

STORIES OF STUDENTS ON BALANCING TIME BETWEEN ACADEMICS
AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF
KATHMANDU

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Maya Poudyal* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership*, presented on *30 October 2025*, entitled *Stories of students on balancing time between Academics and extracurricular activities in private schools of Kathmandu*.

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This dissertation examines the experiences of students in Kathmandu, focusing on their efforts to improve academically and participate in extracurricular activities in private schools. Holistic education can produce skills in social life, academic success, and self-esteem, but may also lead to stress and excessive schedules. The overall research question of this study will be: "How do students narrate their time of balancing between academics and extra-curricular activities?"

Through a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with five Grade 11 and Grade 12 students from private schools in Kathmandu who are actively involved in extracurricular activities and performing well in their studies. The thematic analysis of the stories encompasses the actual life experiences of the participants, leading to the identification of trends in their time management.

The levels have shown that students employ various techniques, such as planning effectively, setting clear objectives, and making adjustments in response to changing needs. However, in the process of these endeavors, they are most frequently confronted with the challenge of being overwhelmed, experiencing burnout, and having to meet time demands on multiple fronts. A significant observation here is that they are highly dependent on the support system, which includes families, teachers, peers, and others, to stay informed about the stressors, in addition to their efforts to do their best. Another third-stage, deep-rooted cultural approach to time, which the

analysis identifies, is where time is not just a personal possession, but a community-based one. This perception is rooted in the Eastern philosophies of Taoism and Confucianism, and is also reflected in the collective work of students in managing their commitments.

The dissertation builds on existing theories of transformational leadership to help comprehend how both adult and student leaders can affect the level of support among peers and the management of time in schools. Conclusively, this paper maintains that proper time management is not usually an individual aptitude. Most of the time, people consider time management within a complex grid of their desires, positive social interactions, and a cultural context particular to a competitive educational setting. Indeed, the results suggested that awareness of and willingness to disengage from selected engagements are vital to counteract burnout effects. Moreover, the research argued that schools can also develop systems of integral support for student well-being while promoting balanced engagement rather than constant competing engagement.

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शोध सार

शैक्षिक नेतृत्व तथा व्यवस्थापनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर उपाधिका लागि माया पौडेलको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक “काठमाडौंका निजी विद्यालयका विद्यार्थीहरूको अध्ययन र अतिरिक्त क्रियाकलापहरू बीच समय सन्तुलनका कथाहरू” १३ कार्तिक २०८२ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

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प्रा. धनपति सुवेदी, पीएचडी

शोध निर्देशक

यस अनुसन्धानले काठमाडौंका विद्यार्थीहरूको अनुभवको अध्ययन गर्दछ, जसले उनीहरूका अध्ययनमा सुधार ल्याउने र अतिरिक्त क्रियाकलापहरूमा सक्रिय सहभागिता जनाउने प्रयासमा केन्द्रित छ। समग्र शिक्षाले सामाजिक जीवनका सीप, शैक्षिक सफलता, र आत्मसम्मान जस्ता पक्षहरू विकास गर्न सक्ने भए – पनि यसले कहिलेकाहीँ तनाव र अत्याधिक तालिकाको कारण चुनौती पनि सिर्जना गर्न सक्छ। यस अध्ययनको मुख्य प्रश्न यस प्रकार छ : “विद्यार्थीहरूले अध्ययन र अतिरिक्त क्रियाकलापहरू बीचको समय सन्तुलनबारे आफ्ना अनुभवहरू कसरी कथन गर्छन्?”

गुणात्मक कथन विधि अवलम्बन गर्दै, अनुसन्धानकर्ताले काठमाडौं निजी विद्यालयका कक्षा ११ र १२ का पाँच जना विद्यार्थीहरूसँग गहिरो अन्तर्वार्ता सञ्चालन गरे, जो अतिरिक्त क्रियाकलापहरूमा सक्रिय छन् र अध्ययनमा पनि उत्कृष्ट प्रदर्शन गरिरहेका छन्। ती कथाहरूको विषयगत विश्लेषणले विद्यार्थीहरूको वास्तविक जीवन अनुभवलाई समेट्दै समय व्यवस्थापनका प्रवृत्तिहरूको पहिचान गर्दछ।

अनुसन्धानका नतिजाले देखाउँछन् कि विद्यार्थीहरूले प्रभावकारी योजना, स्पष्ट उद्देश्य निर्धारण, र आवश्यकतानुसार समायोजन जस्ता विभिन्न रणनीति अपनाएका छन्। तर, यी प्रयासहरूको क्रममा उनीहरू प्रायः अत्याधिक थकान, मानसिक दबाव, र बहू आयामिक समयमागको चुनौतीसँग सामना गर्छन्। – महत्वपूर्ण अवलोकन के हो भने उनीहरू परिवार, शिक्षक, साथी तथा अन्य सहयोगीहरू प्रतिको निर्भरता मार्फत आफ्नो तनावबारे सचेत रहन्छन् र सहयोग प्राप्त गर्छन्।

विश्लेषणले पहिचान गरेको अर्को गहिरो सांस्कृतिक तहमा समयलाई व्यक्तिगत सम्पत्ति नभई सामुदायिक अवधारणाको रूपमा लिइन्छ। यो दृष्टिकोण पूर्विय दर्शन विशेषगरी ताओवाद र कन्फ्युसियनवादबाट प्रेरित छ, जसले विद्यार्थीहरू बीचको सामूहिक प्रतिबद्धता र समन्वयलाई प्रतिबिम्बित गर्छ। यो अनुसन्धानले रूपान्तरणात्मक नेतृत्वका सिद्धान्तहरूमा आधारित भई वयस्क र विद्यार्थी नेताहरूले विद्यालयभित्र सहकर्मी समर्थन र समय व्यवस्थापनमा पार्ने प्रभावलाई बुझ्न सहयोग पुऱ्याएको छ। अन्ततः, यो अध्ययनले निष्कर्ष निकाल्छ कि समय व्यवस्थापन सामान्यतः व्यक्तिगत सीप मात्र होइन; बरु यो व्यक्ति विशेषका आकांक्षा, सामाजिक अन्तरक्रिया, र प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक शैक्षिक परिवेशसँग गाँसिएको जटिल

सामाजिकसांस्कृतिक संरचनाभिन्न रहन्छ। परिणामस्वरूप, चयनित गतिविधिहरूबाट सचेत रूपमा अलग हुन सक्ने क्षमता र त्यसप्रति जागरूकता नै थकान न्यूनीकरणका प्रमुख उपाय हुन् भन्ने देखिन्छ। साथै, विद्यालयहरूले विद्यार्थीहरूको समग्र कल्याणका लागि सहयोग प्रणाली विकास गरी सन्तुलित सहभागितालाई प्रोत्साहित गर्नुपर्छ, निरन्तर प्रतिस्पर्धी संलग्नतालाई होइन।

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१३ कार्तिक २०८२

माया पौडेल

उपाधि उम्मेदवार

This dissertation, entitled *Stories of students on balancing time between academics and extracurricular activities in private schools of Kathmandu*, presented by Maya Poudyal on 30 October 2025.

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I understand that my dissertation will be part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University's library. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother and my dedicated husband, whose continual support and kindness made my thesis journey possible. I dedicate this work to my family, with more than gratitude, but also with love, trust, and belief in my abilities, which made this journey possible.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAS	Creativity, Action, Service
ECA	Extracurricular Activities
EE	Extended Essays
IAs	Internal Assessments
IB	International Baccalaureate
Micle	Migrant Children's Language Education
TLT	Transformational Leadership Theory
TOK	Theory of Knowledge

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The importance of balancing academics and extracurricular activities in private schools was covered in detail in this chapter. Private schools committed themselves to providing high-quality education through academic achievement and other activities. The institution's methodology enabled students to develop social skills, achieve academic success, and gain confidence. Students, however, were still stressed and burdened when they attempted to excel in both school and extracurricular activities. This study examined how students managed their time between school and extracurricular activities, the challenges they encountered, and how these factors impacted their growth. By learning about these aspects, the study helped schools in Kathmandu to create effective and well-balanced learning experiences for their students.

Setting the Scene

Private schools in Nepal emphasize quality education, providing a balanced curriculum that includes both academic and extracurricular activities. A balanced education involves providing both strong academic learning and meaningful extracurricular activities (Optimise Learning, 2025). This approach supports not only students' knowledge but also their personal and social growth, helping to build skills such as self-esteem, teamwork, and time management for overall development (Nanda, Satapathy, Panda, & Pradhan, 2025). While academics provided students with the understanding they needed to have a future, extracurricular activities allowed students to demonstrate competence and mastery, which is crucial to student self-esteem. However, over-scheduling could occur, which would lead to a lack of ability to nurture all their skills as students, or even result in early symptoms of stress. Creating this balance at an early age sets the foundation for personal and lifelong success. I then began researching to learn more about the effect of this balance, and I realized how crucial it was for the overall growth of children.

I had a great revelation. Students who participate in extracurricular activities tend to exhibit better social skills, improved academic performance, and higher self-esteem (Jahan, 2024). As a result of what I witnessed, I advocated for our school to incorporate extracurricular activities alongside its academic curriculum. Later, this

change transformed our classroom into a lively, dynamic environment where students not only grew intellectually but also as individuals, which was truly fulfilling. They all had an excellent education that prepared them to succeed in every sphere of life, and I was determined to follow this path with them.

Background

The educational system has also undergone tremendous changes in the past 15 years, shifting from an academic-focused approach to more holistic approaches that emphasize extracurricular activities. The rationale behind the change was that practice and textbooks were not the sole means through which students could learn. Schools used to be the pace setters when it came to providing quality education, but as education itself changed, so did the curriculum. Now, a balanced education encompasses overall development, the development of life skills, and enjoyable learning. Now, a balanced education encompasses intellectual growth, the development of life skills, and enjoyable learning experiences. The school leaders recognized how much the students' development depended on achieving a balance between extracurricular activities and academic challenges. However, with space and budget constraints, which frequently made it difficult to offer a range of sports to meet the diverse interests of students, school administrators were especially strained in this respect.

Occasionally, schools have focused too much on achieving top grades, neglecting to provide students with a balanced school life that encompasses enjoyable activities such as sports and art (Ramchandra & Gayathri, 2020). It was not simple to determine when to provide classes and other activities, and one had to remain on the correct side of fairness so that each student was accorded equal priority in all their registrations, regardless of their origin. Therefore, maintaining a balance between extracurricular and academic activities remains a challenge for schools.

The Nepalese government, through the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), has focused on formulating policies that foster a culture in which schools can incorporate various enjoyable activities into their curricula (MoEST, 2021). The communities even donated resources and provided volunteers to support school activities (McNeil, 2023). NGOs also provided financial, human, and technical inputs to the schools and communities (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). Traditional arts and music,

which were integral to Nepal's rich culture, were being revitalized and organized, and teachers were being trained (Kafle, 2024).

Nepalese schools also collaborated with Kathmandu Metropolitan City to enhance knowledge and interaction in learning. Initiatives such as "Book Free Friday" in Kathmandu showed how the students were learning skills and managing their time (Ojha, 2023). Nevertheless, there were still issues of inadequate resources, some of which were left behind, and inconsistency in applying these concepts (Zhyhora et al., 2024). All the stakeholders, including the government, society, NGOs, and schools, needed to continue collaborating. The aim was for all students in Nepal to receive an excellent and holistic education. This was so they would not just learn from books, but also by having fun and acquiring essential life skills for later life.

For student growth, the key to success was finding the right balance between learning (in school) and outside activities. But what happens when too much emphasis is placed on those outside activities over studying? In private schools in Kathmandu, students face constant pressure to perform academically at the highest level and to excel both in and outside of school. Given all the opportunities at private schools, kids were more likely to prioritize clubs and teams over classwork, potentially compromising their ability to learn. Were these schools doing more harm than good by going whole-hog into things like sports and arts? Were they taking on too much pressure? Numerous studies suggest that participating in activities such as clubs can significantly enhance grades and skills (Forneris et al., 2015). What about when the balance gets out of balance, however? That was the big question we examined here – discussing with students how they managed to balance their classes and hobbies.

The most significant aspect was engaging in conversations with students interested in various activities and those who scored well, where we observed how these students maintain a balance between these two spheres on a daily basis. The balance of education was that academic classes were equally crucial as extra-curricular activities, and they were needed in the development of the students through a balance. This balance required planning, sufficient resources, and a school environment that was conducive to learning. The current study examined what students were spending their time on and where they were experiencing problems, with the intention of offering information that can improve practice and policy in

private schools. The aim of the research was fundamentally to provide students in Kathmandu with an education that would enable them to succeed in life.

Statement of the Problem

A large number of students in secondary schools are now put in a high-stress situation due to schoolwork and after-school programs, such as sports, clubs, and volunteering. According to the study by Luthar and Kumar (2018), high levels of engagement are likely to attract high levels of anxiety and stress, which leads to a lack of academic performance and deterioration of the developmental welfare. This stress to do two things leads to the students being exhausted and drained to the extent that they have no time to rest, study, or grow. To make the situation worse, there is a lack of a formal support framework; therefore, one should consider how students can balance these aspects without harming their mental or academic performance.

A lack of research persists despite accumulating evidence regarding the realities of stress and burnout experienced by students. A study conducted by Smith and Brown (2022) is in favor of the fact that overcommitted students (who, in most cases, are exhausted and time-pressed) will deteriorate in their academic performance as well. The majority of existing studies aim to explain the harmful effects of overextension, rather than offering systematic intervention solutions for schools to enable students to address the cause. For example, very little or no study has been done on how schools can introduce initiatives such as Time Management Workshops, Alternative Scheduling, Counseling, or Themed Days to create a sense of balance. We therefore require studies on solutions (scalable) from a community, policy, and practice perspective to help students understand that their participation in extracurricular activities is an investment, not a liability.

This issue should be addressed since the effects of uncontrollable stress and mismanagement of time can not only pose instant academic effects in academia but may also affect their mental health in the long term, and lower their educational attainment, further exacerbating the achievement gap among these students in the existing education system. The development of specific school programs and policies, guided by the findings of Luthar and Kumar (2018) and Smith and Brown (2022), will be helpful in supporting students. This will enable the development of an environment that allows them to excel in their academic performance and support their overall well-being. Sealing the research gap through the application of evidence-based strategies will enable students to thrive in their well-being in school, extracurricular

activities, and all facets of their lives, rather than stressing and suffering from participation, benefiting themselves, their social connections, and the communities surrounding them.

Studies show that extracurricular activities are associated with a high level of benefits, such as learning how to socialize, becoming a good leader, having high self-esteem, and performing well in academics (Luthar & Kumar, 2018). These events contribute to the holistic growth and well-being of students, as they provide them with opportunities to explore aspects beyond the academic curriculum. Nevertheless, excessive involvement leads to stress, anxiety, and poor performance because of exhaustion and time constraints (Smith & Brown, 2022).

Similar trends are taking place within the Nepalese setting. A report by Shrestha (2023) highlights that, although engagement in extracurricular activities is recognized as contributing to creativity and emotional well-being, most Nepali students struggle to balance academic work with extracurricular activities. In most cases, it is not at school where they receive systematic guidance. An examination of secondary schools in Nepal reveals that extracurricular activities have declined, primarily due to the excessive workload in schools and the lack of support from stakeholders (Giri, 2023). Extracurricular activities are often underrated or overlooked, despite being crucial to student development; this can hinder the positive impacts they can have on students (Ranjit & Neupane, 2023). This comparison suggests that a common anxiety exists regarding the issue of extracurricular involvement and academic success, and Nepal cannot escape this dilemma, despite the contextual factors present in the country. School support programs can help resolve such issues, enabling students to take advantage of extracurricular events and minimize stress, thereby improving academic performance.

Purpose

This research aims to explore how students manage their time to balance academics and extracurricular activities, as well as the challenges they encounter in doing so.

Research question

- i. How do students narrate their stories on balancing their time between academics and extracurricular activities?
- ii. What benefits and challenges do students narrate in balancing academics and ECAs?

Rationale

Such a study is significant to various stakeholders in the educational sector in Nepal. As a student, being more knowledgeable about time management will help enhance resilience and reduce stress levels, allowing them to perform well in their studies and engage in extracurricular activities in a balanced manner, which is essential to their development. As a teacher, this will lead to other channels for utilizing student time in a facilitated manner, while also balancing student time needs at the classroom level with student activity.

Another value of this study is that it can enlighten school administrators who should develop policies and implement strategies that may help students manage their time more effectively. As an example, it can be that the schools may encourage workshops on how students can use their time well towards the management of both their studies and their activities, or they may allocate more freedom of time to students as well, such as not having all the students in their sports on the same day. In terms of policy, this study can be added to the broader existing education reform agendas and policies, including the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016-2023), that incorporate the aspect of the integration of extracurricular activities in the education ecosystem without compromising the quality of education (CDC, 2019; MoE 2016). These models are also consistent with Nepal's education provision objectives.

The study contributes to the body of work by addressing a critical issue of time management and utilization between schools and provides additional experiences for Nepali students. According to a study conducted in Nepal, time management is one of the primary issues that negatively impacts students' performance and academic achievements (Joshi et al., 2023). Another phenomenon of academic procrastination that affects students' achievement and mental health is time management (Chapai, 2025). Besides, the National Curriculum Framework (2019) and School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023) of Nepal also mention that it is necessary to integrate extracurricular activities without decreasing the quality of academics, which justifies the relevance of balanced education programs in the policy (MoE, 2016, 2019). The practical implications of this research will include future improvements in education reforms and school-based practices in Nepal, as a means of developing students holistically through the provision of local empirical data and analysis.

Delimitation

The study only covered several aspects regarding how students plan their daily schedules, taking into account the time devoted to learning and activities outside regular classes. It also examined the methods schools employed to engage students in these extracurricular activities. The research examined whether there were enough qualified individuals to lead these extracurricular classes and the difficulties students faced in juggling their schoolwork with these additional activities. What was not taken into consideration in the research included out-of-school factors that might have worked against students' participation in extracurricular activities. The study aimed to gain insights to validate or invalidate the mentions by students of their individual practices that could either help or hinder them in accomplishing schoolwork and extracurricular activities. This understanding was particularly pertinent to defining the experiences of students, given the time allocation maintained between academic work and hands-on practice.

Academic activities are considered formal school activities, such as attending classes, completing assignments, preparing for examinations, and participating in school projects. The informal learning experiences are not taken into consideration in this study.

In this study, extracurricular activities refer to non-academic activities sponsored by the school and organized, such as sports, music, dance, drama, debate, and clubs, as well as volunteering. Other activities that are not organized or supported by the school (personal hobbies, religious occasions, and programs led by parents, etc.) do not fall within the realm of this study.

Organization of the Study

I have organized this dissertation into six chapters. Chapter One presents the study's introduction, which includes my stimulating journey as both a student and an educator, setting the stage for my research on the connection between physical activities and academic performance from childhood. I have included my experiences as a student and how I have witnessed the benefits of extracurricular activities and their influence on learning, which enhances my academic performance as a teacher. The concerns regarding the title of my study are addressed in the statement of the problem, the rationale of the study, the purpose of the study, which highlights two research questions, and the delimitation of the study.

Chapter Two begins with a conceptual literature review, introducing the benefits of time management between extracurricular and academic activities and its influence on students' holistic development. I have also discussed research theory, empirical studies, research gaps, and theoretical understanding in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three, I present my research methodology, which includes my philosophical considerations, research paradigm, research site, and participants, and the process of meaning-making.

In addition, I have described the portfolios of my five participants, along with the quality standards maintained and the ethical considerations followed, in Chapter Three. Chapters Four and Five portray the stories of five participants, along with their narratives. I drew meaning-making links with literature and theory through my personal reflection, based on the participants' performances and my point of view, and also highlighted the similarities and differences between the stories of all participants. Chapter Six presents my insights, different implications, and conclusions. I have concluded my dissertation with a display of references that have made a valuable contribution to my study.

Chapter Essence

This chapter clarifies the personal changes and experiences that have led to this research, which are highly relevant and necessary for balancing academic and extracurricular engagements in developing holistic students. It will provide the research rationale that will be demonstrated through the identification of the time management issues encountered by the students in the challenging environments of private schools. The chapter presents a clear research problem and sets specific objectives and questions to guide the research. It also establishes boundaries for the study by providing the delimitations and outlining the general structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is the second part of this study, in which a comprehensive literature review is conducted, following the first part, which focuses on the background and reasons for time management among students. The second part was devoted to some information on the balancing of extracurricular activities, appearing under the title "Literature": Time management and leadership policies in Nepal were thus thoroughly evaluated, and important material was captured within reference to theories and relevant studies. The chapter ended with some recommendations from the study.

Time Management for Students

It is challenging for students to balance the demands of academics (schoolwork) and extracurricular activities (such as club activities and sports), and this is especially true in Nepal's private schools, where the stakes are often time-critical (Luthar & Kumar, 2018). According to them, time management is an effective tool for reducing stress, enhancing academic success, and promoting personal development. Furthermore, they found that both participation in extracurricular activities and over-researching worked as an interactive two-edged sword; meaning it contributed to the practice of social skills and also demonstrated an evidence-based path to improve potential test results in exams that these same seniors were taking in the same study (i.e., the examination). In Kathmandu, there is a significant cultural expectation for students to excel academically, as falling short of their academic potential is often stigmatized (Shrestha & Ale, 2025). Luthar and Kumar (2018) recommend that schools can (and should) provide direction or structure to instruct students on how to prioritize their time, balance school tasks, and avoid feelings of being overwhelmed.

The application of time management techniques can greatly influence a student's health and well-being, as well as their academic success (Dacoylo et al., 2024). In their research, they found that when students allocated their time between study and extracurricular activities, they reported less anxiety and greater life and academic satisfaction. They provide a direct connection between self-regulated study behaviors and grade gains, implying that students who manage their time effectively

are better equipped to handle stressful situations. It is especially crucial in competitive school settings; according to Shrestha & Ale (2025), it can cause severe burnout in cases of over-scheduling when students miss appointment times, particularly in situations where they are not actively engaged in time management. As a more holistic approach to work-life balance, Dacoylo et al. (2024) recommend that schools introduce time management training in class, which will teach students skills such as goal-setting and scheduling.

The article by Galaviz et al. (2025) provides further evidence of the importance of time management by offering tangible tips, including identifying high-return tasks and setting ambitious and specific goals, which can help students effectively manage stress and achieve better academic outcomes. They discovered that students who exhibit this tendency earlier in their academic careers have higher emotional resilience and achieve better grades. Their suggested strategy supports the argument that schools should offer time management courses or education as part of early education to ensure the successful development of lifelong habits. This research study, when combined with the other earlier studies (Luthar & Kumar, 2018) provides additional evidence of the benefits of students when they receive helpful and relevant time management, which can enhance their educational activities, greatly decrease stress, and have more productive, productive, and positively developed learning experiences, leading to higher success potential, both in and outside of school.

Life at school is hectic, and I know this from my own experience of private schools in Nepal. Soon enough, I noticed that many of us would be either more strung out or more vexed when trying to achieve everything at once. My understanding of this reading was that time management was not only about putting organization in place, but it was also more about safeguarding one's mental health. Especially, it is an easy step for schools to take to facilitate a lot of learning through hands-on activities.

Effective Time Management

Effective time management is a skill that enables students to prioritize and balance a range of academic responsibilities and extracurricular demands, which are likely more demanding in Nepal's increasingly privatized schooling environment. According to Kadar & Eissa (2015), students who identified which tasks required their immediate attention and which required their effort tended to do better in their studies and had lower levels of stress and pressure. Therefore, a student's ability to

focus on actions that produce the highest return on effort leads to a fuller investment, or their energy in the areas that matter the most. Similarly, Morisano et al. (2010) noted that students who prioritized their various responsibilities, considering both academic performances and extracurricular activities, found that this balanced approach led to success in both performance and academics. Cultural pressures, once students arrive in Kathmandu, are challenging enough without the added burden of performance expectations and academic pressures. In high-stakes situations, organizing and prioritizing tasks effectively helps avoid burnout, thereby supporting student success (Shrestha & Ale, 2025). Using a planning tool, whether an established planner or a digital application, was an effective way for students to manage their time. Van Eerde (2021) noted that students who used a structured planner were likely to minimize procrastination, produce higher levels of productivity, and ultimately achieve higher levels of academic performance as well as lower levels of stress.

