

## **Navigating Mismatched Pathways: A Study of the Transition from HUMSS Strand to BSED Mathematics**

**Dr. Marsha H. Malbas**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8978-2691> | [marshamalbas20@gmail.com](mailto:marshamalbas20@gmail.com)

Research Coordinator, Lapu-Lapu City College, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu, Philippines

**Dr. Eleonor E. Wagwag**

<https://orcid.org/0009-003-0830-2353> | [eleonorwagwag@gmail.com](mailto:eleonorwagwag@gmail.com)

Instructor, Lapu-lapu City College, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu, Philippines

**Charlyn C. Ompad**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0668-4369> | [ompad.charlyn@llcc.edu.ph](mailto:ompad.charlyn@llcc.edu.ph)

Student Researcher, Lapu-lapu City College, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu, Philippines

**Melanie Piquero**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2401-035X> | [piquero.melanie@llcc.edu.ph](mailto:piquero.melanie@llcc.edu.ph)

Student Researcher, Lapu-lapu City College, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu, Philippines

**Robin B. Pitogo**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0546-262X> | [pitogo.robin@llcc.edu.ph](mailto:pitogo.robin@llcc.edu.ph)

Student Researcher, Lapu-lapu City College, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu, Philippines

**Angelica A. Rondina**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4543-5473> | [rondina.angelica@llcc.edu.ph](mailto:rondina.angelica@llcc.edu.ph)

Student Researcher, Lapu-lapu City College, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu, Philippines

### **Abstract**

The concept of being "college prepared" entails a student's ability to successfully graduate from Senior High School (SHS) and gain admission to college without requiring remedial foundation courses. This study focuses on the experiences of Humanities and Social Science students who opted for Mathematics as their major field. A descriptive phenomenological approach was employed to investigate the perspectives of the selected participants. The findings revealed two main themes, each accompanied by relevant sub-themes. The first theme centers on the students'

challenges, including academic difficulties, financial constraints, and psychological impacts. The second theme explores goal-oriented behavior, familial support systems, and student coping mechanisms. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on potential issues within the educational system. In order to validate the study's findings, the researchers recommend conducting additional research on the perspectives of college students who are dealing with strand mismatch, analyzing how strand mismatch affects outcome-based education (OBE). They also advise educational institutions to reevaluate their guidelines for career advising programs and set up support services for students who are struggling with strand mismatch.

*Keywords:* Academic Challenges, Support Systems, Familial Support, Proactive Approaches, Progression Mismatches

## **Introduction**

In the midst of rapid global growth and transformation, international standards are evolving across various landscapes. Within Asia, the Philippines stands out as one of the few nations still adhering to a 10-year basic education system, diverging from the 11 or 12-year models adopted by other countries in the region. In response to this, the Philippines introduced the Enhanced Basic Education Program, known as K–12, in 2013, with a focus on enhancing fundamental skills and preparing students for diverse future endeavors (Deped, 2019).

A significant component of the K–12 curriculum is the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) academic strand, encompassing a range of subjects exploring the human condition through analytical and empirical approaches. The success of senior high school graduates in college, termed college preparedness, is a key concern in the Philippines, especially given the extended 12-year structure of the K–12 Program (Malbas, et al., 2023).

In tandem with K–12, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) introduced the College Readiness Standards (CRS) in 2011 to ensure a smooth transition from K–12 to higher education (Mamba, et al., 2020). The CRS defines skill prerequisites for K–12 graduates in General Education Courses, aiming to eliminate the need for remedial courses and uphold international quality standards.

This research delves into the experiences of selected Humanities and Social Sciences students who chose Mathematics as their Major in Lapu-Lapu City College for the Academic Year 2022-2023. The study recognizes the evolving concept of college preparedness and addresses the potential challenges arising from the misalignment between senior high school strands and college courses.

The philosophical stance of the research is rooted in qualitative methodology, acknowledging the subjective nature of the study's assumptions, ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The researchers adopt an interpretative design approach, employing in-depth interviews to understand the unspoken experiences of students.

The study's ontology views reality as pragmatic, emphasizing results and the freedom of choice in methodologies. Epistemologically, the research aligns with pragmatism, focusing on the intended outcomes of research activities. Axiologically, the study embraces interpretivism, recognizing the subjectivity of findings influenced by values (Lim, 2023).

The researchers highlight the impact of Benigno Aquino III's K–12 law on education and emphasize the role of strands like HUMSS in guiding students toward their career paths. The Vertical Alignment Theory is introduced to underscore the potential consequences of a misalignment between senior high school strands and college courses.

The study aims to contribute to the understanding of strand mismatch by investigating the experiences of selected students. By shedding light on the complexities surrounding this phenomenon, the researchers aspire to inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, fostering a constructive dialogue and evidence-based interventions for an educational system that empowers learners and ensures their overall success.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The legal basis for Mathematics as a crucial subject is established globally, with a particular focus on the Pakistani context, where students often drop out due to a lack of enjoyment in Mathematics (Michael, 2015). Research in Mathematics education has evolved from a cognitive focus in the early 1980s to incorporating anthropological and socio-cultural approaches in the mid-1990s, emphasizing the impact of social, cultural, and institutional factors on the transition from secondary to tertiary Mathematics education (Kolar-Begovic, et al., 2017).

The introduction of the K–12 program in the Philippines is a significant transition in the current curriculum, extending basic education to 12 years. While the program aims to equip graduates with essential skills for work and lifelong learning, concerns arise regarding the preparedness of graduates for tertiary education (Kilag, et al., 2023). Senior high school strands, such as Accounting Business Management (ABM), are designed to prepare students for specific college courses, and "bridging classes" are introduced to address any potential gaps between senior high school and college (Quintos, et al. 2020).

The K-12 program is lauded for producing graduates eligible for employment, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skill development by the age of 18 (Abragan et al., 2022). However, issues of strand mismatch emerge, affecting students' course choices in college. The Academic Elitism View suggests that a strong academic background enhances academic success, and a misalignment between senior high school and college courses can hinder adaptation and positive learning outcomes (Rambe & Moeti, 2017).

The Vertical Alignment Theory emphasizes the importance of a curriculum that facilitates a smooth transition between educational levels, highlighting the potential hindrance of a mismatch between senior high school strands and college courses (Kurz et al., 2012). The misalignment issue poses challenges, impacting students' academic achievement, adjustment, and interpersonal connections (Pajares et al., 2018; Alipio, 2020).

Students' desires and commitment influence their course choices, and interest in a subject significantly impacts engagement and understanding (Coles, 2010; Ahmed, Sharif, and Ahmad, 2017). The ease of comprehending course topics and the alignment of courses with career aspirations are crucial considerations in students' decision-making processes (Kilag, et al., 2023).

The literature review addresses the evolution of Mathematics education research, the impact of the K–12 program in the Philippines, issues of strand mismatch, and factors influencing students' course choices. The various perspectives and theories presented contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and complexities associated with the transition from senior high school to college.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

In this study, the researchers used the qualitative research design specifically the phenomenological approach. Fundamentally, this phenomenological approach helped the researchers in gaining a better understanding of the phenomena stated by the participants. The study focused on the lived experiences of six (6) Humanities and Social Sciences students who took Mathematics as their major area. Phenomenology comes from the Greek words “Phenomenon” and “logos” which means “appearance” and “reasons”. According to Bliss (2016), phenomenological research is a qualitative research method that aims to discover and characterize phenomena’ universal essence. The approach aims to investigate the lived experiences of human beings while eliminating the researchers’ preconceived assumptions about the phenomena. According to Cilesiz (2011), the phenomenological approach analyzes the emotions, thoughts, and beliefs to define the core experiences under inquiry. Thus, the researchers must bracket whatever prior assumptions that they may have about the experiences of phenomena. Similarly, it allows the researchers to visualize the scenario of the participants based on their real shared experiences with the event.

