

# Social Stigma and the Academic Performance of Social Science College Students

Ernest D. Padiwan, Shella Marie V. Manatad, Julie Ann L. Benemerito

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College-Tagudin Campus, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100300466>

Received: 26 March 2026; Accepted: 31 March 2026; Published: 13 April 2026

## ABSTRACT

Academic performance is conditioned by varied factors such as the teaching modality, learning environment, family background, peer influence, and the challenges met in the academic journey. One of which is social stigma felt by students from students of other programs, instructors and professors and academic leaders. This has been a phenomenon among social science students of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College. The study examined the relationship between social stigma and academic performance among Bachelor of Arts in Social Science (BASS) students at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College–Tagudin Campus and developed an infographic material to promote inclusivity and student support. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 60 purposively selected students through a validated questionnaire adapted from Goffman’s stigma framework, complemented by academic records. Correlation analysis determined the association between social stigma and academic performance, while a developmental phase focused on designing an infographic material to address the stigma. Findings showed that most respondents are female, aged 20–21, and from low-income households earning less than ₱10,000 per month. Students demonstrated high academic performance as they experienced moderate social stigma particularly fear of judgment, and verbal remarks undermining confidence, and coped primarily through resistance strategies, including working harder academically, expressing opinions, seeking support, and using stigma as motivation while avoiding judgmental situations was also common. There is no significant relationship between profile and social stigma and likewise academic performance. Further, the perceived social stigma does not influence the respondents’ academic performance. It is inferred that social stigma is experienced by BASS students regardless of their gender, age, family income, or academic standing but this serves as structural motivation for them to pursue and finish the program. It is suggested that the BASS Program and the whole CAS Department should implement anti-stigma campaigns, inclusive teaching strategies, resilience training, peer mentoring, academic support programs, and formally adopt the infographic material to foster understanding, gain self-trust, reduce stigma, and enhance student engagement towards academic success.

**Index Terms-** Social stigma, academic performance, infographic material

## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a huge role in shaping not just a student’s future career, but also their confidence, identity, and place in society. While academic success is often linked to intelligence, hard work, and access to learning resources, students’ experiences in school are also deeply affected by the social environment around them. How students are treated by peers, teachers, and the wider academic community can strongly influence how they learn and how they see themselves.

One important social factor that shapes students’ academic lives is social perception and stigma. Stigma refers to negative judgments, stereotypes, or discriminatory attitudes directed at individuals because of certain traits, behaviors, or social identities (Goffman, 1963). In schools and universities, this may appear in the form of criticism about a student’s academic performance, the program they are enrolled in, their family’s socioeconomic status, or aspects of their personal identity. When students experience stigma, it can affect their self-confidence, reduce their motivation to participate in class, and limit their sense of belonging in the academic environment.

Over time, these experiences may negatively influence their engagement and overall academic performance (Link & Phelan, 2001).

Studies indicate that social stigma in school settings is not an isolated experience but a widespread phenomenon affecting a substantial proportion of students. International surveys suggest that a significant number of learners, particularly those from marginalized groups, non-prestigious academic tracks, or lower socioeconomic backgrounds, experience stigma, labeling, or negative stereotyping within educational institutions (UNESCO, 2019; OECD, 2017). Research by Juvonen, Wang, and Espinoza (2011) found that students who experience social stigma or peer-based discrimination are more likely to show disengagement from school, lower academic achievement, and higher absenteeism. Moreover, a meta-analysis by Pascoe and Richman (2009) demonstrated that perceived discrimination and stigma are strongly associated with poorer academic performance, reduced cognitive functioning, and increased academic stress. These findings suggest that social stigma operates as a structural barrier to learning, undermining students' academic confidence, motivation, and overall educational outcomes.

International studies have documented the significant effects of social stigma on students' learning and psychological outcomes. Students from minority ethnic or low-income backgrounds often face discrimination, which leads to social isolation, decreased participation in classroom activities, and lower academic performance (Crosnoe & Muller, 2004). Similarly, research in Asian contexts highlights that students who are labeled or stereotyped based on their program, social background, or perceived ability may internalize these judgments, resulting in lower motivation, increased stress, and avoidance of academic challenges (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Goffman (1963) emphasized that individuals labeled as socially devalued internalize negative perceptions, reducing engagement and self-confidence, while Link and Phelan (2001) noted that internalized stigma diminishes self-efficacy and persistence in learning tasks.

In the Philippine context, perceptions and stigma toward specific academic programs are particularly noticeable. At Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College–Tagudin Campus (ISPSC–Tagudin), Bachelor of Arts in Social Science (BASS) students sometimes experience negative perceptions from peers, with some viewing the program as less preferred or an easier program compared to other. These localized perceptions constitute a form of social stigma that affect the students' confidence, classroom participation, and academic performance. Supporting this, Nugroho, Haq, and Thalia (2025) emphasized that social stigma can influence students' engagement and motivation in academic settings, highlighting the importance of understanding students' responses to negative perceptions.

However, research from other universities suggests that such negative perceptions are not universal. Social science and liberal arts programs in institutions such as the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Faculty of Arts and Letters and De La Salle University College of Liberal Arts are recognized for academic rigor, holistic formation, and career-relevant outcomes (UST, n.d.; Daily Tribune, 2025). Students in these programs develop strong academic identities and engagement when the curriculum, institutional culture, and faculty support emphasize the intellectual and societal value of social sciences, rather than purely economic or vocational metrics (Boy et al., 2022). These findings suggest that program-based stigma is shaped more by local cultural, economic, and institutional factors than by the inherent quality of the program itself.

Social stigma does not affect all students in the same way. Some students accept the negative perceptions, internalizing them in ways that may lower self-esteem and academic motivation. Others resist, striving to demonstrate competence, engage actively in their studies, and challenge stereotypes. These responses are crucial to understanding the overall impact of stigma on academic performance and emotional well-being (Major & O'Brien, 2005).

The influence of stigma on academic outcomes can also be explained through several theoretical frameworks. Goffman's Stigma Theory (1963) posits that individuals labeled as socially devalued internalize negative perceptions, reducing engagement and motivation. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) emphasizes that students' perceptions of the social environment shape self-efficacy, motivation, and behavior; students who feel marginalized may avoid academic tasks, leading to lower performance (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory (1984) suggests that stigma functions as a stressor, and students' coping

strategies determine whether it results in anxiety, disengagement, or adaptive behaviors that maintain performance. Together, these frameworks underscore the importance of both perceived stigma and students' responses (acceptance or resistance) in shaping academic outcomes.

Addressing social stigma is aligned with global development priorities. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize inclusive growth, equity, and well-being. SDG 4: Quality Education highlights the importance of inclusive and equitable education for all learners. Stigma and negative perceptions act as barriers to participation, motivation, and achievement. By fostering supportive environments that minimize stigma, educational institutions promote equal access, student engagement, and academic success. SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being recognizes that mental health is essential for learning; stigma can cause anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal, which negatively affect concentration and performance. Addressing stigma and discriminatory practices is essential to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), because both goals explicitly aim to eliminate discrimination and promote equitable opportunities for all individuals, particularly those historically marginalized by stigma (United Nations, 2015; World Health Organization, 2021).

Despite the recognition of stigma in general student populations, a research gap exists regarding BASS students at ISPSC–Tagudin. Few studies have investigated how social stigma affects academic performance, or how students respond through acceptance, resistance, and coping strategies. Understanding these dynamics is essential for determining whether stigma hinders learning or whether students' resilience allows them to maintain engagement and success.

This study is important because these perceptions often arise due to circumstances beyond the students' control. BASS frequently accommodates students who cannot continue in their first-choice program, making it appear as a fallback option. Some view it as “basta-basta lang” because they assume students did not deliberately choose it, while others consider it a last-choice program since it is often the only option available for students who cannot be accommodated in other courses. However, these views overlook the fact that BASS provides opportunities for students with limited options, and enrollment is based on necessity rather than academic ability. Understanding these perceptions is essential because they may contribute to social stigma, which can affect students' academic engagement, self-esteem, and coping strategies. Examining these dynamics allows the study to explore how BASS students maintain performance and resilience despite societal misconceptions.

This study is important because these perceptions often arise due to circumstances beyond the students' control. BASS frequently accommodates students who cannot continue in their first-choice program, making it appear as a fallback option. Some view it as “basta-basta lang” because they assume students did not deliberately choose it, while others consider it a last-choice program since it is often the only option available for students who cannot be accommodated in other courses. However, these views overlook the fact that BASS provides opportunities for students with limited options, and enrollment is based on necessity rather than academic ability. Understanding these perceptions is essential because they may contribute to social stigma, which can affect students' academic engagement, self-esteem, and coping strategies. Examining these dynamics allows the study to explore how BASS students maintain performance and resilience despite societal misconceptions.

This study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship between social stigma and the academic performance of BASS students, considering emotional well-being and coping strategies as mediating factors. By focusing on BASS students at ISPSC–Tagudin, the research contributes to local educational knowledge while also providing insights for creating supportive and inclusive learning environments, aligning with broader goals of equity, mental health, and inclusive education.

Through this study, the relationship between social stigma and academic performance is systematically measured across key dimensions, including experiences of discrimination, acceptance and resistance, self-concept, and social interaction. By quantifying these factors, the research seeks to understand how each aspect of stigma may influence students' learning outcomes, while highlighting the roles of emotional well-being and coping strategies in mitigating negative effects. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence that can guide the development of data-driven interventions, support programs, and institutional policies, fostering a more inclusive, understanding, and equitable academic environment. In doing so, the study not only advances local

knowledge on student experiences but also supports wider efforts to promote mental health, engagement, and academic success for all students.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded on three foundational theories: Goffman's Stigma Theory (1963), Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), and Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory (1984). These theories together provide a multidimensional lens for understanding how social stigma influences the academic performance of Bachelor of Arts in Social Science (BASS) students at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College–Tagudin Campus. By combining insights from sociology, psychology, and education, the framework allows us to examine the social, emotional, and behavioral processes that underlie student experiences in the face of stigma.

Goffman's Stigma Theory (1963) highlights how individuals who are labeled or socially devalued may internalize negative perceptions, which can have profound effects on self-esteem, motivation, and confidence. In the context of BASS students, stigma often manifests through peer perceptions that the program is a “tapunan ng shifters” or a “last choice”, suggesting that the program is less rigorous, less prestigious, or a fallback option. Such labels can subtly or overtly affect students' self-concept, shaping how they view their own capabilities, value, and place within the academic community.

