportunities.	1.85	D
I build professional networks that may support my future career.	4.09	A
I am not fully prepared to face job interviews or professional screening processes.	1.90	D
I continuously improve myself to enhance my career readiness.	4.33	SA
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>A</b>

Table 9 shows that respondents demonstrated a high level of career preparation, with an overall mean of 3.52. They actively engaged in professional and extracurricular activities, skill development, and building professional networks. Respondents disagreed with negative statements about neglecting internships, career documentation, and interview preparation, indicating positive preparation behaviors. The findings

suggest strong commitment to career readiness through continuous development and practical experience. This aligns with Human Capital Theory, emphasizing education and training as key to enhancing skills, productivity, and career opportunities, and highlights the role of graduate education in preparing students for future professional demands.

**Table 10: Test of significant relationship between the extent of ASAP implementation and the level of career development in terms of career awareness**

Parameter	Mean	SD	Pearson r	p-value	DI
Extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP)	3.32	0.29	0.081	0.317	Accept Ho
Level of career development of the respondents in terms of Career Awareness	2.98	0.22			

Table 10 shows a very weak, positive, but non-significant relationship between the implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and respondents' career awareness ( $r = 0.081$ ,  $p = 0.317$ ). Since the p-value exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant link between ASAP implementation and career awareness. The findings suggest that career awareness is more influenced by

personal experiences, academic exposure, and professional environments than by financial assistance alone. While ASAP helps reduce financial burdens and support continued education, it does not directly impact students' career awareness. This aligns with Career Development Theory, which highlights the role of broader life experiences and educational exposure in developing career awareness.

**Table 11: Test of significant relationship between the extent of ASAP implementation and the level of career development in terms of career planning**

Parameter	Mean	SD	Pearson r	p-value	DI
Extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP)	3.32	0.29	-0.009	0.908	Accept Ho
Level of career development of the respondents in terms of Career Planning	3.40	0.25			

Table 11 indicates a negligible negative and non-significant relationship between the implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and respondents' career planning ( $r = -0.009$ ,  $p = 0.908$ ). Since the p-value exceeds 0.05, there is no significant connection between ASAP implementation and career planning. The findings suggest that career planning is influenced more by personal motivation, family support,

career guidance, academic experiences, and professional exposure than by financial assistance alone. While ASAP helps reduce financial burdens, it does not directly impact students' long-term career goal setting. This aligns with Human Capital and Career Development theories, which emphasize the gradual development of career planning through personal and educational experiences beyond financial aid.

**Table 12: Test of significant relationship between the extent of ASAP implementation and the level of career development in terms of career decision-making**

Parameter	Mean	SD	Pearson r	p-value	DI
Extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP)	3.32	0.29	-0.148	0.068	Accept Ho
Level of career development of the respondents in terms of Career Decision-Making	3.44	0.24			

Table 12 shows a very weak negative and non-significant relationship between the implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and respondents' career decision-making ( $r = -0.148$ ,  $p = 0.068$ ). With a p-value above 0.05, there is no significant link between ASAP implementation and career decision-making. The findings suggest that career decisions are

shaped more by personal interests, specialization, experiences, self-concept, and values than by financial assistance. While ASAP provides financial support, it does not directly influence career choices. This aligns with Career Development Theory, which emphasizes the role of personal and environmental factors in career decision-making beyond educational aid.

**Table 13: Test of significant relationship between the extent of ASAP implementation and the level of career development in terms of career preparation**

Parameter	Mean	SD	Pearson r	p-value	DI
Extent of implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP)	3.32	0.29	0.132	0.103	Accept Ho
Level of career development of the respondents in terms of Career Preparation	3.52	0.25			

Table 13 reveals a very weak positive but non-significant relationship between the implementation of the Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) and respondents' career preparation ( $r = 0.132$ ,  $p = 0.103$ ), indicating no significant association. The findings suggest that career preparation depends more on personal initiative, experiences, training, and mentorship than on financial aid alone. Although ASAP supports students financially, it does not directly enhance their readiness for professional roles, consistent with Human Capital and Career Development theories emphasizing ongoing learning and engagement. Results should be clearly presented with appropriate references, and discussions should interpret the findings' importance without repetition, possibly separating results and discussion sections.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Apayao Student Assistance Program (ASAP) was moderately implemented and generally helped graduate school beneficiaries in Conner; Apayao continue their studies by providing educational assistance and reducing financial difficulties. The respondents demonstrated a moderate level of career awareness and high levels of career planning, career decision-making, and career preparation. However, the study revealed that there was no significant relationship between the extent of implementation of ASAP and the respondents' career development in terms of career

awareness, career planning, career decision-making, and career preparation. Therefore, the study concluded that while ASAP supports the educational needs of graduate school beneficiaries, career development may still be influenced more by personal, academic, professional, and environmental factors beyond educational assistance alone.

### Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Author(s) hereby declares that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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