### **Research Environment**

The study was conducted at Lapu-Lapu City College, which is situated in Carajay, Gun-ob Lapu-Lapu City. The establishment of the college was facilitated through City Ordinance No. 354-2010, with the primary aim of providing the city's students with a cost-free and excellent education. Currently, Lapu-Lapu City College offers a range of five (5) courses, specifically Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) with majors in English, Mathematics, Filipino, and Social Studies, Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd), Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM), Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM), and Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (BSIT). As of the second semester of the Academic Year 2022-2023, the College has a total enrollment of 1,754 students.

### **Research Participants**

The research participants of this study are the selected Mathematics major students of the College of Education of Lapu-Lapu City College who were graduates of Humanities and Social Sciences strand in their Senior High School.

### **Sampling Design**

The participants were selected through the use of purposive sampling. According to Lavrakas (2005), purposive sampling is a non-probability sample with its main objective is to provide a sample that may be referred to as a representative of the chosen population. The inclusion of these participants were based on the following: (1) officially enrolled in LLCC in the First and Second Academic Year 2022-2023, (2) must be a HUMSS graduate in Senior High School, (3) Student of BSEd Mathematics, lastly, (4) had willingness to participate in the study.

### **Research Instrument**

The most valuable research instrument for qualitative research is undoubtedly the researcher themselves. In this study, the researchers employed an in-depth interview (IDI) approach as the primary means of data collection. To guide the interview process, the researchers meticulously developed an interview guide tailored to the objectives of the study.

An in-depth interview (IDI) is a comprehensive and open-ended information-gathering technique that aims to delve deeply into the respondent's perspective, experiences, emotions, and viewpoints. Through this qualitative research method, the researchers sought to gain a thorough understanding of the participants' unique insights and lived experiences.

During the in-depth interviews, the researchers did not rigidly adhere to a predetermined list of questions. Instead, they fostered a dialogue with the participants by utilizing more open-ended inquiries. This approach encouraged the participants to freely express their thoughts and engage in a meaningful conversation, rather than simply providing brief question-and-answer responses. The use of in-depth interviews in qualitative research enables researchers to gain rich and nuanced insights, capturing the complexity of human experiences. As mentioned by Creely (2018), this methodology allows for a comprehensive examination of respondents' perspectives, enhancing the depth and quality of the research findings.

According to Ruslin, et al. (2022), a semi-structured interview will be used to guide the interviewer, and an interview guide is a set of questions or themes that the interviewer hopes to cover during an interview. The researchers will examine and understand each participant's experiences with taking Mathematics as their major and how these experiences affected the participants. The researchers will take notes on the non-verbal reactions of the participants during an interview.

Unfortunately, even the most diligent researcher will not be able to record all that transpires during an interview. It's very difficult for a researcher to be fully present and observant when he or she is also taking notes on everything the participants say. As a result, it's typical for interviewers to make audio recordings of the interviews they do. By recording interviews, the researchers can concentrate on the interactions with the interviewee and eliminate the need to take notes. For this study, to ensure that no information was left out or missed, the researchers will seek the permission of the participants so that their responses will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

The researchers initially proposed three different research titles as part of their exploration. After careful consideration and deliberation, they finalized the title as "Match that Mismatch: A

Phenomenological Study" With the title established, the researchers took the necessary steps to commence the study.

To initiate the research, the researchers drafted a letter of authorization, which was then sent to the Dean of the College of Education at Lapu-Lapu City College. This letter sought permission to conduct the study within the college premises. Following the approval from the dean, the researchers proceeded to select six participants from the Mathematics major at Lapu-Lapu City College for personal interviews.

In order to accommodate the participants' schedules and ensure convenience, the researchers carefully coordinated the personal interviews around their availability and free time. During this process, the participants were provided with accurate and meaningful information regarding the study's objectives, methodology, intended use of the gathered data, and the extent of their participation.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face, enabling direct and in-depth communication between the researchers and the interviewees. To ensure ethical standards were upheld, the interviewees were requested to voluntarily participate in the study by signing a consent form. This informed consent formally authorized the researchers to conduct the interviews and record the audio discussions, ensuring transparency and adherence to ethical guidelines throughout the research process.

In order to prioritize the privacy and well-being of the participants, a consent form was implemented to ensure their explicit agreement. It was explicitly communicated to the participants that they had the autonomy to terminate the interview or withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative consequences. Furthermore, the researchers assured the participants that their personal information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences as Mathematics majors, the researchers employed an in-depth interview approach. The carefully crafted questions aimed to elicit the participants' genuine thoughts and reflections, enabling them to express their true feelings without distortion or bias. The researchers took great care in formulating these questions, ensuring their neutrality and effectiveness in eliciting insightful responses.

Once the data collection phase was satisfactorily completed, the researchers would proceed with transcribing the participant's responses. This meticulous process involves accurately converting the audio recordings of the interviews into written text, ensuring fidelity to the original dialogue. After transcription, the researchers would meticulously analyze and interpret the data, striving to extract meaningful insights and themes.

As a part of the research process, the results and findings derived from the analysis would be presented back to the six participants. This feedback mechanism allows the participants to validate and corroborate the accuracy and interpretation of their own experiences, ensuring transparency and promoting a collaborative research environment.

## **Data Analysis**

According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), data analysis involves systematically searching and organizing interview transcripts, observation notes, or other written materials gathered by researchers to gain a better understanding of phenomena. The researchers employed thematic analysis, as defined by Fleerackers, et al. (2022), as a qualitative approach to analyze a collection of texts, such as interviews or transcripts. Thematic analysis serves as a valuable tool for extracting participants' views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values from qualitative data like interview transcripts and survey results. The researchers extensively examined the collected data to identify recurring themes and patterns of meaning. The widely-used six-step approach to thematic analysis, developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), includes familiarization, coding, topic generation, theme review, theme definition and labeling, and writing up. In the initial step, familiarization, as described by Caulfield (2020), researchers become acquainted with the data by transcribing audio, reading the text, taking note of significant information, and gaining an overall understanding of the content. The subsequent stage involves coding, which Medelyan (2019) defines as the process of categorizing and defining qualitative data to uncover various themes and connections among them. Through coding, researchers can gain a quick overview of core ideas and common meanings present in the data.

The third step in Braun and Clarke's method is theme generation, wherein researchers generate themes based on the codes they have assigned and the patterns observed in the data. Following this, researchers review the themes in the fourth step to ensure their relevance and accuracy as representations of the data. The next step involves defining and naming the themes, which entails precisely formulating what each theme represents and how it contributes to the researchers' understanding of the data, as described by Caulfield (2022). The final step in the qualitative data analysis process using Braun and Clarke's approach is writing up the analysis. This includes an introduction that establishes the research topic, goals, and approach, a methodology section outlining data collection procedures and analysis techniques employed by the researchers. The discussion section delves deeper into the analysis by linking the themes to broader topics, exploring the implications of the findings, and examining the assumptions underlying the themes. Citing relevant literature provides additional support and strengthens the analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As ethical researchers, they are confident that there will be considerations like those listed below. Risks like the participant's identification, the confidentiality of information, data from documentation, and petitions for privacy are possible to include in conducting the study.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Embarking on the journey of higher education signifies the commencement of a transformative path toward a student's future professional career. The process of choosing a career necessitates meticulous deliberation, as it offers a crucial advantage for thriving in a fiercely competitive society. However, numerous factors have led to the participants in this study pursuing courses that resulted in mismatches between their aspirations and the actual progression of their careers. Consequently, these mismatches have given rise to a myriad of challenges.

In this section, the invaluable insights and experiences of a carefully selected Humanities and Social Science students who are major in Mathematics are presented. These individuals provide a

unique perspective that sheds light on the complexities associated with the phenomenon under investigation. To comprehensively address these issues, researchers diligently evaluated and studied the wealth of data they collected.

Through a rigorous analysis process, the researchers identified several major themes that emerged from the study. These themes are accompanied by a detailed, step-by-step explanation of how the data was identified and interpreted, employing the well-established Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis methodology. By employing this approach, the researchers aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena explored in the field of investigation, ultimately contributing to the body of knowledge in this area.

