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Students' Perceptions of Inflation and Daily Living Across Socioeconomic Groups

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Abstract. The continuous increase in the prices of goods and services has become a major concern affecting many individuals, including college students. Inflation can influence students' daily living, financial decisions, and their ability to manage educational and personal expenses. Because of this situation, it is important to understand how students perceive inflation and how it affects their everyday lives. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the perspectives of college students on inflation across socioeconomic background and daily living at Mindanao State University-Sulu. Specifically, the study determined the level of students' awareness of inflation, identified the areas of daily expenses affected by inflation, examined whether there are differences in students' perspectives when grouped according to sex, age, monthly allowance, source of income, department, major, and section, and identified the coping strategies used by students to manage the effects of rising prices. This study utilized a quantitative comparative-correlational research design. The respondents were 228 fourth year college students from different colleges, including the College of Health Sciences, College of Education, College of Fisheries, and College of Agriculture. Data were gathered through a survey questionnaire and analyzed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, Mann–Whitney U test, Frequency and Percentage, as well as the Kruskal Wallis test. The findings revealed that students generally agree that inflation affects many aspects of their daily living, particularly food expenses, transportation, utilities, school supplies, and personal needs. The results also showed no significant differences in students' perspectives on inflation when grouped according to sex, age, monthly allowance, and source of income. However, significant differences were found when grouped according to department, major, and section. In response to rising prices, many students cope by reducing non-essential expenses, budgeting and tracking their spending, limiting recreational activities, and seeking additional sources of income. These findings highlight the importance of financial awareness and effective budgeting strategies among college students in adapting to the economic challenges posed by inflation.

Keywords: Daily living; Inflation; Senior high school; Socioeconomic groups

Introduction

Inflation is essentially the increase in the prices of goods and services (e.g., transportation and medical services) over time, which makes money worth less than before. It is one of the main indicators of how healthy a country's economy is because it affects everyone, from consumers to businesses and even governments around the world. Inflation occurs for various reasons, such as when production costs increase, when people begin buying more goods, or when governments inject more money into the economy. In developing countries such as the Philippines, inflation usually stems from rising prices of basic needs like food, fuel, and electricity. These price increases affect different sectors of the economy, especially industries that depend heavily on imports of raw materials. For regular families, inflation makes daily life more difficult since necessities become more expensive. This often forces people to limit their budgets and cut back on non-essential expenses. Thus, inflation does not only reflect the overall condition of the economy, but it also affects the daily lives and well-being of people in every community.

Inflation serves an important function in the stability and growth of an economy, making it essential for central banks to maintain well-anchored inflation expectations among the public. When people expect higher inflation, they tend to adjust wages and prices upward, which can further drive inflation. This highlights the importance of accurate inflation perceptions and expectations for effective and credible monetary policy. According to Fritzer and Rumler (2015), who analyzed survey data from 2,000 Austrian households, inflation perceptions and expectations vary significantly across socioeconomic groups. Older individuals, women, and people with lower income and education levels generally perceive and expect higher inflation, while younger, more educated, and higher-income individuals tend to report lower figures. People living in urban areas and larger households also have lower inflation perceptions, whereas those who distrust official inflation measures ("inflation skeptics") usually report higher expectations. The study further finds that respondents with greater economic literacy. Specifically, knowledge of the European Central Bank's price stability target has more accurate and moderate inflation perceptions. These findings suggest that improving financial and economic education, especially among lower-income, less educated, and younger groups, can help align public expectations with actual inflation trends. In turn, this alignment strengthens the credibility of monetary policy and supports economic stability and sustainable growth.

Furthermore, Louie et al. (2023) emphasize that inflation not only affects macroeconomic stability but also individual well-being. Their study, which analyzes data from 119,531 U.S. adults, reveals that rising inflation in 2022. The highest in forty years significantly increases economic distress and psychological strain among the population. People who experience multiple inflation-related hardships, such as purchasing less food, delaying medical treatment, or taking additional jobs, report higher levels of anxiety and depression. The study also finds that experiencing five or more inflation-related hardships is most strongly associated with mental distress, and the effect is more pronounced among men than women, possibly due to social and financial role expectations. Overall, inflation not only challenges economic stability but also affects mental health and social well-being, underscoring the need for effective policies that stabilize prices, manage expectations, and protect vulnerable groups from financial and psychological strain (Louie et al., 2023; Fritzer & Rumler 2015).

