

Alianna Panganiban  
Professor Spryszynski  
IS 375-102  
5/8/2024

## **1. Abstract**

This paper is about the qualitative study on the analysis of undergraduate students who travel to New Jersey Institute of Technology campus for academic commitments and the effect it has on study habits. There are unexpected challenges that arise that can cause schedule conflicts such as traffic congestion, transportation delays, or weather conditions. As a result there is a limited amount of time that is allocated for studying and can disrupt their ability to focus on academics. I have conducted semi-structured interviews with four participants who are different year levels and majors. They have shared detailed responses about their experiences of traveling to campus. They've revealed strategies or resources which helped them be the most productive with their study time or maintain a balanced school work-life. Utilizing coding cycling methods and visualization tools, like affinity diagrams, empathy maps, and storyboards to ensure quality in the analysis. This research is designed to understand what undergraduate students undergo in terms of traveling to campus and studying on a day to day basis.

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Rationale**

By examining the demographic of undergraduate students in NJIT, we are able to gain a better understanding of the traveling difficulties some students face. While those who live on campus have the convenience of walking to their nearby academic buildings, off campus students are limited with their time there in order for them to go home. NJIT has a majority-commuter population with 79% commuting to campus. New Jersey has a significant amount of resources available for transportation whether it be driving on the roadway, or catching a bus/train.

The location of where their home is a factor that can have an impact on academic performance. Students have their personalized space with comfortable seating and a sense of security which can provide a place to concentrate. On the

other hand, without a physical separation between study and leisure spaces can make it difficult to mentally switch to lock in for study mode. Distractions like television, chores, or your own bed can hinder the process of learning. Answering the research questions: 1) "How does the distance from home to NJIT campus affect the time for a college student to study?" 2) "Are there differences in study habits and academic outcomes between students who live on-campus versus those who commute from off-campus residences?" This study also gained insights to the development of existing NJIT campus resources that meet the needs of all students to make it a supportive learning environment.

## **2.2 Participants and participant recruitment**

The participants were recruited from random sampling for those in different school years who were interested in being interviewed for this topic. They were selected from NJIT's Filipino organization's Discord and residents in the University Center. This approach ensures generalization of the findings because the population had an equal chance of being selected. The first participant is a biomedical engineering student who lives in the campus dorms. The second participant is a mechanical engineering student and the third participant is a Information Technology major who lives in off campus student apartments. The fourth participant is a Cyberpsychology major who commutes to campus by driving. The diverse recruitment process helps ensure a range of different perspectives to represent various academic backgrounds.

## **2.3 Data collection**

The collection method for data was the conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants. There was an interview protocol that was made to outline the main objectives of the research study about traveling to campus and its impact on studying. It included informed consent for the purpose of the study and confidentiality measures. The questionnaire consisted of open ended questions that are in relation to our research questions so they can be answered with detailed responses. The first few questions are general to ease the interviewer and interviewee into the conversation. For example questions like, "How far away is your commute from NJIT campus?" "What is your form of transportation?" "How

often do you find a place and study on campus?" provides us a foundation to understand the potential differences in their college experiences. This also serves as collecting background information in order to keep it relevant to the topic. As the interview progressed the questions shifted to more specific questions about the topic. Questions that are straight to the point such as, "What noticeable differences are there in study habits between students who live within walking distance of campus and those who commute from farther away?" "How do you handle situations where commuting schedules conflicts with academic obligations such as exams, group projects, or office hours?" gives depth in exploring the relationship between traveling to campus and its impact on study schedules. Read Figure 1 for the full interview protocol.

I recorded the data on audio files from the voice memos app on an Apple device. The audio files were transcribed utilizing the otter.ai software. This process made it possible for the primary sources of data to be analyzed efficiently.

## **2.4 Data analysis methods**

I analyzed the data in a systematic framework by coding the interviews through a series of different coding cycles. This identified the common patterns in each participant's responses. During the first cycle, reading through the transcripts line by line was essential to conceptualize the raw data. During the phase, organizing the data by highlighting and creating analytical memos is the most efficient way to code. According to *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, analytic memos is the transitional process from coding to a formal write up of the study. This helps document researcher interpretations that emerge from the analysis process. Utilizing Descriptive and Process coding methods, it allows to summarize and recognize observable activity. It is important to split the data into meaningful units to strengthen the understanding of the topic and research questions.

The next coding cycle I selected new coding methods to better enhance the analysis and direction of the study. It was necessary to use Pattern/Focused coding to analyze patterns and place recurring themes into categories. This application was iterative, but helped include additional codes and refined the

existing ones. I created a code book with descriptions and code frequency that reported themes/subthemes which captured the important aspects of the interviews. The affinity diagram and empathy map served as a visualization tool to sort out the code.

### **3. Analysis**

Going through the column lists of codes, there is a shifted link between the raw data, preliminary codes, and the finalized code. I was able to categorize the similarities in the code for analysis according to the topics that were addressed. The participants all emphasized the importance of time management, productivity, and resources. There are common challenges that were mentioned like transportation delays and weather conditions. Traffic congestion is one of the difficulties and driving can be a strenuous task in itself. It goes in depth about choice of living arrangements and the factors that influence the daily commuting routine.

Participants choose to study in spaces at academic buildings, including the library, Central King Building, and GITC. They create a game plan that outlines their tasks at the start of their study sessions. Turning off distractions such as phones, electronic devices, and avoiding the bed to optimize study time. They take advantage of tutoring services and study groups for academic support. A notable observation was that those who live on campus tend to study more due to easier access to resources. Individuals who live farther away tend to allocate less time due to longer commutes.

