



PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECTING CRIME-LINKED BEHAVIORS OF CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS: BASIS FOR ENHANCED STUDENT DISCIPLINE MANUAL

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ABSTRACT

Behavioral misconduct in higher education is often treated as a matter for discipline, yet the conditions beneath it are seldom examined, particularly among Criminology students, who are trained for the justice system while carrying the same vulnerabilities as their peers. While existing studies center on adolescents, general student samples, or offenders, little attention has reached this distinct group or the institutional conditions surrounding their conduct. This study examined how psychological factors associated with criminal behavior surface as crime-linked behavioral concerns among selected BS Criminology students of Naga College Foundation, Inc., across two recent academic years. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were gathered from ten students and ten key informants through interviews and document review, then analyzed thematically with triangulation. Eight forms of concern emerged, and across them ran emotional dysregulation, self-control failure at clear decision points, and an absence of constructive coping, compounded by adverse experiences, peer influence, a program pressure culture, and a reactive institutional structure. Anchored on these findings, the study produced an Enhanced Student Discipline Manual with psychosocial risk screening and a tiered intervention protocol, aligned with CHED Memorandum Order No. 5, Series of 2026. It contributes by reframing misconduct as interacting vulnerability rather than character failure, and by translating that insight into practice.

KEYWORDS – Crime-Linked Behavioral Concerns, Self-Control, Emotion Regulation, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Criminology Students, Qualitative Descriptive Design, Naga City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is now widely expected to do more than transmit knowledge. The Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those on health and well-being, on inclusive and equitable education, and on peaceful and accountable institutions, together affirm that campuses should also be places of developmental support and behavioral stability (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). Student misconduct, mental health, and well-being have moved from the margins of that mandate toward its center.

The international evidence is consistent on why this matters. Behavioral misconduct in higher education rarely springs from isolated character failure. It emerges where psychological, relational, developmental, and environmental factors accumulate over time and then find expression in a single incident. Scholars across criminology and psychology point to emotion regulation and aggression (Navas-Casado et al., 2023), low self-control (Bryson et al., 2023), adverse childhood experiences (Jackson et al., 2023), and the strain described in Agnew's (1992) general strain theory as well-documented contributors to deviant behavior. A scoping review across the Southern African Development Community traced student behavioral risk to home context, parenting, community, school climate, sociability, and individual characteristics (Khumalo et al., 2025), and U.S. school

psychologists linked safety concerns less to deliberate aggression than to unmet mental and behavioral health needs and weak school-family-community coordination (Robinson et al., 2025). Together these findings have pushed institutions to look past purely punitive discipline toward screening and referral systems that reach the conditions beneath the behavior.

Across much of Asia, however, student conduct frameworks remain rule-based and sanction-oriented, effective at enforcing standards but limited when misconduct is rooted in psychological vulnerability. In the Philippines the gap is sharper. Republic Act No. 11036, the Philippine Mental Health Act of 2018, requires schools to provide mental health policies and services, yet the system serving young people still struggles with thin funding, workforce shortages, and uneven implementation (Alibudbud, 2024). Where support is integrated, it shows results: school-based mental health programs and psychosocial protective factors were associated with lower psychological distress among Filipino adolescents (Mallari et al., 2025). A recent phenomenological study of Filipino college students found that deviant behavior was often a situational response to emotion, provocation, and peer influence rather than a settled disposition (Buenavidez & Baluyos, 2025).

Within this landscape, programs built around discipline and professional ethics carry a particular obligation. BS



Criminology trains students for roles in the justice system, asking them to embody law, order, and responsible judgment, even as they face the same developmental and socioeconomic pressures as everyone else. When one of these students breaches a rule, the act is not only a violation to be sanctioned; it may also signal difficulties that call for assessment and support. A review of the Naga College Foundation Student Code of Conduct and Discipline (Naga College Foundation, 2023), and of comparable handbooks, shows systems that are strong on offense classification, procedure, and sanction but thin on behavioral risk screening, referral pathways, and psychologically informed reintegration. That gap is the practical problem this study addresses.

Across the wider ASEAN setting, behavioral risk among students has been documented in several member states, yet the literature remains uneven and rarely turns its lens on those preparing for the justice professions. Studies from Indonesia have linked low self-control and peer deviance to aggression among adolescents and university students (Saputra et al., 2025; Aulia et al., 2026), and work from Singapore has traced how young people lean on emotional suppression and avoidance when under strain (Chang et al., 2025). Closer to home, Filipino evidence has tied deviant conduct to situational emotion and peer provocation (Buenavidez & Baluyos, 2025) and adverse childhood experiences to youth crime (Tambiga et al., 2026). What this regional body of work has yet to examine is the BS Criminology student as a distinct case, a young person trained to uphold the law while navigating the same pressures that pull peers toward breaking it. This study addresses that regional and disciplinary gap.

