

Research Paper

Local Train Commuting Impacts Students' Academic Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Urban transportation, particularly local trains, significantly shapes students' daily routines and academic performance in densely populated areas. This study employs surveys to investigate how local train commuting impacts students' academic outcomes, revealing disruptions in study routines and concentration levels despite enhanced accessibility, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to mitigate adverse effects and inform policy improvements for urban educational environments.

Keywords: *Urban Transportation, Local Train Commuting, Student Academic Performance, Transportation Challenges*

Urban transportation systems are essential components of daily life for students residing in densely populated areas, providing crucial connectivity between residential areas and educational institutions. Local trains, in particular, serve as vital conduits that facilitate mobility across urban landscapes. However, the intricacies of commuting via local trains introduce complexities that can significantly impact students' academic experiences.

This study aims to explore how local train commuting influences students' academic outcomes, focusing on factors such as commute duration, frequency, comfort levels, and perceived stress. Commuting via local trains often entails navigating crowded platforms, adhering to strict schedules, and managing various stressors that may disrupt students' study routines and overall well-being. These challenges can potentially affect attendance, punctuality, concentration, and ultimately, academic performance.

Despite the critical role of transportation in shaping students' daily lives, there remains a gap in understanding the direct implications of local train commuting on educational outcomes. This research seeks to fill this gap by providing insights into the nuanced ways transportation dynamics influence students' academic journeys.

Understanding the impacts of local train commuting on students' academic experiences is essential for fostering environments that support academic achievement and well-being in urban settings. This study endeavors to shed light on these dynamics, aiming to inform initiatives that enhance student outcomes and educational experiences amidst the challenges posed by urban transportation systems.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

The majority of research studies on commuter students generated qualitative evidence that increased understanding of commuter student engagement and their overall HE experiences. The challenges faced by commuter students, such as costs, overcrowding, delays, and unavoidable lateness were found to decrease academic and social engagement with the university (Baik et al., 2015; Thomas & Jones, 2017). Purcell found (as cited in BIS, 2014) that students who lived at home were less able to engage in extra-curricular activities and were less satisfied with the extra-curricular opportunities at their institution. Similarly, commuting was associated with lower academic and social integration - a principal component of a strong sense of belonging and a maintenance of academic goals, which is a mainstream driver for student engagement (Kuh et al., 2001). Commuting reduces the opportunity to spend time on campus. Hence, commuter students have to make a conscious decision to engage by evaluating the gains of engaging with the university activities over the losses of a long and expensive commute. For instance, commuter students may prioritize their attendance to lectures over extra-curricular activities (e.g., employability workshops), or decide to commute to the university on the days they have several taught sessions but avoid commuting on the days with very sparse timetabled sessions (Thomas & Jones, 2017). Commuter students can also face time pressures and anxiety fostered by lateness. Some students reported that late arrivals can result in denied entry to lectures, which can be especially problematic during the assessment period (Thomas & Jones, 2017). Kingston's internal evaluation generated evidence showing that longer commute predicted lower course overall satisfaction in internal surveys (Butt & Hiely-Rayner, 2017). The analysis suggested that students who commute from home are less likely to be engaged with their provider and hence less likely to express satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A survey was conducted to investigate how local train commuting impacts students' academic outcomes, focusing on commute duration, frequency, comfort, and stress.

Hypothesis

Local train commuting adversely impacts students' academic outcomes in multiple ways. Specifically, the hypothesis is that:

- 1. Commute Duration and Fatigue:** Longer daily commutes result in increased physical and mental fatigue, reducing students' available time for studying and engaging in academic activities. This fatigue impairs concentration and information retention, leading to diminished academic performance.
- 2. Comfort and Stress:** Commuting in overcrowded trains causes significant discomfort and stress. The physical strain and heightened anxiety from navigating crowded conditions negatively affect students' mood and mental state, which impedes their readiness to participate in academic activities and can lead to chronic stress affecting their overall well-being.
- 3. Punctuality Issues:** Frequent delays and inconsistencies in train schedules disrupt students' punctuality, leading to missed classes, important announcements, and academic discussions. This disruption negatively affects learning processes and increases anxiety and embarrassment, further impairing academic performance.
- 4. Mental Health Impact:** The cumulative stress from commuting-related challenges contributes to mental health issues such as anxiety and burnout. These mental health challenges decrease motivation, energy levels, and academic engagement, ultimately

