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Students' Goals as Influenced by Expressed Needs and Challenges

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A B S T R A C T

This study determined the relationship between the expressed needs and challenges and the goals of students in junior high schools in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan during the School Year 2023 – 2024. With explanatory sequential as research design and 16 indigenous and 400 regular junior high school students as respondents of the study, findings showed that the expressed needs of both indigenous and regular junior high school student groups in the areas of economics and career and college need is high. Additionally, indigenous group expressed needs in academic skills, self-development, mental/emotional health, and interpersonal relationship is high. Indigenous group is consistent of having higher expressed needs as compared to regular students. Likewise, the indigenous group of respondents encountered more challenges as compared the regular group of respondents. However, both groups of respondents had higher achievement goals. Based on the findings of the study, these conclusions were drawn: Indigenous and regular students' expressed needs in terms of economics is high. Indigenous students experienced more challenges than the regular ones. Both indigenous and regular students showed higher achievement goals in life. The expressed needs and challenges of junior high school students have a significant influence on their achievement goals.

Keywords: Mastery goal, performance , avoidance, students goals and challenges

Introduction

Each day students come to school, each with their own set of needs and challenges. Students living in poverty often have fewer resources at home to complete homework, study, or engage in activities that help equip them for success during the school day. Many impoverished families lack access to computers, high-speed internet, and other materials that can aid a student outside of school. Parents of these families often work longer hours or multiple jobs, meaning they may not be available to assist their children with their schoolwork. Families living in poverty often have to choose between sending their child to school or providing other basic needs. Even if families do not have to pay tuition fees, school comes with the added costs of uniforms, daily allowance, supplies, and/or other basic needs.

According to Mata (2019), needs assessment is of great help in the improvement of an individual. Eliciting information from the students who are the recipients of the services would be a great input for the development of a better program, after all, the recipients participated in its conception. Furthermore, needs assessment would be a good basis in the identification of future school extension services. After determining the needs of the students, conducting services that would address their needs come next. Moreover, knowing the students' needs would be easier on the part of the counselor to adjust activities and interventions.

Contemplating the above-mentioned concerns, the Department of Education launches the Homeroom Guidance (HG) through DepEd Memorandum OUCI-2021-346 known as the "Revised Implementation of Homeroom Guidance (HG) during Crisis Situation for S.Y. 2021-2022". The program is dedicated to addressing the academic, personal/social, and career development needs of the learners in a developmental, comprehensive, and proactive manner.

Meanwhile, setting goals is a vital practice that can benefit anyone with a dream or a vision for their future. Young people who are just starting out on the grand journey of life are at a particularly opportune time to start building their goal setting skills—not only will these skills serve them throughout their lives but building them now will help them mold their future into one that they desire. In addition, the Department of Education released DepEd Order No. 021, s. 2019 known as the "Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program". The department is committed that a K to 12 graduate is a holistically developed Filipino who has built foundations for learning throughout life. They are individuals equipped with information, media and technology skills, learning and innovation skills, life and career skills, and communication skills necessary to tackle the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of the 21st century.

According to McMillan (2019), "a major factor in establishing motivation for students is to ensure that they take ownership in their learning and goals". In addition, achievement goals were conceptualized as the competence-relevant purposes or aims that individual strive for in achievement settings. Achievement goals provide a framework to conceptualize motivation.

Individuals were hypothesized to have different purposes or reasons for engaging in activity which probably influences their performance attainment (Vergara, 2021). Goal setting can allow students to focus more on their math and reading comprehension because they can self-motivate to meet their goals based on a review of previous academic performance or previous set goals. If goal-setting procedures are implemented, students can set measurable and meaningful goals and take substantial ownership over their learning.

However, Rowe, et. al., (2017) reported that many elementary students fail to set goals to improve motivation or academic achievement because non-academics, such as goal setting, is not addressed in the classroom. These non-academic skills can help advance and could boost student's academic skills. Goals that are set by students allow them to grow in their goal-setting abilities, as they become more comfortable with goal-setting procedures, to improve academic proficiency because they can make better choices to focus on specific skills to improve their academics.

In the Philippines, students often face challenges that negatively impact their academic performance, especially in remote areas. Many students struggle with poor attendance, poor quality requirements, and low exam scores. Despite offering various programs, such as orientation, leadership training, and sports competitions, these are often privileged and do not directly address the needs of students. To improve academic performance, programs should be tailored to the current needs of students, focusing on their common problems, and addressing their specific needs (Dagdag, et al., 2019).

It is in this premise that the researcher was motivated to undertake this research with the objective of determining the factors such as their needs and challenges that influenced the students' goals.

Statement of the Problem

The study determined the relationship between the expressed needs and challenges and the goals of students in junior high schools in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan during the School Year 2023 – 2024.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the students' expressed needs be described in terms of:
    1.1 academic skills;
    1.2 personal;
    1.3 career and college needs;
    1.4 self-development;
    1.5 physical health;
    1.6 mental/emotional health;
    1.7 sexual;
    1.8 family/home life;
    1.9 interpersonal relationship; and

1.10 Economics?

2. How may the students' challenges be described in terms of:
    2.1 Self-regulation challenges;
    2.2 Technological literacy and competency challenges;
    2.3 Student isolation challenges;
    2.4 Technological sufficiency challenges; and
    2.5 Learning environment challenges?
3. How may the goals of junior high school students be described in terms of:
    3.1 Mastery-approach goal;
    3.2 Performance-avoidance goal;
    3.3 Performance-approach goal; and
    3.4 Mastery-avoidance goal?
4. Is there a significant relationship between expressed needs and the goals of junior high school students?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the challenges and the goals of junior high school students?

6. What are the views and insights of the junior high school students regarding the influence of their expressed needs and challenges to their goals?
7. What program of activities can be crafted from the results of the study?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between expressed needs and the goals of junior high school students.
2. There is no significant relationship between the challenges and the goals of junior high school students.

Conceptual Framework

The present study used social cognitive career theory (SCCT) to explore the contextual framework. Social cognitive theory posits that goals are importantly tied to both self-efficacy and outcome expectations: People tend to set goals that are consistent with their views of their personal capabilities and of the outcomes they expect to attain from pursuing a particular course of action.

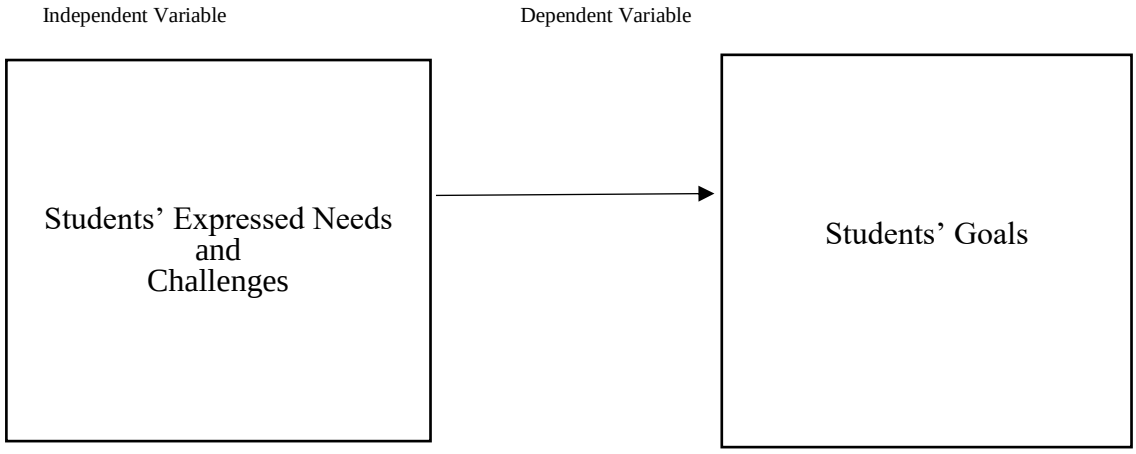

Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 shows that the independent variables are the students' expressed needs and challenges. These variables were hypothesized to influence (as implied by the arrowhead) the dependent variable which is the students' goals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The main objective of the study was to determine the factors such as needs and challenges that influenced students' goals of junior high school students in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan. Further, it looked into the views and insights of students in terms of their needs and how their needs and challenges affect their goals in life. To attain this objective, sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design was utilized.

