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TRAVELING FAR, LEARNING FURTHER: DISCLOSING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS WITH LONG TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study explores the experiences of students in Kapalong National High School. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the challenges faced by the Senior High School students who undertake long-distance journeys to reach their schools as well as the impact of this in their academic performance, and overall well-being. This study is seen in the lens of Rational choice theory of Blume & Easly (2022) believes that aggregate social behavior results from the behavior of individual actors, each whom is making their individual decisions. This study participated by Grade-11 A GAS students of Kapalong National High School through interview. This study involved 7 participants all are In-Depth Interview. Different themes emerged from the participants' experiences. These themes include Catching the Time, A Financial Constraints, Experiencing Tiredness in Long Distance Travel. These findings also revealed regards to the response on coping strategies of the students such as Managing the Time, Motivating the Self, Seeking Support. For the insights and suggestions, these are themes emerged Intensifying Motivation, Showing Positivism, Trust in God. The urgency of this study commended the schools, to perceive the situation beyond the lens.

KEYWORDS: *Learning Further, Long Travel, Phenomenology, Qualitative Inquiry, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Every day, students across the country are making long distance commute to school. In many cases, these students travel from rural or sub-urban areas in order to attend school, universities, or specialized academic program in larger cities. As a result, these students face both physical and mental health challenges that are unique to the experience of long-distance travel. This inquiry explored the effects of long- distance travel on students and their challenges they face in traveling long distances. It will also discuss potential solutions to help alleviate some of these difficulties (Goswami, 2021).

Furthermore in the Philippines, long-distance travel to school is a common phenomenon. A 2023 study conducted by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) revealed that approximately two-thirds of students in the Philippines travel more than five kilometers to get to school. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the lack of transportation options in rural areas. According to the research, the most common form of transportation for long-distance travel is walking, followed by riding a bicycle or a tricycle. (Gonzales F.J. 2021).

There have been many relevant studies that have discussed the students commuting to school, but there has been no specific study, particularly here in Kapalong that meddles in the issues of students coping with travelling far from home to school. There is yet to be a comprehensive study that tried to highlight and symbolize the difficulties faced by Senior High students. Behind this occurrence, there is an urgent need in conducting this study to recognize and reveal the problems and issues of the students. This issue is particularly relevant for students living in rural areas where there may be limited public transportation options.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the challenges faced by the students who travel long distance to school as well as the impact of this in their academic performance, and overall well-being. This inquiry explored the experiences of students travelling from both rural and urban areas and seek to identify potential solutions to address the challenges they faced.

At this stage in the research, understanding the experience of students who travels long distance to school; this also involves students analysis, and evaluation of ideas about the subject matter. Moreover, it allows the students to be more engaged and equipped in the aspect of understanding through their Academic journey despite of the long travel.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1
Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Experiences of Students in Travelling Long Distance to School

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Experiencing Difficulties in Catching the Time	• I experience waking up early to avoid coming late. • I experience rushed to avoid being late. • I woke up early to catch the bus • I face difficulty in catching the time in travelling
Struggling due to Financial Constraints	• I experience skipping recess/ lunch because my money is just enough for my transport fare. • I experience going to school without money • I experience walking home because I don't have money for my transportation cost
Encountering Tiresome Endeavor	• I experience being drained • I experience being tired • I am facing difficulties and stressed • I face so much tiredness • I am struggling due to tiredness

Experiencing Difficulties in Catching the Time

(For me as a student, it's really difficult especially during those time that I really need to wake up early for me to avoid being late in my class.)

For students in particular, travelling significant distances Tor School can create a number of difficulties. Students usually find themselves confronting the difficult challenges of making extensive commutes to further their education, in contrast to their younger peers who frequently attend schools in their immediate areas. This circumstance presents special difficulties that may have an effect on their academic achievement, physical health, and general quality of life.

Struggling due to Financial Constraints

(My experience is that I skip recess or lunch because myallowance is just right for my transportation fare so I reallyneed to bear with it because we are not born to be rich.)

Students who endure long commutes to school often experience significant physical and mental fatigue, which can severely affect their ability to focus and engage in school activities. According to Timperley et al. (2023), the long hours spent travelling to and from school leave students feeling exhausted, which diminishes their energy levels throughout the day. This constant fatigue can make it challenging for students to concentrate during lessons or participate in extracurricular activities. As a result, they may experience difficulty keeping up with their academic work and social interactions, which ultimately impacts their overall well-being and academic performance.

