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## Interview Study Analysis

### Introduction

Many students enjoy a well balanced life, but it can be difficult to achieve such lifestyles when in school. Students mentioned that having one or more extracurricular activities is a great way to bring that equilibrium. Our group decided to base our study on the impact of extracurricular activities on students. To achieve this we came up with four research questions to find out how these activities can change a student's academic life, work life, and personal life. These include: *What extracurricular activities do you participate in? How can extracurricular activities encourage academic and personal success? How do you envision extracurricular activities benefiting your career post graduation? What extracurricular activities influence the college experience?* By asking these questions our group has gained a lot of insight into students' lives and involvement.

### Data Collection

We started by asking ourselves what would be important factors to focus on when conducting this study. It was messy to arrange our thoughts and ideas at first, so we just wrote down all of them. After laying out our ideas, similarities occurred and groups began to form. For example, when we saw that time management repeated, we made sure to include it as a question. Similarly, we were able to couple closely themed questions into categories to fall under a research question. The research question, *What extracurricular activities do you participate in?*, was more of an umbrella topic. The questions in the category gave us a glimpse of the many kinds of activities and covered ideas from student's initiation into their activities to any recent changes in their activities. The second question, *How can extracurricular activities encourage academic and personal success?*, allowed us to learn about the impact on a students' academic life in conjunction with their activities. We included questions about grades, projects, academic

challenges/successes, and relativity to the activity. We also knew that these activities would have longer impacts than just college. Including a third research question, *How do you envision extracurricular activities benefiting your career post graduation?*, felt important to discuss the effects after the college experience. This would be tricky since we interviewed students, but it was a way to learn what students have absorbed from their activities and would take with them. We asked questions about participating post graduation, soft skills the activity has taught them, leadership roles, and impact on their resumes. The fourth question focused on more than just the academic and professional settings of their activity. We wanted to know if the activity was meaningful to their college experience. We wrote, *What extracurricular activities influence the college experience?*, to see if their activities impacted their satisfaction, how they balance everything, stress, and burnout.

Once we had our questions, our group decided to interview any student who claimed to have an extracurricular activity. The recruitment process happened in class and on the class' discord server mostly. Any student who had an activity and was willing to participate in a roughly thirty minute interview was welcomed. It was difficult to organize at first and find three individuals who didn't already promise another member of the group to participate in person, but when we switched to discord the recruitment process became easier. Finding a time and place for in person interviews was easy after some communication. The online interviews were scheduled at a convenient time for both members just as the in-person ones were. All interviews were recorded on Webex. The interviews themselves went smoothly. Besides having to repeat or explain a question on the rare occasion, the interviews were done without trouble. The process to transcribe all the data afterwards was difficult at first. The recordings from Webex were sometimes muffled or unclear. Sometimes the interviewer and interviewee spoke over each other. Sometimes the audio would crack or catch an outside sound. The transcriptions were only half useful. It noted down a bulk of the words spoken, but it was all a mess. There was much editing and time spent cleaning up the transcriptions. This was a long and tedious operation, but we still managed to get good, useful transcriptions in the end.

## Analysis Process and Method

The process that our group decided to utilize for our analysis included categorizing the data in order to identify patterns in each interview. Qualitative data is complex and unstructured when it is first reviewed so it requires a systematic approach. Through a series of coding cycles, we can come up with a framework in order to gain insight of findings that are related to our research questions about extracurricular activities and academic success. It was an iterative process as we did a required of three coding cycles for each interview. The individual coding methods that we used were mostly First Cycle coding methods such as Descriptive and Process Coding. Descriptive Coding means to summarize the topic of a given qualitative data in one word or short phrase. Process coding, also known as “action coding”, is used to recognize observable activity. When going through the column lists of codes, there is a shifted link between the raw data, preliminary codes, and final code. Researchers go through the data and split it into meaningful units which include codes that will strengthen the understanding of the overall study along with the research questions. The data that we collected are transcripts of interviews that were conducted by our team members. We highlighted and created code memos that helped us focus on specific parts of the transcript.

Once the data was individually coded, we moved onto the Second Cycle coding methods. The transition of cycles lets us select new coding methods to better enhance the direction of the study. This process helps us add new codes or refine the existing ones once a pattern is identified. Our group worked together to analyze patterns and place these recurring themes into categories (Pattern/Focused coding). The patterns documented in the data are used to find consistencies in how humans go about a given topic. We had discussions about understanding the data and what hypothesis to the research questions that we can come up with. The development of a codebook gives us a roadmap including repeating themes for each code. This iterative process lets us gain meaningful insights that contribute to how participation in extracurricular activities may impact academic achievement. Following that, we came up with a master list for the final code. Our final code showcases what is necessary for students who are involved in activities.

