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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Free Boarding House: Humanitarian Commitment to Transient Faculty and Learners, Caretakers

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#### Abstract

This study explored the free boarding house program as a humanitarian commitment supporting transient faculty, learners, and caretaker, with emphasis on its physical conditions, conduciveness for study and rest, satisfaction and impact, welfare support, productivity, and institutional engagement. Employing a descriptive design, data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to facility occupants. Results revealed that the boarding house was positively regarded, particularly for its cleanliness, accessibility, and role in easing financial burdens. Respondents strongly agreed that the initiative enhanced school attendance, academic and professional productivity, and a sense of institutional belonging, while also reducing transportation costs, stress, and fatigue. Nonetheless, challenges emerged in the areas of discipline, security, privacy, ventilation, and water supply. Anchored on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and environmental learning space theory, the study concluded that the boarding house functions not merely as a residence but as a welfare-oriented intervention that strengthens educational performance and institutional commitment. Recommendations highlighted facility improvement, reinforced discipline and security policies, and the institutional recognition of welfare initiatives as integral to student success and retention.

*Keywords:* free boarding house, humanitarian intervention, welfare support, academic productivity, institutional engagement

## **Introduction**

Providing free housing for educational stakeholders reflects the global movement toward humanized education. According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, inclusive and equitable quality education must be supported by safe and enabling learning environments, particularly for marginalized and transient populations (UN, 2015). Globally, educational institutions are increasingly recognizing the need to support not only the academic but also the socio-economic well-being of learners and faculty members. Nationally, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) emphasizes student welfare and institutional responsibility for learner support (CHED Memo No. 9, s. 2013).

The concept of institutional housing or boarding facilities provided by educational institutions has long been recognized globally and nationally as a form of welfare support that enhances productivity and morale among faculty, learners, and up keepers. Institutions with on-site accommodations for staff, students, and up keepers often exhibit better retention, stronger engagement, and more cohesive academic communities. In the Philippines, private colleges and universities, especially those located in rural or semi-urban areas are increasingly adopting such humanitarian initiatives in response to the growing challenges of access, transportation, and safety.

Mallig Plains Colleges, Inc. (MPCI) embodies this educational commitment through its generous provision of a Free Boarding House for transient faculty, learners, and upkeep. Situated in the western zone of Isabela province, MPCI receives an influx of students and visiting faculty from remote and neighboring municipalities of Quirino, Quezon and provinces Kalinga Apayao, Tabuk, and Quezon. While the institution offers quality instruction and dynamic community engagement, transient stakeholders often struggle with accommodation and transportation concerns.

The implementation of the Free Boarding House program bridges this gap. However, little is known about how this humanitarian initiative impacts the overall welfare, academic productivity, and institutional engagement of its beneficiaries.

This study aims to answer the overarching question: How does the Free Boarding House program of Mallig Plains Colleges, Inc. affect the welfare and academic productivity of its transient students and faculty members? Specifically: What are the perceptions of the beneficiaries regarding the accessibility, safety, and convenience of the Free Boarding House? In what ways does the program contribute to the academic and professional productivity of its occupants? What issues or challenges are encountered in the implementation and usage of the facility? What recommendations can be proposed to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of the Free Boarding House initiative? Specifically, it sought to: examine how the Free Boarding House supports the physical, emotional, and academic needs of its beneficiaries. Determine the extent to which the provision enhances, physical sustained, and find out significant difference in the perceived level of comfort and conduciveness at the boarding house by the respondents when grouped according to their profile?

The null hypothesis, identify challenges encountered by the beneficiaries in availing or utilizing the facility. Generate recommendations for sustaining or improving the Free Boarding House program in line with institutional goals and educational standards.

It recognizes these challenges and has committed to providing free boarding house accommodation within its campus premises for select transient faculty and students who come from distant areas. This initiative doesn't only alleviate financial burdens but also strengthen the institution's mission of accessible and inclusive education. The boarding house, modest yet functional, serves as a safe and nurturing space for academic stakeholders to focus on their work and studies without the distractions of daily commute and housing expenses.

