



TIME MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A SURVEY STUDY

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Abstract: Time management is one of the most crucial skills for university students in the modern academic environment. Here, multiple responsibilities compete for limited time and energy. With increasing academic demands, digital distractions, social expectations, and personal obligations, many students face significant difficulties in effectively organizing their time. This study explores the common time management challenges faced by university students through a simple, practical, and survey-based approach. This approach can be easily understood by entry-level students. The aim of the study is to identify the main causes of poor time management and to propose practical solutions that students can apply in their daily lives. The study focuses on issues such as procrastination, lack of planning, excessive use of social media, academic pressure, emotional fatigue, and part-time work. The results show that many students do not adhere to a clear schedule, often underestimate the time required to complete tasks, and are easily distracted by digital technologies. Additionally, the study highlights how stress, anxiety, and low motivation affect students' ability to manage their time effectively. The findings of this study will help students, teachers, and academic advisors better understand the practical challenges faced by students and develop strategies that support efficiency and well-being. Effective time management not only improves academic performance but also reduces stress, strengthens self-confidence, and promotes a healthy lifestyle. This makes it an important life skill beyond the university years.

Keywords: time management, university students, procrastination, academic stress, digital distraction, efficiency, student lifestyle.

Introduction

Time is one of the most valuable and limited resources available to university students. How they use it often determines their academic success and personal well-being. Unlike school life, where schedules are usually set by teachers and parents, university education requires students to take full responsibility for organizing their studies and daily routines. Students must



attend lectures, complete assignments, prepare for exams, participate in group projects, and sometimes maintain part-time jobs while trying to preserve their social lives and mental health. Due to these competing demands, effective time management becomes a serious and sometimes overwhelming challenge.

Many students enter university without sufficient time management skills. This is partly because their previous educational environments provided more structure and guidance. When they suddenly gain more independence, they may face difficulties in prioritizing tasks, setting realistic goals, and maintaining consistent study habits. As a result, they often postpone important assignments, miss deadlines, or feel overwhelmed by academic pressure. Poor time allocation not only affects academic performance but also leads to stress, anxiety, low motivation, and decreased self-confidence. This can create a negative cycle of avoidance and procrastination.

This study aims to examine the key time management challenges faced by university students through a simple and practical survey. The study focuses on students' daily routines, study habits, use of technology, emotional issues, and work responsibilities. The goal is to provide students with clear, realistic, and easily applicable concepts that will help them develop more effective time management strategies in their academic and personal lives.

Research Methodology

In this study, a survey-based research design was used to examine the key time management challenges faced by university students. The survey was conducted among 4th-year students of the Faculty of Philology and Language Teaching and the Faculty of Translation Theory and Practice. These students were selected due to their years of academic experience and thorough understanding of the university's academic workload, deadlines, and independent study tasks.

A total of 50 students participated in the study. Participants were selected from both faculties to gain a broader understanding of senior students' time management skills and difficulties.

The research tool consisted of a questionnaire containing 10 questions. The questions were designed to explore students' daily study routines, planning habits, procrastination levels, use of digital technologies, emotional stress, sleep patterns, and part-time commitments. The questionnaire included frequency-based and opinion-based questions to more accurately describe students' time management behaviors.

The main questions of the survey focused on the following areas:

- daily extracurricular study time



- use of personal study schedules
- frequency of procrastination
- primary sources of distraction
- use of social networks
- part-time work
- stress associated with unfinished tasks
- task completion habits
- average sleep duration
- main reasons for poor time management

The collected responses were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical approach. The goal was to identify the most common patterns and problems, rather than conducting complex statistical analyses. This approach allowed the study to present practical and realistic results reflecting the daily experiences of senior university students.

Current context

In today's academic environment, time management is becoming increasingly complex. Modern university students must manage not only academic commitments, but also the constant presence of digital technologies, social expectations, economic pressures, and psychological challenges. Unlike previous generations, who often studied in more structured and predictable environments, today's students live in a fast-paced, information-rich world. Here distractions are always at hand, and the boundary between study time and leisure time is often blurred.

