

Three years' trip from S'kan to UMS pays off for student

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By Chok Sim Yee

KOTA KINABALU: Three years of travelling on a five-hour journey from Sandakan to Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here every week finally paid off for Abdul Sabah @ Mohd Saba Mohd, 44, when he received his Bachelor of Social Sciences (History) with Honours degree yesterday.

Mohd Saba, who is currently an administration officer at SMK Merpati, Sandakan, said lifelong learning has always been his principle and he planned to further his postgraduate course at UMS.

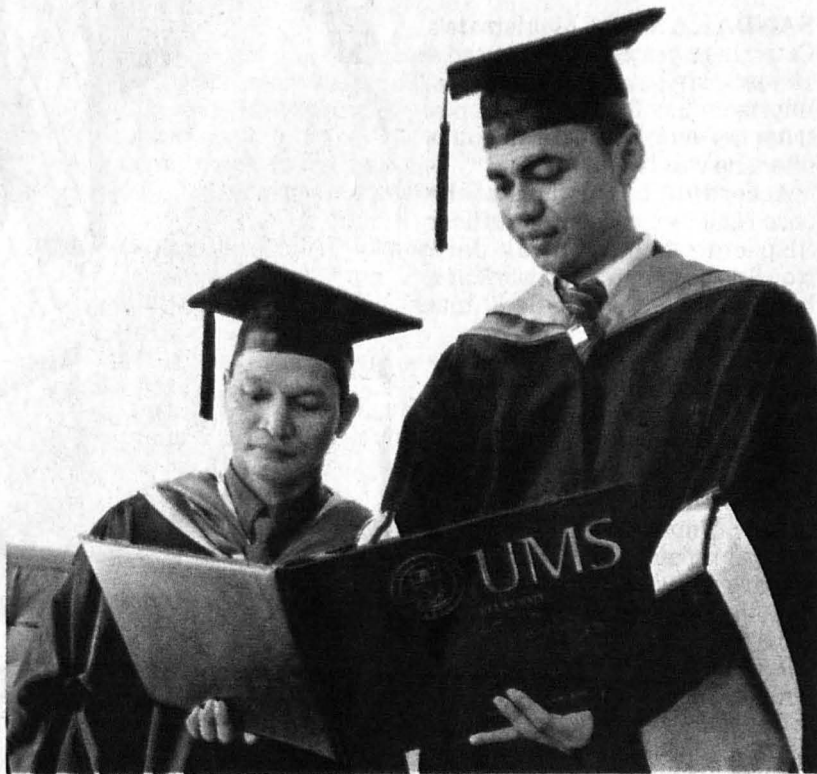
He said his weekly drive to his campus to make sure he made it to his classes finally bore results.

"The travel which took close to five hours was tiring, but my wife has given me a lot of support and encouragement."

He added that it was difficult to adapt and balance work and study but he got used to it after several months.

Mohd Sabah was one of the 737 graduates from the School of Social Sciences and School of Education and Social Development at the UMS 14th convocation here yesterday.

During his three years of traveling to and fro Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu, he had been involved in two minor accidents.



Mohd Saba (left) and Azhar sharing their elation after receiving their degrees.

He added that he had to stay in a budget hotel or even sleep in his vehicle when the budget hotels were full, particularly during school holidays.

"Since a year and a half ago, I managed to rent a room at

Kalansanan. It has become easier for me as I did not need to look for a hotel room to stay during weekends."

Mohd Saba had spent a lot on fuel and food during his travel, sometimes more than the tuition fees.

The expenditure could exceed more than RM1,000 as he had to commute from Sandakan.

Nonetheless, his effort was worthwhile and he advised anyone who wished to work and study at the same time to persevere as it was not easy.

"If there is a will, there is a way," he said.

Azhar Awan Ali, 24, recipient of Vice Chancellor Gold Award, said the education field in Sabah could be enriched by having more research on curriculum.

The fourth child among the five children in his family, Azhar said he had always been interested in teaching since he was a student.

Azhar, who works as a replacement teacher at SK Contoh, Petagas, hoped he would be placed in Sabah in order for him to contribute in educating the younger generations.

He did not expect to be awarded the Vice Chancellor Gold Award as he only set his target to getting First Class degree.

Azhar added that the support of his mother, a general assistant, and his father, who is working in Canada, had helped him to achieve what he wanted.

He is now awaiting call from Sabah Education Services Commission for an interview.