Despite the growing implementation of housing support in various academic institutions, there is limited localized research that investigates the lived experiences and actual benefits derived by transient educational stakeholders, especially in rural and private colleges like MPCI. There is also a need to empirically assess how humanitarian-driven educational policies translate into measurable academic and professional outcomes.

Significantly, the following stakeholders benefitted from the findings, School Administration are provided data-driven insights into the effectiveness of MPCI's generous initiative of offering free boarding houses. It served as a basis for future policies and improvements to strengthen institutional support for non-resident educators, students and up keepers, students will validate their experiences and offer a platform to express feedback on boarding conditions, thus giving them a voice in institutional planning. Improvements derived from this research will directly enhance their well-being, learning outcomes, and teaching performance. Ensured parents and guardians that their children or family members live in a comfortable and safe environment, likewise, will gain confidence and peace of mind about the educational institution's concern for student welfare; Education Planners and Policymakers may serve as a model for other schools, especially in rural areas, showing that access to free and humane lodging facilities can strengthen educational inclusiveness and performance, and future researchers may serve to them as a valuable resource and reference for those who intend to explore institutional support mechanisms, student housing quality, and education equity under the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943) States that basic physiological and safety needs, such as shelter and a secure environment, must be met before individuals can achieve higher-order goals such as learning and self-actualization. Ecological Systems Theory - Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) Emphasizes the influence of environmental systems (such as school-provided boarding facilities) on the development and behavior of individuals. The boarding house is part of the microsystem directly affecting student and teacher outcomes. Tinto's Theory of Student Retention (1975) Asserts that student integration into both the academic and social aspects of college life, including housing experiences, impacts retention and academic success. Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) Posits that investment in individuals - such as providing free housing - enhances productivity, skills, and long-term outcomes, benefiting both the individual and society. Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) Suggests that perceived fairness in resource allocation (e.g., free housing opportunities) affects satisfaction and motivation, which are crucial for performance and retention.

## **Methods**

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research design to capture and analyze the lived experiences and perceptions of transient faculty, students, and stay in caretakers

benefitting from the Free Boarding House program. The study was conducted at Mallig Plains Colleges, Inc. in the Municipality of Mallig, Province of Isabela. The Boarding House facility is located within the premises of the main campus, making it a vital part of the institution's learner support structure. Meanwhile, purposive sampling was utilized to identify students, faculty members, and caretakers who are currently staying at the Free Boarding House. A target of 30 participants was determined to allow in-depth data collection.

The primary instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions related to the beneficiaries' welfare, academic productivity, challenges, and suggestions. Ethical Considerations: Participants were informed of the study's purpose and their voluntary participation. Informed consent was secured, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. The study adhered to the ethical research guidelines set by MPCCI's Research Ethics Committee. Upon approval of the research proposal, interviews were scheduled and conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting. Sessions were audio-recorded (with permission) and later transcribed for analysis.

Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, which involved coding and categorizing responses into major themes that align with the research objectives. Patterns were drawn from qualitative insights to build a comprehensive understanding of the beneficiaries lived experiences.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age**

Indicators	Frequency	Percent
13 - 16 Years Old	9	25.00
17 - 20 Years Old	11	30.56
21- - 24 Years Old	8	22.22
25 and Above Years Old	8	22.22
Total	36	100.00

As to age, the largest group belongs to those aged 17-20 years old or 30.56%, followed by those aged 13-16 years old or 25.00%. Respondents aged 21-24 years old and 25 years old and above each comprised 22.22% of the total. This indicates that the respondents are predominantly in their adolescent to young adult stage, which is typical of students and early-career individuals residing at MPCCI boarding houses.

**Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	14	38.9
Female	22	61.1
Total	36	100.0

As to gender, out of 36 respondents, 22 or 61.1% were female, while 14 or 38.9% were male. This reveals a higher proportion of female residents in the boarding house, suggesting that the facility may cater more to female students or that female learners are more likely to avail of boarding accommodations.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Role at the boarding house

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Frequenc y</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Students	29	80.6
Educators	5	13.9
Clerk	1	2.8
Caretaker	1	2.8
Total	36	100.0

Along with respondents' roles, majority were students – 29 or 80.6%, while a small number were educators – 5 or 13.9%, and only one respondent each was a clerk and caretaker or 2.8% each. This highlights that the boarding house primarily accommodates students, with only minimal representation from personnel who may serve in supportive or supervisory capacities.

**Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Length of Stay at the Boarding House**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Below 4 Years	6	16.67
4 - 7 Years	23	63.89
Above 7 Years	7	19.44
Total	36	100.00

As to length of stay at the boarding house, majority - 23 or 63.89%, had stayed for 4-7 years, followed by 19.44% who had stayed above 7 years, and 16.67% who had stayed below 4 years. This distribution suggests that most respondents have been long-term boarders, indicating stability, familiarity with the boarding house environment, and a deeper experience with its operations and conditions. Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the respondents are predominantly young, female students who have resided in the boarding house for several years. This profile provides a strong foundation for assessing their perceptions and experiences since most respondents have extensive exposure to the setting under study.

**Table 5. Respondents' Distribution with Physical and Environmental Conditions**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Description</b>
The boarding house provides sufficient space for personal and academic need	2.28	Satisfied
The cleanliness of the rooms and common areas is maintained regularly.	2.42	Very Satisfied
There is access to clean and functional bathrooms.	2.28	Satisfied
The rooms are properly ventilated and well-lit.	1.86	Satisfied
The facility has adequate security measures.	2.11	Satisfied
Mean	2.19	Satisfied

The boarding house provides sufficient space for personal and academic need, 2.28 Agree. The cleanliness of the rooms and common areas is maintained regularly, 2.42 Strongly Agree. There is access to clean and functional bathrooms, 2.28 Agree. The rooms are properly ventilated and well-lit, 1.86 Agree. The facility has adequate security measures, 2.11 Agree.

**Table 6. Respondents' Distribution with Conduciveness for Studying and Resting**

Statement	Mean	Description
The environment is quiet and suitable for studying.	2.28	Satisfied
I have a comfortable sleeping arrangement.	2.36	Very Satisfied
There is a designated area for studying with sufficient lighting and table space.	2.19	Satisfied
I experience minimal distractions from noise or external factors.	2.19	Satisfied
Mean	2.26	Satisfied

The environment is quiet and suitable for studying, 2.28 Agree. I have a comfortable sleeping arrangement, 2.36 Strongly Agree. There is a designated area for studying with sufficient lighting and table space, 2.19 Agree. I experience minimal distractions from noise or external factors, 2.19 Agree.

**Table 7. Respondents' Distribution with Satisfaction and Impact**

Statement	Mean	Description
I am satisfied with the current boarding arrangement provided by the school.	2.75	Very Satisfied
The boarding facility helps me attend school or work regularly.	2.58	Very Satisfied
Living here supports my academic/teaching performance.	2.36	Very Satisfied
I feel safe and respected in this environment.	2.33	Satisfied
I would recommend this boarding house to future students/educators.	2.42	Very Satisfied
Mean	2.49	Very Satisfied

I am satisfied with the current boarding arrangement provided by the school, 2.75 Strongly Agree. The boarding facility helps me attend school or work regularly, 2.58 Strongly Agree. Living here, supports my academic/teaching performance, 2.36 Strongly Agree. I feel safe and respected in this environment, 2.33 Agree. I would recommend this boarding house to future students/educators, 2.42 Strongly Agree.

