





be the source of appropriate instructional materials, tools, devices, gadgets, and equipment that educators can use in their classrooms (e)



special needs for them to gain full access and fully benefit from the learning opportunities.

Utilizing the framework of neurodiversity, the present study upholds the notion of self-

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Locale**

The Mindanao State University

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

This is a phenomenological study which used semi-structured interviews which were conducted face-to-face at different locations chosen by participants. Three participants opted for a familiar location at the MSU-IIT campus. One interview, however, was conducted in a nearby restaurant and the informant was accompanied by a classmate.

To reiterate, all interviews were conducted one-on-one and in person within a time frame preferred by participants who requested for personal contact during the in to an hour. Data analysis was completed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). To do this, each interview was analyzed individually according to emerging patterns of the following themes: 1) social experiences 2) academic experiences, 3) potential support and services.





*CASS Langkit*



Finally, Gilbert is a student with autism who seems to find every academic task an insurmountable hill to climb. In particular, he found it mindboggling to remember class schedule, room assignments, and face as well as names of professors. As a result, he missed a good number of course requirements and inevitably failed in many of his subjects. Also, the student expressed vehement protest against having to move to this country and enrolled in the AB English program. He said he is a very good artist and wants to take an architecture course. When asked to describe his

asked why, Gilbert refrained from elaborating, but expressed serious concern that his parents might know of his personal protest.

### **Social Experiences**

On the whole, three participants reported a generally pleasant social experiences. They found MSU - IIT peers friendly and professors helpful. However, social and communication inadequacies keep them quite isolated. Three participants reported having the greatest difficulty during their first year in college. Two participants who were very close to families from distant places did not report getting homesick. Instead, they relished their new independence, but getting into routines, losing their way around the campus, and academic activities that require close social interaction are painfully difficult. Consequently, participants either get sick or perform poorly in classes. Eventually, these students have learned to adjust in their new academic environment but with serious consequences in their academic performance.

In response to the open-

I have made quite a number of friends already, but I still

in her public speaking class she delivered a piece which talked about her autism. The classmates and professor were surprised since she apparently showed no signs of being

demands of major course load that she started missing classes a number of times and could fail or drop several of her course subjects this semester. Apparently, she could be dismissed from her academic program due to poor performance in major subjects.

anxiety prior to a social or academic

**Table 3: Potential Support Services and Academic Accommodations**

parents, principals and special education teachers in previous schools. Also, college students with autism are often tempted to keep their needs quiet. They see college as a step toward independence and students on the spectrum who are determined to make it on their own do not want to admit they need help. But they do need help (VanBergeijk, Klin, & Volkmar, 2

- specific services and accommodations which do not necessarily jeopardize the academic standard of the Institute.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study showed that the School Admissions System Examination scores and the General Percentile Average (GPA) of students with autism (SWA) indicate that they are well prepared to pursue college education in the Institute. Notwithstanding, students may have achieved a relatively high level of academic success while struggling with the non-academic aspects of college such as navigating the social environment and difficulties with communication and interaction with peers and instructors. Furthermore, SWAs in MSU - IIT reported loneliness and suicidal tendencies. These difficulties reveal the importance of offering emotional support to these students in the form of developing social supports, advanced social skills training, and offering counselling services. The implication of this conclusion is that students with ASD require comprehensive support in the academic, social, and psychological domains. Considering the increasing frequency with which college students especially autistic individuals who are extremely vulnerable to anxiety, depression, and other psychiatric problem, it may be more critical than ever before that the University provides these students with services and programs to acquire more advanced social skills and stress-coping strategies. The informants of the study have varied levels of social and emotional needs despite their common diagnosis, it is crucial to create autistic-specific programs and services addressing each of these

t individuals with ASD do not necessarily fulfill common stereotypes. It is a common misconception that autistic people are primarily concentrated around math, computer and engineering, not liberal arts or other fields of interest. Careful considerations must be made not to mistakenly advised students with autism toward majoring in academic fields, when in reality they



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