The research has accumulated data from selected humanities and social sciences students who took Mathematics as their major area. Moreover, the questions from the study were asked during the in-depth interview with probing questions based on the answers that were given. The questions include, 'Can you give me another example of...' 'What do you mean by...?' and 'What are some reasons you like...?' The question was framed so as to grasp the multiple accounts and narratives from the responses of the selected Humanities and Social Sciences students based on their experiences.

The participants in this study were carefully chosen based on specific criteria established by the researchers. To ensure the utmost protection of their privacy and maintain confidentiality, the researchers assigned unique codes to each participant, safeguarding their personal data. Among the participants were individuals selected from various fields of specialization within the College of Education.

**Participant 1** is a "**determined student**," meaning she is determined to do something and motivated. Even during her most difficult times specifically in her first year in the college, she managed to do her tasks and overcome her challenges and difficulties while taking the course. Instead of seeing the major area as hard, she pursues it with determination and is unlikely to give up, and she has a strong desire to achieve her future goals which include becoming a teacher. Furthermore, she naturally prefers to look on the bright side of things, even in the most difficult of situations, which is why she intends to achieve the end goals through hard work and perseverance.

**Participant 2** is known as "**independent student**", meaning she is constantly seeking ways to better herself and her life. Making a better life means she finds a way to overcome challenges by deciding to work hard so that she can support her studies and striving to solve challenges and struggles while taking her major area. She is willing to take a risk even if it is a difficult path because she knows that this is where she can learn and improve. She doesn't want to stop taking her major area since she doesn't want her effort in the first-year college to waste her time.

**Participant 3** is a "**practical student**," which means that her actions are more in line with the facts of life than with concepts or ideals. She makes plans on how to reach the goals she sets. She is aware that there will always be ups and downs in every situation, just as she did when choosing her major. She is conscious of her strengths and weaknesses yet she never allows those



weaknesses to stand in the way of her success. She has a positive attitude on life and believes that anything is possible to conquer with enough hard work and determination.

**Participant 4** is a "**thoughtful student**", which means he thinks about others and wants to help the community by teaching them what he has learned in his major subject. He is considerate of his neighbors or those who find it difficult to learn the subject of Mathematics on their island. He also pays close attention to detail and everything he says or does. In overcoming the difficulties and challenges of his course, he believes that studying is a continuous and never-ending process that takes a long time and is always in a state of development, learning, and growth.

**Participant 5** is an "**enthusiastic student**," which means that he is the kind of student who feels alive and enjoys the moment. He also has the courage to work hard to attain what he started, as when he mentioned that he chose HUMSS because he wants to be a teacher and interested in learning more about Mathematics. Even though he encountered challenges and difficulties, he still continued striving and doing his best. He embraces everything with positivity and energy.

Lastly, **Participant 6** is a "**goal-oriented student**," which means she is willing to achieve a goal set and this willingness encourages her to develop the habits to achieve her goals, such as she mentioned wanting to advance study so that it will develop her learning about Mathematics and she will be ready for the next school year. She is continuously studying in order to be the best she can be and to find better ways to be more productive. She learned to focus on learning her major area, and despite the problems she encountered while taking her course, she learned to stand up and make a strategy to assist her progress and improve her learning.

The succeeding section presents the analysis of the selected Humanities and Social Sciences students' experiences, identifying their narratives and implementation, and other relevant areas related to their experiences. After a thorough examination and reading from their statements and attaching labels to indicate them, two themes emerged: *students' challenges encountered* and *students' coping strategies*, with corresponding sub-themes.

The first identified sub-theme under students' challenges encountered is academic difficulties. Six participants experienced academic difficulties while taking Mathematics as their Major Area.

*interms sa academic nga nga first sa academic nga challenges, of course uhmm kato when I was ay kuan jud di jud nako makalimtan nga kato nga first year college kay murag makahilak nako ba kay natoy-- naa toy kuan ato naa tay paansweran ba nya naglisod jud kog sabot kay murag first jud to nako na na kuan ba na unsa na na encounter ba nga inani na kuan mao to.. (interms of academic challenges, of course [that was] when I was uhmm I didn't forget when I was first year college because sort of I feel like crying because there was an activity and I have a difficulty in understanding because that is the first time I have encountered so...) (SI-DS-02-04)*

*...So first kay example there is a certain topic and most of my classmates kanang already know the topic then most of us kay*

*HUMSS students kay wala pa kabalo. (so first, there is a certain topic and most of my classmates uhmm already know the topic then most of us HUMSS students doesn't know yet.) (SI-IS-03)*

*So my biggest difficulties while taking math major is ahhh... I don't have a lot of foundation so if ever I know the basic or uhmm is ahh it is only in when I am in junior high. So I think I really need to start to study again and again because I forgot it. And aside for that there are terms in math [that] I'm not familiarize with and there are more foundation in math or in basic that I really don't know .Since it's been a while that I am not using it. Since I'm a HUMSS student. (SI-PS-04-07)*

*...So my point here is uhmm they are advance than me, because some of my classmate is they already know what is that, while I'm like not yet. So, it really has a big difference and struggle if taking a HUMSS strand... (SI-TS-03-05)*

*ahh the biggest challenges nga, as a math major is wala nako na familiar ang mga equation, mga symbols then... ah nagstruggle ko dira and....Sometimes I feel ahh down to myself because ahh kanag naawahi bitaw ko, naawahi ko sa ... kuan naawahi ko sa ilang... ahm... sa ilang na learn... ubos ko sa ilang na learn so... (...ahh the biggest challenges that, [I] as a math major is I wasn't able to familiarize the equations, symbols then...I struggled in that...Sometimes I feel ahh down to myself because ahhh I am behind, I am behind on.. ahh I was left to their..ahm.. to their learnings.. I am left behind to their learning so...) (SI-ES-03-08)*

*...there is a gap because I don't know a lot about math because ,, I was a HUMSS student in in .. during in my senior high school is there are only two subject about math and it was not really discussed deeply... (SI-GS-02-08)*

participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 collectively reported facing difficulties and academic challenges when pursuing Mathematics as their major area of study. This aligns with the Vertical Alignment Theory (Kurz, Talapatra, & Roach, 2012), which suggests that the lack of alignment between the chosen senior high school strand and college courses can impede students' learning progression. The learning process is guided by established standards at each educational level, tailored to meet the specific learning needs and skills of students at different stages of intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development. However, when there is a misalignment between high school and college courses, these requirements are not adequately addressed, resulting in insufficient development of cognitive, psychological, and emotional learning components.

According to Fishman's (2014) research, the selection of a senior high school strand can have diverse effects on academic adjustment and performance outcomes. These effects can range from

advantageous to disruptive or inconsequential for the learner. This insight highlights the importance of considering the impact of the chosen strand on a student's academic journey. Specifically, when students experience strand mismatch, wherein their chosen college course does not align with their senior high school strand, they face a disadvantageous situation. This mismatch results in a lack of prior knowledge and preparation, putting them at a disadvantage compared to their peers who have a better alignment between their strand and college course.

Supporting this perspective, Alipio (2020) conducted a study that revealed students with strand mismatch tend to face more challenges in adjusting to their college courses compared to those without strand mismatch. While a student's senior high school strand does not outright determine their academic achievement, the lack of alignment between their high school and college experiences can impede their transition and academic performance.

Furthermore, the disconnect between high school experience and college expectations has been identified as a significant factor contributing to students' struggles in college. As highlighted by numerous studies, including Fishman (2014) and Alipio (2020), many students entering college find that the courses they encounter differ significantly from those they took in high school. This disconnect can lead to difficulties in adapting to the academic demands and expectations of college-level courses.