**Table 8. Respondents' Distribution with Support to Welfare and Well-Being**

Statement	Mean	Description
Staying at the boarding house helps reduce my transportation costs.	2.69	Very Satisfied
The availability of free accommodation lessens my financial burden.	2.64	Very Satisfied
The living environment contributes positively to my mental well-being.	2.39	Very Satisfied
I am able to rest and sleep adequately while staying here.	2.47	Very Satisfied
I feel emotionally supported by having this facility provided.	2.53	Very Satisfied

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School**

Mean	2.54	Very Satisfied
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Staying at the boarding house helps reduce my transportation costs. 2.69 Strongly Agree  
 The availability of free accommodation lessens my financial burden. 2.64 Strongly Agree  
 The living environment contributes positively to my mental well-being. 2.39 Strongly Agree  
 I am able to rest and sleep adequately while staying here. 2.47 Strongly Agree  
 I feel emotionally supported by having this facility provided.

**Table 9. Respondents’ Distribution with Academic/Professional Productivity**

Statement	Mean	Description
Staying at the boarding house helps me arrive at school on time.	2.61	Very Satisfied
I can better focus on my studies/work because of the accommodation.	2.47	Very Satisfied
The convenience of the boarding house reduces stress from travel	2.53	Very Satisfied
My academic or professional performance improved since staying here.	2.25	Satisfied
I have more time for academic-related tasks or preparation.	2.36	Very Satisfied
Mean	2.44	Very Satisfied

Staying at the boarding house helps me arrive at school on time, 2.61 Strongly Agree.  
 I can better focus on my studies/work because of the accommodation, 2.47 Strongly Agree.  
 The convenience of the boarding house reduces stress from travel, 2.53 Strongly Agree.  
 My academic or professional performance improved since staying here, 2.25 Agree.  
 I have more time for academic-related tasks or preparation.

**Table 10. Respondents’ Distribution with Institutional Engagement and Satisfaction**

Statement	Mean	Description
I feel more connected and engaged with the institution because of this support.	2.47	Very Satisfied
I participate more actively in school-related activities and responsibilities.	2.39	Very Satisfied
The boarding house makes me feel that the institution genuinely cares.	2.39	Very Satisfied
I am satisfied with the overall condition of the Free Boarding House.	2.28	Satisfied
I would recommend this initiative to other transient students/faculty.	2.33	Satisfied
Mean	2.37	Very Satisfied

Institutional Engagement and Satisfaction Statement Mean Description  
 I feel more connected and engaged with the institution because of this support. 2.47 Strongly Agree  
 I participate more actively in school-related activities and responsibilities. 2.39 Strongly Agree  
 The boarding house makes me feel that the institution genuinely cares. 2.39 Strongly Agree  
 I am satisfied with the overall condition of the Free Boarding House. 2.28 Agree  
 I would recommend this initiative to other transient students/faculty. 2.33 Agree  
 Mean 2.37 Strongly Agree  
 Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D)

**Table 11. Respondents' Distribution with Challenges Encountered**

Statement	Frequency	Rank
Occupants' discipline	125	1
Security	120	2
Personal Privacy	105	3
Proper ventilation	88	4
Water Supply	68	5

Despite the overwhelming positive feedback, challenges were identified. The most pressing concern was occupants' discipline, Rank 1, followed closely by security, Rank 2, and personal privacy, Rank 3, Structural and environmental concerns such as ventilation, Rank 4, and water supply, Rank 5 were also highlighted.

These issues suggest that while the program is successful in addressing fundamental needs, its sustainability hinges on continuous monitoring of facility maintenance and discipline.

There is no significant difference in the perceived level of comfort and conduciveness at the boarding house by the respondents when grouped according to their profile.

