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Review

# The role of time management in enhancing student performance

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## ABSTRACT

Effective time management is crucial for academic success. This review delves into the importance of time management, its impact on student performance and strategies to improve time management skills. Research indicates that effective time management can reduce stress, enhance academic performance and improve overall well-being. However, many students struggle with time management due to factors such as procrastination, lack of organization and competing demands. To improve time management, it is essential to prioritize tasks, create a structured schedule, minimize distractions and practice self-discipline. Additionally, utilizing time management techniques like the Pomodoro technique and the Eisenhower Matrix can significantly enhance productivity. By mastering time management skills, students can optimize their learning experience, reduce stress and achieve their academic goals.

**Keywords:** Time management; academic performance; students; strategies

## INTRODUCTION

Increased competition has led to a growing emphasis on efficient time management. The concept of time management gained prominence in the mid-20th century as a strategy to assist managers in optimizing their use of available time (Orlikowsky and Yates 2002, Mercanlioglu 2010). The concept of time management comes from Frederick Winslow Taylor for early analysis of motion and time studies of workers with purpose to reduce unproductive work tasks and time wasting. The ability to manage one's time well can actually influence his overall performance and accomplishments. Students today frequently lament their lack of time to fulfil all of the assignments given to them. Additionally, students who lack the ability to manage their time effectively may be hindered by the flexibility and freedom of a university atmosphere (Razali et al 2018). Every student needs to have the ability to manage his time well. Many university students gripe about running out of time when asked to complete a task; becoming angry when they are unable to finish it in time. On the other hand, other people effortlessly manage their time so that they may meet up with friends and do their projects.

Time management skills have been shown to have a positive impact on student learning and student outcomes (Kearns and Gardiner 2007, Kelly 2002, McKenzie and Gow 2004). Effective time management is essential for university students, as it can significantly enhance their academic performance and grades. However, many students face challenges such as task aversion and uncertainty due to a lack of organizational skills. These factors can lead to procrastination, as students struggle to prioritize tasks, become easily distracted and ultimately delay completing their work (Miqdadi et al 2014). Inadequate time management skills can lead to difficulties in completing assignments, preparing for assessments and ultimately achieving academic success. This can negatively impact student retention rates. Furthermore, poor time management can be a significant source of stress and anxiety, placing strain on university support services such as counseling, medical centers and personal tutoring.

In recent decades, organizational literature has increasingly recognized the significance of time as a critical factor. Global competition and the growing demand for rapid product and service delivery have heightened the importance of the temporal dimension of work (Orlikowsky and Yates 2002). Garhammer (2002) observed an acceleration of the pace of life, characterized by faster actions, reduced time expenditure (eg eating faster, sleeping less) and multi-tasking (eg making phone calls during meals). Additionally, research has explored the perception of time in organizational settings (Palmer and Schoorman 1999) and the experience of time pressure among employees (Jackson and Martin 1996, Major et al 2002, Teuchmann et al 1999).

Adams and Blair (2019) observed that effective time management skills were linked to improved academic performance and reduced anxiety levels in students. However, many students struggled to reconcile their academic responsibilities with their daily lives. The study found that students' perceived control over time was a significant predictor of their cumulative grade point average. Interestingly, there were no notable differences in time management behaviours based on gender, age, entry qualifications or duration of programme enrolment.

Cannon (1996) reported that time cannot be managed in the same way that other resources can: human, physical, capital and information. Time is a resource that must be used the instant it is received. Time cannot be saved, it cannot be got more of it and it cannot be replaced. Wasted time is time gone forever. Time must be used at the same rate of 60 seconds per minute, 60 minutes per hour, 24 hours a day and so on. Although philosophers and physicists may disagree, for most academics time is a finite resource. One cannot manage time. It can be done that learn to manage ourselves and other resources in relation to time.

One potential coping strategy frequently offered by university counselling services is time management. It was found that the time management behaviour scale consisted of four relatively independent factors; the most predictive was perceived control of time. Students who perceived control of their time reported significantly greater evaluations of their performance, greater work and life satisfaction, less role ambiguity, less role overload and fewer job-induced and somatic tensions (Macan et al 1990).

