
CenRaPS Journal of Social Sciences



International Indexed & Refereed

ISSN: 2687-2226 (Online)

<http://journal.cenraps.org/>



Original Article

<https://doi.org/10.46291/cenraps.v2i3.33>

Phenomenological Study of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars

Lolita A. Dulay*

Elvira Sumbalan**

*Email: lolitadulay@gmail.com

**Email: ebsumbalan@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study explored the lived experiences of the Bukidnon State University Graduate student scholars in the Mindanao Regions during the School Year 2014-2020. The study delved into the scholars' experiences in the six related factors, namely: students, BukSU faculty, BukSU administration, DepEd administration, work, and family.

A phenomenological qualitative research design was employed. Twelve graduate student scholars were the participants of the study. The triangulation approach employing interviews, focus group discussions, and document review in the gathering of data assured the validity of the findings. Participants' narratives on their lived experiences underwent transcriptions and analysis using Colaizzi's method (1978).

There were six (6) themes that surfaced-out from the lived experiences of the graduate student scholars, namely: *Challenging yet, fulfilling Student-Learning Experiences; Satisfying Learning Experience with Well-rounded graduate faculty; Heart-warming learning experience with the BukSU Administration; Impressive support from the DepEd Administration; Pressured learning experience; and encouraging support system.* A model showcasing the meaningful experiences of the graduate scholars and the attributes of how these scholars succeed in the pursuit of a graduate degree came out from these emerging themes.

Key Words:

Globalization, Internationalization, Phenomenological, Graduate Student, Scholars.

1. Introduction

The remarkable globally competent scheme of Bukidnon State University (BukSU) in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) in granting scholarship program extended to classroom teachers and school administrators paved the way among DepEd educators' career advancement and equal opportunity to succeed and improve quality of life. The Scholarship grant of BukSU creates more quality educators practicing their profession with excellent vision, mission, and goals to deliver quality education in internationalization since the university has the excellent standards and capability to produce high-caliber educators through their outstanding Doctor of Education professors. It helps strengthens educator's foundations in educational administration suited, enhanced, more equipped, innovative, humble, and ready to accept responsibilities and higher positions in their stations embodying the ideals and aspirations of the university.

The scholarship transformed graduate students holistically and become globally competent educators, an open opportunity for the scholars' professional growth and development. Earning a master's degree in the institution added dimension in their lives and pushed them to embrace humility. The impact of the BukSU research standard and the quality education has already transferred and imparted by the scholars to their beneficiaries in the field in DepEd, being more passionate in teaching the learners. As a result, globally competent school administrators have the expertise in handling schools and become rooted with virtue and dedication. Their graduate degree leads to an open door for an immediate job promotion after graduation thus receiving bigger salaries that elevate their lives and providing a better and brighter future for their respective families, as well.

However, even beyond these provisions, it is observed and confirmed from the shared experiences of some graduate scholars, 5 to 10 percent of them were not able to graduate at the prescribed time at the end of the term per school year. Other scholars ended up to stage 3 only. They were not able to comply with the basic requirements of submitting the thesis books as an essential requirement for graduation. They encountered a lot of challenges, problems, and barriers that hindered them from finishing their degree programs. They rationalized that the program has a very high academic standard that they were not able to meet the grade requirements to qualify for the next semester. Many said they failed the comprehensive exam and advised to retake the subject; hence, they did not proceed to thesis writing. Others claimed that they could not stand to be away from their families and love ones, so they quit. Some also mentioned that their allowances were not enough to finance their studies and many

requirements. DepEd teachers preferred to pay back to their schools than continuing their scholarship grants.

2. The Framework of the Study

These study anchors on different theories and concepts about individuals' success and failures in accomplishing tasks. The first theory is from Carl Rogers (1980), who states that for a person to achieve self-fulfillment, he or she must be in a state of congruence and have direction. Self-fulfillment is an indicator of a persons' "ideal self" of who they would like to be. Thus, graduate students pursue their studies because they could be promoted as school principals and administrators, master teachers, supervisors, and directors in the future. They all aim for personal growth and self-actualization and direction.

The theory emphasized that success and failures are due to the involvement of a lot of people in the process. In the case of the DepEd scholar, these might include themselves, their professors, the administrations, as well as their present work and families. These people might have a wide range of roles to deliver all kinds of support and guidance for the best performance of their studies. However, they could be the barriers that may hinder them from achieving their success.

Further, another concept that suffices the current research endeavor is on Bandura's (1994) on self-efficacy theory of learning. The theory emphasized that an individual can accomplish something and can be successful in completing a given task or activity if they try to. Thus, the BukSU- DepEd scholars should be prepared, equipped with advanced knowledge, skills, pedagogies, and learning to stay relevant and connected to their studies.

Complying in whatever tasks required for the course enables them to meet and successfully finish the degree despite the challenges and difficulty in completing the given task. They feel they are competent to accomplish particular tasks. A skilled individual has a strong sense of self-efficacy.

In the same manner, the Behavioral Management Theory of Donelson (2011), claimed that personal commitment sits side by side with one's performance to whatever endeavor he/she may engage in. It has in response the need to account for his/her behavior and motivation towards excellent work. Its further states that a superb performance must not only show a worker's current performance level but also account for areas that can expose their full potential. Furthermore, faculty or professors-related factors could also be the hindrance to student's success. Lack of support and supervision, such as guidance and mentoring in the graduate program could result to increase students' retention rate and a decrease in graduation rates

among BukSU DepEd scholars. Jarvis' (2009) theory of lifelong learning denotes the importance of learning throughout the lifespan. Thus, the faculty shares advanced pedagogical teaching and learning with students. Graduate students doing research practiced the process of learning throughout their lifespan. They also highlight their reflections on learning from the faculty/professor in the graduate program. The role of the professors in the graduate studies is indeed very significant in the lives of the graduate students. The faculty's level of performance on their functions and responsibilities in school measures the achievement of their students' graduation and retention rates. The BukSU DepEd scholars reflect the quality of their professors or the graduate school faculty.

Likewise, the BukSU administration abides with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as the key leader of the Philippine higher education system. They work in partnership with other major higher education stakeholders in building the country's human capital and in the development of a Filipino nation. Article XIV, Section 2, establishes and maintain a system of scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives, available to deserving students both in public and private schools.

However, the 12-month timeframe to complete the rigorous requirements in the graduate degree program hinders students to finish their degree. Arthur et al. argued that Higher Education Institutions, schools, and local authorities should provide academic and professional support. DepEd Administration provides full support to students by subsidizing their monthly salary even on study leave. The gesture could have an impact on student success in finishing the degree. However, students need to spend more time following up their request letters for approval with regards to asking permission for study leave and approval to conduct research. Consequently, the time duration could delay students' target to finish. Also, spending more time to follow-up on their requests could delay the submission of the requirements needed to conduct their study. Likewise, the students' work assignments and designations in DepEd could obstruct their focus from continuing their courses. The work-related factors could contribute to the challenges encountered by the BukSU DepEd scholars. The DepEd school administrators have positions in the DepEd making them liable for the school assignments. Thinking of their responsibilities might affect their academic performance as a scholar. The same with the teacher-scholar, some are master teachers assigned as coordinators and chairman in their school assignments.

Further, the school administrators need to be present in school during the evaluation. They need to defend their output in the school improvements based on four principles, namely: leadership, governance, curriculum, and learning implementation of the school. School heads and teachers

will be evaluated in their school performance as well as on accountability, continuous improvement of the school, and management of resources.

On family-related factors, married scholars with small kids left at home can cause vexations on their emotions and concentration in their studies especially if their families need their presence at home. Some of these scholars are from distant places in Mindanao. They need to spend more time traveling if they commute from home. Hence, they need the full support of their husband or wife to continue their studies. There were also scholars separated from their partners because of jealousy.

Furthermore, the study explores the success stories of the scholars who are promoted to a higher position as a result of their hard work, perseverance, and determination in finishing their graduate degree. The demand for quality education at Bukidnon State University in terms of significant output such research is challenging yet, rewarding in the sense that the knowledge, skills, and expertise they gained can be their asset to face the challenges of the demand in education.

Jarvis (2006) noted that an individual perceives a situation in a particular manner based on what he or she has learned in previous experiences. Thus, the DepEd scholars in BukSU demonstrate their learning in their work in the DepEd based on what they have learned from their professors in BukSU. There is a need to look deeper and examine what learning transpired in the graduate program to understand the transition from student to aspiring professor. Jarvis' theory spans from birth to death. He explained that mid-life learning is a time of identity change that reflects both the changes in our lives and the processes of becoming competent educators in the field of education.