There were two kinds of data that were collected in the study: quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected through administration of closed-ended questionnaires. Then, statistical analysis was conducted after gathering the data.

Qualitative data, on the other hand, were acquired through semi-structured interviews. The researcher asked open-ended questions which were personally formulated by the researcher in conjunction with the issues observed from the quantitative results of the study.

The researcher decided to use the aforementioned research design to further validate the quantitative findings of the study. Additionally, the gathered qualitative data provided a more comprehensive discussion about the relationship between students' needs, challenges, and goals.

Data Gathering Techniques

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher sought permit from the Schools Division Superintendent of Bulacan to use the public secondary schools in Doña Remedios Trinidad as respondents of this research. Upon receiving the approved permit, she coordinated with the principals of the schools for the schedule of quantitative and qualitative data collection which are needed in the study.

For the quantitative data, adapted closed-ended questionnaire which composed of three parts was utilized. Part I is the Students Expressed Needs Survey which was adapted from Mata (2019) and some portion was adapted from Robinson (1999). Meanwhile, Part II is the Challenges

Questionnaire which was adapted from Del Rosario et al., (2021). The last part is the Goal Questionnaire which was adapted from Ratsameemonthon (2015). Each item was rated using the scales such as: 5 for Very much like me (VML); 4 for Mostly like me (ML); 3 for Somewhat like me (SL); 2 for Not much like me (NML); and 1 for Not like me at all (NL). Some modifications were made to the questionnaire in order to fit the settings of education in the locality.

Open-ended questions were asked to selected respondents through semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data.

Ethical considerations were properly observed in the data collection. Before the administration of the questionnaire which was done personally by the researcher (face-to-face), she ensured that an assent form was secured from the respondents' parents or guardians with the assurance that all gathered information was used solely in the study, and they were guaranteed anonymity. The content of the informed consent form was written in plain language for clarity and easy to understand by the respondents. The researcher ensured that the inform consent form has no misleading or deceptive statements and that the consent form has undergone critiquing from a competent reviewer or panel of experts. The assurance that signature of each respondent was affixed on the consent from was checked by the researcher. Additionally, all information that was obtained was stored electronically, and at no time participants be identifiable, as no identifiable information was collected.

All information that was obtained was stored electronically, and at no time participants be identifiable, as no identifiable information was collected. Electronic data gathered were stored in password-protected computers or files from August to January 2023.

Upon completion of this research all gathered data were permanently deleted from the researcher's laptop. Paper records were destroyed/disposed in a manner that leaves no possibility for reconstruction of information.

The researcher saw to it that all required documents by the Division Office as well as by the Institute of Education of the college were accomplished and submitted on time.

Sampling Procedures

The total enumeration sampling method was used in the conduct of this study. All the junior high school students in the three secondary schools in Doña Remedios Trinidad participated in the study. This method is a type of purposive sampling technique where the researcher chose to examine the entire population that has a particular set of characteristics.

In this study, indigenous and non-indigenous (regular) students were chosen as respondents. The sole secondary school that serves indigenous students is Sapang Bulac High School, where the Dumagat learners are enrolled.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents of the Study for Dumagat Students

School	Grade				Total
	7	8	9	10	
1. Sapang Bulac High School	4	1	8	3	16
2. Talbak High School	0	0	0	0	0
3. Esteban Paulino High School	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	1	8	3	16

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents of the Study for Regular Students

School	Grade Level				Total
	7	8	9	10	
1. Sapang Bulac High School	40	45	47	45	177
2. Talbak High School	24	24	24	19	91
3. Esteban Paulino High School	33	28	28	43	132
Total	97	97	99	107	400

For the quantitative data, a total of ten (10) students, five (5) indigenous and five (5) regular students were selected at random and requested to participate in the conducted interview. Students who participated in the interviews were selected using the fishbowl method. Regular students were separated from indigenous learners. All the names of the students were written down each number on a slip of paper and put in a fishbowl/container. Then, the researcher picked 5 slips of paper randomly from each group. The chosen students were subjected from the semi-structured interview to solicit their views and insights about their needs and challenges and how it influenced their goals in life.

Data Analysis Scheme

Upon completing the collection of the needed quantitative data, these were organized. Further these were tallied, tabulated, interpreted, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. To describe the students' needs, challenges and goals, weighted mean and standard deviation were computed. Correlation analysis was performed to determine if significant relationship existed between the independent variables (students' needs and challenges) and dependent variable (students' goals). Meanwhile, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered qualitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Students' Expressed Needs

Understanding and meeting students' expressed needs involves actively listening to their concerns, preferences, and aspirations. It encompasses a personalized approach to education, where educators and institutions work collaboratively with students to address their academic, personal, and developmental requirements. By acknowledging and responding to these expressed needs, a supportive and inclusive learning environment can be fostered, enhancing overall student well-being and success.

The students' expressed needs were assessed by the indigenous and regular students in terms of academic skills, personal needs, career and college needs, self-development needs, physical health needs, mental/emotional health needs, sexual needs, family/home life needs, interpersonal relationship needs, and economics needs.

Academic Skills

Understanding and addressing students' expressed needs in academic skills involves identifying areas of improvement in subjects, study habits, and learning strategies to enhance their overall educational experience.

The survey data in Table 3 reveal that among indigenous students (Mean = 4.87, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.35, VML) the statement garnering the highest mean is "I will do better in school if I am more prepared for tests and quizzes". This suggests that both indigenous students and regular students strongly believe that adequate preparation or being well-prepared significantly contributes to their success in assessments. The standard deviation of 0.88 for indigenous students indicates that their responses are tightly clustered around the mean of 4.87, revealing a high level of agreement regarding the importance of being prepared for tests and quizzes. This narrow spread suggests a consensus among indigenous students. In contrast, regular students exhibit a higher standard deviation of 1.08, signifying greater variability in their responses compared to indigenous students. Despite a mean of 4.35, the larger standard deviation implies diverse opinions within the regular student group, with some strongly agreeing and others holding more reserved or varied perspectives on the significance of being prepared for tests and quizzes.

Conversely, the statement with the lowest weighted mean for indigenous students (Mean = 4.22, VML) and regular students (Mean = 3.25, SL) is "I will do better in school if my teachers tell me why homework was important". This indicates suggests that, across both groups, a lesser emphasis is placed on the explanation of homework importance as a determinant of academic performance. For Indigenous students, the relatively high standard deviation of 1.23 suggests significant variability in responses, indicating a lack of consensus among students regarding the importance of teachers explaining the significance of homework. The dispersed responses imply that some students strongly agree, while others may strongly disagree or hold mixed opinions on this matter. Similarly, regular students, with a standard deviation of 1.20, also demonstrate substantial variability in their responses, reflecting diverse opinions on the crucial nature of teachers explaining the importance of homework. This diversity encompasses strong agreement from some students and differing or mixed views from others within the regular student group.

During the interview, the participants were asked to share their insights on how the availability of resources at school, the clarity of teacher expectations, and understanding the importance of homework impact academic performance for both Indigenous and regular students. The majority of responses from Indigenous students highlighted that they tend to perform better when there is a clearer understanding of what teachers expect from them. Additionally, having more resources at school was identified as a crucial factor contributing to academic success among Indigenous students. The participants emphasized that when teachers provide explanations on the importance of homework, it significantly influences academic outcomes for regular students. Overall, the consensus was that addressing these factors positively influences academic performance, with Indigenous students benefitting particularly from clear expectations and enhanced school resources.