Despite a strong evidence base, gaps remain. Most work on self-control, aggression, and adversity centers on adolescents, general student samples, or incarcerated offenders rather than BS Criminology students as a distinct group whose training places discipline at the heart of professional identity. Regional evidence is emerging from Indonesia and Singapore, but no psychologically informed intervention guide has been adapted for Philippine BS Criminology programs, even as CHED Memorandum Order No. 5, Series of 2026, now calls for a whole-institution approach to student well-being (Commission on Higher Education, 2026). These gaps frame the present inquiry and its objectives.

FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on four complementary perspectives that explain how psychological factors associated with criminal behavior surface as crime-linked behavioral concerns among Criminology students. Self-Control Theory holds that low self-control, shaped early through parenting and socialization, is a primary individual-level predictor of crime and analogous behavior (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), and this pattern carries into adolescence even as the pull of parents and peers shifts. General Strain Theory explains how negative relationships, the loss of valued stimuli, and blocked goals breed the anger and frustration that can be discharged as deviance

(Agnew, 1992). The process model of emotion regulation locates much aggression in regulatory failure rather than deliberate violence, which helps account for both the outward reactivity and the inward collapse the students described (Gross, 1998; Gross & Ford, 2024). Running through all three, the Adverse Childhood Experiences framework treats early adversity as a developmental vulnerability that weakens self-control, deepens strain, and disrupts regulation at once (Felitti et al., 1998). The study treats these not as rival hypotheses but as complementary ways of reading a single lived experience.

Guided by these lenses, the study follows an Input–Process–Output framework. The input is made up of the forms of behavioral misconduct observed, the psychological factors of aggression, emotional dysregulation, and self-control difficulty, and the adverse life experiences and school-peer conditions tied to the students' concerns. The process is the qualitative descriptive work itself: in-depth interviews, document review, coding, and thematic analysis with triangulation across sources. The output is the Enhanced Student Discipline Manual, with its psychosocial risk screening and intervention protocol for BS Criminology programs, aligned with CHED Memorandum Order No. 5, Series of 2026.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study set out to understand how psychological factors associated with criminal behavior take shape as crime-linked behavioral concerns among selected BS Criminology students of Naga College Foundation, Inc., during Academic Years 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025. Specifically, it sought to (1) describe the forms of behavioral misconduct and disciplinary concern observed among the selected students; (2) trace the patterns of aggression, emotional dysregulation, and self-control difficulty running through their narratives; (3) identify the adverse life experiences and school-peer contextual factors tied to their concerns; (4) determine the recurring themes that explain how these psychological and contextual factors interact; and (5) draw evidence-based inputs for an Enhanced Student Discipline Manual with psychosocial risk screening and intervention for BS Criminology programs.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This inquiry adopted a qualitative descriptive design, which is suited to producing clear, practice-oriented accounts of complex phenomena from participant narratives and institutional documents (Hall & Liebenberg, 2024). The aim was not to measure prevalence or test relationships but to understand how the four risk domains operated in the lived experience of Criminology students within the Bicol setting and to translate that understanding into usable institutional provisions.

Study Site

The study was conducted in the College of Criminal Justice Education of Naga College Foundation, Inc., in Naga City, Camarines Sur. The site was chosen for the presence of documented disciplinary and behavioral cases within the BS



Criminology program and for institutional access to the guidance, student affairs, and academic personnel who manage them.

Participants of the Study

Two groups were selected purposively. The first comprised ten BS Criminology student-participants with documented disciplinary involvement, behavioral concerns, or school-rule violations during the two academic years under study. The second comprised ten key informants drawn from the Guidance and Counseling Office, the Office of Student Affairs, and the College of Criminal Justice Education. Students were chosen for direct lived experience of the phenomenon; key informants were chosen for their institutional vantage on how such concerns are detected and managed. Students with no documented behavioral concern were excluded. Participants are identified by code to protect their identities.