Numerous studies examine inflation perceptions, socioeconomic status, and economic behavior; however, there remains limited research focusing specifically on college students in the Philippines. Much of the existing literature centers on adults and households, often overlooking how inflation influences students' daily living conditions. Inflation significantly affects students' financial stability, leading to increased stress, reduced purchasing power, and difficulty in meeting basic needs such as food and education (Baldelamar et al., 2024). Moreover, studies show that inflation alters students' budgeting decisions and consumption patterns, forcing them to adjust their spending behaviors (Lastimosa et al., 2023). In addition, rising prices have been found to affect essential expenses such as food, transportation, and healthcare (Statista, 2023). Students often cope by reducing spending, purchasing cheaper goods, and limiting non-essential activities (Statista, 2023), while some adjust their food choices due to increasing costs (Nueva et al., 2024).

To further understand this issue, the main purpose of this study is to explore how students from varying socioeconomic backgrounds perceive and experience the effects of inflation on their daily living. Specifically, it aims to understand how inflation influences students' spending habits, strategies, and coping mechanisms in response to rising costs of goods and services. The study also seeks to identify differences in perspectives between higher-income and lower-income students and to provide insights that may inform educational and community support programs.

This study is significant because it highlights how inflation impacts students differently according to their socioeconomic backgrounds. The findings can assist educational institutions and local government units in developing targeted interventions and support programs for students facing financial challenges during periods of economic instability. By providing a deeper understanding of a student's lived experience with inflation, the research contributes to the broader discussion on socioeconomic inequality and student welfare. Furthermore, it offers valuable insights that can serve as a reference for future studies examining intersections of economic change in student well-being within local communities.

Research Questions

This study focused on students' perceptions of inflation and its impact on daily living across socioeconomic groups in Sulu, with the aim of understanding how economic conditions influence students' experiences, behaviors, and coping mechanisms.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the students' perception of inflation in Sulu?
2. How do students' perspectives on inflation differ across socioeconomic backgrounds?
3. In what ways does inflation affect the daily living of students from different socioeconomic groups?
4. What coping strategies do students employ to manage the effects of inflation on their daily lives?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examined students' perceptions of inflation and its effects on daily living across socioeconomic groups among fourth-year college students of Mindanao State University–Sulu, Jolo, Sulu, Philippines during the academic year 2025–2026. It focused specifically on 228 respondents from the College of Agriculture, College of Health Sciences, College of Education, and College of Fisheries selected through a multi-stage random sampling technique. The scope of the study was limited to four main variables, namely students' perception of inflation, differences in perceptions across socioeconomic characteristics (sex, age, monthly allowance, source of income, department, major, and section), perceived effects of inflation on daily living, and coping strategies employed by students. Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, Mann–Whitney U test, and Kruskal–Wallis test. The study did not include other year levels, private institutions, or students outside the identified university, and it did not examine macroeconomic policies, long-term financial outcomes, or psychological health impacts. It was further limited to self-reported data, without external financial validation, thereby focusing only on the lived experiences and perceptions of students regarding inflation within their immediate academic and socioeconomic context.

Literature Review

Inflation, Socioeconomic Conditions, and Student Perceptions

Inflation is widely recognized as a persistent economic phenomenon that affects the purchasing power of individuals and households by increasing the prices of goods and services over time. It is commonly driven by supply and demand imbalances, rising production costs, and monetary policy changes, ultimately influencing both macroeconomic stability and individual financial behavior. According to Lorenzoni and Werning (2023), inflation is not only a monetary phenomenon but also a reflection of economic conflict among different social groups, particularly between workers and firms adjusting wages and prices. This dynamic explains why inflation persists and varies across populations, as individuals interpret economic changes based on their own financial realities. Household perception of inflation is strongly influenced by socioeconomic status, income level, and educational background. Fritzer and Rumler (2015) found that individuals with lower income and education levels tend to perceive inflation as higher compared to those with higher socioeconomic status, largely due to greater sensitivity to price changes in basic goods and services. Similarly, Regasse (2025) emphasized that consumer perception of inflation is shaped by personal experience with price changes rather than official inflation statistics, highlighting the subjective nature of inflation awareness across populations.