Relatively, a recent study by Howard and Sarbaum (2022) suggests that economics educators should address study habits, critical thinking skills, and define what critical thinking is to introductory students. Moreover, it found that distributed practice, self-explanation, and interleaved practice, techniques often used by instructors when developing critical thinking skills, demonstrated either "high" or "moderate utility" in improving student learning across a variety of subjects.

Personal Needs

Exploring and meeting students' personal needs entails recognizing and supporting their individual growth, well-being, and identity development outside the academic realm, fostering a holistic approach to education.)

In Table 4, the statement "I will do better in school if I can cope with pressures from home, school, friends, etc." holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.36, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.28, VML), indicating a strong consensus within both groups that they possess the capability

to handle various pressures. The standard deviation for indigenous students is moderate at 0.98, suggesting some variability in responses and indicating differing levels of confidence within the group. Conversely, regular students exhibit a lower standard deviation of 0.86, reflecting a higher degree of agreement and uniformity in their perceptions regarding their ability to cope with pressures.

On the other hand, the statement “I will do better in school if I communicate better with my peers" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.21, SL) and regular students (Mean = 3.11, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that their communication with peers is less positive compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptor "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggests a general agreement, but the lower means imply a less strong endorsement of improved peer communication. Both indigenous students (SD = 1.18) and regular students (SD = 1.09) exhibit relatively high standard deviations, indicating considerable variability in responses within each group. This variability suggests diverse opinions among students, with some expressing strong agreement about effective peer communication, while others hold more reserved or differing views on this aspect.

During the interview, the question about the potential impact of improving problem-solving and decision-making skills on academic performance was posed. In exploring this matter, it was observed that the majority of participants expressed the belief that enhancing these cognitive abilities could positively influence academic outcomes for both groups. Participants emphasized the importance of effective problem-solving in navigating various challenges encountered in the learning process. They noted that improved decision-making skills contribute to better overall preparation for tests and quizzes, which, according to the data, is a key factor in academic success. The consensus among participants was that fostering these skills would create a more supportive learning environment for Indigenous students and regular students alike, potentially narrowing the existing performance gap.

A study by Günaydın (2022) found that rational problem solving was a significant positive predictor of academic motivation. Because rational problem-solving techniques naturally involve making better decisions, which can raise students' academic motivation, rational problem-solving abilities are thought to lead to greater academic achievement.

Career and College Needs

Assessing students' expressed needs in terms of career and college involves guiding them through career exploration, college preparation, and skill development to ensure a smooth transition from education to the professional world.

Table 5. The Students’ Expressed Needs in terms of Career and College Needs

Item Statement	Indigenous Students			Regular Students		
I will do better in school if…	Mean	VD	SD	Mean	VD	SD
1. I find the right career pathway for me.	4.56	VML	1.20	4.32	VML	1.12
2. I better understand my skills and abilities	4.18	ML	1.22	3.81	ML	1.19
3. I have adequate learning about financial aid and scholarships.	4.36	VML	0.98	4.30	VML	0.99
4. I know my strengths and weaknesses.	4.28	VML	1.08	4.21	VML	1.08
5. my school provides an effective career program.	4.78	VML	0.87	4.40	VML	0.88
Overall Mean	4.43	VML	1.07	4.21	VML	1.05

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very much like me (VML)

3.41 – 4.20 Mostly like me (ML)

2.61 – 3.40 Somewhat like me (SL)

1.81 – 2.60 Not much like me (NML)

1.00 – 1.80 Not like me at all (NL)

As reflected in Table 5, the statement "I will do better in school if my school provides an effective career program" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.78, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.40, VML), indicating a shared perception that their respective schools offer a highly effective career program. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) emphasize a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.87) and regular students (SD = 0.88) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the effectiveness of their school's career program. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

On the other hand, the statement “I will do better in school if I better understand my skills and abilities" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.18, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.81, ML), suggesting that, on average, both groups perceive a lower level of understanding of their own skills and abilities compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptor "Much Like" (ML) indicates moderate agreement with the statement. Furthermore, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.22) and regular students (SD = 1.19) are relatively high, signifying

a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. The higher standard deviations imply diverse opinions among students, with some expressing a strong understanding of their skills, while others may have more reserved or varied perspectives on this aspect.

During the interview, participants were asked to share their perspectives on the significance of identifying the right career pathway for students and its potential influence on academic success. In a third-person analysis, it was evident that the majority of respondents highlighted the profound impact that aligning one's academic pursuits with a suitable career path can have on overall educational attainment. Participants emphasized that a clear understanding of future career goals provides students, including Indigenous students, with a sense of purpose and motivation in their academic endeavors. The consensus among participants was that guiding students, especially Indigenous students, in exploring and choosing suitable career pathways contributes significantly to their academic engagement and success.

In this regard, a study by Bargmann et al. (2022) found that the task effort of students and, to a lesser degree, their interest value was related to career decidedness and, indirectly, to the intention to drop out after the first year in higher education. Another study by Atuahene (2021) that analyzed major and career decision-making difficulties found that about 75% of students entering college are unsure of their major, and about 75–80% of college students change their major at least once.

Self-Development Needs

Recognizing and addressing students' self-development needs entails fostering personal growth, resilience, and a sense of purpose, promoting a well-rounded and empowered individual.

In Table 6, the statement “I will do better in school if I develop my self-confidence" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.69, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.32, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that they strongly endorse the importance of self-confidence development. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a high level of agreement with the statement. Furthermore, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.89) and regular students (SD = 0.78) are relatively moderate, suggesting a degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a common appreciation for self-confidence development, the standard deviations indicate that there is still some diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and methods of fostering self-confidence.

Conversely, the statement "I will do better in school if I know and understand myself better" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.88, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.56, ML), suggesting that, on average, both groups perceive a lower level of self-awareness and understanding compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptor "Much Like" (ML) indicates a moderate agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.04) and regular students (SD = 1.02) are relatively moderate, pointing to a degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a common acknowledgment of the importance of self-awareness, the standard deviations suggest that there is diversity of opinions within each group regarding the extent to which they feel they know and understand themselves better.

During the interview, the question was raised about how knowing and understanding oneself better contributes to academic success. The participants shared insights, pointing out that self-awareness plays a crucial role in academic achievement. Several respondents emphasized that a deeper understanding of oneself enables students to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences. This self-awareness, according to their responses, fosters effective study strategies tailored to individual needs, leading to improved preparation for tests and quizzes. Participants expressed the view that such self-knowledge also contributes to reduced stress during assessments, aligning with the data that highlights the importance of finding tests and quizzes less stressful for academic success. Overall, the consensus was that self-awareness enhances the learning experience, positively impacting Indigenous students' academic performance as well as that of regular students.

In this connection, a study by Fini et al. (2022) explored the social roots of self-development, from bodily to intellectual interactions. They proposed that interpersonal bodily exchanges in early life shape self-awareness and the ability to understand others’ intentions, and that abstract thinking emerges from the internalization of social dialogues.

Physical Health Needs

Understanding and catering to students' physical health needs involves promoting a healthy lifestyle, nutrition, exercise, and overall well-being to optimize their physical capabilities and ensure academic success.