These negative perceptions may influence students' willingness to participate in class, engage in discussions, or collaborate with peers. Goffman (1963) proposed that individuals generally respond to stigma in one of two ways. First, acceptance occurs when students internalize these labels, believing the negative perceptions are true. This internalization can lower engagement, hinder motivation, and reduce overall academic performance. Second, resistance occurs when students actively challenge stigma by striving for academic success, seeking peer support, or pursuing mentorship from instructors (Pingani et al., 2016). Observing peers who resist stigma, receiving validation from faculty, or experiencing moments of personal achievement can reinforce resistance, allowing students to counteract negative labels. Conversely, without these supports, internalization of stigma may lead to decreased engagement, social withdrawal, or poorer academic outcomes (Chaudoir, Earnshaw & Andel, 2013).

While Goffman's theory illuminates the social dimensions of stigma, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) focuses on the interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and observed behaviors. This theory explains how BASS students' perceptions of stigma may influence self-efficacy, or their belief in their ability to perform academically. Students who perceive their program as undervalued may hesitate to engage in challenging tasks, participate in group projects, or contribute to class discussions, fearing negative judgment or ridicule. On the other hand, observing peers who confront stigma successfully, receiving positive reinforcement from faculty, and being part of a supportive learning environment can strengthen students' resilience, confidence, and engagement (Major & O'Brien, 2005; Freire et al., 2020). In this way, the learning environment not only shapes behavior through direct feedback but also provides social modeling, demonstrating that resistance is both possible and valued.

Bandura's theory also underscores the dynamic nature of social interactions within the classroom. Social stigma is not experienced in isolation; it is embedded in peer relationships, classroom dynamics, and institutional culture. Observing the successes of classmates who have overcome similar challenges can enhance self-efficacy and promote adaptive behaviors, while negative experiences, such as peer rejection or labeling, can undermine motivation and increase the likelihood of withdrawal or disengagement. This interplay between observation, environment, and personal belief systems is critical for understanding how stigma translates into measurable academic outcomes.

Lazarus and Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory (1984) complements these perspectives by emphasizing the emotional and psychological processes involved. According to this theory, stressors such as social stigma impact individuals differently depending on how they appraise and respond to them. For BASS students, stigma can function as a psychosocial stressor, provoking feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, or diminished self-worth. These emotional reactions may interfere with concentration, disrupt study habits, and reduce participation in academic

activities. Importantly, the way students cope with these stressors can determine whether stigma has a temporary or lasting impact on academic performance.

Students may employ a range of coping strategies to manage stigma. Adaptive strategies, such as seeking social support, practicing positive self-talk, setting achievable goals, and reframing negative experiences, can buffer the harmful effects of stigma. Students who employ these strategies are more likely to maintain engagement, participate actively in class, and achieve better General Weighted Average (GWA) outcomes. Conversely, maladaptive coping such as avoidance, withdrawal, or acceptance of negative labels can exacerbate the emotional burden, leading to disengagement and lower academic performance (Berjot & Gillet, 2011).

The framework also recognizes that students’ individual profiles including gender, age, and socioeconomic background moderate how stigma is perceived and responded to. Research indicates that demographic and socioeconomic factors influence how students interpret social interactions and academic experiences (Çamaş & Yalçın, 2021). For example, students from lower-income families may experience heightened sensitivity to peer judgment due to limited access to resources or social capital.

Taken together, this framework presents a sequential and interactive model: students’ profiles influence the degree and perception of social stigma, which in turn affects emotional well-being, including self-esteem, motivation, and engagement. Students respond to stigma through acceptance or resistance, which mediates the relationship between stigma and emotional well-being. Finally, coping strategies modulate these effects, ultimately influencing academic performance as measured by GWA. Acceptance of stigma may lead to disengagement and lower achievement, whereas resistance, combined with effective coping, can foster resilience, persistence, and higher academic outcomes.

This study further expands upon these concepts by examining specific, measurable dimensions of stigma: discrimination, acceptance and resistance, self-concept, and social interaction. By operationalizing these dimensions, the study not only evaluates the psychological and emotional consequences of stigma but also investigates the social dynamics within the academic environment. Understanding these mechanisms provides a holistic picture of how BASS students navigate challenges associated with stigma and how interventions such as mentorship programs, peer support, and inclusive classroom practices can promote equity and academic success.

By integrating these three theoretical perspectives, the framework offers a comprehensive lens through which to understand the social, psychological, and behavioral mechanisms affecting BASS students’ learning outcomes. It underscores the importance of not only addressing stigma but also fostering environments that promote resilience, self-efficacy, and well-being, ultimately supporting students’ academic and personal growth.

Figure 1. Research Paradigm

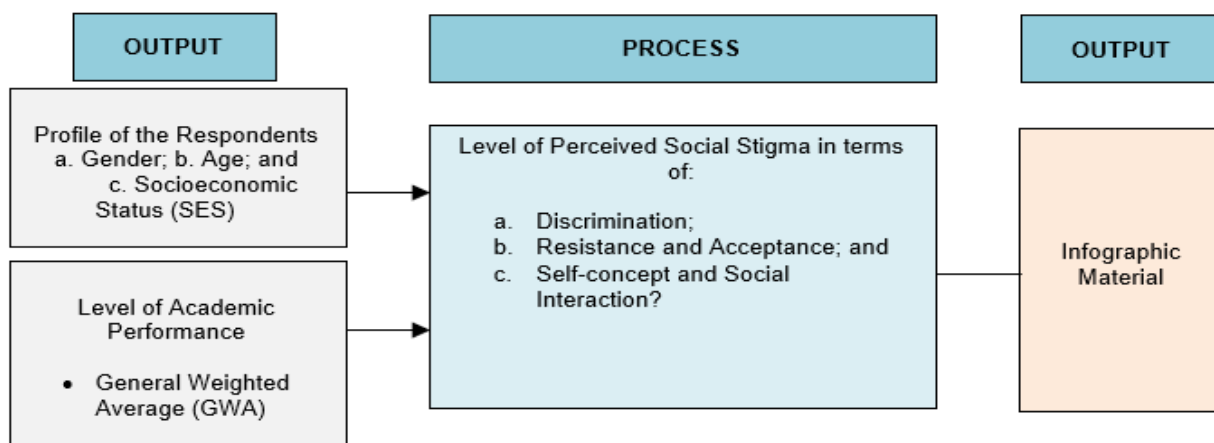


Figure 1 presents the research paradigm of the study using the Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model. The input includes the respondents’ profile in terms of gender, age, and socioeconomic status, as well as the level of academic performance of BASS students measured through their General Weighted Average (GWA). These

inputs provide the necessary data for the study. The process involves analyzing the level of perceived social stigma experienced by the students in terms of discrimination, resistance and acceptance, and self-concept and social interaction to determine whether these factors are related to their profile and academic performance. The output of the study is the development of an infographic material that presents the findings and aims to raise awareness about the social stigma experienced by BASS students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study determined the relationship between perceived social stigma and the academic performance of BASS students of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - a. gender;
  - b. age; and
  - c. socioeconomic status (SES)?
2. What is the level of academic performance of BASS students of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus based on their General Weighted Average (GWA)?
3. What is the level of perceived social stigma experienced by BASS students of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus along:
  - a. discrimination;
  - b. resistance and acceptance; and
  - c. self-concept and social Interaction?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of BASS students and their perceived social stigma?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the academic performance of BASS students and their perceived social stigma?
6. What infographic may be developed and utilized to lessen, if not eradicate, the social stigma experienced by BASS students?

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design, followed by a developmental research design, to comprehensively address the objectives of the study.

Descriptive research design is concerned with describing the characteristics of a population, phenomenon, or situation as it naturally occurs, without manipulating variables (Creswell, 2014). According to Polit and Beck (2012), descriptive research aims to observe, describe, and document aspects of a situation as it exists, providing an accurate portrayal of participants' conditions, experiences, or perceptions. In this study, the descriptive research design was used to determine the level of social stigma experienced by Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences (BASS) students at ISPSC–Tagudin Campus and to assess their academic performance. In addition, the study utilized a correlational research design to examine the relationship between social stigma and academic performance. Correlational research aims to determine the degree of relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them and without implying causation (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, according to Polit and Beck (2012), correlational studies explore associations among variables to determine whether relationships exist and how strong those relationships may be. Through correlational analysis, the researchers were able to identify

whether a significant relationship exists between perceived social stigma and students' academic performance. After establishing and analyzing the existing conditions through descriptive–correlational research, the study employed a developmental research design. Developmental research focuses on the systematic design, development, and evaluation of an intervention, program, or framework intended to address a specific problem or improve existing conditions (Richey & Klein, 2007). In this study, the developmental approach was used to develop a proposed intervention program aimed at addressing the effects of social stigma on students' academic performance. The developmental phase was anchored on the results of the descriptive and correlational analyses. The identified level of social stigma and the findings regarding its relationship with academic performance served as the basis for designing an intervention or support program that may help reduce social stigma and enhance students' academic outcomes. Through this combined approach, the study not only described and analyzed the current situation of BASS students but also generated a practical and context-based intervention that can be utilized by the institution to support students' academic success.

### **Population and Sample**

The locale of this study is the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC)–Tagudin Campus, where the Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences (BASS) program is offered. The campus was chosen because it provides an appropriate academic setting to examine issues related to social stigma and its possible effects on students' academic performance. BASS students were selected as respondents since they are directly involved in the program being investigated and may experience social stigma within the academic environment.

The population of the study consisted of BASS students from first year to fourth year enrolled at ISPSC–Tagudin Campus during the Academic Year 2025–2026. The study employed a purposive random sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used to intentionally select respondents who met specific criteria, namely being officially enrolled as BASS students, while random selection was applied within each year level to ensure fairness and representation (Nikolopoulou, 2022). A total of 60 BASS students who are willing to participate in the study and who experienced social stigma compose the study's universe. The respondents were selected using a purposive random sampling method, ensuring that participants were most relevant to the objectives of the study while still allowing for random selection within the target population. This approach provided a representative sample of BASS students, enabling the collection of accurate and meaningful data to assess the relationship between social stigma and academic performance at ISPSC–Tagudin Campus.