According to *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, analytic memos is the transitional process from coding to a formal write up of the study. This means it is the reflections one has with themselves when investigating the

data. Researchers are able to make the connection between the content of the data. This tool plays a role in documenting additional interpretations that emerge from the analysis. In creating analytic memos, there was confusion and uncertainty especially after doing multiple cycles of the transcripts. However, while going through highlighting the data, this serves as field notes which provides real-time feedback without getting lost in the complexity of the raw data. This gives a space to capture thoughts and reflections that reveal the meaning behind the coded data. Most examples in the transcripts consisted of themes surrounding social networking and scheduling their commitments around academics. These memos helped our team communicate about difficulties we have encountered on the analysis for the first coding cycles. We were able to address personal dilemmas within the study and how we can direct them in the future. For our master list code, we were able to categorize the similarities in the code according to the topics that they address. By recording the key observations of the qualitative data, we are able to identify the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic achievements.

#### Code book with Descriptions and Code Frequency

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	
Culture club Participation	Filipino club	Get involved in clubs that promote cultural awareness and diversity.
	Skateboarding club	
	Bio Major club	
Personal Growth and Self-Management	Time Management	Develop personal abilities and effectively manage personal habits.
	Procrastination Hindrance	
	Resilience	
	Personal Branding	
	Self-Esteem	
	Enhances Confidence	
	Accountability	
	Managing Expectations	
	Innovation	

Theme	Sub-theme	
Culture club Participation	Filipino club	Get involved in clubs that promote cultural awareness and diversity.
	Skateboarding club	
	Bio Major club	
	Overcoming Barriers	
	Conflict Resolution	
	Balance	
	Procrastination	
	Adaptation	
	Personal Development	
	Responsibility	
Health and Wellness	Stress	Participate in activities that promote physical health, mental health, and overall wellness.
	Leisure Time	
	Exploring Interests	
	Self-care	
	Mental Health	
	Physical Activity	
	Work-Life Balance	
Academic and Career Development	Academic Impact	Pursue academic excellence and prepare for future career opportunities and working life.
	Effective Study Habits	
	Networking	
	Career Opportunities	
	Adaptability	
	Problem Solving Skills	
	Career Development	
	Achievements	
	Skill Enhancement	

Theme	Sub-theme	
Culture club Participation	Filipino club	Get involved in clubs that promote cultural awareness and diversity.
	Skateboarding club	
	Bio Major club	
	Mentorship	
	Career Skills	
	Professional Growth	
Social Skills and Networking	Social Skills	Build and nurture relationships for personal support and professional development.
	Socialization	
	Social Aspect	
	Community Service	
	Networking	
	Social Connections	
	New Relationships	
	Community Sense	
Leadership and Team Dynamics	Leadership skills	Develop leadership qualities and work effectively in a team environment.
	Leadership Experience	
	Effective Teamwork	
	Events Coordinator	
	Group Environment	
	Collaboration	
	Effective Teamwork	
Creative and Recreational Activities	Hobbies	Engage in activities that foster creativity and provide recreation and relaxation.
	Outdoor Activities	
	Creative Study Methods	
	Ice Skating	
	Longboarding	

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	
Culture club Participation	Filipino club	Get involved in clubs that promote cultural awareness and diversity.
	Skateboarding club	
	Bio Major club	
Communication and Relationship Building	Effective Communication	Develop the ability to communicate effectively and build meaningful relationships.
	Friends Supporting	
	Sense of Community	
	Expressing Needs	
Stress Management and Coping Strategies	Stress Relief	Learn and apply techniques to manage stress and cope with life's challenges.
	Emotional Intelligence	
	Taking Breaks and Disconnecting	
	Managing Anxiety	
	Burnout Management	
Educational Pursuits and Academic Strategies	Innovative Study Methods	Strategies and motivations behind academic decision-making and learning methods.
	Academic Clubs	
	Following Mind Prompts	
	Critical Thinking	
Community Involvement	Participation	Actively participate in community services and activities and contribute to social welfare.
	Engagement	
	Volunteering	
	Importance of Active Participation	
Personal Aspirations and Goals	Sense of Purpose	Set and work towards achieving personal goals and life ambitions.
	Self Created Career	
	Future Goals	
	Ambitions	
Emotional Intelligence	Emotional Intelligence	Understand and manage your

