

## The meaning of learning on the Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage

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*The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of travellers on the Camino de Santiago in order to find out the pattern of their travel lived experience and the meaning of learning experience. For this purpose, eight Korean travellers were selected for the study; the study was performed using the hermeneutic phenomenological method. The findings are as follows: First, the pattern of lived experience - 'the four Existentials, lived time, space, body and human relation' - on the Camino de Santiago was summarized into 'slow and composure', 'meditation and spirituality', 'companionship', and 'the dance of self-mortification through physical pain' in the four existential aspects of time, space, relationship, and body. Second, the lived experience of participants had profound meaning as a learning experience in terms of biographical learning, the theory of autopoiesis, and spiritual learning.*

**Keywords:** Learning experience, Lived experience, Four Existentials, The Camino de Santiago

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## **Introduction**

This study explores the lived experience of travellers on the Camino de Santiago in order to find out the pattern of their travel lived experience and the meaning of learning experience. Travel has been an important learning tool for those in search of ‘oneself’ throughout the history of humankind. Travel is not just a simple voyage, but consists of learning experiences that involve transformative learning. Travel is chosen by oneself, and all activities in the journey are self-directed, thus making it a self-directed reflection. Today, travel allows the modern people to become ‘time-machines’ in the busy daily grind to take a step away from the complicated world of reality and to take some time to look back on life without any time restriction. John Locke says that the last step of education is travel and travel completes an individual as a gentleman (Goh, 2005). Also, Lindstrom (2011) has discovered that travellers ‘eliminate individual prejudices, awaken the sentimentality, develop confidence and independence, and undergo the examination to discover their true selves, the trust in others, and the behavior-oriented approach for individual change’ (p. 228), after the travel experience. Travel leads to the experience of nature, freedom, and philosophy of self-esteem. Hence, travel has various meanings in terms of education/learning.

The Camino de Santiago is a trail for travel on foot. While people are walking, they observe and investigate local architectures, language, culture, attitude of people, etc. It seems as if they are an amateur anthropologist. The Camino de Santiago is the way of the gospel walked by James the Apostle. The Camino de Santiago itself is a spiritual way and a way of self-mortification that engenders physical and spiritual pain while walking for more than a month. Nevertheless, many people have gone on this route of self-mortification in the past. It is because this way leads to the unknown world and is the way of experience of life that offers them the feelings of loneliness, longing, warmth, rumination of regrets, recovery, consolation, and self-discovery. For many participants, the Camino de Santiago leads to maturation. Furthermore, various people pursue communication and coexistence, reconciliation, and sharing for national and international peace on the journey.

The Camino de Santiago brings various learning experiences and discovery of oneself. For these reasons, there have been studies on the

travel experiences on the Camino de Santiago (Gower, 2002; Hames, 2008; Katsilometes, 2010; Sawicki, 2009) However, these studies were primarily focused on the spiritual and psychological aspects and therefore could not explore the lived experience of travellers on the Camino de Santiago in terms of various learning experiences. This current study explored the travel experience of travellers on the Camino de Santiago in order to discuss the pattern of their travel experiences and the meaning of their learning experiences.

## **The Camino de Santiago**

The Camino de Santiago is about 800 km long leading to Santiago de Compostela, the city with Saint James' tomb, to the northwest of Spain. Santiago is the Spanish name for Saint James. Compostela means the field of stars. According to local Christian beliefs, Santiago is one of the three sacred places of the world. There are other sacred places like Mecca, which are sacred for a different tradition. The Camino de Santiago was an important path of cultural exchange between the Iberian Peninsula and other European regions during the medieval times.

The Camino de Santiago is the Catholic route that has been walked since the 11th century for religious reasons. As it was walked by many religious travellers in the 10th and 11th centuries, it became the largest religious way along with Jerusalem and Rome in the 12th century (The Confraternity of Saint James, 2011). The way of Saint James reached its heights between the 11th and 14th centuries. The travel on the Camino de Santiago with over 1,000 years of history began to decrease after the Religious Reformation; it saw the least travellers in the 18th century. The travel on the Camino de Santiago resumed around the end of World War II. The way to Santiago in France was declared as the Way of European Culture by the European Union in 1987, and was also designated as World Cultural Heritage, including the Camino de Santiago in Spain in 1993. Travellers began to increase as the EU promoted the Camino de Santiago as the symbol of European integration. Although the number of travellers decreased compared to those of medieval times, this journey is still popular today.