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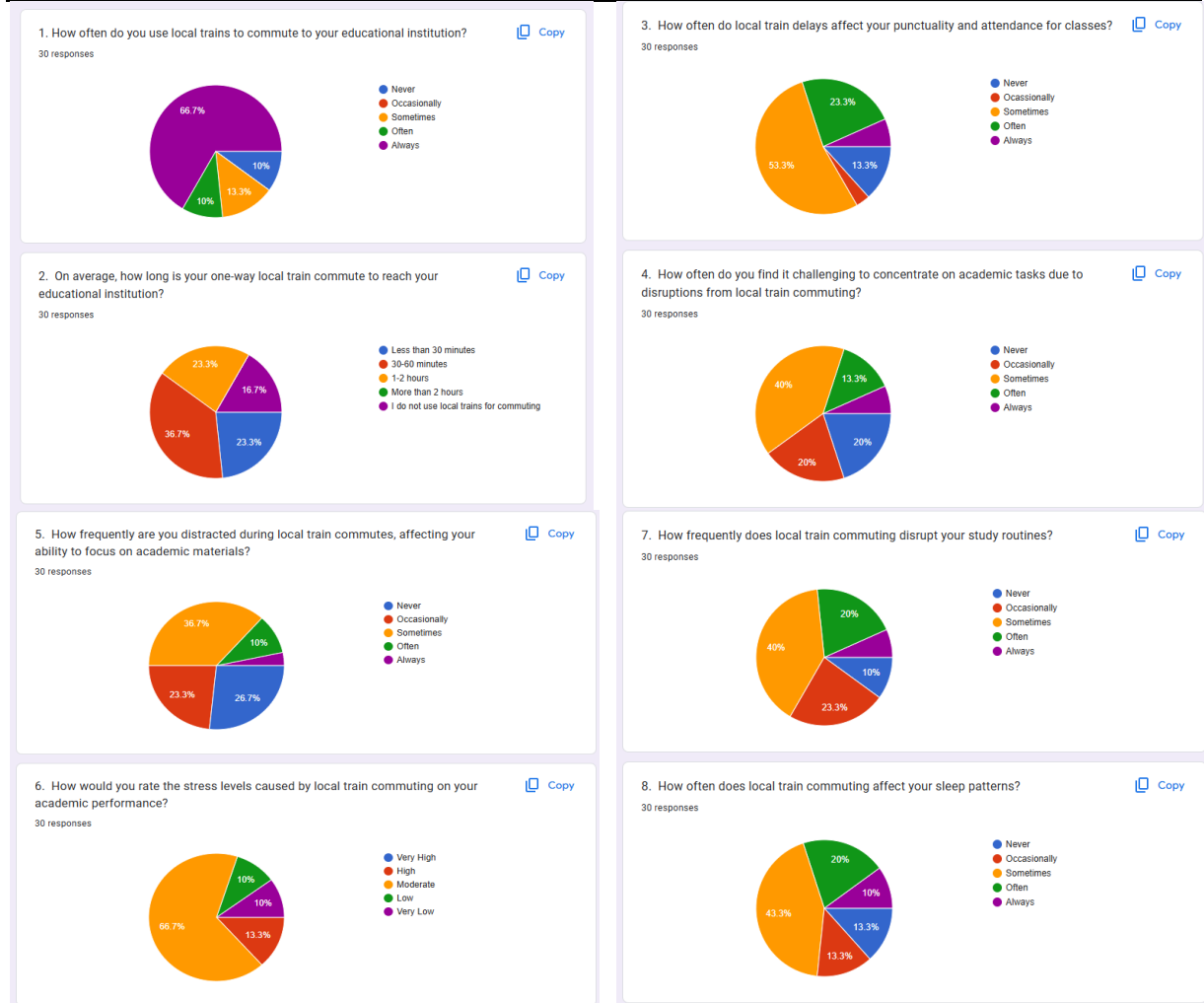
impacting students' academic outcomes and overall satisfaction with their educational experience.