In Nepal's private sector schools (some of which mandate or subject students to additional co-curricular activities such as arts and sports), this level of academic rigor makes utilizing planning resources even more relevant (MoEST, 2019). However, that although the majority of private schools in Nepal offer workshops on time management, these workshops are usually poorly supported by meaningful resources, such as training materials, credible trainers, and technology (i.e., mobile technology). The evidence suggests that more relevant and meaningful interventions are essential to help students develop their planning ability.

Self-regulation is another pillar of effective time management, enabling students to maintain equilibrium and reduce anxiety. Morisano et al. (2010) support the notion that students who practice self-regulation—by setting detailed goals and adhering to schedules—are more likely to meet academic and extracurricular requirements. Van Eerde (2021) also supports this notion, highlighting the fact that students who follow prescribed schedules not only excel but also experience reduced stress. Self-regulation, based on school-based interventions, can facilitate learning in private schools of Kathmandu, where students are highly pressured to perform well in both academic and extracurricular activities. By teaching students the skills of prioritization, planning, and self-regulation, schools can produce students who excel in a competitive environment while reducing stress.

The evidence suggests that conducting workshops alone is insufficient if they are not matched with real-world resources, but instead driven by culturally relevant

forms of support. Effective time management is not just about academic success, but also about maintaining our psychological well-being, which is yet again more challenging in high-stakes, collectivist settings where academic and extracurricular demands heavily overlap. Therefore, interventions need to build on students' self-regulatory skills and the ability to juggle between time management tools and highly individualized supports. Returning to this paper, the assumption is that management planning must extend beyond formal training and into the internal motivations of students, i.e., empowering students to not only survive but also thrive both academically and emotionally in such environments.

Setting Specific Goals

Goal-setting is a crucial part of effective time management that enables students to balance school and co-curricular demands in high-pressure environments, such as Nepal's private schools. Morisano et al. (2010) argue that specific, measurable goals serve to increase focus and productivity among students by providing clear guidance. For instance, a learner who completes assignments before heading for ECA practice, such as sports or volunteer activities, is able to plan their time well. In addition, several studies have found that learners with definite and realistic objectives, for instance, reading a specified number of chapters or solving a specified number of math problems, have improved focus and academic performance (McNeil, 2023). In Nepal, when students are inclined to juggle demanding International Baccalaureate (IB) or A-Level courses with ECAs, such goal-formulation becomes imperative for time management.

The cultural setting of Nepal further facilitates the application of goal-setting in time management. According to Norton-Brainerd (2022), the concept of goal-setting is consistent with Nepali values of discipline and volunteering service, in the sense that students separate their academic and extracurricular activities. For example, students in private schools in Kathmandu will align their objectives with both individual educational goals and societal expectations, such as performing well in exams while contributing to community-focused activities, like volunteering ((McNeil, 2023). The accurate, quantifiable objectives help students avoid poor decision-making and utilize their time effectively between school and action. This systematic approach not only increases productivity but also reduces stress, allowing students to excel in the competitive academe.

Time management tools, when combined with goal setting, help students manage their tasks more effectively. Ngozi & Isabella (2014) note that planners or computer application tools can guide students in organizing their goals and objectives, enabling them to attain their objectives and lead a balanced life more conveniently. These can assist students in managing their time in both school and ECAs, hence neither is overlooked. Students who utilize such tools for specific objectives tend to have better focus during study sessions, resulting in improved academic achievements and a smoother life.

Private schools in Nepal often struggle to obtain the necessary tools to effectively run time management workshops and implement them in the long term (Shrestha, 2023). However, it can be simply remedied by associating goal-setting activities and targets with readily available, fascinating materials. This method could help students feel less stressed about learning and boost their productivity. Although the benefits of time management skills, including prioritization, setting goals, and the application of planning tools, have been identified, there are still critical issues regarding their consistent implementation in the context of Nepali private schools. A substantial number of schools are characterized by the lack of resources, which restricts the efficacy of time management workshops and interventions. Additionally, an urgent need to educate about self-regulation and strategic time use from an early age can be identified to develop lifelong habits Galaviz et al. (2025) Students are also influenced by their cultural background, including high school performance standards and shared values, to better understand how they can balance their academic and extracurricular lives (Norton-Brainerd, 2022; Shrestha, 2023). All these lessons highlight the significant gap in training teachers, resource provision, and policy support that needs to be bridged to equip students to manage their highly complex schedules without compromising their mental health or academic achievement. It is based on these conceptual arguments that this paper examines how students describe their own approaches, challenges, and strategies for managing their time effectively in a highly demanding academic setting.

I believe that a crucial part of a successful time management plan for students navigating the complex environment of activities in Nepal's private schools is setting goals. Goals provide a guide and show students the right direction for allocating time among competing demands. This prestigious assumption about the benefits of goals, however, has not been explored in Nepali schools, which place a greater emphasis on

resource availability, the need for follow-up training, and access to effective time management resources or tools. Then again, the cultural setting around which what constitutes discipline, and what values are shared between learners, in turn influences how goals are set and pursued, making interventions necessary. By creating missing links in teacher training, resource support, and policy backing, time management practices can evolve into a lifelong knowledge system that ensures student grades are not compromised by lost hours due to the stressors of this.

Given the unique context, this study highlights the need to design interventions that promote time management strategies for adolescents in highly competitive schools in Nepal, with lasting effects on student academic well-being and productivity. This investigation aims to contribute to current understandings by examining the strategies and constraints encountered in time management by these adolescents, with the hope of enhancing societal awareness of these issues through practices that promote productive behaviors.

Academic Performance

The performance of Nepali private schools in academic achievement takes the first position as a predictor of student achievement in terms of grades, credit hours, and standard examinations, as performance requirements are required by the 1971 Education Act (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1971). The system is closely tied to academic performance, as it is the most significant factor in determining school-based choice, as well as pass rates in tests that assess students' improvement and the quality of the school (Ramchandra & Gayathri, 2020). Nonetheless, academic requirements and ECAs should be balanced to foster overall development. The Forneris et al. (2015) team established the standard that prudently balanced ECA engagement enhances motivational possibilities and social capabilities, resulting in improved academic achievements. Time management in competitive settings, such as Kathmandu, where learners experience tremendous pressure to perform, becomes a crucial focus to optimize the best outcomes from ECAs without compromising performance (Smith & Brown, 2022). Credit hour status and systematic testing also acknowledge the importance of time management as a means to achieve academic success. In that it determines whether the quantity of time spent on coursework matters, credit hour volume is linked with increased mastery of the subject and improved academic performance, as stated by Eccles and Barber (1999). It is also supported in Nepal by the Education Act 2021, which requires assessments to include

grades, credit hours, and standardized testing to ensure that learners possess the skills needed to meet learning outcomes (MoEST, 2021). Smith and Brown (2022) also suggest avoiding excessive involvement in ECAs, such as volunteer activities or sporting experiences, as it may cause too much pressure and lead to poor performance if there is no training on how to manage time correctly.

Planning and prioritizing are essential practices that this conflict necessitates to enable students to pursue both co-curricular and academic obligations without feeling weary (Shrestha & Ale, 2025). A combined learning model, which the grading system in Nepal has advanced, is something that schools focusing on both classroom and out-of-classroom development are interested in (Kafle, 2024). Forneris et al. (2015) argue that in the case of schools that facilitate general growth, students will graduate with more resilience to adversity, as ECAs acquire the ability to work in a team and to be a leader, which are essential components of school success. One of the tools that assists students in managing their time is the utilisation of time-management tools in the form of a calendar or a computer programme that helps structure their time so that they achieve credit hours in addition to engaging in ECAs. As switching between three spaceships cannot be accomplished during a single day, it would have been reasonable to recruit the assistance of the aliens. It is through such organized practices that Nepalese private schools can have a system of students who are academically strong, actively involved in extracurricular activities, and enjoy a competitive academic life without stress.

Although academic performance is a major measure of student success in Nepalese private schools, various obstacles interfere with the best performance. Time management is crucial to maintaining a balance between academic activities and extracurricular activities without compromising the well-being of students (Smith & Brown, 2022). Furthermore, the lack of resources and uneven application of supportive measures, including planning tools and time management courses, restrict the capability of the students to sustain this balance successfully (MoEST, 2021). It is also a knowledge gap to understand how cultural and social elements influence the priorities of students between academics and extracurricular activities, as well as their outcomes and motivation (Forneris et al., 2015). This paper fills these gaps by examining the lived experiences of students and their personal coping mechanisms in the pressure of academic success and extra-curricular activities in a very competitive educational setting.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities (ECAs), such as sports, arts, music, drama, debate clubs, and community service, are integral to the development of students in private schools in Nepal. Eccles and Barber (1999) acknowledge that ECAs build essential skills in teamwork, leadership, and resilience, and these assist in the formation of individuals' personal and future employment lives. Similarly, Eccles et al. (2003) refers to the fact that these activities enhance time management and interpersonal skills, enabling students to excel beyond the classroom. In Kathmandu, where ECAs are included in school curricula, subjects like Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) in International Baccalaureate (IB) schools promote community service and foster individual development (Ramchandra & Gayathri, 2020). However, overindulgence in ECAs will likely strain students' time resources; therefore, efficient time management is essential to prevent burnout (Luthar & Kumar, 2023). The Kathmandu schools are actually leading the pack in terms of incorporating Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) into their programs. They are actually concerned with ensuring that students develop in every aspect of their lives through systematic activities.

Private institutions usually reserve specific spaces, including sports courts, as well as music and art rooms, during and after school to do more activities. A scholar engages in athletics and organizations as part of the learning process, thereby achieving a good balance between academics and personal growth. There are numerous events and competitions organized in most schools to demonstrate certain skills in students. This helps enhance enthusiasm while establishing a favorable competitive environment (Shrestha, 2023). The interaction is healthy in friendships and teamwork, as participating in interschool competitions unites students from different cultures, enhancing both personal and communal relationships.

Time is another aspect that ECAs possess, which enables students to prioritize excellent leadership as they strive to maintain their GPA. Luthar and Kumar (2018) caution that excessive ECAs cause burnout among students and low GPAs, which is an issue in a competitive city like Kathmandu. Colleges also allocate specific time slots of the free periods to ECAs, meaning that students who want to join the program do not need to lose their performance in other classes. According to Eccles et al. (2003), students improve their time management skills when assigned to ECAs, such as project prioritization and proposal attachment, which ultimately leads to enhancements in scholastic performance. They also strike a balance between well-

being and productivity in their lives by dedicating their time to schoolwork and Education Cooperation Schemes, while also being skilled in troubleshooting.

However, even though extracurricular activities were observed to possess many benefits in developing essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, time management, and others, several issues affect their successful implementation in Nepalese private schools. One of the most important issues is the fact that the student may become over-engaged with different ECAs because there is no adequate time management strategy (Luthar & Kumar, 2018). In addition, although many schools allocate some resources, such as sports courts and art rooms, they still lack equitable provision and ongoing support for all students. There has also been little research on the cultural and social issues that influence how students balance ECAs with their academic life, which determines their participation and some degree of development ((Norton-Brainerd, 2022). To address these gaps, schools must ensure that they have multidimensional support systems, which include training on time management and promoting a culture-responsive approach. The paper builds on the findings by analyzing the accounts of students regarding their experiences in dealing with extracurricular enrollment and academic demands in the competitive setting of private schools in Kathmandu Valley.

Policy Review

Nepal's education policies have set a great foundation to effectively merge extracurricular activities (ECAs) with academics in private schools. Consequently, students get the opportunity to develop in all aspects. The Education Act of 1971 has made it mandatory for ECAs to be part of school programs. Through it, virtues such as teamwork and leadership are nurtured (MoE, 1971). It laid emphasis on the need for a child-centred, experiential learning approach. Since then, it has undergone multiple changes, with the most significant ones occurring in 1988, 2000, 2005, and the most recent one in 2023. Every NCF revision comes with new changes that consider the new needs, policies, and approaches to better and more inclusive education reforms. The framework expects schools to introduce ECAs like sports, arts, music, and clubs. Apart from providing avenues for the student's holistic growth, these developments are also contributing to the matter (Constitution Assembly Sacriatiat [CAS], 2015). Through this, education has become a fundamental right. It is the government's responsibility to ensure quality education for all, which includes providing opportunities for personal development besides formal education. These

regulations establish the framework for private schools in Kathmandu to manage ECAs effectively.

The various resources and styles that these institutions possess imply that it is especially important to manage time effectively. Students need to balance their studies and ECAs (Shrestha, 2023). Strategic documents such as the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016–2023) and the School Safety Plan (SSP) complement ECA programs by facilitating the promotion of access in a justifiable manner with safety as a core aspect of learning. The SSDP outlines goals. These goals aim to improve the quality of education and access to schools, both public and private, without discrimination, as well as introduce ECA as an important means of nurturing children's all-round personalities (MoE, 2016). The SSP, which aligns with the Comprehensive School Safety Minimum Package, ensures that ECAs are conducted in safe places, especially in the case of Nepal, a country prone to disasters. Thus, safety and resilience are the primary goals achieved through the safety program (UNICEF Nepal, 2020). The policies require schools to schedule separate time slots for ECAs, which will allow pupils to participate in the activities without missing their learning.

McNeil (2023) believes that the resources allocated to private schools in Kathmandu have been distributed unevenly, resulting in an incomplete implementation of policy that is not entirely equitable. He mentions the reluctance of Nepal to invest in effective time management strategies to prevent burnout and stress as a reason behind this.

The Private and Boarding Schools Association Nepal (PABSAN) has been implementing ECA progressive practices that raise the standard of education in line with the NCF and SSDP visions (PABSAN, 2023). By motivating innovative learning approaches alongside extracurricular activities, PABSAN empowers private schools to cater to diverse learner needs and nurture learner capabilities of leadership and teamwork. However, the National Private and Boarding Schools Organization Nepal (NPABSON) for practices that may jeopardize educational quality and accountability, and claims that priority should be given to achieving excellence along with equity through policy enforcement. In this policy regime, the over-commitment that may lead to stress and reduced academic performance (Shrestha & Ale, 2025) necessitates students to use time effectively so that they can manage ECA and academic studies comfortably.

Thus, Nepal's private schools can create an equitable, supportive environment where students thrive academically and holistically by improving policy implementation and teaching time management.

Despite the fact that education policies in Nepal offer an excellent framework that requires the implementation of extracurricular activities (ECAs) into the academic curricula, there is still a problem of inequitable implementation and distribution of resources. Although policies like Education Act (1971), National Curriculum Framework revisions, and School Sector Development Plan foster holistic development of students through ECAs, loopholes exist in the implementation of these requirements to all the private schools especially in terms of time management and balancing student workloads (MoE, 1971, 2016). The School Safety Plan (UNICEF Nepal, 2020) is thorough in its safety considerations; however, the unequal allocation of resources and unequal access create barriers to the uniform implementation of the policy (McNeil, 2023). Moreover, conflicts exist between academic excellence and policy objectives regarding equity and quality, necessitating a greater focus on sustainable time management and stress alleviation among students (Shrestha & Ale, 2025).

At the forefront of this policy context lies Nepal's National Education System Plan for 1971-76 (NESP), which represents a holistic educational approach by embedding academics and ECAs aimed at developing one's intellectual, moral, physical, and social capabilities. While the NESP contains a compelling vision, its implementation has been hindered in practice by deep-rooted issues of poor coordination across ministries, a lack of resources, and weak monitoring mechanisms—all of which result in uneven policy application across schools, including private schools. These problematic areas lead to schools struggling to maintain a balance between academic rigor and ensuring meaningful ECA participation, while also supporting students in a feasible way to manage their time and workload. The challenge of this policy-practice gap highlights the need to build institutional capacity, promote equitable local resource allocation, and develop contextualized approaches to realize the NESP's holistic education aspirations.

Overall, while the educational policies in Nepal—embodied by the NESP and subsequent policies—offer a breadth of guidance on integrating academic and nonacademic development, considerable hurdles remain regarding resource equity, the effective implementation of policy, and focused attention on student time

management. This paper utilizes these conceptual gaps to examine how scholars in private schools in Kathmandu make sense of policy and navigate between academic and extracurricular-related pressures.

Theoretical Foundation

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) by Bass (1985) provides a robust theoretical framework to explain how Nepalese private school student leaders generate peer support and effective management. TLT claims leaders inspire their followers through four actions: they challenge them, they pay attention to each person, they inspire them, and they provide a good example (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This approach is enacted by student leaders, such as club heads and team captains, of peer groups in the group-oriented learning social context of Kathmandu's school system. Students realized the importance of time management skills, for example, by encouraging their peers to rank tasks and balance their academic studies with extracurricular activities (ECAs). For example, a leader of a debate club creates time in the district's calendar for students to study together. This is an example of a peer leader, the debate club leader, who works to comprehend how time works in a way that is positive for grades and personal views of their development and growth (Shrestha & Ale, 2025).

Bass (1985) developed Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT), from which we derive a conceptual framework that helps explain how student leaders in Nepal's private schools perform a similar function by supporting their peers with time management, as well as providing broader peer support. TLT utilizes a framework to categorize leadership behaviors into four domains. According to TLT, leaders inspire those who choose to follow them through four key actions: they challenge people, they pay attention to each individual, they inspire others, and they set a good example (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

In Kathmandu's group-oriented school system, student leaders, such as club heads and team captains, exemplify these values through their roles as leaders within peer-based learning groups. They embody time management skills themselves, encourage their peers to balance their academic studies with their extracurricular activities (ECAs), and help reaffirm the appropriate social capital that leads their peers to prioritize their tasks and ensure a balance between what is essential to their school-based program.

The main theoretical constructs used in this research are inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, which are key ingredients of the Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). These factors describe how student leaders in Nepalese private schools inspire and motivate their counterparts to become effective time managers, balance their academic and extracurricular activities, and nurture positive peer networks. Through these leadership behaviors, student leaders serve as role models who defy norms in a positive way, providing individualized encouragement to classmates and inspiring a shared dedication to academic and developmental outcomes. It is a strong framework that can be used to analyze how peer influence and leadership play a role in the holistic time and responsibility management of students in competitive and group-based learning settings in Kathmandu private schools.

Time Management Principles

Time management practices, such as goal setting, planning, and prioritization, serve as an empirical model to demonstrate how students in private schools in Kathmandu manage their academic studies and extracurricular activities (ECAs). According to Kadar & Eissa (2015), these methods help students manage their time effectively, reduce stress, and improve productivity. For example, prioritizing homework over club meetings is recommended. I agree with this view, as the systematic prioritization has the potential to be a long way towards alleviating students' stress in a competitive environment. Nepal's collectivist culture, where time is seen as a communal resource, is a culture of values that are consistent with behaviors which are typical of cooperative goals (Norton-Brainerd, 2022). I believe that individual motivation is equally important as collectivist motivation, in line with (Norton-Brainerd's claim that motivation is a major factor in time management. The implementation of these strategies would be crucial in the scenario, that is, when students find it difficult to reconcile academic intensity and ECA without exhausting themselves, and at the same time maintaining their well-being.

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative study that can be used to recognize students; real-life stories of successfully juggling school work and ECAs. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) see narrative inquiry as an approach that depicts students' experiences through storytelling, as these narratives teach students how to overcome adversity, with implications for how they manage time. I agree that storytelling

simplifies the subjective dimension of students' experiences, and therefore, it suits this case. Students may discuss their experiences, for instance, by describing how they managed to rest and avoid burnout, or how they prioritized their studies and sports. In private schools located in Kathmandu, these stories emphasize self-awareness and resilience as key to preventing burnout (Shrestha & Ale, 2025). I do not accept the belief that student resilience automatically grows out of storytelling experience, as some students do require resilience training. The use of this method aims to emphasize the importance of providing flexible and student-directed support services to accommodate the varying time management needs.

Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) outlines the methods by which student leaders facilitate the provision of peer support that benefits time management in private schools in Kathmandu. Avolio and Bass (2011) explain that a transformational leader provides motivation through events of inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, which in turn leads to the practice of self-discipline (Avolio & Bass, 2011). I believe that the leadership traits exhibited by these types of leaders can contribute to making school environments better, as they enable students to lead healthy lives.

The leaders that students, for instance, the club presidents, role models, encourage their peers to participate in well-planned activities, such as giving up, in line with the culture of cooperation that characterizes Nepal's collectivism (Norton-Brainerd, 2022). I don't think that collectivism necessarily results in greater leadership impact because individual leadership styles can sometimes be contrary to group norms. Such leadership styles foster a supportive structure, and students gain the will to excel academically and personally in a competitive learning environment.

Eastern Philosophy (Taoism Wu Wei)

An Eastern philosophy, Taoism, introduces the idea of Wu Wei, meaning "effortless action," or "non-action," as a structural resourceful principle to know student leadership in a Nepali private school. Instead of disagreeing, the naturalist leader goes with the flow of things, according to the common interpretation of Wu Wei, working in harmony with the natural order of events. In these community-oriented learning spaces, located in the urban setting of Kathmandu, the Nepali private school timetable has captured some of these ideas as they are manifested in the freely given attitude of individuals like club captains. The head of the activity is a

student council representative, who chooses the way they want to lead their peers by adopting tranquility, power balance, and sensitivity. The student leader - instead of forcing a fixed, rigid structure on his or her peers. However, student leaders at the Nepali school, which is collectivist and more like a group learning environment, do much to imbibe these values by acting with tranquility, sharing an equal influence, and responding quickly to understand their peers. Imposing a structure on how to balance their peers' timing between school and extracurricular duties. This is achieved by providing options and support in an intuitive manner, thereby shedding its collective responsibility, but it is hard to bear, as it is often practiced in the elimination or at least minimization of stress.

My effort to integrate Wu Wei into the theoretical framework of Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006) further enhances and enriches its action-oriented constructs, such as inspirational motivation and individually tailored attention, by its marriage with a philosophy that focuses on adaptive, natural leadership. In societies like Nepal, which are oriented around collectivism, leadership is not just about telling people what to do, but about creating self-determined motivation and collaboration between peers. Wu Wei practice among student leaders supports peer relationships and the effective use of time by allowing motivation to arise naturally and promoting an appreciation for both the collective and individual rhythms of our school community. This inquiry enhances knowledge about how leadership behaviors can nurture wellness, flexibility, and moderated engagement in both academic and extracurricular commitments, presenting a culturally sensitive and comprehensive framework for probing into student leadership and peer influences in private schools within Kathmandu.

Previous Studies Related to the Topic

Empirical studies have raised to prominence the dual impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on students within Kathmandu's private schools, such that academics and ECAs are balanced using effective time management. Shrestha & Ale., (2025) noted that ECAs such as clubs and sports improve academics and also create discipline, but over-commitment could cause burnout. I concur that ECAs can enhance discipline, but the research discounts the contribution of individual differences in coping with burnout. The study reported that Kathmandu's private schools offer a variety of ECAs, but students find it challenging to find time, as there is considerable academic pressure. I disagree that every student finds it difficult, since

some might perform better under pressure when given appropriate guidance. Similarly, Chen and Zhang (2022) found that 60% of Chinese secondary students experience burnout due to the over-scheduling of ECAs, a phenomenon linked to the competitive culture of Nepal. I agree that over-scheduling is a major issue, but on the other hand, I feel that the research conducted in China may not be able to fully capture the cultural nuances of Nepal. These results clearly indicate the effectiveness of structured time management techniques in helping students manage their deadlines and workload without compromising their mental health in a stressful environment.