The Camino de Santiago today is developing in a less religious way. Non-Christians and people in various age groups understand the meaning

of this way based on various motivations and purposes and thus travel the way in order to experience the meaning. Their purposes include reflection of life, self-examination, freedom, meeting new people, comfort, religion, change, overcoming crisis, remedy, and new challenge.

### **Theoretical frameworks: Learning experience through the lived experience on the Camino de Santiago**

The travel on the Camino de Santiago is not a simple voyage, but a learning experience that consists of transformative learning. It also brings passion to life and catalyzes spiritual awakening and development. In this study, the learning experience refers to the participants' cognitive, emotional, and physical experience in the interaction with themselves or others in the time and space on the Camino de Santiago. Four Existentials, lived time, space, body and human relation on the Camino de Santiago are the participants' process of learning. In particular, the travel on the Camino de Santiago is the process of learning experience through the body. The physical experience is learned through the experience of space, time, and environment with others. This study examines the participants' learning experience from the lived experience for the Camino de Santiago in terms of biographical learning, autopoiesis, and spirituality learning.

#### *Biographical learning*

Biographical study is a type of narrative study, where the researcher records the life experience of a person. Biographical study biographically records the personal experience that gave value to life. It discusses how the life process of an individual develops through the interaction with individual beings and social situations. It is also the process of examination of personal life and the process of contemplation of overall cultural meaning in the biography that gives historical and social meaning to life in the more inclusive context for the methodological exploration (Choi, 2006). Biographical learning occurs not only in the introversion, but also in the communication and interaction with others as well as in the social context. Biographical learning is the self-determinant and self-reproductive achievement of active beings that actively overcome/resolve problems in life and develop constantly (Alheit & Dausien, 2002).

This study interpreted and examined the participants' travel experience on the Camino de Santiago in terms of biographical learning. They intended to look back on themselves and find the 'meaning of life' through the journey. They walked with the essential questions on how they have lived, how they will live, and how they should live for a good life. The journey became a turning point that changed their lives.

### *Autopoiesis*

The concept of autopoiesis, which is the combination of *autos* (self) and *poiein* (to produce, to create) in Greek, was first created by Maturana and Varela (1980, 1987), the cognitive biologists from Chile. The concept of autopoiesis of a biological organism expanded to the study of Luhmann, who studied autopoiesis as a social system in order to re-explore the meaning of autopoiesis in the learners' psychological system and the meaning of autopoiesis in the educational system (Moon, Han, & You, 2012). Living organisms and the environment stimulate one another and respond to the stimulation within the scope of autopoiesis (Maturana, 2002; Maturana & Varela, 1987). Autopoiesis is the mechanism of how a living organism produces itself through the dynamics of a system in which it currently exists, and learning occurs in the process of learning embodiment that constantly builds one's world based on the history of self-experience (Kim, 2007). In this study, the theory of autopoiesis refers to the process of building one's world as the travellers on the Camino de Santiago with different experiences by walking alone or together in order to influence the experience of one another. They decide the path of voyage and experience autopoiesis through ceaseless changes throughout the process of travel.

### *Spirituality learning*

The pilgrimage is the spiritual training to broaden one's spiritual insight and the profound long-term voyage that has the ability to change the travellers through a continuation of challenge (Boers, 2007). The pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago are likely to experience a spiritual renewal and growth through the pilgrimage. Spiritual growth is the opening of oneself from the self-centred worldview to others and the universal worldview (You, 2012).

All humans have the possibility of spiritual experience; according to

Maslow, the peak experience is the experience of the most elevated satisfaction and joy that entails the deepest immersion and ecstasy in life. Spirituality occurs as the change of life and leads to spirituality learning as transformative learning. The spiritual lived experience on the Camino de Santiago is spirituality learning. The participating travellers on the Camino de Santiago discover the changed ego through self-mortification on the way. The new experience of awakening re-structures the previous experience and makes them different. More specifically, 'awakening' reflects the transition of life.