These findings contribute to the reliability and validity of the statement by drawing on research conducted by Fishman (2014) and Alipio (2020). The studies employed rigorous methodologies to examine the relationship between senior high school strand, strand mismatch, and academic adjustment in college. By presenting these research findings, we gain a deeper understanding of the challenges students face when their high school experiences do not align with the expectations of college courses. As one of the participant have stated:

*...aside sad ana ma'am kay wala sad kaayo mi ma orient about aning mga strands kay ingon sila pwede ra daw bisag unsa kay wala man gud mi career guidance kay tungod pandemic... (aside from that ma'am, we were not oriented about these strands because we don't have career guidance because of pandemic...) (SI-DS-10-12)*

Students who actively participate in career guidance programs offered at school gain valuable awareness, information, and skills necessary for success in the workforce. These programs aim to provide students with vocational orientation, enabling them to understand the requirements and essential aspects of their chosen career that align with their interests and abilities. During the process of occupational orientation, adolescents assess their interests and skills in relation to various job options, gradually developing a preference for a specific occupation. It has been emphasized that providing "transition enhancement" support to students in their further education, training, or employment is crucial (Baker, 2000). According to a study on the participation of students in career guidance and its implications for Kano, Nigeria, engaging in career guidance activities helps students acquire the knowledge, skills, and awareness necessary for effective career development (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004).

Moreover, the lack of involvement in career guidance activities leads to missed opportunities to fully capitalize on one's potential and existing opportunities. As Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, and Peterson (2000) suggest, the nature of work is undergoing fundamental changes. Gone are the days when individuals would start their careers with a single organization and remain dedicated until retirement. Attendance records indicate that students are not fully utilizing opportunities to recognize their skills, values, and aptitudes, as well as explore occupations beyond their current ones that align with their individuality and are essential for survival in the 21st century. Identifying and nurturing talent will undoubtedly reduce young people's reliance on the government and enhance their economic self-sufficiency.

The second sub-theme is financial issues. A student's major and college course choices are influenced by many variables. Various factors, such as financial difficulties, can influence the decision and lead to disagreements between individual factors. As participants have stated:

*...usa pud kay ang financial, of course sa financial naka agi pud ko nga challenges like kuan sa kanang mge needs nato naay usahay na out of budget ta. Makaingon ko nga Stress kaayo... (...also one of the [challenges] is financial, of course in financial I also been through that like uhmm in our needs, there are also times that we were out of budget.. I could say that it is very stressful...) (SI-DS-13-14)*

*So first of all ma'am kay kanang kay I took HUMSS but my main goal that time kay STEM but wala may STEM sa skwelahan nga duol sa amoa nya nag self-support raman ko... (So first of all ma'am, uhm I took HUMSS [strand] but my main goal that time is STEM [strand] but there is no STEM [strand] offered in the school that is near in our house then I was just a self-supporting student...) (SI-IS-08-10)*

*One of the problem jud is a financial like that's why I don't took STEM... (One really of the problem is the financial that's why I didn't take STEM [strand]...) (SI-TS-10)*

*dile man kay me dato dile pud kay me ingon ing ana. (we are not that rich ...)* (SI-GS-12)

According to extensive research conducted by Gallagher et al. (2020), multiple factors contribute to the high levels of stress experienced by students. Among these factors are financial pressures, academic difficulties, and the relentless pursuit of achieving excellent grades. The college environment itself adds to the challenge, as it demands greater rigor and places heightened demands on students, particularly those who find themselves in degree programs that lack consistency and alignment.

Building on these findings, the study conducted by Batu et al. (2018) highlights the struggles faced by students who have ended up in courses that do not suit their interests or aspirations.

Regret and a sense of unfulfilled expectations often permeate their college experience, as they realize the sacrifices made to pursue an unsuitable path. The absence of a genuine sense of reward further exacerbates their feelings of disillusionment and dissatisfaction.

Moreover, Fan and Wolters (2014) emphasize that students who encounter unforeseen circumstances and are unable to adapt to the demands of the school curriculum are at a higher risk of dropping out. The lack of effective coping mechanisms and an inability to navigate unexpected challenges can significantly impact a student's persistence and motivation, leading to the unfortunate decision to discontinue their educational journey.

The third identified sub-theme that has emerged is psychological impact. Strand mismatch gives rise to a myriad of challenges, encompassing academic, social, emotional, and mental spheres. Among these challenges, a prominent issue arises from the fact that students find themselves lagging behind their peers due to a disparity in the coursework they have undertaken. This knowledge gap can impede their academic progress and hinder their ability to fully engage with the subject matter.

However, the consequences of strand mismatch extend beyond academic difficulties. Students grappling with this mismatch often experience a sense of unease, uncertainty, and anxiety regarding their future. The divergent path they find themselves on creates a dissonance that amplifies concerns about their ability to succeed in their chosen field. This emotional burden further compounds the challenges they face and may lead to a sense of alienation from the learning process itself.

Socially, students with strand mismatch may encounter difficulties in connecting with their peers who have shared experiences and a more aligned academic background. This social disconnect can lead to feelings of isolation and hinder their ability to form meaningful relationships within their academic community.

Moreover, the emotional toll of strand mismatch should not be underestimated. Students may experience a range of emotions, including frustration, self-doubt, and a diminished sense of confidence. These emotional struggles can undermine their overall well-being and further impact their academic performance and personal growth.

The reliability of these assertions are rooted in the experiences and observations of numerous researchers and scholars in the field of education. Extensive studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of strand mismatch on students' holistic development, uncovering the multifaceted challenges they encounter in academic, social, emotional, and mental domains. To quote from the participants:

*jud di jud nako makalimtan nga kato nga first year college kay murag makahilak nako ba...(...that time when I was uhhh I really can't forget that time [when I was in] first year college, I felt like crying...)* (SI-DS-17)

*...In my self I need to double my style whole my times for me is*

*really need “kanang” I am hierarchy down or what ...(laugh) to be honest that I feel below if there are times I have low score or even when we will have oral presentation or uhhh participation because (laugh) uhhh I think we are just the same but it is not... (SI-PS-20-22)*

*At first, I can feel ahmm...behind...that is why I feel stressed.. (SI-TS-21)*

*...na behind ko sa mga ... angay unta nakong kat-unon, then.. na behind ko sa akong mga classmates so that usahay ma down ko... (...I [am] behind to the... things that I should have learned... I [am]behind to my classmates so that sometimes I am down...) (SI-ES-23-24)*

*...kay ma pressure ko kay murag sa .. sa.. kay kadaghan namo sa kuan kay murag ako moy tan aw nako sa akong self is.. akoy pinakaslow bitaw kaayo kay wala kayo koy alam sa math...(because I am pressured because I feel like... having many classmates I feel like I am the slowest [learner] because I don't have any foundation in math...) (SI-GS-23-24)*

Multiple studies have been conducted in traditional face-to-face classroom setting to evaluate students' attitude, dropout rate, and academic performance in distance education. Distance learning, particularly online learning, has been linked to lower academic achievement and higher rates of students leaving their courses compared to traditional in-person teaching. Some of the factors contributing to these outcomes include unengaging course content, financial difficulties, inadequate feedback and support, feelings of isolation, lack of motivation, dissatisfaction with requirements and regulations, and challenges in adapting to the online learning environment. Furthermore, factors such as career goals and aspirations also influence students' experiences in online education (Bernard, 2004; Fozdar & Kumar, 2007).

According to Saddington (1992), one of the primary difficulties associated with feelings of insecurity and low confidence is the fear of inadequacy. This fear can lead to anxiety, self-perception of being negatively judged and evaluated, a sense of inferiority, shame, humiliation, despair, and avoidance of collaborative activities involving diverse individuals. Consequently, anxiety becomes a significant hurdle for students, especially when they are required to give oral presentations or solve math problems.

The phenomenon of strand mismatch exerts a significant influence on students, causing some to contemplate the drastic decisions of dropping out or switching courses. These considerations, though understandable given the challenges they face, are often transient in nature. Students, driven by their inherent resilience and an unwavering commitment to their aspirations, find themselves reluctant to abandon their educational endeavors and determined to persevere despite the obstacles they encounter.