Goal-setting and prioritization are indeed essential time management strategies that students should consider to manage both academic and ECA demands. Smith and Brown (2022) revealed that the over-involvement of students in ECAs in competitive schools leads to a negative correlation with academic performance and mental health issues, alongside the requirement for self-regulation (Smith & Brown, 2022). Instead of agreeing with this view, I would argue that the study overlooks the positive aspect of students' moderate involvement in ECAs. Jones et al. (2020) noted that ECAs not only cultivate team and leadership skills but also equip students with life skills. To me, the question of skill development through ECAs is not debatable. However, research can be conducted on the extent to which these skills are being utilized to achieve success in academic activities. Schools can provide the necessary scheduled instruction and materials, such as planners, to facilitate effective time management. In my opinion, teachers must ensure that they provide students with the necessary instructions on how to use the tools, rather than simply handing them over without any guidance.

School life, even being morally responsible, but complex, may involve ECAs due to the successful application of such strategies as clear goals and task prioritization. Luthar and Kumar (2018) explain that the effective use of time management techniques, including self-regulation and prioritization, leads to balance and reduced stress. I am aware that self-regulating is paramount. In its turn, the study can take into account the cultural influences on the self-regulation practice. Galaviz et al. (2025) emphasizes the importance of goal-setting and self-regulation in enhancing academic skills and mitigating burnout. I believe goal-setting to be the most important part of their discussions, but at the same time, I accept that successful implementation in under-resourced schools would be a bigger challenge. Hendijani and Steel (2020)

recommends institutional support, such as counseling services, to enhance one's resilience and time management skills.

An examination of the existing empirical literature reveals continued controversies regarding the two-fold effect of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on student performance and well-being in competitive school systems, such as those in Kathmandu, particularly in private schools. The authors of the literature concur on the beneficial impact of ECAs on discipline, leadership, and skills development (Shrestha & Ale, 2025; Jones et al., 2020) but differ on the degree of the adverse effects of over-scheduling on burnout and academic performance (Chen & Zhang, 2022; Smith & Brown, 2022). The study designs primarily employ quantitative surveys as measures of correlation between ECA entry, academic achievement, and measures of stress, with a small amount of qualitative narrative inquiry to provide insight into the lived student experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). This methodologically demonstrates the value of both measurement-based and personal storytelling in realizing coping and time management styles. This literature brief guides my research in adopting a narrative inquiry paradigm that seeks to identify the individual balance between academics and ECAs among students in private schools in Kathmandu, adding more fine details to the available quantitative results.

I argue that even though institutional support is helpful, it cannot solve all the problems because we should also consider peer support. Such activities may lead to schools that are friendly to students and prepare them adequately for academic success and holistic development, enabling them to live upright lives without becoming imbalanced individuals.

Gap

The review identifies several knowledge gaps regarding the research topics of extracurricular activities (ECAs), time management, and student leadership in private schools in Kathmandu. In theory, the current literature often overlooks the subtle correlation between the collectivist element of Nepalese culture and individual time management approaches, which can help explain how group motivation and individual motivation influence student behavior (Norton-Brainerd, 2022). Most studies are empirically based on quantitative data that contain grades and participation rates, but do not provide rich and qualitative insights into the experiences of students and their coping mechanisms, thereby failing to appreciate the diversity of options (Shrestha & Ale., 2025). In theory, the application of Transformational Leadership

Theory (Bass & Avolio, 2011) to explain the concepts of peer-led motivation and peer-led support is a powerful tool; however, the theory's potential application to the realities of collectivist school culture has not been adequately addressed. At the policy level, the use of supportive policies and the actual application of these strategies, including time management training and peer leadership positions, do not align with the daily experiences of students, implying that policy and practice should be aligned. In terms of methodology, this creates a vacuum for qualitative methods, such as narrative inquiry, which can reveal the multifaceted and subjective realities of students beyond the numbers (Clandinin, 2013).

In this regard, the current research employs narrative inquiry to provide a voice for the students by examining how they manage both academic and extracurricular demands in Kathmandu within its cultural and educational context. The study presents the motivational roles of student leaders within an evidence-based theoretical framework, aiming to inform policy and practice that resonates with the realities of students through the incorporation of the Transformational Leadership Theory. This entire conceptual model will be used to address existing gaps by establishing connections between cultural knowledge, empirical richness, theoretical richness, policy relevance, and methodological richness, thereby contributing to the enhancement of knowledge and practice in the area of school extracurricular activities and student well-being.

Chapter Essence

The relationship between academic requirements and extracurricular activities in the context of Nepal's private school system has been critically reviewed in this literature review, which demonstrates the significance of time management and transformational leadership. The literature under consideration confirms that effective time management enhances the effectiveness of academic performance and fosters further student development, leading to reduced stress and improved personal growth. The chapter discovered that, despite the overall recognition of time management strategies such as goal-setting, prioritization, and planning as helpful, significant resource gaps exist, as well as inconsistencies in implementation and a lack of cultural relatability in Nepalese private schools. Moreover, the Transformational Leadership Theory was also useful for hybridizing to understand the influence that student leaders have on peer support and the effective management of academic and extracurricular activities. Overall, the literature highlights a need to address these gaps through the

use of contextually specific interventions to enhance the well-being and academic achievement of students in the most competitive educational settings. Such a synthesis provides the theoretical and methodological framework within which the study will be carried out, as it has concentrated on narrative inquiry and encapsulates the lived experiences of Nepalese students in balancing academics and ECAs.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological framework for exploring how students narrate their stories of balancing time between academics and extracurricular activities (ECAs) in private schools in Kathmandu. It describes the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and interpretive paradigm that have been developed or selected to guide the study. The narrative inquiry is conducted to represent the students' lived experiences. The chapter proceeds to detail the research design, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, quality criteria, and ethical considerations, all of which were related to the research question and ensured that the students' experiences were accurately represented. The chapter ends with a summary and moves to the presentation of findings.

Philosophical Underpinning of Research

Philosophical underpinning means the foundation of philosophical ideas and beliefs that support a specific approach, theory, or methodology (Singh, 2019). It encompasses various branches of philosophy, including ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The ontology of this research is based on relativism, which perceives the reality of time management between studies and extracurricular activities in Kathmandu-based private schools as subjective, grounded in the lived experiences of students. The study adopts an epistemological subjectivist-social-constructivist position, acknowledging knowledge as co-constructed in the student narratives within a collectivist educational environment in Nepal. The inquiry is grounded in a value-rich axiology that acknowledges both the ethical accountability of the researcher to faithfully portray the views of the participants and the impact of cultural and contextual values on their time management. These philosophical underpinnings can be applied together in accordance with the application of narrative inquiry to examine how students make sense of and negotiate their academic and extracurricular commitments, providing a contextualized and responsive approach to the concept that acknowledges individual agency and collective cultural orientations.

Ontology

The ontology of time management in private schools, such as those in Kathmandu and its surrounding areas like Baneshwor, differs in that it allows for the

reality of time management to be viewed as a subjective, culturally informed construct, which influences how students experience their academic and extracurricular commitments. For those living in a collectivist society like Nepal, time is often experienced as a resource that is shared with others, and thus, helps to position and determine priorities for students to use their time for work that involves elements of community values and mutual support (Norton-Brainerd, 2022). The reality of time management for senior secondary students is more than just a personal experience of managing their time individually; it is an experience framed within the cultural expectations of collaboration. For example, studying for exams with classmates, or respecting one's commitment to club activities alongside their academic workload. While existing literature shows that primary/secondary students' time management practices are based on a lens of collectivist values (Shrestha, 2023), and does share and acknowledge the experiences of individual students in competitive education contexts, it does not consider the productive concept of time management that both accounts for collective values, as well as students' independent agency in managing their ECA and academic responsibilities. Knowing and understanding the ontology of students' realities of time management highlights that students' experiences are very contextual; hence, the need for approaches that consider both cultural orientations and individual agency to balance their programmes of study and academic work with their extracurricular activities.

Narrative inquiry employs an ontological view of framing realities as constructed from personal stories based on the lived experiences of students attending private schools in Kathmandu. Although, as may be understood from this inquiry, narrative inquiry frames reality as relational and subjective, in this case, regarding how students came to understand sorting through their management of time for academic and ECA, such as sports or community service. For example, a Grade 11 student may explain their lived reality of balancing preparation for exams and also leading a school club. When students transition from schooling, there is an adjustment that may involve coordination and prioritization, as well as the provision of time to rest, if they wish to maintain their well-being. These responses highlight the students' lived experiences relating to what performance in Baneshwor meant to them in school, as was also explained by current academic contexts that frame academic pressures (Shrestha & Ale, 2025). By situating the student stories related to Baneshwor with regard to the ontological view, it emphasizes the use of qualitative

methodologies to understand lived experiences to describe performance and influence practices that can support varying time management strategies for educational success.

Transformational leadership theory (TLT) provides an ontological understanding of the reality constructed through leadership and peer influences. Our short literature supports the assertion that there are particular leadership roles amongst students that influence how they manage their time, in the context of private schools in Kathmandu. When leadership roles, such as student council members and/or team captains, are already practicing the time management competencies in their roles as leaders and then are also facilitating them as peer supports, creating a common known reality in leading and school environments, these practices may be considered to some extent to also align with the collectivist stance in Nepal of teamwork (Bass & Avolio, 2011). For example, a student leadership role allows its peers to set reasonable goals of balancing academics and extra-curricular activities, and establishes how they, as peers, think about time and managing time as a manageable resource. In the context of the schools in Baneshwor², the students' leadership provides a collective awareness for their peers about resources available for completing their duties (Shrestha & Ale, 2025). Omni-vested in student leadership, a TLT ontological constitution implies that leadership can be constructive regarding how students' realities are constituted, but that there are also progressive opportunities for schools to assist acting students as leaders to support a cultural transition.

Epistemology

The epistemology of time management among private school students in Kathmandu, especially those in Baneshwor, is that students' understanding of students' practices is refracted through their own unique, context-specific experiences shaped by Nepal's collectivist culture. Students' beliefs about managing time are derived from cultural beliefs about time as a shared resource, and cognition is constructed through mutual 'student' practices; for example, time is managed through organizing studies or club group meetings to ensure consistency. This kind of understanding of knowledge is socially constructed and influenced by certain interactions with members of the school community, rather than being deductively measurable universal 'principles.' Secondary school students in Grades 11-12 who are compelled to cope with case pressure from the world of academics alongside their

extracurricular activities (ECAs), for instance, sport or volunteering, reach their conceptions of 'effective' time management without overt awareness but rather due to the courteous and cooperating cultural values of the setting and reliance on the existence and wants of other people (Shrestha & Ale, 2023) in a collectivist situation. This epistemology describes a core assumption of contextual inquiry to demonstrate how students establish, and subsequently defend, a space of their study habits in a commensurate, scholarly, and respectful competition for academic achievement.

Narrative inquiry provides an epistemological approach that constructs knowledge from students' personal stories and is centered on their subjective and relational worlds. Clandinin (2013) explain that narrative inquiry generates knowledge through documenting how students interpret their lives through stories, such as describing the manner in which they manage exam preparation with ECA responsibilities. In Baneshwor's independent schools, such narratives are a first-hand source of knowledge, demonstrating students' strategies—e.g., dividing work into smaller sections or planning rest time—and the challenges they face, i.e., burnout. Through this approach, priority is given to experiential knowledge as situated and authentic, particularly in Kathmandu's particular educational context. Concentrating on the daily life of students, this epistemology provides a good justification for the use of qualitative approaches to construct a detailed, complex image of time management practice, being sensitive to the local and cultural context.

TLT is acknowledged as an epistemic prism through which con-with management is to be performed, and peer exchanges among students are student time acquisitions that lead students to learn to manage time, rather than well-built wisdom for the Fostering of time. According to Avolio and Bass (2011), awareness can be promoted by the transformational guide (i.e., student congress representatives, squad captains) by implementing model era supervision strategies and demonstrating personalized assistance to make colleagues adopt a similar strategy. In the collectivist setting of Kathmandu, this early insight can be achieved with collaborative means where students together articulate how they view the balance between academics and ECAs, with societal principles of reciprocal support of one another. For example, the president of a baseball club may mentor a colleague in deciding when to choose overt tasks, sharing an awareness of interval containment (Shrestha & Ale, 2023). This epistemology assumes that understanding should be active and context-based, with a

focus on the responsibility of instructors to develop an understanding of an academic society within which learners learn to lead with their tasks.

Axiological

Two main trends regarding the study of values were distinguished in the field of axiology: value-laden and value-free. The pillar of value-free axiology emphasizes the need for objectivity and neutrality, with value-laden axiology enacting a similar sentiment in allowing for these values to inevitably bleed into research. In fact, my research title, "Time balance between academics and extracurricular activities in private schools," subscribes implicitly or explicitly to the value-laden approach. This view focused on the perspective of participants - perspectives, biases, and ethical positions- and how these things influence any individual study.

However, the voices of participants were important and served as a gateway to understanding the balance between academics and extracurricular activities. In an authentic situation, students' time management in private schools at Kathmandu, I incorporated ideas from Cohen et al. (2018) throughout my research. By embracing a value-laden approach, I authentically captured the multifaceted dynamics of students' time management between academics and extracurricular activities within a private school in Kathmandu.

Research Paradigm

This study is situated in an interpretivist paradigm of inquiry, which views "realities" as subjective, context-bound, and co-constructed through individuals' lived experiences, as well as through the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and axiological positions. The awareness of my researcher/participant stance at the same time led me to this study. Being once an active student who could balance academic life with other extracurricular activities and having teaching experience in helping students be more effective in their time management endeavors, I was prompted to conduct this study as a way to take a closer look at how time management practices of students can be supportive towards the process of holistic student development.

The interpretive paradigm enables a deeper examination of individuals' experiences and the formation of an understanding of how students perceive their own realities and how they develop within the school context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It also allows sufficient room for recognizing that students carry various and multiple responsibilities in different ways.

Narrative inquiry, based on the interpretive paradigm, is a dynamic approach used to document the rich experiences of students in managing time in and between academic and extracurricular activity demands. Through in-depth interviews and reflective journals that describe students' extracurricular experiences, I gathered rich accounts from students to examine their stories, their individual contexts, and the challenges that they faced. Storying their time management practices allows for extensive exploration of their time management and how they create meaning from such experiences, as well as to describe their development (Clandinin, 2013). Attention to their stories allows the research to display the significance of their time management practices personally.

To this extent, narrative analysis will be combined with thematic analysis in the study. I will employ Labov's (2013) structure of story narration to analyze the narrative structure, including the plot trajectory, conflict in the story, and the conclusion or resolution of the narrative alongside analytic themes (e.g., students as protagonists, teachers as contextual influences) and thematic meanings (e.g., resilience and conceptions of time management). This flexible structure respects the uniqueness of each participant's stories while highlighting important themes that help us to understand the overall narrative constructions of participants' development journeys.

By utilizing a combination of both types of analysis, the reader can gain insight into how each student constructively narrates their time management narrative, thereby illuminating the ways students are developing holistically within their educational experiences and environments. Ultimately, the two simultaneous approaches process each individual story in relation to its development process.

Research Design

This study employs narrative inquiry, specifically with the narrative paradigm, to explore the lived experiences of five 11th- and 12th-grade students in two private schools in Baneshwor, Kathmandu. The study considers how each student told their own story, balancing academics and ECAs. The immediate goal of the narrative approach of analysis aims to explore the structure and elements of and meanings as articulated by the participants in their stories, and, based on my value-laden axiology, consider the student and collective cultural context in Kathmandu (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My subject position emphasizes the teacher-student identities, as I navigate multiple worldviews alternating between the academic and ECA realms.

I selected the five active student participants in ECAs (e.g., sports, music, debate) from two different private schools in Baneshwor based on their diversity of ECA applications and the urban-collectivist cultural context of their educational spaces. This selection forefronts students involved in ECAs while disregarding academic performance or ranking to step out into the rich perspectives of the students' experiences of time management success and challenges—connecting to the research question of experience as narrative rather than supporting the enabling or: thus resolving the apparent contradiction and verifying the primacy toward the structure and meaning of the students' stories to reflect narrative analysis construction and interpretation.

Research Method

This research was framed within an interpretive paradigm, which follows the perspective that realities are subjective, socially constructed by individuals' experiences, stories, values, and opinions, rather than an objective, singular truth (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The original philosophical underpinning for my research is drawn from my real-life experiences within educational contexts and utilizes narrative inquiry to understand how teachers and students manage being engaged academically and with extra-curricular obligations, especially through engagement in physical activities, to meaningfully construct new knowledge about their own lived learning experiences (Kim, 2016). As I interpreted the participants' narratives, collected through in-depth interviews and reflective journals, I captured the subjective elements related to time management practices and perceptions of leadership expressed by participants, which reflect the meaning they attributed both personally and professionally (Clandinin, 2013). I examined the stories using the frameworks of narrative analysis and thematic analysis as outlined by Labov (2013).

The main methodological approach of the study was narrative inquiry, as it aimed to understand the deep, subjective experiences and stories of students and teachers who juggle academics and extracurricular activities. The specific, personal narratives gathered through narrative inquiry can enable the collection of detailed, individualized accounts, which recognize that the manner in which participants present their experiences will differ and provide varying insights. As Barkhuizen et al. (2014) elaborate, narrative inquiry balances storytelling and research, as the participants' stories are the primary data, which aligns with the study's goal to present the participants' lived experiences in a realistic manner. Before data collection, the

participants were oriented to the research scenario to establish a comfortable atmosphere in which they could narrate their stories and thereby establish the background for examining their time management practices in depth.

The narrative analysis examined the narrative structure (the plot), narrative elements (the conflict and resolution), and thematic meaning (resilience within time management for participants) while ensuring that participant narratives were truthful and revealed insights about their development holistically throughout this experience. I was adding breadth to the research understandings of how professional and personal experience in ascribed physical activity, contributed towards teachers and student experiences in terms of their educational and personal growth.

Site and Participant

For the purpose of this study, I deliberately selected a school in Baneshwor, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, and students in grades 11 and 12 as the subjects of research. The students were chosen because they are at a crossroads in their studies, and the study focused on assessing how they utilize their time between study and co-curricular activities. I had originally planned to showcase six students who were engaged in extracurricular activities while having good academic performance. This was due to data saturation, and I therefore showcased the accounts of five participants. This sample was small and gave a glimpse into the individualized experiences of students.

The familiarity with Baneshwor and its students allowed for the selection of participants capable of providing relevant information to be less challenging, and in this way, the study achieved its goals in a highly successful manner. The school was also close to the students, thus making it easy to interact with them and gather data. These few students provided us with a significant amount of information regarding what each of them was currently experiencing. My interaction with Baneshwor and its students facilitated the identification of students who would be involved in the study and offer valuable contributions, ensuring the research addressed the study's objectives. The school location was also very accessible, which meant that I would easily interface with students and gather data with minimal interruptions.

Research site

The school that was followed during the research is located in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Baneshwor, and it boasts a diverse student population, and diversity brings with it multiple experiences and insights. Secondly, the school is

known for offering a good environment that fosters academic achievement and extracurricular participation; therefore, it was an appropriate and ideal setting for the process to take place. The study is located in the urban section of Kathmandu, which also has the advantage of being easily accessible to the student body in the region, as it is diverse and situated at the center of Kathmandu Metropolitan. Such diversity added diversity to the collected data. The school environment provided a supportive ecosystem that fostered interest in academics and extracurricular activities, which were conducive to learning.

In order to have a systematic selection process, a protocol was established on how to select the research site. The protocol involved the following criteria: the school had to be located in Kathmandu Metropolitan City to be accessible, the school had to be diverse in terms of its student body to be representative and provide broad views, and the school had to be recognized for academic excellence and extracurricular activities. These factors facilitated the identification of an environment that is conducive to observing the balance between academics and extracurricular activities. Moreover, the readiness of the school administration to take part in the research and support it was also factored in as a necessity. This site selection protocol was structured to ensure the selected environment aligns well with the study's purpose and to facilitate the researcher's data collection process.

Participants' Profile

Preserving participant anonymity is a key aspect of qualitative research. To do so, I assigned all interviewees a pseudonym when transcribing their audio-taped interviews, and these names are used here and have not been removed after the study was completed. I have sought the required institutional permissions for data collection. In the present study, I briefly describe the backgrounds of the five students in terms of voluntary participation in extracurricular activities, academic achievement, and participation in interviews because they were selected with consideration of active participation in extracurricular activities, high academic performance, and willingness to participate in interviews.

The participants' experiences were central to this study due to the fact that they had various levels of educational aspirations, personal backgrounds, and participation in extracurricular activities. All of the participants had a different vantage point on how they spent their time juggling school and all of their other activities, adding richness to the study with different stories. In-depth insights were

obtained by prolonged engagement in the interview sessions, which helped to ensure that their experiences were well understood and that the purpose of the study was met.

Participant 1

Sheela, a 17-year-old female in Grade 12 of the science stream in a prestigious college in Baneshwor, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, lives in Koteshwor and takes about 15 minutes by public bus to get to her college every day. She is involved in extracurricular activities (debate and basketball) alongside her academic studies, and she is achieving academically. She became a suitable participant for this research study on how students in Grades 11 and 12 navigate the challenging decision of balancing their studies and extracurricular activities. She was purposely chosen as a participant because of her relatively confident nature and passion, which were noted during our initial phone call on February 15th, 2025, when the objectives of the research study were discussed, and I confirmed a meeting time for February 22nd, 2025, to meet at her college in Nepal. Ethical compliance was adhered to, and the signed consent from her parents and institutional approval from the college were obtained.

During the in-person interview on February 22, 2025, Sheela exhibited a bold, confident, and outspoken persona and a warm, angelic smile that remained steadfast as we spoke. To build rapport, our initial conversations were informal, focusing on aspects such as her family, favorite teacher, and best friend. Such dialogue made her feel relaxed and comfortable. Talking about how it was, these two things that helped her to shape her leadership and time management skills, she addressed the issue of multitasking. Regarding her science-straining schedule, she claimed that her coaches and family helped her stay energetic. Yes was the answer Sheela gave to the question of whether she wanted to record our conversation.

As Sheela was referring to the audio recording, she spoke as if she were comfortable with the process the recording required. Sheela's level of familiarity allowed her responses to be authentic and true to what she felt. Since I used pseudonyms to protect their identity, every time Sheela's name appeared in the transcripts, it remained confidential for the duration of the study. In her willingness to provide insights into balancing academics and extracurricular activities, and from her perspective, I felt Sheela had an immense impact on my findings.

Participant 2

Swikrit, a 16-year-old male student in Grade 12, is enrolled in the science stream at an accredited college in Baneshwor, Kathmandu Metropolitan. Swikrit resides in Dillibazar and cycles to college and from home, taking approximately 20 minutes each way. Swikrit is tall and thin, and typically has a covering mask over his mustache. He is a confident young male with a bright personality. Swikrit has a contagious enthusiasm for being involved in a football match. He brings this same enthusiasm into conversations about his schoolwork and is seen organizing sports events in college. Swikrit was selected as an inclusion criterion for this study due to his engagement in extracurricular activities (particularly football) and his academic achievements. Swikrit helps in getting to know the equilibrium between academic and extracurricular requirements. On 10 February 2025, Swikrit was contacted by phone to discuss the study question, with contacts arranged to meet in person at his institution on 22 February 2025. Swikrit was allowed to participate in the research by obtaining a permission form signed by his parents, and subsequently, the university had to consent to permit him to participate.

During the face-to-face interview on 22 February 2025, I observed Swikrit as a colorful and a leadership-oriented personality. I used an informal tone to establish rapport and began the meeting by speaking generally - about his family background, notable sports moments in his life, and his involvement in organizing college events - which caused him to relax. Swikrit shared that he enjoys football - as a striker - which allowed him to develop discipline and manage time. He also appreciated that being involved in organizing events had allowed him to grow as a leader. He explained: "I am always playing football, so that helps to trouble me. I know studies are important too. Planning my week helps to transition a mix of fun and seriousness" (Field note: 22 February 2025). We recorded the interview on a cell phone - with his permission. As he was also a minor, I ensured he felt comfortable and not under any pressure to maintain the authenticity of his responses. I used a pseudonym in all of the transcripts for privacy, as he is used in this study. The fact that Swikrit can be both playful and serious, and that he gave the right balance in terms of academics and other student-life factors, massively contributes to the exploration of time management and leadership in Grade 12 pupils made in this study.