### **Data Gathering Instrument**

To collect data for this study, the researchers utilized an adapted research questionnaire based on the social stigma framework of Irving Goffman (1963). The instrument was carefully modified to fit the experiences of BASS students at ISPSC–Tagudin Campus, while additional items were adopted and refined from relevant online academic sources to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Before administration, the questionnaire was reviewed and revised to ensure that all items were clear, appropriate, and capable of addressing the research questions effectively.

The first part (Part I) of the questionnaire gathered the profile of the respondents, including demographic information such as gender and other relevant background data. This allowed the researchers to understand the characteristics of the participants and ensure a representative sample from each year level. The second part (Part II) explored the level of social stigma experienced by BASS students, examining experiences of discrimination, the ways students accept or resist stigma, and how social stigma affects their self-concept and social interactions with peers. This section aimed to capture both the personal and social effects of stigma in the students' academic and social environment. The third part (Part III) focused on academic performance, which was measured objectively through the respondents' grades. Using grades as an indicator allowed the researchers to analyze the relationship between social stigma and academic outcomes, providing a reliable and quantifiable measure of performance.

To facilitate data collection, the questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms, while printed copies were provided for respondents with limited or no internet access. This ensured that all selected participants could respond, making the data collection process inclusive and effective.

## Data Gathering Procedure

To collect data for this study, an adapted questionnaire was used to measure the social stigma experienced by Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences (BASS) students and its relationship to their academic performance. Prior to its administration, the survey questionnaire was subjected to content validation by three (3) research experts to ensure the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items. The suggestions and recommendations of the validators were carefully reviewed and incorporated to improve the final version of the instrument.

After the validation process, the researchers prepared and sent a formal communication letter to the Campus Director of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus to request permission to conduct the study and administer the questionnaire to the selected respondents. Upon approval, the researchers proceeded with the data collection.

Before administering the questionnaire, informed consent was obtained, and participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their rights as respondents, and the confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms, while printed copies were provided to students with limited or no internet access to ensure inclusivity and a higher response rate.

The respondents were given a specific period to complete the questionnaire, and follow-ups were conducted to encourage participation. After data collection, the responses were carefully reviewed for completeness and accuracy, and the students' grades were collected with proper consent as an objective measure of academic performance. All gathered data were then encoded, organized, and analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS or Microsoft Excel to generate meaningful interpretations and conclusions regarding the relationship between social stigma and academic performance.

## Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were statistically treated using appropriate statistical tools to answer the specific sub-problems of the research.

For Sub-problem #1, which focuses on the profile of the respondents, frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences (BASS) students at ISPSC–Tagudin Campus.

For Sub-problem #2, which seeks to determine the academic performance of BASS students, document analysis was employed. The students' General Weighted Average (GWA) was obtained from official academic records, with proper consent, to describe their overall academic standing.

For Sub-problem #3, which aims to determine the level of social stigma experienced by BASS students in terms of discrimination, acceptance or resistance, and self-concept and social interaction, the weighted mean was utilized. The computed values were interpreted using a descriptive rating scale to determine the level of social stigma experienced by the respondents.

For Sub-problem #4, which determines the significant relationship between respondents' profile and social stigma, the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was used. The  $r$ -value determined the strength and direction of the relationship, while the  $p$ -value was used to test the level of significance at a specified alpha level.

For Sub-problem #5, which examines the significant relationship between academic performance and social stigma, the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was likewise employed. The computed  $r$ -value indicated the degree of relationship between the variables, and the  $p$ -value determined whether the relationship was statistically significant.

For Sub-problem #6, which aims to identify the infographics to be developed and utilized to lessen social stigma, no statistical computation was performed. The development of the infographics was anchored on the results of the descriptive and correlational analyses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, and socio-economic status (SES).

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents		
Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	16	26.67
Female	40	66.67
LGBTQIA+	4	6.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age		
18-19	11	18.33
20-21	28	46.67
22-23	11	18.33
24 and above	10	16.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Socioeconomic Status		
Less than ₱10,000	54	90.00
₱10,001 - ₱20,000	5	8.33
₱20,001 - ₱30,000	1	1.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Gender

In Table 1, the study's findings indicate that most respondents are female, with 40 out of 60 participants (66.67%) identifying as such. Male respondents account for 16 participants (26.67%), while LGBTQIA+ respondents make up 4 participants (6.67%). This predominantly female sample may influence the broader interpretation of the results, as it could reflect or skew insights into academic experiences that are more common among women. Educational research underscores the significant role gender plays in students' academic journeys and achievements, often highlighting how societal expectations and biological factors intertwine to shape outcomes.

For instance, Sevilla et al. (2024) explain that female students often perform well in language-based and social science subjects because they are more internally motivated, actively participate in class discussions, and maintain regular study habits. This can be observed among BASS students, who often show enthusiasm during discussions, prefer group activities, and show genuine interest in social issues that are central to their course. From the researchers' perspective, this indicates that many BASS students are not just studying to comply with academic requirements but are motivated by their interest in understanding real-life social problems, which helps them maintain stable academic performance.

Likewise, Pesado et al. (2024) note that women generally stronger persistence and organizational skills, such as managing their time well, taking organized notes, and meeting deadlines. Among BASS students, these skills are evident in their ability to handle reading-intensive subjects, complete research-based tasks, and remain committed to long-term academic projects like research papers and fieldwork. In the researchers' view, this suggests that these qualities help BASS students manage academic pressures more effectively and avoid excessive stress, leading to more consistent academic performance over time.

Nonetheless, despite the evident strengths and academic dedication of female students, gender-related challenges such as stereotype threat may still influence their academic self-perception. Steele (1997) explains that exposure to negative gender stereotypes can lead to anxiety, self-doubt, and reduced participation in learning activities, even among capable and motivated students. From the researcher's perspective, this suggests that female BASS student while demonstrating strong motivation, persistence, and organizational skills may still internalize subtle forms of gender-based stigma present in academic spaces. This internalization can affect how confidently they express ideas, particularly in discussion- and debate-oriented classes that are central to the BASS program. For example, a student may hesitate to participate in class discussions or leadership roles due to fear of being judged or stereotyped, which may limit her learning opportunities and academic growth. From the researchers' standpoint, this indicates that academic performance is not solely shaped by ability or effort but is also significantly influenced by the learning environment and the presence of gender-based expectations that can quietly hinder student engagement.

The findings of the study suggest that gender continues to influence students' academic experiences, even among those who demonstrate strong motivation and academic skills. Despite the positive traits commonly observed among female BASS students, such as active engagement and persistence, the presence of gender-based stereotypes may still affect their confidence and willingness to participate fully in classroom activities. This implies that academic performance and participation are shaped not only by students' abilities, but also by the learning environment and social expectations within the institution. If left unaddressed, subtle forms of gender-related stigma may limit students' academic growth, particularly in discussion-heavy courses where self-expression is essential.

In response to these implications, educational institutions are encouraged to implement gender-sensitive practices that promote inclusive and supportive learning environments. This may include using mixed-gender group activities, anonymous participation tools, and structured discussion formats to ensure equal opportunities for student participation. Schools may also conduct awareness programs, such as seminars or workshops, to help students and faculty recognize and challenge gender stereotypes. Additionally, mentorship programs and policies that support balanced gender representation in leadership and academic roles are recommended. These initiatives can help build students' confidence, encourage active engagement, and foster an academic environment where gender is viewed as a strength rather than a barrier.

## Age

From Table 1, an examination of respondents' ages shows that the largest group consists of students aged 20–21, with 28 participants (46.67%). The 18–19 and 22–23 age groups each include 11 participants (18.33%), while those aged 24 and older form the smallest group at 10 participants (16.67%). Overall, the sample is primarily composed of young adults navigating the transition from adolescence to full adulthood. From the researchers' perspective, this age distribution is important because it reflects a stage where students are balancing academic responsibilities with emerging personal and social obligations, such as part-time jobs, relationships, or family duties, which may influence study habits, time management, and classroom engagement.

Age demonstrably affects students' social awareness, emotional growth, and handling of academic challenges. Arnett (2015) characterizes emerging adulthood as a period marked by identity exploration, social flux, and heightened sensitivity to peer evaluation. From the researchers' viewpoint, this suggests that BASS students aged 20–21 may be particularly attentive to how they are perceived by classmates, which could affect participation in discussions, willingness to take academic risks, and classroom confidence. Muñoz, Morales, and Karstensen (2024) note that individuals in this age bracket are keenly aware of peer opinions, increasing vulnerability to anxiety and stress related to social perceptions. This indicates that some BASS students may experience

heightened concern about how their contributions are viewed, potentially leading to self-censorship or hesitation in group activities. Erikson (1968) similarly emphasizes that late adolescence and early adulthood involve ongoing identity formation, where students are still solidifying their sense of self, making them highly responsive to external evaluations such as exams or presentations. This reinforces the idea that feedback or evaluative settings may feel particularly personal for BASS students, which can influence motivation, confidence, and engagement.

The age distribution of BASS students has important implications for their academic experiences. Students aged 20–21, who make up the largest group, may be especially sensitive to social stigma and peer judgment, which could affect their participation in class discussions, willingness to speak in debates, or performance in presentations. Younger students, such as those aged 18–19, might face challenges with self-confidence and peer acceptance, making it harder for them to assert themselves in competitive or group settings. In contrast, older students, those aged 24 and above, may have developed stronger coping skills through life experiences, which can help them manage academic pressures and social challenges more effectively. Understanding these age-related differences allows educators to anticipate potential barriers and provide tailored support to enhance participation, confidence, and overall academic performance among students at different stages of emerging adulthood.

To navigate these issues, institutions can introduce supportive frameworks that are tailored to developmental needs. Peer mentoring initiatives could pair older students with younger ones for guidance on handling social pressures. Counseling services might offer sessions focused on building emotional resilience, such as cognitive behavioral techniques to reframe negative thoughts. Resilience-focused workshops could teach practical skills like stress management or assertive communication. These resources can equip students to manage social pressures, minimize stigma's detrimental effects, and elevate their academic outcomes, fostering a sense of community and belonging that buffers against age-related vulnerabilities.