The participants also discuss strategies to manage stress and fatigue during the college career. Techniques to finding a mental reset like getting coffee or food runs with friends, going to the gym, or enough sleep to avoid burnout. A common improvement they would like to see in resources to accommodate the needs of students who travel to campus is more study spaces and longer hours of the buildings. This makes for a supportive learning environment that is requested from the students.

Figure 1 Affinity Diagram



### 1) Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows qualitative research that explores an undergraduate NJIT student who has to travel to get their academic responsibilities done on campus and how it affects aspects of their study habits. Participants detailed their responses in a semi-structured interview of navigating challenges like transportation methods, study time conflicts, and maintaining a balance in work life. It inquires about the perspectives of managing stress, energy levels, and avoiding burnout to ensure maximized productivity amidst academic demands. This also gathered information about efforts in enhanced resources like more study spaces and longer night hours for academic buildings. This research showcases the traveling routine concerning on and off campus students and their optimized designated time to study.

## Figure 2 Interview Protocol

Team Name: "Ahh shi, here we go again"

Consent:

*My name is [INTERVIEWER NAME]. I'm here with [].*

*If at any time you feel uncomfortable please say so, I will stop the interview immediately. I will be recording this interview.*

*Would you like to continue?*

### Research Questions

- How does the distance from home to NJIT campus affect the time for a college student to study?
  - Are there differences in study habits and academic outcomes between students who live on-campus versus those who commute from off-campus residences?
  - How does the availability of study spaces on campus versus at home affect study time allocation for students with varying commuting distances?
1. Do you live on campus or off campus?
  2. How far away is your commute from NJIT campus?
  3. How long is your commute to NJIT campus?
  4. What is your form of transportation?
  5. Have you ever considered alternative transportation options or living arrangements to optimize your commuting experience?
  6. What factors influenced your decision to commute rather than live on campus? (or vice versa)
  7. Can you describe your daily commute routine?
  8. How do factors such as traffic congestion, public transportation delays, or weather conditions impact a college student's study schedule when commuting?
  9. How do you navigate any challenges or delays that may arise during your commute to campus?
  10. What safety measures are in place for commuters traveling to and from campus, especially during late hours?
  11. How many hours are you usually on campus on a day to day basis?

12. How does the cost of commuting (e.g., gas, public transit fares) influence your overall budget as a college student?
13. Have you ever experienced any safety concerns or incidents while commuting to or from campus, and how were they addressed?
14. How do college students who travel to campus navigate saving time and money on their transportation choices?
15. What role do campus amenities play in supporting college students? (scooters, bike racks, designated parking spaces, or light rail)
16. How often do you find a place and study on campus? (library, available seating)
17. How much of that time spent on campus do you do academic responsibilities?
18. How much of that time spent on campus do you do miscellaneous activities?
19. Do you use the study rooms on campus in the NJIT buildings?
20. Do you meet up with other students in order to study?
21. What resources do you use on campus to offer academic support, such as tutoring services or writing centers?
22. How do you ensure a smooth and productive start to your study sessions?
23. How does the length of your commute impact your daily schedule and time management?
24. How do you balance the time spent traveling to campus with other responsibilities, such as work or family obligations?
25. How do college students prioritize their study time during their commute in comparison to other activities, such as socializing or leisure activities?
26. How do you perceive the social dynamics and interactions among commuters?
27. Are there any strategies you employ to make the most of your commute time, such as listening to podcasts or reviewing class materials?
28. Do individuals who live farther from campus tend to allocate less time for studying compared to those who live nearby?
29. What noticeable differences are there in study habits between students who live within walking distance of campus and those who commute from farther away?
30. How do you handle situations where your commuting schedule conflicts with academic obligations such as exams, group projects, or office hours?
31. How does commuting affect your ability to participate in extracurricular activities or social events on campus?
32. How do you stay connected with classmates and peers outside of class hours, especially if you live off campus?

33. How do you stay connected with professors outside of class time, especially when you may have a limited availability for in-person interactions?
34. What role do peer support networks, carpooling, and study groups play in helping students on campus stay motivated and focused on their studies?
35. What role do digital technologies and mobile applications play in helping college students maximize their study time during their travel to campus?
36. Have you noticed any differences in your study routine or academic performance during different seasons or weather conditions that impact your commute?
37. How do you deal with the stress of traveling to campus that can influence your ability to focus or study?
38. How do you manage fatigue or exhaustion during traveling and how does it affect your academic performance ?
39. How do college students who commute manage their energy levels and avoid burnout while juggling academic demands and travel time?
40. How do you prioritize self-care and well-being amidst the demands of commuting and studying?
41. Do you find that your time it takes to travel on campus provides a valuable opportunity for reflection or mental preparation before or after classes?
42. How do you manage your belongings, such as textbooks, laptops, or study materials to ensure they remain safe and accessible?
43. Are there specific time management techniques or productivity hacks that college students who commute find particularly effective in optimizing their study time?
44. Are there differences that you have noticed in types of courses or majors chosen by college students who commute compared to those who live on campus, and how do these choices affect their study habits?
45. How do students who commute adjust their study routines during breaks or holidays when commuting schedules may differ?
46. Can you share any strategies or techniques you use to maintain motivation and focus on your academic goals despite the challenges of commuting?
47. How do you prioritize self-improvement and personal development goals while balancing the demands of commuting and academic coursework?
48. Can you discuss any long-term effects or implications of traveling to campus on your academic trajectory or personal development?
49. What improvements would you like to see to enhance your overall academic experience on campus?



