DESIGN METHODS PROJECT PHASE I

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EMPATHY AND MIND MAP

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PERSONA

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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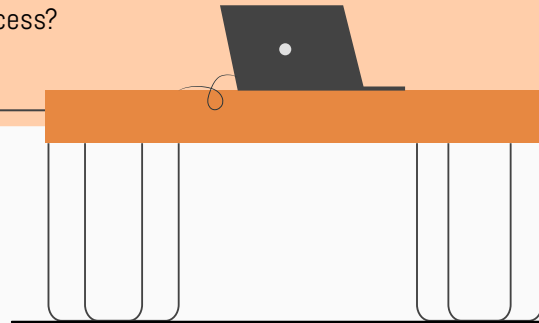LIMITATIONS & CONCERNS

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REFLECTIONS

01.
RESEARCH QUESTION

RESEARCH QUESTION

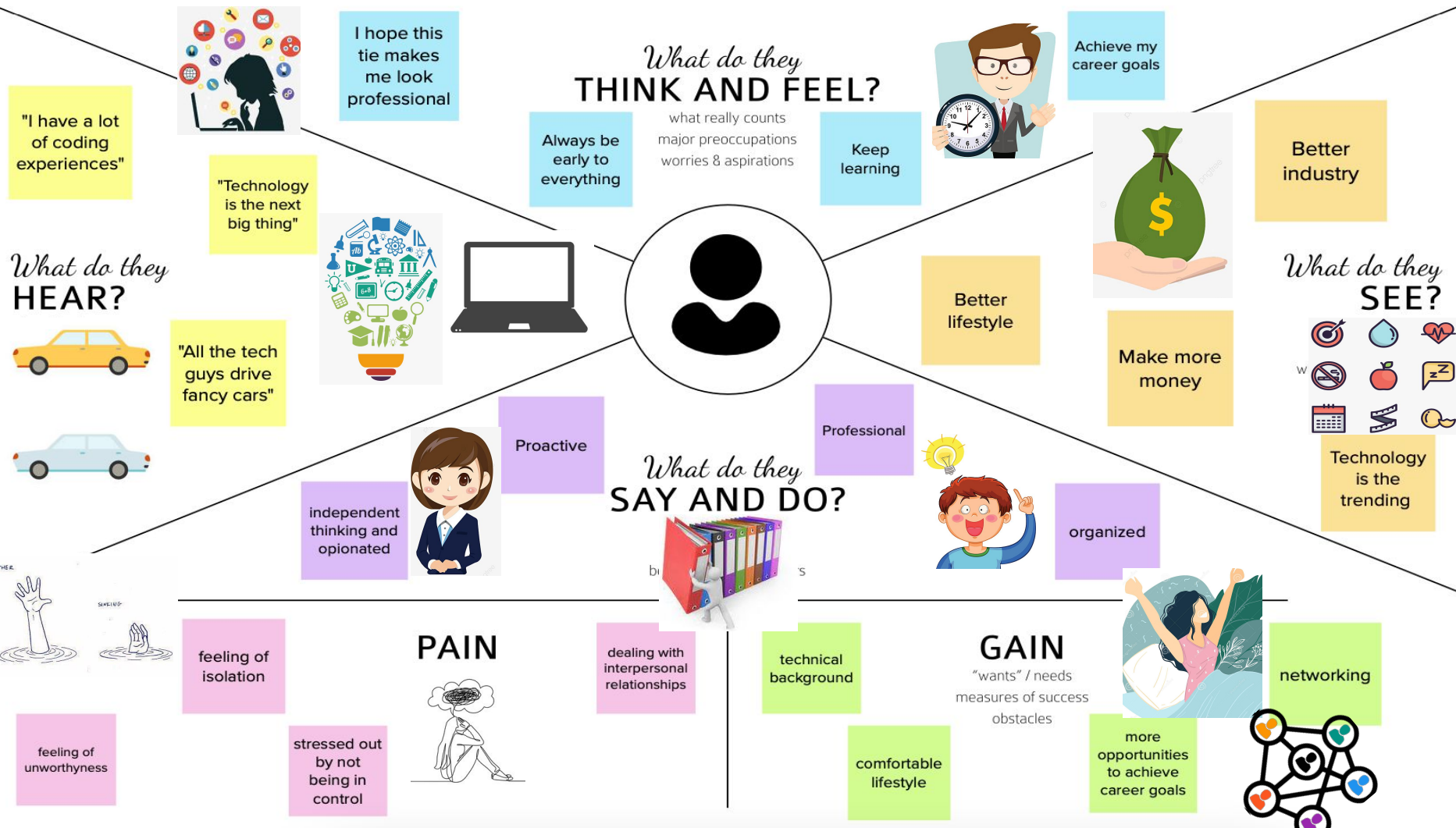What motivates a student to take a technical graduate program given past experiences?
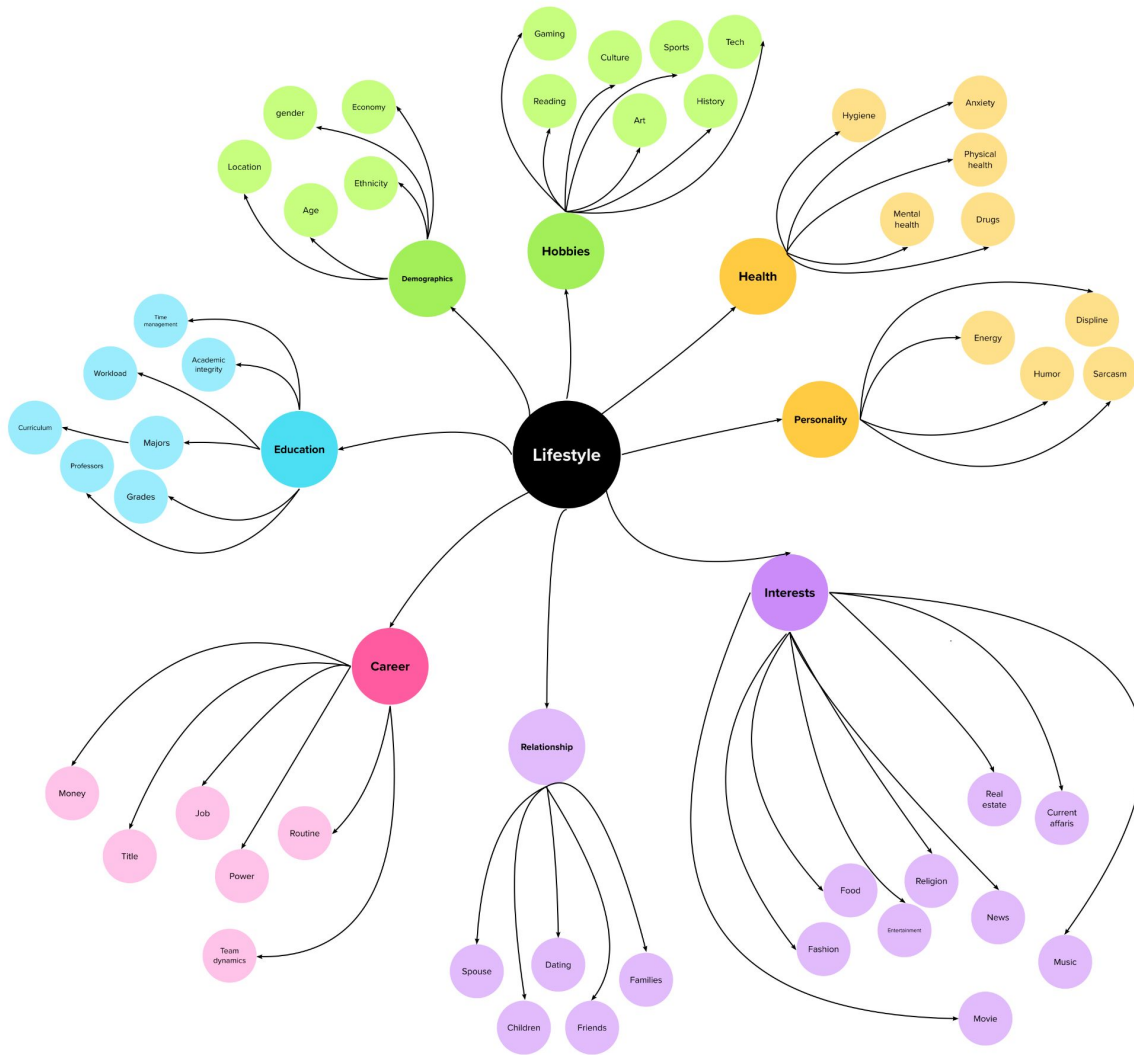
    a.   How does it change/affect his/her lifestyle?

    b.   How much does the financial aspect of the decision impact a student

    c.   How do the future prospects affect the decision-making process?