On faculty-related factors, teacher self-efficacy is influential in teacher professional commitment (Klassen et al., 2013). Self- efficacy can influence classroom performance, especially on learners with additional needs. Self-efficacy is crucial, not only for the well-being of the individual but also about their behaviors and student outcomes. There is a need that we gain a greater understanding of how self-efficacy develops.

According to Bandura, one's beliefs about self-efficacy are from four main sources, namely: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, physiological factors, and verbal persuasion. There is the impact of the faculty professor in the graduate program self-efficacy as they are the main sources of information on the graduate students. The faculty-related factors include the length of service, teaching performance, academic rank; teaching experience; educational attainment; workloads; the field of specialization, training, and seminars attended (Aljo et al., 2016).

Thus, on the BukSU administration, the full support of the faculty and the administration is exceedingly desired to succeed. Moreover, pursuing graduate studies is challenging yet fulfilling. The students should have the right attitude towards learning and academic work. Likewise, the faculty should be available and approachable for the students to help them attain their quest for excellence. Hence, for a student to be competent they should have a sense of self-efficacy to accomplish a difficult task as expected from them.

Additionally, this study also anchors on the concept of Maslow (1954) that humanistic education provides a foundation for personal growth and development and that learning will continue throughout life in a self-directed manner. BukSU's granting of scholarship provides the qualified DepEd administrators and teachers scholars the avenue for personal growth and development. Learning will continue throughout life in a self-directed manner. Furthermore, BukSU in partnership with the Department of Education helps a lot of DepEd educators to achieve their quest for excellence and service contributing a great impact to their work in the DepEd. With educators applying Abraham Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, love, and belonging, self-esteem, knowledge, and understanding, aesthetic, and self-actualization to education is an ideal way to assess lesson plans, courses, and educational programs (Lutz, (2014). Moreover, the completion of the degree among the BukSU DepEd scholar demonstrates self-actualization in the aspect of education.

On the work-related factor of the graduate students, they are obedient to the authorities of the DepEd and BukSU. The scholars' contract of the agreement requires them to complete their degree within the time frame. In doing this, the scholars have to conform to the policies in their thesis writing heeding the advice of the thesis adviser and the thesis committee. The scholars should maintain a harmonious relationship toward the BukSU administration who gave the scholarship grant, to the BukSU professors/faculty, advisors and mentors, and all, enabling them to be happy while undertaking their graduate work.

3. Statement of Objectives

This study explored the lived experiences of BukSU–DepEd graduate student scholars of the graduate program of the College of Education who graduated from the previous school year 2014-2015, up to 2019-2020.

Specifically, the study answered the question:

1. What are the lived experiences of BukSU-DepEd graduate student scholars in finishing their masters' degree in the following:

1.1 student-related;

- 1.2 faculty-related;
 - 1.3 BukSU administration-related;
 - 1.4 DepEd administration-related;
 - 1.5 work-related; and
 - 1.6 family-related?
2. What conceptual model could be designed to illustrate the meaningful experiences of the BukSU-DepEd scholars to be successful in their master's degree?

4. Literature Review

4.1 Legal Bases

BukSU- graduate student Scholarship Program is the response to the Philippine government's mandate of providing support to enhance educational pursuits not only to the undergraduate but also to the postgraduate students who would like to pursue and improve their educational attainment (Article XIV, Section 2 of the Philippine Constitution). As directed, schools, including CHED, will provide grants, incentives and subsidies to deserving students in both public and private schools. Thus, professional support from Higher Education Institutions, schools, and local authorities should also be expected. Academic support provides access to students by providing resources in pursuit of learning (Garrison & Baynton, 1987). These resources could focus on the cognitive, financial, social, and emotional support facilitating and enhancing success in learning.

The provisions, as stated in the Philippine Constitution, provide concrete support to the current study that scholarship grants among the HEIs are an obligation; thus, scholarship grants are a right of every Filipino citizen at all levels. All Filipino citizens should know that scholarship grants are for everyone, still, they differ on the kind of scholarship granted depending on the need and purpose from the primary schools up to the HEIs.

Further, Republic Act No. 9456, s.2007, Section 15 on Scholarship Program and Admission stipulates that any University shall provide a scholarship program to assist the marginalized but deserving students. The student shall not be denied admission to the University regardless of sex, religion, cultural or community affiliation, or ethnic origin. Thus, the BukSU Scholarship program is an agreement between DepEd as the second party and Bukidnon State University as the first party to provide professional educational development to those teachers from the Department of Education. The BukSU scholarship comprises different forms, namely: the bursary given to the undergraduate students, FDP grants to the faculty of BukSU, and subsidy assistance to the DepEd fellows. The BukSU - DepEd scholarship is aiming at assisting the

DepEd teachers who are duly recommended by the school principal and the school's division superintendent. Each division has its strategy of choosing who will be their representative, still in BukSU. The first essential prerequisite for the scholarship grant is those teachers who have been in the service for several years but failed to enroll in the graduate studies. The graduate student scholars or known as Dep Ed Fellows, continue to receive their benefits like their monthly salary, mid-year bonus, and the year-end bonus, clothing allowance, but not the chalk allowance and the PBB since they have not performed actual teaching during the period of the grant.

Furthermore, the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP, 2012) required HEIs to promote and continue its linkages to other institutions as it offers educational programs with opportunities for self-direction and self-reflection and feedback on program content and direction. With the BukSU-DepEd scholarship program, it would prepare graduate students to be competitive globally. The task could be overwhelming since the institution needs to update and upgrade itself against the standards in the labor market. With their accredited academic programs, especially graduate programs, students who graduated from accredited institution programs are expected to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skills, and therefore considered world-class professionals.

The scholarship program provides the avenue for BukSU's linkages to the Department of Education all over the Mindanao region. In like manner, it looks into the impact of the teaching and learning gained by the scholars in BukSU, which they applied in their respective regions. The research agenda is very important in DepEd wherein teacher's and administrators' performance evaluations include the conduct of two types of research, namely: one from January to June and another from July to December. The researches they conducted could help them merit an outstanding performance to address the gap in their respective fields of specialization and to prove their worth as a DepEd scholar in the community they served.

4.2 Phenomenological Studies of Scholars

The lived experiences of the graduate students move around from their experiences in completing their academic requirements. These will discuss the different factors which may affect the students' success in finishing their studies. These factors are the students-related factor, student–faculty-related factor, institution's administration, the DepEd administration, work-related and family-related factors.

The BukSU's effort as a Higher Education Institution is to align its vision, mission, and core values, which take heed to the demands of students who value graduate education. To enhance

the career prospects of the students prompted BukSU to offer a graduate program. The qualifications and competencies of the teacher are indicators of the quality of education delivered in schools. Considering the teachers' vital role in influencing education outcomes, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requires that teachers at higher education levels have at least a master's degree in the fields. The Faculty Development Program (FDP) is an avenue for strengthening quality education.

4.3 On DepEd Administration-Related Factor

The educational organization like DepEd plays a significant role in the graduate students' experiences (Hunter & Devine, 2016). Dillon (2000) argued that teacher development is a management responsibility that the school management has to provide teachers with these opportunities that they can create an environment in which meaningful interactions among staff can take place. Lovitts (2001) suggested that departments should have more opportunities for graduate students and be more supportive in their development as professionals. DepEd has observed offering viable intervention programs to students who struggle academically giving them a chance for success.

Lunsford (2016) stated that students should develop an orientation to their chosen discipline. They should begin developing a research agenda. After all, a graduate degree is a research degree. Students' finishing a graduate degree relish delight in one's professional and personal development, the enhancement of skills, the advancement of one's career, and the confidence in practicing their craft with colleagues.

5. Research Methods and Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design. Qualitative research methods inform the researcher's understanding of a phenomenon. The main objective of this study was to gain a deep and thorough understanding of the lived experiences of BukSU-DepEd scholars in the entire region of Mindanao.

Bukidnon State University (BukSU) is the locale of the study. BukSU is in the heart of Malaybalay City and is known for its mission to develop globally competitive professionals and committed to providing excellent instruction. It is one of the leading educational institutions in Mindanao offering graduate programs. Most of the graduates of the programs are currently holding significant positions, particularly in the Department of Education (DepEd) and to some private institutions in Region X and nearby region and even internationally.

The participants of the study were the twelve (12) BukSU-Dep Ed scholars: six graduated in the school years 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017; 2017-2018; and 2018-2019. While the other six have their ongoing thesis writing during this school year, 2019-2020. They were also considered participants in this study. These graduate students came from all over Mindanao representing Regions IX, X, XII, XIII, and BARMM. The participants were purposively chosen based on the specific criteria met by the participants at the moment of selection. The data were gathered using the interview of the participants commenced after the approval of the letter by the dean, and the dissertation committee. The researcher followed the ethical processes before the actual gathering of the data took place. The interview happened in a conducive place at their most convenient time where the participants can literally give their responses to the questions on their lived experiences in the pursuit of their professional development at Bukidnon State University as DepEd scholars.