It is presented in Table 7 that the statement "It is important to me personally for the school to provide someone to talk to about my health" holds the highest mean for indigenous students (Mean = 4.28, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.29, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that having someone to discuss health-related matters is of utmost importance. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.88) and regular students (SD = 0.98) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the significance of having someone to talk to about health. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

Meanwhile, the statement "It is important to me personally for the school to provide more sports programs after school" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.69, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.21, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that additional after-school sports programs are less crucial compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Much Like" (ML) and "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggest a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Furthermore, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.08) and regular students (SD = 1.04) are relatively high, indicating a considerable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify

a general agreement on the perceived importance of additional sports programs, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and desirability of expanding sports programs after school.

In the interview, participants acknowledged that providing information on preventing diseases and addressing physical health needs is crucial for overall well-being and academic performance, especially for Indigenous students. They highlighted that a healthy physical state positively influences cognitive functions, attendance, and participation in academic activities. According to their responses, promoting health awareness contributes to a more supportive learning environment, reducing absenteeism and enhancing students' ability to focus on their studies.

In addition, a study by Posadzki et al. (2020) reviewed the evidence on the effectiveness of exercise and physical activity for various health outcomes. They found that physical activity reduces mortality rates and improves quality of life, with minimal or no safety concerns. They also highlighted the need for more and better research on the optimal types, doses, and modes of physical activity.

Mental/Emotional Health Needs

Recognizing and supporting students' mental and emotional health needs involves creating a supportive environment, offering resources for stress management, and addressing emotional challenges to enhance overall well-being.

It is shown in Table 8 that the statement "It is important to me personally to gain the following information: How to deal with bad feelings?" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.88, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.32, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that obtaining information on coping with negative emotions is highly important. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) emphasize a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.78) and regular students (SD = 0.87) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the significance of gaining information on dealing with bad feelings. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

Meanwhile, the statement “It is important to me personally to gain the following information: How to deal with thoughts of hurting myself/suicide" has the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.20, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.89, ML), indicating a common perception within both groups that gaining information on handling such challenging thoughts is of relatively lower personal importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptor "Much Like" (ML) suggests a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.08) and regular students (SD = 1.10) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of obtaining information on dealing with self-harming or suicidal thoughts, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of this sensitive topic.

Participants in the interview stressed the significance of gaining information on dealing with bad feelings, building self-esteem, and setting goals in supporting the mental and emotional well-being of students, particularly Indigenous students. They noted that such knowledge equips students with essential coping mechanisms, fostering resilience and emotional balance. According to their insights, promoting positive self-perception and goal setting contributes to a healthier mindset, reducing stress and anxiety. Participants emphasized that supporting mental and emotional well-being is integral to creating a conducive learning environment, ultimately enhancing academic performance, especially for Indigenous students.

Relative to this, a report by the World Health Organization (2022) highlighted the urgent need to transform mental and emotional health care. The report reviewed the global situation of mental health, the challenges and opportunities for improving it, and the best practices and innovations for promoting well-being and preventing and treating mental disorders.

Sexual Needs

Acknowledging and addressing students' sexual needs involves providing comprehensive education, guidance, and support to foster a healthy understanding of relationships, consent, and sexuality.

It is shown in Table 9 that the statement "It is important to me personally to have factual information about sex" holds the highest weighted mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.56, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.36, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that having accurate information about sexual health is highly important. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.88) and regular students (SD = 0.86) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of having factual information about sex. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

On the other hand, the statement "It is important to me personally to have advice on love, courtship, and marriage" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.26, SL) and regular students (Mean = 3.11, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that obtaining advice on romantic relationships is of relatively lower personal importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptor "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggests a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.08) and regular students (SD = 1.08) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of obtaining advice on love, courtship, and marriage, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of guidance in this area.

During the interview, the question delving into the importance of addressing students' sexual needs, including establishing wholesome relationships and making healthy decisions about sexual involvement, was raised. The participants emphasized the significance of this aspect for both Indigenous and regular students. The majority of respondents acknowledged that addressing students' sexual needs is crucial for their overall well-being and development. They highlighted the impact of fostering healthy relationships and making informed decisions on students' mental and emotional health, which can subsequently influence their academic performance. The consensus among participants was that a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual needs contributes to creating a supportive and holistic learning environment, benefiting all students, irrespective of their background.

In this regard, a study by Oliva-Lozano et al. (2022) investigated the physical demands of sexual intercourse and how they vary depending on contextual variables. They found that sexual intercourse can elicit moderate intensity physical demands, but these depend on health status, intercourse position, activity duration, intercourse phase, and sex differences.

Family/Home Life Needs

Understanding and supporting students' family and home life needs involves recognizing the impact of their domestic environment on their education and providing necessary resources and assistance.)

In Table 10, The statement "It is important to me personally for the school to help me cope with family issues and problems" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.68, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.38, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that receiving assistance from the school in managing family-related challenges is highly important. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.89) and regular students (SD = 0.98) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of the school's support in coping with family issues. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

Meanwhile, the statement "It is important to me personally for the school to help me learn how to take care of myself when my parents/guardians are not home" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.39, SL) and regular students (Mean = 2.88, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that acquiring assistance from the school in developing self-care skills during parental absence is of relatively lower personal importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptor "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggests a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.12) and regular students (SD = 1.07) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of receiving school assistance in self-care, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of such guidance.

During the interview, the question regarding the impact of addressing family issues and problems on the overall well-being and academic success of students was discussed. Participants shared the perspective that addressing family issues is paramount for the holistic development of students. The majority of responses emphasized that a stable and supportive family environment positively influences students' mental and emotional well-being, creating a foundation for academic success. Participants pointed out that resolving family issues can alleviate stressors that might otherwise hinder a student's focus and performance in school. They also noted the importance of a strong support system, particularly for Indigenous students, whose cultural values often place significance on family connections. The consensus among participants was that addressing family issues contributes to creating a conducive atmosphere for learning, promoting the overall well-being and academic success of students, including Indigenous students.

A study by Wäsche et al. (2021) examined the influence of family health climate on individual health behavior. They defined family health climate as the shared perceptions and cognitions regarding a healthy lifestyle within families. They found that family interactions and family time, often realized through shared family meals, are key factors for families' health with regard to nutrition and physical activity.

Interpersonal Relationship Needs

Addressing students' interpersonal relationship needs involves promoting positive communication, conflict resolution, and social skills to cultivate healthy connections with peers, teachers, and others.

In Table 11, the statement "It is important to me personally to learn how to deal with unfair treatment because of economic status/race/sex/religion" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.58, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.36, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that acquiring skills to address discrimination based on economic status, race, sex, or religion is highly important. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.86) and regular students (SD = 0.89) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of acquiring skills to address unfair treatment. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "It is important to me personally to learn how to work out problems or conflicts with others" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.89, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.32, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that acquiring skills to resolve interpersonal conflicts is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Much Like" (ML) and "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggest a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.04) and regular students (SD = 1.11) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a

general agreement on the perceived importance of acquiring conflict resolution skills, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of this skill.

Throughout the interview, the question exploring the ways in which skills related to conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships with members of the opposite sex, and sharing personal problems contribute to a positive school environment and academic success was discussed. Participants conveyed a shared perspective that these skills play a crucial role in fostering a positive and inclusive school atmosphere. According to the responses, conflict resolution skills contribute to a harmonious social environment, reducing disruptions and creating a conducive space for learning. Interpersonal skills, especially in relations with members of the opposite sex, were deemed important for promoting a respectful and collaborative atmosphere, positively impacting overall well-being and academic performance. Additionally, participants emphasized that the ability to share personal problems builds trust and facilitates a supportive community, where students feel comfortable seeking assistance when needed. The consensus among participants suggested that these interpersonal skills contribute significantly to a positive school environment, thereby enhancing the overall well-being and academic success of students.

In connection to this, Zhang et al. (2021) explored the associations between undergraduates' class interpersonal relationships and mental health from a perspective of social network analysis. They classified the class interpersonal relationships into three types: common, passive, and active. They found that the common group had the highest level of mental health than the other two groups, and that moderate activity and popularity were positively associated with mental health.

