The Experiences of Ontario Secondary School Teachers who are Heavily Involved in Extracurricular Activities

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A research paper submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Master of Teaching
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of full time Ontario secondary school teachers who are heavily involved in extracurricular activities (ECA). Selection criteria for the participants who made up this study included teachers that are or have been involved in three plus extracurricular activities simultaneously and/or someone involved in minimum of six hours a week in extracurricular involvement in one school year. The data for the study were gathered using a semi-structured interview protocol, and the interviews were then transcribed and coded. The major themes that emerged included teachers’ main reasons for involvement, ECAs’ effect on lunch time and preparation time which in turn reportedly affected the amount of work that had to be done after school hours, teachers’ reported need for extra teacher support and perceived lack of value for their ECA involvement from other colleagues and lastly, the increased sense of school community, connectedness and student rapport. These findings may help highlight the importance and effect of involvement in ECA for teachers, which is a topic that is lacking in the literature compared to the studies done on the importance of ECA for students. Moreover, implications from this study may help shape future stakeholders in education, including other teachers, unions and parents, to reevaluate the importance of ECA for the wellness of everyone involved.

Key Words: extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, Ontario teachers, sports, clubs, afterschool, job satisfaction, school connectedness, sense of belonging
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank my cohort (the original UTS 143) for the tremendous support and solidarity we each had for one another as we pushed through our practicum stresses, OISE assignments, and life happenings amidst the writing of this thesis paper. I would particularly like to thank Wendy Byrnes Calderone for providing me with her endless revisions, suggestions, and support when I needed help sorting out the thoughts in my mind.

It is without a doubt that this paper would not exist without the meticulous editing, revisions, and approval from my professor Lee Airton and TA Austin Koecher. Thank you for not getting tired of reading through hundreds of MTRPs, and simultaneously giving each of us the same amount of attention and detail we needed to make it ready for publication. I would also like to acknowledge the participants of this study; thank you for being the kinds of teacher I aspire to be one day and for giving your hearts to your profession both inside and outside of the classroom.

Lastly, I would like to thank God for His constant and abundant provisions over my two years at OISE. This was no easy feat and in the times I doubted the completion of this paper, I knew I had a purpose and vocation in teaching, which spurred me on to continue. Jesus, thank you for your faithfulness and for providing me with the people, the focus and the means to complete this thesis project and degree. May it all be for Your Glory!
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction: Research Context

In Ontario secondary schools, students from grades 7-12 have the option of being involved in many different extracurricular activities ranging from organized sports (physical activity with coach/instructor) to non-sports activities (music, drama, art outside of classroom) to clubs and community groups (Brownies, Girl Guides, Scouts). Data from the 2000/2001 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (Statistics Canada, 2001) shows that 86% of Canadian youth between the ages of 14 and 17 participated in any type of extracurricular activity within the last three months prior to the survey, with 76% participating in sports, 38% in non-sport activities and 39% in community/club activities.

Student engagement in extracurricular activities not only enhances their educational experience but has also shown to have many multifaceted benefits. In a report for Statistics Canada on organized extracurricular activities of Canadian children and youth, Guèvremont, Findlay and Kohen (2008) highlight the positive short-term and long-term benefits of extracurricular activities for students’ academic achievement and social behaviours. Moreover, they go on to say that student participation in extracurricular activity is also associated with decreased rate of attrition, and lower rates of emotional and behavioural disorders.

For their part, many teachers believe involvement in extracurricular activities is a critical part of their own experience because it allows them to create deeper relationships with the students, giving them a rewarding sense of achievement outside of the classroom (Brown, Checkeris, Cove, Hood, & Walker, 2001). Nevertheless, in September 2012, the passing of Bill 115 also known as Putting Students First Act produced a huge uproar from four major education unions in Ontario; Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario Secondary
School Teacher Federation (OSSTF), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) where consequentially teachers were no longer allowed to take part in ECA as a bargaining tactic. A 680 News article, posted on Dec 4th, 2012, explained that the government has imposed a two-year contract and wage freeze on teachers, as well as a 50% reduction in sick days with no option to bank unused sick days. Most controversially, the article highlights that this bill now allows the “Education Minister to end a strike or a lock out without debating the issue in the provincial legislature” (FAQ: Bill 115 & teachers’ job action explained, para. 5). With this being the case, ETFO and OSSTF have decided to take job action in order to protect their collective bargaining rights by instructing their members to withdraw from administrative and ministry-related duties, including extracurricular activities.

Following this controversy, OSSTF conducted a survey of teachers titled Workload and Volunteerism of Educators (WAVE). This was the result of OSSTFs’ 2013 Annual Action Plan where they proposed to investigate the amount time educators contribute to the education system (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014b). Publications within the OSSTF including the Education forum (Fall 2014) and Education Watch (March 2015) presented the following results of the WAVE survey; of 7,600 OSSTF members, 92% of teachers volunteer their time to run and support extracurricular activities, where two out of five members will often lead more than three different extracurricular activities (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014b). Additionally, 33% of these extracurricular activities are sports-related, 25% of the members serve on committees, and 18% assist with fundraisers and campaigns (Education Watch, 2015). The Professional Relations Service (PRS) staff of ETFO (2014) also presented a report on teachers’ voluntary participation in extracurricular activities with similar themes from the OSSTF also arose among ETFO
members such as feeling obliged to sign up to a list of activities, highlighting teachers’ mental wellness regarding, stress and depression as a warning for members who take on extracurricular activities on top of their professional responsibilities.

1.1 The Research Problem

Despite the voluntary involvement in extracurricular activities, teachers might feel pressured to take part in extracurricular activities by the school’s administration, colleagues, and parents. Moreover, the willingness to take part in extracurricular activities is more often than not a reason why a teacher is able to secure or retain their position (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014a). WAVE survey participants spent, on average, 15 hours per week “beyond their assigned work time doing job related work” (Education Watch, 2015, p. 2), excluding time spent on extracurricular involvement. The naturally high demand of a teacher’s workload on top of their involvement with extracurricular activity reportedly leads to feelings of being overwhelmed, stressed, under resourced (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014a).

An earlier report of the Ontario Education Minister’s Advisory group by Brown et al. (2001) on the provision of co-instructional activities discusses three key challenges for Ontario’s education system in providing extracurricular activities. The first is respect, as many teachers feel their profession is not valued, leading to decreased moral, lowered self-esteem, increased stress, and eventually a decreased desire to want to provide extracurricular opportunities for the students (Brown et al., 2001). This lack of respect is also exacerbated when teachers are forced to withdraw from extracurricular activities since they lie in the realm of work action bargaining as seen after the passing of Bill 115. The second challenge revolves around time, specifically regarding the added stress that comes with decreased preparation time for classroom instruction that in turn affects their ability to partake in extracurricular activities. Contributing factors
include teachers with young families and Catholic board teachers who have commitments to Catholic social teachings and other Catholic value-based activities (Brown et al., 2001). Lastly is the challenge of resources; with no specific budget set aside for extracurricular activities by the Ministry of Education, school boards must fund these activities from their general operating revenue with many of the funding issues residing within transportation and facility costs.

Many of these challenges described in 2001 remain an issue today, as seen in the WAVE (2014) report, and all of them can lead to stress and a sense of being overworked. Nevertheless, 92% of teachers who support and participate in extracurricular activities because they are “resilient, motivated and, most of all, driven to create opportunities and learning for secondary students across Ontario” (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014a, p. 15).

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative interview study is to explore the experiences of Ontario secondary school teachers who are heavily involved in extracurricular activities. Based on the WAVE (2014) survey, at least two out of every five teachers are involved in leading three or more extracurricular activities (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014b), despite many teachers eventually feeling stressed and overwhelmed as a result (Brown et al., 2001). Thus, I will look to explore their experiences of extracurricular involvement by focusing on their reported responsibilities as teachers, their reported reasons for undertaking their said degree of involvement, as well as the reported effects of their involvement in these activities. Moreover, I will explore the presence and role of support from administration, colleagues, friends and family in allowing them to undertake this extra role, as well as potential barriers. My goal is to gather and share best practices for maintaining work-life balance from teachers who are heavily involved in
extracurricular activities; many teachers are seeking to become involved but may be reluctant for many of the reasons discussed above.

1.3 Research Questions

The central question that guides my research is: What are the experiences of Ontario secondary teachers who are heavily involved in extracurricular activities? To better answer this question, my focused sub-questions on this topic are the following:

- What are the teachers’ reported responsibilities including extracurricular activities?
- What are the teachers’ reasons for undertaking this degree of involvement?
- What are teacher supports (what helps them to do this) and barriers (what makes it hard)?
- What are the self-perceived effects of teachers’ involvement?

By answering these questions, I hope that teachers as well as other educators will gain a better understanding of what it means to be successfully and sustainably involved in extracurricular activities.

1.4 Background of the Researcher (Reflexive Positioning Statement)

As an extrovert who enjoys the presence and energy of others along with the relationships created in a space separated from daily routine where common interests are shared, I am someone who truly believes in the benefits and need for extracurricular activities. Over the years, and across both secondary school and university, my involvement in extracurricular activities, has helped shape my overall identity. Some aspects of that identity are: the athlete (via my involvement in sports), the social butterfly (via my involvement as First-Year class representative during my undergraduate degree at University of Toronto), the approachable Christian (via my involvement in Christian athlete campus organization). Extracurricular activities helped me to create a sense of belonging among my peers ever since I was young,
especially considering the fact that I was an immigrant to this country at the age of 8 years old from the Middle East.

However, as a graduate student who is still involved in many extracurricular activities on top of a full course load, I often find myself participating in too many activities and stretching myself too thin. Feeling a sense of commitment and responsibility to my chosen undertakings, I catch myself stressing over being fully present and efficient in my schoolwork, in school clubs, and on my sports team.

Stepping into a teaching career, I feel like this pattern of ‘putting too much on my plate’ may remain consistent when I inevitably choose to get involved with extracurricular activities alongside my teaching duties. By exploring the different experiences of the teachers are already living this reality, I hope to feel better prepared and motivated to continue following my passions outside of the classroom not only for my personal fulfillment but also for the benefit of my students.