02.
EMPATHY & MIND MAP

"I have a lot of coding experiences"

I hope this tie makes me look professional

"Technology is the next big thing"

What do they THINK AND FEEL?

what really counts
major preoccupations
worries & aspirations

Always be early to everything

Keep learning

Achieve my career goals

Better industry

Better lifestyle

Make more money

What do they HEAR?

"All the tech guys drive fancy cars"

What do they SEE?

Technology is the trending

Proactive

Professional

What do they SAY AND DO?

independent thinking and opionated

organized

PAIN

feeling of isolation

dealing with interpersonal relationships

feeling of unworthyness

stressed out by not being in control

GAIN

"wants" / needs
measures of success
obstacles

technical background

comfortable lifestyle

more opportunities to achieve career goals

networking

MIND MAP OF TARGETED STUDENT LIFESTYLE

03.
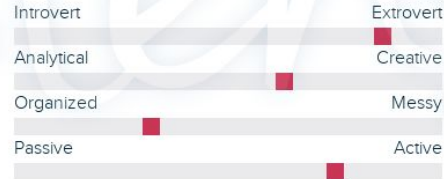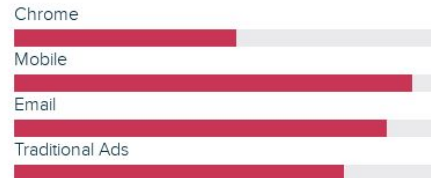# PERSONA

Bio

As their life evolved and changed this person seeks out a more technical skill set. Whether through foresight or actual experience for the need of technical skills this individual wants to be prepared. Through discipline and perseverance technical masters school is the best option moving forward. Now this persona must navigate graduate school with a non-technical background to achieve their goals.

Personality

Introvert — Extrovert

Analytical — Creative

Organized — Messy

Passive — Active

Preferred Channels

Chrome

Mobile

Email

Traditional Ads

"I'm looking for career prospects that will let me grow as an individual"

Age: 20-30 years
Gender: Male/Female
Work: MS program graduate student
Family: Single or Married
Location: Austin, TX
Character: Obedient student

Organized   Practical

Motivated   Hardworking

Energetic   Goal Oriented

Goals

- To have a balanced lifestyle
- To work at a company where I can enhance my technical skills
- To be an ideal student and never stop learning

Motivation

Salary

Work life balance

Growth Opportunity

To set an example

PREPARATION FOR GAINING INSIGHT

a. What are some attributes that could be unique to this persona?
   i. Compared to their peers, members of this persona are more determined to complete their work above and beyond the requirements
   ii. Members of this persona are more career-oriented and focused on their education
b. What assumptions were made that need to be questioned?
   i. The scope of their previous educational background is limited
   ii. They are self-aware of their surroundings and conscious of the decisions they make
   iii. They follow their schedules religiously.
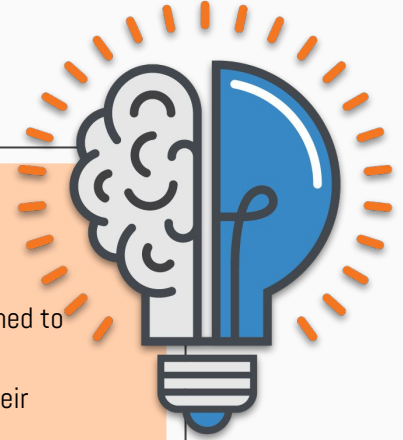
04.
RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY

OBSERVATION

I. Identify participants and learn their schedule

II. Develop questions and techniques of interests

III. Observe and take notes

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

I. Find out what motivated them to enter the tech program

II. Conduct interview in a comfortable setting like cafe, collaboration center

III. Start with structured interview then transition to unstructured interview

PHOTOJOURNAL

I. Instruct the participant to take photos under different contexts

II. Record participant's storytelling

OBSERVATION

I. What does their life look like? What's their usual schedule of one day?
   a. What do they say, hear, and perceive? How do these factors shape their personalities or habits?
   b. What excites them? What hinders their performance?

II. What does the unique aspect about them outside their daily routine?
   a. Do these lifestyles contribute to their way of thinking?

III. How do they respond to stressful situations?
   a. How does it affect their mental health?

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

I. Which factors influenced their decision to pursue tech program
    a. Why do they want to transition?
    b. What are their expectations from this program?
    c. Who helped in their decision?
II. What kind of hurdle did they face or facing?
    a. What kind of problems faced during transition?
    b. Are they facing difficulties or have concerns about the MS program?
III. Asking detailed questions about education and lifestyle
    a. What is their previous education background?
    b. How does MS program affect their lifestyle? Study-life balance
    c. Gaining insight about career objectives and expected lifestyle

PHOTO JOURNAL

We will give the research participants a list of prompts to click pictures. These pictures are from their living or working space. They have a specific time limit to click these pictures. Once the participant submits the photos, we can use them to derive information. This way, we have a whole new perspective to look at things.