The initial impulse to entertain the thought of dropping out or changing courses is a natural response to the difficulties posed by strand mismatch. The incongruity between their chosen field of study and their previous academic foundation can create a sense of uncertainty and frustration, prompting them to question their path and explore alternative options. This moment of contemplation, however, is often fleeting as students reflect upon the efforts they have already invested and the potential loss of the progress they have made thus far.

Fuelled by their tenacity and an unwavering belief in their abilities, students with strand mismatch chose to confront the challenges head-on rather than relinquishing their aspirations. They recognize that the path they have embarked upon, despite its hurdles, holds promise and opportunities for growth. This determination to forge ahead is fortified by their recognition that their hard work and dedication should not be squandered or rendered insignificant by momentary setbacks.

The credibility of this perspective is bolstered by insights derived from various research studies and the narratives of students who have navigated strand mismatch. These sources reveal the resilience exhibited by individuals facing this predicament and their steadfast commitment to realizing their educational goals. Moreover, the findings underscore the significance of personal motivation and the belief in one's abilities as crucial factors in overcoming the challenges posed by strand mismatch.

The second identified theme is the Students' Coping Strategies. Six participants utilized different coping strategies in coping with the experiences and challenges encountered. Two themes have emerged under students' coping strategies and they are Goal-Focused and Family-Support System.

The first identified sub-theme is Goal-Focused. Six participants utilized Goal-Focused coping strategies in coping with the experiences and challenges encountered.

Recognizing the existence of a problem is the crucial first step towards finding a solution. It is through this acknowledgment that individuals open themselves up to the possibility of exploring multiple approaches to overcome the difficulties they face. While certain students may find themselves in circumstances where they experience academic or social isolation, it is important to view this setback as an opportunity for growth and resilience.

On the other hand, students who have chosen a path that does not align ideally with their field of study may find themselves navigating a more arduous and intricate journey that can impede their academic and personal fulfillment. However, it is essential to note that this choice also presents an opportunity for self-discovery and the cultivation of a strong sense of determination.

To excel academically despite these challenges, students can employ a range of strategies that enable them to effectively manage the pressure they face. Austria-Cruz (2019) suggests that the implementation of various coping mechanisms can yield diverse outcomes in terms of student performance, cognitive functioning, and the overall learning environment.

Assuming responsibility for one's role as a student may initially evoke feelings of insecurity, as the path ahead may seem uncertain and daunting. However, it is precisely through embracing these responsibilities that individuals can embark on a journey of personal growth and self-assurance. By approaching their academic pursuits with dedication, curiosity, and a willingness to adapt, students can unlock their potential and overcome obstacles along the way.

The reliability and credibility of this perspective stem from the insights derived from research conducted by Austria-Cruz (2019) and other scholars in the field of education. These studies have explored the impact of coping strategies on student outcomes and shed light on the importance of taking ownership of one's academic journey.

By embracing the challenges, seeking support, and adopting effective coping strategies, students can not only overcome the setbacks they face but also thrive academically and personally. It is through this process of self-discovery and perseverance that they can develop the confidence and resilience needed to navigate the complexities of their academic and spiritual growth. As the participants quoted:

*Hmmm--- so far uhmm since first year jud uhmm when we were first year college lisod jud to sya nga time pero I can say nga na we were in third year college, uhmm I can really say nga kaya pud diay nato diay nga despite nga kato nga mga challenges na cope rapud nako if we will have a hard work, og perseverance nga ganahan jud ka ana na I pursue gyud na nga kuan nga since I really love math but I don't know if Math loves us or ingana ba something nya mao to nga kuan my plans now is to maybe to strive hard and to keep up the work for my goal to graduate...(Hmmm--- so far uhmm since first year uhmm when we were first year college, it was really a difficult time but I can say that we were now in third year, I overcome it despite those challenges, [I] was able to cope with it if we will have hard work and perseverance on that [matter] I really pursue it since I really love math but I don't now if math love us or like that something.. so my plans now is to maybe to strive hard and to keep up the work for my goal to graduate...)*  
(SI-DS-43-47)

Despite those challenges and struggles encountered in the first year of college, Participant 1 created a coping mechanism which is to strive hard and keep up the work for the goal. According to the article of Perseverance in Psychology: Meaning, Importance & Books (Schaffner, 2020), The point is that all forms of learning and mastery require perseverance (Duckworth et al., 2010; Ericsson, 2006). Learn at college, improve your skills, work hard to pursue something interesting, apply that learning, think of ways to overcome learning challenges, and do more rather than sticking to previous knowledge, trying to acquire knowledge(Richard, 2007). participant 1 marks the end phase of the struggle by revealing realizations while still developing as a student through strategies for coping.

*Nasugdan naman(chuckles)\*, sayang kung dili ipadayon para nis akong pangandoy...( I started it (chuckles)\*.. It will be a waste if I will not continue [it] for my dream...)* (SI-IS-37)



Regardless of the challenges and obstacles encountered, participant 2 create a coping mechanism to continue striving hard in order to reach the dream and decided to continue what he/she started so that his/her efforts will not put into a waste.

Based on the research conducted by Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2014) on the topic of Implementation Intentions and Effective Goal Pursuit, it was found that when students felt a loss of control and agency, they encountered difficulties in their learning process, including hyperactivity, withdrawal, a desire for immediate gratification, and anxiety. To overcome these challenges, students required a certain level of control over their personal environment and performance in order to stay focused on their intentions and successfully achieve their learning objectives (Gollwitzer & Brandstatter, 1990). It should be noted that setting goals is just the initial step towards their accomplishment, as there are numerous implementation-related factors that need to be addressed in order to ensure success (Gollwitzer & Brandstatter, 1997).

*....although I don't want teaching after "kuan" for me the salary here in the Philippines and DepEd it's more on papers and I hate that preparation and I don't want to prepare more in teaching in that particular subject so less of the salary I can't say that I will shift my path way or career path because my plan is I think I just study, for me ha because of practicality and I just study for the diploma because my plan after graduate I don't want to teach in public, in private I want to take abroad but not teaching Because I graduate I plan to go to abroad ahh...since I realize our 1 week salary here is I will get in 1 day or 2 day or a week in abroad so it's more on practicality But yes, it doesn't mean I don't like teaching ha I don't like but to be in practical here is to change of career path like that, path. But my goal for now is to graduate... (SI-PS-42-48)*

In a compelling study conducted by Johnson and Howard (2006), a significant correlation was unearthed between the academic achievement of teenagers and their resilience. The study revealed that individuals who possessed a strong sense of confidence in their own capabilities, feelings of empowerment, and a belief in their ability to influence outcomes exhibited higher levels of academic success. These findings underscore the critical role that psychological factors, such as self-belief and resilience, play in shaping students' academic outcomes.

Moreover, a comprehensive analysis conducted by Multon, Brown, and Lent (1991) further supports the notion that self-efficacy is a fundamental determinant of academic performance and persistence. This extensive review, encompassing 39 studies, delved into the intricate relationship between self-efficacy, academic achievement, and the ability to persevere in the face of challenges. The research conclusively demonstrated that self-efficacy serves as a powerful catalyst, influencing individuals' behavioral decisions, level of dedication, and capacity to overcome obstacles encountered along their academic journey.

The reliability and credibility of these findings stem from the meticulous research conducted by Johnson and Howard (2006) and Multon, Brown, and Lent (1991), as well as the subsequent

studies that have built upon their seminal work. These studies represent a culmination of rigorous scientific investigation and contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the significance of self-efficacy in academic performance and resilience.

*...So my plan is all my struggle it is just a struggles so I know that “kanang” it is just for a meantime. Then, if I can’t come out of the struggles, “nang” go with the flow always. So, like what my classmate said “it is what it is”. If I passed then I’ll passed. I have many plans to study advance, to will try boost my confidence during reporting like during Demo’s and I start practicing for lifelong learning...(SI-TS-56-57)*

After facing various challenges in their chosen major during their first year of college, participant 4 decided to address these difficulties by adopting proactive measures. They chose to study ahead, boost their confidence, and continue practicing in order to foster lifelong learning. Developing a positive sense of identity is considered crucial for building resilience (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008), as it facilitates a sense of belonging and connection.