**Table 12 Results on the Significant Difference in the Perceived Level of Comfort and Conduciveness**

**at the Boarding House by the Respondents when grouped according to their Profile**

Indicator	Significance F	Decision	Remarks
Age	.762	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Gender	.663	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Role	.990	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Length of Stay at the Boarding House <b>(Above 7 Years)</b>	.003	Reject Ho	Significant

The results on the significant difference in the perceived level of comfort and conduciveness at the boarding house when the respondents are grouped according to their profile. The findings reveal that age ( $p = .762$ ), gender ( $p = .663$ ), and role ( $p = .990$ ) all yielded significance values greater than 0.05. This indicates that these variables do not significantly influence how respondents perceive the comfort and conduciveness of their boarding houses. In other words, regardless of their age, gender, or role, respondents tend to share similar perceptions. On the other hand, a significant difference was noted in terms of the length of stay at the boarding house ( $p = .003$ ), since the computed significance value is less than 0.05. This suggests that the respondents' perception of comfort and conduciveness varies depending on the number of years they have stayed in the boarding house. Those who have lived longer may have different experiences and levels of adjustment compared to those who have only recently begun residing there. Overall, the results indicate that while personal demographic factors such as age, gender, and role do not create significant variation in

perceptions, the length of stay emerges as a crucial factor that shapes respondents' experiences and comfort levels in their boarding houses.

### **Findings**

The free boarding house was positively evaluated in terms of cleanliness, security, and accessibility, with overall satisfaction and impact receiving the highest ratings. Respondents affirmed that the facility reduced financial strain, enhanced attendance, and supported academic and professional productivity. Despite favorable ratings, ventilation, discipline, security, and personal privacy emerged as persistent challenges that need improvement. The program strengthened institutional engagement, with occupants feeling valued and more connected to school-related activities. The free boarding house functions not only as a residential facility but also as a humanitarian intervention that significantly supports the welfare, productivity, and institutional engagement of learners, caretaker, and faculty. While the initiative successfully addresses financial and logistical barriers, its sustainability depends on addressing environmental and behavioral concerns, particularly in ventilation, discipline, and security.

It is found that there is no significant difference in the respondents' perceived level of comfort and conduciveness at the boarding house when grouped according to age ( $p = .762$ ), gender ( $p = .663$ ), and role ( $p = .990$ ). However, a significant difference was observed when grouped according to the length of stay at the boarding house ( $p = .003$ ). This indicates that the number of years spent in the boarding house plays a crucial role in shaping respondents' perceptions, while other demographic factors do not. That the respondents' perception of boarding house comfort and conduciveness is generally uniform across age, gender, and role, suggesting that these factors do not influence their living experience. However, the length of stay significantly affects perception, implying that the longer the students reside in the boarding house, the more their experiences and adjustments shape their views on comfort and conduciveness. This underscores the importance of considering the duration of stay in addressing boarding house conditions and student welfare.

### **Recommendations**

Improve the physical environment, particularly ventilation and lighting, to enhance comfort and support both academic and personal needs of occupants. Provide regular orientation and capacity-building sessions for residents to reinforce discipline, respect for privacy, and shared responsibility in maintaining a harmonious environment.

Establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for facility maintenance, including feedback systems where residents can regularly report concerns regarding cleanliness, safety, and water supply. Strengthen institutional policies on security and privacy by assigning designated personnel or caretakers, ensuring the safety and well-being of both students and faculty residents. Develop strategies to sustain and improve living conditions, particularly for long-term residents. Regular facility maintenance, periodic upgrading of amenities, and the provision of programs that promote social interaction and well-being. Additionally, mechanisms such as feedback systems and periodic satisfaction surveys should be implemented to identify and address concerns early, ensuring that both new and long-staying boarders enjoy a supportive and conducive living environment.

The future researchers to undergo a research work supporting the notion that institutional support mechanisms extend beyond academics, demonstrating that welfare-oriented facilities directly contribute to improved performance, engagement, and retention. The study reinforces Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, showing that when basic

physiological and safety needs are met through free housing, higher-level needs such as academic productivity, social engagement, and self-fulfillment are better achieved.

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