### **Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

As depicted in Table 1, the socioeconomic breakdown of respondents shows that 54 of the 60 participants (90.00%) come from households earning less than ₱10,000 per month, highlighting a predominance of low-income backgrounds among BASS students. Five respondents (8.33%) report monthly incomes between ₱10,001 and ₱20,000, and one participant (1.67%) falls in the ₱20,001–₱30,000 range, with no students indicating incomes above ₱30,000. From the researchers' perspective, this economic profile suggests that the majority of BASS students face material challenges that compete with educational priorities, such as affording school supplies, transportation, or access to technology. The researchers further observed that these constraints may affect not only academic performance but also students' ability to engage fully in class activities, manage their time effectively, and participate in school-related opportunities.

Sirin (2005) emphasizes that low SES limits access to essential learning resources, including textbooks, online tools, tutoring, and technology, which can hinder academic achievement. From the researchers' perspective, this means that BASS students may need to work harder to access the same opportunities as peers from higher-income families. The researchers note that these students often develop resilience and problem-solving skills to overcome such barriers, but the added effort may contribute to stress or fatigue, which could influence both their academic outcomes and well-being.

In addition, Bourdieu (1986) introduces the concept of cultural capital, highlighting that economically disadvantaged students face systemic barriers in environments shaped by middle- and upper-class norms, such as unspoken expectations around extracurricular involvement or networking. BASS students may feel pressure to conform to these norms, which can impact confidence, classroom participation, and willingness to seek help. The researcher further observes that understanding these cultural and social dynamics is crucial, as interventions should not only provide resources but also create inclusive environments that recognize and validate students' diverse experiences.

Moreover, Reay (2017) points out that SES-related stigma in higher education can reduce students' sense of belonging and engagement, leading to lower participation in classroom and academic activities. This suggests

that low-income BASS students might hesitate to interact fully in group activities or take leadership roles due to fear of judgment. The researchers note that fostering supportive and non-judgmental environments is key to counteracting stigma and encouraging active engagement, helping students feel valued regardless of economic background.

The findings indicate that economic circumstances can influence academic performance directly, through limited resources, and indirectly, through social and psychological pressures. Low-income students may experience stress and anxiety related to financial constraints, which can disrupt study routines and limit participation in extracurricular or academic activities. This interplay between material and social pressures underscores the importance of comprehensive support systems that address both the practical and emotional needs of students.

To surmount these challenges, institutions can implement targeted supports tailored to students’ economic realities. Expanding financial assistance programs, ensuring access to learning resources, offering mentorship, and creating inclusive spaces can strengthen engagement and promote a sense of belonging. Combining these strategies not only mitigates the impact of SES barriers but also fosters resilience, self-efficacy, and academic growth among BASS students, ensuring they can reach their full potential.

**Level of Academic Performance of BASS Students**

As shown in Table 2, the academic performance of BASS students, as measured by the General Weighted Average (GWA), indicates a generally strong academic standing across the cohort. Among the 60 respondents, 36 students (60%) achieved a “Very Good” rating (1.51–2.0), demonstrating that the majority consistently maintain above-average performance. Twenty students (33%) were rated "Good/Average" (2.01–2.5), suggesting satisfactory performance with potential for improvement, while only 2 students each fell into the "Excellent/Superior" (1.0–1.5) and "Satisfactory/Fair" (2.51–3.0) categories. The Grand Mean GWA for the group is 1.95, corresponding to a "Very Good" descriptive equivalent, reflecting strong overall achievement within the program.

Table 2. Level of Academic Performance		
GWA	Frequency (f)	Descriptive Equivalent Rating
1.0 - 1.5	2	Excellent / Superior
1.51 - 2.0	36	Very Good
2.01 - 2.5	20	Good / Average
2.51 - 3.0	2	Satisfactory / Fair
<b>GRAND MEAN</b>	<b>1.95</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

These findings are supported by studies emphasizing the role of psychosocial factors in academic performance. Nunes et al. (2022) argued that GWA reflects not only a student’s knowledge or intelligence but also their social and emotional experiences, such as how they deal with stigma and maintain self-confidence. From the researchers’ perspective, this means that doing well in school is not just about studying hard, but also about handling challenges like peer judgment, pressure from others, or self-doubt. For the BASS students, the fact that most achieved "Very Good" ratings may show that they are able to stay confident and focused even when facing these challenges. This suggests that being emotionally strong and managing stress well help students keep up consistent performance. It also implies that supporting students in building confidence and coping skills can help maintain or even improve their academic success. They just do not mind the negative things that they heard and see leading to an unfair treatment since they take these untoward remarks as challenges for them to pass their subjects and other adverse situations as they have reached emotional maturity. Goffman’s Stigma theory concurs with the Social Science students when they accept the negative things since those are true but they see to it that these untoward remarks will not be heard again as they make them as stepping stone to get rid of those

disapproval. They make the stigma as a challenge by making more efforts to academically succeed by seeking support to people who are willing to assist them.

Students in the "Good/Average" range may reflect challenges highlighted by Parmar et al. (2025), who noted that students perceiving higher levels of social stigma often experience academic anxiety and reduced engagement. From the researchers' perspective, this suggests that even students who are capable and motivated can have their performance moderately affected when they feel judged, excluded, or pressured by social expectations. These students might struggle to fully concentrate on their studies or participate actively in class, which can slightly lower their grades compared to peers who experience less stigma. It also highlights that academic performance is closely connected to emotional and social well-being, not just intellectual ability.

The few students in the "Excellent/Superior" category align with the findings of Berjot and Gillet (2011), who emphasized that students with a positive self-concept and effective coping strategies tend to achieve the highest academic outcomes. From the researchers' perspective, this suggests that these students' strong performance is not only a result of their intelligence or study habits, but also their confidence in their abilities and their ability to manage challenges effectively. Being able to cope with stress, setbacks, or pressures allows them to focus on learning and perform consistently at a high level. This also indicates that fostering self-confidence, resilience, and adaptive coping skills among students can help more of them reach their full academic potential, not just the top performers.

Acosta-Gonzaga (2023) emphasized that intrinsic motivation and self-esteem are key drivers of academic engagement and persistence. From the researchers' perspective, the fact that most BASS students achieved a "Very Good" GWA reflects not only their academic abilities but also their personal drive and confidence in learning. Students who are internally motivated tend to stay focused, remain engaged, and persist in their studies even when faced with challenges. Confidence in their abilities allows them to approach tasks with assurance, reducing the negative effects of setbacks. This suggests that the strong performance of the students is supported by intrinsic motivation and self-belief, which help them consistently maintain high academic achievement, as reflected in the "Very Good" final rating.

Demographic factors may also influence academic outcomes. Pesado et al. (2024)

noted that gender, socio-economic status, and year level interact with perceived stigma to affect academic performance. From the researchers' perspective, the predominantly female and young adult composition of the respondents may have contributed to the overall high GWA observed in the study. These characteristics could have supported a more positive academic mindset, greater engagement in classroom activities, and resilience in managing academic challenges.

Supportive learning environments further reinforce student achievement. Wang and Yu (2023) highlighted that social support and a positive academic self-concept enhance engagement and persistence. From the researchers' perspective, the finding that no students failed reflects the protective role of both peer and institutional support, as well as personal resilience, in sustaining academic success. Access to encouragement from classmates, teachers, and mentors may have helped students remain motivated, overcome difficulties, and stay focused on their studies, contributing to the overall "Very Good" performance of most of the cohort.

The implications of these results indicate that while most BASS students are performing well academically, there remains a subset who may be experiencing challenges that limit their full potential. The concentration of students in the "Very Good" category suggests that these students can maintain consistent study habits, managing academic pressures, and utilizing coping strategies effectively. However, those in the "Good/Average" and "Satisfactory/Fair" categories may still struggle with motivation, social pressures, or external factors such as stigma, which could affect their engagement and confidence in academic settings. This highlights the importance of understanding that academic performance is not solely determined by intellectual ability but is also shaped by social, emotional, and environmental influences. Recognizing these factors can help the institution identify students who may benefit from additional support to enhance their learning experience and overall academic outcomes.

To further support and improve academic performance across all levels, it is recommended that the institution implement targeted interventions for students who fall into the lower-performing categories. Programs such as mentoring, study skills workshops, and counseling services can help students develop stronger study habits, manage stress, and build resilience. Additionally, creating inclusive and supportive learning environments can reduce the impact of stigma, promote self-confidence, and encourage active participation in academic activities. By focusing on both cognitive and psychosocial support, the institution can ensure that all students could maintain high academic performance while addressing the factors that may hinder engagement or achievement. This comprehensive approach not only helps sustain the performance of high-achieving students but also provides the necessary support for those who may face challenges, ensuring a more equitable and productive academic environment.

The Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura exemplifies that when BASS students could see that their peers are able to surpass the experienced stigma, such peer experience could give them emotional resilience that encourage them to overcome similar stigma and seek adaptive behaviors. However, it would be a loss to BASS students when they withdraw or disengage from their groups due to the negative experience of their peers that they have witnessed causing them to drop their subjects or perform lowly in their academics.

### Level of Social Stigma Experienced by BASS Students

#### Discrimination

Table 3 presents the level of perceived social stigma experienced by BASS students of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus along discrimination. In Table 3, the study on social stigma and discrimination among BASS students at ISPSC–Tagudin Campus revealed a moderate overall level, with a sub-mean score of 2.67, indicating that stigma is present but not extreme. Students reported the highest levels of stigma in feeling uncomfortable expressing themselves due to fear of judgment (3.15) and experiencing verbal remarks that made them feel inferior (3.10). Other moderate indicators included being judged based on assumptions (2.88), experiencing reduced confidence (2.80), and encountering subtle teasing or insults (2.65). Items rated as fair, such as feeling disrespected (2.50), being ignored in class (2.50), facing peer prejudice (2.48), exclusion due to stereotypes (2.34), and unfair treatment tied to social background (2.30), suggest that subtle forms of stigma persist in daily student interactions. Overall, these results indicate that while overt discrimination is limited, moderate stigma still affects students’ self-expression, confidence, and engagement in the academic setting.