## **Research design**

This study explores the experience of travellers on the Camino de Santiago in order to find out the pattern of their travel lived experience and the meaning of learning experience. For this purpose, the hermeneutic phenomenological method of van Manen (1990) was applied. In other words, the participants' travel experience was captured as phenomena (descriptive phenomenological methodology), and the meaning and feeling of their subjective experience were analyzed through the description of philosophical, literary, and artistic interpretation (hermeneutic phenomenology), to explore the meaning of travel and the learning experience brought by the travel experience. This methodology is appropriate for several purposes: first, the travel experience on the Camino de Santiago is the walking voyage using the body for the experience through all five senses. It is made possible by the personal experience of the participants themselves through the four existential bodies, which are the lived experience of time, space, body and relation. Second, the various forms of mythical, religious, artistic, and linguistic experiences explore the method of reflecting the character of self-identity (van Manen, 1990). The Camino de Santiago has myths, religion, art, and language, and the people who walk on it experience diverse people, myths, culture, and language beyond the religious pilgrimage of the past. Third, hermeneutic phenomenology has the purpose to explore the meaning in language or conversation (Patton, 2002). It is also the tool that determines the essence of human experience, and includes travel records, literature, poetry, and art.

The participants of this study (see Table 1) are people who have lived as time-machines that only run forward. They are adult learners who

took some time off from their busy lives for the transition of life through the travel lived experience on the Camino de Santiago. The sampling methods were criterion-based selection and purposive selection. The occupations of the participants included student, housewife, office worker, and retiree. The results were saturated when eight participants were interviewed, who had 1-3 travel experiences on the Camino de Santiago and whose ages were between mid-20s and mid-70s. The genders and ages of the participating travellers were broadly set for the appropriateness of data collection so as to find the common experience in their various travel experiences.

**Table 1:** *The participants*

Name	Sex/Age	Occupation	Trips/Date	Schedule
Enzo	Male, mid-20s	College student	1 time/Jul 2012	Compostela, 32 days
Blanca	Female, early 30s	Freelance instructor	1 time/Feb 2013	Compostela, 30 days
Jessica	Female, early 30s	Graduate student	1 time/Jul 2012	Finisterre, 37 days
Frida	Female, early 50s	Bookkeeping assistant & housewife	1 time/May 2012	Finisterre, 34 days
Camilo	Male, mid-50s	President	1 time/Jun 2011	Finisterre, 34 days
Mario	Male, early 60s	Retired	1 time/ Oct 2009	Finisterre, 31 days
Feria	Male, late 60s	Retired	1 time/May 2010	Finisterre, 25 days
Dante	Male, mid-70s	Retired	3 times/Apr 2008, May 2009, Jun 2011	Finisterre, 32, 34, 30 days

Note: The researchers gave each participant a Spanish nickname.

The researchers used the participants' observation logs, transcription, and official documents, and resources, such as poetry, novels, and

photographs, were applied in the process of interpretation. I walked the path seven times for 11 days with the participants, walking approximately 300 km during four months for rapport and in-depth interviews. Each participant was interviewed one to three times. The observation involved non-structuralized questions.

The analysis and interpretation of resources applied the method of hermeneutic phenomenology of van Manen (1990). Our process of analysis first described the participants' phenomena of travel experience as itself through bracketing our pre-understandings (i.e., *epoche*). Second, we read the transcribed text several times, focusing on the words or sentences that denoted the basic meaning or significance of text and the repetitively used vocabularies, topics, and scenes. Third, 'open coding' was performed for 'categorization' in order to categorize the coded data. Fourth, in-depth coding was performed to classify them into the four existential bodies (time, space, relationship, and body). Finally, we observed the phenomena and used the language of participants to capture the liveliness and specifics of experience, profundity of meaning, and quality of thinking. Moreover, we used various phenomenological resources, such as metaphors, poetic terms, literature, and photography, in order to discover the essential meaning of travel experience of participants through several writing processes.

## **Findings**

The purpose of this study was to explore the pattern of travel lived experience of the participants on the Camino de Santiago based on the four forms of existentials, which are lived experience of time, space, body, and relation in order to find the meaning of lived experience. It was also to explore the meaning of learning experience through the travel lived experience. The results of this study are shown below in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Patterns and learning experience of travel lived experience on the Camino de Santiago