During the individual interview and the focus group discussion, the participants have ample time to answer the questions, in the language or dialect familiar to them to ensure confidence and truthfulness when conveying their experiences. The use of audio visual and video recording of the proceedings provided the researcher the ease in transcribing the discourses in the interview and focus group discussion. The transcriptions and coding of the data help the transcriber.

5.1 Transcription of Data

An English major college teacher transcribed the results of the interview and FGD. She provided the verbatim written account of spoken words from the recorded responses. A play and replay of the recordings help to decipher the wordings in the interview. The researcher discarded irrelevant information or responses in the transcript. There was a systematic review of the transcripts grouping and coding these into themes, then analyzing the content.

6. Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the gathered data using Collaizzi (1978) method of data analysis. The analysis consisted of six steps. There were the reading and re-reading of the transcribed interviews to get the thought and sense of the whole content shared by the participants. The researcher extracted relevant statements from the transcripts that directly answered the research questions. Then, there was the formulation of meaning on every essential statement of the participants after rereading thoroughly the transcript to ensure the derivation of key statements and accurate meaning.

The analysis of the data included the formulation of meanings to determine the theme cluster and emergent themes. Then the identified emergent themes were exhaustively defined and described, uncovering the phenomenon in the study. The participants validated the findings of the study to compare the results constructed by the researcher on their experiences before the finalization of the findings. Furthermore, there was a rereading of the word-for-word transcribed responses many times to make sure that there is a sense of the acquired description. From the descriptions, the researcher extracted relevant statements pertaining directly to the proposed phenomenon.

The researcher reread the original transcription to assure the original description is portrayed in the extracted significant statement meanings as well as organized the formulated meanings into clusters, which allowed themes to emerge. Again, the researcher referred to the original transcription for validation, being aware of the repetitive themes and discrepancies. Then, the researcher made a concise statement of the exhaustive description and provided a fundamental declaration of identification, presented a succinct statement of the comprehensive description to the original participants of the study to verify the results.

6.1 Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

The discussion on discovering the essence of the lived experiences of the Bukidnon State University graduate student scholar in this section proceeds through the use of matrices containing the significant statements, formulated meanings, meaning units and themes and through the use of frames of extracted statements from the transcripts of the interview to substantiate the claims. This procedure provided the means for determining the essence of the lived experiences of the BukSU graduate student scholars.

The findings revealed at least six outstanding themes and twenty-eight sub-themes that emerged from the responses of the participants. The major themes include

- (1) Challenging yet, fulfilling Student-Learning Experiences;*
- (2) Satisfying Learning Experience with Well-rounded graduate faculty;*
- (3) Heart-warming Learning Experience with the BukSU Administration;*
- (4) Impressive Support from the DepEd Administration;*
- (5) Pressured Learning Experience; and*

(6) Encouraging Support System. The succeeding sub-sections present the discussion of sub-themes in each relevant theme.

The Student-Related Lived Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars

Matrix 1 presents the experiences of Bukidnon State University graduate student scholars in terms of student-related factors. One of the shared experiences of the graduate scholars emerging from the data in terms of student-related factors is their *challenging yet fulfilling experience* as students in BukSU. This experience pointed to five sub-themes that validate the major theme. These sub-themes include *struggles to comply and beat deadlines, coping with academic requirements, financial pressures, working in teams, and fulfilling experiences*.

Matrix 1. *Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars in terms of Student-Related Factor*

Emergent Theme	Sub-themes	Experiences of the graduate student scholars in completion of their master’s degree at Bukidnon State University
<i>Challenging yet, fulfilling Student-Learning Experiences</i>	<i>Struggles to comply requisites and meet the deadlines</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <i>The scholars experienced extreme difficulties in complying with the academic requirements</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Struggled in doing research</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Had trouble in defending research to the panel members</i>
	<i>Coping with the struggles in complying academic requirements</i>	Scholars strategies in completion of the degree
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Persistent invoking the Divine wisdom and countless prayers helped the scholar complete the degree</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Purpose and motivation</i> • <i>Perseverance and diligence</i> • <i>Determination and hard work</i> • <i>Faith</i>
	<i>Financial Pressures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Scholar struggled financially emotionally and mentally in completion of the academic requirements</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The graduate student scholar loaned money from the bank just to augment the finances and yet it is still not enough because of the expenses in board and lodging. Also, the cost of finishing the thesis</i>
	<i>Working in teams</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Felt wonderful and grateful for meeting brilliant persons from all over Mindanao regions</i>
	<i>Fulfilling Learning experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upgraded,</i> • <i>Equipped and innovative towards the fountain of knowledge by embracing research</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enlightened with the Perspectives in life</i> 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Become excellent,</i> • <i>Productive in the entire educational career</i> 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Holistically Transformed</i> 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meeting the standard in terms of quality research</i> 		

Sub-Theme 1: Struggles to Comply and Beat the Deadlines

The matrix shows that in terms of dealing with academic requirements, the graduate student scholars struggled in complying requisites to meet deadlines. One participant shared during the interview that:

“It is an arduous academic experience. Given the fact, that there was a bulk of requirements to be submitted in all the subjects on time. Such as paper works and researches considering the short time frame it was challenging yet, amazing and fulfilling educational experience as the graduate student scholars”.

The interview result showed that with the short time they have to spend to complete the degree and the congested subjects they have to take per semester cause these difficulties among the scholars.

The goal of the DepEd scholars is to improve teaching and learning performance in the department of education and Bukidnon State University. However, individuals must have enough ability, accept the goals, and receive feedback related to performance (Latham, 2013).

Participant L validates this with this declaration:

“It was tough, especially during the summer class meetings was every day and all three subjects- Methods of Research, (Ed203), the ecology of education (EA 201), and issues and trends (EA 2014) require paper output every day. However, challenging yet, fulfilling!”

The participant’s experience includes summer classes, where class schedules are recited every day with three subjects. When the three subject teachers gave requirements all at the same time, the scholars would have difficulties in complying these.

This difficulty is exemplified by participants J and A as they experienced sleepless nights as they struggle to complete the requirements of the various subjects.

They declared in the following statements:

“I have a lot of sleepless nights and tears in compliance with my academic requirements. The biggest struggles were and still are when almost all the subjects will give a task to be submitted almost at the same time”.

“Struggling and sleepless nights complying with the academic requirements”.

These experiences entail the efforts that the scholars must put to their requirements. They have to spend sleepless nights to complete such, and one even lamented that he had also shed tears just to comply the requirements. Being a scholar must have been very difficult for them (MacKeracher, Suart & Potter, 2006). Another participant also affirmed the difficulty. His challenging experience would relate to "culture shock." He mentioned that this phenomenon is

usually experienced by a person who is new to a place where he or she has to adapt. Participant I express the following during the interview:

“Being a scholar is challenging considering I am from the farthest places in Mindanao”. Wherein I need to adapt to the environment, conform with the schedule and in compliance with the rigors of the requirements which makes my life challenging.”

The scholar's experience suggests that one of the struggles a scholar could experience include adjusting to a new environment coupled with the fulfillment of the subjects' requirements. Many of the graduate scholars in BukSU have been to school in their undergraduate degrees for a long time. Consequently, when they enroll in the graduate program, some of them would feel strange being in a classroom again. They need to take time to get attuned to the new environment, much more in complying with the requirements.

In like manner, the language barrier and the absence of laptop and printer could also contribute to this difficulty as participant K mentions:

“I struggled with the difficult subjects of the requirements, reaction papers, especially that I do not have a laptop, printer. I find it difficult also with the dialect since I am Ilonggo and my classmates are speaking Visayan dialect”.

Having no laptop and printer is a barrier in meeting deadlines among the scholars because most of the subjects in the graduate program are research-based, therefore requires a student to own these gadgets. A laptop and a printer are two things a scholar would need to facilitate his paperwork, projects, assignments and research paper in order to finish the degree. Also, the participant expressed the language barrier that contributes to the challenging experience of being a scholar. Like the other participant who must adjust to the new environment, this scholar also needs to adapt the language used in the community. Learning to speak the language of people around the community is also contributory to the scholar's difficulty while in BukSU.

According to Locke and Latham (1990), leaders in goal-setting theory, there are two cognitive determinants of behavior: values and intentions. The graduate students' objective in pursuing their study in the graduate program is to attain its goal to be a full-fledged master's degree holder, helping them in term of learning's and teaching pedagogies. They would consider this accomplishment a worthwhile achievement as educators despite the challenges and barriers encountered in the fulfillment of the degree.

The challenging experiences of the participant did not stop her from achieving her goal of earning the degree. She also mentioned that despite all the hardships, she believes that the reward will be fulfilling as it will contribute a lot to her career and professional growth.