1.5 Preview of the Whole MTRP

To respond to the research questions I will be conducting a qualitative research study using purposeful sampling to interview three teachers who are heavily involved in extracurricular activities about their experiences. In chapter two of this paper, I review the literature on the benefits of extracurricular activities for students and teachers as well as workload of teachers and its effects on stress and job satisfaction. Next, in chapter three, I elaborate on the research design and methodology. In chapter four, I report my research findings and discuss their significance in light of the existing research literature, and in chapter five, I identify the implications of the research findings for my own teacher identity and practice, and for the educational research
community more broadly. I also articulate a series of questions raised by the research findings, and point to areas for future research.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature in the areas of benefits of participation in extracurricular activities, teachers’ responsibilities in terms of their workload, as well as work related stress and its subsequent effect on job satisfaction. I start by reviewing the literature in the area of benefits of extracurricular involvement for students and teachers. Next, I review research on teachers’ workload and time spent outside of the instructional time. This is done in order to try and understand their initial teaching responsibilities and workload prior to taking on additional time commitments of extracurricular activities. Finally, I review literature on stress, teacher expectations, and job satisfaction levels related to the extracurricular involvement of teachers.

2.1 Definition of Extracurricular Activities in Schools

As in Chapter one, Ontario students and teachers are both heavily involved in activities that occur outside of the classroom. These activities go by names such as co-curricular, co-instructional, or extracurricular activities. For the purposes of this paper, the nomenclature that will be used throughout this study is extracurricular activities (ECA) and is described by Beckett (2013) as school-based activities that: “take place (largely) beyond the set hours of the school day, are not part of the Ontario curriculum, are optional for both students and staff and include a very broad range of sports, music, and various other activities such as graduation/prom and yearbook committees, student government, clubs, and so on” (p. 1).

Despite it being stated as optional for both students and staff, policy documents from school boards across Ontario highlight that the Education Act S170 (1) requires school boards to develop and implement a plan to provide extra-curricular activities for pupils enrolled in
elementary and secondary schools operated by the board.

The following subsections explore the literature that supports ECA and their positive effect on youth development/behavior, increased school connectedness, and better academic achievement for students specifically, followed by the perceived benefits for teachers. It is important to highlight that the following literature will stem from American journals, and will not only be comprised of Canadian literature, since both educational systems are fairly similar in nature, which maintains the validity of the research for the purposes of this project.

2.2 The Benefits of Extracurricular Activities for Students

This section will highlight the social and academic benefits of extracurricular involvement for students. It is important to present these findings in this study as they help give an understanding to why extracurricular activities are held in schools in the first place.

2.2.1 Social benefits of ECA

Secondary students spend the vast majority of their vulnerable adolescent years in an education system where they undergo numerous hours of classroom instruction in order to receive a high school diploma and be deemed literate citizens ready for the workplace or Higher Education. Nevertheless, so much of what shapes who they are as individuals comes from activities outside of the classroom, which in turn benefits them not only in the academic school setting, but also develops them into stronger, more well rounded individuals who have a better sense of identity and sense of self (Eccles, Barber, Stone & Hunt, 2003).

Studies (e.g., Eccles et al., 2003; Guest & Schneider, 2003) have found that all of these benefits are especially heightened for at-risk students within poor communities, though positive youth behaviour is most evident as a benefit of participation in ECA. When looking at sport participation in particular, Donnelly and Coakley (2007) suggest that students who are
susceptible to ‘deviant’ behaviour (in which one often under-conforms to social norms, resulting in criminal, anti-social, or delinquent behaviour) can look to sport as an effective tool to alleviate this type of behaviour when it is provided in a positive, supportive, and non-authoritarian manner. Feelings of physical safety, sense of value and moral support need to be present when participation in sport occurs to ensure positive youth development (Coakley, 2011). This space is ideally fostered for the students when they participate in extracurricular activities in a school setting. While participation in sport itself helps keep the students away from possible encounters with opportunities to engage in delinquent behavior (Donnelly & Coakley, 2007), in their study of physical education and sport programs in inner-city schools, Holt et al. (2012) found that it was the empathy and social connection via sport that in fact promoted positive youth development. Empathy was a result of teachers instilling values of care and understanding in students, where these values were not likely found in these students’ home lives. The students created social connection while they were developing friendships, teamwork, and other social skills that often naturally come about when participating in sport (Holt et. al, 2012).

Jenkins (1997) used students’ school involvement as a measurement tool alongside the four components of Hirshi’s Social Bonding Theory (school commitment, attachment to school and belief in school rules on its effects on school crime, and misconduct) to measure social bonding levels among students. School involvement has also been described by Libbey (2004) as participation in extracurricular activities such as belonging to a school band, participating in intramural sports, belonging to drama clubs, etc.

When it came to the relationship between involvement and student diversity, Brown and Evans (2002) found an increased sense of school connection when participating in extracurricular activities, regardless of ethnic background. Park (2015) studied the benefits of
extracurricular participation for English Language Learners (ELL). He found that there was an increased level of confidence, language acquisition, social development, and academic development via increased school connectedness and motivation, which were acquired from extracurricular involvement.

2.2.2 Academic benefits of ECA

In addition to the positive outcomes discussed above, regarding increased social acceptance and connectedness to the school, ECA have also been found to yield higher academic performance (Stuart, Lido, Morgan, Solomon, & May, 2011). Time management, discipline and focus were all qualities that were developed by athletes who participated in ECA; all of which are things that help students better succeed academically. Furthermore, the little time the student athletes have left after their extracurricular time commitments will often push them to complete their assignments in a more timely fashion and seek to help from teachers (Stuart et. al, 2011). Discipline, commitment, and character development in the students who participate in athletics have been said to be factors in the resultant increase in grade point average, math, and science grades (Macaluso, Shaw and Pucci, 2013). Nevertheless, participation in non-sport activities has also shown increased academic achievement and higher educational expectations (Guest & Schnieder, 2003). While it has been found that students who score the highest on test scores are the ones who are the most active in extracurricular activities (Kronholz, 2012), this cannot always be said to be a causal effect (Shulruf, 2010).

The above literature has shown that the multiple benefits of students’ involvement in ECA may include positive youth development/behaviour, increased sense of school connected and sense of belonging, and increased academic achievement. All of these demonstrate the importance and necessity for the existence of these co-instructional programs within schools.
This in turn highlights the importance of having teachers willing and available to want to lead, supervise, and/or organize these activities. The following subsection focuses on the benefits that teachers have acquired when devoting their time to extracurricular activities.

2.3 The Effects of ECA Involvement on Teachers

It is generally known in Canada that extracurricular involvement from teachers is not a required duty as a part of their teaching contracts. Nevertheless, it is also so much of what makes up a part of teachers’ interaction with the students as the above research has demonstrated. This is why teacher unions tend to use extracurricular activities as bargaining chips. This following section will focus on literature surrounding teacher workloads, their involvement in extracurricular activities, and the effects that come from spending their extra time on these activities, looking specifically at the areas of stress and job satisfaction. This section will conclude with the benefits of teacher involvement in extracurricular activities.

2.3.1 Workload and time spent outside of the classroom

As in Chapter 1, the Ontario Secondary Schools Teacher Federation (OSSTF) conducted a research survey on *Workload and Volunteerism of Educators* (WAVE) after the 2013 Annual Action Plan, in which they found that where two out of five members will often lead more than three different extracurricular activities where the naturally high demand of a teacher’s workload on top of their involvement with extracurricular activity reportedly lead to feelings of being overwhelmed, stressed, under resourced (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014b). A study conducted in Newfoundland by Dibbon (2004) showed similar findings on the impact of workload on teachers. Both reports discuss the fact that demands and expectations of teachers have increased, requiring that teachers spend extra time working at home and outside of school hours. The
WAVE study reports that this extra work taken home is done by 90% of their participants (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014b).

When looking at time spent on their professional teaching duties and responsibilities, Dibbon (2004) gathered that the majority of teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador work most of their non-voluntary hours outside of the instructional time with students, either in meetings, prep time, assessment time, parent meetings, etc. amounting to up to about 20 hours a week outside of the 27 hours of direct teaching time. The WAVE report from Ontario also highlights hours spent outside ECA:

…Those 1,615 members spend over 16,000 hours each week on extra work at home. And this figure does not include the amount of time spent on extra work at school, other locations or the time spent on extracurricular activities (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014a, p.15). Thus, time, or lack thereof, may play a big factor in teachers’ daily ability to do their professional jobs as well as engage in extracurricular activities. A study from British Columbia focused specifically on how a teacher’s preparation time affected their willingness to participate in ECA. Whiteley and Richard (2012) found that 90% of teachers agree that ECA are an important part of school life, and that three out of five of those teachers are willing to lead and participate in ECA. However, this level of engagement would drop to one in five teachers, when they are teaching with a full course load with no prep time (Whiteley & Richard, 2012). Dibbon (2004) is concerned that a failure to address the issues regarding higher workloads may likely result in decreased teacher satisfaction and increased attrition.

2.3.2 Stress, expectations, and job satisfaction

With ever-increasing demands on teachers’ time due to increased workloads and Ministry requirements, the mental health of teachers is often put to the test. Johnston-Gibbins (2014b)
highlights the major sources of stress in teaching regarding workload and time constraints, increased students with exceptional needs, lack of support and resources etc., in which many of these and others are excluding the stressors that may come with extracurricular involvement.

The Ontario Ministry of Education report on co-instructional activity (Brown et al., 2001) identified other stressors specific to the provision of extracurricular activities. Time-related challenges that affect teachers’ ability to provide extracurricular activities include: teachers with young families, Catholic teachers having other responsibilities such as Catholic social teachings, and decreased classroom preparation time. These challenges were then said to increase levels of stress in the teaching profession (Brown et al., 2001). Moreover, an added pressure to participate in extracurricular activity was also mentioned and may lead to feelings of increased stress (Brown et al., 2001). Johnston-Gibbins (2014a) reports that while over half of the teachers partake in ECA voluntarily, these teachers report that: “there are often expectations and social pressure from administration, colleagues, parents and students to take part” (p. 14).