In three studies conducted by Lucas, et.al. (2015), the findings indicated that participants faced no significant difficulties in completing tasks when the circumstances were favorable, regardless of their level of engagement. However, as the challenges became more demanding, those who exhibited courage not only exerted more effort but also persevered longer. Researchers concluded that a combination of positive emotions, an expectation of success, and sheer determination enabled individuals to overcome the fear of failure and enhance their willingness to persist (Griffiths, 2017). Another study, titled "Too Much Grit to Quit? An Examination of Grit in Two Separate Within-Institution Contexts," revealed that although courageous individuals may complete tasks at a slower pace, their educational and employment outcomes surpass those of individuals with less courage (Duckworth et al., 2007; Eskeis-Winkler et al., 2014; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014).

*...So my plan is all my struggle it is just a struggles so I know that “kanang” it is just for a meantime. Then, if I can’t come out of the struggles, “nang” go with the flow always. So, like what my classmate said “it is what it is”. If I passed then I’ll passed. I have many plans to study advance, to will try boost my confidence during reporting like during Demo’s and I start practicing for lifelong learning...(SI-TS-71-73)*

In the face of the formidable challenges encountered during the first year of college within their major area, participant 4 exhibited commendable resilience and determination. Recognizing the importance of proactively addressing these struggles, they made a conscious decision to adopt effective coping strategies to navigate the complexities of their academic journey.

Participant 4's proactive approach involved several key elements. Firstly, they embraced the value of studying in advance, recognizing that thorough preparation and a deep understanding of the subject matter are instrumental in surmounting academic hurdles. By devoting extra time and effort to their studies, they sought to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

In addition to academic preparations, participant 4 understood the significance of bolstering their confidence. They recognized that a positive mindset and self-assurance are essential ingredients for overcoming challenges. Through self-reflection, seeking support from mentors, and engaging in positive self-talk, they actively worked towards building their confidence, allowing them to approach difficulties with a resilient and determined mindset.

Furthermore, Participant 4 embraced the notion of lifelong learning. They understood that education is an ongoing journey and committed themselves to continuous growth and improvement. By maintaining a mindset of curiosity, adaptability, and a willingness to acquire new knowledge and skills, they positioned themselves for long-term success and personal fulfillment.

The reliability of these observations stems from the experiences shared by participant 4, providing firsthand insights into their coping strategies and mindset. Additionally, the findings are supported by existing research on resilience and personal development. Studies such as those conducted by Brooker and Woodhead (2008) emphasize the importance of achieving a positive sense of identity, fostering a sense of belonging, and forging meaningful connections as foundational elements for developing resilience.

Participant 4's experiences serve as an inspiring example of resilience and personal growth. Their proactive approach to overcoming challenges by studying in advance, cultivating confidence, and embracing lifelong learning reflects their unwavering commitment to success. By incorporating these strategies into their academic journey, they not only navigate the immediate struggles but also lay the groundwork for their future endeavors.

The experiences of participant 4 serves as a testament to the power of resilience and the transformative impact it can have on individuals. Their story encourages others to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, adopt proactive coping mechanisms, and nurture a lifelong passion for learning. Through their perseverance and dedication, participant 4 exemplifies the remarkable potential that lies within each of us to overcome obstacles, achieve personal growth, and ultimately thrive in the pursuit of our goals.

The outcomes of three studies conducted by Lucas, et.al. (2015) indicated that participants faced no difficulties in completing tasks when conditions were favorable, regardless of their level of engagement. However, as the challenges became more demanding, courageous individuals not only exerted greater effort but also exhibited longer perseverance. Researchers concluded that a combination of positive emotions, the expectation of success, and sheer determination enabled individuals to overcome the fear of failure and enhanced their motivation to persist (Griffiths, 2017). According to the study of Too Much Grit to Quit? An Examination of Grit in Two Separate Within-Institution Contexts, it turns out that while brave people complete jobs more slowly, their educational and employment outcomes are better than those of the less brave. (Duckworth et al., 2007; Eskeis-Winkler et al., 2014; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014).

*Yes because, ahhh.. in ... this.. unsay tawag ana.. yes I really want to finish this 4<sup>th</sup> year college because as what I have said the ... since I was elementary, junior high school and senior high, senior*

*high, I am interesting in math, until now I am still interested ... I want to learn more, I want to kanang .... Ah.. to... know more about the math...(Yes because, ahhh.. in... this.. what do we call that...yes I really want to finish this 4<sup>th</sup> year college because as what I have said the ... since I was elementary, junior high school and senior high, senior high, I am interesting in math, until now I am still interested ... I want to learn more, I want to uhmm .... Ah.. to... know more about the math...)* (SI-ES-61-63)

In spite of the challenges encountered, participant 5 still managed and coped up the struggles by motivating himself/herself. He takes the challenges by the coping strategies of being positive and continues working hard to achieve his/her goals.

In Hunter and Csikszentmihalyi's (2003) research on the perceptions of perseverance and its impact on the life and academic success of university students, two groups of adolescents were compared based on their level of interest in daily activities. The study revealed a notable distinction between those who found their lives engaging and those who experienced boredom. Students who were interested in their daily lives displayed a positive attitude, enthusiasm, and confidence in their future prospects, considering themselves effective agents in the world. They exhibited their strengths and capabilities when faced with challenges. In a more recent study by Aduhamdeh and Csikszentmihaly (2012), it was observed that interested students were primarily motivated by the intrinsic value of the activities they engaged in, as well as the challenges inherent in those activities. While extrinsic motivations also had an impact, students were more likely to persist in their habits when driven by intrinsic motives such as enjoyment (Griffiths, 2017).

*Ang akong plan no kay of course mas ganahan pako sa makat on and ganahan ko mag mag advance study during summer kay para ig ka second year nako like mura dile ko ka dile kanang makaingon ko nga medjo medjo ready nako kay nag nag nag unsa na na naggather nako sa mga knowledge sa knowledge nagkuan sa math in which is tanang subject sa math is connected rapud sa kanang connected ra sad siya sa each other like sa algebra like conncted siya sa trigo, trigo connected sa geometry so mao to ganahan ko mga self-study and then magfocus na jud ko sa akong major na gekuha kay akong goal akong diploma... (My plan is of course I wanted to learn more and I wanted to.. to advance study during summer so that when I become 2<sup>nd</sup> year college I am [somewhat] like I can tell [my self] that I am kinda..kinda ready because I was able to gather the knowledge.. the knowledge uhmm in math in which all part of the subject in math is also connected..also connected to trigo[nometry], trigo[nometry] connected to geometry so that is why I wanted to self-study and then focus to my major that I took because my goal is to graduate...)* (SI-GS-52-55)

Despite the challenges encountered while taking the major area, participant 6 overcomes the struggles by having the coping mechanism of advanced studying and focus on the goals.

According to the research on Perceptions of Perseverance and its Impact on the Life and Academic Success of Nine University Students, Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2014) discovered that motivational beliefs related to self-regulation, such as self-efficacy and goal orientation, precede students' academic efforts. This is supported by Zimmerman's (2011) findings, which showed that students' self-efficacy beliefs and attributions for their efforts influence their academic performance. In a separate study conducted by Schunk et al. (2012), extensive training research indicated significant correlations between cognitive performance, empowerment, and self-regulatory performance across different academic areas, such as math problem solving, writing, and reading.

In response to this challenge, each of his concerned students has taken appropriate steps to minimize the impact of their situation. The participants have created coping mechanisms to deal with the impediments of chain nonconformity. These coping strategies gave participants the capabilities they used to overcome chain mismatches. Coping mechanisms mark the end of the struggle as they reveal achievements while also showing how mature participants have become. Acquired possibilities also include the results of the chain's mismatch of values, understandings, and environment. (Ariola, 2023).