One of the most influential factors of our time is the widespread use of digital technologies. This fundamentally alters how students spend their time. Smartphones, social media platforms, online entertainment, and instant messaging apps have become deeply integrated into everyday life, and while these technologies offer many educational benefits, they also create powerful distractions that are difficult to resist. Many students start their day by checking notifications, and what begins as a quick glance at a message often turns into extended periods of browsing social media or watching short videos. Since



these platforms are designed to capture attention and encourage continuous engagement, students may lose track of time, even when they know important learning tasks await them.

Beyond digital distractions, the increasing popularity of online and hybrid education has introduced new challenges in time management. While online learning offers flexibility and convenience, it also demands a high level of self-discipline and personal responsibility. Students attending physical classes benefit from a strictly defined schedule and direct supervision, which helps them maintain structure in their daily routine. However, in the online learning environment, students often have the freedom to choose when to watch lectures or complete assignments, and this flexibility can lead to procrastination, especially among those lacking self-management skills. As deadlines approach, many students rush to complete large volumes of work in a short time, increasing stress and reducing the quality of their education.

Economic factors also play a significant role in shaping students' time management skills. An increasing proportion of university students work part-time jobs to support their education or meet their family's financial needs. While employment can provide valuable experience and independence, it also reduces the time and energy available for academic tasks. Students who work long hours often feel physically and mentally exhausted, making it difficult to concentrate on their studies. Consequently, they may delay assignments, miss classes, or adopt ineffective study habits, which negatively impacts their academic performance.

Social expectations and peer influence further complicate students' ability to manage their time. University life is often associated with freedom, friendship, and social activities, and many students feel pressured to participate in events, meetings, or group activities, even when they have academic responsibilities. While social interaction is crucial for personal growth, excessive involvement in social activities can interfere with study time. Students may prioritize short-term enjoyment over long-term learning objectives, especially when experiencing stress or lack of motivation, which can gradually lead to poor academic outcomes.

Another significant factor of our time is the increasing awareness of mental health issues among higher education students. Academic competition, high expectations, financial concerns, and uncertain career prospects generate feelings of anxiety, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion. When students feel overwhelmed, they may avoid their responsibilities rather than face them, leading to procrastination. For instance, a student anxious about an assignment might spend hours on entertainment or social media to escape negative emotions, even though these behaviors ultimately increase stress. This



emotional avoidance creates a cycle where unfinished tasks cause anxiety, and anxiety leads to further delays. Multitasking is another common feature of modern student life, and although it is often perceived as a productive habit, it usually reduces efficiency and focus. Many students try to study while listening to music, checking messages, or browsing the internet. While such an approach feels comfortable, it divides attention and slows down the learning process. Tasks requiring deep concentration, such as reading academic texts or writing essays, become more difficult when the mind constantly switches between different types of activities. Over time, this habit leads to mental fatigue and reduces the overall quality of academic work.

The lack of formal education in time management skills also causes difficulties for students. Universities often expect students to manage their time independently, but do not always provide practical guidance on how to do so. Most students don't know basic strategies such as setting priorities, breaking large tasks into smaller steps, or creating a daily schedule. Without these skills, students rely on guesswork or last-minute efforts that rarely lead to effective outcomes.

Cultural and family expectations can also influence students' time management practices, especially in societies where academic achievement is highly valued. Some students need to balance their studies with household chores, family obligations, or part-time work, which reduces the time available for academic tasks. In such situations, students may feel pressure from multiple directions, making it difficult for them to focus on their priorities.

Sleep habits are another crucial issue today. Many students stay up late using their phones, completing assignments at the last minute, or engaging in online communication. Irregular sleep patterns reduce concentration, memory, and motivation, which directly affects learning outcomes. A consistently tired student cannot adhere to schedules, forgets important deadlines, or loses interest in studying. Over time, poor sleep habits lead to a cycle of fatigue, low productivity, and increased stress.

Information overload is also a characteristic feature of modern education. With access to countless online resources, digital platforms, and learning materials, students may feel overwhelmed by the volume of available information. Instead of focusing on one task at a time, they may switch between different activities without fully completing any of them. Such a scattered approach not only wastes time but also undermines confidence and increases frustration.