Students and Inflation in Daily Living

Students are among the most vulnerable groups affected by inflation due to their limited income and dependence on allowances or family support. Inflation directly impacts their ability to afford food, transportation, education-related expenses, and personal needs. Baldelamar et al. (2024) emphasized that rising prices significantly reduce students' purchasing power, leading to financial stress and difficulty in meeting academic and personal needs. Likewise, Lastimosa (2023) found that inflation forces students to adjust their spending behaviors, often prioritizing essential needs while reducing discretionary expenses. In addition, inflation affects essential areas of student life such as food security, transportation, and academic materials. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2025), food and transportation are among the most inflation-sensitive commodities in the Philippines, making students highly exposed to price fluctuations in their daily expenses. This is further supported by the World Bank (2019), which noted that transportation and utility costs significantly influence household and student expenditures, especially in developing economies.

Socioeconomic Differences in Inflation Perception

Socioeconomic background plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive and respond to inflation. Students from lower-income households often experience stronger financial pressure, making them more sensitive to price increases. Fritzer and Rumler (2015) explained that individuals with limited income tend to overestimate inflation due to direct exposure to rising costs of basic commodities. Meanwhile, students from higher-income groups may not experience the same level of financial strain, leading to less intense perception of inflation. However, Cavallo et al. (2014) argue that inflation perception is not solely determined by income level but also by personal spending patterns and exposure to price changes. This means that even within similar socioeconomic groups, individuals may perceive inflation differently depending on their consumption behavior. Furthermore, Gündüz et al. (2020) emphasized that economic understanding and awareness are influenced by academic exposure, suggesting that students in economics-related fields may interpret inflation differently from those in non-economic disciplines.

Inflation and Mental, Academic, and Financial Well-Being

Inflation does not only affect financial stability but also impacts mental health and academic performance. Louie et al. (2023) found that individuals experiencing inflation-related financial hardship are more likely to report anxiety, stress, and psychological distress. Similarly, Dabrowski et al. (2025) highlighted that financial strain among students contributes to "money anxiety," affecting their emotional well-being and academic focus. In the academic context, financial stress caused by inflation can reduce students' concentration and engagement in learning activities. Kim and Park (2020) found that economic stress negatively affects academic performance, as students struggle to balance financial responsibilities with academic demands. This suggests that inflation indirectly influences educational outcomes by increasing students' cognitive and emotional burden.

Coping Strategies of Students Against Inflation

Students adopt various coping strategies to manage the effects of inflation on their daily living. The most common strategies include budgeting, reducing non-essential expenses, and seeking additional income sources. According to Baker et al. (2022), individuals under financial pressure often adjust their spending behavior by prioritizing essential needs over discretionary expenses. This behavior is consistent among students who face rising living costs. Budgeting and financial tracking are also widely used strategies among students. Ynuegas (2024) explained that budgeting improves financial awareness and helps individuals manage limited resources effectively. In addition, many students engage in part-time work to supplement their income, as highlighted by Consumer Credit (2024), who noted that student employment provides both financial support and skill development opportunities. Furthermore, students also rely on social support systems such as family assistance and informal borrowing. LiveWell (2023) noted that inflation increases dependency on family support due to rising educational and living costs. However, access to formal assistance programs remains limited, leading many students to rely on personal coping mechanisms rather than institutional support (Bobasu et al., 2024).

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a Quantitative approach to examine students' perspectives on inflation across different socioeconomic backgrounds and daily living. This approach allowed the researchers to collect numerical data and analyze patterns objectively. The Comparative-Correlational design was employed to observe and analyze naturally occurring differences and relationships between groups without manipulating variables, thereby accurately depicting existing conditions. According to Nilsson, et.al., (2017) a Comparative-Correlational research design is described as a method used to simultaneously compare differences between distinct groups and investigate relationships between variables within those groups. This approach enables researchers to identify patterns, similarities, and variations that may exist across different populations or categories. By examining both comparison and correlation, the design provides a more comprehensive understanding of how variables interact in diverse contexts. It also allows researchers to determine whether observed differences between groups are associated with specific factors or conditions. Furthermore, this method is useful in exploring potential trends and predicting outcomes based on the strength and direction of relationships among variables.

