



MARIANO MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY

Sustainability Initiatives of Mariano Marcos State University Student Organizations toward the Advancement of Sustainable Development

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are essential in strengthening knowledge and innovation, fostering a generation of leaders committed to addressing pressing societal challenges. The Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) stands as a beacon of academic excellence and community engagement among the state universities and colleges in Region 1. At MMSU, this commitment to knowledge production and exchange, innovations, excellence, and community engagements must cascade from the administration down to student-led organizations, including their dedication to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those about environmental stewardship. Student organizations serve as vital engines of change, mobilizing passion, creativity, and collective action toward building a greener, more equitable world.

This study explored the role played by the student organization at MMSU in championing SDG programs and initiatives by delving into how these groups contribute to a culture of sustainability, empowerment, and development for positive changes in the community. Specifically, this study aimed to (1) determine the awareness of the different student organization members on Sustainable Development, (2) identify the integration of SDGs into the student organization's programs and activities, (3) identify the SDG that MMSU student organizations strongly tackle, and; (4) identify the perceived challenges by student organizations in achieving the SDGs.

This study followed a descriptive research design, which included a survey. Questionnaires and interview schedules were employed to gather information related to the topic. Forty-four accredited student organizations for the Academic Year 2023-2024 were included in this study. Three (3) student leaders from each organization served as respondents; 132 student leaders and three advisers totaled all respondents. Descriptive statistics, which included frequency, percentage distribution, and ranking, were used to analyze data.

Results show that awareness differs among different organization members. Student organization officers and advisers know the term SDG, primarily through the school curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and social media. While there is high recognition of fundamental SDGs such as No Poverty, Zero Hunger, and Quality Education, other goals related to infrastructure,

sustainable cities, and responsible consumption are less recognized. This profile underscores the need for targeted educational initiatives to ensure a comprehensive understanding of all SDGs among student leaders, preparing them to effectively address a wide range of global challenges. On the other hand, the extent of sustainability integration in the organization's programs and activities reveals variation and focus of sustainability initiatives. Top performers like PICHE and PSABE set a benchmark with full integration, showcasing how student organizations can effectively align their activities with global sustainability goals. Organizations with moderate integration still demonstrate significant commitment but have room for expanding their focus to include more SDGs. Lastly, those with lower integration rates indicate potential areas for growth and the need for greater awareness and implementation of comprehensive sustainability practices. All student organizations can enhance their contributions to sustainable development by sharing best practices and encouraging collaboration. Finally, this study also found that the most common challenges in promoting sustainability are multifaceted, including financial constraints, lack of administrative and infrastructural support, coordination issues, resistance to change, policy barriers, and difficulties in measuring impact. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from student bodies and institutional leadership to create a supportive environment that fosters sustainable development initiatives. Enhanced funding, streamlined administrative processes, improved infrastructure, effective communication strategies, cultural shifts towards sustainability, supportive policies, and robust impact assessment mechanisms are essential to overcoming these barriers and achieving meaningful progress.

Keywords: sustainable development, HEIs, student organization, sustainability

Reference:

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