The cited experiences of the DepEd teachers gave them a sense of pride in having been allowed to pursue graduate degrees through the scholarship that they have availed. The experience at the same time pushes scholars to a different level of perseverance. Scholarship program paved more ways for scholars in terms of professional growth and development. In fact, after earning a degree in BukSU, many of the scholars have been invited to serve as speakers in training and seminars related to research. The academic training in the university proved to help develop professionals. Additionally, the services and expertise of the graduate scholars from BukSU are often sought by their superiors when they go back to their stations after the scholarship. The journey of the graduate students is a challenging yet rewarding experience.

Further, researchers also found that graduate students felt there was a lack of guidance in the steps of working with their research committee (Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2014). Graduate students, who were stressed, isolated and lacking social support was more likely to lose motivation and leave the program (Rockinson- Szapkiw et al., 2014). Students need an environment that meets their basic needs. These graduate students' needs included a sense of belonging, motivation to achieve, the ability to overcome difficult issues, personal sacrifice, and academic understanding (Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2014).

7. The Faculty-Related Lived Experiences

Matrix 2 presents the experiences of Bukidnon State University graduate student scholars in terms of faculty– related factors. From the scholars' responses during the interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), there emerged a faculty-related theme that points to their experience in working with the *satisfying learning experience with Well-rounded graduate faculty of the BukSU*. Four sub-themes emerged from this major theme; these are: *qualified and good-natured graduate faculty; motivating and inspiring faculty's professional background; skilled mentors; and supportive and expert advisers*.

Participants' experience with the faculty from the graduate program of BukSU introduced them to the well-rounded personality of the faculty. They considered the faculty as experts and competent who possess a good-natured personality, which includes their being approachable, accommodating, kind, and tolerant. They are also motivating and inspirational that gave the scholars the courage to face the challenges that they encounter during their stay in BukSU.

Matrix 2. *Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars in Faculty–Related Factor*

Emergent Theme	Sub-themes	Experiences of the graduate student scholar with the BukSU Faculty
<i>Satisfying Learning Experience with Well-rounded graduate faculty</i>	<i>Qualified and good-natured graduate faculty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <i>The scholars were able to meet dedicated, competent and expert faculty of the graduate program</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The scholars encountered tolerant, kind, accommodating, and approachable faculty</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The scholars also experienced eloquent and updated faculty of the graduate program.</i>
	<i>Motivating and inspiring faculty’s professional background</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The professional background of the graduate program faculty inspired and motivated the scholars to complete the program.</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The scholars were assured that the faculty’s qualification would prepare them to become full-fledged graduate degree holders</i>
	<i>Skilled mentors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The BukSU professor influenced the graduate student scholars to finish the degree and became a catalyst for quality research and competitive educators in the Department of Education</i>
	<i>Supportive and expert advisers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The scholars experienced being mentored in a motherly and sisterly way.</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The faculty-mentored the scholars in an accommodating and nurturing way.</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The faculty-mentored the scholars through giving valuable feedback, useful comments, and a great deal of scaffolding.</i>

Sub-Theme 1: Qualified and Good-Natured Graduate Faculty

The first sub-theme refers to the scholars' experience with the qualified and good-natured faculty members of the graduate program. The scholars believed that their professors in the graduate program are competent enough to deliver the instruction that they needed for every course or subject that they take. Participant F remarks that,

“The professors in the ELT program are all equally competent in their field of specialization. They have set the standards, pushed us to reach our potentials. Challenged us inspired us and guided us for us to meet and complete the academic requirements to earn the degree and be worthy of it”.

The statement indicates that the scholars were able to experience being taught by capable teachers in terms of their field of specialization. According to the scholar, these teachers have set the standards of their program that pushed them to reach their potentials. Here, the teachers have established the measures of a true graduate program.

Further, a scholar from a different program also experienced the same competence as a graduate professor, this time having a different specialization. Participant C conveys in the statement:

“Most of the instructors in Ed. Ad. during my stay at Bukidnon State University were competent. They provided substantial ideas and guided the students to where the fountain of knowledge is”.

The student acknowledges the competence of professor teaching in the Educational Administration program. The teacher provided the students with significant ideas in this field. According to the student, these ideas imparted by their teacher guided him in understanding the subject matter.

Also, participant C claimed the same experience as stated below:

“One of the instructors who handled our subject in curriculum development was a very good professor not only extended significant insights in curriculum development but on thesis writing as well. His eloquence in research preparation which he had shared with the students resulted in the successful completion of our thesis”.

The statement implies that the professor in one of the subjects in the graduate program was able to impart substantial input to the students. The scholar observed the professor's competence in terms of thesis writing. An implication to this is that the faculty of the graduate programs are capable of teaching research which is essential in a graduate program.

Meanwhile, the scholars also experienced the faculty as having a good nature. They said that their professors are accommodating, kind and tolerant, resourceful, and approachable. These are qualities of a well-rounded professor. Likewise, participant G mentions that,

“They had done their best in sharing knowledge with us. Resourceful, considerate, patient, approachable, and innovative are likely the right words that described my instructors concerning their teaching performance. Our professors had always kept an eye on us regarding our responses to every topic, and they were patient in guiding and helping us with difficulties through spending extra time talking to us”.

The scholar's experience with this teacher is a pleasant one. The teacher must have been so kind that the student was able to describe the experience as such. The statement clearly shows that the graduate faculty has always monitored the progress of the student. Moreover, the teacher

also extends extra miles for the students by spending their time in helping them cope with the requirements of the course.

Sub-Theme 2: Motivating and Inspiring Faculty's Professional Background

Another sub-theme that surfaced from the statements of the participants refers to how the graduate faculty's educational qualifications influenced their performance in the graduate program. Most of their comments direct to *motivating and inspiring faculty's professional background*. They are one in agreement that the professional qualifications of their teachers have inspired and motivated them to pursue and earn their graduate degrees.

Moreover, participant E says that,

“Their impressive academic portfolio alone made me thrilled and determined more finish the program no matter what it takes. Their exposures and how adept they were in research gave me the enthusiasm to emulate somehow what they have achieved. For me, being firm and consistent were teacher-factors that pushed me to the limits of my capacity whether academically and or professionally”.

According to the participant, the academic accomplishments of his professors made him want to achieve his goal of completing and earning the degree. He said that the professor is worth emulating in terms of academic achievements. The scholar is impressed of their teacher being adept in research. He became enthusiastic and eager to complete the course.

Additionally, participant E also experienced being motivated by the professional background of his professor, saying that,

“The faculty’s professional background has a great impact on our performances because this provides me the feeling of trust for the institution in providing quality higher education for me being their learner. Feeling ensured with acquiring quality knowledge, I am very much honored to be part of the program which makes me boost my determination to finish the degree. Another faculty-related factor contributes to finishing my degree is the heartwarming welcome of the faculty for us considering the far distance of our hometown to Malaybalay”.

The statement implies how the student looks up to the standards of the qualification of the professors in the graduate program. According to him, this gives him the assurance and became confident that he received a quality education because of the academic portfolio of the teacher.

Professors' professional background prompted student's motivation to do their best in studying at BukSU. As mentioned by the Participant F:

“The faculty’s professional background influenced me to give my best in my studies. It motivated me to be better in the program I am in. I don’t want to miss a class or I’ll miss something important. Other – faculty related factors that contribute to my study here in BukSU to complete my degree are their kindness. They set a standard but their smiles; words and actions tell that we could come to them and they’re ready to help us”.

Also, the influences of the faculty to students contribute a lot to finishing the degree. The participant stated how he tried and gave his best to do better in the program enrolled. The faculty's kindness was also pointed out by the participant through the facial countenance, words, and actions manifesting that they are willing to help the students despite the standard of the course. All these are narrated by the scholar's experience with the BukSU faculty. The testimonial of the participant demonstrates the impact of the influence of the graduate program professors on student's motivation, encouragement with inspiration, and focus on their studies. Aside from the faculty's professional background, a sense of respect and gratitude is very important to students, which push them to do their best. Students indicate that social contexts in and out of the university could have a vital part in their development. These circumstances could include relationships with supervisors, peers, family, friends, and business associates (Devenish et al., 2009; Sweitzer, 2009).

Sub-theme 3: Skilled Mentors

The BukSU graduate student scholars were already handling positions in the department of education. For that reason, teaching the graduate program requires expertise, competence, equipped with knowledgeable and high caliber professors that graduate scholars could emulate. One scholar utters:

We were guided by our thesis subject professors in the process of thesis writing. They provided good explanations about thesis parts and processes. Additionally, deadlines and timeline of work were set. Another thing, my adviser assisted me in working with my paper. And, guided me to create my title and in doing the different parts of my research. My professors showed expertise in the field of research”.

