



# BARKADA: A proposal for the creation of an organization for students of MSU-Gensan living away from home



# OVERVIEW

- **Abstract**
- **Introduction**
- **Material and Methods**

# ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the emotional, social, and academic struggles of students living off-campus at Mindanao State University-General Santos (MSU-Gensan). Using qualitative phenomenological methods, the lives of students while off campus, the emotional distress derived from negative coping methods and the students' perceptions of BARKADA (an organization that offers aid) are assessed. Participants took part in individual interviews and focus group discussions to gather information. The occurrence of homesickness and the emotional distresses that stem from it lead to increased social loneliness and depression. The students encounter academic struggles and distractions due to negative environmental settings such as poor housing conditions, and unstable housing. There are coping methods that are practiced such as peer support and participation in BARKADA, however, many students perceive the organization to be ineffective and the services difficult to access. The study restraint to the off-campus students the offer of institutional support and these remaining barriers have the potential to be transformed to academic barriers and success. The study suggests academic institutions focus efforts on off campus living support concerns and offer help that spanned beyond basic support would positively counter the negative off-campus living support.

# INTRODUCTION

Many students living on campus at MSU-Gensan find it hard to adjust to independence. They often face homesickness, loneliness, financial pressure, and the challenge of managing daily life without their families. These issues can impact their academic performance and mental health. Studies from other countries show similar challenges. For instance, Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) discovered that international students in the U.S. frequently feel emotionally strained and culturally out of place, relying on peer organizations for support. Sovic (2008) also pointed out that student organizations help European students studying abroad feel a sense of identity, belonging, and adjustment to their new academic environments.

# INTRODUCTION

Research in the Philippines shows the same trend. Reyes and Santos (2018) found that rural students at UP Diliman cope with being away from home by joining campus groups that help recreate a sense of community. Similarly, CHED (2022) found that culturally grounded student organizations ease homesickness and reduce dropout rates among students across the country, including those in Mindanao. Local studies back up these findings as well. Dulnuan et al. (2020) identified financial strain, isolation, and adaptation problems as major challenges for MSU students and noted that peer groups help build resilience.

# INTRODUCTION

In light of these insights, the proposed organization BARKADA aims to support MSU-Gensan students living away from home by offering emotional, social, and cultural support based on Mindanao's communal values. This qualitative study seeks to understand their experiences, identify their needs, and explore how a student-led group like BARKADA can help strengthen their resilience, sense of belonging, and academic stability.

# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of MSU-Gensan students who are living away from their families and to understand how a proposed student organization BARKADA can address their needs.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of MSU-Gensan students who are living alone and away from their families?
2. What challenges do students encounter in their emotional, social, academic, and daily living experiences while living alone?

# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of MSU-Gensan students who are living away from their families and to understand how a proposed student organization BARKADA can address their needs.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

3. What coping strategies do students use to manage the difficulties of living independently?
4. What forms of support do students believe a student-led organization like BARKADA could provide to help them navigate independent living?

# **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

## **Research Design**

This study is a phenomenological investigation that explores the lived experiences of students at Mindanao State University in Gensan whose living away from their home. Phenomenology is a research approach in which the researcher seeks to understand the essence of human experiences related to a particular phenomenon, as described by the participants (Cresswell, 2009). It focuses on the subjective reality of an event as perceived by the individuals involved and is concerned with capturing the lived experiences of individuals (Litchman, as cited in Wa-Mbaleka, 2016)

# **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

## **Participants**

The participants of this study will be Eight (8) bona fide students of Mindanao State University Gensan. The participants are selected deliberately since their experiences will be describe and defined. In this study, the inclusion criteria in the selection participants are:

1. Currently enrolled at MSU-Gensan,
2. Living away from their family home, and
3. Willing to participate in the study.

# METHODS AND MATERIALS

## Data Gathering Techniques

1. In-depth Interviews to explore personal experiences, emotions, and challenges.
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to identify shared experiences, peer dynamics, and suggestions for the development of the BARKADA organization.

# **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

## **Data Analysis**

Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, following coding, categorization, and identification of core themes that reflect students' lived experiences, coping strategies, and perceived support needs.

# REFERENCES

- Commission on Higher Education. (2022). *Student well-being and support programs in Philippine higher education: A qualitative report*. CHED Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dulnuan, M., Daguiio, M., & Talamayan, F. (2020). Stressors and coping mechanisms of students living away from home: *A grounded theory approach*. *Mindanao Journal of Science and Technology*, 18(2), 45–60.
- Poyrazli, S., & Grahame, K. M. (2007). Barriers to adjustment: Needs of international students within a semi-urban campus community. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(4), 423–432. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.54.4.423>

# REFERENCES

- Reyes, J. F., & Santos, M. A. (2018). Coping with family separation: Experiences of rural students in an urban university. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 51(1), 89–112.
- Sovic, S. (2008). Lost in transition? The international student experience. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(1), 32–56.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306293416>
- Wa-Mbaleka, S. (2016). *Research and publication: A guide for researchers in education and social sciences*. Oikos.