Table 3. Level of Social Stigma along Discrimination		
Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent Rating
I have experienced verbal remarks that made me feel inferior.	3.10	Moderate
I have been excluded from group activities because of stereotypes.	2.34	Fair
I feel disrespected because of how others perceive my background.	2.50	Fair
I experience prejudice from peers within the school.	2.48	Fair
I feel uncomfortable expressing myself due to fear of judgment.	3.15	Moderate
I feel that I am treated unfairly compared to other students because of my social background.	2.30	Fair

I have been judged negatively by others based on assumptions rather than my abilities.	2.88	Moderate
I feel ignored or overlooked in class activities because of how others see me.	2.50	Fair
I experience teasing or subtle insults related to my identity or background.	2.65	Moderate
I feel that discrimination affects my confidence in school.	2.80	Moderate
<b>SUB-MEAN</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

These findings are supported by previous research. Steele and Aronson (1995) explained that fear of judgment can lead students to restrict self-expression and underperform academically. From the researchers' perspective, this helps explain why BASS students reported the highest stigma in discomfort expressing themselves. Even capable students may hold back in class due to worry about being judged, which can affect participation and confidence.

Goffman's Stigma theory (1963) highlighted that even subtle stigma can be internalized, contributing to reduced confidence and feelings of inferiority. From the researchers' perspective, this aligns with the moderate indicators of judgment and diminished self-esteem observed in the study. Students who experience subtle judgments may gradually internalize them, which can lower self-confidence and make them hesitant to share ideas or participate actively.

Civitillo et al. (2023) emphasized that covert discrimination, such as teasing and verbal microaggressions, negatively affects student engagement. From the researchers' perspective, the moderate experiences of subtle insults reported by the BASS students may explain occasional hesitancy in classroom participation. Even small negative interactions can accumulate, subtly discouraging students from fully engaging in academic and social activities. In the Philippine context, Pesado et al. (2024) and Sevilla et al. (2024) noted that peer dynamics and socioeconomic status shape students' experiences of stigma. From the researchers' perspective, the fair-rated items such as peer prejudice, social exclusion, and unfair treatment suggest that students' backgrounds and peer relationships may influence how stigma is experienced. This indicates that even when overt discrimination is minimal, social, and economic factors continue to affect students' confidence, engagement, and sense of belonging in school. The findings indicate that moderate levels of social stigma continue to affect BASS students' confidence, self-expression, and engagement in the academic setting. Even subtle forms of discrimination, such as teasing, judgment, or exclusion, can influence how students participate in class and interact with peers, which may indirectly impact their learning and overall academic experience. This suggests that academic performance and student well-being are closely connected to the social environment, not just cognitive ability. From a broader perspective, addressing both overt and subtle forms of stigma is crucial for creating a supportive, inclusive, and equitable learning environment where students feel safe to express themselves and fully engage in their studies.

The presence of social stigma, even at a moderate level, demonstrates how social perceptions can subtly influence students' lived experiences within the academic setting. While it may not directly determine academic performance, its impact on confidence and interaction suggests that learning is shaped not only by intellectual ability but also by the social climate in which students are situated. This underscores the role of campus culture in shaping how students perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others.

### Resistance and Acceptance

Table 4 presents the level of perceived social stigma experienced by BASS students of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus along resistance and acceptance.

As depicted in Table 4, the analysis of social stigma coping strategies among BASS students shows that respondents generally rely more on resistance strategies to manage discriminatory experiences. Among these strategies, working harder academically to disprove stereotypes received the highest weighted mean of 3.82 (“High”), indicating that students actively strive to counter negative perceptions. Other prominent resistance strategies included expressing opinions when experiencing unfair treatment (3.62, “High”), seeking support from friends or organizations (3.60, “High”), and using stigma as motivation to improve (3.50, “High”), while trying to ignore negative labels scored 3.58 (“High”). Actively challenging negative stereotypes through actions or achievements received a “Moderate” rating (3.40). Acceptance strategies were slightly lower, with accepting negative perceptions to avoid conflict (3.27, “Moderate”), remaining silent during discrimination (3.28, “Moderate”), and changing behavior to fit in (3.07, “Moderate”). Interestingly, avoiding situations where one might be judged scored “High” (3.53). The overall sub-mean of 3.47 falls under “High,” showing that students actively use coping strategies, with a tendency toward resistance.

These results are supported by previous studies. Berjot and Gillet (2011) noted that students who rely on acceptance strategies often experience lower self-esteem, reduced motivation, and weaker academic self-concept. From the researchers’ perspective, this helps explain why BASS students who mostly use resistance strategies maintain confidence and drive, allowing them to stay engaged and perform well despite discriminatory experiences. Researchers also point out that actively countering stigma through achievement reinforces a positive self-concept, which strengthens resilience over time. Furthermore, consistently using resistance strategies helps students build long-term coping skills, so they are better prepared for future challenges in academic and social contexts.

Table 4. Level of Social Stigma along Resistance and Acceptance		
Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent Rating
I try to ignore negative labels given to me. (Resistance)	3.58	High
I accept negative perceptions to avoid conflict. (Acceptance)	3.27	Moderate
I work harder academically to disprove stereotypes. (Resistance)	3.82	High
I remain silent even when I feel discriminated against. (Acceptance)	3.28	Moderate
I express my opinions when I experience unfair treatment. (Resistance)	3.62	High
I change my behavior to fit in, even if it makes me uncomfortable. (Acceptance)	3.07	Moderate
I use discrimination as motivation to improve myself. (Resistance)	3.50	High
I avoid situations where I might be judged or stereotyped. (Acceptance)	3.53	High
I actively challenge negative stereotypes through my actions or achievements. (Resistance)	3.40	Moderate

I seek support from friends or organizations when I feel stigmatized. (Resistance)	3.60	High
<b>SUB-MEAN</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>High</b>

Meisel et al. (2022) and Elballah (2025) emphasized that resistance strategies, such as seeking social support and participating in academic or extracurricular activities, help moderate the intensity of perceived stigma. From the researchers’ perspective, this aligns with the BASS students’ use of active coping methods, like working harder and seeking support, to counter stereotypes and maintain motivation. Researchers also suggest that these strategies create a sense of agency, as students feel they can influence outcomes rather than being passive victims of discrimination. Additionally, engaging in supportive peer networks fosters collaboration and reinforces a sense of belonging, which further buffers the negative impact of stigma.

Crocker and Major (1989) explained that resistance allows individuals to attribute discrimination to societal bias rather than personal deficiency, preserving self-esteem and motivation. From the researchers’ perspective, this helps clarify why students who actively challenge stereotypes or use stigma as motivation do not internalize negative labels, maintaining their confidence and commitment to learning. Researchers also observe that recognizing systemic bias encourages critical thinking and reflection, helping students understand social challenges more objectively. This awareness can increase resilience and reduce emotional distress, enabling students to focus on personal growth and academic goals.

The findings indicate that BASS students actively use coping strategies to manage social stigma, with a clear tendency toward resistance rather than acceptance. This suggests that students are not passive in the face of discrimination, they take proactive steps, such as working harder academically, seeking support, and using stigma as motivation, to protect their self-esteem and maintain engagement. The moderate use of acceptance strategies, like avoiding judgment or remaining silent, shows that environmental factors, peer attitudes, and institutional norms still influence students’ responses. Overall, the study highlights that both personal coping strategies and the social context play a critical role in shaping how students experience and respond to stigma. These results imply that fostering resilience, self-confidence, and supportive peer and institutional environments can enhance students’ ability to manage stigma while maintaining academic focus and well-being.

Strengthening students’ coping skills and resilience plays an important role in how they navigate experiences of social stigma. Developing self-confidence, assertiveness, and effective communication allows students to respond constructively, such as expressing their perspectives and seeking support instead of passively accepting negative perceptions. Supportive peer relationships and mentoring spaces contribute to a stronger sense of belonging and mutual understanding. At the same time, awareness of subtle forms of discrimination within the classroom environment reinforces respect, fairness, and inclusivity. The interaction between personal coping capacities and supportive social structures influences students’ ability to maintain confidence and remain actively engaged in both academic and social settings.

### Self-Concept and Social Interaction

Table 5 presents the level of perceived social stigma experienced by BASS students of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus along self-concept and social interaction.

As depicted in Table 5, the level of social stigma along self-concept and social interaction obtained an overall sub-mean of 3.44, interpreted as High, indicating that social stigma significantly influences students’ self-perception and social experiences. The highest-rated indicator was “I am comfortable building friendships despite experiences of stigma” (reverse-coded) with a weighted mean of 3.88 (High), followed by “I feel accepted by my peers” (reverse-coded) at 3.67 (High) and “I avoid social situations where I might be judged unfairly” at 3.60 (High). Additionally, “Social stigma affects how I see myself” received a 3.48 (High) rating. Other indicators were rated Moderate, including feeling a sense of belonging despite negative stereotypes (3.25), feeling less confident in social interactions (3.17), feeling comfortable expressing identity on campus (3.33), feeling anxious about others’ perceptions (3.32), social stigma affecting willingness to participate in group

activities (3.28), and feeling respected regardless of negative stereotypes (3.37). Overall, the results suggest that social stigma has a considerable impact on students' self-concept and social interaction within the campus environment.

Table 5. Level of Social Stigma along Self-Concept and Social Interaction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent Rating
Social stigma affects how I see myself.	3.48	High
I feel a sense of belonging despite negative stereotypes. (Reverse-coded)	3.25	Moderate
I feel less confident in social interactions.	3.17	Moderate
I feel comfortable expressing my identity on campus. (Reverse-coded)	3.33	Moderate
I feel anxious about how others perceive me because of social stigma.	3.32	Moderate
I feel accepted by my peers. (Reverse-coded)	3.67	High
Social stigma affects my willingness to participate in group activities.	3.28	Moderate
I feel respected by others regardless of negative stereotypes. (Reverse-coded)	3.37	Moderate
I avoid social situations where I might be judged unfairly.	3.60	High
I am comfortable building friendships despite experiences of stigma. (Reverse-coded)	3.88	High
<b>SUB-MEAN</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>High</b>

The findings of the study are supported by previous research. Berjot and Gillet (2011) emphasized that when students rely on acceptance strategies, such as remaining silent or tolerating negative perceptions, they may experience lower self-esteem and reduced motivation. This supports the present findings, particularly the moderate ratings in indicators related to belongingness, confidence, and willingness to participate, suggesting that while students attempt to adapt, social stigma still affects their self-concept and social interaction. From the researchers' perspective, this explains why some students report moderate levels of anxiety, reduced confidence, and hesitation in group participation, indicating that passive acceptance does not fully protect students from the psychological effects of stigma.