Graduate professors at BukSU guided the students in the formulation of the thesis paper in a step-by-step manner. They discussed the process chapter-by-chapter of the research

manuscript. They tried as much as possible to guide and direct the students on what to do, explaining to them the procedures and giving examples on how to write a research paper.

One of the scholar's declares that:

“One of the most admirable characteristics of my professors in BukSU was their approachability. Most of the time when we experienced difficulties or have queries on course requirements; they were just always around the corner. We can even convey our messages during times where we cross our roads on the school campus. These events provided convenience for the students and facilitated effective guidance by the professors”.

The graduate student admired his professor's character in helping him in complying with the requirements of the course. The availability and approachability of the professors were appreciated by the student. He also admired how the professor accommodates queries and the willingness to help in times of need for effective guidance. The scholar observed that the faculty valued her students by efficiently helping them towards success in their studies. Lovitts (2001) explained that the time faculty spent with graduate students, the location where interactions (formal vs. informal) took place, and the quality of time with students all influenced students' satisfaction with their thesis adviser.

One participant states:

“They gave comments suggestions and feedback especially in our activity worksheets, making lesson plans, solving problems, and class reports”.

Giving comments and feedback on student's work for improvement in each activity, worksheets, and mentoring in making lesson plans as well as solving problems and facilitating in-class reports enhanced students to become a better educator in DepEd. During their stay in the institution, the scholars commended the valuable and notable professors. Some of the observations of the participants include:

“I was amazed by their dedication and commitment to mentoring aspiring individuals who wanted to finish a master's degree. Anyway, it was their unique style of dealing with us that opened for smooth communication between a professor and a student; then became a tool that made mentoring to be done easily. We were treated with utmost care and respect with an assurance that learning would come along; then in return, I did my best to become teachable and be mentored without any distraction”.

“I was mentored to be intellectually independent at the same time ethically and intellectually humble”.

“Other professors I say that they are supportive to other scholars also”.

The professors at BukSU were competently doing their duties and responsibilities in mentoring and guiding students' learning process and thereby, showing commitment and dedication in providing quality education. They dealt the students with professionalism giving utmost care and assurance of the knowledge gained.

Sub-theme 4: Expert Adviser

World-class institution provides standard quality education for every student to pursue higher education. Therefore skilled, well-versed, globally competent, and highly equipped faculty would be considered in the delivery of instruction in developing educators professionally. Participant G states:

“She had truly done her best in guiding, and mentoring me and patiently checking my manuscript”.

A professor takes extra time and commitment in guiding students, in mentoring and patiently checking the manuscript. For the scholar, it was worth the effort. Professors prepare their students by allowing them to explore and craft their own researches that could enhance student's career and professional life. Participant C narrates the following:

“in terms of my adviser he is very brilliant, and he always push us to go on with our thesis he always motivates and monitor us always. We are guided”.

“sa thesis adviser ko I say that I'm on the right person nga ako na duolan kay si sir grabi jud siya mo motivate mo push naa jud siyay intellectual capacity nga magtudlo sa ako a”.

The recorded response shows that the thesis adviser is well-versed and knowledgeable in research. He is a good motivator to students guiding them well to come up with their thesis. Universities need brilliant educators, who are good-natured and possess the skills to guide, direct and lead students beyond the limit for them to succeed. The graduate program requires that students become knowledgeable. The factors that impacted success were supportive thesis chairs and available advisor (Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

The BukSU Administration-Related Lived Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars

Matrix 3. *Experiences of the BukSU Graduate Student Scholars with the BukSU Administration*

Emergent Theme	Sub-Themes	Experiences of the BukSU graduate student scholars with BukSU administration
<i>Heart-warming learning experience with the BukSU Administration</i>	<i>Considerable monetary benefits and moral support from the BukSU Administration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The scholars received monetary incentives from BukSU aside from the free tuition fee, it's not enough but has helped them get through it</i> • <i>The administration constantly monitors the scholars' progress while in BukSU.</i> • <i>The administration releases the monetary incentives on-time.</i>
	<i>Ease of gathering data through BukSU facilitation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The university administration facilitated the ease of gathering data in different research locale.</i> • <i>The BukSU Administration aided the conduct of studies through proper channelling of communication</i>
	<i>Sufficient but inadequate student services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The university offers affordable dormitory where scholars can stay, but there is a problem with sanitation and cleanliness</i> • <i>The administration provides appropriate facilities for learning such as a library, laboratory, and the like, but there is an inefficient internet connection on the campus.</i> • <i>The administration provides accessible facilities for graduate scholars.</i>
	<i>Assured promotion due to research standard set by BukSU Administration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The standards set by the graduate program in terms of research assured the scholars of their promotion after earning the degree.</i> • <i>What they learned in research in the university made the scholars proficient in the field.</i> • <i>The research standards in the university opened doors for DepEd research funding.</i> • <i>It also gave scholars various opportunities like mentoring other teachers in conducting research.</i>

Matrix 3 presents the experiences of Bukidnon State University graduate student scholars in the BukSU administration – related aspect.

The graduate student scholars' experiences with the BukSU administration generate theme as a *heart-warming learning experience with the BukSU Administration*. From the significant

statements of the participants and there were four (4) unit meanings, namely: *considerable monetary benefits and moral support from the BukSU Administration, ease of gathering data through BukSU facilitation, sufficient but inadequate student services, and Assured promotion due to research standard set by BukSU Administration.*

The BukSU graduate student scholars' experiences with the administration generated emergent themes such as *heart-warming learning experience with the BukSU Administration.* The heart-warming learning experiences are from the significant statements of the participants and the meaning units. The scholars received monetary incentives given by the administration, aside from the free tuition fee.

The appropriate facilities provided for learning such as library and laboratory. There is an affordable dormitory where scholars can stay. Students were aided in the conduct of studies through proper channeling of communication. There is a constant monitoring of the scholars' progress in studying at BukSU. Besides, the standards set by the graduate program in terms of research assured the scholars of their promotion after earning the degree. The research standards in the university opened doors for DepEd scholar's research findings. It also gave scholars various opportunities like mentoring other teachers in conducting research.

Sub-theme 1. Considerable Monetary Benefits and Moral Support from the BukSU Administration

The scholars' experiences in BukSU on the university administration include monetary benefits and moral support in various forms. Scholars receive financial assistance for their tuition fees, book allowance, traveling allowance, and monthly allowance. These benefits helped the scholars in some way or another during their stay in the university. One participant said that their monthly allowance from the university helped them financially when they ran out of money. The statement of the participants during the interview confirms this:

“The support given by BukSU administration is mostly on official communication to our research field or station. We also have our monthly stipend which assists us in times when we are financially depleted. I think BukSU should extend its benefits to the scholars by sponsoring the monetary honorarium to be given to the panel of experts during the different stages of the thesis writing presentations. These are a heavy financial burden to scholars.

Although the student said that the monthly allowance helped them financially, his statement seems to suggest that this is not quite enough, especially when they undergo the three stages of thesis presentation and defense. The scholar even suggested if BukSU could add the financial

support to include the payment for panel members during the three stages or phases of the thesis defense.

Participant B supported the suggestion with this statement:

“Aside from, though we have the book allowance but still, not enough. But again, we are so much privileged”.

Most of the participants seem to agree that the monetary benefits given to the scholars by the university are not enough to sustain their stay at BukSU, still they are grateful for this opportunity. Additionally, participant C and K expressed the same experience by saying,

“The financial benefit given by the university, although not as substantial as the others, has really helped me with my studies. My monthly house rental was 2,500. With the allowance, I just need to worry the remaining 1,000 to complete my obligation”.

“The book allowance, traveling allowance, kulang ra kaayo, very limited not enough knowing that I have many requirements to be submitted that time”.

Aside from the monetary benefits given by the university, the scholars also received their salaries even if they are out for study leave. This benefit is good for one summer and a one-year study term in BukSU.

Participants C affirmed that the subsidy is not enough from his statements:

“Frankly speaking, other scholarships I have enjoyed extended important financial allowances to the scholars. In BukSU, we received 1,500 pesos every month, another 600 pesos, and transportation. The DepEd also gave us my complete monthly salaries as I am on a leave with pay status”.