Economics Needs

Recognizing and supporting students' economic needs involves addressing financial challenges, providing resources for economic literacy, and ensuring equal access to educational opportunities.

As presented in Table 12, the statement "I will do better in school if my family has enough money for the things we need like food, clothing, shelter, etc." holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.95, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.88, VML), indicating a strong and shared belief within both groups that financial stability and meeting basic needs significantly contribute to academic success. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.68) and regular students (SD = 0.86) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of family financial well-being for academic performance. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "I will do better in school if I know how to budget my finances wisely" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.23, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.18, ML), indicating a common perception within both groups that having skills in financial budgeting is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements in relation to academic success. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) and "Much Like" (ML) suggest a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.99) and regular students (SD = 1.01) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of financial budgeting skills, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of this particular skill for academic success.

During the interview, the impact of economic factors, specifically having enough money for basic needs and financial assistance, on a student's academic performance was discussed, with attention to both Indigenous and regular students. Participants highlighted the considerable influence of economic stability on students' ability to focus on their studies. The majority of responses indicated that financial security contributes to a positive academic environment, as students with their basic needs met can allocate more mental and emotional resources to their education.

Participants pointed out that economic challenges, including insufficient funds for necessities, can create stress and distractions, potentially hindering a student's academic performance. For Indigenous students, the impact may be exacerbated by unique cultural and socioeconomic factors. Financial assistance programs were identified as crucial for alleviating these challenges, with participants emphasizing the positive effects of targeted support on academic success.

In connection to this, Darko-Amasadu and Sika-Bright (2021) analyzed that a child's psychology is influenced by the moral and material support they receive from their parents, and this is shown in how well they function in school. In addition to lacking the resources that could help them succeed academically, students from large families also experienced low parental attention.

The Challenges of Junior High School Students

Entering junior high school comes with its set of challenges, representing a pivotal phase in students' academic pathways. From adapting to heightened academic demands to navigating evolving social dynamics, these challenges play a crucial role in shaping the educational journey of junior high school students. Recognizing and addressing these obstacles is fundamental for creating an environment that facilitates their academic and personal growth. These include self-regulation challenges, technological literacy and competency challenges, technological sufficiency challenges, and learning environment challenges.

Self-Regulation Challenges

Assisting students with self-regulation challenges entails identifying and addressing difficulties in managing time, emotions, and behavior to enhance their ability to navigate academic and personal responsibilities.

It is evident in Table 13 that the statement "I have poor time management skills" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.68, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.26, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that acknowledging deficiencies in time management skills is highly important. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.88) and regular students (SD = 0.92) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of recognizing poor time management skills. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "I lack the ability to control my own thoughts, emotions, and actions when doing school tasks" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.16, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.99, ML), indicating a common perception within both groups that admitting a lack of control over thoughts, emotions, and actions during school tasks is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptor "Much Like" (ML) suggests a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.05) and regular students (SD = 1.02) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of admitting a lack of control, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of this acknowledgment in the context of school tasks.

During the interview, challenges related to self-regulation, encompassing poor time management skills and difficulty controlling thoughts and emotions, were explored in terms of their impact on the academic performance of students. Participants indicated that these self-regulation challenges could have a significant negative effect on academic outcomes.

According to the majority of responses, poor time management skills contribute to procrastination and incomplete assignments, which may result in lower academic achievement. Difficulties in controlling thoughts and emotions were seen as potential sources of stress and distraction, further hindering effective learning and concentration. Participants noted that these challenges might be particularly impactful for Indigenous students, considering the potential intersection with cultural factors and unique stressors.

In relation to this, Warschburger et al. (2023) discussed self-regulation as a pivotal role in the concurrent and subsequent mental and physical health of an individual while Elhusseini et al. (2022) suggested that self-regulation interventions can lead to improved reading, writing, and math scores for children and adolescents

Technological Literacy and Competency Challenges

Addressing technological literacy and competency challenges requires identifying gaps in students' understanding of digital tools and platforms, providing targeted training to enhance their proficiency, and ensuring equitable access to technology resources for an inclusive learning experience. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for preparing students to navigate an increasingly digitized world and thrive in a technology-driven society.

It can be perceived in Table 14 that the statement "I lack the ability to effectively use technology to facilitate learning" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.32, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.21, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that acknowledging a deficiency in using technology for learning is highly important. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.88) and regular students (SD = 0.87) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of recognizing a lack of proficiency in using technology for learning. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "I resist learning technology" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.89, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.21, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that expressing resistance to learning technology is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Much Like" (ML) and "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggest a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.02) and regular students (SD = 1.02) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of resistance to learning technology, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of expressing resistance to incorporating technology into their learning.

During the interview, the question surrounding the role of technological literacy and competency in the academic success of students was explored, with a specific focus on potential challenges for Indigenous students. Participants consistently emphasized the increasing importance of technological skills in navigating contemporary educational landscapes. They noted that proficient technological literacy is a key factor in accessing educational resources, completing assignments, and participating in modern learning environments.

According to the majority of responses, students equipped with strong technological skills are better positioned to engage with online platforms, conduct effective research, and communicate digitally—all essential components of academic success. Conversely, participants highlighted that a lack of technological literacy can create obstacles, limiting students' access to information and hindering their ability to leverage digital tools for learning.

In considering the impact on Indigenous students, participants acknowledged potential disparities in access to technology and digital resources. Economic factors and remote geographical locations were identified as contributing factors to these discrepancies. The consensus among participants underscored the importance of addressing these challenges to ensure equitable opportunities for Indigenous students, recognizing that technological competency plays a vital role in their academic success.

The study of Falloon (2020) introduced an expanded view of teacher digital competence (TDC), moving beyond technical and literacies conceptualizations. It argues for more holistic and broader-based understandings that recognize the increasingly complex knowledge and skills young people need to function ethically, safely, and productively in diverse, digitally mediated environments. In addition, Kaminskienė et al. (2022) emphasized the need for lifelong learning among teachers. As technology continues to evolve, teachers must stay abreast of the latest advancements and adapt their instructional practices accordingly.

Student Isolation Challenges

Understanding and mitigating student isolation challenges involves creating inclusive environments, fostering a sense of belonging, and providing support systems to combat feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

It is shown in Table 15 that the statement "During face-to-face classes, I feel disinterested" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.56, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.21, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that feeling disinterested during in-person classes is highly prevalent. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.82) and regular students (SD = 0.89) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the commonality of feeling disinterested during face-to-face classes. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "During face-to-face classes, I feel alone and helpless" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 3.86, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.11, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that experiencing feelings of isolation and helplessness during in-person classes is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Much Like" (ML) and "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggest a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.04) and regular students (SD = 1.01) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of feeling alone and helpless during face-to-face classes, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of these emotions in the context of traditional classroom settings.

During the interview, the question exploring the impact of emotional disconnection, unease, and isolation during face-to-face classes on the overall well-being and academic performance of students was addressed. Participants consistently emphasized that these emotional challenges could have significant adverse effects on both well-being and academic success.

As per the majority of responses, feelings of emotional disconnection and isolation were identified as potential barriers to engagement and active participation in the learning process. Participants stressed the critical role of a supportive and inclusive environment in fostering positive mental and emotional well-being, factors integral to academic success. Emotional unease, left unaddressed, was viewed as a potential hindrance to effective learning and concentration during face-to-face classes.

In considering the impact on Indigenous students, participants acknowledged that cultural factors and unique challenges might magnify the consequences of emotional disconnection. Establishing a sense of community and cultural inclusivity was underscored as essential for addressing these emotional challenges, contributing to a supportive environment that positively influences both well-being and academic performance.