Instrumentation

Data were gathered through a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide developed for the study, with separate versions for student-participants and key informants (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The guide was reviewed by experts for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research questions, as documented in a certificate of validation, and interviews were conducted in English with Filipino used where it aided comprehension. Interview data were supplemented by review of the institution's discipline-related documents.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permissions were secured from the College and the offices concerned before data collection began. Each participant was oriented on the purpose of the study, gave informed consent, and was assured of confidentiality and the freedom to withdraw at any point. Interviews were conducted privately and audio-recorded with consent, then transcribed for analysis. Institutional documents were accessed with permission and used only to corroborate, not to identify, individual cases.

Data Analysis

Transcripts and documents were analyzed thematically following the established six-phase approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ahmed et al., 2025). Codes were derived inductively, grouped into categories, and organized under the four risk domains. Triangulation across the three data sources, student-participants, key informants, and institutional documents, was used to test the consistency of emerging themes and to confirm that patterns were not the product of a single source.

Trustworthiness

Rigor was pursued through the four standard criteria. Credibility rested on verbatim transcription, triangulation across the three sources, and returning to participants to confirm interpretations. Dependability and confirmability were supported by an audit trail of transcripts, codes, and analytic decisions. Transferability was supported by thick description of the participants and the Naga setting. The researchers practiced reflexive bracketing throughout, setting aside the disciplinary lens

that a Criminology context invites so that the students' accounts could be heard on their own terms (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

Given that the study involved students disclosing sensitive experiences, ethical protection was treated as central rather than procedural. Participation was voluntary and based on written informed consent, identities were coded, and records were secured and used solely for the study, in keeping with Republic Act No. 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (National Privacy Commission, 2012). Sensitive experiences, including adverse life events and mental health concerns, were discussed only as far as participants willingly and safely chose to share them, consistent with the protective intent of Republic Act No. 11036 (2018) and the Department of Education's child protection policy as a precedent for school-based safeguarding (Department of Education, 2012). Where a participant disclosed acute distress, referral to the guidance office took priority over data collection. The study sought neither to determine criminal liability nor to diagnose any condition.

RESULTS

The findings are organized under the four risk domains. Each is presented first as what the narratives and documents showed, supported by the participants' own words, with interpretation held back for the Discussion. The recurring sub-patterns that emerged during coding are named as they are introduced. Student-participants are identified as SP-1 through SP-10 and key informants as KI-01 through KI-10.

Forms of Behavioral Misconduct and Disciplinary Concern

Across the ten student-participants, eight forms of concern were documented. The most common were substance-related violations, detected in three cases through the academic drug testing built into the Forensic Toxicology curriculum rather than through any reported incident. The remaining cases spanned a physical altercation over group-work credit, academic dishonesty driven by test anxiety, the bullying of a classmate with a physical disability, an offensive online comment, chronic absenteeism tied to part-time work after a father's job loss, a mental health crisis surfaced by an attentive professor rather than a disciplinary report, and the forging of a dean's signature during enrollment. What recurred across them was that the act looked, from the inside, less like calculation than like a person cornered:

"I did not cheat because I did not study. I cheated because I panicked and did not trust myself." (SP-5)

"I knew very clearly that forging a signature was wrong and illegal. But I told myself it was only this one time, and that I had no other choice. Looking back, I did have other choices." (SP-10)

For some, the weight came only afterward, when the harm became a face rather than an abstraction:

"It was only when I saw his face during the investigation and heard how long he had been enduring it that I felt the full weight of what I



had done. The guilt after was overwhelming.”
(SP-6)

Substance-related violations stood out as the most prevalent concern, yet the three cases began very differently. One student tried a vaped substance at a celebration without knowing what it held, one had moved from senior-high curiosity to a near-nightly habit, and one was handed a drink during examination week by a blockmate who said it would ease the stress:

“I was very stressed and one of my blockmates offered me something to drink that he said would help me relax. I did not know what was in it.” (SP-3)

Harm directed at others formed a second cluster. A dispute over group-work credit escalated into a physical fight, a classmate with a physical disability was mocked over a sustained period, and an offensive comment was posted online and framed by its author as a joke until the distress it caused became visible:

“It was meant to be a joke, but it was taken very seriously by the person I directed it at and by others who saw it.” (SP-7)

Pressure-driven violations made up a third cluster, each traceable to a strain the student could not voice. Examination panic, not a refusal to study, drove the act of cheating; a father’s job loss and the part-time work it forced lay beneath the chronic absences; and an enrollment deadline met in financial shame produced the forged signature:

“I was ashamed to tell anyone that I was struggling financially. That shame made me isolate myself.” (SP-8)

A mental health crisis stood apart from misconduct altogether. One student was referred not for any violation but because an attentive professor noticed repeated crying in class and rushed work, after which the student disclosed thoughts of not wanting to be alive:

“I was not in trouble for anything I did wrong, but the situation was serious.” (SP-9)

Key informants read the same pattern from the institutional side, noting that the school usually meets the behavior only at its end point:

“Cases like this blur the line between behavioral misconduct and a lapse in judgment shaped by environment.” (KI-01)

Two features cut across all eight forms. The violation was typically detected by the institution rather than disclosed by the student, and in most cases the student had not grasped the full consequences of the act at the moment it occurred.