Encountering Tiresome Endeavor

(.My experience is that feeling that you are so drainedespeciall during in the middle of the week together withthe lots of paper works that also cause of you being drained*)*

For the students, encountering with a tiresome endeavour is often word that often carries a negative connotation, signifying weariness, depletion, and fatigue. In the fast-paced world we live in, it's not uncommon to encounter moments of overwhelming tiredness, especially when we pour ourselves into work and various responsibilities. However, amidst the hustle and bustle, there exists a profound beauty in exhaustion, particularly when engaging in activities that bring fulfilment and purpose to our lives.

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Table 2
Major Themes and Core Ideas on Students Coping Mechanism when Travelling Long Distance to School

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Time Management	• I utilize my time in handling my task • I allocate and divide my time among various tasks • I prioritize task that is truly important • I need to manage my time carefully • I need to maximize my time to do many things
Motivating the Self	• I always motivate my self everyday • I disregard negative thoughts • I need to stay motivated despite the distance • I make sure that I am motivated in doing something g
Seeking Support from Others	• I am reaching out for family for emotional and moral support • I talk to someone whom I can share similar experiences • I seek for guidance to our teachers • I ask for help from other people • I seek advice from others especially from experienced people

Time Management

(During the travel time I utilized my time to do the things like reading notes for me to not waste any time of my day.)

Time management is a critical concern for the vast majority of students, especially those who travel long distances to school. According to research by Marinova (2015), the average student travels one and half hours per day using public transportation to get to school. Furthermore, Marinova (2022) indicates that, on average, the students spend three and a half hours daily travelling to and from their school. This extended period of travelling greatly affects the students' ability to balance their academic and personal responsibilities.

Students with long commutes often face significant challenges in managing their time effectively, especially when it comes to balancing academic responsibilities. According to Schneider (2022*)*, the extended hours spent travelling leave students with limited time to complete homework, study, or engage in school-related activities. As a result, students must constantly prioritize and make difficult decisions about how to allocate their time, often sacrificing study sessions or social activities to keep up with their academic obligations. This lack of time management can lead to increased stress and lower academic performance, as students are unable to devote the necessary time to their coursework.

Motivating the Self

(For me to cope up with my challenges, I disregard the negative thoughts of other people and I focus on myself for me to overcome this challenges I face right now.)

Motivation among students who commute long distances is influenced by both external and internal factors, including their personal goals and the support they receive. Timperley et al. (2023) suggest that while the challenges of long travel times can dampen motivation, positive reinforcement from teachers, family, and peers can help students stay motivated. Moreover, intrinsic motivation such as a desire to achieve academic success or pursue a specific career can act as a driving force to overcome the obstacles posed by long commutes. However, without consistent support and reinforcement, students may struggle to maintain their focus and enthusiasm for school, as the burden of long travel times can overshadow their academic goals.

According to Dr. Dweck (2021) the motivating self of students who travel long distances to school is also characterized by a growth mindset, resilience, and self-discipline. As noted by psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck, Students who adopt a growth mindset believe that their abilities can be developed through hard work and dedication, leading to increased motivation and perseverance. By developing these qualities, students can overcome the physical and emotional demands of their daily commute and achieve academic success.

Seeking Support from Others

(I have a classmate that is facing the same experience with me, if we talk we just like giving support to each other since we can relate to the experience of each others)

Emotional support helps students cope with the physical and mental strain of commuting, providing them with the encouragement and reassurance they need to persist in their academic endeavours. Students who endure long commutes often face a range of emotional and practical challenges that make seeking support vital to their success. The stress and fatigue resulting from long travel times can lead to feelings of isolation and burnout, making it crucial for students to seek emotional support from family, friends, or mentors. Additionally, practical support, such as help with transportation or academic resources, can alleviate the burdens associated with long travel.

In addition to emotional support, students with long commutes often seek academic help to keep up with their studies. Schneider (2020) emphasizes the role of academic support systems such as tutoring, study groups, or teacher-student relationships in helping students overcome the challenges of long travel times. These

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support systems provide students with the opportunity to ask questions, clarify difficult concepts, and stay engaged with their academic work, despite the time constraints imposed by commuting. Peer support can also be critical, as students who face similar challenges can relate to one another and share coping strategies, fostering a sense of community and shared resilience.

Table 3
Major Themes and Core Ideas on Students Insights about Travelling Long Distance to School

Major Themes	Core Ideas
One must Intensify Motivation	• Embracing the challenges • Motivating once self • Keeping striving and set clear goals • Intensifying motivation for improvement • Being optimistic to be motivated
One Must Show Positivism	• Being optimistic in doing something • Believe in your self • Staying optimistic in all endeavours • Showing positivism in accomplishing the tasks
One Must Have Trust in God	• Trusting in God's Plan • Strengthening trust in God • Believing and have faith in God • Maintaining the power of prayer • Believing God's providence

One must Intensify Motivation

(To those students like me who travel long distance to school embrace the challenges that we face think that this challenges will help us grow as a person it can help us to be strong. We will be successful in the future, God bless us all!)