In summary, the hypothesis posits that local train commuting introduces several stressors that negatively affect students' academic performance through fatigue, stress, punctuality problems, and mental health challenges.

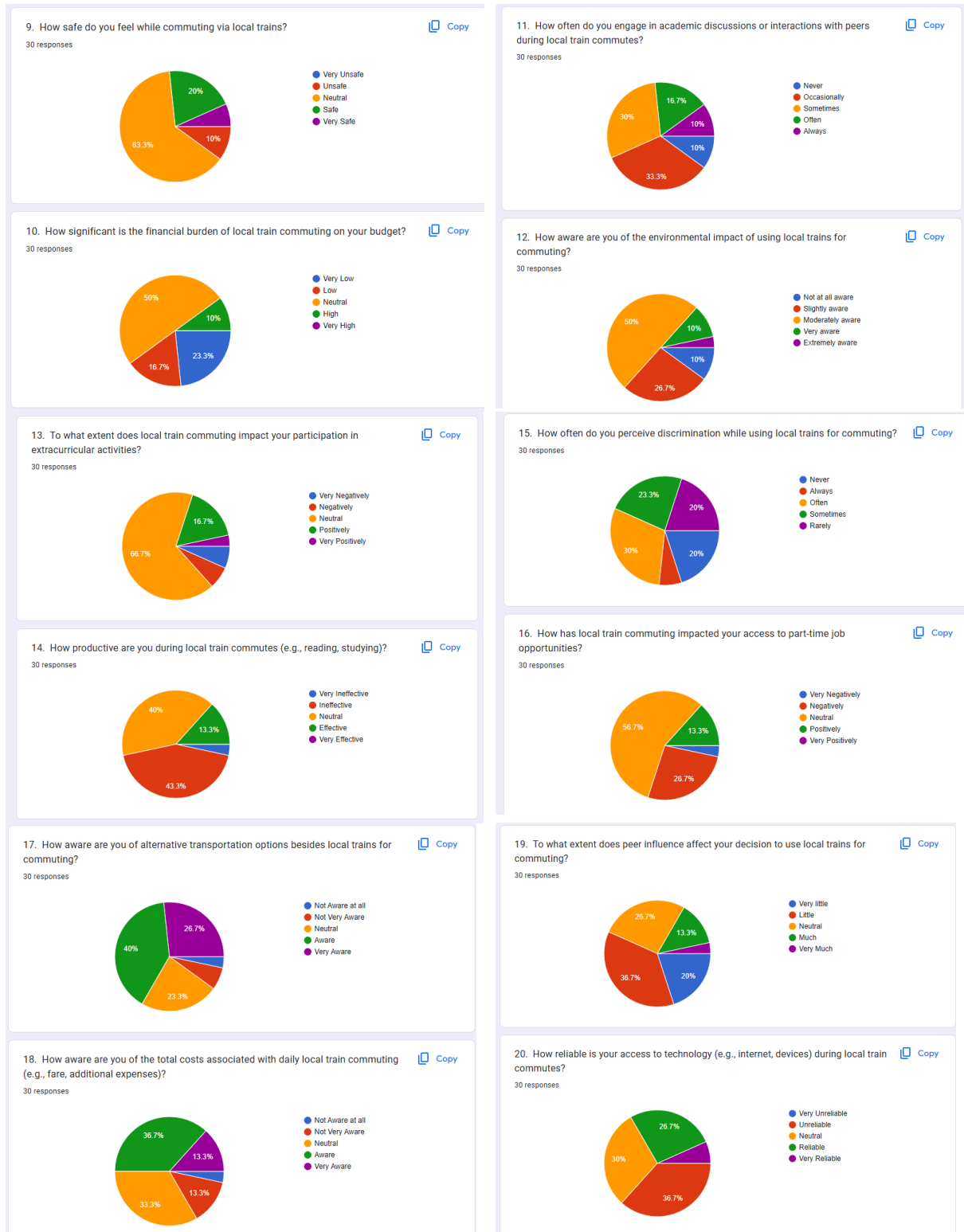
TOOLS

A survey was conducted in online mode through Google forms and distributed link of the survey is: <https://forms.gle/1fmA9gN6uKyvA53i9>