One scholar comparatively narrates his experience from previous scholarships where he enjoyed extensive benefits, while BukSU scholarship is not as substantial. However, based on the experiences of the scholars, BukSU's benefits have helped them get by. Moreover, they continue to receive their DepEd salary and benefits while on study leave which helped the scholars a lot. During the entire scholarship, what the students need to worry about are the remaining financial obligations not covered by the benefits. The implication is that the benefits provided by BukSU administration to scholars helped them a lot yet, not enough to sustain the student's obligations

Sub-Theme 2: Ease of Gathering Data Through Buksu Facilitation

Another type of support received by the scholars from the BukSU administration is in making their gathering of data a lot easy by facilitating this activity. Usually, the BukSU administration

writes a letter to the agencies or institutions where the researcher could gather the needed data. In most instances, the agencies or institutions positively respond to these requests making the job of the researcher a lot easier. Correspondingly, participant C narrates the following:

“I felt how strong the linkage between DepEd and BukSU was during the conduct of my study in our division. Beforehand, I transmitted communications to the different levels of governance in DepEd Gensan signifying my intention to research schools in the city, as duly approved by the university. During the conduct of my study, DepEd officials who have learned that I am from the BukSU Scholarship Program readily facilitated the smooth conduct of my study. Our Regional Director who was at the same time the concurrent superintendent of our city, who was also the former Regional Director of Region 10, Allan G. Farnazo, happened to own thorough background of BukSU. He swiftly approved my intention to conduct the study upon learning that I’m from the university and instructed the school heads of participating schools to accommodate me. Indeed, I never experienced difficulties during the conduct of my study”.

The scholars observed that there are some instances where the sanitation and cleanliness in the dormitory are not always well kept hence recommended for the sanitation and maintenance of the dorm. He further suggested that the graduate library to have an air-conditioning system to have a more conducive place for writing and doing research work. Dillon (2000) stated that teacher development is a management responsibility that the school management has to provide teachers with these opportunities that they can create an environment in which meaningful interactions among staff can take place.

The easy access to school facilities inspires scholars to stay inside the campus. The access to the affordable dormitory inside the campus helped save their daily transportation. The slow Wi-Fi access in school prompted the students to provide their own in their living quarters. Generally, the participants experienced adequate facilities except for sanitation and internet connection. Fullan (2016) emphasized the importance of organizational provision to provide a supportive and stimulating environment to encourage graduate students to succeed. Educational institutions must offer facilities that meet the needs of the students at various levels of competence throughout their study terms.

Nevertheless, lifelong learners that are not merely consumers of learning facilities but could also contribute to the sourcing of facilities (Fischer, G., & Ostwald, J., 2002; Fischer, G., & Ostwald, J., 2002). The provision of academic support from universities while a necessary condition for success is insufficient on its own to ensure a successful and satisfying educational experience (Black & Bonner, 2011; Oehlkers & Gibson, 2001).

Matrix 4. *Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars with the DepEd Administration*

Emergent Theme	Sub-themes	Experiences of the BukSU scholars with the DepEd Administration
<i>Satisfying support from the DepEd Administration</i>	<i>Implementation of research made easy</i>	<i>The DepEd's full support to the scholars implemented their studies easily. The scholars received immediate approval of requests related to research especially during the gathering of data.</i>
	<i>Guaranteed assistance</i>	<i>The scholars are assured of the financial support from DepEd as they still enjoy the benefit of their monthly salary even if they are on-study leave The scholars also receive the same reliable support from DepEd before, during, and after the scholarship. Before the scholarship, they have been endorsed and recommended to the university. During the scholarship, their respective Division offices monitor their progress. After the scholarship, there is a post-conference to discuss their re-entry plans.</i>

qualitative research and having poor writing skills. Moreover, the limited financial conditions to pay the thesis committee and adviser during the different stages of the thesis defense also pose a challenge. What challenges the scholars during the writing phase of the thesis is in reviewing the literature. The data gathering phase comes next especially on the availability of participants. Furthermore, students find difficulty in the data analysis and how to interpret and put together in writing the narrative discussions making these comprehensible to the reader. Distance is also one of the many stumbling blocks they need to hurdle during the gathering of data. Yet, the scholarship made the implementation of the research study easy.

The students have official communication to the concerned heads of offices in the field. The dean of the college or program heads provides approval letters to endorse the candidate to officially conduct the research study. Following proper protocol in the data-gathering part, helped ease the burden of the scholar in communicating with the respondents to participate in the study.

Participants F and E affirm the observations:

“To the extent that DepEd approved their involvement in my study. They have accepted my request to conduct research on some selected school heads. Following their rules and regulations in conducting researches on the field, they have played a great part in the success of my study.”

“Ease of access and conduct of the study.”

Based from the experiences of the participants it was not easy to conduct a study within a short time frame. For the DepEd scholars working on limited time duration it was difficult, tough and challenging. The well-built linkage between BukSU and DepEd facilitated the conduct of research among the scholars. DepEd plays a significant role in the success of their scholars as they gave financial and moral support. To reciprocate the support of the DepEd, the scholar follows their rules and regulations in conducting researches on the field and strived hard to finish their degree. Participant L states:

“Facilitate in the submission of the requirements, encourage taking the exam, facilitated in the enrolment when the schedule for enhancement did not warrant us to be present and clear instruction to keep us informed of our benefits in the division.

As indicated from the student’s response, DepEd helped their scholars in the submission of the requirements, encourage them to take the exam, and given clear instruction to keep them informed of their benefits in the division. Participant A and G mentioned how DepEd administration helped in their research study.

“Yes. Since they permitted me to have my collection of data in our school and they helped me in identifying my participants. They also guided me in the gathering of the basis for the problem of my study.

“It was only by allowing me to conduct classes for a certain period purposely to gather data and the support and help in answering my questionnaire.

Permission for the scholars to gather the data in the school, which is used as the locale of the study, facilitate and simplify the scholars’ research activity. Some heads or administrators even helped the scholars to identify the participants or respondents in their study. They allowed the teacher respondents to answer the interviews and be a part in the focus group discussion. From these gestures of the DepEd administration it was apparent that they gave their whole-hearted support for their scholars to finish their degree. Participants J and L affirm this observation:

“They are very supportive by allowing the school personnel to participate in the conduct of my study. The student was helped in the conduct of the study.”

“Allow the teachers to be involved in the focus group discussion.”

DepEd administration supported the scholars by allowing them to conduct interviews, participate in group discussions, observe classes, give exams, answer questionnaires and surveys, gather data, conduct experiments, record observations, and do other activities that are part of the data gathering phase. DepEd higher authorities helped to send memorandums to ensure that the chosen respondents or participants of the study will actively participate in the research being conducted by the scholar. These activities denote that the participants were helped and supported in the gathering of data in DepEd schools.

Some of the participants' testimonies include:

"They accommodate me immediately without hesitation, they don't delay my time".

"Yes, the higher authority of DepEd sent a memorandum for those included respondents of my study to ensure that they will actively participate in the conduction of my study".

"Moral support and the approval of letters in the conduct of the study".

"It was only by allowing me to conduct classes for a certain period purposely to gather data.

The implications of the responses of the scholars showed that they recognized the help extended by DepEd administration in their gathering of data for the research. The scholars were given moral support with the approval of the conduct of the study. They were supported by the administration in the data gathering procedure.

The recommendation of the DepEd for the teachers or administrators to apply for the BukSU scholarship grant is already an enormous opportunity for the student. Qualifying as a scholar is also a pride of the chosen teacher or administrator because there are a limited number of DepEd scholars accepted by BukSU every school year for the specified programs.

Some responses of the scholar Participants G, D, and F during the FGD include:

"For allowing us one of the scholars. Recommendation as one of the scholars".

"Yes, the approval of the scholarship grants and moral support in the conduct of the study.

"Yes, even after the scholarship program DepEd conducted a scholarship forum focusing on our re-entry plan and also allowed us to present our study in a research forum. Presently, DepEd is monitoring our current performance and professional development.

The BukSU scholarship grant to teachers and school administrators is of great help for their professional growth and development as educators of the young Filipino learners in the Department of Education. DepEd expects that after the scholarship program of the scholars they could present the findings of their studies in a research forum. These graduate scholars could echo what they learned at BukSU and share to their colleagues their research and experiences. DepEd will also evaluate the FDP development plan of the schools to identify the next probable batch of scholars by conducting a scholarship forum focusing on the re-entry plan in the application of the BukSU-DepEd Scholarship grant. DepEd could monitor the current performance and professional development of teachers who need upgrading.

Sub-theme 2: Guaranteed Assistance

The educational organization like DepEd plays a significant role in the graduate students' experiences (Hunter & Devine, 2016). The support given by DepEd to their scholars typically include financial assistance in terms of salaries and benefits. Aside from the monetary aspects DepEd administration also gave motivations and encouragements for the scholars to really finish their graduate studies and to be able to conduct their research.

Some of the experiences of the Participants in this regard show the following:

“The approval to avail the scholarship and the consent to conduct my study were the only support I could recall so far”.

“Aside from the support in all aspects like moral and assistance, financial support is appreciated where I am receiving the full benefit granting to teachers.

For some the DepEd scholars it was a great privilege receiving all the support in all aspects like moral support and assistance. Student C appreciated much the full benefit granted to the scholars while on study leave, such as the complete salary, bonuses, and all the benefits.