Sampling Design

The study utilized the Multi-stage Random Sampling Technique to ensure that the participants were selected in a fair and unbiased manner. This sampling technique is a probability sampling method used when a population is large, spread out, or difficult to list completely. Instead of sampling directly from the entire population, researchers select samples in multiple stages, often combining different sampling methods at each stage. This makes it more practical and cost-effective for large-scale studies. This technique is appropriate for large and diverse populations, where several college departments existed. In the first stage, four colleges were randomly selected from the university to serve as the primary sampling units. These colleges included the College of Education, College of Health Sciences, College of Fisheries, and College of Agriculture. The selection of these colleges ensured that the study covered a diverse range of academic fields and student backgrounds. In the second stage, the study focused specifically on fourth-year students from each of the selected colleges. Instead of randomly choosing certain sections, all sections of fourth-year students from each of the four colleges were included to ensure complete representation. By involving every section, comprehensive data that reflected the overall views and experiences of all graduating students within the selected colleges was gathered.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Mindanao State University-Sulu, as it offered a range of undergraduate programs and catered to students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds across the Sulu Archipelago. The university setting provided an appropriate environment for the study since students from different disciplines and financial circumstances provided varied perspectives on the effects of inflation on their daily living.

Research Participants

The respondents of this study were fourth-year college students from various colleges, specifically from the College of Agriculture, College of Health Sciences, College of Education and College of Fisheries. A total of 228 students were chosen from an estimated population of 554 college students. 91 from College of Agriculture, 44 from College of Health Sciences, 59 from College of Education, and 34 from College of Fisheries.

Research Instrument

The study employed a survey as the primary research instrument. The survey included a demographic section to collect information on students' age, name, gender, and allowance, which served as indicators of their socioeconomic background. Additionally, a checklist questionnaire was administered to gather data on students' perspectives on inflation, their coping strategies, and the impact of inflation on their daily living.

Data Gathering Procedure

For gathering data, the researchers personally conducted in-person surveys using a printed questionnaire. This approach allowed for direct interaction with the respondents, ensuring that their answers were clear, accurate, and complete. To maintain consistency, the researchers approached students within their respective colleges during scheduled break times to avoid any academic disruption. Participants were given ample time to read each item and provide their responses without pressure. Following the completion of each survey, the researchers immediately checked the questionnaires for any missing information to ensure data integrity.

Results and Discussions

***Problem 1*: What is the students' perception of inflation in Sulu?**

Table 1. Perceptions on Inflation

Items	Mean	SD	Description
1. I am aware of the current inflation rate in the Philippines.	4.22	0.842	Strongly Agree
2. I have noticed an increase in prices of basic commodities.	4.25	0.800	Strongly Agree
3. I understand the causes of inflation.	3.93	0.907	Agree
4. I believe inflation has a significant impact on my quality of life.	4.23	0.871	Strongly Agree
Total	**4.16**	**0.692**	**Agree**

Table 1 shows that students generally have a high level of awareness and strong perception of inflation in Sulu, with an overall mean of M = 4.16 (Agree). The highest-rated item is the noticeable increase in basic commodity prices (M = 4.25, Strongly Agree), indicating that students are highly sensitive to daily price changes in essential goods such as food and transportation. Likewise, students strongly agree that inflation has a significant impact on their quality of life (M = 4.23) and that they are aware of the current inflation rate in the Philippines (M = 4.22), showing that inflation is clearly perceived as a factor affecting their daily financial decisions and living conditions. However, the lowest mean is observed in understanding the causes of inflation (M = 3.93, Agree), suggesting that while students are aware of inflation and its effects, their understanding of its economic causes is relatively less developed compared to their awareness of its impact. This finding aligns with Lorenzoni and Werning (2023), who explain that inflation is often complex and rooted in economic interactions such as wage and price adjustments between firms and workers. Overall, the results imply that students possess strong experiential awareness of inflation, particularly in terms of rising prices and personal financial impact, but show a comparatively moderate understanding of its underlying economic causes. This suggests that inflation is primarily understood through daily experience rather than formal economic knowledge, consistent with findings from Nepal and Panthee (2024), who emphasized that students' perceptions are shaped by real-life exposure to increasing living costs.