Similarly, Meisel et al. (2022) and Elballah (2025) highlighted that resistance strategies, such as seeking support, expressing oneself confidently, and remaining socially engaged, help preserve self-confidence and social integration. This aligns with the high ratings in reverse-coded items such as feeling accepted by peers and being comfortable building friendships despite experiences of stigma. From the researchers' perspective, these high scores suggest that students are actively protecting their self-esteem and maintaining social connections despite

experiencing stigma. The findings indicate that students demonstrate resilience by sustaining peer relationships and continuing participation in academic and social activities.

Furthermore, Crocker and Major (1989) explained that attributing negative treatment to external societal biases rather than personal shortcomings helps preserve self-esteem. This perspective is consistent with the overall high sub-mean result, indicating that although social stigma significantly affects students’ self-concept and interaction, they are still able to maintain a sense of personal worth and social belonging. From the researchers’ viewpoint, this suggests that students are not fully internalizing stigma but are instead developing coping mechanisms that allow them to remain socially connected and emotionally stable.

The implications of the findings reveal that while social stigma has a high level of influence on students’ self-concept and social interaction, students demonstrate adaptive coping strategies that help them remain engaged. However, the moderate ratings in confidence, belongingness, and participation indicate that the social environment still plays a crucial role in shaping students’ experiences. Therefore, strengthening both individual coping skills and institutional support systems is essential in minimizing the negative effects of stigma.

The findings of the study are supported by previous research. Berjot and Gillet (2011) emphasized that when students rely on acceptance strategies, such as remaining silent or tolerating negative perceptions, they may experience lower self-esteem and reduced motivation. This supports the present findings, particularly the moderate ratings in indicators related to belongingness, confidence, and willingness to participate, suggesting that while students attempt to adapt, social stigma still affects their self-concept and social interaction. From the researchers’ perspective, this explains why some students report moderate levels of anxiety, reduced confidence, and hesitation in group participation, indicating that passive acceptance does not fully protect students from the psychological effects of stigma.

Students’ self-concept and social interactions appear to influence how they navigate experiences of social stigma. Skills such as self-confidence, assertiveness, and effective communication allow students to respond constructively to negative perceptions, while supportive peer relationships and collaborative activities contribute to a sense of belonging and inclusion. Inclusive classroom environments further shape students’ experiences, providing spaces where they feel respected and free from judgment. Together, personal coping abilities and supportive social structures help students maintain confidence, build connections, and engage fully in both academic and social aspects of school life.

**Summary Table for the Level of Social Stigma**

Table 6 presents the summary table for the level of social stigma experienced by BASS students of ISPSC–Tagudin Campus.

As shown in Table 6, the study revealed that Discrimination (A) had a weighted mean of 2.67, corresponding to a Moderate descriptive rating, while Resistance and Acceptance (B) and Self-Concept and Social Interaction (C) both received High ratings, with weighted means of 3.47 and 3.44, respectively. The Grand Mean of 3.19 indicates an overall Moderate level of social stigma among respondents, suggesting that while some discriminatory experiences exist, students generally utilize coping strategies and maintain positive self-concept to manage these experiences. This pattern shows that stigma is present in the school environment but does not overwhelmingly hinder students’ social interactions or academic engagement.

Table 6. Summary Table for the Level of Social Stigma		
Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent Rating
A. Discrimination	2.67	Moderate
B. Resistance and Acceptance	3.47	High

C. Self-Concept and Social Interaction	3.44	High
<b>GRAND MEAN</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

These findings are supported by research conducted by Leurent and Ducasse (2023), who note in *Discrimination, Stigma, and Identity: A Literature Review* that stigma influences self-concept and social identity, often affecting psychological well-being, particularly when individuals internalize negative societal perceptions. From the researchers’ perspective, the high levels of resistance and strong self-concept among BASS students indicate that they are actively defending their self-esteem and social identity, rather than allowing stigma to define their abilities or social worth. Researchers suggest that students who develop effective coping strategies, such as seeking social support, confronting stereotypes, or focusing on personal achievement, are better able to buffer the negative effects of discrimination and maintain psychological resilience. Moreover, maintaining positive social interactions provides additional protection by fostering a sense of belonging and peer acceptance, which reinforces confidence and encourages students to engage fully in both academic and social settings.

From a broader perspective, these results indicate that social stigma does not exist in isolation it interacts with individual resilience, coping mechanisms, and the surrounding social environment. From the researchers’ perspective, the moderate level of discrimination combined with high resistance and self-concept suggests that students are not passive recipients of stigma but are actively shaping their experiences through adaptive behaviors. This underscores the importance of viewing stigma as both an individual and social phenomenon, where personal strategies and supportive relationships can mitigate potential negative outcomes. By understanding how students balance these dynamics, educators and policymakers can better tailor interventions to strengthen protective factors while addressing sources of discrimination.

The implications of the study highlight the dual influence of social environments and individual capacities on how students experience stigma. Addressing discriminatory behaviors and strengthening students’ coping abilities, self-concept, and social support appear crucial in shaping both social and academic engagement. Peer interactions, collaborative activities, and inclusive classroom practices play a role in reinforcing these protective factors, allowing students to navigate challenges more effectively. Overall, managing social stigma involves a balance between supportive social environments and individual strategies, which together contribute to students’ confidence, participation, and long-term personal development.

Navigating social stigma depends on both individual strategies and the broader campus culture, illustrating the importance of supportive, respectful, and inclusive learning environments in enhancing students’ confidence and engagement. The Stress and Coping Theory of Lazarus and Folkman exemplifies that stressors impact students differently depending on how they appraise and respond to these stigma. If taken by social science students negatively, the stigma may result to self-doubt or diminished self-esteem. The stigma may destroy the focus of the students in their academic endeavors so much so that they are distracted in their study habits and class participation which may lead to low academic performance. But when they respond to them positively and make these stigma as motivation, then, the social science students could make their grades better by trying their best to prove that the negative things they received are not true and will not hinder their success. Making the negative experiences to be positive by the social science students makes a lot of optimistic changes in self-trust as well as academic performance.

**Relationship between Profile of BASS Students and Perceived Social Stigma**

Table 7 presents the relationship between profile and the perceived social stigma of BASS students.

Profile	r-value	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Gender	0.102	0.44	Not Significant	Accept Ho

Age	-0.002	0.986	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Socioeconomic Status	-0.06	0.65	Not Significant	Accept Ho

Table 7 illustrates the relationship between respondents’ profile variables, such as gender, age, and estimated family income, and their perceived social stigma, which was examined using correlational analysis. The results revealed that none of the profile variables had a statistically significant relationship with perceived social stigma. Specifically, gender ( $r = 0.102$ ,  $p = 0.44$ ), age ( $r = -0.002$ ,  $p = 0.986$ ), and estimated family income ( $r = -0.06$ ,  $p = 0.65$ ) all produced  $p$ -values greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05. These findings suggest that an individual’s perception of social stigma is not strongly influenced by basic demographic characteristics. In other words, both male and female respondents, younger and older students, and those from lower- or higher-income families experienced social stigma in a similar manner.

This pattern aligns with established theoretical perspectives. Goffman (1963) emphasized that stigma arises from social labeling and “spoiled identity,” which can affect individuals regardless of their demographic profile. From the researchers’ perspective, this explains why stigma was experienced across gender, age, and income levels: it is rooted in how society labels individuals rather than personal traits. Researchers also note that when students internalize these social labels, their self-esteem and social confidence may be challenged, making coping strategies critical to resilience.

Link and Phelan (2001) further argued that stigma is a systemic and structural process involving labeling, stereotyping, and discrimination. From the researchers’ perspective, this suggests that the social and institutional environment often shapes stigma more than individual demographics. Students’ experiences of stigma are influenced by peer attitudes, classroom culture, and institutional norms, showing that interventions must focus on these broader social structures.

Similarly, Bourdieu (1986) highlighted that social and cultural capital determine how individuals are perceived within institutions. Researchers interpret this to mean that access to supportive networks, mentorship, or social resources can protect students from the negative effects of stigma more than demographic factors like age or income. This perspective helps explain why students across different socioeconomic levels reported similar perceptions of stigma: personal and social resources may mediate their experiences.

Durkheim emphasized that societal norms influence perceptions and behaviors, reinforcing the idea that collective cultural attitudes shape how stigma is expressed and perceived. From the researchers’ perspective, the moderate level of stigma reported in the study may reflect cultural expectations about behavior, peer conformity, and social acceptance, which all affect how students perceive judgment from others.

Empirical studies also support these theoretical insights. Wang and Yu (2023) found that gender may influence academic participation and self-efficacy, but overall stigma perception is mediated by institutional and social dynamics rather than gender alone. From the researchers’ perspective, this aligns with the current study: male and female students experienced similar levels of stigma because broader social interactions matter more than individual gender.

Yap, Wright, and Jorm (2011) observed that age may affect sensitivity to peer pressure, yet perceived stigma is more closely related to social support and social interactions than chronological age. Researchers interpret this to mean that even younger students can navigate stigma effectively if they have strong peer networks, while older students may struggle if social support is lacking.

Singh, Arokiasamy, and Bloom (2024) reported that socioeconomic status affects social positioning, but it does not automatically predict perceived stigma. From the researchers’ perspective, this suggests that stigma is influenced by both social context and individual coping skills rather than simply by family income.

Doyle and Molix (2016) further emphasized that demographic variables may interact but do not operate in isolation, reinforcing the study’s finding that gender, age, and estimated family income are not significant

predictors of perceived stigma. Researchers note that understanding stigma requires looking at social structures, peer interactions, and institutional culture, rather than focusing solely on demographic characteristics.

These results have important implications. The lack of significant relationships indicates that perceived social stigma among BASS students is universal across demographic groups, suggesting that interventions should focus on the broader social environment, peer interactions, and institutional culture, rather than targeting specific demographic traits. From the researchers’ perspective, inclusive and supportive social and academic spaces are key to helping students manage stigma and maintain well-being.

Based on these findings, schools should implement anti-stigma programs and workshops to promote inclusivity and empathy among students and faculty. Counseling and peer-support services should be strengthened to help students cope with stigma. Future research should examine psychosocial and institutional factors, such as self-esteem, social support, and campus climate, to better understand how stigma develops and persists.

### Relationship between Perceived Social Stigma and Academic Performance of BASS Students

Table 8 presents the relationship between perceived social stigma and the academic performance of BASS students.