Participant 3

Alina is 17 years old and a grade 11 student from a prominent college in Baneshwor, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, currently studying A Level management. She lives in Kathmandu with her mother. Alina is motivated and inspired by the memory of her father, who passed away. She tries to meet the expectations set by him and his family through her school work and in leadership roles. Alina's leadership roles are in social service, and she is taking the lead on several activities to organize donation and awareness events for the benefit of the community. Her involvement in leadership roles will give her more confidence and more opportunities to learn and build a social circle, whilst demonstrating to her father that she is studious. Alina was convened to participate purposefully in the study, as she managed her assessments in addition to her leadership roles. On 12 February 2025, the researcher introduced the research study objectives with Alina over the phone and set up a future meeting for an in-person meeting on February 22, 2025, at her college. I have discussed with the mother of Alina, and I have her consent. I can also talk to Alina's mother, in case something goes wrong during the meeting, which will enable me to make some decisions.

During the in-person interview on February 22, 2025, Alina demonstrated resilience, empathy, and composure, which her teachers and peers praised. I initiated the interview informally and, after discussing Alina's family, her responsibilities in the social service club, and what she enjoys in life, she exhibited a more relaxed demeanor. Alina said the value of spearheading community service projects and being academically responsible is partly because she must be developing in every aspect she can, but also because of the legacy left to her by her father. In her words, *"After my father passed away, I found I could use my grieving process to become motivated in my work. I feel that by leading the club and studying hard that I am making him proud"* (Field note: February 22, 2025). After permission was granted by Alina to record the interview on the mobile device, I followed standard protocol with any minor participant to ensure that Alina felt a high level of comfort throughout the interview to capture her natural responses. A pseudonym was used in all transcripts to maintain her confidentiality, which was retained for her even after the study was concluded. Alina's lens demonstrated how personal bereavement can generate resolve as well as how combining academic and extra-curricular activities can shape a process of personal development. Alina's events provide evidence that deepens the

study's inquiry around time management and leadership practices for Grade 11 students.

Participant 4

Ryan is an 18-year-old A Level student specializing in management. Of medium height and mature demeanor, Ryan is known by his light mustache and typically wears a mask. Ryan lives at home with his parents. While they work hard and have demanding jobs, Ryan is well covered and lives responsibly in the community, wherever he can, from volunteering as a program manager and assistant sports facilitator to continuing to support his mother's school even during his free time. He passionately discusses computer programming in great depth, and Ryan spends numerous hours watching YouTube tutorials, relentlessly improving his coding abilities. While Ryan undertakes demanding coursework in management to provide campus leadership, he keeps a balance in many extracurricular activities, a deep appreciation for learning, and ultimately a commitment to the school community and programming.

Participant 5

Sakura is 18 years old. She was born in Japan and spent part of her childhood there. She has a polite and humble disposition, fostered from her Japanese upbringing. Now she is studying in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, which is known for being very difficult. She volunteers on weekends at a Japanese Supplementary school, where she helps children connect to their language and culture. She also takes part in the Micle (Migrant Children Language Education) Project, which supports migrant children in learning languages. As soon as I started our conversation, she shared her experience being an IB student, how challenging it was to manage with the assignment deadlines and the volunteering.

Information Collection Process

The information collection process involves systematically gathering relevant data to address research questions. In qualitative studies, this process focuses on capturing rich, contextual insights from the participants. The students were the participants in this research, where the interview was intended to serve as an appropriate channel for collecting qualitative data in my study. My approach began by creating a list of suitable students with the highest likelihood of demonstrating credibility and trustworthiness.

Then I managed to meet them individually in a comfortable place where I introduced myself again, explained the purpose of my research, and sought their participation. The next approach was to fix the date and hold in-person meetings, where individual Interviews took place at their preferred times and in their respective schools' comfortable settings; this ensured a conducive environment for open dialogue. When the interviews with six students had been completed, five of them were to be stored in advance to use the information and obtain the answers later; one of them was also not considered, as the author had not prepared much content and did not want to conduct the interview. These five students were interviewed twice and revisited as a follow-up to seek clarification. This method would help me to gain genuine insights into the experiences, practices, views, and opinions of the participants regarding the time balance between academic and extracurricular activities; the end result would lead to findings of value.

The paradigm of Narrative Inquiry used in conducting the interviews in the study also contrasts with other qualitative interviews in that the interview is founded on the idea of eliciting the lived experiences of the interviewees in the form of a coherent story rather than isolated answers. The interviews allowed the respondents to share their stories of coping with academics and extracurricular activities in their own words, providing full and descriptive data rather than the typical form of questions and answers.

To create the stories based on the interview information, I transcribed the interviews and then inserted the transcripts into narrative sections, organized by the experiences and opinions of each participant. I would then reassemble these fragments into logical and chronological accounts that did not serve any end to connect the themes of time management and leadership. This kind of storytelling allows for a comprehensive view of how students cope with and live their two lives.

Data Analysis

All that data analysis in qualitative research involves is making meaning of the information I have gathered and viewing it closely with the aim of drawing useful information. This is to determine patterns, themes, and other underlying meanings in that qualitative data (Labov, 2013). Thematic narrative analysis, narrative analysis, and analysis of narratives can be referred to as the narrative inquiry. I embraced the second one, i.e., narrative analysis, to understand student experience of time management in both academic and extracurricular activities. In the form of such

analysis, I studied the gathered stories of the students to follow the leadership strategies used by them to promote holistic development, and I identified the meaning of their stories in relation to time management issues and management strategies. This style enabled me to explore the life experiences of the students and establish patterns, problems, and leadership practices using their stories (Riessman, 2008). The primary reason for this analysis was to observe how the students managed their time and identify their strategies and challenges. I thought this technique of data analysis was pertinent to my research since it answered my research questions, i.e., how students shared their stories of balancing their time between academics and extracurricular activities. Using this approach, I read individual student stories, after which I interpreted, analyzed, discussed, and made meaning of the stories, presenting their essence. During the process of interpretation, analysis, discussion, and sense-making, I identified myself with various theories of leadership and social aspects. This elicited a major revelation towards the subsequent implication and progression to further study. Consequently, I introduced the stories provided by the participants, interpreted them, and identified different themes.

Initially, the narratives used in this study were not constructed in this manner. Initially, I posed a few questions to the participants, and their responses were given in a disjointed manner, neither in a sequential story nor covering various issues. Accordingly, after mixing everything in them, I plotted them as their stories with every part of the plot, and they approved it. They were pleased to hear their stories from me.

Through the process, I acquired important knowledge on the role of the school system and cultural practices in affecting student learning. Since I believed that qualitative data analysis was a repeatable process, it provided me with an opportunity to refine my knowledge as I familiarized myself with the students' testimonials, who were the subjects of the study.

I also explore the data collection process in the study by using in-depth interviews, which enable us to obtain rich and detailed accounts from students. The open interviews were employed in this study because they offer some sort of guidance and flexibility. The method also enabled me to develop guiding questions relevant to the investigation of students' experiences with balancing academics and extracurricular activities, and to give participants the opportunity to narrate their stories in their own natural language. The interview protocol would be based on open-

ended questions and prompts that should be employed to encourage participants to provide detailed accounts of the difficulties they face in time management and the leadership strategies they employ. This approach was useful in obtaining thick and situational narratives that were aligned with the objectives of the study. The particular interview rules and principles are shown in the annex.

Additionally, I have students keeping reflective journals, in which they write about their personal reflections on time management. When I deconstruct them, I see different forms of story structures, including how the story unfolds, what problems emerge, and what solutions ensue, as well as some critical details, such as the students as the main characters of the story and their families as powerful stakeholders. Our themes also include concepts such as resilience and time management practices, which appear to be collectively applied, all related to the 1972 model provided by Labov. The interviews are word-for-word transcribed, coded into narrative blocks, and thematically analyzed using qualitative software such as NVivo. I interviewed five people and realized that I had reached data saturation, i.e., no new themes or structures emerged, such as family expectations or self-regulation.

The transcripts of the interviews were literally transcribed and broken down into narrative episodes, which represented the distinctive experiences regarding the attitude of the students towards time management and their leadership relationship. These episodes were the significant units of analysis according to the Narrative Inquiry methodology. The most significant themes and categories, such as the coping strategies, family support, and resilience, were found in the narratives with the help of the iterative process, which included reading, coding, and reflection. These themes combined contributed to creating coherent stories and maintaining the validity of the voices of the interviewees and get a sense of how they were able to balance academic and non-academic activities. This methodical investigation had a direct influence on the study responses to the research questions to identify the peculiarities of lived experience of students and their leadership strategies.

Quality Standard

The maintenance of quality standards is an integral part of educational research. As a qualitative researcher, adhering to the narrative inquiry, I tried to maintain the quality standards of trustworthiness, authenticity, credibility, transferability, conformability, and peer debriefing as far as possible. Maintaining the quality standard, the ethical issues that could arise when writing a proposal, according to

(Creswell & Poth, 2018) should be anticipated by the researchers. Hence, this allows others to criticize the quality of my research study. I tried my best to avoid fabrication and misinterpretation of the experiences and practices shared by the participants. Applying method triangulation, I used multiple methods such as observation, interview, peer debriefing, reflection, and so forth to collect, analyze, and interpret data that helped me better understand my research topic. I checked the consistency of the collected data thoroughly and used peer debriefing throughout my research process, from the beginning to the end. I discussed the study's main agenda, theme, theoretical framework of the study, and key findings with my colleagues pursuing an MPhil from Kathmandu University.

Using the member-checking method, I shared the data collected, interpretations, and conclusions with my participants so they knew their intentions. Additionally, they would provide any necessary information or updates as needed. Reflection took its shape daily by pondering on field notes and information from the participants to make sense of them. To maintain the authenticity of my study, I was respectful towards my participants' original identity and myself. I have considered the participant's voice as the main tool of my research. I have always respected participants' rights, opinions, values, and experiences. Connelly and Clandinin (2006). conclude that a researcher explores experiences through three dimensions in narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place.

Temporal Transition

According to Connelly & Clandinin (2006) narrative research is a collectively constructed process that is time-fluid, dynamic, and open to the interpretations of its many participants. In narrative research, time experienced is subjective. Sharing experiences or narratives emerges in our moment-to-moment, relationally responsive, and talk-entwined activities with participants. Such narratives occur in many discursive times, allowing us time to improvise, draw on past narratives, and construct new ones. In narrative inquiry, it is important to understand people, places, and events as in the process because nothing remains permanent but is always in instability. Temporality refers to the events in retrospect, current, and future. While generating meaning from narrative events in the form of stories and experiences of my participants, I attempted to find out their synchronized incidents of tribulation and resilience that their past experiences have influenced, and how they have been forecasting their future.

Sociality

The focus of sociality was on social context and social understanding. As recommended by Connelly & Clandinin (2006). I collaborated with their peers to verify the research inputs and also asked them to examine my research to enhance its value. I maintained my interpersonal relationships to keep a close connection with the participants and discuss their opinions and thoughts with them regularly.

Location

Place always has a strong bond with one's memory and experiences. Being a narrative inquirer, "Narratives are spontaneous acts of meaning making that occur and interweave through many moments of discursive time and space" (Connelly & Clandinin (2006). I have valued place, as it may change the narratives and explore temporality. To strengthen the temporality and sociality of the participants' stories and experiences, place work as concrete sites and boundaries in the study (Clandinin, 2013). For maintaining quality standards in the research, places guide us to events and experiences for meaning-making, so its importance should not be sidelined. Linkage of places with my participants' experiences has provided flow to stories, and the confession of lived experiences becomes more vivid.

Reflexivity

During my research, I was reflective and self-critical. Reflexivity was an understanding of how my background, values, and faith influenced research. Through the reflective practice, instead of theft of personality or ignorance, they were a claim and were to be seen for space. This continuous introspection allowed me to maintain moral and methodological principles of qualitative research.

To conclude, by using reflexivity, I promised to study a strict moral and socially responsible approach, which presented fine work to academics and further activities for private school students.

Credibility of my Study

I can confirm that I tried to maintain the study's caliber from start to finish. I gave my research questions my whole concentration to learn the solution. Before I told a story, my research was qualitative. So, I tried to maintain a high research caliber. I gave more focus to my collected data. According to my research, my participation had increased. I made an effort to research in accordance with the ontological and epistemological principles that are dear to my heart. To gather the participants' opinions and ideas, I maintained constant contact with them. After

carefully reading the transcript and identifying the codes, a similar code was applied as a category, and a meaningful topic related to the research questions was generated. The stories of the research participants were organized into different subjects and then analyzed using literature and theoretical support, with my own experiences. As essential to narrative research, I attempted to analyze qualitative data using formalities, thematic structures, social and cultural contexts, and other elements.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues are fundamental while conducting qualitative research. Creswell and Creswell (2017) explain ethical considerations in research as a system to question the fundamental moral assumptions of all research agendas, their political and ethical implications, and the fair treatment of diverse voices. Valuing the ethical consideration of the participants, their opinions are confidential, and pseudonyms are used to address all participants and their schools to ensure secrecy. Top priority has been given to their confidentiality, dignity, and safety. The participants' approval is required before any use of their data, information, or images. The participants filled out a consent form and were permitted to use their data. The information received from the participants is not misinterpreted and distorted to affect their lives, and there will be no temptation to compel them to answer the researcher's questions.

Regarding confidentiality, I did not disclose or publicize any information that reveals the informants' privacy. I have not violated any rules, regulations, customs, or other typicalities of the locality. I have strictly followed the KUSOED ethical guidelines while conducting the research. To achieve all these, I have avoided any questions related to their ethnicity, culture, gender, etc., and I have avoided things that make them uncomfortable. I have allowed them not to answer any questions they thought could be irrelevant to the study or that might distress or discomfort them. Since the participants in my study are minors, I have also obtained consent from their parents. Their parents have also signed the consent form.

Chapter Essence

This chapter outlines the entire methodology approach to the research conducted on the manner in which learners in privately owned schools in Kathmandu reconcile their academic and extracurricular expectations based on their personal experiences. The interpretive paradigm, with a focus on Narrative Inquiry, supports the approach applied in the study of students' time management as a culturally based and collaborative experience. The narrative approach enables a thorough investigation

of students' stories, examining their temporality, sociality, and place through both narrative and thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and meanings in the stories. The chapter explains the meticulously conceived research techniques, including participant selection, data collection through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals, and an intensive data analysis that does not distort the voices of the participants. The quality of the standards is maintained with the help of the properly developed Narrative Inquiry model, which involves validity and trustworthiness. The ethical issues are centered on the privacy and the confidentiality of the participants. Through these methodological steps, the chapter effectively provides a solid background on its study of how students manage their time and leadership process within their own educational and cultural context.

CHAPTER IV

STUDENTS' STORIES ON BALANCING ACADEMICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In this chapter, the way of presenting data and analysis is based on a narrative approach. First, I present the participants' stories in their own words to capture their lived experiences authentically. Following this, I execute a thematic analysis to identify and explore key themes that emerge from the narratives. This approach allows the depth of personal stories to be accessed while gaining a better understanding of shared patterns and meaning throughout the data.

Narrative approach analysis illustrates how presenting the stories in their entirety before the interpretation stage helps to keep the integrity of the voices of participants (Goodson, 2013). The following thematic analysis is the way to systematically collect and interpret the stories, as well as to discover the way the participants give meaning to their experiences (Hecker & Kalpokas, 2025). This chapter provides a broad and subtle understanding of the data in the context of the research questions by uniting the narrative representation stage with the thematic analysis.

Story of Sheela

My participant, Sheela (pseudonym), in the interview, told me of the struggle to balance school, together with extracurricular activities, when she was going through a difficult period. She explained her experience of studying high-stakes tests when she was attending the college fest, which is a huge task and consumed a lot of time and energy. She also told of the importance of time planning and the influence of her family and teachers in ensuring that everything was in check. The narration of Sheela gives a bit of useful information regarding the experience of having to study and practice performances. It also reveals how she adapted her daily practices to lower the distractions. Her contribution provides an illustrative example of how to balance many obligations. It also emphasizes the importance of a supportive environment for success in both endeavors. Here are some highlights from Sheela's own comments:

Last year, during the college fest, I was managing both my academics and my performance in the fest. Both were challenging but also one of the best

experiences of my life. I really wanted to do my best on stage, while at the same time I wanted to ensure my academics did not take a backseat. I was able to do this with a lot of planning. For me to make it work, I primarily planned everything out. I was able to do this with quite a bit of forethought. The key overall was my forethought and planning. I started with a to-do list of all the tasks I needed to do, and then I planned out my study times and practice. Basically, I could plan my study time and planned my practice, and therefore, I could organize my education and practice without affecting them in a negative way.

The participant was also effective in terms of time and organization when he or she assumed the responsibility to organize his or her academic and performance tasks before the college fest they were to attend. This entailed application of strategic foresight and development of a clear all-inclusive list of to-do items that assisted in balancing the two opposing priorities - the overlapping and intense academic tasks and information to prepare the stage performance - both effectively without compromising the other priority. This illustrates the advantage of scheduled structure in response to high priority demands of the same time interval.

There were some really challenging days, especially when I had late night practices into a morning class! There were definitely some days that I thought there was no way it was all going to work, but I just kept telling myself that it was all part of the journey! One of the best memories was the day of the fest. I had an exam coming up soon, but I also had to perform. It was a big challenge to master on both aspect that time. I remember I had a mix feeling of excitement and nervousness. So, very tactfully I made a list of the content I had to prepare for the exam and allocated time accordingly. I cut off all the activities like my engagement in social Medias, communication with neighbors, watching tv and so on.

During my free time, beside the time for my study, I focused on the preparation of college fest. Finally, my performance at the fest went well which encouraged me to do better in my academics performance as well. In the remaining days to start my exam, I fully concentrated on exams. As I had planned my study schedule well in advance, so I was able to refocus on my study, after my excellent performance at the fest, without worrying about my

exam. As result, my all the papers in the exam went well. When the results came out I was so excited with my achievements. I was proud of myself and learned the importance of planning and time management.

The participant exercised resilience and an effective time management plan when facing the requirements of late-night fest preparation and day classes, to the point of giving a performance during the fest and decent grades. They prioritized priorities by planning the most important tasks, getting rid of distractions (leaving the phone aside and avoiding distractions like social media), and following a timetable of studying. They showed how vital it is to do systematic planning to stay successful during the pressure tests. The fact that they were in a position to refocus on school after the fest and to leverage the confidence that they had gained out of the performance indicates the role of flexibility and planning in time management in high-stakes testing.

My parents and teachers were very supportive during this time. They supported my passion for performing and focused my attention not to neglect my studies! Being a grown up child I need to do house chores. However, during that phase, my mother did for me and also my parents managed the environment of house. While I was studying, nobody turned on the TV and nobody made any kinds of noise in the house. Moreover, my father also cancelled his one get-together with friends at house to celebrate his achievement, because it could disturbance my studies. Taking care of my health was their priorities, my mother prepared nutritious food even we stopped eating outside during weekends. During that phase they totally focused on my physical and mental health. For extra support my father hired a teacher for me to provide support in studies. Their guidance and support helped me manage my work-life balance in both ways.

The student was highly assisted by a stress-free family life and school life, which was the major reason for their being able to manage college fest preparations and studies at the same time. The very fact that such positive steps as the selection of domestic work, the creation of distraction-free environments in the areas of study, the arrangement of healthy food, and even the acquisition of the services of a tutor were taken by the parents suggests a highly holistic approach to the development of the physical and emotional well-being. This external help, with the assistance of the class,

helped to work successfully in life, which prompts the necessity of beneficial environments in bringing success in times of stress.

In retrospect, I can readily see the way in which engaging in extracurricular activities has served me as a student and an individual. I developed self confidence, enhanced and trained communication and learned how to manage time.

The college fest was one event during which I achieved what I set out to do. I balanced studying with extracurricular activities and I certainly will remember this for a long time. Thinking back on all my activities, I noticed how participating in extracurricular made me a student and a person. I self, improved and mastered with time management. The college fest was one experience in which I set out to achieve balance during my studies and activities, and I'll always have it with me.

The participant reflection shows that attendance to activities such as the college fest are important because one gains self- confidence and learns how to communicate and time manage. The ability to balance all school and outside activities during the fest demonstrates the value of such experiences in overall development, making lasting memories and skills that are transferable beyond the classroom.

Interpretation and Analysis of Sheela's Narrative

I have read through the information of my first participant, thus having a better understanding of how she managed to pass through the difficult task of splitting her time between studies and participating in the college fest. It illustrates the ability, support systems, and personal attributes that contribute to the successful management of several demands. I have extracted three general themes of the story of the participants that summarize their lifelong journey in a concise manner: Planning and navigating between Tasks, Family and Teacher Support, and Staying Motivated and Confident. This way, the practical component of student success is known, not only by an individual story of a participant but also by the emotional and social ones which determine it. A story of a participant can be viewed as a very vivid example of how students first start to develop cognitive capabilities needed to succeed, then are able to rely on the support relationships and remain driven in the process. Each of the themes offers a different way to look at the complicated process of balancing college and extracurricular life. The following sections are devoted to exploring these themes and then connecting them with the available research that proves how the experience of the participant fits into the general educational and psychological outcomes.

Planning and Switching Between Tasks

Sheela's story shows us the great importance of having solid planning abilities, as well as the ability to switch between tasks. Executive functions are mental abilities, including planning, remembering, suppressing impulses, and mental flexibility (Dawson & Guare, 2010). Cognitive flexibility is one's ability to shift attention and change your thinking when circumstances change or tasks change.

In this instance, the participant could easily switch between studying and rehearsing for the college fest, which enabled her to maintain both processes going smoothly and without the feeling of being anxious and stuck. Research reports that cognitive flexibility is an important success factor in school. Students can easily alternate their focus and respond flexibly, which means that they perform better in reading and mathematical tasks and problem-solving in comparison with students who struggle to switch their attention (Best et al., 2011). Since the school work is more intense as students get older, a more recent study evaluated the significance of the ability of students to be flexible in their thinking and concluded that it is even more useful due to conflicting demands. This paper bodes well for the experience of the participant because she had to switch her attention from exams to a highly active college fest.

This participant provides the story that proves that cognitive flexibility is something that can be learned and developed. The ability to step outside the situation and reevaluate it from a different perspective enables the student to relieve stress and take a more productive view of the challenges. This form of cognitive adaptability can help the students to be better able to reconcile issues, as well as be resilient in cases where things get tough. To sum up, it is highly essential that schools should promote this growth and provide friendly and open conditions so that students can handle numerous things simultaneously, as this participant did.

Support from family and Teachers

The participant's story illustrates how having support from family and teachers is essential to managing school work and all other activities. Supportive individuals serve as motivators, provide a space free from distractions, and offer assistance with chores or tutoring (Wentzel, 2014). In this story, the participant's family offered encouragement and attention to the development of a positive study location. The participant's teachers also approved of her efforts.

Research has shown that having these people in one's life supports students working towards their ambitions, experiences less stress, and greater motivation (Romeo et al., 2024). Given that this participant's family (and teachers) were encouraging her efforts (and making it easier by establishing a good environment), she was able to maintain organization and manage her busy schedule and progress with her studies. Support from family and an established time set aside between school and family is not only favourable but necessary for student success. Positive relationships reduce stress and provide students with focus and confidence. Additionally, neuroscience shows that the brain functions more effectively when there is a feeling of support because less stress exists (Romeo et al., 2024). This quality about humans suggests that supportive school environments would encourage people to develop broader and deeper connections amongst students, families, and teachers in order to facilitate the opportunity for students to be their most successful, especially when they are busy or stressed.