Wilson and Gillies (2005) evaluated the role of social support and self-efficacy on the level of stress associated with the transition from high school to university. The results showed that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of stress associated with the transition to university in that higher levels of self-efficacy were associated with lower levels of stress while social support was a non-significant predictor of stress.

Miqdadi et al (2014) found a correlation between time management and academic performance in male engineering students at the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi, with successful students demonstrating effective time management skills. To enhance time management, students should prioritize assignments, organize materials, seek advice, minimize distractions and combat procrastination with short study bursts. Professors can contribute by providing semester plans, offering time management advice, encouraging further learning and setting a positive example through punctuality, organization and timely grading.

Razali et al (2018) investigated the relationship between time management and academic achievement among students. The study identified three key time management factors: planning, attitudes and time-wasting behaviours. While gender and race had no significant impact, year of study and faculty affiliation were associated with differences in time management practices. Notably, all time management factors were positively correlated with academic achievement, with time planning emerging as the most significant predictor.

Brophy (1986) asserted that effective teaching practices, including clear goal setting, efficient time management, appropriate pacing and individualized instruction, significantly impact student achievement. Teachers play a crucial role in optimizing learning time by providing clear information, asking thought-provoking questions and offering constructive feedback. These instructional behaviours can be tailored to specific student needs, such as grade level, socio-economic status, ability and emotional state. Ultimately, enhancing student outcomes requires a focus on developing and implementing effective teaching strategies.

Alhasani et al (2022) studied the impact of COVID-19 on students' mental health and time management. They found that the pandemic led to increased stress, disease-related anxiety and consequence-related anxiety among students. A preference for organization was linked to better perceived time control, which, in turn, reduced stress and anxiety. Female students and graduate students reported higher levels of stress and anxiety. To address these issues, the researchers proposed using persuasive strategies to promote organizational behaviours and develop technological interventions to enhance time control and alleviate mental health concerns.

Time, a priceless resource, continues to pass by without coming back. The secret to achieving success in life is effectively managing this resource that everyone possesses equally and paying sufficient emphasis to plan (Arumugam et al 2021).

The best way to manage time is to prioritize the task (Chaudhari 2022). In other words, deciding which task is most important and should be completed first. For example, in a choice between reading for an essay due in four weeks or preparing a seminar presentation in two weeks, choose to prepare the presentation. To prioritize successfully one must develop weekly and long-term time management plans. Many students find long, medium and short-term planning useful for organizing their study as effectively as possible. Planning ahead saves time, worry and energy.

Walck-Shannon et al (2024) investigated whether an online intervention could help students reduce distractions during independent study. The intervention involved reflection and planning exercises. Students were asked to set goals, visualize success, identify obstacles and create plans to overcome them. While students who aimed to reduce distractions directly didn't always follow through, those who planned for specific distraction obstacles were more successful. The study suggested that using mental contrasting with implementation intentions could be a helpful strategy for students to improve their study habits.

**Key skills in time management**

Effective time management involves several key skills:

**Goal setting:** Clearly define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) goals to provide direction and motivation.

**Prioritization:** Identify the most important tasks and allocate time accordingly. Focus on high-priority tasks first to maximize productivity.

**Planning and scheduling:** Create a structured plan, using tools like calendars or time management apps, to allocate specific time slots for different tasks. Break down large tasks into smaller sub-tasks.

**Time estimation:** Accurately assess the time required to complete each task to avoid underestimating or overestimating.

**Time blocking:** Dedicate specific time blocks for different activities, such as studying, working or leisure. This helps maintain focus and reduce distractions.

**Task management:** Use techniques like the Eisenhower Matrix to prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance.

**Time tracking:** Monitor time spent on various activities to identify time-wasting habits and optimize productivity.

**Flexibility and adaptability:** Be prepared to adjust plans as unexpected events arise.

**Stress management:** Develop effective stress management techniques to maintain focus and productivity.

**Self-discipline:** Stay committed to the plan and avoid procrastination.

By mastering these skills, individuals can significantly improve their time management abilities and achieve their goals more efficiently.

The research suggests that when creating a schedule, consider the following factors for optimal time management:

**Peak performance times:** Identify the time of day when the brain functions most efficiently. Schedule demanding tasks during these peak hours.

**Task allocation:** Determine the appropriate time allocation for each task or sub-task. Break down large tasks into smaller, manageable chunks.