Four Existentials	Pattern of Lived Experience	Learning Experience	Transformative Lived Experience of Life
Lived time (Temporality)	Time-machine: Busy life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Empty</li> <li>• Meaning of physical pain: Dance of self-mortification toward awakening</li> <li>• Companionship</li> <li>• Return to the origin</li> <li>• Life: New beginning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away from seduction, broad mind</li> <li>• Recovery of self-esteem, breaking</li> <li>• Gratitude, empty, composure and slow</li> <li>• Simplicity, contemplation</li> <li>• Confidence, love</li> <li>• Missionary of hope, volunteer and sharing</li> </ul>
	Time of conflicts		
	Time of immersion		
	Finite time and infinite time		
Lived space (Spatiality)	Open space: Desire toward the origin		
	Space of fear		
	Space of solitude and loneliness		
	Space of romance		
	Space of meditation and spirituality		
Lived body (Corporeality)	Physical pain		
	Importance of what is essential and basic		
	Embodied body		
	Tears		
Lived human relation (Relationality or Communalilty)	Relationships you want to stay away from		
	Unfamiliar relationships, Relationships of feeling and silence		
	Intimate relationships: Mutual dependence		
	Independence		
	Unfinished relationships: New network		

The participants took some time away from home, work, school, and a mundane life in order to have the opportunity of examination to look back on themselves through the travel lived. The pattern of travel lived experience based on the four existentials and the meaning of learning experience are as follows:

*The pattern of four existentials of Travel Lived Experience*

The meaning of time and space from the phenomenological view is explained as the time and space of internal lived experience or ‘intentionality’ in the subjective and cognitive realms. Our body does not just exist in time and space, but dwell in time and space. Time and space are lived. We are moving toward time and space. Our body is not merely in space, but toward space and adjust ourselves on the qualitative time and space so as to bring and embody our bodies into them in order to expand the scope of existence (life) (Jo, 2012, p. 197). The bodies of participants on the voyage exist as they dwell in time and space.

The “Lived time (Temporality)” is subjective time and refers to the lived experiential time of a certain situation that is given personally. Therefore, the participants on the Camino de Santiago experience the length or feeling of time differently according to their situations. The aspect of ‘Time-machine’ of the participants’ lived experience of time is the time of routine life they lived before traveling to the Camino de Santiago.

I have been a workaholic. I even forgot what it was to rest (Dante) I never slept with the light off on weekdays. I took naps or slept with my laptop in my arms, or went to work at 4 AM. (Jessica)

The participants walked fast with the joy of freedom away from mundane life, and physical pain came as time passed. In this process, they learned that ‘physical pain dominates their thinking’ and the ‘composure of slowness’. In terms of the aspect of ‘Time of conflict’, they had to readjust the habit of time on the way. The physical pain and the failure to control time brings the conflict of ‘why am I here; I want to go back’. However, the participants explore their introversion in the time of conflict.

I was so excited that I was away from the tedious daily grind. My

heart was pounding. I could not wait to walk. I wanted to start walking fast. I ignored the advice to apply Vaseline to my feet. A few days later, the entire feet were filled with blisters. I wanted to give up and had all kinds of thoughts. There was a person whose feet were ragged over the Pyrenees. The skin was not just peeled, but completely separated. (Frida)

The participants are physically and spiritually embodied over time and are able to control time for the 'time of flow'. They project themselves into the future. The form of existence becomes prospective.

I had a big fight with my son after walking for about 15 days. We had different opinions and steps. We did not listen to each other. We walked separately. We took time to think and understood each other better. We were able to control time and be engrossed in walking. (Camilo)

However, they feel that they have not changed much at the final destination. They have already changed and the changed selves have already become themselves. The destination is not the end, but the time of another beginning. The participants can have the time to look into their introversion in the experience of stagnant time. They feel 'the finiteness and infiniteness of time' simultaneously.

The 'Lived space (Spatiality)' is the space in which we experience and feel, but it can be unfamiliar or familiar according to situations or can be different from person to person. Heidegger says that the space of current existence (Dasein) is existentially 'the elimination of distance-Entfernen' and 'the openness of direction-Ausrichtung' (Heidegger, 1927) 'Open space' is the space where the participants experience freedom in the open space of Santiago. Also, open space generally consists of one-on-one experience between oneself and the space. It is the space where one wants to contemplate as a free being separate from other.