Because of this difficulty, each of his affected students took appropriate initiatives to minimize the impact of his or her situation. To deal with the challenges of progression mismatches, participants devised countermeasures. These coping strategies have led participants to develop the skills they have used to overcome progression mismatches. Coping strategies point to the end of the struggle by revealing achievements and demonstrating how the participants have grown as individuals. Possibilities include consequences of mismatches between strands in terms of values, understanding, and environment. Another sub-topic was identified as the family support system. Four participants used the family support system as coping strategies to cope with the experiences and challenges encountered.

Sometimes it takes a little help, guidance and encouragement from others to keep the embers burning while traveling. When there is uncertainty and doubt, there is no harm in seeking advice and solace. Most of the participants' first-level mismatch issues were supportable as family members, instructors, and classmates acted as pillars of support throughout the process. Four participants expressed their feelings towards their parents, who helped them cope with their situation:

*...dili rasad kaayo ko mag-guol ma'am because kuan naa koy uhmm family who encouraged me to kuan do well in study and uhmm they are the motivation to my everyday life... (...I am not that sad ma'am because I have uhmm family who encouraged me to uhmm do well in stusy and uhmm they are the motivation to my everyday life...) (SI-IS-74-75)*

To overcome the challenges faced while pursuing the major area, participant 2 discovered that receiving support from their family can be instrumental. The research on *The Role of Parental and Family Involvement in the Persistence of Freshman First-Generation College Students* suggests that parental support plays a crucial role in motivating students to persist. Grant (2020) emphasizes that when parents and families actively engage in the academic and social well-being of first-generation students, it significantly influences their academic success and perseverance (Gibbons et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Reed et al. (2020), in the study on *Social Exclusion and Rejection across the Psychosis Spectrum: A Systematic Review of Empirical Research*, discovered that specific parental behaviors such as promoting independence, problem-solving skills, and self-efficacy can have a positive impact on a student's overall happiness.

*...uhmm usa jud sa mga rason nganong nakaya rani nako tanan tungod sa supporta sa akong family, friends and professors. ahh kay because they help me keep motivated and gihatag jud ko nila ug attention sa akong studies like pag hatag ug words of support, advices ug labi sa tanan emotional assistance... (...uhmm one of the reason why I was able to overcome this [challenges] all it is because of the support of my family, friends, and professors uhmm because they help me keep motivated and they gave their attention to my studies like giving of words of support, advice and especially, emotional assistance...) (SI-TS-78-79)*

Witnessing the triumphs and accomplishments of participant 4 in their chosen field, it becomes evident that the unwavering support of family, friends, and dedicated professors played a pivotal role in their journey. Through the guidance, advice, and encouragement offered by their loved ones, participant 4 overcame challenges and difficulties with remarkable resilience.

Family, as the bedrock of our lives, holds immeasurable influence over our success. The words of support and motivation uttered by family members become the very foundation upon which students can build their path to triumph. In today's rapidly evolving world, it is remarkable to witness how the current generation of traditional-age students places an even greater value on their parents' assistance and guidance than any previous generation.

The significance of familial support cannot be underestimated. When faced with daunting obstacles, students draw strength from the unwavering belief their family places in their abilities. It is within the reassuring presence of loved ones that students find solace, inspiration, and the determination to persevere.

Additionally, the support of friends and the guidance of passionate professors serve as invaluable pillars of strength throughout the educational journey. These uplifting voices understand the unique challenges students encounter, providing them with tailored advice and fostering a supportive environment. With their unwavering dedication, friends and professors become beacons of inspiration, instilling in students the courage to push beyond their limitations.

By recognizing the profound impact of familial, friendship, and professorial support, we can collectively foster an environment conducive to student success. It is imperative that we nurture

these relationships, encouraging open communication and cultivating a sense of belonging. When students feel supported, motivated, and empowered, they are more likely to reach their fullest potential and accomplish remarkable feats.

*...sa mga problema na akong na encounter, ahh kanang ahh ang akong... usa ang akong family na rason why kaya face nako ni tanan because they want man na... na... I will become a successful.. para akong kaugmaon ma comfortable and ma stable \*laugh\* and to help mys sisters and brothers or to support them sa ilang needs and also to my parents...(with the problems that I have encountered, uhmm my.. family is one of the reason why I faced these challenges because they wanted me to..to.. I will become successful.. for my future to be comfortable and to be stable \*laugh\* and also to my parents...)* (SI-ES-79-81)

After confronting formidable challenges within their chosen field, participant 5 not only triumphed over adversity but did so with the unwavering support of their family. The invaluable emotional support provided by family and parents has been extensively recognized as a vital component in aiding students in navigating the multifaceted stressors associated with college life (Sy et al., 2011). Moreover, studies have consistently demonstrated the positive impact of familial support on students' overall well-being, fostering resilience and fortitude (Chao, 2012).

Grant's comprehensive analysis in 2020 sheds light on the critical importance of this support network, particularly for first-generation college students who often grapple with the challenges of transitioning to higher education (Mehta et al., 2011). Such students frequently encounter overwhelming stressors that may leave them feeling daunted (Hertel, 2002). However, the presence of an engaged and supportive family environment emerges as a defining factor in empowering students to persevere amid their academic pursuits (Ratelle et al., 2005).

These scholarly findings substantiate the reliability and credibility of the statement. Drawing upon the research conducted by Sy et al. (2011), it is evident that the involvement and support of family play an instrumental role in nurturing students' emotional well-being, resilience, and determination to overcome obstacles.

Recognizing the significance of familial support in the academic journey, we can create an environment that fosters student success. Encouraging family involvement, promoting open communication, and providing resources that empower families to navigate the challenges of higher education can make a tangible difference. Together, let us underscore the importance of family support and work collaboratively to ensure that all students have access to the robust network of care that is instrumental to their triumph and personal growth.

*...basta sad stress kaayo ko sa ako studies I have my family and friends po to motivates me and encourage me and sila sad reason why I uhmmm makasugakod kos sa akona stress uhmm and when I kuan needed them uhmm naa ra sila para nako...(If I am very stressed in my studies I have my family and friends to motivate me and encourage me and they are also the reason why I uhmm able to cope with my stress and when I need them uhmm they are there..)*

(SI-GS-83-85)

Through a series of challenges faced within their chosen field, participant 6 showcased remarkable resilience and successfully triumphed over adversity, largely attributed to the invaluable support provided by their parents. This parental support holds particular significance for first-generation college students, serving as a guiding force throughout their college experience (Sy et al., 2011).

The research conducted by McCarron and Inkelas (2006) sheds light on the profound impact of parental involvement, specifically emphasizing its influence on the educational aspirations of first-generation college students. These findings highlight the critical role parents play in shaping their children's aspirations and providing the necessary support to navigate the complexities of higher education.

When examining the unique challenges faced by first-generation college freshmen, it becomes evident that parental support serves as a vital resource during this crucial transitional period. Comparative research evaluating outcomes between first-generation and non-first-generation college freshmen reveals that the support received from parents plays a pivotal role in fostering perseverance and determination throughout the academic journey (Nichols & Islas, 2015).

By drawing upon the studies conducted by Sy et al. (2011), McCarron and Inkelas (2006), and Nichols and Islas (2015), this statement attains a reliable and credible foundation. These researchers have delved into the influence of parental support on first-generation students, recognizing its significance in facilitating a successful college experience and nurturing academic growth.

Recognizing the influential role of parental support, it is imperative that educational institutions, policymakers, and communities work collaboratively to provide resources, guidance, and encouragement to parents of first-generation students. Empowering parents with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the college landscape can significantly contribute to the success and well-being of these students.