***Problem 2:* How do students' perspectives on inflation differ across socioeconomic backgrounds?**

Table 2 . Student's Perspectives on Inflation in terms of Sex

		Statistic	df	p
Student's Perspectives on Inflation	Mann-Whitney U	4700	228	0.434

The Mann–Whitney U test produced a value of U = 4700 with a p-value of 0.434, which is higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no significant difference in students' perspectives on inflation between male and female students. In other words, both male and female students generally share similar views regarding how inflation affects their daily lives and expenses. This result suggests that sex does not strongly influence how students perceive the effects of rising prices. Male and female students often experience the same economic environment, such as increases in food prices, transportation costs, and school-related expenses. Because they face similar financial situations, their perceptions of inflation tend to be alike. Previous studies of Gündüz, Yıldırım, & Durukan, (2020) also support this findings for it was found out that economic perceptions are often shaped more by financial experiences and household conditions rather than gender alone. This indicates that when students are exposed to similar financial realities, their understanding of inflation may not significantly differ regardless of sex.

Table 3. Student's Perspectives on Inflation in terms of Average Monthly Allowance

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Students' Perspectives on Inflation	2.23	2	0.327

The Kruskal–Wallis test was conducted to determine whether students' average monthly allowance affects their perspectives on inflation. The result showed H = 2.23, df = 2, and p = 0.327, which indicates that the difference is not statistically significant. This means that students with higher or lower monthly allowances tend to have similar perceptions about inflation. Regardless of the amount of financial support they receive, students still notice the increasing prices of goods and services in their daily lives. However, the amount of allowance may still influence how strongly students feel the impact of inflation. Students with smaller allowances may need to budget more carefully or reduce certain expenses when prices increase. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (2022), financial pressure caused by rising prices can shape how individuals experience and perceive inflation, even if income differences do not always lead to statistically significant differences in perception.

Table 4. Student's Perspectives on Inflation in terms of Age

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Student's Perspectives on Inflation	4.46	2	0.107

The Kruskal–Wallis test also examined whether age differences among students affect their perspectives on inflation. The results showed H = 4.46, df = 2, and p = 0.107, indicating that there is no significant difference in perceptions across age groups. This suggests that students of different ages generally share similar views about the effects of inflation. Most students in the university experience the same economic environment, including increases in the prices of food, transportation, and school materials. Although age does not significantly affect perceptions in this study, older students may sometimes have more experience managing personal or household expenses, which can increase their awareness of financial challenges. A study of Espelita, et.al., (2025) found that older students tend to show higher levels of economic understanding because they have greater life experience and financial responsibility compared to younger students. However, despite these differences in experience, students who live in the same economic environment may still develop similar perceptions of inflation.

Table 5 . Student's Perspectives on Inflation in terms of College Department

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Student's Perspectives on Inflation	9.79	3	0.020

The results of the Kruskal–Wallis test showed H = 9.79, df = 3, and p = 0.020, indicating a significant difference in students' perspectives on inflation across colleges. Since the p-value is lower than 0.05, this suggests that the department where students belong may influence how they understand or perceive inflation. Students from different academic departments are exposed to different subjects, learning experiences, and academic discussions. For example, students from programs that focus on economics, business, or social sciences may have greater exposure to discussions about economic issues such as inflation, price changes, and financial systems. Because of this academic exposure, students from different departments may interpret or understand inflation in different ways. Gündüz et al., (2020) suggest that academic background can shape how individuals analyze economic issues and interpret financial trends.

Table 6. Student's Perspectives on Inflation in terms of Major and Section

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	P
Student's Perspectives on Inflation	41.9	14	<.001

The Kruskal-Wallis test showed a larger variation in perceptions which was observed when students were grouped according to their major and section. The test result showed H = 41.9, df = 14, and $p < 0.001$, indicating a highly significant difference in students' perspectives on inflation. This finding suggests that students' specific academic programs and classroom environments may influence how they understand the effects of inflation. Different majors may include subjects that discuss financial management, economic concepts, or social issues related to rising costs of living. In addition, sections may differ in terms of teaching style, classroom discussions, and learning experiences. Some instructors may include real-world economic topics such as inflation in their lessons, which can influence students' awareness and understanding of price increases. Previous research supports this idea, suggesting that students' field of study can influence their level of financial literacy and understanding of economic concepts. For example, studies have shown that academic major and educational exposure significantly affect students' financial knowledge and decision-making abilities (Ghozia et al., 2025; Alqam & Hamshari, 2024). When students are exposed to economic or financial topics in their academic programs, they are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of issues such as inflation and cost of living.