“The schools’ division office of General Santos City supported my study by giving the necessary approval to conduct the research. In effect, participating schools readily accommodated me to perform the different activities about gathering data. For the school level of governance, my principal and co-teachers extended significant financial assistance during moments where my family ran out of funds, especially during the illness of my daughter. They have also given me moral support and believed that I can survive the rigors of the program despite the adversities. All their words of encouragement provided me the strength to pursue my studies.

In this situation, the division office in the region supported the conduct of the study. The scholar performed the different activities related to the gathering of data. Additionally, the school level governance, principal, and co-teachers extended significant financial assistance during moments when he ran out of funds. The actions done by the DepEd regional office administration, family and friends imply that the scholar enjoyed the assistance and the moral support by the school division. The gestures of the school administration, family, and friends provide an enormous impact to the scholar's determination. The scholar perseveres in pursuing the degree despite the challenges and difficulties encountered. Participant D's response is as follows:

“One year of study leave with pay with all the benefits we still receive despite we are on study leave. Support is also given during the data gathering period.

Likewise, participant E cites:

“DepEd provided me priceless support, allowing me to focus on my studies leaving the school that I am administering in which I am still properly compensated with complete benefits. In this scenario, I feel sincere support from DepEd helping me to grow professionally”.

Moreover, participant F and G assert:

*“Aside from the regular salary, DepEd helped in the smooth conduct of research study
“Facilitating my papers, giving encouragement, moral support, and for granting a study leave with pay”.*

From the responses of the participants in this study, it is evident that the administration fully supported the scholar, such as the approval of the study leave with pay, giving all the benefits and bonuses, and taking part in the data gathering and administration of the instrument in the DepEd schools. Moral support also helped the scholars a lot in their journey in BukSU. Most importantly, the DepEd teachers and administrators have the chance to grow personally, professionally, ethically, and psychologically, which means that there is a total transformation of the educators in DepEd. Participant H and K narrate:

“The DepEd made their best to guide us and motivated us to keep moving. I am always inspired each day hoping that my dreams make me better. Aside from the full salary, the graduate student scholar was guided, motivated by DepEd to do better in her studies.

“They have extended my monthly salary. They supported me morally and always push me to do better.

Aside from the full salary, DepEd guided and motivated the graduate student scholar to do better in her studies, to reach her personal and professional dreams, and to finish the master's degree. It is the goal of DepEd to deliver quality education to young learners in the field. Yet, the quality of the educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers (Mckinsey, 2007). The answer to this statement would be the professional growth and development of teachers to upgrade teachers' level of competence. Participant L states:

“Full salary and benefits. Approval of the study leaves with designated officers in charge and approval without delay in conducting the data gathering.

Yes, support system in terms of salary and other benefits while I'm in study leave. The DepEd really supports scholars while in study leave”.

Another relevant point by participant F shows:

“It helped me have the focus on my goal which led me somehow to become an efficient student and scholar.

The full support from the administration motivated and helped the scholars to focus and to achieve their goal, which led to becoming an efficient student and scholar. Participant B stated:

“My math co-teachers are willing to extend their help especially if I have a requirement where it needs a presence in our school. I will no longer travel and visit but instead, they can help me by doing it by themselves. Also, our division is ready to assist me, especially for the papers and documents matters.

In compliance with the requirements in her station, the co-teachers helped the teacher-scholar. The division also assisted the scholar on the papers and documentary requirements. From these gestures of the co-teachers and the division, it was evident that there is teamwork between the scholar and the administration. Participant D testifies:

“I am focused to finish the degree because I still receive everything monetary though I did not report to my station”.

The monetary benefit from the administration encouraged the scholars to persevere and stay focused to excellently pursue their studies, the implication is that the extended benefits were satisfying for students. Participant B comments:

Yes, they were very supportive. In terms of the consideration given in the conduct of my study”.

Scholar C recalls by saying:

“Yes. For me, the school level of governance was very supportive before, during, and after the scholarship. Starting the application procedures until graduation, the school administration was constantly in communication with me to see if I was doing well in Malaybalay City”.

The division and school administration in their region were supportive before, during, and after graduation, which added the determination for the student to perform well in their studies at BukSU until they graduated in the program. The administration’s help before, during, and after the scholarship grant provided a powerful impact on the scholars’ personal and professional growth. In the same way, the scholars' expressed their experiences as elaborated below:

“Pasalamat na gyud ko kay ang DepEd very supportive kay modawat kag full salary, bonuses, usahay makusensiya ko kay kana bitaw nga maghimo ra ko sa ako requirements kung deadline na akong ginahimo FB ra. Peru pasalamat gyud me sa DepEd Ma’am oy sa kadaku niya ug tabang sa amo a mga scholars.

The scholars were thankful for the full support given by DepEd administration in terms of complete salary, benefits, and bonuses. The following are the responses of the participants:

“So far sa Caraga region gina help gyud me sa amo division”.

“So far sa amo division sa amo region wala gyud problem a pagprocess sa amo papers, approval since our superintend in our division is very supportive and instructed to the persons incharge na whatever documents we needed automatic e process dayon as well as in the region if they know that gikan pa sa Basilan amo paper trabahuon na gyud dayon, so far wala gyud problema”.

“It has no problem in the region of Basilan the superintendent were very supportive to scholar’s approval of the papers priority for the processing of documents. The administrations were responsible taking part of their responsibilities to scholars.”

“Sa Bukidnon sila nag a process even in the region sa amo douments sila na tanan nag process so far so good”.

It was also helpful in the division of Bukidnon since the administration processes the documents of the scholars and sends these to the office in Region X. The DepEd Region X takes charge to completely assist and support the scholars.

8. The Work-Related Lived Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars

Matrix 5 presents the experiences of Bukidnon State University graduate student scholars in terms of work-related aspects. Most of the scholars were DepEd administrators handling positions in the departments. They also handle schools and district-wide responsibilities. Even if they are on study leave, they need to follow-up the conditions of the respective schools under their supervision. Many times, the administrator-scholars have difficulty in complying with their academic requirements as a student while doing multitasking jobs in the department. Other scholars have tough times since they also worked on additional requirements in their stations. Some teachers were asked by the school head to approach teachers to agree to substitute with their teaching loads while on leave. Other scholars were required to submit an accomplishment report as a teacher. These hindrances contributed to the scholars' delayed submission of their requirements in BukSU. Luckily, the university allowed them to take the exam one week late from the schedule but still manage to finish the degree within the time frame.

The responses of the participants generated the emergent theme, which include *a pressured-learning experience*. There are six sub-themes, namely: *challenging experience, multitasking, disturbed and worried, encountered problems, job promotion, and professional growth*

The Family-Related Lived Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student Scholars

Matrix 5. *Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student*

Scholars in Work-Related

Emergent Theme	Sub-themes	Experience of a scholar with their respective works, assignments designations, positions in DepEd while on study leave
<i>Pressured learning experience</i>	<i>Challenging experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The graduate student scholar encountered challenges in catering their responsibilities in DepEd as a school principal in their respective station while studying in BukSU</i>
	<i>Multitasking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The graduate student scholar doing a multitasking job, catering to the needs of the school at the same time doing the academic requirement in school as a full-time student scholar</i>
	<i>Disturbed and worried</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The student scholar was disturbed emotionally and mentally as a school principal and at the same time a student scholar in BukSU</i>
	<i>Encountered problems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The graduate student scholars encountered a problem in their respective works while on study leave</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The graduate student scholars encountered problems as the head of the school and being away for study leave</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Challenging yet, fulfilling learning experience</i>
<i>Job Promotion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The graduate students enjoyed their job promotion after graduation with their master's degree as a scholar</i> 	
<i>Professional Growth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The scholar's knowledge gained in studying in BukSU helped scholars opened a new opportunity for their professional growth</i> • 	

Matrix 6 presents the experiences of Bukidnon State University graduate student scholars in terms of family-related aspect. The emergent themes include *encouraging support system* with three sub-themes, namely: *emotionally and mentally disturbed being away from the family, Faith in God, Motivated and inspired by the family despite the hard times being away from the family.*

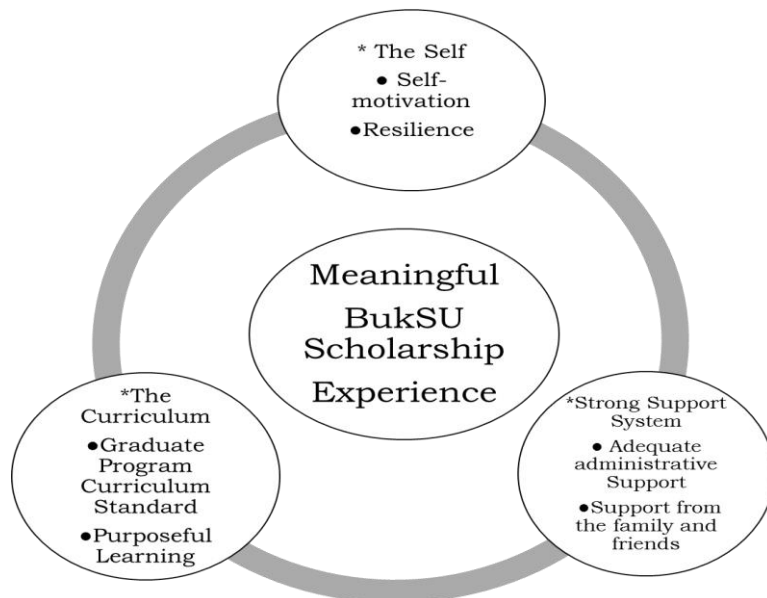
Specifically, the majority of the BukSU graduate student scholars came from the farthest island in Mindanao regions. They leave their families just to study at BukSU. This situation is not easy for scholars to be away from their loved ones, especially for married students. The theme *encouraging support system* reminds scholars with the words of encouragement, moral support, financial, and with all the love and concern from their loved ones help them push themselves to continue despite the adversities experienced. Further, the spiritual support like prayers for the scholars to successfully finish the degree becomes vital.