- Goal is to capture all the details of their day to day dynamics.
- We could ask them to click a picture of their study or work table to get a clear picture of their organizing skills. We could also ask for pictures of their cupboards and cabinets.
- Go through these pictures carefully and come up with a list of questions we want to ask during the personal interview.

Our major research participants will be graduate students at UT who have no previous technical background but choose to pursue a MSITM or MSBA degree. We will further consider graduate students in other MS programs and qualified research candidates outside the UT.

Research Participants Size: 15 people

20%

80%
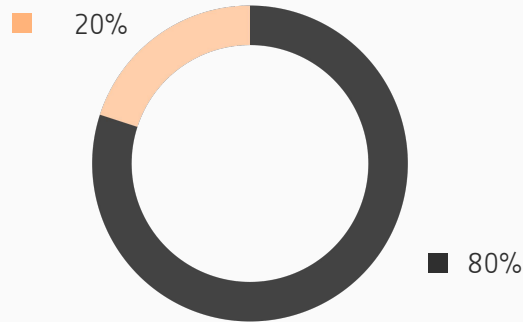
■ MS STUDENTS AT UT   ■ OTHER POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

We plan to find participants through word of mouth and online communication methods.
- This method begins to establish rapport and trust between participants and researchers before research begins
- This approach also allows us more control in selection of participants and who we reach considering our networks may be much larger than just MSITM
- This approach also allows us to begin understanding the willingness and needs of participants within this persona

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Our research will be structured to focus first on understanding each individual participant and delve deeper into what they themselves need. We do this to better formulate a clearer picture of the persona we are trying to empathize with. From there we plan to use to our research methodologies to go even further and pick out the similarities and differences between individual participants. This will aid in developing a greater sense of the needs this persona requires in order to succeed and thrive in their context. We would also like to explore how this persona develops, maintains grounded, and motivates oneself.

Our team will begin with personal interviews with each individual participant to better understand where this persona shines and develops. Moreover, this approach will start us off with a much deeper empathic understanding of participants so that we may see the rest of the research methodologies with clearer eyes on what drives this persona. From there we plan to ask participants to photo journal their lives at incremental moments because as they say a photo is worth a 1000 words. From these we plan to highlight similarities between participants. We plan to also enact observation as a key tool towards understanding the persona and their needs. Through this approach we hope to make our own assessments of the persona without personal bias playing any part. We choose this last because we would like to develop trust between participants before we begin our observations.

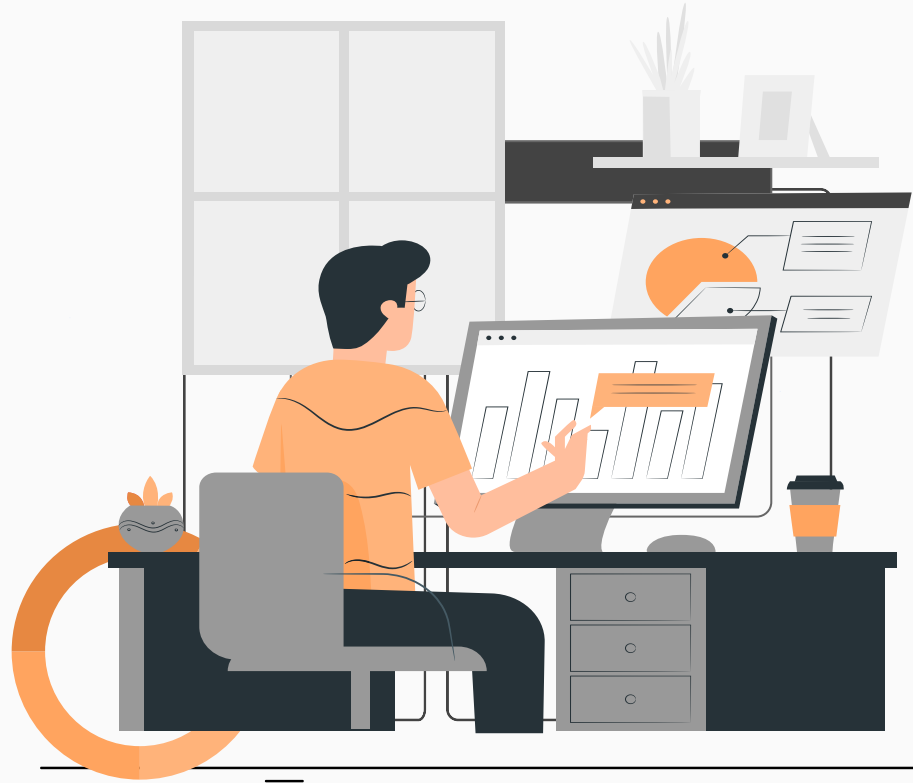| JULY 26	Schedule interviews with research participants
JULY 27	Send out prompts to 2 participants for photo-journaling
JULY 28 - JULY 30	Spend time with few participants and OBSERVE
JULY 31-AUG 1	Conduct personal interviews with structured questions
AUG 2	Collate photo-journals and gain insights