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	
Culture club Participation	Filipino club	Get involved in clubs that promote cultural awareness and diversity.
	Skateboarding club	
	Bio Major club	
	Understanding Emotions	emotions
	Cyberpsych Interest	
Project Management and Organizational Skills	Scheduling	Coordinate resources and efforts to effectively complete projects and organizational tasks.
	Organization	
	Event Planning	
	Time management	
	Prioritization	
Intellectual Engagement and Learning	Innovative Study Methods	Be deeply involved in a learning process that challenges intellectually and encourages continued growth.
	Academic Challenges	
	Learning Adaptation	
Self-Discovery and Personal Insights	Self-care	Get to know yourself deeply
	Purpose Finding	
	Expressing Needs	
	Understanding Differences	
Financial Responsibility and Management	Financial Management	Make informed decisions by handling your personal finances responsibly.
	Budgeting	
	Investing in Personal Growth	
Time Management and Efficiency	Prioritization	Effectively prioritize and allocate time to increase productivity and efficiency.
	Scheduling	
	Efficiency	
	Managing Deadlines	



## Code Category Diagram

### Findings

A series of questions were asked to multiple participants relating to the topic of how a student's extracurricular activities affect their college experience and academic success. The set of questions were broken into 4 different categories such as; does extracurricular encourage academic and personal success, do extracurricular activities benefit students post graduation, and how does extracurricular activities influence the college experience? 12 interviews were conducted, upon these interviews many similarities were found. A Master Set of all these similarities was created to easily keep track of said similarities.

One of the similarities we found was the topic of what skills the participants learned from their said Extracurricular. A majority of the participants said they learned skills such as Time Management, Communication, Leadership, and Teamwork. Multiple participants said that they learned these skills through participating in the extra curricular activities, an example being that participants had to learn time management skills in order to manage their time with extracurricular activities and balance their school and personal life. Communication skills were learnt through having to interact with those who participated in the extracurricular activities and through events that the participants' extracurricular activities would hold. Leadership skills were only learnt if the participant held leadership roles that not many held. Teamwork skills were learnt through having to work with fellow group members in their extracurricular activities with tasks such as scheduling and organizing events. This information is relevant to the research questions because it shows that Extracurricular activities do play an important role in encouraging academic and personal success while also playing a role in post graduation benefits.

To continue on the topic of how extracurricular activities encourage academic and personal success, questions relating to how extracurricular affects a students academic performance were asked. From these questions, many similar answers were given, many students found that extracurricular do play a role in their academic performance, many saw a decrease in performance. Students found that because of their extracurricular activities, they are not as likely to study or complete work on time as much as they would if they did not participate in

extracurricular activities. Despite the decrease in academic performance, students said that they remain happy with their college experience, detailing that a slight decline in academic performance is worth the experience they get from their extracurricular activities. This is relevant to our research question because it details how extracurricular activities affect a student's academic performance and how they feel about it, describing how it is a fine trade.

When it came to the topic of how student's extracurricular activities affect their future careers, responses were mixed. Most students said that their extracurricular activities have no relation to their career goals and are mainly for entertainment. However, they also stated that these extracurricular activities allowed them to network with other students, alumni's and work with people in certain industries which can greatly benefit their future career goals. Many students who were not in academic clubs were quick to state that joining an academic club will definitely help with their future career. This is relevant because it shows that extracurricular activities can benefit students in their career goals, even if it may not be related to their major or academics, students are still able to gain some career benefits from it.

On the topic of how does Extracurricular activities affect students' stress levels, many students had similar answers. One similarity found was that extracurricular activities play a significant role in relieving stress for students. Many stated that extracurricular activities were a way to escape from school work and other life commitments and be able to be entertained. When asked if there was ever a moment where the extracurricular activities caused burnout and how do they handle it, similarities were found again, many students said that their extracurricular activity rarely causes burn out and if they do feel stressed or burned out, they simply take a break and return when they feel better.

When asked how extracurricular activities influence the college experience, many similar answers were given. One similarity across all responses was that extracurricular activities help foster a sense of community amongst students. It also allows students to meet new people, people they perhaps would have never met without their extracurricular activity. Many students also stated that extracurricular activities help foster a sense of belonging, students said that without their extracurricular activity, many of the participants would leave campus after class, but because of their extracurricular activities, students now have things to look forward to on campus. This is relevant to the questions because it displays that

extracurricular activities do improve the quality of life for students on campus, students are able to enjoy themselves, create new friendships, and have a sense of community through extracurricular activities.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, our study provided meaningful insights about the impact of extracurricular activities on college students and how it shaped their lives during this pivotal time. Our team explored using a variety of coding methods to analyze how these activities contribute to academic, personal, and career success. Our research questions highlight the demands of the college experience in the social aspect as well as developing skills. Some personal reflections as a group we have faced were less quality of the code over time during the coding cycles without intention of doing so. We gained a deeper understanding of how significant it is for these students to emphasize time management in order to live a well-balanced lifestyle. The findings show that extracurricular involvement is an integral part of the education process by providing opportunities for personal growth and future career.