Aggression, Emotional Dysregulation, and Self-Control Difficulty

Emotional dysregulation took many forms and never a single one. For some students it ran outward, as reactive anger that surprised even the person who felt it; for others it surfaced as a sustained indifference to the harm being done; and for others still it ran inward, as withdrawal and quiet collapse. The outward form moved fast:

“I was angry during the incident, but underneath the anger, I think I was actually hurt. My groupmate took credit for work I did. When I tried to address it calmly and he laughed, I lost control.” (SP-4)

A different form showed not as outburst but as an absence of empathic awareness, recognized only when the institution forced a reckoning with its effect:

“Looking back, I was mostly indifferent at the time, and that indifference is what I am most ashamed of. I did not stop to think about how my classmate felt.” (SP-6)

The inward form was quieter and far harder to see, often passing as composure:

“I used to cope by pretending everything was fine. I smiled around people and then went home and cried alone.” (SP-9)

Self-control failed at a clear decision point, the instant a student knew an action could lead to trouble and went ahead. In several accounts the barrier had already been worn down by an earlier act that went unpunished:

“I had done it once before in high school and was not caught. That experience made me think I could do it again without consequences.” (SP-5)

Key informants described the gap between knowing and doing precisely:

“The student knows the risk intellectually but cannot translate that knowledge into action when the social moment arrives.” (KI-02)

Constructive coping was largely absent. Several students had no workable way to manage stress when it arrived, and the healthier strategies, where they appeared at all, were learned only after the incident:

“Before, my way of coping was really marijuana. But now, I cope through basketball, talking with friends, and using Facebook.” (SP-2)

What made the inward cases especially difficult was that distress could pass as steadiness, which an informant named as a detection problem in itself:

“That masking behavior is a form of emotional dysregulation that is deeply difficult to detect because it passes as normal, even composed.” (KI-09)

Adverse Life Experiences and School-Peer Context

Behind the incidents sat a layer of adverse experience that students themselves connected to their behavior, and a school-peer context that tended to amplify rather than soften it.

Family disruption and an absent parent marked the earliest of these experiences. One student traced his drift toward a permissive outside group to the emotional void left by a mother’s absence and a father he reached only later:

“I came from a broken family. I did not have someone to properly guide me, especially



because I did not have my mother with me. Maybe this is one of the things that pushed me into this situation.” (SP-1)

Inherited expectation and family shame weighed on others. A father’s unfulfilled dream of police service, and the silent burden of being the eldest in a sacrificing family, turned ordinary setbacks into a heavier kind of failure:

“My parents have very high expectations of me. I am the eldest of four children, and they sacrificed a lot to send me to college. Whenever I feel like I am not meeting their expectations, I feel heavy inside.” (SP-3)

Learned conflict and normalized teasing carried family scripts into school. One student had grown up watching anger expressed through shouting; another had grown up where mockery passed for affection, and neither recognized the limits of those scripts until the school enforced them:

“I grew up watching my parents argue constantly. They never hit each other, but the shouting was always there. I think I learned that when you are angry, you show it loudly.” (SP-4)

“I grew up in a household where teasing was a way of showing affection. We constantly joked about everything, even sensitive topics. I did not realize that this behavior does not translate the same way outside my family context.” (SP-7)

Interpersonal betrayal preceded the most serious crisis in the set. A trusted relationship that turned to betrayal damaged one student’s sense of safety from the inside and set the conditions for the breakdown that followed:

“I went through a very difficult personal situation involving someone I trusted who betrayed me. It affected my sense of safety and self-worth deeply.” (SP-9)

Socioeconomic hardship carried in shame ran through several cases at once. Scholarship pressure, a concealed part-time job, and years of family financial struggle all pushed students toward silence rather than help:

“My father lost his job during my second year. I felt responsible for helping the family, so I took on a part-time job. I did not tell the school because I was embarrassed.” (SP-8)