While willingness to take on ECA may play a role in the hiring process (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014a; McDonald, 2013), it is suggested that new teachers do not take on extracurricular engagements until they have more classroom experience in order to improve teacher retention (Renard, 2003). Dibbon (2004) went on to say that: “almost 50% of new teachers are giving consideration to leaving their current position because of reasons related to heavy workload, a stressful teaching environment and a lack of opportunities for advancement and pay increases (p. 125).” The stress that comes from heavy workloads and inadequate preparation time is said to reduce job satisfaction for teachers (Liu & Ramsey, 2008). In a review of literature on teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction, Klassen and Chui (2010) found that “teachers who are dissatisfied with their work display lower commitment and are at greater risk
for leaving the profession” (p. 742). They go on to explain that “teachers report that job satisfaction is gained from the nature of day-to-day classroom activities, such as working with children, seeing students make progress, working with supportive colleagues, and overall school climate”. Thus, despite high levels of stress job satisfaction for teachers may still exist due to a sense of fulfillment from their daily activities. Reinardy, Maksl, & Filak (2009) found that journalism teachers reported to be most satisfied with their jobs despite minimal support and long hours outside of the school day. This was due to their high level of enjoyment of working closely with their students and feeling a great deal of success and achievement in their work. Thus, there may be a possibility to achieve high job satisfaction within ECA involvement as long as a strong level of enjoyment and success can be gained from the extra time and effort put in voluntarily. Collective efficacy, which Klassen (2010) defines as “teachers’ perceptions of group-level attributes; that is, judgments of the capabilities of the staff or school to which they belong” (p. 342), is better perceived with increasing social capital through ECA involvement (McDonald, 2013). Thus, collective efficacy may act as a buffer between stress levels and job satisfaction (Klassen, 2010) meaning that when the teachers work is valued as good and wanted, job satisfaction levels are higher.

Therefore, despite the heavy workloads and time requirements of teaching duties, where feelings of stress are often reported, over teachers still report to be satisfied with their position, enjoying their work, colleagues and especially their students (Johnston-Gibbins, 2010b).

2.3.3 The benefits of extracurricular activities for teachers

Extracurricular activities are means highly used by bargaining units because it is understood that teachers are at the helm of their existence. Without teachers leading and organizing these activities, the educational system would be stripped down to only classroom
instruction, and aforementioned benefits that students gain from their involvement in ECA would be non-existent. Regardless of whether teachers face pressure to lead ECAs, however, it is important to highlight any benefits that teachers may gain from their involvement in ECA.

While there is very little research on the benefits for teachers who lead and organize these activities, McDonald (2013) reviewed studies of teachers’ perceptions of the professional benefits of extracurricular participation and found that teachers may receive similar social benefits as students when involved in ECA. These benefits include: increased preference in hiring process, less teacher burnout, and increased level of social capital (McDonald, 2013). McDonald expands on many definitions of social capital from various authors to highlight that it is essentially a network of people who share resources and common goals. Through the interactions of people within this network, relationships, and mutual obligations towards one another are built. It is suggested that this increase in social capital through involvement in ECA allows teachers to get to know one another in a deeper level, increases the level of respect from other teachers, administration and parents, as well as increases the level of shared resources between teachers. The increased networking among teachers, and more importantly with students, has mirrored the benefits of student involvement described above; these teachers also perceive to have an increased sense of belonging and connectedness to the school community, as well as increased self-esteem, confidence and interactions with others. Career benefits for teachers who participate in ECA have also been noted; i.e. their willingness to lead/coach/advise ECA gives them the perceived belief of having an advantage in the hiring process. However, McDonald found that these career benefits were not necessarily the main reason for the teachers’ involvement, but rather the simple fact that the teachers who are involved are mainly interested in being part of the activity. They receive personal benefit from their participation and
fulfillment of their own personal interests i.e. they are “energized” by their participation. The survey for this study has shown that the highest level of agreement of teachers’ perceived benefits for those who participated in ECA was related to classroom benefits; “The highest agreement (92.9%) came with the statements, ‘Allows me to know my students more personally’ and ‘More opportunity to relate to students in a different type of environment’” (p. 75). Teachers found that they become better and more well-rounded classroom teachers and have gained insights on their students’ motivation to learn.

Thus, McDonald found that the overall perceived benefits for teacher participation are seen through an increased sense of belonging and connectedness to the school and other members. This is achieved via increased social capital, closer relationships and rapport with the students translating to better classroom teaching practices, and increased job satisfaction due to participation out of a high level of interest, yielding its own positive career benefits. It is important to highlight however that the study by McDonald is an outlier in much of the literature that I have been able to find in terms of positive effects of extracurricular involvement for teachers.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I began by defining extracurricular activities as activities that largely take part after school, having a wide range of variety and not belonging within the formal Ontario curriculum. The first section of the literature reviewed highlighted the benefits of ECA firstly for students, including increased positive youth behaviour, increased sense of school connected and belonging, and overall better educational outcomes, followed by perceived benefits for teachers which included increased social capital and better rapport with students.
The second part of this literature review explored the workloads and expectations of teachers and the effects that, in turn, often led to increasing levels of stress due to large time commitments and workloads outside of the classroom. Despite the reported stress level, job satisfaction may be achieved for teachers due to the genuine enjoyment of their work and positive interactions with colleagues and students.
Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I will begin by describing the qualitative research methodology that will shape my study. I will then go on to expand on the instruments of data collection that was used before elaborating more specifically on participant sampling and recruitment. Participant biographies will also be included. Following this, I will discuss data analysis procedures and review the ethical considerations regarding my study. I will conclude this chapter by summarizing key methodology limitations and strengths on the qualitative approach.

3.1 Research Approach & Procedures

This study was conducted using a qualitative research method whereby educators were provided insights relevant to the central research question via a semi-structured interview protocol. Historically, qualitative research was often described as an alternative to quantitative research (Flick, 2007). It is important to understand that qualitative research has more or less become an umbrella term for covering a series of approaches more specifically used today in social science. These approaches include or are otherwise known as hermeneutic, deconstructive, or interpretive (Flick, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) give a generic definition of this overall qualitative method:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. ... This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) elaborate on the idea that qualitative researchers stress the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied as well as the socially
constructed nature of reality, specifically how social experience is created and given meaning. Creswell (2012) goes on to discuss that the most appropriate time to use qualitative research is when a problem or an issue needs to be explored, therefore requiring a group or population in which their variables are not easily measured. Moreover, qualitative research allows complex issues to be explored via talking directly to people and allowing them to tell their own stories in order to best understand the issue.

My research topic was exploratory in nature, which sought to explore the experiences of teachers who are heavily involved in extracurricular activities. Thus, according to the definitions above, this approach is very suitable for this research question and provided room for different teachers to describe their own experiences and stories more holistically due to the different experiences, interpretations within their own settings. Different teachers at different schools had different experiences thus a qualitative approach allowed the most plausible means of collecting this type of data. The following section will elaborate on the latter as we explore qualitative semi structured interviews.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

It was described above that one of the key tenets of qualitative research is the relationship between the researcher and what is studied in a social experience. Moreover, it is about making sense and interpreting the phenomena that people bring forward from their own experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A way that researchers have been able to gather this type of information is through interviews. Freebody (2003) discusses the idea that interviews are not only data-gathering but more so data-generating. Freebody continues on to cite Baker (1997) to explain three components that mark interviews as data-generating methods: firstly, the idea of interviewing being an interactional event where the participants draw on and rebuild their
knowledge of the experience/subject in question. Secondly, questions used for the interview are a central part of the data and help shape the grounds on which the participants speak. Lastly, interview responses are to be used as accounts and not straight reports (Freebody, 2003). He continues on with Baker’s idea to explain that rather than evaluating interviews as more or less successful, or well or badly conducted, this approach examines the capabilities of the researcher to describe accurately the ways in which the interview participants, including the interviewer, together make sense in generating meaningful accounts of the experiences they describe. (p. 9)

The type of interview that was used to achieve these accounts was a semi-structured interview (in lieu of structured interview and open ended interviews). Ayres (2008) describes the semi-structured interview as “a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermine but open-ended questions” (p. 3). This allows the researcher to have some control over the topics of the interview, but also allows for some freedom for the interviewee (Ayres, 2008). Freebody (2003) describes this method to be of value since it allows the core issues to be covered (via the prepared set of questions) while at the same time allowing the order questions and pertinence of the interviewee free to vary by having the researchers pose follow-up ad hoc questions. Moreover, in light of the interviewee’s responses and statements the researcher may also find that “the issues guiding the research in the first place need to be adapted, re-tuned, or even changed comprehensively” (Freebody, 2003, p. 4).

In this study the interview guide has been created by turning my research objects into major questioning sections such as: teacher involvement in ECA, teacher roles in ECA and effects of ECA of teachers. An example of a question that was asked was as followed: To what extent do you feel an obligation or pressure to be involved in extracurricular activity? I also had
a follow up prompting question such as: Who/what would you attribute that pressure to, if any? (Administration? Better hiring prospects?)

This style of data collection has allowed me to move freely among my questions, allowing for prompting questions and more open-ended questions as well giving the interviewee freedom to expand on the topic as their experiences allowed. Once the interviews were over, the information was transcribed in full and I was able to decide what to analyze in depth based on the patterns and themes that emerged from my participants (Freebody, 2003).

The next section will describe my participants, sampling criteria, as well as the sampling procedures I used to gather my participants.

**3.3 Participants**

Participants make up a significant contribution to research, they are the individuals who have voluntary agreed to participate in a study (Persaud, 2010). In research literature, the term participant is also interchangeable with respondent and/or interviewee. Persaud (2010) defines the latter as participants who provide information themselves such as their experience, opinions, and behaviours during interviews for data-analysis purposes. This section will describe how the participants have been selected via sampling criteria and procedures.

**3.3.1 Sampling criteria**

The sampling criteria that determined my participants were as followed:

1. Teachers that are or have been involved in three or more extracurricular activities simultaneously and/or someone involved in minimum of six hours a week in extracurricular involvement in one school year (Johnston-Gibbins, 2014b).
2. Lead teacher for the activities
3. Full-time teacher within the GTA region

4. Ideally, involved in one or two different types of activities throughout the year
   a. i.e., Sport coach, Drama teachers, Production leaders, Social programs leaders, school councils.