Matrix 6. *Experiences of Bukidnon State University Graduate Student*

Scholars in Family- Related theme

Emergent Theme	Sub-themes	Graduate student scholars experience with their families while studying at Bukidnon State University
<i>Encouraging support system</i>	<i>Emotionally and mentally disturbed being away from the family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Having a hard time struggled emotionally having disturbed with loneliness being away from the family</i>
	<i>Faith in God</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Painful experience being far from the family</i> • <i>Trust GOD</i>
	<i>Motivated and inspired by the family despite the hard times being away from the family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Goal-driven</i> • <i>Motivated and inspired by the family members to pursue and finish the degree</i>

Correspondingly, the scholars were motivated and inspired as well as encouraged by their family members to combat the loneliness of being away, just to give a brighter future and better life to their respective families. The motivation to gain professional growth development necessary for the job promotion and to have a higher salary to sustain the needs of their respective families becomes essential.



9. Findings

Based on the analysis of the data, the findings are the following:

1. From the lived experiences of BukSU-DepEd graduate student scholars in finishing their masters' degree, six major themes emerged. These themes include: *Challenging yet Fulfilling Student-Learning Experiences; Satisfying Learning Experience with Well-rounded Graduate Faculty; Heart-warming Learning Experience with the BukSU Administration; Impressive support from the DepEd Administration; Pressured Learning Experience; and Encouraging Support System.*

1.1 Under the *student-related aspect* the BukSU scholars underwent *challenging yet fulfilling experience*. These experiences include their struggles to comply and beat deadlines, cope with academic requirements, financial pressures, working in teams and fulfilling experience.

1.2 Under the *faculty-related aspect* the BukSU scholars have satisfying learning experience with *well-rounded graduate faculty of the BukSU*. Their experiences revealed that they are exposed to qualified and good-natured graduate faculty; with motivating and inspiring faculty's professional background; skilled mentors; and supportive and expert advisers.

1.3 Under the *BukSU administration-related aspect*, the scholars revealed a *heart-warming learning experience with the BukSU Administration*. These experiences include considerable monetary benefits and moral support from the BukSU Administration, the ease of gathering data through BukSU facilitation, the sufficient although non-satisfying student services, and the assurance for promotion due to their research.

1.4 Under the *DepEd administration-related aspect*, the scholars experienced a *satisfying support from the DepEd*. These are felt on the DepEd's facilitating to make the implementation of research easy and the provision for guaranteed assistance.

1.5 Under *work-related aspect*, the scholars encountered being *pressured in their learning experiences*. They met challenging experiences like multitasking, getting disturbed and worried, having problems, job promotion and professional growth.

1.6 Under *family-related aspect*, the scholars experienced an *encouraging support system*. Their families encouraged them when they are emotionally and mentally disturbed being far from the family, encouraging them to have faith in God, and motivating and inspiring them despite the hard times away from the family.

2. A model reflecting meaningful learning experiences of the BukSU scholars is designed. The model shows the six major themes that were experienced by the scholars.

10. Conclusions General Statement

The BukSu-DepEd graduate scholars encountered positive, challenging, and fulfilling experiences *before, during, and after* their scholarship grant. These experiences were lived through by the scholars in relation with students, faculty, BSU administration, DepEd administration, work, and family.

11. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the study based from the findings:

1. Since the DepEd scholars experienced *being pressured in their learning* at BuKSU there is a need for the graduate school program heads together with their faculty to meet and study the courses offered, the course syllabi, and the requirements in every course so that they could agree to lessen the burdens of the students in terms of course requirements.

1.1 Since there are some student scholars who did not finish within a given time frame, BukSU's graduate programs could trace these scholars and extend guidance and assistance.

1.2 The BukSU graduate program faculty could strengthen their instruction, especially in research, to prepare the graduate student scholar comprehensively in doing individual research studies; exposure to research presentations and research journal writing.

1.3 The BukSU administration need to continue the scholarship program to deserving teachers and administrators in the field as this is the best extension services that BukSU could offer.

1.4 The DepEd administration needs to create a selection committee to monitor the performance of the DepEd scholar to ensure that they graduate. Qualification for nominee should not only be on awardee but those that have Zero Unit in M.A. priority should also be given to IP's.

1.5 The DepEd administration could unburden the scholars especially the administrators, from their work responsibilities in their respective schools so that the scholars could fully concentrate in their graduate work.

1.6 The DepEd scholars may prepare themselves and their families on the possible problems and challenges that they will face once the scholarship is on the process.

2. The model could be used to enhance the policy of the administration and the quality of the delivery of instruction to achieve a 100% graduation rate among BukSU DepEd graduate student scholars.

References

- Freeman, R. M., & Rust, F. (2009). Teacher research and the problem of practice. *Teachers College Record*, 111(8), 1882-1893.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among the Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. (pp. 77-83).
- Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as a phenomenologist views it. In: Valle, R. S. & King, M. (1978). *Existential Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology*. Open University Press: New York.
- Millar, J. (Eds.). *Improving Science Education: The Contribution of Research*. (Pp. 94–109). McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Donelson, R. (2011). *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 12, 210-222.
- Fischer, G., & Ostwald, J. (2002). Transcending the information given: Designing learning environments for informed participation. Paper presented at the Proceedings of ICCE 2002 International Conference on Computers in Education, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (2013). *Teachers Development and educational change*. New York: Routledge.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Fullan, M. (2016). *The new meaning of educational change*. (5th ed.). New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- Hunter, K. H., & Devine, K. (2016). Doctoral students' emotional exhaustion and intentions to leave academia. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 11, 35-61. Retrieved from <http://ijds.org/Volume11/IJDSv11p035-061Hunter2198.pdf>
- Jarvis, P. (2009) *International Journal of Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning*. 2009, Vol. 2 Issue 1, p1-14.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G.P. (2013). *New Developments in Goal Setting and Task Performance*. Psychology Press: New York.
- Lovitts, B. (2001). *Leaving the ivory tower: The causes and consequences of departure from doctoral study*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Luthans, F. (2011). *Organizational behavior* (12th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Lutz, K. (2014). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in an Inclusion Classroom*. Retrieved from [http://psed516diversityproject.wikispaces.com/Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in an Inclusion Classroom](http://psed516diversityproject.wikispaces.com/Maslow's+Hierarchy+of+Needs+in+an+Inclusion+Classroom) by Kaitlin Lutz.
- MacKeracher, D. (2010). *Making sense of adult learning*. (2nd ed.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G., (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication, 262 pages (4th edition), ISBN 9781412924894, USD \$47.95 (paperback), ISBN 9781412924887, USD \$90.95 (hardback).

Maslow, A. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper.

McKinsey & Company (2010). *Closing the talent gap: Attracting and retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching*. New York: Author; McKinsey & Company (2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*. New York: Author; Fleischman, H.L., Hopstock.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Oehlkers, R. A., & Gibson, C. C. (2001). Learner support experienced by RNs in a collaborative distance RN to BSN program. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 32(6), 266–273.

Spaulding, L. S., & Rockinson-Szapkiw, A. J. (2012). Hearing their voices: Factors doctoral candidates attribute to their persistence. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 7, 199-219. Retrieved from [http://ijds.org/Volume7/IJDSv7p199-219 Spaulding334.pdf](http://ijds.org/Volume7/IJDSv7p199-219%20Spaulding334.pdf)

Sweitzer, V. (2009). Towards a theory of doctoral student professional identity development: A developmental networks approach. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(1), 1-33.