There are many different reasons why students choose to make excuses or ask for extensions. Family matters, increased workload, mental health issues, and many other reasons all lead to students needing to ask for an extension or excused absence. How the students act on that matter is different. Just because a student needs an extension or excused absences, doesn’t mean they’re always going to ask for one. Key factors such as course policies, relationship with the professor of the class, and the overall attitude of the professor all impact how students decide whether or not they are going to ask for an extension on a project or assignment.

**Literature Review**

There are many different reasons why students make excuses in the college classroom. Alabas and Albas (1993) found that students are more likely to ask for an excuse during the middle of the semester rather than the beginning or end of the semester because of the research. We also know that students are more likely to make excuses when in contact with teaching assistants rather than professors. Another thing that we know about student excuses because of Barnar (2010) is that students with disabilities are much more likely to make excuses because they don’t feel welcome in class. The fourth major thing that we know about student excuses is that teaching style can impact how students feel about a professor (Brann and Edwards 2005). Caron (1992) finds that a majority of students feel bad after asking for or making an excuse. The major thing that is missing from past research about student excuses is how students decide whether or not they are going to ask professors for an excuse.

**Research Question**

How do students decide whether or not to ask for an extension on a project or assignment?

**Data and Methods**

This project is part of a larger interview study in which interviewees described what it was like to ask for extensions and excused absences. We asked them a variety of open-ended questions about a time a student made this request, how they decided to make the request, and a time they wanted to request but did not. Interviews lasted from 10 to 30 minutes.

The full project contained 69 interviews and took place in the Fall of 2020 in two sociology research methods courses. This data for this study focused on 20 transcripts interviews. Interviewees had to meet the following criteria:

- Over 18 years of age
- Currently enrolled in a university or college

Data was analyzed using grounded theory (Charmaz 2006). Themes were identified and initial coding focused on 3 issues: the relationship between the student and professor, the overall attitude of the professor, and the course policies of the class. Memos were used to reflect on and refine coding categories.

**Analysis**

There were three major patterns that I found while analyzing all of the interviews that we had conducted, edited, and coded. First, students asked for an extension from a professor that they found to be friendly and were reluctant to ask when the professor seemed unfriendly. Secondly, students asked for an extension from a professor that they had a relationship with in one way or another. Finally, students asked for an extension if the professor had less strict course policies and avoided asking if the professor had strict or harsher course policies.

**Conclusion**

Students decide whether or not to ask for extension based on how they view the professor and the class that they need the extension in. More relaxed professors that can be described as nice and without strict policies are more likely to get asked for extensions by students. Harsh professors with strict class policies and little to no relationships with their students will be less likely to be asked for extensions.

**References**

Available upon request.

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