Table 8. Relationship Between Academic Performance and Social Stigma				
Academic Performance	r-value	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
GWA	-0.006	0.962	Not Significant	Accept Ho

From Table 8, the relationship between academic performance, measured by General Weighted Average (GWA), and perceived social stigma was examined. The results indicate a very weak, negative correlation between the two variables ( $r = -0.006$ ), with a p-value of 0.962, suggesting that this relationship is not statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that academic performance does not significantly influence students’ perception of social stigma.

Despite the lack of a significant relationship, BASS students still experience social stigma. This suggests that stigma in the program is not based on academic ability or performance but rather arises from social perceptions, stereotypes, and societal assumptions about the Bachelor of Arts in Social Science (BASS) program. For instance, students may face assumptions that their field is less prestigious or career-oriented compared to other programs, which can influence peer interactions, self-concept, and social inclusion, regardless of grades.

Goffman’s Stigma theory emphasized that stigma stems from social labeling and “spoiled identity,” affecting individuals independently of their personal achievements. From the researchers’ perspective, this helps explain why high-performing students can still experience stigma: social labels and peer assumptions influence perception more than academic success. Researchers also note that managing these perceptions requires social awareness and coping strategies rather than just academic excellence. Link and Phelan (2001) highlighted that stigma is a systemic and structural process shaped by social and institutional dynamics rather than individual attributes. From the researchers’ perspective, the study’s findings support this view, showing that social and cultural structures, such as peer attitudes and program stereotypes, play a larger role in perceived stigma than student performance. Students’ experiences are therefore influenced by the collective environment, suggesting that changes in institutional culture are necessary to reduce stigma.

Similarly, Bourdieu (1986) argued that access to social and cultural capital determines how individuals are perceived, meaning that academic performance alone does not protect students from social marginalization. From the researchers’ perspective, this suggests that students who build strong networks, participate in social and extracurricular activities, and develop supportive relationships may experience less stigma, even if their grades are like their peers.

These results have important implications. Since academic performance does not significantly affect perceived social stigma, interventions should focus on institutional culture, peer awareness, and inclusive practices rather than targeting students based on GWA. From the researchers' perspective, fostering supportive environments, positive peer interactions, and inclusive attitudes is crucial to reduce stigma and promote student well-being, regardless of academic standing.

Based on the findings, schools and administrators should implement anti-stigma campaigns, peer-support initiatives, and faculty-led workshops to promote inclusion and respect among all students. Additionally, future research could examine mediating factors, such as self-esteem, social support, and program perception, to better understand the sources and effects of stigma in higher education contexts.

### **Development of Infographic Material**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers developed an infographic material titled "Breaking the Stigma: Empowering BASS Students of ISPSC Tagudin" as an awareness-based intervention aimed at addressing the moderate level of social stigma experienced by BASS students. The infographic was carefully structured to present the nature of social stigma, the specific stereotypes directed toward BASS students, the forms and effects of stigma, and the possible actions that students and the academic community can take to reduce it.

The first section of the infographic material explains what social stigma is, defining it as the act of judging, stereotyping, or excluding individuals based on their academic program or social identity. It emphasizes that stigma is socially constructed and rooted in shared perceptions rather than individual abilities, which aligns with the study's finding that stigma is experienced regardless of gender, age, family income, or academic performance.

The next section presents the common stigma against BASS students, openly acknowledging stereotypes such as being labeled as "tapunan ng shifters," "basta-basta lang," or a "last choice program." These statements were intentionally included to confront the actual perceptions circulating within the campus community. By directly presenting these misconceptions, the infographic material aims to raise awareness and challenge unfair labeling. Following this, the material outlines the forms of social stigma experienced by BASS students based on the statistical results of the study.

The infographic material shifts toward empowerment and solutions. It presents what BASS students can do, such as seeking support from peers and mentors, focusing on personal growth and academic achievements, and using stigma as motivation rather than limitation. At the same time, it emphasizes that responsibility should not rest solely on BASS students. A section outlines what other students can do, including avoiding stereotypes, promoting respectful classroom interactions, and supporting awareness initiatives that encourage inclusivity. To challenge misconceptions, the infographic material includes testimonials from BASS graduates who have successfully pursued meaningful careers. These testimonials serve as evidence that the program produces competent and capable professionals, thereby countering negative stereotypes through real-life examples.

The development of the infographic material followed a systematic process. The researchers first identified key findings of the study and selected significant themes related to stigma and coping mechanisms. These findings were translated into clear, concise statements while maintaining their original meaning. The content was arranged in a logical flow from defining stigma, presenting stereotypes, explaining its forms and effects, and concluding with solutions and empowerment to guide readers toward awareness and action. The material is grounded in Goffman's (1963) theory of social labeling, which explains that stigma arises from societal judgments rather than personal traits, and Link and Phelan's (2001) concept of systemic stigma, which highlights the role of social and institutional narratives in sustaining discrimination. Furthermore, Mayer's (2020) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning supports the use of visual materials, as individuals better understand and retain information when text and visuals are combined.

Overall, the infographic material serves as a findings-based, theory-supported, and practical intervention designed to confront stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and empower BASS students within the academic community of ISPSC Tagudin.



Figure 2. Infographic Material

#### IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The respondents exhibit diverse characteristics in terms of gender, age, and socio-economic background.
2. BASS students demonstrate strong academic capability with limited student failing.
3. Students experience social stigma stemming from peers, faculty, and societal perceptions of the BASS program.
4. There is no significant relationship between the profile of BASS students and their perceived social stigma.
5. There is no significant relationship between the academic performance of BASS students and their perceived social stigma.

6. The infographic material is effective tool to promote equality among students, particularly the BASS students of ISPSC -Tagudin Campus.

The following are strongly recommended for possible course of action:

1. BASS students should be supported through structured anti-stigma campaigns, seminars, and workshops that promote their well-being and foster inclusivity within the academic community.
2. BASS students should be provided with academic support and enrichment programs to maintain and improve their strong performance.
3. BASS students are encouraged to remain aware of the prejudice and discrimination they may encounter and to transform these experiences into motivation, using them as benchmarks to further strengthen their academic performance and personal development. The institution should enhance peer mentoring initiatives and counseling services to assist students in developing resilience, emotional regulation, and effective coping strategies in dealing with social stigma.
4. BASS students should be provided with support programs, such as counseling services, peer mentoring, and resilience workshops. The institution should implement these programs to help students cope with social stigma experienced by students of all genders, ages, and income levels.
5. BASS students should be encouraged to maintain their academic performance while developing strategies to manage social stigma. Schools should strengthen financial aid programs and ensure equitable access to learning resources to address socioeconomic barriers that may affect student engagement and performance.
6. BASS students should benefit from the infographic material “Breaking the Stigma: Empowering BASS Students of ISPSC Tagudin”, which should be formally adopted and utilized as an instructional and advocacy tool to promote awareness and reduce misconceptions. The infographic material should serve as an effective resource to foster equality and understanding among BASS students at ISPSC-Tagudin Campus.

## REFERENCES

1. Acosta-Gonzaga, E. (2023). The effects of self-esteem and academic engagement on university students' performance. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(4), 348. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13040348>
2. Aranson, S. (2024). Infographics on ADHD literacy promotion and stigma reduction. (2025). eScholarship. [https://escholarship.org/content/qt5xv4n9bg/qt5xv4n9bg\\_noSplash\\_e565bbae224bf837a6e0f4be23708a5a.pdf](https://escholarship.org/content/qt5xv4n9bg/qt5xv4n9bg_noSplash_e565bbae224bf837a6e0f4be23708a5a.pdf)
3. Arnett, J. J. (2015). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199795574.013.9>
4. Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W H Freeman/Times Books/ Henry Holt & Co.
5. Bandura, A., & National Inst of Mental Health. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
6. Benner, A. D., & Graham, S. (2012). The Antecedents and Consequences of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination During Adolescence: Does the Source of Discrimination Matter?. *Developmental Psychology*. DOI:10.1037/a0030557
7. Berjot, S., & Gillet, N. (2011). Stress and coping with discrimination and stigmatization: Toward a model of coping with identity threats. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3110961/>
8. Bishop, P. A. (2023). Young adolescents' perspectives on peers' social and emotional competence. *RMLE Online*, 46(7), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2023.2236347>
9. Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

10. Boy, I. F., Bondoc, M. A. A., Bonifacio, C. A. Q., Bonoan, M. D. R., Bonaon, R. C., Macindo, J. R. B., & Torres, G. C. (2022). Extracurricular activity involvement on the compassion, academic competence, and commitment of collegiate level students: A structural equation model. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, 22(1). <https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/apssr/vol22/iss1/9/>
11. Bradley, R. H., & Corwyn, R. F. (2002). Socioeconomic status and child development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 371–399. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135233>
12. Burgess, D. J., Joseph, A., van Ryn, M., & Carnes, M. (2012). Does stereotype threat affect women in academic medicine? *Academic Medicine*, 87(4), 506–512. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22361794/>
13. Çamaş, G., & Yalçın, İ. (2021). The relationships between stigma toward psychological help seeking, self-efficacy, family sense of coherence, and social support. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 29(4), 233–245. <https://doi.org/10.24106/kefdergi.822044>
14. Chaudoir, S. R., Earnshaw, V. A., & Andel S. (2013). “Discredited” Versus “Discreditable”: Understanding How Shared and Unique Stigma Mechanisms Affect Psychological and Physical Health Disparities. *Basic Appl Soc Psych*. 2013 Jan 1;35(1):75-87. doi: 10.1080/01973533.2012.746612. PMID: 23729948; PMCID: PMC3666955.
15. Chicca, J., & Chunta, K. (2020). Engaging students with visual stories: Using infographics in nursing education. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 15(1), 32–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2019.09.003>
16. Civitillo, S., Jugert, P., Yip, T., Lui, P., & Titzmann, P. F. (2024). A daily diary study on associations between school-based ethnic discrimination and school engagement. *Social Psychology of Education*, 27(6), 3047–3072. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-024-09919-x>
17. Compas, B. E., Connor-Smith, J. K., Saltzman, H., Thomsen, A. H., & Wadsworth, M. E. (2001). Coping with stress during childhood and adolescence: Problems, progress, and potential in theory and research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(1), 87–127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.127.1.87>
18. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Retrieved from <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/research-design/book237357>
19. Criswell, K. R. (2022). Stigma, health, and academic performance in university students with physical and mental chronic health conditions: Baseline data report. *Stigma and Health*, 7(3), 336–346. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000389>
20. Crocker, J., & Major, B. (1989). Social stigma and self-esteem: The self-protective properties of stigma. *Psychological Review*, 96(4), 608–630. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.96.4.608>
21. Crosnoe, R., & Muller, C. (2004). Body mass index, academic achievement, and school context: Examining the educational experiences of adolescents at risk of obesity. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 45(4), 393–407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002214650404500403>
22. DeFreitas, S.C., Crone T., DeLeon M., & Ajayi A. (2018) Perceived and Personal Mental Health Stigma in Latino and African American College Students. *Front. Public Health* 6:49. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2018.00049
23. Daily Tribune. (2025). The Philippine Tribune. Retrieved from <https://tribune.net.ph/2025/01/22/dlsu-shines-in-arts-business-and-education-in-global-rankings>
24. Doyle, D. M., Molix L. (2026) Perceived Discrimination and Social Relationship Functioning among Sexual Minorities: Structural Stigma as a Moderating Factor. *Anal Soc Issues Public Policy*. 2015 Dec;15(1):357-381. doi: 10.1111/asap.12098. Epub 2015 Oct 6. PMID: 26807046; PMCID: PMC4723102.
25. Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 109–132. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153>
26. Elballah, K. A. (2025). Perceived social stigma and friendship skills among students with learning disabilities. <https://www.edupij.com/index/arsiv/80/955/perceived-social-stigma-and-friendship-skills-among-students-with-learning-disabilities>
27. Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company.
28. Ertl, B., Luttenberger, S., & Paechter, M. (2017). The impact of gender stereotypes on the self-concept of female students in STEM subjects with an under-representation of females. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 703. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00703>
29. Franz, D.J., Richter, T., Lenhard, W., Marx P., Stein R., & Ratz C. (2023). The Influence of Diagnostic Labels on the Evaluation of Students: a Multilevel Meta-Analysis. *Educ Psychol Rev* 35, 17 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09716-6>