In conjunction to this, Barrot et al. (2021) findings highlighted that students' most significant obstacle in online learning was the suitability of their home learning environment. This suggests that creating an effective and conducive study space at home is crucial for academic success in remote learning settings. Interestingly, the study also found that students generally felt comfortable with the technological aspects of online learning, indicating that the digital literacy and competency of students may not be as limiting a factor as initially thought in the transition to online education.

Technological Sufficiency Challenges

Addressing students' technological sufficiency challenges involves ensuring access to necessary digital resources, providing technical support, and promoting digital literacy to enhance their learning experience.

In Table 16, the statement "I do not have Internet access" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.92, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.42, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that lacking Internet access is highly prevalent. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.87) and regular students (SD = 0.96) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the commonality of not having Internet access. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "I experience technical difficulties in completing my assignments" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.12, ML) and regular students (Mean = 3.11, SL), indicating a common perception within both groups that encountering technical difficulties while completing assignments is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Much Like" (ML) and "Somewhat Like" (SL) suggest a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.99) and regular students (SD = 1.06) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of experiencing technical difficulties, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of this particular challenge.

During the interview, the impact of access to learning technology and the experience of technological inequalities on the academic success of students, with consideration for both Indigenous and regular students, was explored. Participants consistently highlighted the crucial role that access to learning technology plays in today's educational landscape.

According to the majority of responses, sufficiency of access to learning technology is essential for students to effectively engage with modern educational resources, conduct research, and complete assignments. Participants emphasized that technological inequalities, such as disparities in access to devices and reliable internet connectivity, can create significant barriers to equal educational opportunities. Regarding Indigenous students, participants recognized that unique challenges, including economic factors and remote geographical locations, might exacerbate technological inequalities. The consensus among participants was that addressing these disparities is vital to ensuring equitable access to educational resources and opportunities for all students, regardless of their background.

In this regard, Closs et al. (2021) explored the impact of learning environments on students' learning experiences, considering physical, pedagogical, and psychosocial factors. The research highlighted that the challenges faced by students in online learning environments were diverse and ranged in terms of both type and severity. This suggests that addressing the multifaceted aspects of learning environments is crucial to enhancing the overall educational experience for students in online settings.

Learning Environment Challenges

Recognizing and addressing challenges within the learning environment involves creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere, adapting teaching methods to diverse learning styles, and addressing barriers to effective education.

As presented in Table 17, the statement "I have difficulties in selecting the best time and area for learning at home" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.68, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.28, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that facing challenges in choosing the optimal time and space for learning at home is highly prevalent. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.92) and regular students (SD = 0.96) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the commonality of difficulties in selecting the best learning environment at home. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "There is no place in our school for a study area" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 2.52, NML) and regular students (Mean = 2.08, NML), indicating a common perception within both groups that the absence of a dedicated study area in their school is of relatively lower concern compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Not Much Like" (NML) suggest a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.01) and regular students (SD = 1.02) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived lack of a study area, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of this particular aspect of their school environment.

Throughout the interview, the significance of a conducive learning environment, encompassing the impact of distractions at home and classroom conditions, on the academic performance of students was discussed. Participants consistently emphasized the critical role that the learning environment plays in shaping students' academic outcomes.

Majority of responses, a conducive learning environment is vital for promoting focus, concentration, and effective learning. Participants noted that distractions at home, such as noise, lack of privacy, or insufficient study spaces, can negatively impact students' ability to engage with their studies. Similarly, classroom conditions were identified as key factors influencing the overall learning experience.

Concerning Indigenous students, participants recognized that cultural factors and unique challenges may further influence the importance of a conducive learning environment. They emphasized the need for culturally inclusive spaces that respect the diverse backgrounds of students. Addressing distractions at home and optimizing classroom conditions were seen as essential for creating an environment that supports the academic success of both Indigenous and regular students.

The study of Cheung (2021) in shaping the future learning environments with smart elements: challenges and opportunities presented a conceptual framework introducing an expanded view of smart learning environments. It moves beyond prevailing technical and literacies conceptualizations, arguing for more holistic and broader-based understandings that recognize the increasingly complex knowledge and skills young people need to function ethically, safely and productively in diverse, digitally mediated environments.

The Goals of Junior High School Students

The goals of junior high school students encompass both academic and personal development. Academically, students aim to cultivate a strong foundation in various subjects, while simultaneously honing essential life skills, fostering social connections, and discovering their unique interests and passions.

In this study, we measure these in terms of mastery-approach goal, performance-avoidance goal, performance-approach goal, and mastery-avoidance goal.

Mastery-Approach Goal

Junior high school students pursuing a mastery-approach goal are driven by a desire for competence and understanding, focusing on mastering new skills and gaining knowledge to excel in their academic endeavors.

In Table 18, the statement "My goal is to learn as much as I can" holds a high mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.86, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.89, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that the primary objective is to maximize their learning. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.89) and regular students (SD = 0.78) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of their goal to learn as much as possible. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "I exert extra effort to learn the lessons presented in the class" holds a lower mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.36, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.78, VML), indicating a common perception within both groups that putting in additional effort to learn the lessons is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.96) and regular students (SD = 0.96) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of exerting extra effort to learn lessons. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

During the interview, the question about how students' goals related to learning as much as they can and fully understanding lesson contents contribute to their academic success was explored, with consideration for both Indigenous and regular students. Participants consistently emphasized the crucial role of students' learning goals in shaping their academic outcomes.

According to the majority of responses, students who set goals to learn as much as they can and fully understand lesson contents tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement and motivation. Participants noted that such goals drive a deeper level of comprehension and retention, contributing to improved academic performance. Setting ambitious learning goals was seen as fostering a proactive approach to education, influencing study habits and time management.

Concerning Indigenous students, participants acknowledged that cultural factors and unique challenges might influence the formulation of learning goals. They emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting diverse learning styles and preferences within Indigenous communities. The consensus among participants was that fostering a mindset of learning as much as possible and fully understanding lesson contents is universally beneficial, promoting academic success for both Indigenous and regular students.

Benita and Matos (2021) found that students' perceptions of teachers' autonomy support and control when presenting mastery goals affected their internalization of these goals and their behavioral engagement. Specifically, students' perceptions of teachers' autonomy support for mastery goals were related to their endorsement of mastery goals and behavioral engagement. These relations were mediated by students' autonomous reasons to pursue learning activities. On the other hand, perceptions of teachers' control predicted disengagement through controlled reasons for learning, but only at the within-classroom level.

Performance-Avoidance Goal

Students with a performance-avoidance goal in junior high seek to avoid demonstrating incompetence and strive to prevent failure, often driven by a fear of negative evaluation, leading them to prioritize not making mistakes over actively pursuing success.

It is shown in Table 19 that the statement "My goal is to avoid producing worse work than other students" holds a relatively high mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.36, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.58, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that aspiring to avoid producing lower-quality work compared to their peers is of some importance. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.96) and regular students (SD = 0.89) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the importance of this goal. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "I am doing my best to avoid getting worse test scores than other students in my class" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.20, ML) and regular students (Mean = 4.24, VML), indicating a common perception within both groups that avoiding lower test scores compared to classmates is of relatively lower importance compared to other survey statements. The verbal descriptors "Much Like" (ML) and "Very

Much Like" (VML) suggest a moderate to high level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.03) and regular students (SD = 0.99) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. While the means signify a general agreement on the perceived importance of avoiding lower test scores, the higher standard deviations suggest a diversity of opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of this particular academic concern.

During the interview, the impact of students' goals to avoid producing worse work or getting worse grades compared to their peers on their academic performance was discussed. Participants shared insights into how these particular goals can influence students' learning experiences and outcomes.