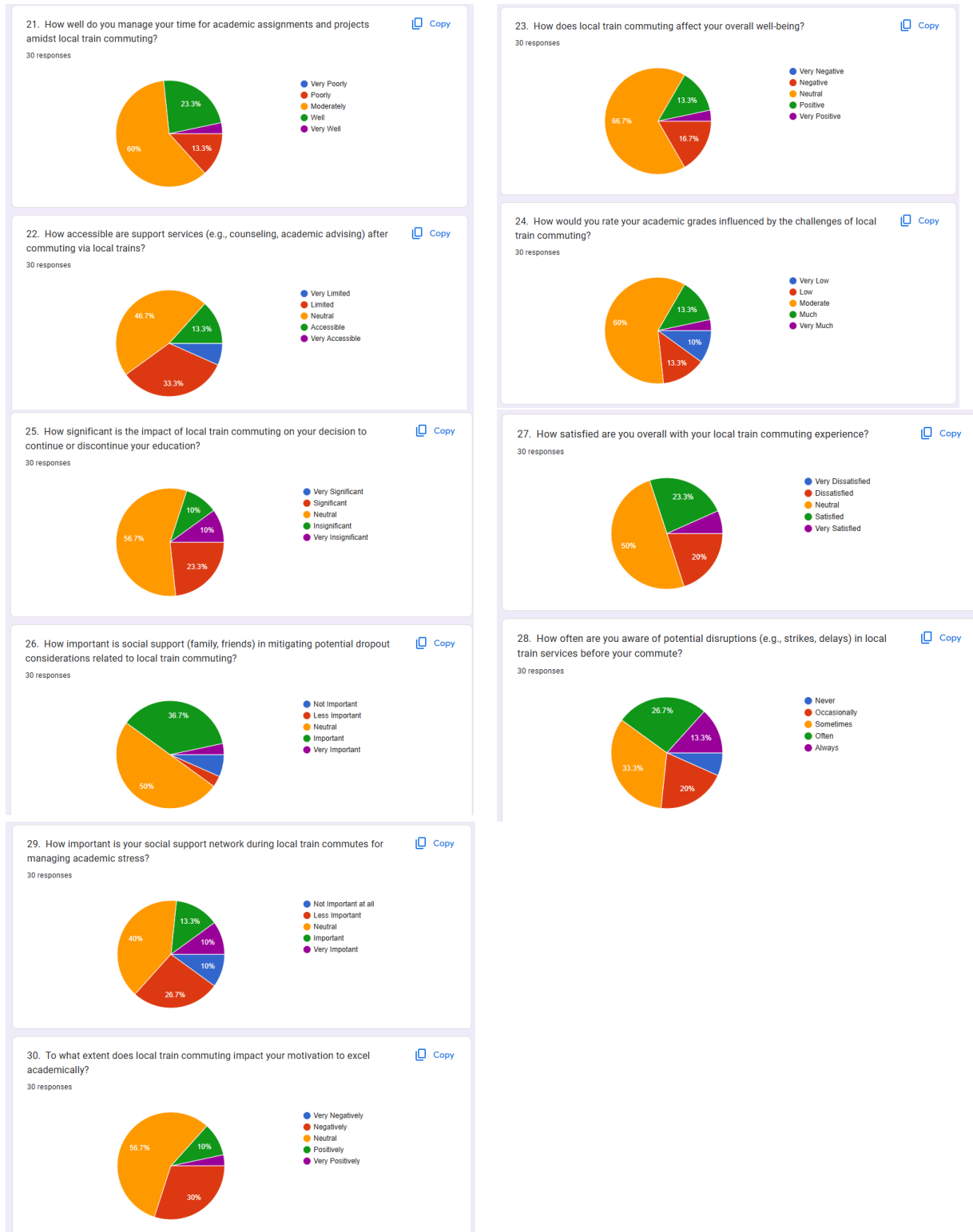
RESULT



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DISCUSSION

The impact of local train commuting on students' academic performance is a multifaceted issue that affects various dimensions of their educational experience. The survey data, complemented by a detailed pie chart analysis, sheds light on several key factors influencing students' academic outcomes.