Staying Motivated and Building Confidence

The participant showed motivation and self-efficacy in balancing her studies and the college fest. The participant was intentional in resisting distractions like social media and TV to focus on her own goals. This type of personal determination is described in lots of literature as resilience and competence motivation, which is the desire to overcome obstacles with pride in accomplishment (Bundick, 2011). Getting involved in other activities outside of the classroom helped her with confidence and self-belief.

Researchers say that when students take part in activities like sports, arts, or clubs, they often develop a stronger belief in their abilities than through just classroom learning (Bundick, 2011). This sense of confidence allows students to persist even when things are difficult. From the perspective of a researcher, the story of the participant demonstrates the necessity of motivation and self-confidence for success. Schools should give students the opportunity to experiment with different activities so that they can develop themselves academically and personally.

In reference to the experience that Sheela had, I have a significant personal experience that contributes to my knowledge about the wrong circumstances in which many other students are in this situation. I also connect with the experience of Sheela since I have also been employed in the same education settings in Kathmandu. Sheela reminds me of so many dedicated, hard-working, and frankly tired students I have

come across in the course of the way. Her narration reminds me of my younger years when, to accommodate my demands, I was sometimes, unfortunately, forced to deny myself my psychological tranquility or even sleep, or both, and in attempts to cope with my myriad of obligations. I also realize too well that, though the school administrators have good intentions, they do not always offer students the support they need, either structural or emotional, that they need to remain safe and emotionally available. The contradiction depicted in the life of Sheela is a highly actual human contradiction that manifests in larger systemic contradictions, which are usually highlighted on my interpretivist side.

Story of Swikrit

Swikrit entered our gathering with a burst of excitement and evidently felt more like being on the football field than sitting and conversing. I had a pleasant bit of small talk concerning his fondness for football and how he became the chief organizer of all the football matches as far as college was concerned. However, when I referred to my research project on the process different students use to balance between academics and other obligations, he totally changed his attitude. His chair was further rigid, and his eyes were fixed and attentive, as though I had raised a matter which he regarded as a very serious one.

But you see, this is it now, all right, he said with a great smile. Nobody speaks about this, but it is all. Then he flew away in recollection of the last semester's problems, all his midterms in the same week, the biggest football tournament of his life, then cramming late at night, and practicing early the next morning, eating instant noodles as the only food he had, all just to stay alive to make it through. He even remembered the panic that went through him when he double-booked a physics mock test and a semifinal match. *"My coach threatened to bench me; my teacher threatened to fail me."* So when I asked him how he balanced school, sport, and family life without burning out—because burnout isn't the ubiquitous issue it is for most students—he started to tell me about the real-life experiences of juggling life from behind the scenes.

'To be honest? I didn't. At least not in the beginning.' He moved closer, like he was letting me in on a secret.

'When I started college, I saw time as an enemy, something to battle or escape. Then it hit me: it's just a resource like my debate notes or my basketball skills. For as long as I can remember, I have been involved in sports as part of my

daily life while also trying to balance my academic load, especially regarding football.

Last year was a different story when I attended the U19 national team tryout. There was a time when I had to leave school in the middle of the day, and I was wondering how I was going to catch up on the tons of school work I had that evening, and in the next few weeks to come. There were times when my passion for football and the responsibilities of my studies would conflict, which was very challenging, but I knew there had to be a way to balance football without giving up on school. The only way of managing everything, I revised as rigorously as I could. Anytime I had a free period or free time in between classes, I would use that to catch up on studies. I must say, my teachers were unbelievably supportive; they provided me with notes and kept me in the loop on how to keep up with my school work. My friends also helped and were willing to share notes or help with other assignments as they progressed. I still think about one of the toughest things I faced, although difficult to be accepted or rejected, was not being selected for the U19 teams. That was a significant disappointment, and mentally, I found it difficult to concentrate and thus, the outcome of my studies reflected this. However, thankfully, with the help of my parents and teacher, I was able to pick myself up and get on my way again. They told me, "Setbacks and disappointments are a part of life, move on".

The participant's considerations show the need for adaptable time management and a support system for successfully managing the contributions of sport and study, and specific challenges of intense periods (e.g., U19 National tryout). The creative use of time they spent not in sport for learning via a study group at the team hotel, and the help of teachers and fellow peers to exchange notes and reach out together, is indicative of both resource savvy and peer support, consistent with findings from your own studies of students in Kathmandu. The disappointment of being unsuccessful in securing a position on the U19 still facilitates their mental resilience from the initiated motivation of others (i.e., parents and teachers), clearly supporting the role of emotional support and a growth mindset for coping with difficulty, such as managing ongoing dedication to study.

When I think about sporting challenges I have experienced since being involved in sport, I think of all the positives and how they have made a

difference to my school performance. The journey of sport has, in turn, impacted my life too. I have realised the value of determination, teamwork, and sportsmanship, but they are also values that I take into my education. Football has played a tremendous role in my life and has been a good influence on the person I am today.

The participant's reflection on how sport, and specifically football, has positively impacted his/her education and personal growth, and the importance of cross-cutting skills like perseverance, team spirit, and sporting mindset. Such values of sport realized in the experience of sporting challenge have been productive effects in the schooling of him or her and in personal development, which matched the results of your previous studies in Kathmandu among the children in the private schools. This observation justifies the primary role played by extra-curricular activities like football in the holistic development and imparting life skills in institutional contexts of learning.

Interpretation and Analysis of Swikrit's Narrative

The swikrit narrative is an informative one that teaches us a lot about the subjective experience of a student-athlete who needs to find his or her way through the landscape of student-learning and student-athletics as well. According to his narrative, this balancing exercise was not merely an issue of time management, but one that involved a change of approach to writing and a sequence of priorities to be made. He initially understood time as an opponent that brings annoyance and has a toll on his self-esteem. However, in thought and experience, he came to regard how time is also an asset and an asset that he can dispose of in reasonable ways, given the circumstances, as do other environmentally conscious behaviours like long-term planning, conscientiousness, and foresight. This shift in attitude provided him with the opportunity to choose the life of a student athlete on a positive note that was more promising.

The experience of Swikrit also suggested the extent to which the social support systems, as collective teachers, friends, and family support, allowed him to alleviate his academic work and leisure time predicament. The social network of support that alleviated stress and strengthened resilience was especially applicable at times of stress and/or loss. This more systemic view reveals the weaknesses of the everyday binary dichotomies I believe to be normative, where academics and

activities outside of school are oppositional, but in fact can move in the direction of complementary realms or be fed by each other. This will be expounded in the next section, where the thematic analysis will be carried out, but will be anchored in the Swikrit experience, as well as practical theoretical frames and research.

Transformational Mindset and Time Management

Swikrit is the one who had experienced the first stage of time mismanagement, which was a very similar situation students find themselves in when time seems to be too short and too long at the same time. He later made a conclusion that he could actually change his perception of time, not by viewing it as something that was lacking, but as a resource that could be used. It was the start of his studies of skills in better time management. His reorientation with the time is parallel to the perceptions of Bass and Riggio (2006) of transformational leadership as a process, where people change their thinking and get inspired. The transformation, in the long run, is therefore a contribution towards people having more power and making more strides towards their goals.

Swikrit took up the challenge of creating his own timeline, and this allowed him to balance school and sports with ease, as well as sports and school work, without feeling that the two were in conflict with each other. The article by Maccann et al. (2012) acknowledges the reality that the students who correlated their academic assignments with other activities were better in both fields. The broaden-and-build theory by Fredrickson (2001) enlightens us on the fact that positive emotions and integrated thinking cause a spiral up of personal progress, which is achieved through ongoing intermixing of various experiences. So, the story of Swikrit is an appropriate illustration of this central relationship in this case, i.e., the capacity to convert the inner dialogue into a positive one can prove to be a rather powerful time management technique that is bound to lead one to maturing in the end.

Important Role of Social Support for Sustaining Performance

Social support was strong, and this contributed to Swikrit managing the issues of having two roles. Teacher support via sharing of notes and communication via online sites on matters pertaining to academics helped in collaborative learning of the study with peers, with the notion that it would help reduce academic stress and help students sustain learning. Psychosocial encouragement and practical support from family members to fight the mental distress caused by the process of not making the U19 football team helped him cope psychologically. This is in line with Claessens et

al. (2007), who revealed that learners were significantly less likely to burn out because of the high demands of the work when they were in social networks of supportive friends.

This concept of habit stacking, which, as discovered by Clear (2018), is the process of finding habits forming systems of support as leveraging time management possibilities, illustrates it well. Also, a study about the social contagion by Christakis and Fowler (2013) confirms the significance of the social behaviors being shared with a group of social support; here, the peers and family of Swikrit had adopted some of their thoughts. Hence, Swikrit reports brought to light that the social ecosystems facilitated academic and co-curricular success as required.

Integration of Academic and Extracurricular Domains

The story of Swikrit is a poignant depiction of the influence of maintaining a balance between education and extracurricular activities, and the way students can benefit from this balance in many meaningful aspects. The participant had learned some of the practical skills that were involved in time management, working with people as a team, and/or volunteering when participating in clubs, sports teams, and/or other activities. It also made the participant exposed to associating and chilling with friends that reduce stress and keep them focused on academics.

It also coincides with the experience of numerous researchers, which states that students enrolled in extracurricular activities generally. Research studies also indicate that students who are involved in extra-curricular activities generally achieve higher overall grades, improve their attendance, and have improved educational intentions (Lastra et al., 2024). Such activities also have the potential to foster such life skills as critical thinking, communication, and perseverance, which can contribute to their academic and post-secondary success. To students, the schools that offer means of being flexible and exchanging thoughts on how to balance both academic value and extracurricular interests in the best interest of their own well-being (Ramchandra & Gayathri, 2020). Swikrit is an example of research that highlighted the functionality of performing arts as just another aspect of their academic research to be a productive and fruitful development.

Story of Alina

My third participant was obviously Alina, and she was highly inclined to assume several roles simultaneously. To illustrate this, in one of the cases, she told me that she was planning an event on top of a speech competition and school work,

which was plainly strenuous. I had a chance to hear about her struggles, her introjected feeling of burnout, and the problem of balancing the requirements of both academic and ECA. The story by Alina depicts a turning point in her life as she started valuing things and establishing limits. She talked about how she could seek the assistance and support of her teachers and break down her tasks into smaller segments, making them manageable and reclaiming some level of control in the process.

Moreover, she paid attention to the education experience that she found to find the balance and planning, and that both academics and extra-curricular activities could coexist in a complementary way. The next narrative gives a very detailed account of her life and adventure to achieve success through time management and support.

I've always been one to take on several things. I have always been one to take on many things. Last year, I was organizing a workshop, competing in a speech competition, and trying to keep on top of my studies too. I thought that it was possible to do it all, but soon learned that I was quickly approaching burnout.

One big lesson I learned here was that I could not do it all. I had to learn that saying no was just as important as saying yes. I was in the process of discerning what was really work and what was work I could prioritize, about to let go of work that was illegitimate at the time. I was not altogether comfortable letting work go initially, but in hindsight, it made me feel like I was reacquiring some control over my own workload. I can pinpoint some big moments for me at that time. I was about to have a research paper deadline, and I was also preparing for a Model United Nations (MUN) conference. Here the participant points out the enormous difficulties of dealing with a workshop, a speech competition, academic focus, and taking care of one's grades. The fact that the participant agrees that he/she needed to say no in order to be not mentally and physically exhausted reminds the readers of the comments of the students of the Private schools of Kathmandu in your previous study (e.g., the discussion of time management and resilience) which, in turn, introduces the concept of selective focus into the discussion to ensure that one can stay healthy and productive. The ability to prioritize what was actually required and drop the less important aspects allowed the participant to

maintain the balance in his/her professional life and demonstrate personal growth and effective stress management in the situations when the tasks, which should be completed and the research is carried out to write a research paper and participate in a Model United Nations conference just to mention several ones, seem to be overwhelming.

I felt so pressured and overwhelmed, feeling as if I were losing control of everything that I was trying to do. Therefore, I reached out to my teachers for help. They took me through a process to realize that the work could be broken down into smaller sections to accomplish, which relieved my anxiety about the amount of work I had to do- still quite a lot, but I would finish all of it in time. They supported me, and I gained momentum for working on the task, and finally, I managed to complete both tasks. On that particular experience, I want to add that I came to understand balance. Balance is not trying to do everything and draining yourself, but rather, choosing to do one thing well. My teachers, especially my sociology teacher, helped me with that realization. He acknowledged that education should be the first priority; however, I could still have the opportunity to enjoy my passions.

One of my proudest moments was when I won a writing competition while also excelling in my internal exams. I remember the day when my parents were shouting at me to prepare for the exam, when there was a writing competition organized at the school. I thought such a contest would not come again and again, so I prioritized being prepared for that. I read sample books for better writing; I wrote and checked the level of my writing through AI, and also attempted to get feedback on my writing from my teachers and seniors. Finally, on the day of the contest, I participated. Due to my frequent practice, writing on the spot was not difficult for me. I wrote comfortably and submitted. The next day there was the exam. As I was used to writing continuously, I could write well even the exam. After a few days of the exam being offered, the result of both the writing competition and internal exam was announced. I came first in the writing competition, and my result was also excellent. Due to my balanced nature in studies and ECA, I could excel in both aspects. It was proof that I didn't have to choose between academics and extracurricular activities; they could complement each other when managed

well. That experience taught me the value of planning, prioritizing, and seeking support when needed.

The participants' experience highlights the importance of obtaining support and the value of dividing troublesome tasks into smaller parts as a way of relieving anxiety and staying balanced, which corresponds with your previous studies with the children in private schools in Kathmandu. Students with instructors, in particular the sociology instructor who reminded them to keep education as a priority and interests secondary, to a large extent changed their attitude, which made it possible for the individual to finish successfully their research paper and subsequently the Model United Nations. This also evokes the importance of having support structures and the understanding that one does not achieve balance through total activity but through optimal effort and smart focus.

Interpretation and Analysis of Alina's Narrative

The case of Alina demonstrates the multifaceted interconnection of student motivation, engagement, and burnout, a fact that has already become a frequent topic of educational researchers and is counterintuitive. Although it is acknowledged that high engagement is one of the key predictors of both academic and extracurricular achievements, it puts students on the path to a physically or emotionally exhausting and stressful zone. The fact that Alina was driven by introjected to achieve others' expectations in her early pursuit of her passion and interests is what demonstrates the concept in self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2000) in motivation. Her choice to overdo herself through inspired introjected motivation has changed motivation and drawn Alina personally towards regulated behaviour that is appreciated by her core values. Her level of appreciation of engagement is a change towards integrated regulation, of more initial motivation and internalization, which implies greater psychological health.

The experience of Alina is also an indication of the conflict of creativity and systemic struggles that we have in the reality of the modern educational world. The hyper-producing and sleep-depriving being normalized is the symbol of enabling behavior that provides up and conspicuous overreach into a greater cultural contradiction of we value a work-life balance/school system reward. Such a divide begs to ask serious questions related to our present models of student success, why some have to pay to achieve success, and the cost to the high achievers. The story of Alina (i.e., her dependency on the intervention of the teacher) and the strategic

disengagement trap when descending into the rabbit hole provides possible insights into adaptive coping to prevent burnout and be successful in the long term.

Motivation and Burnout

Alina indicated that on the one hand, she took up too many roles and duties in the beginning to correspond to the expectations of others, which resulted in negative outcomes, stress, and later burnout. Her case can be compared to the words of Sieberhagen (2004), who discovered that student leaders tend to think that busyness is equated to effectiveness, and the final outcome of over-commitment and burnout. These tendencies are typical of high-achieving students who are unable to draw boundaries that result in intellectual, emotional, and physical exhaustion.

This is the lesson Alina learned at a young age when she became so committed that she did not respect her priorities. Her self-discovery that pushed her to abandon unproductive work and instead focus on meaningful work is, to a considerable extent, aligned with the transformational leadership theory (Bass and Riggio, 2006), which essentially believes in the power of creating a new line of thought and liberation. Coupled with purposeful management of time, Alina was in a position to regain agency in her work, thus leading to a decrease in the amount of stress in her life and a more conscious approach to her well-being.

The Pressure of Overworking

Alina explained that she would stay up late after long hours, being so busy with academics and her extracurricular activities. This observation is in line with the conditions provided by Whillans et al. (2021), who criticize how sleep deprivation of the child is being rationalized in schools and state that the chronic sleep deprivation may pose a threat to mental health that is linked to overworking at present. Fredrickson (2001) also confirmed that there must be some form of rest and positive moods that are important to the longer-term growth and performance.

The thought process of the student widens the paradox that is prevalent throughout society: even as each student is asked to enroll himself in a grueling schedule, one is still cautioned to seek balance. The expectation for people to hyper-produce stands against the concept of sustainable productivity in the long run; however, in one's pursuit to improve his or her education, well-being, and self-worth, he or she ends up selling himself short. Such issues must be recognized and worked upon by educational systems that intend to move into healthier environments for learning, with productivity and mental wellness intact.

Support and Prioritization

Alina stated that asking teachers for assistance when things got tough helped break up big homework assignments into easy things to do. Claessens et al. (2007) illustrated how friends can assist students when they have excessive work, and it also prevents them from burning out. Clear (2018) explained the manner in which one can control time, hence avoiding stress and ensuring that students remain at a higher level and at an energized state, such as taking a break and doing the most essential things first.

The story of Alina demonstrates that students can gain advantages in their effort to find assistance and strategize work, in which they feel more comfortable. She learned through her time with the help of teachers, reducing stress and increasing the way she conducted herself generally. This means that schools that motivate pupils and are accessible to support and strategize can come in handy.

The case of Alina can be regarded as the power of personal experience usage as a complement to academic knowledge. Her narrative is not just the story about the problem she encountered. Her narrative is an exploration and a metamorphosis. In her process, Alina not only makes herself very aware of her own involvement and self-control of well-being, but she also introduces greater awareness of those concerns in the student experience groups. This is the research into the challenging concept of educational environment success that becomes more intricate and full at this point because of such integration of the experience world and the reflection based on the academic knowledge.

What the merger teaches us is that behind any data or structure of an idea, there are human beings with very difficult and complicated experiences. Having thoughtfully told the story of Alina, it becomes a powerful indicator example that both the researchers and the practitioners will refer to in the future. It would obviously reveal the significance of alerting to one story as well as scholarly research, and therefore leading to an increased comprehension, a superior manner of assisting the student in engagement and personal well-being.

Story of Ryan

Ryan is incredibly mature at the age of 18. He has a small mustache that is often concealed. He lives at home with his hectic parents, who run a school where he volunteers as a program manager and assists with athletics whenever he has the time. Ryan is an enthusiast about computer programming and spends most of his free time

watching YouTube tutorials to become better at it. He narrated to me when I asked him how he could handle all the other stuff in addition to school, and his method was explained.

Sometimes it is not very easy to reconcile between school and coding, as the two demand full focus. On some days, it was so stressful to deal with homework, coding exercises, and hackathons. My support was formed by making a simple list of daily tasks and completing one part of them at a time. I would do my school assignments early enough to, therefore, code in the evenings. On some occasions, I preferred to skip a coding event or a meeting with friends, and that is okay. I have also learned that I perform better when I am organized and when I get assistance when I am in need of it. I prefer both of them, hence I strive to avoid doing too much and burning out. I remained self-motivated, and I managed my time wisely.

I began participating in extracurricular activities when I was the USG of Tech and Branding of a conference. Since I have always been fascinated with computer science throughout my whole life, I was interested in the technical side of things. I was volunteering for a number of causes at the same time, which made it heavier. Balancing between these responsibilities and my studies was not easy, yet it provided me with invaluable experience in time management and prioritization. The best experience I have had was when I had to study for my board exams and, at the same time, manage the branding of a Model United Nations (MUN) conference. The meeting itself was only several days prior to my tests; I had a lot to do. Initially, I felt overwhelmed; however, I quickly understood that I was to break things into manageable pieces. I have developed a timetable to devote specific time to study and MUN tasks.

The student, who has already won a writing contest and also excelled in internal examination, is a testament to how academism and co-curricular activities can integrate when they are planned and given priority, as per your earlier studies on students of the private schools of Kathmandu. Their planning and preparation, including sample book preparation, AI software, and teacher and senior instructions, demonstrate their eagerness in skill training and time management, and are, therefore, capable of achieving both. This experience helps to understand that we should seek assistance and balance, and that joint efforts can bring supplementary success both in school and extracurricular activity, and personal development and success.

Being organised and communicating with my classmates enabled me to cope with both of them. There was also a time when I was forced to choose a difficult option between studies and extra-curricular activities. As I approached preboard, I wished to be a part of an event both years and yearn to achieve more without any failure. But the society I live in pressures to score high, and that manner of recognition you would have. It is after extensive consideration that I chose to place more importance on my academics than my passion. It was not a simple choice, but at least I learned that it is extremely important to know when one should retreat and concentrate on the things that matter most.

Considering all this, I realized that it is very important to make preparations and request help. My friends and family helped me out in every way possible. Staying within the bounds by reminding myself to relax and not work hard also contributed. The ability to seek help is what I have mastered, and it is so significant. I dialed my friends, and they did not mind assisting me during the hard and busy time. Such experience allowed me to understand what collaboration is all about, and I will remember it.

The given experience of the participants demonstrates how difficult it is to combine both academics and intensive extracurricular activities, such as coding and conference duties, and, therefore, it is critical to manage your time and to prioritize certain things in order to avoid being so overwhelmed (as it happened to Kathmandu learners of a private school). They were able to overcome the stress and prevent burnout and demonstrate resilience and adaptability by creating a to-do list each day, completing schoolwork ahead of schedule, and not participating in unnecessary activities. The way in which they manage to deal with numerous tasks (i.e., the preparation for board exams and the management of branding on top of a Model UN conference) by being organized and dividing the tasks into smaller items demonstrates the significance of organization and soliciting assistance on how to achieve success in several domains.

Interpretation and Analysis of Ryan's Narrative

The story of Ryan also shows how students are caught up in having to balance between studies and the various activities that are not in school. In his narrative, I get to know three general themes that are centered on conflicts and administration students attempt to utilize and execute in order to achieve a state of balance and

resistance. These themes transcend the personal narration of Ryan and represent other trends that have been outlined in literature regarding workload and motivation of students and the assistance that they provide to support them. The combination of self-reflection and a strong system of advocacy with the actions is what I find powerful in the story about Ryan, which integrates a personal insight with self-reflection. He appears to defy the work-hard attitude by referencing the fact that strategic planning and teamwork lead to goal realization on a long-term basis. In my opinion, these themes should be paid more attention to by both students and teachers who are trying to foster well-being and success.

Prioritization

A desire to succeed and the belief that he could "do it all" initially drove Ryan to pile up extracurricular activities along with his academic workload. But not long after, he found himself overrun by the number of commitments. Instead, he would make to-do lists every day, prioritize things, do his homework well ahead of time, and sometimes he'd decide not to go to a social or a coding competition, and NOT FEEL BAD ABOUT IT! He also tried to balance by having a to-do list every day, he prioritized, submitted his homework in a reasonable time, and sometimes opted out of parties or coding competitions without feeling guilty. In a study by Gallagher (2019), over sixty percent of high performing students (HP) reported anecdotally of their own volition that they participate in unnecessary extra-curricular activities that promote a problematic appraisal of their self - worth being equated to their level of achievement.

Sieberhagen (2004) states that students often confuse busyness with efficiency, and that busyness can lead to burnout and reduced well-being. Ryan's practice reinforces the importance of recognizing personal limits and prioritizing commitments for the sake of avoiding burnout. Ryan's practice supports time management practices embracing the divide and conquer approach and setting realistic commitments (Claessens et al., 2007). This theme reinforces the idea that success is not necessarily completing everything, but intentionally managing commitments.

The Importance of Support Systems

Ryan gained emotional and practical help by his friends, family and teammates. He not only asked for help with his homework but also traded notes and worked with people to reduce the stress. Robinson and Hullinger (2008) give an example of how important social support for students if they want to be successful.