I don't like the flowers in pots. I feel sorry that they are confined. They are just like me. They have to be planted in the open land. The flowers and plants on the way...Freedom. It was so good. I didn't want to come back home. (Frida)

The aspect of 'Space of fear' is the space of fear due to unfamiliarity,

but the space of serenity and meaning. In terms of the aspect of 'Space of solitude and loneliness', solitude and communication are the two aspects of the same phenomenon. The participants could get lost and discover the ego through introverted communication with themselves in the space of solitude and loneliness, where they walked the long trail of the desert all by themselves under the hot sun. The aspect of 'Space of romance' is the space of romance that is comfortable, enjoyable, and happy. The aspect of 'Space of meditation and spirituality' is the space of meditation and spiritual awakening as they focus on the way so they do not miss the arrows along the path.

The compulsion that I might die. I was anxious until I found the arrow. The sense of crisis stimulated my nerves so I could not be idle... It eliminated all distracting thoughts. There was nothing else to do besides walking. (Mario)

In the 'Lived body (Corporeality)', the physical experience is the subjective lived experience that is the basic pattern of human experience. This is the overall phenomenon that conveys the mystery of the most basic and direct experience. The body is the symbolic indicator that evaluates the quality of the given time and space (Merleau-Ponty, 1968), and the participants embody themselves in order to expand the scope of existence (life). They experience the approach toward the "l'être-au-monde, in-der-welt-sein" by leading the interaction with others. The word "l'être-au-monde" means they are in the world and also are advancing the world at the same time.

'Physical pain' is the experience of conflicts and regrets. Walking 20-40 km a day in the unfamiliar space and time engenders physical pain as the body is not embodied yet. However, the participants do not give up, but rather overcome themselves because they have the existential will to change. In terms of the 'Importance of what is essential and basic', walking every day is the key as the body is tired. They communicate with themselves in silence by asking the basic questions, such as, "Would my feet be OK?" "Would I arrive at the lodging safely?", and "Are my feet OK; can I walk?" The 'Embodied body' brings the experience of oneness of body and mind. The body is not just in the space but moves toward space. The oneness of body and mind transcends the present and projects oneself into the future or nature. That is, Entwurf into the

nature. Nature and people, body and spirit, and body and mind become one.

I walked not knowing that my toe nails were fallen out. I realized when I took off my socks. The soles of my feet hurt so much in the beginning, so a certain degree of pain didn't hurt so much later.  
(Blanca)

The "Lived human relation (Relationality)" is the experiential relationship we maintain with others in the interpersonal space we share with others. The *dasein* does not live alone in the world, but lives with others as *In-der-Welt-sein* (So, 2001). In other words, we live together 'Mitsein' with others in the world. We are being-in-the-world. Human lives have their unique worlds, but the worlds are created by relationships with others. The participants make new relationships with others on the 'Mitwelt', Camino de Santiago, which is the world shared by others, in order to recover their places as subjective beings in the world. The 'Relationship you want to stay away from' is because the participants want to contemplate without any interference of others as the subjects of time and space. The 'Unfamiliar relationship' refers to the unnatural relationship with barrier between oneself and others.

I walked a long way all by myself at first. I could not think when I walk with others (Frida) The pilgrims talk in English, Spanish, and German, but they cannot communicate smoothly. They communicate by 'feeling'. It was the most basic sense of kinship. They share what others might need without having to talk to them.... (Mario)

Difficulties in verbal communication stiffen the relationship even more. The communication occurs through feeling and silence. The 'Intimate relationship' is formed on the basis of mutual dependence due to physical pain. In the intimate relationship, they no longer see others with biased views and experience the sympathy to see and understand from one another's perspective. The silence, soundless smile, short communication, and basic questions between oneself and the other share the language of friendliness, warmth, and consolation. People can communicate through feeling and silence.

We walk and chants of 'go! go!' together while cheering each other

up (Jessica). I had no confidence in myself. At that moment, a foreign boy said, “Nuna, you can do it; let’s go, Nuna. Nuna, go, go.” ‘Nuna,’ meaning “older sister” in Korean. I was so... The word ‘Nuna’ gave me strength. I had taught him to call me ‘Nuna’.  
(Blanca)

As the body is embodied and the mind is stabilized over time, the pilgrims hope to be ‘alone’ and experience their own subjective time. They establish the identity of self-examination and self as the true selves as they can be ‘Independent’ away from the dependent relationships. The ‘Unfinished relationship’ means the sense of kinship and intimacy between the pilgrims after the same experience leads to continued relationship subsequent to the pilgrimage.