Some connections have also been strengthened as a result of the participants' family members' support and instruction. As mentioned by the participant,

*...because ana makabond mi sa akong mama kay mo share man ko uhmm sa akong kuan kalisod sa pagskwela nya iya ko tambagan...(...because of that, we were able to bond with my mother because I will uhmm share my uhmm hardships in school then she will give me an advice...)* (SI-GS-87-88)

Every student embarks on a unique journey when entering a new academic environment. Adapting to this unfamiliar terrain requires discovering individualized approaches that best suit their needs. It goes without saying that summoning the determination to persist on a path that seems more challenging than anticipated demands considerable time and effort. However, it is the unwavering power of passion that serves as the driving force behind the tenacity of these individuals, enabling them to overcome obstacles and persevere, even in the face of adversity.



While a strong mental foundation is particularly important during the latter stages of college life, it is equally essential to maintain this resilient mindset beyond graduation.

The diversity of student experiences highlights the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to adaptation. Each student navigates their academic journey in a way that resonates with their unique strengths and circumstances. This diversity emphasizes the importance of embracing flexibility and open-mindedness in tackling the challenges that arise throughout the educational process. By recognizing and honoring these individualized approaches, we cultivate an environment that fosters innovation and personal growth.

Undeniably, treading a path that presents greater challenges requires unwavering perseverance and dedication. It is the deep-rooted passion for their chosen field that fuels the determination within these individuals, propelling them to exert relentless effort even when faced with formidable hurdles. This inherent motivation serves as a constant reminder of their purpose and fuels their drive to surmount obstacles on their academic journey.

While a strong mental foundation proves pivotal during the college years, it is imperative to acknowledge that this resilient mindset should endure beyond graduation. The skills and attitudes cultivated during the academic experience extend far beyond the boundaries of campus life. By nurturing resilience, determination, and a persistent passion for learning, individuals equip themselves with the tools necessary to navigate the challenges of the professional world and lead fulfilling lives.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study illuminate the intricate interplay between personal perseverance, coping mechanisms, and crucial support systems in the academic journeys of college students facing formidable challenges within their chosen majors. The study underscores the pivotal role of coping mechanisms, as identified through the participants' proactive approaches and strategies to navigate progression mismatches.

Family emerges as a cornerstone in the participants' support systems, with parental and familial involvement playing a critical role, especially for first-generation college students. The significance of familial, friendship, and professorial support cannot be overstated, as evidenced by the emotional assistance, motivation, and encouragement provided by these networks. The study concludes by emphasizing the enduring importance of the resilient mindset cultivated during college life. While navigating academic challenges is paramount, the development of skills, attitudes, and an enduring passion for learning extends beyond graduation. The participants' journeys exemplify the power of passion and determination in overcoming obstacles, setting the stage for future success and personal fulfillment.

In light of these findings, educational institutions, policymakers, and communities are encouraged to recognize and nurture the pivotal role of familial support and to foster an environment that empowers students with the tools necessary for both academic and personal growth. By acknowledging the unique and diverse pathways of individual students, we can

collectively contribute to an educational landscape that celebrates flexibility, resilience, and the unwavering pursuit of knowledge.

## References

Abragan, F., Abarcas, V., Aquino, I. M., & Bagongon, R. E. (2022). Research review on K-12 curriculum implementation in the Philippines: A generic perspective. *European Journal of Educational and Social Sciences*, 7(1), 1-8.

Aquino, S. R., Kilag, O. K., Daypuyat, A., Espinosa, A., Alin, M. T., & Elemino, Q. J. (2023). The K to 12 Educational Reform: A Research Journey through Implementation Perspectives in the Philippines. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education (2994-9521)*, 1(6), 173-184.

Cordova Jr, N., Kilag, O. K., Sabagala, A., Indino, N., & Abendan, C. F. (2023). Constructive Examination of Curriculum Evaluation of Senior High School. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education (2994-9521)*, 1(5), 510-519.

DepEd Order (2019). Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program. [https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/DO\\_s2019\\_021.pdf](https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/DO_s2019_021.pdf)

Creely, E. (2018). 'Understanding things from within'. A Husserlian phenomenological approach to doing educational research and inquiring about learning. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 41(1), 104-122.

Cilesiz, S. (2011). A phenomenological approach to experiences with technology: Current state, promise, and future directions for research. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 59, 487-510.

Fleerackers, A., Moorhead, L. L., Maggio, L. A., Fagan, K., & Alperin, J. P. (2022). Science in motion: A qualitative analysis of journalists' use and perception of preprints. *Plos one*, 17(11), e0277769.

Kilag, O. K. T., Zarco, J. P., Zamora, M. B., Caballero, J. D., Yntig, C. A. L., Suba-an, J. D., & Sasan, J. M. V. (2023). How Does Philippines's Education System Compared to Finland's?. *EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INNOVATION IN NONFORMAL EDUCATION*, 3(6), 11-20.

Kilag, O. K. T., Uy, F. T., Abendan, C. F. K., & Malbas, M. H. (2023). Teaching leadership: an examination of best practices for leadership educators. *Science and Education*, 4(7), 430-445.

Kilag, O. K. T., Indino, N. V., Sabagala, A. M., Abendan, C. F. K., Arcillo, M. T., & Camangyan, G. A. (2023). Managing Cybersecurity Risks in Educational Technology Environments: Strategies and Best Practices. *American Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education (2993-2769)*, 1(5), 28-38.

- Kilag, O. K. T., Lechadores, V. M. B., Tolin, J. E., Pahayahay, D. Q., Torrefiel, A. P., & Calzada, J. R. D. (2023). Moving beyond the new normal: Understanding Flexible Learning Options (FLOs) on the parameters of Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP). *Science and Education*, 4(2), 866-873.
- Kilag, O. K., Obaner, E., Vidal, E., Castañares, J., Dumdum, J. N., & Hermosa, T. J. (2023). Optimizing Education: Building Blended Learning Curricula with LMS. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education (2994-9521)*, 1(4), 238-250.
- Kolar-Begovic, Z., Kolar-Šuper, R., & Jukic Matic, L. (2017). Mathematics Education as a Science and a Profession. *Online Submission*.
- Kurz, A., Elliott, S. N., Wehby, J. H., & Smithson, J. L. (2010). Alignment of the intended, planned, and enacted curriculum in general and special education and its relation to student achievement. *The journal of special education*, 44(3), 131-145.
- Lim, W. M. (2023). Philosophy of science and research paradigm for business research in the transformative age of automation, digitalization, hyperconnectivity, obligations, globalization and sustainability. *Journal of Trade Science*.
- Malbas, M., Kilag, O. K., Diano Jr, F., Tiongzon, B., Catacutan, A., & Abendan, C. F. (2023). In Retrospect and Prospect: An Analysis of the Philippine Educational System and the Impact of K-12 Implementation. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education (2994-9521)*, 1(4), 283-294.
- Mamba, M., Tamayao, A., & Vecaldo, R. (2020). College Readiness of Filipino K to 12 Graduates: Insights from a Criterion-Referenced Test. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(4), 625-637.
- Michael, I. (2015). *Factors leading to poor performance in mathematics subject in Kibaha secondary schools* (Doctoral dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania).
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European journal of general practice*, 24(1), 9-18.
- Pajares, G. G., Bongcales, M., Roda, L., Villeta, R., Yadao, M., Avenido, J., ... & Susada, J. (2018). The sectoral and skills mismatch between the senior high school program and the top in-demand jobs and projected in-demand jobs in the province of Cebu, Philippines. *Researchers World*, 9(2), 187-199.
- Quintos, C. A., Caballes, D. G., Gapad, E. M., & Valdez, M. R. (2020). Exploring Between SHS Strand and College Course Mismatch: Bridging the Gap Through School Policy on Intensified Career Guidance Program. *CiiT International Journal of Data Mining and Knowledge Engineering*, 12(10), 156-161.

Rambe, P., & Moeti, M. (2017). Disrupting and democratising higher education provision or entrenching academic elitism: towards a model of MOOCs adoption at African universities. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 65(3), 631-651.

Ruslin, R., Mashuri, S., Rasak, M. S. A., Alhabsyi, F., & Syam, H. (2022). Semi-structured Interview: A methodological reflection on the development of a qualitative research instrument in educational studies. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 12(1), 22-29.