As per the majority of responses, students who set goals primarily focused on avoiding inferior work or grades compared to their peers may experience heightened stress and pressure. Participants noted that this goal orientation may lead to a fear of failure, potentially hindering intrinsic motivation and the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The emphasis on competition rather than intrinsic curiosity was seen as a potential barrier to meaningful learning experiences.

Concerning Indigenous students, participants recognized that cultural factors and unique challenges may intersect with this goal orientation. They emphasized the importance of fostering a positive, supportive learning environment that encourages growth and collaboration rather than fostering a purely competitive mindset. The consensus among participants was that a shift toward more positive and intrinsic learning goals could positively impact the academic performance of both Indigenous and regular students.

In the findings of Quintero and Wang (2023) whether the socioeconomic achievement gap in academically at-risk students varied as a function of students' perceived classroom goal structures, it hypothesized that low socioeconomic status (SES) students would be more susceptible to the various classroom goal structures. Specifically, high levels of mastery classroom goal structure would mitigate the negative effects of low family SES on achievement development among low-achieving students, whereas high levels of both performance-approach and performance-avoidance goal structures would exacerbate the negative effects of low family SES on achievement development among low-achieving students.

Performance-Approach Goal

Junior high school students adopting a performance-approach goal are motivated by a desire to outperform their peers and attain positive evaluations, emphasizing the attainment of success and recognition as key objectives in their academic pursuits.

The statement "My goal is to behave well when compared to other students" holds the highest mean for indigenous students (Mean = 4.36, VML), indicating a shared perception within this group that aspiring to exhibit good behavior compared to their peers is of some importance. The verbal descriptor "Very Much Like" (VML) underscores a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviation for indigenous students (SD = 0.96) is relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within this group regarding the importance of this behavioral goal. The narrow spread of values around the mean indicates a consensus among indigenous students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

Meanwhile, the statement "I am doing my best to attain higher grades when compared to my classmates" holds the highest mean for regular students (Mean = 4.48, VML), indicating a shared perception within this group that exerting effort to achieve higher grades compared to their peers is of some importance. The verbal descriptor "Very Much Like" (VML) underscores a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviation for regular students (SD = 0.88) is relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within this group regarding the importance of this academic goal. The narrow spread of values around the mean indicates a consensus among regular students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

On the other hand, the statement "My goal is to produce better work than other students" holds the lowest mean for indigenous students (Mean = 3.88, ML), indicating a common perception within this group that aspiring to produce higher-quality work compared to their peers is of relatively lower importance. The verbal descriptor "Much Like" (ML) suggests a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviation for indigenous students (SD = 1.02) is relatively high, suggesting a notable degree of variability in responses within this group. While the mean signifies a general agreement on the perceived lower importance of producing better work, the higher standard deviation suggests a diversity of opinions within the indigenous student group regarding the significance and personal importance of this particular goal.

Further, the statement "I try hard to behave well when compared to my classmates" holds the lowest mean for regular students (Mean = 3.89, ML), indicating a common perception within this group that putting in effort to behave well compared to their peers is of relatively lower importance. The verbal descriptor "Much Like" (ML) suggests a moderate level of agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviation for regular students (SD = 1.02) is relatively high, suggesting a notable degree of variability in responses within this group. While the mean signifies a general agreement on the perceived lower importance of trying hard to behave well, the higher standard deviation suggests a diversity of opinions within the regular student group regarding the significance and personal importance of this particular goal.

Throughout the interview, the question of how students' goals to behave well, produce better work, and attain higher grades compared to their classmates influence their academic success was explored, with attention to potential variations between Indigenous and regular students. Participants shared insights into the impact of these particular goals on students' learning experiences and outcomes.

As per the majority of responses, students who set goals to behave well, produce high-quality work, and achieve higher grades often exhibit positive learning behaviors. Participants noted that such goal orientations can foster a strong work ethic, intrinsic motivation, and a commitment to continuous improvement. The emphasis on personal growth and achievement was seen as contributing to a more positive and proactive approach to academics.

Concerning Indigenous students, participants recognized that cultural factors and unique challenges may influence the formulation of these goals. They emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive environment that supports positive goal orientations. The consensus among participants was that the positive impact of goals related to behavior, work quality, and grades can be universally beneficial, promoting academic success for both Indigenous and regular students.

In relation to this, Senko and Dawson (2017) found that the operationalization of performance-approach goals was an important moderator of the associations between different performance-approach goals and several educational outcomes. The study found that both normative and appearance-based performance-approach goals were positively correlated with school grades.

Mastery-Avoidance Goal

Students with a mastery-avoidance goal in junior high are focused on avoiding situations that might reveal their lack of competence, with their primary aim being to prevent the perception of failure and incompetence rather than actively seeking mastery and understanding.

Table 21. The Goals of Junior High School Students in terms of Mastery-Avoidance

Table 21 shows that the statement "I try to avoid partially understanding the subject" holds the highest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 4.36, VML) and regular students (Mean = 4.52, VML), indicating a shared perception within both groups that actively avoiding incomplete comprehension of subjects is highly important. The verbal descriptors "Very Much Like" (VML) underscore a strong agreement with the statement. Additionally, the standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 0.88) and regular students (SD = 0.89) are relatively low, suggesting a higher level of agreement and consistency within each group regarding the significance of avoiding partial understanding of academic subjects. The narrow spread of values around the means indicates a consensus among students, with minimal variability in their opinions.

The statement "My goal is to avoid learning less than what it should be" holds the lowest mean for both indigenous students (Mean = 2.12, NML) and regular students (Mean = 4.08, ML), indicating a significant disparity in the perceived importance of this goal between the two groups. For indigenous students, the verbal descriptor "Not Much Like" (NML) suggests a relatively low level of agreement with the statement, while regular students, with a mean of 4.08 and a descriptor of "Much Like" (ML), indicate a higher level of agreement. The standard deviations for both indigenous students (SD = 1.08) and regular students (SD = 1.01) are relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in responses within each group. This variability suggests differing opinions within each group regarding the significance and personal importance of the goal of avoiding learning less than what it should be. In contrast, regular students express a higher level of agreement with the importance of this goal, as indicated by the higher mean and the descriptor "Much Like." The higher standard deviations suggest diverse opinions within each group about the significance of this particular academic goal.

During the interview, the impact of students' goals to avoid learning less than their capability and understanding less of the subject matter on their academic success was discussed, with consideration for potential differences between Indigenous and regular students. Participants shared insights into how these particular goals influence students' learning experiences and outcomes.

As per the majority of responses, students who set goals to avoid learning less than their capability and understanding less of the subject matter tend to exhibit a proactive and engaged approach to their studies. Participants noted that such goal orientations can drive intrinsic motivation, a commitment to thorough understanding, and a pursuit of excellence. The emphasis on personal growth and mastery of the material was seen as contributing to a positive and self-driven learning experience.

Concerning Indigenous students, participants recognized that cultural factors and unique challenges may intersect with these goals. They emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting diverse learning styles within Indigenous communities, tailoring educational approaches to individual needs, and creating an inclusive environment that supports positive goal orientations. The consensus among participants was that the impact of goals related to avoiding learning less than one's capability and understanding less of the subject matter can be universally beneficial, promoting academic success for both Indigenous and regular students.

King and Mendoza (2020) found that mastery-approach, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goals were contagious among classmates, but mastery-avoidance goals were not. They further mentioned that young adults perceived the mastery-approach goal to be more attainable and therefore felt less pressure, enjoyed the task more, and performed better with it, whereas older adults showed this pattern with the mastery-avoidance goal.

The Relationship between Expressed Needs and the Achievement Goals of Junior High School Students

Table 22 exhibits the results of the correlation analysis which was done to determine if significant relationship existed between the junior high school students' expressed needs and their achievement goals.