It was important that my sampling criteria be as specific as it is due to the specificity of the central research question focused on the experiences of teachers heavily involved in extracurricular activities in Ontario. Based on a study by Johnston-Gibbins (2014b) on the workload and volunteerism of Ontario educators, many teachers are involved in extracurricular activities, thus I wanted to ensure that participants were the top percentage of teachers whose involvement went beyond that of regular teachers. Moreover, I was seeking the main teachers leading the extracurricular activity since I was hoping it would give the richest data regarding time consumption and preparation. I had hoped to find teachers who are not only heavily involved in terms of their time commitment, but also in different kinds of activities, which gave me a broader spectrum of effects that extracurricular activities may reportedly have on teachers. Moreover, these overall selective criteria have likely allowed a rich level of data to be gathered despite the low numbers of participants in the study, which were four.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures

The sampling procedures that have been implemented for this study fell under a nonprobability type of sampling. This meant that I could not state the likelihood of a participant being selected for this study, i.e., my selection was based on reasons other than mathematical probability (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Fritz & Morgan, 2010). There are a few procedures within nonprobability sampling that I used. The first was theoretical sampling (or purposive sampling), the selection criteria above fit into this procedure since the selection of the participants for this
study is based on my judgment from the literature reviewed. Theoretical sampling allowed me to pick participants who could best attest to my topic and it is from this sampling procedure that I created my above sampling criteria.

The next two sampling methods were based on which participants were actually available and could meet the criteria above. All participants chosen for this study were located via convenience sampling (meet the criteria and are easily accessible and readily available within the area) or were a result of a snowball sampling where one participant suggested another potential participant (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

I was able to find my participants by putting out the above criteria through my professional networks via emails and phone calls.

3.3.3 Participant bios

My first participant, Alex, is a department head in physical health and education at [Academic Private Elite School] (APES) in Toronto. She has been teaching for 21 years, 11 of which have been at APES and has been and continues to be heavily involved in ECA. Among her ECA are [Big Siblings], head coach of the [racquet sport] teams, the [paddle club], and [NGO society], supervisor of the school’s weight room after school hours, student mentorship and the head of the wellness team which she cherishes very much. Alex spent about 20 hours per week on her ECA.

My second participant, Maya was a department head in the social sciences at [East Toronto School] with a strong passion for theater and social justice issues, along with an interest in sports. She has been teaching for about 7 years in Ontario. Her list of ECA included leading the school’s mental wellness club, the [music genre] club, the [theater/festival] club, the
[humanitarian] club, the [religious] club and lastly the [field lacrosse] team. Maya averaged about 16 hours of ECA during a week.

My third participant, Samantha, also works at APES, but is from the drama department. She has been teaching Ontario for 16 years and has two young children. She is the lead teacher for the school drama production throughout the year, having been a professional in the field for over 10 years. She met the criteria of my study due to her numerous hours of involvement in the productions rehearsals, play-writing, and oversight.

My final participant, Roxanne, is also a mother of two. She has been a teacher in Ontario for 20 years, and teaches the senior level sciences at a school in [uptown] Toronto. Roxanne has been responsible for the [field lacrosse] and [paddle sport] teams. She was also the lead teacher for the student activity club, which ran all year round as well as the summers prior to the new school year. Roxanne averaged about 15 hours a week for her ECA.

It is important to note that all my participant were also full-time teachers whilst also taking on ECA.

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative research is particular in the way that data is generated since it is not so much based on standardization and control (Flick, 2007). Data analysis in qualitative research implies transformation of data collected, sorted and then processed/interpreted (Gibbs, 2007). This transformation process is done through transcription and thematic coding. Transcription was used to make the audio-recorded information available in written form in order to then get coded and categorized. The process of transcribing allows the research to become more and more familiar with the data being gathered due to the process of listening (and re-listening) as they transcribe (Rapley, 2007).
Gibbs (2007) describes coding as means to define what the data we are analyzing is about. Furthermore, it is a way of “categorizing text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it” (p. 3). This allowed the data to be organized based on similar themes and ideas in order to combine many experiences into retrievable categories to then get further analyzed. Coding involves careful reading of the transcribed text and decisions on what that text is about (Gibbs, 2007). It can be done on two levels: the more superficial and descriptive level, followed by the more analytical and theoretical level. It is during the latter where the researcher begins to add their own interpretations. Nevertheless, all coding levels are useful and important to ensure the authenticity of the data, moving from descriptive, to categorical to analytic coding (Gibbs, 2007).

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

In a research methodology that requires in large part the participation of other people in order to gather data for a study, many ethical issues may arise. Punch (1994), Thorne (1998) and Hammersley (1998) as cited by Ryen (2004) name three main ethical issues that arise in Western ethical discourse: codes and consent, confidentiality and trust. The first refers to mainly informed consent, where the participants are to be made aware of the nature of the study, the purpose, and the knowledge that they have the right to withdraw at any time during the research (Ryan, 2004). Informed consent is usually established via a written mutual contract signed by both the researcher and the participants. The contract should detail the nature, purpose, duration and, procedure of data collection (storage, access, and assurance of anonymity) (Flick, 2007). Nevertheless, some ethical dilemmas arise with informed consent and covert research (Ryen, 2004). This is due to the nature of deception with said research. Deception is only acceptable if the debriefing process after the study alleviates and removes any discomfort that it may have been caused (Ryen, 2004). Fortunately, this particular study in question did not require
deception. While the participants in my study are able to give true informed consent, some ethical issues arise with vulnerable population such as children, very elderly persons, or medical patients (Flick, 2007). In these scenarios, researchers should ensure that their participants understand the letter and sign on their behalf, or have find someone justifiable to understand and signed on their behalf and monitor the data collection process (Flick, 2007).

The second main standard in ethical considerations is confidentiality. As best practices in research, the anonymity of the participants needs to be ensured in the study (Ryen, 2004). I ensured confidentiality of my participants by removing any direct identifiers by using pseudonyms during my transcription. I ensured that any indirect identity marker regarding their involvement in extracurricular activities were masked. Moreover, I ensured that the transcript file names were not identifying. Alongside anonymity comes the protection of the data: the participants were made aware in the consent form (appendix A) that the data collected will be stored for a maximum of five years, password protected and only accessible by myself and my research supervisor.

The third ethical point for consideration is trust. The latter covers many things including the rapport between the researchers and the participant, their comfort throughout the study and the care for the data collected from the study (Ryen, 2004). While there are no evident risks in the participation of my study, I wanted to ensure that my participants were at ease throughout the interview study, therefore reminded them that they are able to choose not to answer a question should they feel uncomfortable, and were free to withdraw from the study at any time. This is important because the semi-structured interview method allowed from more prompting and probing questions. Thus, respect for privacy and intimacy of the participant must be kept (Flick, 2007). Participant were allowed to review the transcript once it was complete to ensure its
accuracy and were able to retract any statements they saw fit. Flick (2007) goes on to highlight the importance of the analysis of the data and its ethical implications. Analysis needs to be explicit and removed from any implicit comparisons made by the researchers own assumptions. Moreover, neutrality and respect for the participant must be maintained when analysing the data. Generalization should also be avoided (Flick, 2007).

Overall, the wellbeing and protection of the participants is one of the utmost important pieces in the ethical considerations in qualitative research. Through informed consent, confidentiality strategies, and an established trust between the researcher and the participants, the standards of ethics can be maintained.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

While sample size may often be considered a defining factor in the quality of quantitative research, the small sample size I had while doing this qualitative research is of less generalizable significance. Bloor and Wood (2006) explain that small sample size can be mitigated if the researcher can collect enough meaningful data in order to draw a conclusion about the phenomenon of interest. Due to the nature of this study, it may be difficult to state that my 4 participants could conclusively describe the experiences of teachers heavily involved in extracurricular activity. However, the same can be stated if the sample size for this study was increased since it was a more exploratory topic in nature. Merriam (2002) describes qualitative research as an inductive process because more often than not research done with this method lack the theory to explain the studied phenomenon, therefore research need to build concepts, and theories. This is best done using this approach where data can be categorized, themed, and essentially richly descriptive (via the use of quote from the participants own experience).

While interviewing does in fact give us rich access to deep knowledge and first hand
experiences on the topic in question, Rapley (2007) argues that it can become difficult to discern whether interviewees are simply just individuals or part of a whole broader story of the research. He explains the latter with this example:

\[ \textit{after the interview, as we write up the report the ‘individual’ account becomes part of a broader collection of voices; as part of the interviewing process, in that we sometimes ask interviewees to speak as a representative of a specific perspective; as part of the interview interaction, in that we sometimes tell interviewees ‘What you've told me is very similar to what I've heard from so and so.’} \] (p. 36; original emphasis)

Rapley (2007) goes on to explain that there are accounts where interviewees will speak as representatives of a broader collective, rather than from their own personal experience, thus questioning the validity of interviewing as a whole when the purpose is said to obtain their own experiences.

Qualitative research, especially within the interview method, can be paradoxical in the sense that it is crucial to this type of research that the researcher have a voice and have a part of the conception of the study, but must also be careful in how they use their voice in analyzing the data collected (Merriam, 2002). Thus, the researchers must remain aware of that existing tension when going through their data and writing-up their findings.

3.7 Conclusion

In this section, I defined and described the qualitative research methodology that shaped this study. I went on to explain the data collection method that was used, semi-constructed interviews, and how it was used and provided examples of the interview guide. I then went on to list and justify my sampling criteria and sampling procedures that allowed me to gather participants that helped generate the richest data. Data analysis was broken down and explained.
Ethical considerations were then highlighted and alleviating strategies were put forth. Lastly, methodological strengths and limitations of qualitative interviews were examined. In the next section, I will analyze and highlight my finding following the interviews.
Chapter Four: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction to the Chapter

Thus far, this study has explored the context of teacher involvement in extracurricular activities in Ontario secondary high schools, as seen in chapter one. Chapter two expanded then on the literature found on student involvement in ECA, with regards to impact on their academic performance and social connectedness. The chapter also highlighted literature on the potential impact of involvement in ECA for teachers when looking at job satisfaction, time consumption, and certain benefits of involvement. Lastly, chapter three highlighted the methodological components done in this study which included using a semi-structured interview protocol to explore the topic in question in a qualitative manner.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight findings that arose from teacher participants who fit the criteria of what it means to being heavily involved based on the literature gathered above. The aim of the study is to share their experiences while exploring topics such as reasons for involvement, supports and barriers and level of job satisfaction caused by their involvement in ECA. The data was collected via semi-structured interviews, as aforementioned, that have been transcribed and analyzed. The themes that arose are as follow:

1. Initial reasons for teacher involvement in ECA
2. How preparation and lunchtime is reportedly used due to ECA and its perceived effect on work outside of school hours
3. The balance between managing teaching responsibilities, familial responsibilities, and ECA
4. A reported need for extra teacher support for ECA with a perceived lack of value and commitment to ECA from colleagues
5. Increased sense of school community, sense of belonging and job satisfaction due to the student relationships and connections created through ECA environments

These participants have reported that ECA involvement initially begins with an innate sense of passion, past experiences and ambitions for personal growth in their lives. It is the desire of sharing these things with the students that give the teachers that first desire to give time out of their regular school hours willingly and committedly. Nevertheless, teachers report having had to learn how to balance, rearrange, and work through significant ‘break’ or professional work time in their school day. This meant reportedly working through lunch and preparation periods and having to take significant amounts of work home in order to maintain ECA, professional and familial responsibilities. For some teachers, balancing all of the aforementioned meant that they felt that they could no longer take on as many ECA or commit as much time into particular ones as they once did since having children. Moreover, participants often stated that extra help and support from other teachers would enhance their involvement in ECA via collaboration and that simply having an extra set of hands and eyes could go a long way in helping run the activity more meaningfully. However, they reported that many teachers were perhaps not willing to put in the extra time commitment required for ECA aware that it could become “too much”.