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The data indicates that 40% of students experience negative academic impacts due to the length of their daily commute. Long commutes not only reduce the time available for studying and engaging in academic activities but also contribute to fatigue. This fatigue can diminish students' ability to concentrate during classes and while studying at home, resulting in a lower retention of information and reduced academic performance. The time spent commuting could otherwise be utilized for productive academic activities, such as reviewing lecture materials, completing assignments, or participating in study groups. The physical and mental exhaustion associated with prolonged travel can also lead to decreased motivation, making it harder for students to stay focused on their academic goals.

Another significant factor, reported by 25% of students, is the discomfort and stress caused by overcrowded trains. Commuting in such conditions can be physically taxing, contributing to physical discomfort and heightened stress levels. The crowded environment often leads to anxiety and discomfort, which can negatively affect students' mood and mental state upon arrival at their educational institutions. This discomfort can reduce their readiness and ability to engage fully in academic activities, such as participating in discussions or focusing on lectures. The psychological impact of commuting in crowded conditions should not be underestimated, as it can lead to chronic stress, affecting students' overall mental health and well-being.

Punctuality is a critical aspect of academic success, and 20% of students identified issues with punctuality as a major concern. Delays and inconsistencies in train schedules often lead to students arriving late for classes, which disrupts not only their learning process but also that of their peers. Frequent tardiness can result in missing important announcements, lectures, and discussions, which are essential components of the learning experience. Additionally, being late can cause anxiety and embarrassment, further detracting from a student's ability to concentrate and participate fully in academic activities. Over time, these issues can accumulate, leading to a significant decline in academic performance and overall satisfaction with their educational experience.

The mental health implications of commuting stress are significant, as highlighted by the 15% of students who reported that commuting negatively impacts their mental well-being. The stress of navigating crowded platforms, dealing with delays, and the constant pressure of adhering to strict schedules can lead to anxiety and other mental health issues. This stress is exacerbated by the fear of missing classes or important academic engagements, which can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and decreased self-esteem. Chronic stress can also lead to burnout, characterized by a lack of motivation and energy, which further impedes academic performance and overall well-being. The mental health challenges faced by commuter students are an important aspect that institutions need to address to support student success.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that local train commuting significantly impacts students' academic performance, highlighting the need for targeted government intervention. Long commutes lead to physical and mental fatigue, reducing students' ability to focus and participate in academic activities. Overcrowded trains exacerbate stress and discomfort, further diminishing students' readiness and performance. Additionally, punctuality issues caused by inconsistent train schedules result in missed classes and increased anxiety, disrupting the learning process. The cumulative effect of these challenges is further compounded by mental

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health issues such as decreased motivation and burnout, affecting overall academic success and well-being.

To address these issues, several government policies are crucial. Firstly, investing in the expansion and modernization of local train networks can alleviate overcrowding and improve service reliability, thereby reducing commuting stress. Secondly, implementing flexible academic schedules and hybrid learning options can help accommodate students' commuting challenges, reducing the impact on their academic performance. Providing transportation subsidies for students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, can ease financial burdens and make commuting more affordable. Additionally, establishing mental health support programs, such as counseling and stress management workshops, can help students cope with the psychological impacts of commuting. Enforcing safety and comfort standards for public transportation will also ensure a better commuting experience. Finally, encouraging community engagement and feedback on transportation services can lead to more responsive and effective policies. By adopting these measures, governments and educational institutions can enhance students' academic experiences and overall well-being, addressing the multifaceted challenges of urban commuting.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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