Table 7. Student's Perspectives on Inflation in terms of Source of Income

	Kruskal-Wallis		
	χ^2	df	p
Student's Perspectives on Inflation	0.572	2	0.751

The Kruskal–Wallis test was also used to examine whether students' source of income affects their perspectives on inflation. The results showed H = 0.572, df = 2, and p = 0.751, which indicates no significant difference in perceptions based on students' source of income. This means that whether students rely on parental support, part-time work, or other sources of financial assistance, their general understanding of inflation remains similar. However, the source of income may still influence students' personal experiences with financial pressure. For example, students who work part-time may be more aware of changes in prices because they directly earn and spend their own money. Similar to the study of Alberto Cavallo, et.al., (2014) personal financial experiences can shape how individuals perceive inflation and economic conditions, even if these experiences do not always lead to statistically significant differences in survey responses.

Problem 3: **In what ways does inflation affect the daily living of students from different socioeconomic groups?**

Table 8. Perceived Effects of Inflaction in Daily Living

Items	Mean	SD	Description
1. Inflation has affected food and beverage consumption.	4.34	0.771	Strongly Agree
2. Inflation has affected water and electricity charges.	4.11	0.819	Agree
3. Inflation has affected gasoline use and other petroleum products.	4.21	0.856	Strongly Agree
4. Inflation has affected transportation fares.	4.18	0.801	Agree
5. Inflation has affected tuition fees and other school's requirements.	3.94	0.916	Agree
6. Inflation has affected rental fees on apartments or boarding houses.	3.93	0.943	Agree
7. Inflation has affected medicines and other healthcare needs.	4.00	0.941	Agree
8. Inflation has affected apparel and gadgets including cellphone load, cosmetics and personal wants.	4.5	0.874	Strongly Agree
9. Inflation has affected registration fees for seminars, workshops, training and other extracurricular activities.	3.95	0.913	Agree
10. Inflation has affected school supplies and materials used in the classroom.	4.11	0.876	Agree
Total	**4.13**	**0.792**	**Agree**

Table 8 shows that students generally agree that inflation significantly affects their daily living, with an overall mean of M = 4.13 (Agree). The results indicate that inflation has a broad and multi-dimensional impact on students' expenses, particularly in essential and recurring cost categories. Among all indicators, the highest impact is observed in apparel, gadgets, cellphone load, cosmetics, and personal wants (M = 4.50, Strongly Agree), followed by food and beverage consumption (M = 4.34, Strongly Agree) and gasoline and petroleum products (M = 4.21, Strongly Agree). This suggests that students are highly affected by inflation in both basic necessities (food and transport fuel) and modern essential needs (digital devices and connectivity). Moderate effects are also observed in transportation fares (M = 4.18), water and electricity charges (M = 4.11), and school supplies and classroom materials (M = 4.11), all interpreted as Agree. This indicates that inflation also influences daily academic-related and household utility expenses, which are essential for students' regular functioning. Meanwhile, relatively lower but still significant effects are found in tuition fees and school requirements (M = 3.94), rental fees (M = 3.93), registration fees for seminars and trainings (M = 3.95), and healthcare-related expenses (M = 4.00). Although these items are less frequently incurred compared to daily consumption expenses, they still contribute to students' overall financial burden. Overall, the findings imply that inflation is most strongly felt in daily consumption goods and transportation-related expenses, while academic and housing costs are also affected but to a lesser extent. This suggests that students experience inflation primarily through routine, everyday spending patterns, supporting the idea that inflation is more visible in frequently purchased goods (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025; Baker et al., 2022).