Table 22. Results of the Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Expressed Needs and the Goals of Junior High School Students

Expressed Needs	Achievement Goals			
	Mastery-approach	Performance-avoidance	Performance-approach	Mastery-avoidance

academic skills	0.476** (0.003)	0.369** (0.008)	0.686** (0.000)	0.520** (0.001)
personal	0.799** (0.000)	0.699** (0.000)	0.802** (0.000)	0.612** (0.000)
career and college needs	0.639** (0.000)	0.599** (0.000)	0.712** (0.000)	0.608** (0.000)
self-development	0.714** (0.000)	0.711** (0.000)	0.608** (0.000)	0.603** (0.000)
physical health	0.692** (0.000)	0.721** (0.000)	0.688** (0.000)	0.518** (0.001)
mental/emotional health	0.477** (0.003)	0.406** (0.003)	0.714** (0.000)	0.709** (0.000)
sexual	0.372** (0.008)	0.515** (0.001)	0.452** (0.003)	0.380** (0.008)
family/home life	0.832** (0.000)	0.806** (0.000)	0.791** (0.000)	0.748** (0.000)
interpersonal relationship	0.717** (0.000)	0.606** (0.000)	0.748** (0.000)	0.639** (0.000)
economics	0.811** (0.000)	0.803** (0.000)	0.702** (0.000)	0.788** (0.000)

Legend: ** = Highly Significant ($p \leq 0.01$)

Numbers in the upper entry are Correlation Values (r-values)

Numbers in the lower entry (enclosed in parentheses) are Probability Values (p-values)

It can be noticed from the table that highly significant relationship existed between the junior high school students' expressed needs in terms of academic skills, personal, career and college needs, self-development, physical health, mental/emotional health, sexual, family/home life, interpersonal relationship, and economics and their achievement goals in terms of mastery-approach, performance-avoidance, performance-approach, and mastery-avoidance goals. This highly significant relationship was brought about by the fact that the computed probability values for these variables that ranged from 0.008 to 0.000 are less than the 0.01 significance level. Further perusal of the tabulated results showed that direct relationship existed between the aforementioned variables as manifested by the positive sign of the computed correlation values that ranged from 0.369 to 0.832.

These findings suggest that as the level of junior high school students' expressed needs increases, the level of their achievement goals also increases. This may due to the fact that the challenges that they encountered in life served as inspirations for them to strive hard and attain their dreams in the future. Additionally, this means that they firmly believed that when they become successful in their career, they will no longer experience all those hardships that they faced during their younger ages.

In accordance with the present findings, the study of Maleskii (2022) also found that the expressed needs and financial and social challenges have a significant impact on the academic goals and performance of high school students. This study can provide further insights for scholarship bodies, organizations, and education sectors on how to pay attention to such factors that affect students' goals and achievement. Further, the researcher recommended that similar studies may be conducted to investigate the effect of these factors on similar contexts while looking at the use of qualitative research design.

In the conducted interview, the students were asked about the influence of their expressed needs on their achievement goals. The majority of the students replied that they have a lot of needs since they belong to the "low-income families", but they did not consider this as hindrance for them to achieve their goals in life. Instead, they further stated that they considered "being poor" as a challenge to become more determined and motivated to fulfill their ambitions in life and attain their dreams.

The Relationship between Challenges and the Goals of Junior High School Students

Table 23 displays the results of the correlation analysis which was performed to determine if significant relationship existed between the junior high school students' challenges and their achievement goals.

Table 23. Results of the Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Challenges and the Goals of Junior High School Students

Challenges	Goals			
	Mastery-approach	Performance-avoidance	Performance-approach	Mastery-avoidance
Self-regulation	0.709** (0.000)	0.674** (0.000)	0.708** (0.000)	0.755** (0.000)
Technological literacy and competency	0.800** (0.000)	0.809** (0.000)	0.713** (0.000)	0.633** (0.000)
Student isolation	0.812** (0.000)	0.792** (0.000)	0.402** (0.008)	0.745** (0.000)
Technological sufficiency	0.766** (0.000)	0.694** (0.000)	0.758** (0.000)	0.778** (0.000)
Learning environment	0.657** (0.000)	0.699** (0.000)	0.758** (0.000)	0.803** (0.000)

Legend: ** = Highly Significant ($p \leq 0.01$)

Numbers in the upper entry are Correlation Values (r-values)

Numbers in the lower entry (enclosed in parentheses) are Probability Values (p-values)

It can be noticed from the table that highly significant relationship existed between the junior high school students' challenges in terms of self-regulation, technological literacy and competency, student isolation, technological sufficiency and learning environment and their achievement goals in terms of mastery-approach, performance-avoidance, performance-approach, and mastery-avoidance goals. This highly significant relationship is manifested by the computed probability values for these variables that ranged from 0.008 to 0.000 which are smaller than the 0.01 level of significance. Further examination of the summarized findings revealed that direct relationship existed between the aforementioned variables as implied by the positive sign of the computed correlation values that ranged from 0.402 to 0.812.

These results signify that as the level of junior high school students' challenges increases, the level of their achievement goals also increases. This indicates that challenges made the junior high school students more serious and directed to make their lives better in the future. Moreover, they felt that in obtaining their goals they would be able to have the chance of getting away from experiencing the same challenges in the future.

In conjunction with the findings of the present study, the results of research conducted by Farah (2021) revealed that during high school and college days many challenges are seen to be obstacles for the students to complete their educational path and obtaining educational certificates. Consequently, students exhibited motivation and more interest to attain the product of formal education, with the assistance of their families, communities and peers. Social, economic and cultural forces influence learning and thus academic achievement.

In the conducted interview, the students were asked about the effect of the challenges that they experienced in attaining their goals in life. Most of the students answered that challenges are normal especially when they do not have enough resources to support their needs in schooling. However, they said that these challenges made them stronger to strive hard to achieve their goals and dreams in life.

Findings

This study determined the relationship between the expressed needs and challenges and the goals of students in junior high schools in Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan during the School Year 2023 – 2024.

Using the procedures described in the preceding chapter, the answers to the problems raised in this study were ascertained and summarized as follows: Findings revealed that the expressed needs of both indigenous and regular junior high school student groups in the areas of economics and career and college need is high. Additionally, indigenous group expressed needs in academic skills, self-development, mental/emotional health, and interpersonal relationship is high. Indigenous group is consistent of having higher expressed needs as compared to regular students.

Likewise, the indigenous group of respondents encountered more challenges as compared the regular group of respondents.

However, both groups of respondents had higher achievement goals.

Highly significant relationship existed between the junior high school students' expressed needs in terms of academic skills, personal, career and college needs, self-development, physical health, mental/emotional health, sexual, family/home life, interpersonal relationship, and economics and their achievement goals in terms of mastery-approach, performance-avoidance, performance-approach, and mastery-avoidance goals.

Similarly, highly significant relationship existed between the junior high school students' challenges in terms of self-regulation, technological literacy and competency, student isolation, technological sufficiency and learning environment and their achievement goals in terms of mastery-approach, performance-avoidance, performance-approach, and mastery-avoidance goals.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, these conclusions were drawn: Indigenous and regular students' expressed needs in terms of economics is high.

Indigenous students experienced more challenges than the regular ones.

Both indigenous and regular students showed higher achievement goals in life.

The expressed needs and challenges of junior high school students have a significant influence on their achievement goals.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. The school may implement a program of activities crafted from the results of the study.
2. The school may give more attention to indigenous students to help or assist them in addressing their needs and challenges in life.
3. Future researchers may compare the assessments of the indigenous and regular students as regards their expressed needs, challenges, and goals. Moreover, further research along this line could be conducted. The same study may be conducted with the application of qualitative research design to further validate the results of the resent study.

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