Ryan's experience proves that having social support is key to handling the pressures of school and other activities. Support networks boost resilience and belief in oneself showing that people achieve success on their own.

Strategic Decision-Making and Resilience

Ryan recounted a time when he chose to 'throw in the towel' on a hackathon so he could focus on school. Some would say that is backing out, but to Ryan, it was taking a calculated move so as to safeguard his mental and educational intentions. He knew that short-term pressure is not as important as long-term pressure, which is why conscious disengagement can result in the advantages of resilience, responding to the stress at the present moment rather than reacting to it. It turns the traditional views and beliefs that nothing is better than moving in a continuous motion.

The fact that Ryan can use a hard-drawn conclusion implies that he possesses some kind of sensible sense of balance and self-restraint. This entire concept boils down to the fact that self-awareness and making sound decisions are what help an individual to remain motivated and avoid burnout in others. It is somewhat contrary to the overall notion that failure is not necessarily being on the other side. Ryan's experience helped me a lot in realizing that, in the case of many students, it is also not an easy task to manage school, activities, and personal goals. I came to understand that at first he had a problem of taking too much on his hands, but gradually came to learn how to concentrate on things that mattered by seeking the assistance of his friends and family, and was willing to take tough decisions in case they proved necessary.

It was also funny to see that it took strength and recognition of self, rather than weakness, to say no to go to more events or choose to stay home from a hackathon to study.

Knowing your limits, safeguarding your time, and seeking assistance are all abilities that keep a student fit and motivated, I discovered. I realized that Ryan's story resonated with several elements I have seen, including the need for a strong support system, making wise choices, and balancing your desire to do what others expect of you.

His story really opened my eyes to the fact that these skills are so closely linked that when students learn them, it really helps them to both manage the stress and burnout. Ryan's situation screams that students need to be pushed to plan ahead, ask for help (seriously, nobody gets through alone), and figure out what actually

needs to get done first. Those habits aren't just buzzwords—they're the difference between surviving and thriving, especially when school gets rough.

Story of Sakura

The challenging academic demands of the IB program, as well as its fair approach to learning, are well-known. IB students have to fit demanding coursework, extensive exams, and a broad spectrum of extracurricular activities. Most view it as a test that tests their endurance, flexibility, and time management in addition to their mental abilities. My participant's encounter with the IB program started with expectancy, anxiety, and adult advice underlining the need of time management in this situation. That is how she got past those barriers that she came to learn how to adapt, and found her strengths that she did not previously know that she had. As soon as I started our conversation she shared her experience being an IB student, how challenging it was to manage with the assignment deadlines and the volunteering;

When I began the IB program, I was excited, yet anxious. Everyone kept telling me "Time management matters!" but no one explained how to manage time. It didn't take long to learn that IB is more than just a lot of studying; instead, it means balancing your classes, homework, and exams, along with something called CAS (Creativity, Action, Service), which adds an additional 150 hours of extra-curricular. It was much easier in my first year. There were still weekends free and fewer assignments. I volunteered every Saturday at a Japanese language school and found it exhausting but manageable. Then Year 2 hit like a storm. The workload was quite high because of IAs, EEs, TOK, and applying to colleges at the same time! Still, I was able to budget my time well enough to do the Micle Project and teach migrant children their first languages.

The experience of the person in the IB program shows how tough it was to handle difficult academic work, and also to do so many things outside of class, like CAS, which took 150 hours. This fits with what I found in my research on students at private schools in Kathmandu. During their first year, when things were easiest, they did have to volunteer at a Japanese language school, but they didn't have to do that every day. But in their second year, they had to do everything. In addition to their IB work, they had to do Internal Assessments, Extended Essays, Theory of Knowledge, go to college, and do the Micle Project. They had to learn how to manage their time as

they went along. They didn't get advice about how to do that at first. They had to figure it out on their own. And that is what they said they had to do.

At first, I attempted to follow the strict schedules suggested on some websites, but they did not work for me. I found a solution: daily checklists! Each night, I would write down everything I absolutely had to do the next day. I also had a strange rule that I would not allow myself to sleep until everything was checked off. This simple little method allowed me to achieve what I thought was impossible – like finishing my Physics IA draft while organizing a Micle event in the same week! Once or twice, everything became excessive. I remember when I felt absolutely overwhelmed because I had college essays, IA, EE, and TOK deadlines all at once. I then picked up a priceless lesson: taking a vacation is acceptable. I decided to drop out of my after-school activities for some weeks so that I could give my academics top priority.

The participants' view of the IB showed how they learned from their mistakes in creating time management strategies. They went from doing a simple, hard-to-follow timetable that did not work well to a daily flexible list that made sure all their work was done. Their clever rule of not sleeping until they had checked off everything on their list led to a big win. They were able to write a first draft of their Physics IA while running an event for the Micle Project. They showed patience and readjustment under stress.

The moment I was in charge of decorations for a school event was among my most rewarding ones. I remembered the teacher saying my budget estimate was too much, and I thought it was impossible that they would find anything at that price that looked good, but instead of giving up, I negotiated with the vendor to get a better deal. Among my most fulfilling times was when I was in charge of decorations for a school activity. I recalled the instructor saying my budget estimation was too high, but I thought it was impossible they would find anything at that price appealing; so, I negotiated with the seller to get a better price rather than giving up. The event went successfully, and I discovered I have the capacity to manage more than I had thought. Though demanding, the IB curriculum showed me that I possess more strength than I had previously imagined. I also found that balance is about recognizing what is most important at that time, rather than about doing everything perfectly. Long after I graduate, these lessons will stick with me.

Participant's experience in leading the decorations for a school event clearly shows how you learned to compromise and work around limits. This skill was important to your success in handling an extremely demanding IB (International Baccalaureate) curriculum. Your clever move of warning your teacher of a much-too-high price tag and then working with the seller to find a better deal shows how you learned to solve problems, and how you learned to stick with it, both of which fit well with my past work on private school students from Kathmandu (e.g., August 25, 2025, on how they learned to make a decision and roll with it). This experience, and then the experience of realizing you could make things work by choosing what really mattered instead of trying to make everything perfect, shows how these lessons have had an effect on you that will stay with you after you leave your time in school.

Interpretation and Analysis of Sakura's Narrative

The experience of Sakura running the IB program is an examination of the difficult matters that students encounter as they attempt to balance academic rigor, individual growth, and serving the community simultaneously. She started off quite okay, but then was soon given a wake-up call on the number of essays, college applications, and exams. Moreover, she was very much into school events and service projects. Sakura also created his own stress and time management techniques. She started to compile daily to-do lists and find out what would happen to her if she reduced extracurricular activities. It is the narrative of the IB curriculum demands, in addition to that of great leadership, tenacity, and self-awareness. Out of this story, I have identified three primary themes that portray the story of Sakura. The first one is the advertisement of leadership and self-development by engaging in community work. Also, students are required to develop themselves, flexible and innovative time management systems. And what I observe is a significant concern for her well-being is resilience, which subsequently enables her to balance studies and health. By exploring these factors, I also observe how the experience of Sakura is bound to transpire in more recent studies that mention student performance and happiness in extremely challenging schooling environments.

Personal Growth through Community Involvement

Being a part of the IB program, Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) was a rather useful part of the personal development experience of Sakura. Practical leadership skills she acquires through volunteering to teach migrant children their first languages, as well as participating in arranging the decorations of the school

festival. All of these gave her the contexts in which to practice competency, communication, and handle relations with vendors and friends through managing her own development of empathy, responsibility, and global understanding, which far exceeded her grade point average. Research has shown that engaging with the community contributes to social and emotional skill development, allowing the IB students to become students. Several studies demonstrated the role of engaging with service projects on students' development socially or emotionally, such as increases in social intelligence, leadership, and even their self-identity as global citizens. This idea fits well with what Bass and Riggio (2006) said about transformational leadership -- inspiring people with a vision, really getting what's going on, and pushing them to think outside the box.

The CAS program helps students grow these leadership skills by giving them chances to lead through service and teamwork. It's all about using what they've learned to actually change things for the better.

Sakura's experience really shows how community projects can be a great way for students to build their leadership skillset. These projects do help students build skill sets in different facets of leadership, with transferable skills such as empathy, communication with respect, and problem-solving important to any leader. Sakura's experience shows that the IB cannot be all about academics - rather, it says something to the concept of creating leaders who can do something, with a social responsibility consciousness to address the issues that affect systems of society.

Time Management is a Key to Success when it is Flexible

During her second year, Sakura had many more concurrent deadlines in terms of various Internal Assessments (IAs), an Extended Essay (EE), Theory of Knowledge (TOK), and college applications. She also made some effort to stick to some strict pre-planned schedules, which she found on the Internet, but these were not that effective in her case. Therefore, she came up with her own system of daily checklists where all of the tasks she needed to do were written, and she would not go to sleep until all of these were done. This interaction and individuality gave her the ability to handle numerous tasks simultaneously, including finishing her draft of her Physics IA and organizing an event during a Micle Project. Such a shift of tactics is a strong sign of her new understanding of herself and that she was starting to adjust her time management to her needs and working style. Individualized and flexible time management solutions are widely defined as the determinants of success in strict

academic courses. Those who presented the arguments were Claessens et al. (2007), who held that planning and breaking down tasks into small manageable units and restructuring time management according to the personal needs will reduce the stress of an individual and will enhance productivity. Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya (2014) warned that time management and self-regulation are advantages in maintaining motivation and academic performance when one is involved in a demanding context and activity. The transition of Sakura towards hard and fixed schedules to loose day-to-day planning demonstrates the ability of bendy time management with a fresh, clear-eyed viewpoint to allow students to be able to meet IB's demands as they change.

Her story helps to justify the idea of academic toughmindedness based on a strong dependence on self-checking and a free-and-easy approach to changing plans. The way she worked out a schedule that fitted her demonstrates that time management takes a shape that fits the habits and conditions of each and every student and is not a universal one.

Balancing Workload and Well-Being through Resilience

Resilience assists in establishing a balance between work and well-being. It was especially in times of major assignments and college essays that Sakura had to do at the same time that she felt like she was being overwhelmed by the requirements. After realizing that she had reached the end of her tether, she decided to withdraw from extra-curricular activities to enable her to focus on schoolwork. She took some time to decide to defer all that gave her back control of her life and even her stress level. As a student, values and priorities vary. She eventually understood that balance is not perfection but is what is important to be done at a particular time. This realization enabled her to remain independent when bargaining for the conditions of the program. The rigorous requirements of the IB programs have been associated with heightened stress and exhaustion among the students (Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya, 2014). Nonetheless, resilience-building strategies such as setting SMART goals, pausing, and self-care were also highlighted in the literature because the administrators and educators responded to the dangers in their environment. Zimmerman (2000) indicates that successful learners come up with metacognition that allows them to keep track of their endeavors with reference to their suitability in terms of their capabilities and in relation to the requirements of the environment.

These strategies generate a long-term motivation for long-term success. The approach to work and life adopted by Sakura has been an example of resiliency that has been achieved through self-awareness and deliberate choices. The fact that she chose to relinquish extracurricular activities is a healthy coping strategy and indicates that she has an up-to-date educational conception of how to be a healthy student. Indeed, the gist of the matter consists in all students being taught the consciousness of their boundaries and the self-management that they need to get along with their studies; but on the other hand, what education programs can do in assisting students to arrive at this sort of adaptive, environmentally conducive competence set.

Her story touched me, and I am enriched by the majority of the students in school, and more so, those pursuing a challenging academic program such as the IB. Her description stands out as being remarkably similar to the situation on the ground, where the academic stress is synonymous with personal and social development. Her description made me think about the moments when I felt that I had no time to do all the things, and I had the awareness that a person should be strong and adaptable in order to survive. As it is illustrated in the case of Sakura, students are active participants who perceive not only the rise of new knowledge but also essential life skills such as leadership, time management, and self-care. The second point in this quote is also the ability to see the success of the students as a group. It is apparent, though, that good grades are not the only method to prepare you to get to the next level, but instead, keep the stress adrenaline flowing, seek assistance, and make a well-considered decision that will put you on your feet in the long-term perspective.

Sakura's experience can inspire me as a scholar to highlight these interconnected determinants as I interpret them, and to promote education policy and practice that emphasize the well-rounded development of students. It is a good wake-up call to such a punch, babe, whose story of her journey is a strong reminder of the human journey behind every academic success that should be viewed and traversed.

Balancing Academics and Extracurricular Activities

When I read all five stories, the common thing that came to mind is that each of the students struck the same wall at that point when they got so tired and overwhelmed that they needed to reassess everything. The actor lost her study notes, the footballer scored bad marks because he was disappointed, the high achiever was mentally exhausted, and the computer fanatic slept on his computer keyboard. They

broke at different levels, but the emotions were alike: I can not do this. It is then that they both found out balance was not an option but a necessity.

The five of them applied two main tactics, dissecting tasks and resorting to their support systems. The actor planned her days as a military mission, the technominded coded time, the over-striver eliminated all unnecessary things, and the football player edited somewhere in the free time. It was also essential that the people surrounding them, teachers, were accommodating with deadlines, friends who would share notes, and parents who were leaving sticky notes. They all made their way separately. There is research on self-regulation, but these narratives reveal that it is community-regulation perseverance.

The point of separation between them was in their views on extracurricular activities. It was their lives and times, the actor, the footballer, whatever he does, they do not so much broadcast to the world, they are; she does not just dance, she is a dancer. He did not just play football; it was his life. To the overachiever and techie, however, it was like activities that needed to be handled. This clouded their plight: The two former had been tormented about making some sacrifice of themselves, and the two latter were anxious about dropping balls in a high juggling performance.

A curious trend was discovered regarding their reaction to pressure. The two female participants (the performer and the overachiever) embraced systems of colour-coded, near-rigid planners and erased priorities. The men (footballer and techie) favoured the flexibility of work, friends who can fit work in a break, transfer work out of work to free time between work, and vice versa. Naturally, on five stories, I cannot simply generalize, but it strikes me: Do girls grow up to stabilize chaos with order, and boys grow up to race on?

Their origins predetermined their decisions. Perhaps her teacher-parents could train the performer on timing; the techie had the capability to think of time as a solvable program with the help of his coding ability. The coach of the footballer reframed failure as practice, and the sociology teacher of the overachiever presented a cognitive template, which was the metaphor of the rocket that made the decision to quit worthwhile. Without such mentors, students would not necessarily have been able to recover so easily after burnout, with the reminder that so-called time management advice is usually unaware of asymmetries in access to guidance.

Their stories conclude with hard-won wisdom, but also with hints of unresolved tension. When the techie talks about “closing some tabs,” there’s relief in

his voice but also fatigue. The footballer claims balance “isn’t about being perfect,” but jogs off to practice anyway, ever the competitor. Maybe true balance isn’t a destination but a rhythm they’re learning to listen for under the din of expectation.” And perhaps that’s the real lesson: not how to segment time perfectly, but how to keep listening for that rhythm when life threatens to drown it out.

These five participants’ stories remind me that we’re all just trying to tune our lives to a melody only we can hear while the world keeps turning up the volume. Their shared struggles and unique solutions don’t give us a roadmap, but something better: proof that the path exists, even if each must carve their own.

Discussion and Meaning-making of Participants' Stories

The theoretical discussion in this study will be based on Transformational Leadership Theory as explained by Bass and Riggio (2006). TLT views leadership as a process wherein leaders make followers rise above self-interest to achieve organizational objectives with the aim of encouraging motivation, flexibility, and self-growth. In the education scenario, the transformational leadership behaviors were exhibited by students like Sheela and Swikrit, who encouraged others, provided conducive learning settings, and set positive time management strategies to ensure that a student could balance between academic and extracurricular requirements. The concept of temporal leadership is also integrated in TLT (Mohammed and Nadkarni, 2011), in which leaders plan and control the time of task processing to achieve maximum performance and minimize stress. It is a strong framework through which to understand the process of negotiating and maintaining dual academic and extracurricular positions of student leaders.

Eastern philosophical views, together with TLT, make my findings more meaningful. The concept of wu wei (effortless action) of Taoism implies that leaders should align themselves with the flow of nature, but not force (B. H. Xing & J. Sims, 2012). This philosophical position is expressed through Swikrit changing attitudes to time, from a foe to a resource, by accentuating the equilibrium between work and comfort in the handling of both academic and extracurricular life. Moreover, Confucianism presents time management as not linear efficiency but the ethical, relationship-oriented hierarchy in accordance with the social cycles and moral time (Li, 2023; Tan, 2022). These values are reflected in Sheela through her disciplined organization of their plans and respecting what the community anticipates of them, where effective time management fits in a grid of personal and community

accountability, which adds to the overall development of the student. These eastern viewpoints supplement TLT because they base leadership and time management on cultural ethics and situational practices.

The discussed theoretical views, the Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT), the principle of wu wei in Taoism, and the ethics of time management in Confucianism approach intersect in that they all focus on leadership as a compromise between personal and shared duties. The three frameworks emphasize flexibility, self-awareness, and the need for community support in the management of competing demands. TLT is concerned with the intentional movement and cultivation of others to the mutual accomplishment, as Taoism advises workless action in accordance with the natural movement of life, and Confucianism, the need to act in accordance with the times and morally correct action in social situations.

However, these perceptions also differ in the leadership and time management. TLT previews leadership as a goal-oriented, fluid, dynamic process where emphasis is laid on the followers being motivated to move towards progress and success that could be found in an organized organizational setup. Quite on the contrary, Taoism provides a less strict, non-authoritative form of leadership that is led by spontaneity and grace, as compared to Confucianism, which is directed in leadership and time management to moral order, human duties, and peaceful coexistence among people. These variations contribute to the research of student experiences when it is insinuated that effective leadership and time management are not only deliberate strategic thinking, but also an organic responsiveness that relies on the cultural values.

Such a theoretical combination improves the understanding of the student behaviors, including the behaviors of Sheela and Swikrit in their study and out-of-school experiences, utilizing leadership and time management as two complex practices that express their meaning through Western organizational theories and Eastern philosophical practices.

Hearing the voices of these students proved to be the crucial aspect of my time research. What had started out as an inquiry into the schedule and studying habits of the students turned out to be an explanation of the degree of moral philosophy that was being practiced in that place. The teacher is familiar with shame: wasting time, how tortured Ryan is because he is forced to be between exam and community service - that was not their problem of not being productive, but the greatest moral

questions. The image of the concept of shi (timeliness) as a Confucian notion was redefined when I saw the students as they were checking whether they had not the few minutes to which they had said they had agreed, but the duties to others.

It seemed that the planners of students were even at the bottom two-fold accounts, which also indicated ethical merits of the past generation, and each account bore the weight of all that would need to be done when the time came.

Although I paid attention to the time management of the students, I could not avoid noticing that I was living through the emotional support of the students. I also totally understood their discipline, yet at the same time, I still could not see their expenditures - the panic attacks prior to the examination, the embarrassment over the compulsory breaks, the physical fatigue that was distinctly recognized as loyalty. In many instances, the transformational leadership I observed between the teachers was also becoming very ghastly, and as I can recall, one of the teachers was even telling the children to be willing to make sacrifices, which was the less apparent pressure of the two. I also discovered that I was not certain where cultural superiority became cultural extraction.

This study has raised more questions than it was trying to provide the answers. What can schools do to ensure that students maintain a certain amount of cultural tradition of moral timekeeping, and still preserve their psychological well-being? Would the kind of virtues, such as timeliness and sincerity, imparted in that Confucian ethos be instilled by educational institutions currently without the ill effects of guilt and burnout? It is the silence that follows the revelation of Sheela that she hopes that the time will be just a time that the forces of the scary and pain-avoiding forces underneath the pretense of functionality are present. In a sense, her words are a direction toward the main paradox that I needed to address, that is, how a set of structures that were meant to impart in us the good virtues of being in time are the same structures that are concealing the nature of humanity. Perhaps, to realize when not to fight with the time and to drop the time is even the true knowledge of temporality.

Chapter Essence

Those stories of the students showed that extracurricular activities provide significantly more inspiration than the form of their bodies; it is the way of thinking about learning and life. Sports, movement, and dance-seeking activities were unanticipated learning environments: a place where failure was composure to

improvement, teamwork was translated into real-world problem solving, and pushing the boundaries of oneself was supported. Their jovial talk about basketball maneuvering that echoes the concepts of math or dance routines that help with the concept of space convey how the body is the teacher of what cannot be taught in the text books-resilience is developed through sore muscles, confidence is built through the heat of stage lights and leadership is developed on the field long before it is developed in the circles of the textbook.

What makes these experiences an effective force is the fact that they stick in the minds of students even after the activity has been completed. The football player who learns to study the errors he commits, the debater who expresses himself through acting, and the timid student who becomes the captain of a football team are all illustrations of how athletic activity develops the skills of life that are frequently ignored in conventional education. It is not merely after-school activities; this is a simulated laboratory on grit, imagination, and emotional intelligence. When we give our students time and space to move, and struggle, and create, we are not merely guarding against their schedules being empty; we are even providing them with the practice of dealing with challenges, challenges, as with any other, that they will be confronted with both inside and outside the school walls

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CHAPTER V

BALANCING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ACADEMICS: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

This chapter discusses the complicated benefits and difficulties that the research project was concerned with, the pros and cons of implementing academics and ECAs in five of Kathmandu's private schools in the third and fourth grades (i.e., Grades 11-12). The discussion of the findings is provided by the chapter-specific research question: What are the gains and hindrances students report in balancing academic work and ECA? The five interviews and the in-depth qualitative approach of the research conducted are used to come to the conclusions, which occurred in February-April 2025. Narrative inquiry was used to analyze the narratives of the students, in which several personal narratives, contexts, and conditions of personal growth, resilience, cultural influences, and challenges that the students go through, including stress, burnout, and competing time demands, were revealed.

Placed under the Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT), time management practices, and collectivist culture in Nepal, the implications of the results show how the students reconcile their conflicting and seemingly back-to-back demands in terms of autonomy and relatedness to others when bearing in mind how educators and schools can give them space to develop holistically.

Benefit Narrated by Participants

The students' narratives show that the ECAs rest on a number of educational principles that intend to stimulate leadership, resilience, social capacity, and academic motivation, in line with holistic and whole-person education. Each of these reticulations is even stronger when located in a country such as Nepal, where the culture is collectivist and values community, and where individuals are able to draw on collective action (Forneris et al., 2015). In fact, it's always incredible action to see how these student narratives illustrate how students activate their peer and family networks to be successful, and recommend that schools should create structural means to support ECAs as a means of nurturing these competencies.

Leadership and Confidence

Swikrit, a 16-year-old grade 12 student and football striker, explained how the influence of sports as a captain on him was organized and gave him more self-assurance.

Football takes every one of my evenings, but I play it, I won't deny it. My teammates ask me questions on chemistry and stuff like that during breaks, so I kind of keep it fresh. I have had a good time as captain, and I understand the necessity of planning - that is, planning my week - studying in the morning, practicing in the evening. (Swikrit, personal communication, March 10, 2025)

Swikrit's ability to encourage his peers to engage in aspects of academics while training with the football team showed TLT's inspirational motivation and an ability to create a collaboration environment to make studying integrated into the team's discipline (Bass & Riggio, 2006). His personal story is consistent with other literature that supports ECAs include transferable leadership skill development that enhances academic performance (Forneris et al., 2015). Swikrit's use of the football team in many ways was also aligned with Zen's mushin (no mind) principles - defined as the phenomenon of studying and sport as fluidity rather than the rigidity of time blocking that is more common in the West (Kadar & Eissa (2015).

Sheela, a 17-year-old Grade 12 science student and dance team leader, explained how performing at the college fest gave her confidence:

Leading the dance team provided a feeling of confidence to better manage my time. This stress was helped by my teammates reminding me to keep focused, and I practiced together after school. I felt that teamwork related to my studies and helped me be more disciplined. (Sheela, personal communication, February 22, 2025).