Intensifying motivation of students who travel long distances to school refers to the increased drive and determination that these students exhibit in pursuit of their educational goals. Despite the challenges and hardships associated with long commutes, these students demonstrate a remarkable ability to persevere and stay focused on their objectives. According to educational researcher Anyon (2022) Students who travel long distances to school often develop a strong sense of resilience and determination, which serves as a powerful motivator in their academic pursuits.

In relation to this, according to Duckworth, A. (2021) stated that intensifying motivation can be attributed to several factors, including the students' desire to make the most of their educational opportunities, their sense of responsibility to their families and communities, and their determination to overcome the obstacles that stand in their way. As noted by psychologist Dr. Angela Duckworth, Students who travel long distances to school often develop a growth mindset, believing that their abilities and intelligence can be developed through hard work and dedication.

One Must Show Positivism

(The advice I can give to them is that they should never lose hope and continue moving forward so that their efforts won't go to waste and their school performances won't be affected.)

As started by Stephen Y. Wei and John L. Orians (2020), various strategies can be employed to minimize the travel time for students going to school. One crucial step is to enhance the availability of school transportation by increasing the number of routes and ensuring the reliability of vehicles. These measures can significantly reduce the duration of students' commute. Moreover schools can consider expanding the lunch services, thereby reducing the necessity for students to go home after School. This would enable them to access additional educational resources and engage in more learning activities.

In relation to this, showing positivism of students who travel long distances to school has a profound impact on their academic achievement, mental health, and future success. By developing a resilient and optimistic mindset, these students can navigate the challenges of their daily commute and achieve their goals. As observed by educational researcher Dr. Christine Dreyer (2021), Students who travel long distances to school often develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and confidence, driven by their ability to overcome obstacles and stay positive in the face of adversity.

One Must Have Trust in God

(The most important things is that you should always trusts God's plan for you because of what they always say "Do your best and God will do the rest" this is what we should remember)

Trusting in God of students who travel long distances to school refers to the deep-seated faith and reliance on a higher power that these students exhibit as they navigate the challenges of their daily commute. Despite the uncertainties and risks associated with travelling long distances, these students demonstrate a remarkable sense of trust and confidence in God's protection and guidance. Trust in God is not just a feeling, but a decision to rely on God's character and promises, even when circumstances are uncertain (Smith, 2022).

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In relation to this, the trust in God of students who travel long distances to school is also characterized by a sense of surrender, obedience, and gratitude. As noted by Christian and Jerry Bridges(2020), to trust in God involves surrendering our wills to His, obeying His commands, and trusting in His goodness, even when we don't understand His ways. By cultivating this kind of trust, students can experience a sense of peace and security, even in the midst of challenging circumstances.

Limitation

This study focuses on the lived experiences of students who travel long distance to school in the Division of Davao del Norte during the school year 2024-2025. Since this study is a qualitative phenomenology, the participants consisted of 7 students who travel long distance to school everyday who's facing challenges in their academic journey. The study was conducted from February to March.

Moreover, face-to-face in-depth interviews (IDI) is utilized in this study due to safety protocols. While the results provide valuable insights into the struggles of students who travel long distance to school, they are generalizable only to the participants of this study, with the understanding that these experiences may vary among other students facing similar challenges.

CONTRIBUTION

Provides valuable insights into the struggles of students, particularly form the lives experiences of students travelling from to school. Their firsthand accounts reveal the challenges and strategies involved in understanding the students' experiences, ensuring that students can go to school and participate meaningfully. These students offer practical methods and strategies, using adaptive approaches and fostering a supportive environment that promotes both physical and social development for all students. Their experiences highlight the importance of understanding their unique experiences, patience and creativity in addressing their unique needs of learners while maintaing an inclusive and engaging classroom.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education policies by emphasizing the need for systematic support, such as professional development programs and resource allocation. Teachers and School Administrators may provide valuable reflections on the evolution of understanding and practices, shedding light on both progresses made and persisting gaps in mainstream education. Their perspectives can inform future policies, curriculum design, and teacher preparation programs to better equip educators in handling and understanding these students. Ultimately, this research reinforces the significance of understanding and giving support in fostering equal opportunities, promoting social integration, and enhancing the overall well- being of learners in mainstream schools.

KEYWORDS: Education, students travelling far to school, qualitative inquiry, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines

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