The American who fought in the Korean War (78) and his son (18) have become blood-brothers with us and we still keep in touch (Camilo). When it comes to my age, I have no one to talk to. I only have formal conversations with my family. My kids and grandchildren only talk with each other. But it is different now. Everyone asks information about the Camino and pays for my lunch to thank me (ha ha ha). I am even interviewed for a study today. This is happiness. (Dante)

### *The meaning of learning experience of travel experience*

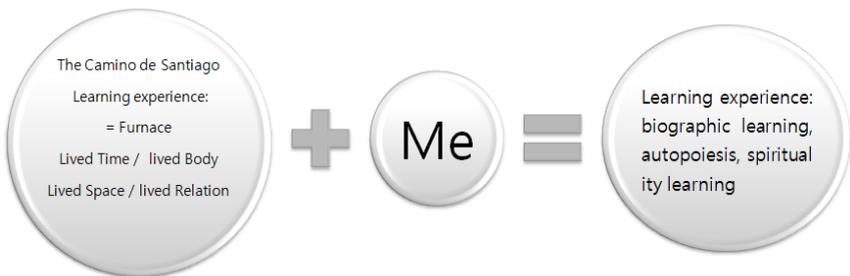
The travel on the Camino de Santiago is not just a trip, but it is the experience of learning that consists of transformative learning. Four existentials, lived time, space, body and human relation on the Camino de Santiago, are the participants’ process of learning. [Figure 1] shows this process.

First, biographic learning as the learning experience of travel lived experience often entails the transformative experience of life through the lives of participants and the pain, conflict, and examination in the process of travel. The participants design their lives through the travel. The participants learn the resistance to seduction, tolerance, recovery of self-esteem, blessing of awakening, tears, appreciation, emptiness, encounter, pain of hastiness, composure and slowness, and meditation through the arrows on the way after the travel. Currently, they are living with positive minds and energy in order to spread hope as well as to

engage in volunteer activities and sharing. The travel on the Camino de Santiago is the path of self-mortification that one can never walk by oneself, and the participants experience transformative experience while walking by themselves or with others. Biographic learning does not occur inside an individual, but is related to the communication, interaction, and social context between an individual and others (Illeris, 2009).

Second, the travel lived experience engendered the learning experience of autopoiesis. The participants, as shown in the image below, are the subjects of adjustment and change through relationship in the space of furnace on the way. This means that they spontaneously respond to the environment or allow the space of autopoiesis within a mutually dependent and dynamic system. The participants classified the relationships with the surroundings and others in the time and space of the way and spontaneously changed themselves within the environment. They affect one another along the voyage in order to configure their worlds self-directively. This can be compared to ‘synchronized pecking’. More specifically, the hen should recognize the spontaneous pecking of the chick in order to break the shell and peck the shell from the outside so as to give birth to the chick. The hen only gives little help for the chick to come out and it is up to the chick to break the shell.

**Figure 1.** Learning experience of travel lived experience



When we are 1 km apart due to the difference in steps, he just stands there and waits for me without a word. I follow him with courage. He goes ahead of me and waits for me over and over again. It's like he reads my mind. (Blanca)

The participants depend on each other in the mutual relationship, but demonstrate independence, responsibility, and creativity. The lived experience of the Camino de Santiago made the participants 'changed and new selves'. This process means autopoiesis in nature. To borrow Maturana & Varela(1980)'s idea, each pilgrim, as an autopoietic organisation, is a system capable of reproducing and maintaining him/herself.

Third, the travel lived experience on the Camino de Santiago achieves learning through spiritual experience. Spirituality appears as the change of life and leads to transformative learning. The participants walk on the way of pilgrimage in order to experience deep flow and ecstasy and the peak experiences of satisfaction and joy. Their peak experiences changed their lives to live for love, generosity, consideration and cooperation, truthful sharing and service, endurance, simplicity, good deeds, and moderation. They focused their minds so they do not miss the arrows on the way, and learned the simplicity of life by having a potato left by someone for a meal. They were physically and spiritually matured by pain and prayed for others instead of themselves. Through the spiritual lived experience, the participants experienced transformative learning that made the problematic framework of Illeris (2009) more inclusive, identifiable, open, examinative, and emotionally changeable. The travel lived experience catalyzed their spiritual awakening and development and brought about the transition of life through 'awakening'.