“I come from a very poor family. I am the first in my family to reach college, and the pressure of that is immense. That pressure sometimes makes me act against my own values.” (SP-5)

The school-peer context then amplified the risk. Peers initiated or sustained the behavior in most cases, supplying the substance, the social reward, or the audience that made the act feel acceptable:

“The two friends I was with during the incident encouraged the behavior. When they laughed, I kept going.” (SP-6)

“My friends are really part of it, and some of them are bad influences. Most of my friends are outside school, especially friends from high school.” (SP-1)

Social isolation removed whatever buffer a genuine network might have offered. Students who most needed connection withdrew from it, and several performed normalcy to avoid pity:

“Being surrounded by people in class but feeling completely alone was one of the hardest parts.” (SP-9)

The program’s pressure culture was distinctive. An unspoken expectation that Criminology students appear disciplined and error-free made struggling feel like a breach of identity:

“I was afraid of how my classmates and professors would see me. The environment in the Criminology program emphasizes integrity and law enforcement values, which made it even harder to admit that I had committed an act of forgery.” (SP-10)

“Criminology students are trained to project strength, composure, and authority. These are professional expectations that get internalized early.” (KI-03)

A reactive, unfamiliar support structure completed the picture. Services existed but were perceived as a record against the student, or were simply unknown until a crisis made them visible:

“Not everyone knows that guidance services exist, and some students are afraid to go there because they think it will be recorded against them.” (SP-3)

“If the school had proactively informed students about available financial assistance early in the year, I think I would have asked for help sooner.” (SP-8)

Interaction of Psychological and Contextual Factors

Vulnerability compounded over time. The strongest finding was that no single factor produced misconduct. In every case the concern was the product of several interacting vulnerabilities, emotional, relational, developmental, and contextual, that had accumulated long before a specific trigger converted them into an act. Key informants located the failure as much in the institution as in the student:

“The home sends the student out with an invisible weight, and the school does not know it is there.” (KI-03)

Contextual triggers converted latent risk into behavior. The vulnerability stayed dormant until a particular moment activated it, an examination week without anyone to talk to, a calm grievance met with ridicule, a vulnerable target rewarded with laughter, or an enrollment deadline met in shame:

“If I had someone to talk to during that exam period, maybe I would not have made that



decision. I think the loneliness and the pressure combined in a bad way.” (SP-3)

An institutional gap let risk escalate unseen. Detection was reactive, guidance was read as a place for students already in trouble, and the support that existed was rarely communicated when it would have mattered:

“The problem was institutional before it was behavioral.” (KI-10)

A Criminology-specific identity tension cut across all of it, the dissonance between the disciplined professional the student was being trained to become and the struggling person the student privately was:

“These students are being trained to become enforcers of the law while personally navigating environments where that law is routinely broken. The moral gap between their future professional identity and their current lived reality can be very disorienting.” (KI-01)

Notably, several students experienced detection itself as a relief, a forced stop to a behavior they could no longer manage alone:

“In a way, testing positive helped me because I was already having a hard time controlling my use.” (SP-2)

Evidence-Based Inputs for the Enhanced Student Discipline Manual

Read across the four domains, the findings pointed to a consistent set of inputs for the program’s disciplinary response. The recurrence of late, reactive detection argued for early and routine screening in place of incident-triggered review. The inward, masked forms of dysregulation argued for screening that reaches quiet distress and not only visible disruption. The compounding of family, financial, and relational adversity supported a brief socioeconomic and family risk screen at enrollment, paired with proactive outreach within the first weeks of the year. The weight of peers and isolation supported a peer-mentoring and bystander-intervention component, and the program’s identity tension supported an explicit message that seeking help is consistent with professional formation. Taken with the integrated referral and reintegration needs the informants described, these inputs form the evidence base that the study carries into its output, set out under Translational Research.

DISCUSSION

The eight forms of concern, read together, support the study’s central claim: misconduct among these students was less a matter of character than the visible outcome of interacting vulnerabilities. That aggression surfaced as regulatory failure rather than deliberate violence aligns with systematic evidence that maladaptive emotion-regulation strategies track with aggression while adaptive ones temper it (Navas-Casado et al., 2023), and with university findings that link distress to aggression and well-being to its reduction (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Demichelis et al., 2024). The Singaporean account of emotional suppression

and avoidance as dominant strategies among youth (Chang et al., 2025) gives the inward pattern observed here a regional parallel.