***Problem 4:* What coping strategies do students employ to manage the effects of inflation on their daily lives?**

Table 9. Coping Strategies of Students

Items	Frequency		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Reducing non-essential expenses.	198	30	86.8%	13.2%
2. Seeking additional sources of income (e.g., part-time jobs).	161	167	70.6%	29.4%
3. Budgeting and tracking expenses	192	36	84.2%	15.8%
4. Limiting social and recreational activities.	163	65	71.5%	28.5%
5. Borrowing money from family or friends	129	99	56.6%	43.4%
6.Utilizing community support or assistance programs	69	159	69.7%	30.3%

The results indicate that students adopt multiple coping strategies to manage the effects of inflation, with a generally high utilization of practical financial adjustments. The most dominant strategy is reducing non-essential expenses (86.8%), followed by budgeting and tracking expenses (84.2%), showing that students prioritize financial discipline and controlled spending as primary responses to economic constraints. This suggests strong awareness of financial limitations and a tendency toward self-regulated financial behavior. Limiting social and recreational activities (71.5%) and seeking additional income through part-time work (70.6%) were also commonly practiced, indicating that students actively adjust both consumption patterns and income sources to cope with rising costs. These findings reflect adaptive financial behavior where students balance lifestyle reduction with income augmentation strategies. A moderate proportion of respondents reported borrowing from family or friends (56.6%), suggesting reliance on informal financial support networks when personal resources are insufficient. In contrast, utilization of community assistance programs (30.3%) was the least practiced strategy, implying limited awareness, accessibility, or preference for formal support mechanisms. Overall, the findings demonstrate that students primarily rely on personal financial management strategies rather than institutional support systems. The dominance of budgeting, expense reduction, and selective spending indicates a shift toward financial resilience and adaptive coping mechanisms in response to inflationary pressures. These results highlight the importance of strengthening students' financial literacy and expanding access to structured support programs to further enhance their capacity to manage economic challenges effectively.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the appropriate school authorities and concerned institutional offices to ensure that the study complied with existing research protocols and policies. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement, and their right to refuse participation or withdraw at any point without any form of penalty or academic consequence. Informed consent was secured before the administration of the survey questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were strictly maintained. No identifying information was collected, and all responses were encoded and reported in aggregate form to ensure that individual identities could not be traced. Data were used solely for academic and research purposes and were stored securely with restricted access. The study also ensured non-maleficence by avoiding any procedures or questions that could cause psychological, emotional, or social harm to the respondents. The questionnaire focused only on perceptions and experiences related to inflation and daily living without intruding into sensitive personal matters. Finally, the research followed the principles of beneficence by ensuring that the findings may contribute to a better understanding of students' financial experiences and may serve as a basis for policy recommendations and support mechanisms in educational settings.

Conclusion

This study examined the students' perceptions of inflation in Sulu and how it affects their daily living across different socioeconomic backgrounds. The findings revealed that students are generally aware of inflation and strongly recognize the increase in prices of basic commodities. Most respondents agreed that inflation significantly affects their quality of life, indicating that students clearly perceive the economic pressures caused by rising prices. The study also found that students' perspectives on inflation do not significantly differ when grouped according to sex, age, average monthly allowance, and source of income. This suggests that students experience and perceive the effects of inflation in similar ways regardless of these socioeconomic characteristics. However, significant differences were observed across college departments and among different majors and sections, which implies that students' academic environment and field of study may influence how they understand and interpret economic issues such as inflation. The results showed that inflation affects several areas of students' daily living, including food and beverage consumption, transportation costs, utilities, school supplies, tuition fees, healthcare needs, and personal items. These findings indicate that the rising cost of goods and services places financial pressure on students and requires them to adjust their spending habits. Finally, the study identified several coping strategies used by students to manage the effects of inflation. The most common strategies include reducing non-essential expenses, budgeting and tracking expenses, limiting social and recreational activities, and seeking additional sources of income. These strategies demonstrate that students actively respond to financial challenges by managing their available resources more carefully. Overall, the study concludes that inflation has a significant influence on students' financial experiences and daily living, allowing them to adopt various strategies to cope with the increasing cost of living.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed: students should strengthen their financial management skills by practicing budgeting, prioritizing essential expenses, and monitoring their spending habits to better cope with the effects of inflation; educational institutions should provide financial literacy programs or seminars that help students understand economic issues such as inflation, budgeting, and financial planning; university administrators may consider developing financial support programs or assistance services to aid students experiencing financial difficulties due to rising living costs; and government agencies and local organizations should enhance initiatives that support students and families affected by inflation, particularly through programs that help reduce the financial burden of education and daily living.

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