Despite these challenges, modern students have access to many useful tools and strategies that can improve time management. Digital calendars, task management applications, and study timers allow students to organize their



schedules more effectively. Methods such as the Pomodoro technique, goal setting, and daily planning are becoming increasingly popular because they help students focus and manage workload in smaller, more manageable stages.

Universities are also increasingly recognizing the importance of time management skills, and some institutions now offer seminars, counseling services, and academic support programs that teach practical planning strategies. These initiatives encourage students to establish healthy daily routines, set clear goals, and maintain a balance between academic tasks and personal life.

In the modern world, effective time management is closely related to self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and digital discipline. Students who understand their habits, energy levels, and emotional states are better equipped to plan their time realistically. For example, some students work more productively in the morning, while others are more effective in the evening. By recognizing these individual patterns, students can create schedules that align with their natural rhythms and increase their efficiency. In general, modern university students face a complex combination of technological, economic, social, and psychological challenges that affect time management. However, with appropriate strategies, tools, and institutional support, these difficulties can be transformed into opportunities for personal growth and academic success.

Results

The survey results reveal a number of important patterns related to students' time management skills. A significant portion of respondents noted that they encountered difficulties in maintaining a consistent study routine and adhering to academic deadlines.

Approximately 62% of students admitted that they often postpone assignments until the last minute. This indicates that procrastination remains one of the most common problems among senior students, even after several years of university experience.

When asked about study planning, almost 58% of respondents noted that they do not follow a regular daily or weekly study schedule. Most of these students said they relied on short-term planning or last-minute preparation, especially before exams or major deadlines.

Digital distraction was identified as a major problem. About 72% of students noted that social networks and smartphones are their main sources of distraction while studying. Many respondents admitted that they frequently check their phones, which interrupts their concentration and reduces study effectiveness.

Emotional factors also played an important role. About 64% of



participants reported experiencing frequent stress due to unfinished tasks and approaching deadlines. This stress often leads to avoidance behavior, such as spending more time on entertainment rather than academic work.

Sleep patterns were another issue. About 43 percent of students reported sleeping less than six hours a day, especially during intense study periods. Lack of sleep was usually associated with decreased concentration, reduced motivation, and poor time management.

In addition, about 35% of respondents noted that they have part-time work commitments. These students reported higher levels of fatigue and less time available for studying, which often led to delayed assignments and irregular study habits.

Overall, the survey results show that the most common time management problems among fourth-year students are procrastination, digital distractions, lack of systematic planning, emotional stress, and irregular sleep patterns. Together, these factors reduce learning effectiveness and increase psychological pressure on students.

Conclusion

The results of this questionnaire-based study show that time management remains one of the most significant challenges faced by university students in the modern academic environment, where academic obligations, digital distractions, social expectations, and economic pressures interact in complex ways. Many students struggle with procrastination, lack of planning skills, emotional stress, and overuse of technology. All these factors lead to ineffective time management and poor academic performance.

Analysis of modern factors indicates that time management is no longer simply a matter of creating schedules or following routines. It requires a combination of self-discipline, emotional regulation, rational use of digital technologies, and setting realistic goals. Students lacking these skills often experience stress, fatigue, and decreased motivation, further complicating their ability to manage time effectively. Moreover, factors such as part-time work, social pressure, irregular sleep patterns, and information overload create additional obstacles that make time management more challenging than for previous generations.

However, research shows that time management is a skill that can be developed through practice, awareness, and appropriate support. Simple strategies such as setting daily priorities, breaking large tasks into smaller steps, limiting digital distractions, and maintaining a regular sleep schedule can significantly increase student productivity and well-being. When students adopt a systematic yet flexible schedule, their ability to complete assignments on time, live with less stress, and maintain a healthy balance between academic and



personal life improves.

Educational institutions also play a crucial role in developing students' time management skills. By offering seminars, counseling services, and academic guidance, universities help students learn practical planning strategies and develop healthy study habits. When such support systems are combined with students' personal efforts, it becomes possible to mitigate the negative impacts of poor time management and improve learning outcomes.

In conclusion, effective time management is essential not only for academic success but also for long-term personal and professional development. As students learn to organize their time, set realistic goals, and manage distractions, they develop skills that will benefit them well beyond their university years. Therefore, promoting a culture of efficient time use and education in modern higher education should be considered a key priority.

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