Unfortunately, participants also shared that they perceived a certain lack of value and even resentment in their participation in ECA from their colleagues. Major concerns were discussed around a fear of their ECA ‘fizzling’ out due to a lack of other teacher value, care, or experience to continue on the program should the main teacher have to step down. The teacher participants who were heavily involved in ECA reported that their job satisfaction was tremendously increased because of their involvement despite all the barriers, either personal or professional. They attributed their enjoyment and satisfaction to the greater sense of school community and
sense of belonging in the school via their involvement in ECA. More importantly, it was the relationship with the students and the deep connections that were created environments outside of the classroom that strongly resounded among all the participants as to why they continue to be so heavily involved in ECA. Being able to create memories and experience and safe spaces for students during and beyond their high school experience “makes it all worth it” and kept the teachers energized, satisfied and passionate.

4.1 “So I Bring A Lot of That To What I Do, Because It’s Not Just What I Teach, It’s My Whole Life”: Teachers Initial Reasons for ECA Involvement

Teachers report that their initial involvement in ECA comes from their personal desires and previous experiences. This first theme section will highlight that an initial reason for involvement in ECA is reportedly caused by personal prior experience, future ambitions, and a desire for personal growth. The purpose of these findings is to demonstrate that when there is enough passion and desire for certain activities, from past experience or ambitious desires, teachers are willing to share those with their students in a space that is solely focused on that activity. Firstly, I will discuss how these teachers expressed enjoyment in being involved in a variety of activities with the purpose of sharing that with students. I will then discuss how some of my participants, moreover, looked forward to participating in different ECA for personal growth in new experiences or to improve upon their previous work for themselves and for their students.

The participants in this study each had a story as to why they initially were interested in getting involved in ECA. For Roxanne, her love for sport was quickly stated as a passion when asked about her personal interests outside of school: “Sports is a big thing for me, I love sports, I try to be active in sports and I try to get my students to be active.” It was clear that she had an
innate desire to bring her personal passion for sport into the school and share that with the students through her involvement in ECA. Moreover, her desire to coach the paddle sport team and field lacrosse team not only came about because of her passion and prior experience in the latter but also reportedly increased the intensity in which she lead the activities:

We make it more intense, I think it’s just the people I coach with as well, that wanna see us [the team] do better, and I suppose because it’s something that I actively do as well, or was doing as well, I mean I played [field lacrosse] in high school, but I was still in the [paddle sport] until a couple of years ago, so…maybe that’s part of the reason why.

This passion can be seen beyond sports as well. Samantha and Maya, both expressed that their personal passion and even professional experiences, prior to being teacher, was found in theater:

So my first passion is theater, since I was six I knew that’s what had to do and I worked professionally for ten years as an actor, professional play-writer and director. I had my own theater company. So I bring a lot of that to what I do, because it’s not just what I teach, it’s my whole life. - Samantha

When I do the [theater festival], that’s my pure passion, my degree is theater, that's my passion. I get a high from directing. I really enjoy working with the kids and seeing them grow, and even when I worked abroad, I ran theater programs and I just love it, I am passionate about it, I wanna see it happen. - Maya

Their innate love and passion in the field and her involvement in school productions and plays as ECA created a perfect space for them to share their wealth of experience and knowledge with students who shared those same desires or wanted to explore the art. Samantha’s excitement in her role was very evident: “my biggest passion is shows, so I get really really excited, like right now I'm adapting a play I’ve always wanted to do, so like I go home and I can't wait to work on
it.” Thus, for both Samantha and Roxanne it was their previous experience and desire to share their expertise with their students that made for an evident reason for involvement in their respective ECA. These finding are in tandem with that of McDonald’s (2013) study of teachers’ perceptions of the professional benefits of extracurricular participation where he highlights that it is not necessarily any specific career benefit that entices teachers in getting involved in ECA, but rather that teachers receive a personal benefit when fulfilling their own personal interests via their involvement in their passionate areas. This is to say that they are “energized” by their own participation.

For Alex, while also having mentioned a passion for sport, her prior experiences and why she chose to get involved in ECA take on a bit of a different angle compared to being the expert on the field. Sport was a place where she “found peace”. She went on to explain why, saying, “I had a tough family situation going on and my mum was mentally ill, and my dad and I would seek kinda refuge through sport.” Despite the prior negative family experience, Alex highlights that her story created the person and teacher she is today, and it is with that lesson in life that she aspires to inspire students. She describes that her it was through that journey with her family that has taught her to value life, and the good moments. It was through those relationships that she sought to “teach love”, change the world by creating “agents of social change” and give others a chance to feel good and experience hope.

It is this kind of outlook and experience that Alex has taken into her involvement in ECA, one as she reports, that creates a place for students to hopefully have the same safe space she found in ECA.

Maya also expressed strong ambitions and passion for seeing change in her surroundings in her reasons for getting involved:
I want to make a difference, like honestly I want to die with making a difference in this world […] but that’s just who I am, like it’s my passion, I wanna do something that changes the way we think, the way we do things, changes someone’s life… you know? Thus, it is through experience, motivations, and ambitions such as these that gave these teachers a higher sense of purpose in their involvement in ECA where they could share their passions and make a difference.

Along with prior experiences and future hopes weaved through out the reported reasons for involvement for these participants, some teachers reported that their involvement in activities also served the purpose to grow them personally. Maya, for example, when asked about one of the main reasons why she is involved in ECA stated that she didn't want to be stagnant. She wanted to go out of her comfort zone and grow a person and so chose to coach the field lacrosse team, something she had never done before. For Alex, she wanted to continue to be a life long learner, continuously striving to get better in the things she is involved in:

You know starting my 21st year, still loving coming in everyday and being inspired to do things differently, and also kind of kick yourself in the butt when you know, “Hey I didn't do that well,” “I wanna do it differently,” like still having the energy to do that.

This reported desire for growth, change and betterment of their personal strengths and weakness’ is seen when they choose to get involved in ECA and have a sense of purpose behind their participation.

Thus, we can see that some of the reported reasons for teacher involvement in ECA come from a place of prior experiences in their activities where teachers can share their passion and expertise in their field with their students from a place of genuine personal interest. Moreover, teachers report having hoped to share their ambitions and motivations to ‘change the world’
through involvement in ECA, while also growing as people as they seek to step out of their comfort zone in certain activities, or bettering the work they’ve done for a few decades.

4.2 “Because There is Not Enough Time in the Day”: Impact of ECA on Preparation Periods, Lunchtime, and Time Outside of School Hours

Despite having a set preparation time in their schedules, teachers reported having to work through their lunch hour and take a lot of work home, or stay late afterschool in order to complete important tasks. This reported lack of time for classroom preparation work such as marking, responding to emails, parent phone calls, or creation of tests and quizzes have been cause by participants willingness to have an ‘open door policy’ for their students, extra help or one hour lunch time meeting for ECA clubs or meetings.

The participants explained that preparation time for teachers is a free period in their timetable where they are not teaching, but as the name suggests, have time to prepare what they need for their next classes or time to catch up with different work tasks. However, some of the participants in this study reported being generous with their preparation time by keeping an ‘open door policy’ where students often came in for some sort of mentoring from the teacher, whether it is dealing with a student “crisis” or to help them prepare for auditions. Other participants also reported using the extra hours outside the instructional times to provide extra help time for students. Therefore, it was only when students did not need the teacher that the latter reported using this time to respond to emails, setup up class for next period and either mark or prepare tests and quizzes, as it was meant for. Roxanne particularly highlighted her preparation time as being her time of day as “most active and most busy” where she is engulfed with her emails, marking and other tasks relating to the classroom subjects she is teaching. Therefore, we see that teachers reported being willing to grant that time for extra student needs.
and attention beyond the classroom which in turn may have caused them to take on more work afterschool hours in order to keep up with the demands of the job, as will be shown below. This may be specifically one of the factors that is likely to prevent teachers from being willing to take on ECA as highlighted in a study by Whiteley and Richard (2012) that looked at teachers’ attitude on taking on extracurricular activities while having zero or low preparation time.

Moreover, the most interesting and reoccurring finding regarding how teachers spend their non-instructional time came up around the concept of a ‘working lunch’. Roxanne expressed it very bluntly, stating that “lunch time is never a real lunch, it’s always a working lunch.” All participants found that they often lacked time throughout the day to do a lot of their tasks such marking, phone calls to parents, etc. and therefore find themselves “sitting at their desks, and working while they eat fast.” Another important finding was that teachers report that more often than not, unless it’s a sporting activity, most ECA, such as clubs and committees, are run during the lunch hour. Some examples from the participants included Alex having her student society meeting once a week during a lunch period, and Maya having her music genre club, her religion club, and her mental wellness club weekly during lunch. Other examples included Samantha having to hold some of her drama rehearsal and auditions at lunch, and Roxanne spending a lunch hour twice a week with her student activity council and then another weekly lunch commitment with the commencement committee.

With the lack of time for work during the school day caused by ECA or “open door policies” many of the participants in this study had to take their extra work home after school. Home became a place for Alex where her full attention could be given to the task she was shorthanded from during the school day:
I don't what it is about me but that space is where I can get the most creative, here [at school], I just feel like my feelers are out on everybody and I’m trying to take care of some many things and I can’t sit down and always do [my work].

Therefore, Alex had to find a different place outside her workspace and time block to do what needed to be done for school due to the busyness and impact of her involvement in ECA. Roxanne reported choosing to take her work home with her in order to keep her time afterschool solely dedicated to her ECA activities or extra help for students, otherwise remaining afterschool would “just be too much”. Therefore, the impact of ECA involvement during the school day, played a factor on how teachers had to manage their workload during after school hours.