**Conducive environment:** Create a focused study environment that minimizes distractions. Choose a quiet space where to concentrate.

**Scheduled breaks:** Incorporate regular short breaks into the schedule to rest and recharge. This can improve focus and productivity.

**Scheduling tools:** Utilize effective scheduling tools like calendars, planners or time management apps to organize the tasks and track progress.

By carefully considering these factors, one can optimize his time management and achieve his goals efficiently.

**Tips for taking control of schedule**

**Time blocking:** Dedicate specific time blocks for work, writing, research and other important tasks.

**Prioritize peak performance:** Schedule demanding or complex tasks during the most productive hours.

**Minimize interruptions:** Protect the focused work time by minimizing distractions and avoiding unnecessary interruptions.

**Self-care:** Allocate time for activities like socializing, exercise and relaxation to maintain overall well-being.

Time management plays a major role in a student's achievement along with his academic performance.

Following points and strategies are needed to improve time management skills in students.

**Procrastination:** The act of delaying tasks is a common habit that can negatively impact productivity. Many students struggle with procrastination, often prioritizing entertainment over academic work. The availability of various distractions, such as video games, social media and streaming services, can further exacerbate this issue. Ultimately, it is up to the individual to develop self-discipline and prioritize tasks to achieve academic success. To combat procrastination, students can implement time management techniques like the Pomodoro technique, set specific goals and create a conducive study environment.

**Mastering time management skills**

University students must develop effective time management skills to succeed academically. One strategy is to prioritize tasks based on deadlines and importance, using a calendar or planner to visualize the semester's workload.

When creating new study resources, it's essential to consider the following:

**Content:** Provide practical advice proven to be effective.

**Provision:** Identify gaps in current resources and develop new materials to address those needs.

**Demand:** Understand the specific needs and preferences of students.

**Access:** Ensure resources are easily accessible and available in various formats to maximize their impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a rapid shift from traditional face-to-face learning to online education, placing greater responsibility on students to manage their learning independently. The increased reliance on virtual platforms for synchronous learning has also added to academic pressures. This heightened stress can negatively impact students' mental, physical, and emotional well-being (Huang and Zhao 2019, Alhasani et al 2022).

In the field of education, understanding how students manage their time is crucial. Students often juggle a diverse range of academic tasks, including readings, seminars, projects and individual and group work. This variety of activities necessitates effective time management skills to balance academic demands with personal commitments and successfully achieve learning objectives (Lay and Schulenburg 1993, Marchena et al 2009, Romero and Barberà 2011, Hellsten 2012, Barberà et al 2015).

**Effective time management strategies**

Effective time management involves a combination of strategies and skills. Here are some proven techniques:

**Core strategies**

**Prioritize tasks:** Identify the most important tasks and allocate time accordingly.

**Time blocking:** Divide the day into specific time blocks for different activities.

**Minimize distractions:** Create a focused work environment and limit interruptions.

**Practice self-discipline:** Stay committed to the schedule and avoid procrastination.

**Take regular breaks:** Short breaks can improve focus and productivity.

**Review and adjust:** Regularly assess the schedule and make necessary adjustments.

**Additional tips**

**Set SMART goals:** Ensure that goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

**Use time management tools:** Utilize calendars, planners or digital tools to organize the tasks and deadlines.

**Delegate tasks:** If possible, delegate tasks to others to free up own time.

**Learn to say no:** Avoid overcommitting and prioritize most important tasks.

**Take care of yourself:** Prioritize sleep, nutrition and exercise to maintain energy levels and focus.

Remember, the key to effective time management is finding a system that works. Experiment with different techniques and adapt them as per individual needs and preferences.

## CONCLUSION

Effective time management is a crucial skill that can significantly impact academic and professional success. By understanding the principles of time management, students can improve their productivity, reduce stress and achieve their goals. Key strategies, such as prioritizing tasks, time blocking and minimizing distractions, can help students optimize their time and enhance their overall well-being.

Additionally, developing self-discipline and seeking support from peers or mentors can further contribute to effective time management. As the academic landscape continues to evolve, it is essential for students to adapt their time management strategies to meet the demands of their studies. By implementing these techniques and seeking guidance when needed, students can take control of their time and achieve their full potential.

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