The self-control findings fit the theory squarely. The failures the students described at clear decision points are what Self-Control Theory predicts (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), and the persistence of that association across adolescence, even as peer and parental influence shift, matches longitudinal evidence (Bryson et al., 2023). Regional work extends the same mechanism, linking low self-control and peer deviance to aggression among Indonesian adolescents (Saputra et al., 2025) and to online harassment among Korean university students (Lee & Jung, 2026). A chain-mediation model among college students positioned self-control as a sequential bridge between self-appraisal and aggression, giving the mechanism observed here an empirical structure (Yu et al., 2024).

The adverse-experience layer is consistent with a now-substantial literature. Cumulative adversity raises the risk of delinquency through weakened self-control and attachment (Jackson et al., 2023), and through serial pathways that include sleep and self-regulation (Fava et al., 2023), while at the college level it tracks with higher stress, lower well-being, and anticipated risky behavior mediated by emotion-regulation difficulty (Underwood et al., 2024; Dickie et al., 2024). General Strain Theory ties the threads together, explaining why students carrying accumulated adversity responded with misconduct when pressure mounted (Agnew, 1992). Emerging Southeast Asian evidence shows the same pathways operating regionally among Indonesian university students (Aulia et al., 2026) and Filipino youth (Tambiga et al., 2026). On the relational side, the peer dynamics observed here match fine-grained evidence that peers shape deviance through specific tactics of instigation and reinforcement rather than diffuse pressure (Hoeben et al., 2025), and the situational, emotion-driven quality of the misconduct echoes Philippine phenomenological findings (Buenavidez & Baluyos, 2025).

The study’s more distinctive contribution lies in the institutional and identity findings. The recurring institutional gap, in which vulnerability escalated precisely because detection and support were reactive, locates the problem not only in students but in the architecture meant to help them, the same conclusion reached across very different settings (Khumalo et al., 2025; Robinson et al., 2025; Mallari et al., 2025). The Criminology-specific identity tension is, to the researchers’ knowledge, new to this literature: a professional culture that demands composure and discipline can itself suppress help-seeking and magnify the shame of a misstep, turning a conduct issue into a perceived failure of identity. This is where developmental, school-based prevention earns its place, given evidence that interventions targeting risk factors can reduce antisocial behavior (Farrington et al., 2017), and where trauma-informed campus practice offers a model for support that does not stigmatize (Schroeder et al., 2024).

Three limitations frame these claims. First, the design is qualitative and local. Ten students and ten key informants in one program yield depth, not prevalence, and the findings are offered for transferability through thick description rather than for



statistical generalization. Second, much of the data is retrospective self-report, filtered through how students later made sense of their own conduct, which document review and key-informant triangulation mitigate but cannot eliminate. Third, the four guiding lenses illuminate different mechanisms and are used as complementary rather than competing explanations; the study does not adjudicate among them, and a larger multi-program study would be needed to weigh their relative force. Within these limits, the convergence of the narratives, documents, and informant accounts gives reasonable confidence in the four-domain pattern.

CONCLUSION

Crime-linked behavioral concerns among the selected BS Criminology students did not arise from single causes or from deficient character. They were the observable result of psychological vulnerabilities, low self-control, dysregulated emotion, and accumulated adversity, interacting with relational and contextual conditions, peer influence, isolation, and a program pressure culture, within an institutional structure that detected trouble late and offered support reactively. Reducing these concerns therefore requires more than firmer sanctions. It calls for a proactive, psychologically informed layer added to existing discipline: early screening, tiered and referral-based support, family engagement, reintegration that does not stigmatize, and a culture in which a Criminology student in difficulty can seek help without feeling that the asking is itself a failure. These directions operationalize the intent of Republic Act No. 11036 and the whole-institution approach mandated by CHED Memorandum Order No. 5, Series of 2026. The Enhanced Student Discipline Manual developed from these findings is one concrete instrument toward that end, and its adoption within the program that produced it would test its value in the setting it was built for.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings are intended for direct institutional use. Their primary translation is the Enhanced Student Discipline Manual, which converts the four-domain evidence into screening tools, a tiered intervention framework, referral pathways, a family engagement protocol, a reintegration monitoring system, and an annual mental health and wellness campaign for the BS Criminology program. Beyond the manual, the findings can inform faculty and guidance trainings on recognizing risk indicators early, orientation materials that make support services visible and non-stigmatizing to students, and a policy brief for program administrators and CHED-aligned institutions implementing the whole-institution approach. Built modularly, the manual is offered for adaptation by other BS Criminology programs in the Bicol Region and beyond.

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