Despite whether teachers chose to take their extra work home or do it after school, as one of my participants reported doing, the extra work that teachers reported doing outside of ECA and instructional time in the school day often amounted to up to 20 hours a week. This amount included time for marking, lesson planning, coordinating courses, emails, and other tasks that teachers hoped they could finish during their preparation time. These findings were in agreement with a study done by Dibbon (2004) where he looked at time at time spent on teachers’ professional teaching duties and responsibilities. He found that teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador work most of their non-voluntary hours outside of the instructional time with students, either in meetings, prep time, assessment time, parent meetings, etc. amounting to up to about 20 hours a week outside of the 27 hours of direct teaching time.

In sum, teachers reported having to use most of their extra unpaid times before school, during lunch, or after school as well as their preparation time to provide extra help for students, run ECA and if they were lucky, get their school work done. This in turn left them with up to 20 hours of marking, lesson planning, responding to email and such to do after school hours.
4.3 “I Would Be Here All the Time if I Didn’t Have a Family”: Managing Teaching Responsibilities, Familial Responsibilities, and ECA

Teachers reported that having a family had significantly reduced their involvement in ECA, which is one of the barriers they identified to active participation in ECA. Nevertheless, both these participants reported being able to manage and work with their ECA schedules and school work in order to be able to juggle ECA involvement, school work and a family life.

Prior to having children, both Samantha and Roxanne expressed that they took on numerous activities and were able to stay much longer after school in doing so, calling it a great experience and reiterating their passion for their involvement. Roxanne, for example, reported having coached volleyball for ten years prior to getting pregnant, however, after having kids, Roxanne had to revert to only doing one sport per semester due to the extra time commitment required to do both while also having a family:

Because I can’t be at two places at once and I don't have the same amount of time that I could commit before. So I’m just in a chapter in my life [with a family]. I mean if I could be coaching volleyball once [field lacrosse] is over, I would, but I can’t because it requires more commitment.

Samantha also shared the same type of experience saying that she would be at school all night doing theater with great joy but with time as the culprit she is no longer able to do so: “So basically it’s just time, like certainly I’d do theater all day and all night if it was just me, but I can’t do that anymore.” She then went on to follow this by saying that she has a commitment to her family and can no longer be gone all the time. Therefore, it is shown that having a family may significantly impact a teacher’s decision to be involved in ECA, especially when comparing their amount of involvement before and after having children.
Furthermore, the Ontario Ministry of Education’s report on co-instructional activity (Brown et al., 2001) stated that teachers with young families, such as the participants in this study, might be like to experience higher stress when also involved with ECA. Nevertheless, these participants, albeit having to reduce their ECA involvement from the amount they did prior to having children, were still able to manage balancing a family and ECA involvement. The participants reported doing so by “rejigging” their times involved in ECA. Samantha reported choosing to have shorter rehearsals at lunch (which posed it’s own problems, however, as seen above) or by decreasing the rehearsal times after school in order to get home early enough for dinner. While Samantha reported being able to rearrange her rehearsal time, Roxanne did feel some stress with her management of ECA and responsibilities for her kids. She stated this when explaining how she balances being at an ECA field lacrosse game versus being home to prep for her daughter’s soccer game:

Like last night we had a game at 3:30 that didn't finish until 4:40, [my daughter] had to leave by 5:30 and I live 45 minutes away, so I had to prepare dinner the night before, she put it in the microwave, fed herself and then my husband went and took her to [soccer].

Being aware of the reality of her daughter’s needs and her own responsibilities with ECAs, Roxanne reports being much more planned out with her week in order to manage both. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous theme section, Roxanne prefers to take her work with her at home now, in order to meet the needs for her family first then do school work, thus forcing her to reduce her ECA relating to sports which kept her after school more often. She also learned to become more efficient with her workload by taking her work everywhere: “Marking, I honestly
will take anywhere and everywhere, my daughter’s soccer game, my daughter’s dance, piano stuff, I take my marking anywhere and everywhere.”

Thus, despite having to reduce certain ECA or number of hours in a specific extra curricular activity, both the participants that had young children were able to find a balance between staying involved, doing their school work and being there for their families.

4.4 “There Were Moments Along the Way Where People Don’t See [ECA] as Important as You Do”: The Reported Need for Extra Teacher Support and Perceived Lack of Value and Commitment to ECA From Colleagues

Highly involved teachers reported wanting more teacher support in their ECA for extra help or different ideas through collaboration. Nevertheless, participants noted that their colleagues did not want to invest that amount of time due to its ‘high commitment’ requirement outside of school hours. They also perceived that their peers did not value the ECA the same way they did which caused resentment and lack of intra and inter department connections, or were simply unable to provide the experience and expertise required to run the ECA. Thus, their ultimate concern was that certain ECA would be dissolved if they themselves were not there to run it.

All participants reported that more teacher support and help would enhance their involvement in ECA. For Alex, she found value in the collaborative piece of having other teachers involved with her: “you also support each other in that role and that’s really huge because you can challenge yourselves to be better. You look at things differently, so that the program can alter, change as needed”. Teachers also appreciated having an extra body in the room to allow for more one on one feedback time for the student in the activity, or even to take
on that supervisory role should they have to leave early due to family demands as was the case for Roxanne who needed to get home to drive her daughter to soccer practice.

Despite the common desire of those already involved in ECA, other teachers often reported preferring to stay away from getting into ECA since it was perceived that many of them did not want to stay after school or participate in lunchtime activities. One participant stated that other teachers were quick to refuse ECA involvement because “because it was too much and they knew it”. Aside from the concern of putting in the extra time outside instructional hours, it has been perceived by some of the participants that there is lack of value in their respective ECA.

As a physical education teacher, Alex immediately felt that some colleagues in the department saw her wellness initiative as ‘fluff’. When asked about her passion behind health and wellness, after describing her passion she highlighted the following:

There were moments along the way where, you know, maybe people don't see that as important as you, or don’t prioritize the same way, so you start to doubt your beliefs and who you are and the impact you’re having as a teacher.

It is evident here that the value from her colleagues is something of importance to her in how she chooses to take on initiatives.

For Maya, she perceived her colleagues lack of value to ECA initiatives from a political viewpoint:

To be honest with you there are some teachers who are childish, and who see your enthusiasm in a negative way or want to shut down your flame, so there is a lot of that, there’s a lot of that, there’s a lot of politics.

In addition, Maya discussed that she perceived that certain teachers even resented the fact that she was so involved in ECA since they would often have to use their preparation time to do an
on-call coverage for her class when she had to be away for an activity. Therefore not only was it difficult to get teacher on board with support them in their ECA’s but it was also beginning to potentially create some uneasy tension between those who were involved and those who wanted to remain completely out of it.

These findings regarding teacher relationships around ECA were divergent from the literature. In McDonald’s (2013) study, he found that more interactions between teachers would be built via ECA and those relationships and mutual obligations towards one another would foster and increase their level of respect for one another. Alex reported that even among teachers involved in ECAs, many of the activities and department were very ‘siloed’ from one another. Moreover, Samantha went on to highlight that certain ECA’s took on more or hierarchical priority in her school due to the nature of the activity:

I actually have to beg to do shows here, it’s a big academic school, there is a lot of academic pressure so the weight and the pressure is definitely on the debate and young business club and so I actually have to wrangle to do the shows because they often don't want people to rehearse after school.

Even among the same department there were some divisions due to lack of initiative and lack of ‘team effort’.

Nevertheless, participants reported that when the initial teacher needed to step away from the activity, a need still remained for that teacher to get help from others. It also mattered to participants that someone be competent and willing enough to eventually be able to take over the extracurricular activity so that it may continue to run. Roxanne, for example came into the dilemma of having to still need to send out emails, and preparation tasks for one the committees that her vice principal took on once she had decided to step away from after about 19 years of
involvement. Samantha reported concern with having any teacher ‘qualified’ with drama taking over her productions without actually having had theater experience.

So through the participants’ reports, it is seen that tension still remained in that involved teachers were concerned that their ECA would no longer continue to run when having to step down from their roles for different reasons. In the meantime, said teachers would benefit from having extra help from their colleagues not only to be an extra body and mind within the ECA but also with the hope of being able to trust that their potential future successors will gain the experience and knowledge required to take over their activity.

4.5 “I Loved Being Part of a Unit, that Sense of Belonging, Belonging to a School, Being Involved in Someway in These Children’s Lives”: Increased Sense of School Community, Sense of Belonging and Job Satisfaction Created Through ECA Environments

Despite the aforementioned barriers, teachers perceive ECA as significant for building a positive school community and report that they play a major role in job satisfaction for teachers involved due to the student relationships and connections that are created through ECA.

A positive school community for the participants was one where teachers reported the shared joy of being invested in ECA with their students. Roxanne described this sense of investment as important because, “if they see that you’re involved in things, they think you’re invest in the school, and they feel like you’re invested in them”. In addition to the passion and appreciation it created in the students, it was evident that for her, her investment was as deep as feeling like she was “embedded in concrete walls” of the school. Alongside the increased sense of school community came also a greater sense of belonging in the school. Alex described her feeling of belonging as such:
There is nothing better than walking down the hall: “hey Miss [Alex].” “Hey Miss [Alex],” and you get the text, you get the email, and it’s always just a lift, it’s a spirit lift, you know you’ve connected and that’s my thing.

Similarly, Maya and Roxanne found their sense of belonging within the numerous clothing pieces that read “coach”, and they mentioned they really felt the school spirit and pride when they got to wear their sweaters or jackets. For all the participants, having a place in the halls among the students, wearing the labeled attire and being known was a powerful product of their involvement in ECA.

Teachers report that with this much involvement and love for the school shown through teachers participation in ECA, students began to have a greater sense of respect for the teachers who devoted their time into their programs. This sense of respect and level of connection bled into the classroom and into the hallways which manifested into a greater and more positive school community for both the teachers and the students. This finding was also reported in McDonald’s (2013) study on perceived benefits for teachers involved in ECA, where they become better and more well rounded classroom teachers and gain insights on their students’ motivation to learn.