30. Freire, C., Ferradás, M. M., Regueiro, B., Rodríguez, S., Valle, A., & Núñez, J. C. (2020). Coping strategies and self-efficacy in university students: A person-centered approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 841. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00841/full>
31. Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
32. Graves, B. S. (2021). Gender differences in perceived stress and coping among undergraduate students. *PLoS One*, 16(8), e0255634. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0255634>
33. Harter, S. (2012). *The construction of the self: Developmental and sociocultural foundations* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
34. Hyde, J. S. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist*, 60(6), 581–592. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.6.581>
35. IAFOR. (2024) Development of infographics on mental health and nutrition to promote health and wellness for secondary school students. In *Proceedings of the Asian Conference on Education 2024. International Academic Forum*. [https://papers.iafor.org/wp-content/uploads/papers/ace2024/ACE2024\\_86378.pdf](https://papers.iafor.org/wp-content/uploads/papers/ace2024/ACE2024_86378.pdf)
36. Juvonen, J., Wang, Y., & Espinoza, G. (2011). Bullying experiences and compromised academic performance across middle school grades. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 31(1), 152–173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431610379415>
37. Kilaton, L. J., & Ranoa, C. A. (2023). Infographics: Tool for enhancing the level of knowledge in contextualized Filipino literature of Grade 11 students. *European Journal of Science, Innovation and Technology*, 3(6), 71–81. Retrieved from <https://ejsit-journal.com/index.php/ejsit/article/view/318>
38. Lankow, J., Ritchie, J., & Crooks, R. (2012). *Infographics: The power of visual storytelling*. Wiley.
39. Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
40. Legette, K. (2018). School tracking and youth self-perceptions: Implications for academic and racial identity. *Child Development*, 89(4), 1311–1327. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12748>
41. Leurent, M., & Ducasse, D. (2023). Discrimination, stigma and identity: A literature review. PubMed. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37357050/>
42. Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 363–385. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363>
43. Major, B., & O'Brien, L. T. (2005). The social psychology of stigma. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56, 393–421. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070137>
44. Mayer, R. E. (2014). *The Cambridge handbook of multimedia learning* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139547369>
45. Mayer, R. E. (2020). *Multimedia learning* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316941355>
46. Meisel, M., Haikalis, M., Colby, S. M., & Barnett, N. P. (2022). Education-based stigma and discrimination among young adults not in 4-year college. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-022-00737-4>
47. Mucherah, W., Dixon, F., Hartley, K., & Hardin, T. (2010). Perceptions of self-concept and actual academic performance in Math and English among High School Students in Kenya. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228663233\\_Perceptions\\_of\\_self-concept\\_and\\_actual\\_academic\\_performance\\_in\\_Math\\_and\\_English\\_among\\_High\\_School\\_Students\\_in\\_Kenya](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228663233_Perceptions_of_self-concept_and_actual_academic_performance_in_Math_and_English_among_High_School_Students_in_Kenya)
48. Muñoz, N., Morales, L., & Karstensen, V. (2024). Predicting social anxiety through peer rejection and fear of negative evaluation in youth. *Journal of Adolescent and Youth Psychological Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.jayps.5.8.18>
49. Nikolopoulou, K. (2022). What Is Purposive Sampling? | Definition & Examples Scribbr. Retrieved from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/purposive-sampling/>
50. Nugroho, F., Haq, A., & Thalia, P. (2025). Social stigma as a predictor of academic help-seeking behavior: Evidence from Indonesian college students. *Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 12(1), 45–56. <https://journal.kurasinstitute.com/index.php/bocp/article/view/1644>
51. Nunes, C., Oliveira, T., Santini, F. O., Castelli, M., & Jesus, F. C. (2022). A Weight and Meta-Analysis on the Academic Achievement of High School Students. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/12/5/287>

52. OECD. (2017). *Education at a glance 2017: OECD indicators*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en>
53. Parmar, J.S., Mistry, S.K., Micheal, S., Dune, T., Lim, D., Alford, S., & Arora, A. (2025). Peer Support for Improving Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes in Postgraduate Public Health and Health Sciences: A Qualitative Study. *Education Sciences*. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/15/5/602>
54. Pascoe, E. A., & Richman, L. S. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(4), 531–554. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016059>
55. Pesado, H. L. G., Pulga, R. G., Rosales, J. D. B., Visto, C. A., & Salazar, S. N. Y. (2024). Correlational study on socioeconomic status and academic performance of Senior High School Students in a Laboratory School. *Research Journal of Educational Sciences*. Volume 12, Issue (2), Pages 15-25,
56. Pingani, L., Catellani, S., Del Vecchio, V., Sampogna G., Ellefson S. E., Rigatelli M., Fiorillo A., Evans-Lacko S., & Corrigan P. W. (2016). Stigma in the context of schools: Analysis of the phenomenon of stigma in university students. *BMC Psychiatry*, 16, 29. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12888-016-0734-8>
57. Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (9th ed.). Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
58. Quinn, D. M., & Chaudoir, S. R. (2009). Living with a concealable stigmatized identity: The impact of anticipated stigma, centrality, salience, and cultural stigma on psychological distress and health. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97(4), 634–651. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015815>
59. Reay, D. (2017). *Miseducation: Inequality, education and the working classes*. Policy Press.
60. Richey, R. C., & Klein, J. D. (2007). *Design and development research: Methods, strategies, and issues*. Retrieved from <https://www.routledge.com/Design-and-Development-Research-Methods-Strategies-and-Issues/Richey-Klein/p/book/9780805854376>
61. Roberts HL, Novotny D, Stanbrough C, Keys A, Jackson W. (2025) Experienced weight stigma in higher education: impact on academic choices, extracurricular participation, and well-being in students. doi: 10.1080/07448481.2025.2472187.
62. Ruano Á. M., Vicente D. R., Desbrow J. M., & Galán-Casado D. (2025). Inclusive Education for University Students With and Without Intellectual Disabilities: Effectiveness of an Anti-Stigma Intervention. *J Appl Res Intellect Disabil*. 2025 Jan;38(1):e70012. doi: 10.1111/jar.70012. PMID: 39853568.
63. Sevilla, Y. M., Picardo, R. L., Serad, J. B., Bacarisas, J. P., Coronado, R. S., & Amores, G. E. A. (2024). Socio-Demographic and Health-Related Predictors of Perceived Academic Performance of Students: An Academe-Centered Analysis. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*.
64. Singh, L., Arokiasamy, P., & Bloom, D. E. (2024). Subjective social status and socio-demographic correlates of perceived discrimination among older adults in India. *BMC Geriatrics*, 24, 51. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-024-05114-x>
65. Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417–453. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075003417>
66. Smiciklas, M. (2012). *The power of infographics: Using pictures to communicate and connect with your audiences*. Que Publishing.
67. Steele, C. M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52(6), 613–629. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.6.613>
68. Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5), 797–811. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.5.797>
69. Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C. (2007). Age differences in resistance to peer influence. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(6), 1531–1543. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.6.1531>
70. Stephens, N. M., Fryberg, S. A., Markus, H. R., Johnson, C. S., & Covarrubias, R. (2012). Unseen disadvantage: How American universities' focus on independence undermines the academic performance of first-generation college students. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(6), 1178–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027143>

71. Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political psychology: Key readings* (pp. 276–293). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203505984-16>
72. UNESCO. (2019). *Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying*. Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing.
73. United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>; <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>
74. University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Arts and Letters. (n.d.). *Vision, mission, and programs*. University of Santo Tomas. Retrieved from <https://www.ust.edu.ph/arts-and-letters/ust.edu.ph>
75. Verner-Filion, J., Véronneau, M.H., Vaillancourt, M. C., Mathys C. (2023). Perceived school climate and school grades in secondary school students: The mediating effect of self-determined motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 74, 102202. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2023.102202>
76. Wang, L., & Yu, Z. (2023). Gender-moderated effects of academic self-concept on achievement, motivation, performance, and self-efficacy: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1136141. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1136141>
77. Wentzel, K. R. (2009). Students' relationships with teachers as motivational contexts. In K. R. Wentzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 301–322). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203879498>
78. World Health Organization. (2021). *Gender and health*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/gender-and-health>
79. Yap, M. B. H., Wright, A., & Jorm, A. F. (2011). The influence of stigma on young people's help-seeking intentions and beliefs about the helpfulness of various sources of help. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 46(12), 1257–1265. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-010-0300-5>