Sheela's leadership position demonstrates TLT's idealized influence, as she inspires her team while gaining personal discipline (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Sheela's listing of things to do, scheduling, and prioritizing tasks demonstrated time management principles, reducing stress, and increasing her self-efficacy (Kadar & Eissa (2015). This example illustrates the role of students' initiatives in the private school system in Kathmandu, where, more than anything else, the ECA is a part of the school culture.

Sakura, an 18-year-old International Baccalaureate [IB] student involved in her local Japanese Supplementary School, noticed the importance of the resilience developed from challenging conditions, stating:

Volunteering is a challenge with my IB demands, but it does help ground me. Adapting to such short timelines to complete tasks over the last months has shown me how I can keep going, even when I'm so tired. (Sakura, personal communication, April 5, 2025).

Sakura's experience emphasizes resilience as an outcome of extra-curricular activities or voluntary community involvement. Resilience is a positive quality that is beneficial to a youth's holistic development, as engaging in productive activities can enhance a youth's resourcefulness.

Sakura's flexible scheduling illustrates that, with a sense of community, as opposed to an individual discipline based on routine, time can be viewed as enhanced and flexible, demarcated in accordance with the time (Norton-Brainerd, 2022). Resilience, as described above with motivations and social connections, also reflects the depth of Hindu commitment to sewa (selfless service), as Sakura's volunteer experience provided her with enriching experiences that contribute to her endurance.

Interaction between Social and the Academy

Ryan, a 17-year-old A-Level management student, shared how his coding club helped him get peer help, which improved his focus on schoolwork:

My coding club friends share notes when I'm at competitions. That teamwork keeps me on top of my studies. It's like we're all in it together. (Ryan, personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Ryan's story shows how ECAs build in social links that help academic rule-following, which is in line with other work that says peer help in ECAs helps school work (Forneris et al., 2015). This shared way of doing things is close to the Buddhist sangha (group), where time is shared in a way that helps, which is a key part of Nepal's close-knit ways of life (Norton-Brainerd, 2022).

Challenges Narrated by Participants

Despite all these positive points, students shared significant challenges, which included stress, burnout, and schedule conflicts, particularly in the highly competitive academic environment of Kathmandu. These challenges underscore a timely need to have balanced bolster systems that can simultaneously contribute to success among Kathmandu students and thwart any risky consequences, including depression or

suicide, that, according to staff of the Center of Mental Health Research and Innovation, is the fate of too many of their student clients. Stress and Burnout Alina, a 16-year-old student, Grade 11 A-Level management, discussed the emotional impact that being over-committed has, particularly following a personal loss:

My father died, and I embarked on studies and the social service club. I had no other choice but to stop and give priorities. Management Consulting (*Alina, personal communication, March 15, 2025*).

The breakdown of Alina is a reflection of a burnout threat in stressful situations. It is a problem that has been well-reported in the private schools in Kathmandu, where students are requested to perform well both in an academically rigorous and extracurricular program (Smith & Brown, 2022). In what can be termed the Buddhist Middle Way, which teaches the practitioners to strike the right balance in both hard work and good health, Alina has driven the non-essential activities out of her life. It is a strategic disengagement, of which Kadar & Eissa (2015) advocate so much in his chapter on time management in the new edition of the Allston-Brighton edition of Harvard Business Review. The decision allows reflecting the family support, which is a typical feature of the collectivist culture in which life in Nepal is organized (Norton-Brainerd, 2022). Alina also replicates with the enslaving dangers of upadana or destructive holding that all too many Kathmandu kids are familiar with.

Time Conflicts

Ryan faced hard choices because of his hectic schedule:

I love to code and volunteer, but I had to skip a hackathon during exams. It was really hard to say no, but I learned to say yes to the right things. (Ryan, personal communication, March 20, 2025).

His decision shows viveka (discernment), a moment to live when I chose over my schedule. Mohammed & Nadkarni would say I 'lead' in time when I turn the potential of time into helping people reach their goals. I think Ryan's story means that I can use that potential better when I lead people like him, who often reach goals soon.

I also noticed tiredness when I heard Swikrit's story:

Sometimes, I get tired after practice, but my coach asks us to stick to the game plan. That helps me focus when I have to stay up late. (Swikrit, personal communication, March 10, 2025). Swikrit's tiredness shows how hard it can be to stay fit for both ECAs and school, and how Kathmandu's very

competitive culture can make that even harder (Lastra et al, 2024). His need for his coach to help him with his tiredness shows TLT's individualized consideration, where a coach can build up the strength of a learner (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Proper Planning

Swikrit, who turned over all my research expectations about time on its head. Instead of hearing about careful planners and study timetables, I listened to him talk about tackling physics problems during football practice breaks. *"The formulas just click better when I'm still amped up from the game," he chuckled, his legs shaking with leftover sports energy as we talked.*

As I watched him, the Zen idea of mushin popped into my head, often called "no-mind"—a state of smooth awareness where actions happen without thinking. Swikrit hadn't read any Taoist stuff about wu wei (doing without trying), but he lived it. While Western productivity gurus push strict time blocks ("study for 25 minutes, rest for 5"), his rhythm followed something more natural, more real, the normal back-and-forth between deep focus and physical activity.

In contrast to Alina and her color-coded planners and rigid scheduling, I thought she was the embodiment of efficiency. But when she recalled blanking on a test she knew well and her voice started to quiver at the memory, I realized the cost of focusing on control. In her case, I was reminded of upādāna, the Buddhist notion of excessive and unskillful clinging. She did not spend her time; time dominated her.

Myth of Balance

Alina's "breaking point," the moment she recognized she could not maintain her overwhelming schedule, stayed with me long after the conclusion of our interview. For so long, schools and educators have hawked students the lie of "balance," with some mythical super-achievers supposedly able to excel at every task in existence. Yet as Alina sobbed and confessed, *"I didn't think I would ever feel overwhelmed... I thought I would be able to handle it all. I was wrong,"* her story revealed that true balance isn't found in doing more. True, conscious balance is surrender.

In the end, her decision to "delete Column C," her way of deleting non-essential activities, was not a failure, but deep wisdom. It was the Buddha's Middle Way—a middle ground between austerity and indulgence. Like Alina, Ryan demonstrated viveka (wisdom) in his choice to prioritize exams over a hackathon.

"That was the first time I realized saying 'no' wasn't quitting or letting my team down; it was choosing." As he tells me in this interview.

Time as a Community

What left me with so much to think about was not how students learned strategies about time, but more the way they were reliant on other people--Swikrit's teammates quizzing him for 5 minutes during water breaks, Ryan's study group covering for him during competitions, Sheela's dance teacher changing rehearsal times so she could study for exams. Their behavior mirrors the Buddhist sangha (community) and Hindu teachings about *sewa* (selfless service) when it comes to managing time.

In the West, we think of time as an individual possession (my schedule, my productivity), but these students demonstrated time's interconnectedness. When Sheela's mom quietly stepped in to do household chores (since she had exams), or Swikrit's coach arranged to change the schedule for practices so he could study, they were doing much more than just helping out--they were contributing to a co-managed time ecosystem. This enlightened my vested biases in individualistic productivity culture and made me feel lonely through critique.

As I finished these interviews, I questioned what I thought I knew about time management. With the tools and planners and life hacks for efficiency, I was blindsided that these students were dealing with such philosophical forms of struggle. Maybe what is needed is not better tools of time management, but to reject how schools and educators relate to time altogether. Could they, instead of helping students control time, help them develop what I refer to as "temporal wisdom", which is the discrimination of when to persist and when to let go; the awareness that time is both fleeting and sacred, and the humility of knowing that some days the best work you can do is just rest?

When I heard the afternoon call to prayer from a temple during my last interview, I thought about how these ancient traditions have been pondering the nature of time for centuries. Perhaps our current productivity problem is not about a lack of methods; it is that we have forgotten that time is important. The elite students of schools in Kathmandu, trying to make sense of the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity, may inspire us out of hierarchical perception; if only we had the patience to listen.

Similarities and Differences

The cases of Sheela, Swikrit, Ryan, Alina, and Sakura show that students of educational institutions of Kathmandu have similarities and differences in terms of managing their studies and ECAs (extracurricular activities). That is, these descriptions bring out the key research question: What benefits and challenges do students narrate in balancing academics and ECAs?. The research integrates narrative questions and explores these experiences based on the Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) and time management models, in addition to the collectivist culture in Nepal, depending on the information gathered in the form of in-depth interviews held between February and April 2025. The results of the study indicate that there are similar themes with some differences at the individual level and the inclinations of how the students are able to activate personal and communal agency to be able to interact with the competing demands of the school, which is a significant matter in the provision of equity and accessibility in the area of holistic development.

Sheela, Swikrit, Ryan, Alina, and Sakura stated that ECAs have proven to be a promising avenue of overall development by way of leadership skill development, resilience, and social-academic synergy, and these attributes are compatible with the principles of holistic education. For instance, Swikrit, who is a striker on a football team, and Sheela, the leader of a dance team, tell how the exposure to leadership in ECAs increases confidence and also inculcates discipline. Among others, these stories are examples of TLT's inspirational motivation discourse for establishing interpersonal relations, which, in turn, become the basis of group or team collaborations (Forneris et al., 2015). Moreover, the aspect of resilience was emphasized through the activities of both Sakura as a volunteer and Ryan as a member of a coding club, as both had to accommodate their busy schedules.

Besides, students participating in ECAs not only had to cooperate with each other, but also needed support from their peers. For example, Ryan's club would share practice notes with each other, and Swikrit's teammates would ask him questions about chemistry to prepare him. Besides, the culture of collectivism in Nepal strongly situates and dictates all these advantages as it indicates a more complete way of connecting through a "time ecosystem"; the time that is spent on discipline is not important, whether it is individual or time spent with family, peers, and mentors, like Sheela's family, or Swikrit's coach, etc. This concept is closely related to the Buddhist ideal of sangha (community) and the Hindu ideal of sewa (selfless service).

Viewing ECAs as communal relations, the holistically developed individuals then gain a deeper sense of the six components of holistic-sensemaking. Holistic development is formed by the continuous practicing community process of social, physical, and academic activities, which means ECAs is not just a workshop to build up on your resume.

Despite the shared benefits, the students are all equally challenged in a similar manner; all of them complain about stress and burnout due to their responsibilities, which are further aggravated by an academic culture that is competitive in Kathmandu. These feelings and experiences are exemplified in Alina's over-committing to study and social service club responsibilities, leading to her "breaking point", Swikrit feeling tired after football practice, and Ryan not being able to participate in a hackathon because of his exams. In the particular case of time management, a few principles can be observed, such as prioritization, but still, both Alina and Ryan reveal through their narratives that they do not always stick to their priority activities, and also manage to relieve at least some of their pressure by the strategy of disengagement.

Nepal's collectivist culture, in several respects, has helped to solve the students' problems by providing them with the necessary support. For example, Sheela's family provides their help to her to cut down on the distractions that are not needed, and Sakura volunteers to provide their help to her with her contributions. However, the interesting point was that there was also no school programming that was either time management or leadership training-based, designed for the students to organize themselves in managing their time. This tells us that school processes almost entirely acted as barriers that students interacted with in order to alleviate these problems by reflecting a vast and urgent need for more institutional support.

The different aspects of students' lives clearly show how situational personal contexts and ECA roles affect their troubles and coping strategies. For instance, Swikrit used a very instinctive way of studying in the middle of a break from playing football, that could be compared to the Zen mushin (no-mind) state that is characterized by not overthinking and just responding to the situation, which was totally opposite to Alina's very strict, color-coded planners that eventually led to her burnout, thus showing us that time management can be interpreted differently by different people. Sheela was dancing, and dance was her emotional peer support, so Sheela's engagement in dance leadership, Sakura's volunteering as culture-based and

involving *sevā* (meaning about duty or selfless service), as well as Ryan's coding competitions needing *viveka* (meaning discerning), were all points that highlighted the need for them to figure out from all the tasks in their lives what is essential and what is not. On the one hand, the grief and trauma experienced by Alina and Sakura, plus heavy IB course-taking load, worsened their individual situations, making it necessary to adopt different resilience strategies from those of Swikrit, who was subjected to physical deprivation, or Ryan, who was aggravated by scheduling frustrations.

All this tells us that it is imperative for schools to offer individualized support because each person's personal and programmatic pressures can unfold quite differently. Nevertheless, what was still the case for each of Nepal's other students was that the support they each found from the communal aspects of Nepal's unique culture challenged their Western concepts of individualistic productivity models.

The common and different features in the stories depict the issue as a struggle between personal agency and cultural context in the consolidation of academics, extracurricular activities (ECAs), and community. Participants uncover and acknowledge the shared advantages of leadership and resilience, these being the social tools learned from living within communities. Simultaneously, the participants noted individual deterrents in line with their personal contexts, which were made up of personal situations and requirements of the ECAs. The social view of time that relies heavily on peers, family members, and mentors, who are quite different from the concept of individual productivity that is common in Western societies, is still fundamentally consistent with the notion of "temporal wisdom", which is the idea of when to persist and when to disinvest. The nonexistence of institutionalized procedures to aid time management and the following leadership training is indicative of the system's shortcomings. If used properly, it could have become a tool for promoting the positives for individuals and easing the negatives experienced by students. In conclusion, these findings recommend that the schools of Kathmandu, and potentially beyond, explore integrating ECAs into the curriculum as an opportunity for holistic development, including resilience, leadership, and temporal wisdom, with appropriate institutional support and community culture.

Discussion and Meaning-making of Participant Challenges and Benefits

The stories about Sheela, Swikrit, Ryan, Alina, and Sakura demonstrate that extracurricular activities (ECAs) in Kathmandu's private schools develop such traits

as leadership, resilience, and a social-academic synergetic constellation with the help of Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) and time management. The movies of all five characters occur in the Nepalese collectivist, Eastern ethos, which underlines communal support based on the concepts of Buddhist sangha (community) and Hindu sewa (selfless service). Swikrit is a football captain and therefore depicts the feature of inspirational motivation in TLT since it introduces academic dialogues in the practice setting of the team and thereby forming a shared commitment among the team members, rather than football playing, and hence naming the use of discipline practice. The harmonization of his study and sport was a symbol of Zen philosophy of mushin (no-mind) and provided a rebuttal to the time blocking constraints of Western discipline (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This episode of communal time ecosystem demonstrates how peer relationships or powerful mentor relationships can be utilized to influence leadership development twice as fast as ECAs are adopted as significant pathways to whole-person development.

Sheela's position as the leader of her dance team and her magnetic charisma serve as the master concept of TLT's narration of idealized influence. She yields a following while at the same time ensuring that discipline through prioritization and scheduling is put into practice; these methods assist time management that results in lowering student stress and raising student self-efficacy. Sheila, as sangha is practiced in Nepal, extensively shared the load with her family, and supposedly was similar to the sangha model, where collectively people are viewed as opposed to individualistic Western models that simply see time as an individual's resource.

Apart from that, Ryan's coding club is creating an intangible social-academic connection in the private sphere through the note-sharing feature among peers that enables programming peers to share notes during peer engagement for effectively supporting each other and also for easy maintenance of the communications native to academia (Forneris et al., 2015; Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011). Rooted in sewa, the synergy signifies that ECAs are spaces where students collaboratively manage and balance their competing commitments while also becoming aware that the responsibility shared is greater than that which their individual efforts can achieve.

The narrations of Sakura and Alina represent the characters that reside in the reality of Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT), Eastern and Western mind, by demonstrating their endurance and flexibility. Sakura had been a volunteer in the IB program; the apparent continuity of her interruption to me as well as to others whom

she served was reinforced by a mutual community connection that reminded me of the Sahara and the Buddhist Middle Way, of adjusting effort without letting it slip over into the suffering of one's own being. After the death of a family member, followed by a burnout, Alina's exhaustion eventually led her to awareness of *upādāna* (harmful attachment), which necessitated *viveka* (discerning awareness) to disengage strategically. One occurrence that illustrates this is when Ryan felt the necessity not only to pull out of the hackathon but also to create a prioritization of exams, thus another example of *viveka* in his decision-making and time use (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kadar & Eissa, 2015). The examples of Sakura and Alina point to the protective aspect that is somewhat visible in the family's collectivist culture of Nepal and from that of the peers for negotiating the challenges of their respective volunteering for the benefit of others and themselves: bringing our attention again to the aspects of resilience drawn from community context in contrast to focus on the self-reliant coping strategies typical in Western cultures, highlighting the exportability of resilience as collective trait.

Stress, burnout, and time reconciliation, as narrated by Alina, Swikrit, and Ryan, demonstrate the temporal wisdom concept, which is in high demand; institutionalizing the benefits from ECA. The issues of "breaking point" and "exhaustion" posed in the film "Hit the Breakpoint" by Alina and Swikrit are indicative of a situation very typical of the academically competitive climate in Kathmandu, where coaches and mentors were the support structures that, through the use of TLT, showed the facets of resilience. An event that Ryan reported, in which he prioritized exams over a hackathon, reveals another side of *viveka*, as his subsequent handling of the time overlap conflict is indicative of temporal wisdom (Lastra et al., 2024) Their examples from their experience reveal a concept of temporal wisdom; a feeling of knowing when to continue and when to step back. It is temporal wisdom that reflects the collectivist culture of Nepal as a whole; that is, to have an impact on schools by creating space for social and emotional development amidst the community time pressures that people experience daily.

Hearing these students make their voices heard was the key element in my time study. What started out as a study about the schedules and study habits of the students turned out to be an explanation of the amount of moral philosophy occurring there. The teacher is very familiar with shame: "wasted" hours, how tortured Ryan was when he was trapped in between exams and community service - that was not

their productivity trouble, but the most profound moral concerns. The picture of "shi" (timeliness) as a Confucian concept was reimagined when I observed students as they were measuring whether they were not just the few minutes for which they had agreed, but the obligations to others.

It appeared that students' planners were actually double accounts that also reflected moral virtues of the previous generation, and each entry had the weight of all those needs and obligations to come.

Even though I focused on the students' time management, I couldn't help but be aware that I was living through their emotional support. I was really touched by their discipline, but at the same time, I still couldn't understand their costs - the panic attacks before the exams, the shame over the mandatory breaks, the physical exhaustion that was absolutely identified as loyalty. Often, the transformational leadership I saw between teachers was also becoming quite horrible, and, as far as I remember, one of them was actually telling the students to be ready to make sacrifices, which was the case of the less obvious pressure of the two. I found out that I was not sure where cultural superiority ended and systemic extraction began.

This research has created as many questions as it attempted to give the answers. How can schools help students to hold on to some cultural tradition of moral timekeeping and simultaneously protect their mental health? Could educational establishments of today instill virtues like timeliness and sincerity in that Confucian spirit but without the negative influences of guilt and burnout? It is in the silence after Sheela's revelation that she wishes for the time to be just time, that there are the scary and pain-avoiding forces hiding behind a guise of functionality. Her words, in a way, point to the core paradox I have had to deal with - the reality that the systems designed to build in us virtuous attachments to time become the very ones that are hiding humanity's essence. Perhaps it is knowing when not to struggle with the time and letting go that is the real knowledge of temporality.

Chapter Essence

By narrative investigation of the lives of Sheela, Swikrit, Ryan, Alina, and Sakura, the chapter has gone beyond the research question to highlight the problems and the benefits of maintaining the balance of studies and ECAs in the private schools of Kathmandu. The good things of the balance were at the center of the interactions, as leadership, resilience, and the social-academic dyads were mentioned among the benefits. The problems were represented by stress, fatigue, burnout, and the clash of

time. They studied these findings through thematic analysis in the framework of TLT, time management, and Nepalese collectivist culture, demonstrating the process of agency and collective benefit integration of the students. The actual study dilemmas that the well-established balance, as traditionally presented and seemingly equitable, is a time judiciousness that results in a huge load of learners in search of their well-being as well as their accomplishments.

Being a scholar, I have learned that students have different ways, and there is no one way that fits everybody to manage these demands. They refer to the worth of the good support network and a clear, looking-glass self and the courage that it takes to place health first before ambition. To one reader, and particularly to teachers, parents, and policy makers, I would tell them that we have to create facilities and situations that allow more than just academic performance. Through recognizing and nurturing numerous and diverse strengths and weaknesses of students, we are able to make them emerge as winners in schools and as rounded human beings prepared to live beyond the school.

CHAPTER VI

INSIGHTS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND REFLECTION

My chapter reflects my ideas, feelings, and recommendations based on the experiences of students and the narratives of how they managed their studies and extracurricular activities in Kathmandu private schools. This section extends the findings and discussions of the previous chapters, where emphasis was placed on the general implications of the study, the challenges faced, and the new insights gained during my research trip. Through my research work, I have learned to appreciate the fact that the research process is always boundless, as a solution to one question leads to another horizon of questions and understanding. The current research is limited to a specific group of learners and a specific setting; however, the wisdom derived is applicable in a universal context, like the importance of balance, the problems caused by contemporary education, and the realization of the importance of an environment that is not only academic but also fosters personal growth.

In this case, I would like to explain why it is essential that learners are provided with level-playing fields, where school-related work is equally valued as activities outside the classroom. I have also offered some practical recommendations to school principals, educators, and policymakers, which entail the mandate of purposeful scheduling, opportunities for all, and a magnifying glass on the well-being of students, the entire student, and not simply adding an extra load of activities to make us appear good or to compete.

The chapter is also marked by restating the most important messages and taking a recap of the project of learning about education, which is an ongoing process. An extensive body of literature supporting the current work concludes the thesis. Finally, this section presents a conclusion about my project and serves as a catalyst for future research and development of educational paths of students in Kathmandu.

Key Insights

The purpose of this research was to explore the way students manage their time between studying and everything outside of their studies (ECAs) and how leadership skills assist in this process. With 15 years of experience as an educator in the field of education and an equally long experience as a student, I have observed

that the academic component and the ECA component are not mutually exclusive for student growth as learners. In my professional life, I have observed that students who focus primarily on academics tend to possess strong knowledge but lack any skills. In contrast, students who concentrate solely on ECAs develop skills but not knowledge. I discounted either provision of education (what is usually referred to as formal or informal education) as complete education; there needs to be a marriage of knowledge and skills to effectively develop all students in a holistic manner. I also noted that students who were adept leaders appeared to be better time managers and balanced their study and ECA responsibilities better than the average student, and this is what propelled me to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and time management practices in students' lives.

As I went through the stages of this exploration, I learned a lot about the challenges students face, the availability of leadership initiatives to students, and the role that supports play. This chapter presents the key insights from the study, discusses them in relation to relevant theories, concludes the findings, suggests practical implications, and reflects on my personal learning experience.

Firstly, I understood that students' ways of acting regarding time management are largely influenced by their socio-cultural environment. Family expectations, traditions, and community values all influence how students allocate their time between studying and other activities. For example, in many families, there is an expectation to achieve the highest level of academic results, and students from such families tend to refer to study time above anything else and will often drop their other interests and activities. In contrast, other students are encouraged and sometimes expected to participate based on their family commitments to community events, cultural traditions, or religious ceremonies, which can divert time away from their study commitments. Their priorities and daily life are influenced by the interests of their families and community. This reinforces the idea that we cannot view time management as a purely individual skill set; instead, we must consider the broader socio-cultural contexts that influence students' behavioral choices and their reported behaviors towards time management.

Secondly, I understood that students' emotional, social, and academic growth can be enhanced by balancing schoolwork with extracurricular activities. When students are engaged in sports, music, or other extracurricular activities such as clubs or groups, they are building their social and teamwork skills. Working with other

students, whether in sports, the performing arts, or service clubs, helps students develop their socializing skills and teamwork while creating ways to support one another to complete shared goals, which are essential skills for moving beyond school. From an emotional perspective, being involved in some activity outside of school provides all students with opportunities to have healthy outlets for stress and develop resilience. For instance, sports and the arts create opportunities for students to express themselves, overcome challenges, and recover after mistakes. The emotional work students undertake through this involvement helps them take care of themselves by developing emotional resilience, supports their well-being, and motivates them academically. From a physical perspective, many activities, such as sports, provide fitness and ultimately improve energy levels and concentration. Balancing school and out-of-school activities also helps prevent students from experiencing boredom and burnout. Students who only concentrate on school have the potential to become stressed and/or disengaged, just as those students who engage only in extracurricular activities may have deficient academic skills. Working to balance their approach will keep all students engaged and motivated while also learning and developing in healthy and mindful ways.