Moreover, in his study through surveying teacher he also showed that teachers could know their students more personally and gave them an opportunity to relate to students in a different type of environment. Maya explained that she has achieved this via extracurricular involvement:

If you have 30 kids in a class, you can do the best you can, but it’s in those extracurriculars, you really start to know them well and they start to understand you more, that classroom experience becomes better because of that, you know it’s really so vital.
Thus, ECA, alongside building better school community and greater sense of belonging for the teacher also became a place where deeper and meaningful relationship with students reportedly began to form.

When asked about the main reasons for their continued involvement in ECA and how it related to job satisfaction, the most common and strongest consensus among all participants was around building student relationships and deeper connections. Alex synthesized this thought when I asked about how I should begin getting involved in ECA as a new teacher:

So, build those relationships, get involved, even if it’s in a kind of an assistant role at the beginning, really kind of connect with the kids outside, because you also kind of build their trust faster, they see you in a different way a little bit more quickly and overall you’ll just enjoy your time that much more.

Thus, she shows that even a little bit of involvement can go a long way with creating a sense of connectedness with the students and how that hen can play into increased satisfaction in the job through ECA.

Along the same lines, Roxanne alluded to “getting to know students on a deeper level” when participating in ECA. Maya and Alex both shared stories where students had gotten to a place of such trust around them that certain students were able to be vulnerable with them and share their most personal struggles. The example for Maya said the following when asked why these connections were so important:

One student in my [theater club] was writing a play and I was trying to break it down and talk about what the play was really about and it came out that she was a lesbian and she came out to me, and [I] discovered that that’s what the play was about, but never told anybody it, thought about it, and so I was sort of her conduit for that, and she has that
connection with me because she feels like she can tell me these things, and help her through her coming out. So the connections you make with your students are crazy. Maya’s choice of words, like “conduit” and such sentiments as: “[the student] feels like she can tell me these things” shows that this environment outside of the classroom, where the teacher acts as a mentor, can create a space for students who would never open up to anyone to trust and share these unexplored emotions and feelings with their teachers. Alex shared a similar experience when one of her trans students asked if they could do an independent physical education credit since they had spent time in ECA and classroom together in the year before their transition. Since these students knew their coaches or club facilitators outside the classroom, in roles where no grades are assigned, these teachers believe the students were more comfortable approaching them as trusted and compassionate individuals.

Despite the participants having reported being tired, not having enough time for personal factors, having to manage school and ECA, dealing with ‘a ton of’ reference letters, all of it was regarded as worthwhile when they were able to create relationships with their students that lasted beyond the classroom and even past their high school years. Roxanne described a sense of satisfaction when explaining her 19 years of involvement with the student activity council. This satisfaction came with knowing that students were having fun beyond the classroom and would be able to carry their experiences in their years post-secondary. Samantha also shared that she enjoyed giving “students [the] opportunity to pursue passion outside of class subject.” Thus, student growth and lifelong learning skills was satisfying and worthy enough for these teachers to continue to their give time to their students in ECA. In a study of burnout and job satisfaction among high school journalism advisers, Reinardy, Maksl, & Filak (2009) found similar consensus among teachers. This research is aligned with my findings as their study found that
despite high levels of stress, job satisfaction for teachers might still exist due to a sense of fulfillment when working closely with students during ECA.

Ultimately, all four participants were clear in their conviction that involvement in ECA was well worth the exhaustion and sacrifice. They were consistent in expressing that these out-of-classroom experiences not only foster personal connections with students, but also create space for teachers to take on an advisory role outside their teachable subject and contribute to a positive cohesive school community. As a result of these extensions beyond the classroom instructor role, these four teachers found that involvement in ECA increased their fulfillment and facilitated their continuing growth as educators and individuals.

4.6 Conclusion

In sum, my participants collectively told a story of the experiences of teachers who are heavily involved in extracurricular activities in a way that began with an innate passion for wanting to be involved in ECA due to their prior experiences and ambitions. They also reported concerns around a lack of time during preparation periods, lunchtime, and having to take extra work home due to all the ECA that happened at school. Moreover, certain teachers had to juggle their familial and professional responsibilities while continuing to be involved in ECA. With a young family, teachers had learned that they needed to reduce their ECA involvement in order to be able to manage their teaching responsibilities alongside their familial responsibilities. Teachers stated that they would have appreciated more support from their colleagues, but unfortunately found themselves in a bind when they perceived that their peers did not want to commit extra time, or lacked value in their activities. With that being said, the teachers involved feared that their ECA might no longer exist should they not find someone to replace them. Nevertheless, they all shared happy endings, reporting that it was all worth it due to an increased
sense of school community, sense of belonging and ultimately the relationship and connections
they had built with students that made an impact for all.

The next section will discuss the implications of my findings and how teachers that may
be reading this can benefit from the knowledge and experience that have been shared above to
enhance their profession through a potential commitment to ECA in their own schools.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

The chapter will cover key findings and their significance to Ontario secondary school teachers and the broader stakeholders who may be involved within the context of extracurricular activities (ECA) in the school. Broad and narrow implications will be discussed to help highlight and expand on the findings. Recommendations to teachers and different stakeholders will follow as well as areas of further research regarding aspects of teacher involvements in ECA. Finally, this chapter will close with concluding comments.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and Their Significance

Five key themes emerged from the data that helped answer the central research question regarding the experiences of Ontario secondary school teachers who are heavily involved in ECA. It was evident that the experiences that teachers had regarding ECA involvement had an impact both intrinsically and interpersonally as we discussed how it affected the teachers’ own lives and those around them, such as their families, colleagues and students.

The most personal finding concerning teachers was their initial reasons for involvement; describing their passions in sport, previous experiences with ECA and personal desires for growth and ambitions. It was these reasons that catapulted their desires to get involved in ECA. Secondly, when exploring how teachers’ involvement reportedly affected their teaching responsibilities and time management during the school day, it was shown that teachers report most of their preparation and lunchtime periods as compromised by ECA. This caused them to reportedly have to manage all their other work outside and around school day hours. The latter became its own and third finding, which described how teachers had to proceed to manage that extra time needed with their family and other teaching responsibilities while balancing the heavy
load of ECA. The teachers had often done aforementioned by taking their marking home, leaving earlier from ECA and by preparing dinners the nights before.

The interpersonal reasons influencing teachers’ involvement in ECA included the perceived and reported need for support from other colleagues and how said colleagues valued involvement of ECA as a whole. Having an extra hand at a practice, or a replacement teacher when those involved in ECA were away for a game, for example, was very much desired from those who had to be replaced. However, that brought concern for those outside the world of ECA to question the cost of their own involvement in terms of extra time and energy it would have required. Nevertheless, teachers reported that the most significant aspect of being involved in ECA was the sense of community and belonging in the school. The relationships that developed reportedly impacted both the students and teachers involved, making it all worth it for the teachers in the end.

This sort of narrative regarding heavily involved teachers in ECA may help shed some light as to why and how ECA has become such an important part of students’ secondary schooling experience, but more importantly it reveals the perspective of the ones responsible for making ECA possible in the first place. The purpose of this study was to highlight and share teachers’ experience of ECA in school and how it affects them, a view that is seldom seen in the literature, especially when compared to the studies pertaining to students.

5.2 Implications

This following portion of the chapter will look at the broad and narrow implications of how teachers’ perceptions of, experiences with, and involvement in ECA found in this study may affect the educational community and my professional identity and practice respectively.
5.2.1 Broad implications: The educational community

When examining what broad implications the findings of this study have surfaced, it is evident that three main stakeholders come into question: students, teachers (both the ones involved in ECA and others) and administration. When looking at the theme regarding teachers’ reasons for getting involved in ECA, we have seen that these teachers reportedly bring a significant sense of knowledge, experience, and passion to their activities. Thus, this may create a more meaningful and significant experience for the students engaging in the ECA. Moreover, it may allow for students to learn, appreciate, and value their teachers in a deeper and more personal sense in a context outside of the classroom. This was in fact a key piece in the findings regarding teacher-student relationships that gets fostered during ECA. Another implication with regards to the students that could stem from that relationship with teachers is that students may be more likely to get called out and/or given extra attention in class. For example, a teacher who may know a student only through ECA can easily communicate to their colleagues who teach the student about their personality should they deem it helpful for their learning. Alternatively, the classroom teacher is able to communicate to the student’s ECA teacher how they are doing in class in order to help determine if their extracurricular participation is helping or hindering their academic success. This type of two-way communication regarding the students between the classroom and their time in ECA can also go beyond their academic profile and extend into their interpersonal relationships with teachers.

The idea of communication leads me to discuss the implications involving teachers all around: teachers involved in ECA, teachers who may want nothing to do with it, and teachers who are perhaps keen on getting involved but may be held back due to a variety of factors. For the teachers that are involved in ECA, it was pretty straightforward that their involvement may
have been a key component of their job satisfaction due to the positive and increased sense of connectedness, community, and belonging to the school, particularly because of their interactions with the students. However, we also see that these teachers are reportedly reaching out for more help and support from their colleagues, some of whom may want nothing to do with ECA. This may create some underlying animosity between the latter types of teachers due to having to cover classes for ECA-involved teachers, for example. Nevertheless, seeking support may become a bridge or an opening for those other teachers who are interested in getting involved in ECA but who have been hesitant. Getting a taste and a feel for their participation by giving a helping hand to the lead teacher may be enough to show them that despite whatever drawbacks they may have to not getting involved in ECA could perhaps be mitigated by the benefits of their participation, even if it is means starting with taking on one activity or being an assistant. Consequently, a teacher’s request for ECA support may bring about two different responses from other teachers: firstly, one that may create a greater sense of community and partnership between teachers, where those who are involved are happily extending their passions to others. Or secondly, one that may create more resentment and begrudging attitudes from teachers who get roped in unwillingly to give up their time to cover the ECA-involved teachers when they have to be absent.

Lastly, the administration may have a significant role in deciding what kinds of ECA, if any, get to run. This may be due to the ‘vision’ or mission the principal may have for the school, one where, for example, the principal may reject or be reluctant to support a drama play because it has no ‘real’ relevance or impact to the school’s means of achieving the highest academic excellence, versus a debate club, which may be perceived as more academically enriching. Nonetheless, there may be some schools where the administration plays a very little role in
which ECAs get to run, so long as there is someone to lead it. Thus, there may be a significant advantage when both the teachers’ visions and that of the administration are in harmony and can be fully supported by the leaders of the school.