05.
LIMITATIONS & CONCERNS

A

Our target research participants are students initially from a non-technical background but currently pursuing a tech-based graduate program. We are concentrated on MSITM and MSBA students. So the data collected may be skewed towards them

B

Our research tries to explore the lifestyle aspect of these participants. It may be difficult to capture every part of their personal life. Hence, giving us fewer insights.

C

There is a possibility of non-quantifiable factors that affect their decision-making, which may not be apparent from just the looks of it. Factors like these could be hard to capture and could be out of the scope of this research

I. Considering the research methodology, we may not have much time and efforts to observe each participant in a short period of research time; participants might have privacy concerns of being observed or shooting photo

II. There might not be so many potential candidates whose background and experiences match with our research context

III. It may be hard to coordinate and set up interviewing time with research participants who are not at UT

06.
REFLECTIONS
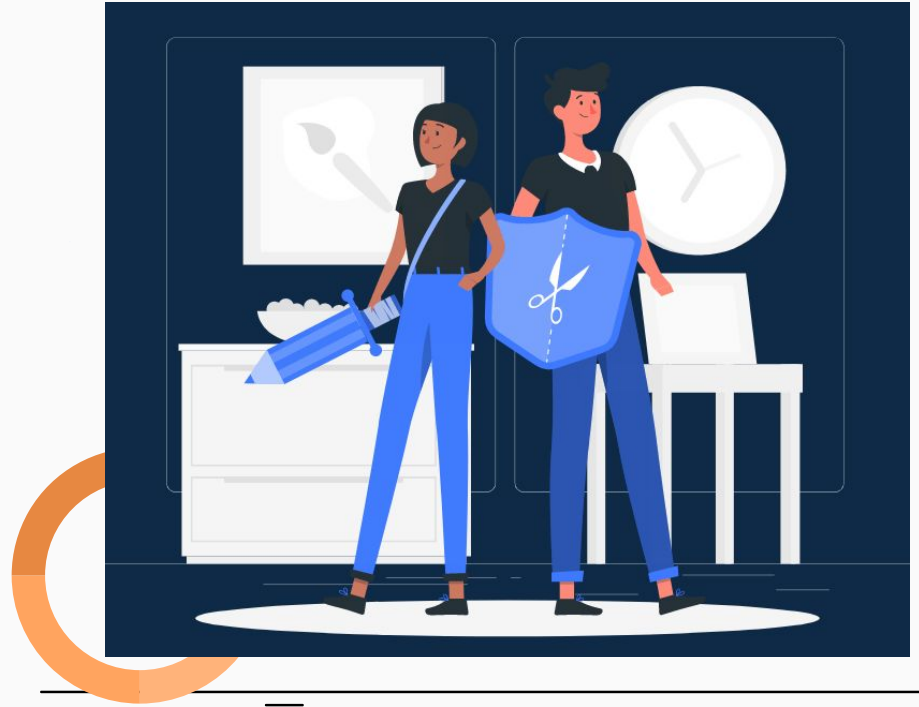
- We would like to understand why members of this persona chose to engage in a technical master program. What experiences, people, and/or places influenced members of this persona to pursue a technical master program.
- We would like to understand what pain points are common among members of this persona and what alleviated them.
- We are heavily dependent on participant sticking with photo journaling throughout the research process
- We also hope that observation will result in greater diversity of actions instead of more repetitive common actions.

CITATION

- Observation image - https://www.marketing91.com/observation-method/
- Interview - https://www.mbaknol.com/research-methodology/interview-method-of-data-collection-in-research/
- Photo journal - https://uxinsight.org/photojournal/
- All the other pictures are from the Google images