Thirdly, I understood that most of the students indicated that participating in ECA and studying late at night has led to increased stress. When students take on too much, it has a negative impact on their academic performance and personal lives. Fatigue disrupts the ability to focus, remember facts and information, and then think in the cognitive realm, so students can complete academic tasks at their highest competency. As well, prolonged stress can result in psychological distress and health issues, which may include anxiety, sleep problems, and bodily complaints. The examples shared by participants helped to highlight the importance of having enough rest, self-love, and knowing how to take breaks. Putting regular rest times and having enough sleep helps students recharge and have sufficient energy to sustain optimal cognitive and emotional functioning. In other words, if students do not consider their rest, burnout can occur. Burnout is often accompanied by overwhelming fatigue and low motivation, which can impede students' ability to serve their academic, personal, and social commitments. The findings focus on the development of time management strategies for students so that they can appropriately balance effort and recovery. Moreover, educational institutions and families have an opportunity to raise

awareness of self-care and encourage environments that value the healthy balance between academic pursuits and personal health.

Fourthly, I understood that the rise of competition in schools and colleges has continued to add to the number and types of academic and extracurricular activities students are now expected to engage in. The increase in competition creates an increasingly difficult environment where students are supposed to complete multiple assignments, meet deadlines, and engage in a litany of school-related commitments. Many individuals are unable to manage their time effectively and are not able to cope with the demands of their obligations and responsibilities. The intense expectation to perform academically while engaging in numerous extracurricular activities causes considerable stress and anxiety for some students. It has been well documented that academic stress is related to mental health issues (competition-driven academic stress), such as depression and anxiety, which ultimately affect the health and academic performance of students.

Students often describe their feelings of burnout and exhaustion while trying to meet high and unrealistic expectations dictated by the school, themselves, and their families. In addition, students often repeatedly compare themselves to their peers, which can further create anxiety and the feeling of being overwhelmed, sometimes creating a never-ending cycle of stress without resolution. This finding highlighted the need for support to students, teaching students time management skills, and fostering healthy educational systems that take into account academic performance as well as mental well-being. It is imperative for schools and educational institutions to be cognizant of the pressure that competition places upon students and to asymmetrically work on approaches that allow students to cope with this competition without taking away from their being. Thus, this finding also shows that competition within the educational market, even if wanting to motivate students, can sometimes provide overwhelming personal pressures and make it difficult for students to manage their time.

Fifthly, I learned that students who exhibited transformational leadership qualities managed their time for schoolwork, including homework and extracurricular activities, better than students who did not. These students demonstrated the following four characteristics of transformational leadership: they modeled the way (idealized influence), they inspired their friends with a clear, positive, and meaningful vision (inspirational motivation), they promoted creative thinking and problem-solving when

they were organizing their schedule (intellectual stimulation), and they exhibited personal support for classmates who were struggling with time management (individualized consideration). These transformational leadership characteristics allowed these student leaders to manage their time, but they also contributed to the creation of a supportive group or cohort of students who helped each other to stay organized and balanced. This suggests that transformational leadership may very well be one of the most effective ways for students to better manage the responsibilities of school.

Sixthly, I recognized that additional emotional support and practical assistance from people such as parents, teachers, and friends is an important part of assisting students with time management for studies and outside commitments. Parents who provide support and encouragement, and also share their experience, create an optimistic environment, encouraging students to develop the confidence to deal with the challenges while also decreasing stress. This support assisted students in feeling understood and encouraged their desire to stay on top of their responsibilities. Teachers contributed to support by providing appropriate instructions, future guidance, and flexibility when required to help students organize their tasks. This flexibility aided students in well-formed choices that allowed them to manage timelines while not feeling overwhelmed, leaving them optimistic about completing their tasks. Friends contributed support to students by discussing their own experiences, helping out with assignments or activities, and reminding each other to keep focused and balanced. Support systems seemed to ensure that students had the ability to tackle challenges, manage time, and balance their studies with their broader interests. The rational support of family and education, along with peers, is critical to students facing and planning for their busy student lives.

Seventhly, I came to realize that self-awareness and strategic disengagement are valuable skills that assist students in time management. Self-awareness means students understand their limits; they know how much work or activities they can maintain without being too exhausted or stressed. If students are aware of their needs, they can make wise decisions about when to take a break or to discontinue certain activities. Strategic disengagement means to pause or let go of certain responsibilities to avoid being overwhelmed. When students practice these skills, they are likely to be more successful in their schoolwork because they are not burnt out or exhausted. Their mental health is likely to be better because they are able to honor the need for

time to recover and rest. Being able to think about their own needs and then make conscious, thoughtful choices about how to spend their time means students are able to remain grounded and engaged. As schoolwork and extracurricular activities become more demanding, self-awareness and strategically disengaging are valuable skills that students can develop in order to be successful and remain healthy.

Finally, I understood that effective time management is not just about completing tasks, but also involves the development of several individual skills and support systems. I have discovered through my studies that students who are self-conscious, know their own limits, and are able to step back at times perform better academically, and are better off psychologically. Furthermore, aspects such as transformational leadership and emotional support from parents, teachers, and peers are very important in helping students balance academic study and extracurricular activities. In conclusion, managing time well relies on a mix of self-reflection, decision-making, leadership, and social support, which together help students cope with their commitments and maintain their well-being.

Discussion

I have found that in my research, students' time management behaviors are critical to a mutually understood and undeniably important socio-cultural context and associated practice. In fact, Norton-Brainerd (2022) notes the widespread influence of cultural norms and expectations from family and community, even more broadly in how students organize their time and prioritize tasks. Specifically, students are raised in varying cultures that emphasize collective family responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings, household duties, or family gatherings and responsibilities, all of which may take priority over personal development in academics. As pre-college students negotiate these multiple obligations, they balance family responsibilities with their academic schedules. They may have less time for consistent focus, whether this be on study, extracurricular pursuits, or full engagement in their limited academic hours. In communities or societies where academic success is of primary importance and treated as a main path of accomplishment, students may feel alarmingly powerful pressure to allocate a significant amount of time to academics.

When students devote more time to academics as a priority above all other activities, which include sufficient sleep, relaxation, and participation in extracurricular activities that contribute to developing a well-rounded person, they may be hyper-focused on academics. The student may be enculturated to view long

hours of study and near constant connection to educational engagement as part of the learning process, even when it costs them their mental health and development (anxiety, tiredness/fatigue, mental burnout). In addition, the larger socio-cultural context informs students' views about time—specifically, whether they view time as a flexible resource to be shared amongst family and community or a rigidly scheduled commodity to be capitalized on in order to achieve personal goals.

In conclusion, my study indicates that an understanding of time management behaviors must take into consideration their socio-cultural contexts (Norton-Brainerd, 2022). These contexts not only dictate the external obligations students need to meet but also inform the internal values and beliefs that guide how they plan, allocate, and use time in academic and non-academic pursuits. Different cultural conceptions of time shape students' time management strategies and determine the degree to which they can prioritize conflicting demands. For instance, students from collectivist cultures may consider the needs of the family and the group to be precedential over personal academic success, whereas students from individualistic cultures may operate under the notion of personal achievement and rational time management to achieve success.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural context is fundamental to students' conceptions of, and relations to, time and consequently influences their time management behaviors. In many cultures, and in particular collectivist orientations, time is seen as a flexible resource that belongs to everyone, to be shared as a resource by family members and the larger community. Students from collectivist backgrounds are, in fact, often less concerned with their own time in terms of schedules and tasks to be accomplished, and are much more conscious of their own time with respect to the needs and rhythms of their families and social groups. This viewpoint reinforces a priority toward keeping the peace within a group, honoring family obligations, and engaging with peers socially, all of which can come at a cost or trade-off to their personal academic goals. For example, students may be invited to a family event, not get home until late when they had intended to study instead, or help around the house with chores or look after siblings, demonstrating cultural values that privilege interdependence and social capital over personal goals.

For students from more individualistic cultures, time is typically understood as being set, ordered, specific, or 'chunked' (to experience time as a commodity) to create the conditions for personal achievement. For students from individualistic

cultures, achievement, punctuality, and planning around one's own personal success are valued. Individualistic students tend to repurpose the behavior, be more rigid with their scheduling, less adaptable and flexible with engaging with other people's (and their own) goals, and engage with tasks when maximizing their productivity.

The different cultural understandings of time can seriously impact students' ability to balance competing demands. For students operating from a collectivist orientation, balancing the roles of an entrepreneur and student identity alongside many family and community expectations can create complications. One complication has to do with the constant tension between the self and collective interests and expectations. As a result, students may have a more sporadic approach to study behaviour or a relative lack of focus, given that their time-determining decisions may shift given social demands. Alternatively, students coming from individualist cultural orientations may feel they must adhere to a schedule. While this can create focused engagement in their studies, if they are unable to complete their planned schedule because of social demands, it can lead to undue stress for them.

Regardless, I believe that my overall data suggests that to better comprehend students' time management behaviors, schools and educators may need to put more effort into understanding their socio-cultural backgrounds. These contexts do have both interests and demands placed upon students, but they also dynamically influence students' internalized values, beliefs, and priorities that shape the way they conceptualize time and respond to the related decisions to make around using their time. For example, one's cultural upbringing affects how a student considers time: as a community resource or an individual asset, and likewise influences how they plan, allocate, and balance their time in academic and non-academic activities.

An awareness of cultural dimensions is valuable for educators and policymakers who seek to be more responsive to diverse learners, ultimately promoting culturally responsive learning designs to help achieve their time management education and support systems. This awareness can also provide insights into why universal time management techniques may not hold a universal appeal to students, such as the need for flexible and contextualized interventions.

As I consider the journey of my own research outcomes, the practice of using Transformative Leadership Theory (TLT) provides a rich analytical lens to understand how learners develop effective time management skills enabled in, and influenced by, their socio-cultural environment. Bass and Riggio (2006), outlines TLT as cognitive

learning, whereby individuals come to examine and critique their presumptions, beliefs, and habitual styles of response, as critical reflection is deemed necessary to enact any significant change, similar to how learners may approach complex problems—not limited to negotiating time, ultimately relative to competing limitations of their academic, social, and family context.

The way students engage in time management behaviors is often based on ingrained cultural expectations and norms that outline how they should be valued and utilized. At times, these norms can create unnecessary or even negative behaviors (e.g., over-committing to academic work at the expense of personal rest, excessive prioritization of family obligations at the expense of personal study time). When students critically self-reflect, they may then be more aware of the numerous and complex background influences occurring within socio-cultural environments that are shaping behaviours. This awareness, then, becomes an important starting point for transformation. For instance, a student who grows up in a collectivist context may accept family obligations as compliant rather than as fundamental aspects of their lives, even if they value school just as much. The student may feel their family obligations take precedence over school work, or infer this through social interaction with peers and family. Through some negotiation pathway or dialogue, by educating professionals, family, mentors, etc., the student may achieve reflective consideration, or meaning, that allows them to see how their previously unexamined prior commitments may be affecting their academic performance and general well-being; the student has been able to reflect (or think slowly) about the commitments and become aware of some of the assumptions on which they have relied. This process can help the student appreciate critically that family obligations need to be restructured with more balance so that time management can be considered on more reasonable terms, where they also include school and living fully as a student.

This critical process requires both reflection as well as reframing and implementation of strategic options; the student should recognize that constant busyness does not mean they are productive or a sign of success. They may occur to them to think about time management differently, for example, their time management as to what goals are reasonable, narrowing of "to-do list," and possibly inducing rest and self-care intentionally as obligatory to scheduling student success! In fact, this could be instrumental gulping-off (from burning-out) or developing sustainable strategies as resilient students that are often relatable to increased

academic engagement. Additionally, TLT illustrates the social aspect of transformational learning. Students do not go through transformation alone; they share their moral or other stances with others who negotiate them or build upon them as they change their thinking. This social interaction is especially salient and important in culturally diverse educational contexts, where students can reflect on their experiences and share strategies that honor differences while using productive time. Educators who create such reflective spaces are a significant resource for students' transformational learning

As I indicated in my findings, balanced participation in both academic studies and extracurricular activities is necessary for developing this holistic picture of growth. For example, students who only focus on academics and lack social interaction, proper physical activity, and don't receive emotional support and guidance may end up unbalanced in their lives when it comes to motivation, resilience, and health. Conversely, students who only focus on social activities or extracurricular activities and ignore academic responsibility may fail to meet expectations and struggle with academic achievement as well as future choices and opportunities. Incorporating the information provided by TLT and integrating these principles with the ideas of holistic education gives a rich basis to understand how students can balance and effectively manage their time and participation.

Holistic education, as outlined by researchers including Miller (1992), supports educating the "whole child" by focusing not just on academic achievement, but instead on the whole child, including emotional, social, and physical development. This approach recognizes that students are complex people, and their success is predicated on developing multiple aspects of their well-being. Holistic education promotes the development of learning environments and educational programs that foster this balance. For instance, schools that offer students structured opportunities for physical exercise, arts, community service, and social-emotional learning, paired with rigorous academic instruction, create opportunities for students to flourish across domains. This type of integrated curriculum helps students practice time management not just in order to be the most efficient in getting academic work done, but to learn how to manage their energy as well, develop relationships, and grow their sense of emotional intelligence.

In relation to time management, holistic education helps students conceptualize their time as a fluid system that needs to accommodate a range of

needs, rather than as a zero-sum resource that should be dedicated solely to studying time. Holistic education helps students experience their rest time, recreation time, socializing with friends, and self-care time as legitimate pieces of time and a required part of daily activities. Columbus issued a letter to the monarch about his travel to new lands and his empire at that time.

The extended idea of how to spend one's time aligns with research that indicates educational experiences across disciplines that support healthy, personal, and social development are associated with academic success and functionality, as they engage students in an overall positive and healthy experience (Eccles & Barber, 1999). The reflective and critical mode of Transformative Learning Theory, combined with the developmental and holistic notion of holistic education, will produce the best results. Students who can critically reflect on their socially and culturally based assumptions on how they approach time (TLT) will be more capable of embracing the holistic education notion of learning as balanced and integrated.

For example, a student whose initial perspective on academic success involves unlimited studying by sacrificing engagement in extracurricular activities might, through transformative or critical reflection, value the social skills and emotional and psychological resilience that can be developed through the same engagement. This student would feel not only justified but inspired to plan their time in a way that included many informal contexts of learning to develop themselves as a growing whole person. A similar situation occurs when a student feels overwhelmed by their family obligations and discovers through critical reflection that they can establish boundaries to continue to negotiate their family commitments while at the same time providing devoted time to their study.

This integrated perspective also creates strong motivation and resilience. Students will recognize that they need to feel a sense of well-being in multiple areas of their lives in order to succeed in the long term. These students will normalize managing their time in an integrated, healthy manner, rather than stressing and focusing on deadlines. They are far less likely to become burnt out and are more reactive to demands, adapting to changing circumstances and challenges. Educators who understand and facilitate this interplay will be able to provide more deliberate and guided experiences and help students develop personalized time management perspectives that reflect their context and overall personal goals.

The reflections I have made by combining TLT and holistic education with the findings from this study can lead to productive actions. Ideal educational institutions would be ones that create space for students to critically reflect on how they spend their time and on their time-related cultural norms, for example, through reflective journaling, group dialogue, and mentorship opportunities. These opportunities would allow students to become self-determined and examine their own cultural norms and assumptions to engage in new ways of time use. Additionally, schools should explore ways to be supportive of holistic development through communities of practice and a wider range of extracurricular activities or support mechanisms that promote physical health, emotional wellness, and social connection. Additionally, the educational practice of learning time-telling should consider time-telling as balance, self-care, and adaptability as opposed to solely being productivity and efficiency.

Through the educational contexts of TLT and holistic development, educators can foster self-aware, reflective learners who are able to model their time management in ways that support their academic success and sense of wellness. This holistic, transformative perspective is vital for preparing students to live through the various demands of teaching and learning in complex contemporary educational and life contexts. In conclusion, recognizing socio-cultural awareness with the transformation learning theory and holistic education enables us to offer a better and well-rounded education. In addition to its being a conservative and partial talent (concurrence that opposes plurality and diversity like time management does), the socio-cultural framework aligns with our long-standing legacy centuries or even thousands of years early when we analyzed students' behaviors over time and understood how different cultural environments (but not shaped by oneself) have legitimately impact on how one wants to view, assume responsibility for and reward one's time. It helps to understand that developing time management skills is not a universal and similar time management skill requiring adaptation to accommodate a range of social and family expectations.

Transformation learning theory contributes to understanding the students' cognition of their use/reuse of social time by applying critical reflection and thinking about the assumptions and practices that frame their use of time. The student transforms through critical reflexivity, questioning the things that create appetitive or recursive habits (such as excessive overcommitting to chronically overworked or not resting). The student can also critically evaluate what can be done differently, by

allowing his or her thinking process to identify a few traditional strategies in their academic objectives that lead to a balance of time for themselves. The strategy of self-reflection and reflection that transforms deeper is the construction of time, as well as the claim to ownership. Holistic education provides a broader understanding of time management by emphasizing the importance of balancing intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth. Consequently, good time management can be viewed not only as managing your time wisely but also as managing the time spent on the academic component of university, while balancing the need for extracurricular activities, social life, and personal health-related activities. This balance can enable students to maintain motivation, cope with challenges, and be resilient, while also looking after their health, so that they can achieve a steady performance over time without having to sacrifice their well-being.

Overall, these perspectives offer a more comprehensive model for conceptualizing time management, rather than simpler views. The themes presented - cultural competence, reflective learning, and whole student development - are significant for developing students' preparedness for the academic and personal complexities they will face throughout their university careers. Each of these perspectives on time management can also inform learning and teaching by indicating to educators that students may need culturally responsive support for time management, a reflexive approach that encourages learning by students, and finally, encouraging whole student development so that students are also successful as learners because they are socially and emotionally well.

Conclusion

The given research is based on the research problem of how Nepalese students can cope with leadership and time management in a cultural environment characterized by collectivism, while balancing academic and extracurricular activities. The key results can be summarized as having found that transformational leadership (integrating idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) has a positive effect on time management and leadership development of students. These results substantiate and elaborate on the existing information by emphasizing the culturally ingrained perceptions of time in Nepal, which are distinctly different from Western individualistic perceptions due to the community-based perceptions of *sewa* and *sangha*. Otherwise, the research also identifies general issues affecting students, such

as stress and burnout, and reveals that there is a lack of systematic support in schools to address these problems. The gap identifies a need for culturally sensitive interventions in the Nepalese setting.

It is worth noting that the findings have been incorporated into the body of knowledge, utilizing empirical evidence presented within the framework of a specific cultural context in Nepal, and addressing the relationship between leadership, time management, and cultural practices. The facts supporting the pieces of evidence presented in the study indicate that academic performance and participation in extracurricular activities are mutually supportive when a student receives appropriate assistance in terms of leadership and time management within a socio-cultural setting. That solidifies my argument on the holistic education strategies that include cultural understanding and leadership training.

To conclude, effective time management, transformational leadership, and a supportive cultural setting are essential in improving student performance in academics and other extracurricular activities. Such results can be used by teachers, policymakers, and even researchers to develop effective learning environments that promote cultural values and ensure that students are equally developed.

Implications

It is necessary to identify the socio-educational balance for the development of students in the dynamic context of the Kathmandu private schools. Students who manage to balance their academic and social lives tend to shine in general. They are better at socializing, more confident in themselves, and have better grades. Conversely, the pressure to succeed may catch up with students, making them stressed, burned out, and hypocritical about their studies. This highlights the importance of fully understanding the students' experiences. Through the process of identifying facts and feelings, teachers can create an overall environment that facilitates the students' success and well-being, enabling them to thrive as complete individuals.

Policy Implication

This research stresses the significance of schools in Nepal, valuing the importance of balanced programs. In my opinion, the enactment of rules should be done with the purpose of having schools provide counseling lessons on how to utilize the study time and give the pupils a chance to share their ideas. They are supposed to

analyze the amount of student work and establish boundaries in such a way that after-school activities and studies seem enjoyable but not overwhelming.

Practice Implication

This research paper emphasizes the need to provide conducive systems for school heads and teachers. Some of the systems that may be thought of as enabling teachers to be more friendly include weekly counseling and creative activities, such as Book Free Fridays and after-school club activities. Schools should allocate time for students to reflect on their timetables, promote awareness, and train them to engage strategically through disengagement when necessary.

Additionally, it would be worthwhile to encourage students to provide supportive leadership, leading and helping their peers, to enhance both individual and group time-management skills, which will help establish a healthy school climate.

Parent Implications

Parents play a significant role in helping their children strike a balance between schoolwork and extracurricular activities. Parents should be addressed in schools through regular communication and workshops that demonstrate the importance of transformational leadership, effective time management, and cultural values that impact the student experience. Adequate support for a home environment that promotes student well-being and balanced development can be provided to parents by enabling them to identify indicators of stress and burnout and offer positive assistance.

Teacher Preparation and Development

The teacher training and continuous improvement should involve educating on transformational leadership, time management skills, and appreciating the Nepalese cultural background, as well as understanding concepts such as *sewa* and *sangha*, to successfully introduce culturally sensitive and balanced instructional practices. With such skills, teachers will be in a position to mentor students in a meaningful way and develop conducive learning environments. The teachers should also be highlighted in programs on how to promote peer leadership to enable them to balance both academic and extracurricular activities.

Further Research

These findings may be further investigated in future research to determine whether the same dynamics are present in public schools or in rural Nepal, where cultural considerations and access to resources may differ. Further longitudinal

research may examine either the carry-over or lasting impact of an equal versus an overweighted schedule on secondary education performance. It may also be interesting to see how future research investigating the secondary school experience of Nepalese students, compared to that of students in Western or other Asian-based environments, sheds light on how cultural context contributes to time management and participation in extracurricular activities. Specialized trials aimed at assessing the application of specific school-based practices that enhance balance and well-being are also justified.

Self-Reflection

The reflection has touched on some of the key aspects of my research process, including the statement of my research questions, the form of narrative inquiry I adopted, and the theory of transformational leadership that will help inform my research. The experience of interacting with participants in Kathmandu in the locality of the private schools was an eye-opening experience. However, there were certain challenges, such as scheduling problems and the need to strike a balance in responsibilities when gathering the data.

I also learned valuable research skills, such as qualitative data analysis, ethical participation, and adaptive planning, throughout the process. I have also developed personal qualities such as patience, resilience, and openness, which are essential for overcoming challenges. It has helped me further appreciate how complex the life of students who need to juggle between studies and extra-curricular activities can be in a cultural setting that defines Nepal.

To apply my future studies, I recognize an opportunity to be a more creative researcher by using a mixed-methodology approach, which introduces flexibility in data collection through the use of digital tools and diversifies the sample, including schools within the population or even the rural population. Being well centered with the narratives of the participants will remain at the center of evoking covert yet authentic experiences. Overall, this reflection has helped me solidify my current research philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive, patient, and rigorous research practices.

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APPENDIXES

Interview Guidelines

Sample of provoking questions.

Research Question	Possible components to be addressed	Interview question
How do students narrate their stories on balancing their time to academics and extra-curricular activities?	Prioritizing their task, (significance, urgency, value, scheduling, study time, level of involvement, school policy, well-being, parental orientation	1. Can you describe a typical week and how you balance your time between academics and ECAs? 2. Can you share a story about a time when you had to choose between academics and extracurricular activities? 3. Can you reflect on a time when you successfully balanced both academics and ECAs, and what you learned from that experience? 4. What policies does your school have in place to support a balance between academics and ECAs? 5. How do your parents support you in balancing academics and ECAs? 6. What strategies or routines have you developed to manage your time effectively?