5.2.2 Narrow implications: Professional identity and practice

This study has helped uncover and affirm certain beliefs and practices I envisioned as a new teacher who wants to and likely will be heavily involved in ECA. Based on the strong and unanimous responses from the participants of this study regarding the importance of building and fostering student relationships, I will certainly look to intentionally value and work on my relationships with the students participating in ECA. Moreover, I believe that it would be just as important to go further and reach out to the students who are not involved in ECA and inquire into what activities they may be interested in, in order to accommodate their needs. All students want to have a voice, and this may be a means for them to be heard. Moreover, it would be interesting and valued to be able to co-create/co-lead ECA with students who may share the same passion as me, in order to further help them develop their leadership skills and confidence. This notion of collaboration could also be valuable with other teachers. This kind of collaboration and communication may allow for both parties to grow and learn from one another’s strengths and weaknesses.

On a different note, the student relationships developed through ECA could potentially be enhanced by also involving the parents. I intend to make it my duty to share with students’ parents what we are doing in the ECA, why it matters, and why is it valuable for their students to be involved in ECA.

Other personal implications for me as a new teacher involved in ECA is that I must be willing to openly share and believe in what I am involved in with those in the school community.
For many who are heavily involved, being so may seem like it is part of the job, even if it is voluntary. As a future teacher, I believe that a positive school community and involvement is so crucial to the job and to job satisfaction. With that being said, a concern that may arise in my time at school would be the dynamics between myself and teachers and/or administration that may not be on board with my heavy involvement in ECA. This may be due to the perceived lack of value of ECA, as mentioned by some of the participants of the study, or simply a lack of interest. Thus, it will be interesting to learn to navigate around this sort of school community.

Another narrow implication involves the value of being a more well-rounded and well-versed teacher in more than just a subject matter or two. For example, learning to coach or being able to lead open and thoughtful dialogue in multifaith club would make me open to a broad spectrum of students, instead of just the same group of athletes. One must be able to add to a school’s culture, experience, and life outside of the four walls of the classroom.

Lastly, an implication worth more thought is the one regarding equity in ECA. Are all students being given a fair chance to make a sports team, for example, or to join a strong debate team because they are interested in the idea but have no experience? Are we creating a space for those who want to be competitive or elite and a space for those who just want to play for fun or experience a new sport or activity? Have we created these sorts of ECA? What is holding us back? Answering these questions in my school context will allow me to take future steps in creating a more equitable space for all students.

5.3 Recommendations

The above implications revolved a lot around teachers’ relationships with students, colleagues, and administration. Therefore, one of the recommendations I would like to pose based on the findings above to the schools and the faculty team within is to increase intentional
communication and meetings around the purpose and action plans for ECA in the school. Ideally, it would include all of the staff, including those that may be uninterested, just so that they are able to hear and learn about the activities and be kept informed. Moreover, administration should ensure clear and explicit expectations, policies, and/or requirements they may have for teachers to run their ECA. If there was to be a case of disagreement between a teacher and the administration in terms of the decision to have an extracurricular activity, teachers should be given a right to appeal and present a case as why they believe it should run.

I would also like to see parents of students who are also heavily involved in ECA support their supervising teachers by also providing extra help when and if possible (such as tournament days, debate trips, etc.), or by giving positive and descriptive feedback about the effect of ECA they perceive on their students due to the teachers impact. A token of appreciation may go a long way for teachers who often give up a lot of their personal time and energy to support the growth of the students outside of the classroom.

5.4 Areas for Future Research

I initially took on this study to explore the teachers’ perspective and experiences regarding ECA and the ways that their heavy involvement reportedly affects them in their daily teaching practice and personal lives. Moreover, it was a fresh topic in my mind not only for my own desire to partake in ECA but also due to the heavy media buzz around teachers’ union strikes and the cuts made to many secondary and elementary school extracurricular programs. It is often used as a bargaining chip for teacher unions when trying to come to agreements, yet, we never hear about the implications and impact it poses on the students and teachers. Unions will be quick to use a teacher’s involvement in ECA to ‘protect’ their teachers’ unpaid time, yet some of my findings have shown that a lot of job satisfaction comes from that form of interaction with
the students. With that being said, further research could be done on teachers’ perspectives on work-to-rule motions that affect ECA involvement and its effect on them, the students, and the school atmosphere as a whole. Do they feel like they get a break? Will they miss their involvement in ECA? Do they try and fill that void in a different way in their classrooms? Also, what are the current regulations or policies set by schools, or school board for ECA regarding teacher involvement? Answers to these questions will ideally be able to create a more holistic political picture as to why ECA are to be valued in schools by teachers.

In addition, I would like to see more studies such as this one to broaden the sample size and range of teachers who are heavily involved in ECA. Much research is done on the impact of ECA for students, with regards to academic success, social relationships, and sense of school connectedness. The same should continue to be explored for teachers with regards to job satisfaction, stress levels, workloads, etc. Lastly, a future study could potentially examine the effects and perspective of teachers on ECA should they ever become a mandatory part of a teaching contract. Some already consider it in their heart a natural part of their teaching duties, while some others enjoy their 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. day.

5.5 Concluding Comments

This study has allowed me to explore the area of ECA, which is related to (and in my opinion a part of) teaching in a way that allows me to see and learn what teachers today have to say about their involvement outside of the classroom. It has affirmed some of my hopes, it has brought up different and new questions, and it has made even more excited to take a step into the world beyond the classroom. A place where students and teachers are connected in a deeper way over a common passion, and where students’ successes, creations and imagination can be celebrated without marks, grades or academic stress. I am hoping to share my passions not only
with my students, but also with my colleagues. I want to be able to tap into their interests, collaborate, and work together in a place where we seldom see each other and are confined to our own classrooms or department offices for the majority of the day. Extracurricular activities may very well be just as rich and rewarding for the teacher as it is for the students.
References


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Appendix A: Consent Form

Date: TBD

Dear ________________________________,

My name is Jessy Khalife and I am a student in the Master of Teaching (MT) program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on the experiences of teachers heavily involved in extracurricular activities. I am interested in interviewing teachers who are extremely active in extracurricular activities alongside their full time teaching responsibilities. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one roughly 60-75 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper and informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded.

The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jessy Khalife
**Consent Form**

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Jessy Khalife and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ________________________________

Name: (printed) ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Hello, my name is Jessy Khalife, and I am a Teacher Candidate in the Master of Teaching program out of OISE from the University of Toronto. Thank you for participating in my research study. I am here to explore the experiences of teachers who are heavily involved in extracurricular/co-curricular activities. I am looking forward to hearing about your experiences as an involved teacher in your school, as well as your perceptions about your role within ECA and how they effect you in your teaching practice. I am hoping that these insights will inform my own teaching practice and ideas of what it is like to be a full time teacher heavily involved in activities outside of the classroom. In our next hour or so together, I will be asking you 21 questions divided into five sections beginning with your background information, Teacher responsibilities and workload, followed by your reasons behind the degree of involvement, supports and barriers and lastly job satisfaction and balance.

Please know that you may choose not to answer any question, and can remove yourself from participation at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin? Please sign and return the consent form as I prepare the recording device.

Please state your name for the beginning of the recording.

Section 1- Background Information

1. How many years have you been teaching in Ontario?

2. What are you teachable subjects?

   a. How would you describe the workload demand of those subjects?
3. Please describe your area(s) of passion or interest outside of school i.e. Sports, theater, music, or other hobbies.
   a. Do you bring those passions with you in your school environment?
      i. (if yes) How are they manifested (e.g., in extracurricular activities)?

Section 2- Teacher responsibilities/workload

4. Please walk me through your typical workday as a teacher.
   a. How do you spend your preparation time? Lunch break?
   b. Do you spend a lot of time in school after your work day is over? If so, what often keeps you on site?

5. How do you manage your time in relation to marking, lesson preparation, extra help for students, etc? I’m not asking about extracurriculars here.
   a. Can you estimate how many hours per day (or week) that you allot for the above?
   b. Would you say that your involvement in extracurricular activities takes away from those times? Why/not?

6. What extracurricular activities are you/where you involved in?
   a. Are they/where they seasonal? If so, what is/was their timeline?

7. How many hours a week do you spend being involved in extracurricular activities?
   a. How many hours do you (did you) spend planning and preparing for those activities?

8. Can you tell me about your role and responsibilities as the teacher involved in one of your extracurricular activities?
   a. how much planning or preparation did you put into it?
   b. How much commitment do you feel is on you in this role?
c. If you were to be absent, is your position easily fillable by other teachers?

9. How would you describe the difference in your role and responsibilities between different activities such as Coaching vs. student council etc.

Section 3- Reasons behind degree of involvement

10. Please describe the main reason why you chose to be involved in extracurricular activities.
   a. Do you feel that those reason or reasons are ever questioned or changed once you are in the midst of it all?
   b. How important is that reason for you? How have you come to make it so important? Previous experience, your student experience?

11. To what extent do you believe your involvement in extracurricular activities affects your teaching practice?
   a. Prompts: Relationship/rapport with students?
   b. Do you believe it has helped you form better relationships with other teachers?
   c. Prompts: Time management?
   d. Do you think this effect is positive or negative? Why?

12. To what extent do external factors, such as family and other-out-of-school commitments affect in your decisions regarding involvement in extracurricular activities?

13. To what extent do you feel an obligation or pressure to be involved in extracurricular activity?
   a. To who/what would you attribute that pressure, if at all? (Administration? Better hiring prospects?)

Section 4- Supports and Barriers
14. What supports do you believe could best enhance your experiences as a teacher involved in extracurricular activities?
   

15. If applicable, what barriers hold you back from being more involved in extracurricular activities?

16. How do you think your experiences would change if extracurricular activities became formalized as part of your employment?
   
a. Would this be a good thing, in your opinion?

Section 5- Job Satisfaction/Balance

17. To what extent does your involvement in extracurricular activities increase or decrease your job satisfaction as a teacher?

18. To what extent does your involvement in extracurricular effect your sense of belonging and connectedness to the school as a whole?

19. What would you highlight as benefits to being involved in extracurricular activities?
   
a. Personal benefits?
   
b. Teaching benefits?

20. What would you highlight as drawbacks to being heavily involved in extracurricular activities?
   

21. What recommendations do you have for a beginning teacher to achieve a healthy balance between teaching responsibilities, extracurricular responsibilities and external responsibilities?
   
a. Do believe you achieve that?
**Turn off tape recorder**

Thank you for your time, input, and honesty! Your experiences will be very valuable to my research. Do you have any final questions for me?