The tears kept running down at the church. I learned to cry. I thought I was a very strong person...(Jessica) I was still healthy when I walked 40 days while eating only rye bread and drinking wine. Life is so simple... (Mario) My pain is nothing compared to the pain of Jesus when he went up the hills of Golgotha while carrying the cross.... (Camilo)

The participants have various religions, including Christianity, Buddhism, and no religion, and did not walk the Camino de Santiago for religious purposes; however, they still experienced religious spirituality. They say they were able to 'experience the religious spirituality just by walking the way walked by Saint James to spread the words of God'. Currently, the participants are sharing their lived experience on the Camino de Santiago wherever they go, such as church, online

communities, office and alternative school and so on. Their lived experience gives them the confidence and hope of a new challenge to future pilgrims. Those who have travelled the Camino de Santiago are living new lives at school, at work, and in everyday life.

## **Discussion**

The meaning of travel lived experience of the participants appeared as emptying, learning from history, culture, and remains, meaning of physical pain: dance of self-mortification toward awakening, companionship, return to origin, and life: new beginning.

First, the travel on the Camino de Santiago was learning through “emptying.” Tao Te Ching of Lao-tzu emphasizes the virtue of emptiness, using as emptiness. Freedom by emptying brings the filling toward fulfillment and happiness. The participants learn freedom and fulfillment without possession and the importance of rest and composure by emptying through the travel. You need to walk the Camino de Santiago only with the essentials. You cannot walk if you do not empty. You will not have any health problems even if you walk for almost 40 days with minimal food.

I live a humble and simple life after the travel. I only need one or two condiments. I spend 2 dollars a day. It does not mean I have no money. It is a new way of thinking. (Mario)

The Camino de Santiago has many historical and cultural remains for learning. The participants learn the history and culture from the various medieval structures along the way, including churches and statues. These structures are educational fields.

You can see the country culture along the way. You are tired, but the many cultural and historical remains make the trip not tedious at all. (Camilo)

Second, the meaning of physical pain in the travel lived experience is ‘the dance of self-mortification toward awakening’. Suffering is non-receptivity. Lvinas (1998) believes that non-receptivity allows openness to others and pain is meaningful when ‘suffering in myself and ‘suffering in others’ are essentially separated and I am agonized

by others' pain. The pilgrims tolerate others' suffering through the experience of oneness with the Universe or God; this is oneness of oneself and others so others' suffering becomes my suffering (Park, 2011). Physical suffering is the adversity for the maturity of soul and they spiritually grow through pain for the 'awakening' of soul.

Third, travel on the Camino de Santiago is companionship. 'Companionship' is the relationship of intimacy, where the barrier is broken through interaction. I (self) no longer see other with biased views and experience the sympathy in order to see and understand from one another's perspective. Self-mortification on the Camino de Santiago builds the relationship of mutual dependence and intimacy as the complete cooperators and the landscapes smear one another for the coexistence in the same world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945)

What do you do back in Korea? Well, I don't have anything to do. I am jobless. I envy you! Why? For what? You have endless possibilities. That's what they said. I was a bit shocked (Blanca). He offered to carry my backpack when he had his own (Jessica). When I fell in the mud, he used his feet to push me out. He didn't care about his feet getting dirty. (Blanca)

Fourth, the travel on the Camino de Santiago is the return to origin and the invitation to the essential philosophy. Your understanding of yourself begins from the fact that 'people ask about themselves'. "What am I?" "What does it mean that I live?" People walk while asking about the meaning of existence, meaning of life, and identity. Camilo changed his plan while walking the way and travelled more places for 2-3 days. As he did in everyday life to use time more efficiently, he started early in the morning and walked faster. As a result, he became tired and unable to walk anymore. In that process, however, Camilo thought about why he lives and how he should live to learn such that his life needs slowness and composure. Jessica experienced 'brokenness' on the Camino de Santiago. She knew that she is not strong but weak. She often skipped meals, drank coffee instead of water, and worked when she had to sleep. On the Camino de Santiago, she learned that water, food, and sleep are the most basic essentials of human life. The participants looked back on their lives in order to return to the essential self.

Fifth, the travel is life and the new beginning with no end. The travel

on the Camino de Santiago is the travel of lonely adversity and life in the search of the self. People encounter many adversities on the path of life. The process of travel is the continuation of physical pain and psychological conflicts. The participants successfully ended the pilgrimage. They now start again. The arrival at the destination is not the end, but another start. We return to the world of mundane life after the trip and prepare for another trip.

*We must not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time. -T. S. Elliot*

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