

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Medical Students' Time Management Capabilities

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ABSTRACT

Background: Time management skills increase satisfaction and balance between work and life. Additionally, managing time effectively reduces anxiety while also making achieving goals easier.

Aim: The objectives of the study were to figure out the time management skills of medical students and their relationship with socio-demographic characteristics.

Methodology: This cross-sectional study was conducted in a medical college of Faisalabad. Study duration was 4 months (October 2021 to January 2022). A total of 250 students were enrolled in a study. The inclusion criteria included medical undergraduate students. A total of 50 students were enrolled from each class of MBBS through non-probability convenient sampling technique. A questionnaire titled "Time Management Assessment Questionnaire" containing 25 items developed by Wayne State University was used. A participant who had a score ≤ 29 was deemed to have poor time management abilities. A participant had average time management abilities if their overall score ranged from 30 to 44, and they had exceptional time management skills if their overall score ranged from 45 to 50. The IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 was used for data analysis.

Results: Most of the students were found to have inadequate time management skills. Class 2nd and 1st year MBBS students were found to have more inadequate time management skills followed by 4th, 3rd and final year students. Fairly well time management skills were shown by 1/3rd of participants and excellent time management skills were shown by less than 10% of participants.

Conclusion: Over half percentage of medical students have poor time management abilities. Based on their socio-demographic characteristics, there are no differences in time management abilities among participants. Reading books and other publications on the subject, as well as attending related workshops and seminars, can help students improve their time management abilities.

Keywords: Capabilities, medical, management, students, time, community

INTRODUCTION

Time management may be described as a set of cognitive abilities that help students manage their academics and course workloads.¹ It may also be described as the method or practice of deliberately regulating the time taken on certain tasks, with the goal of increasing productivity or performance.² When fulfilling certain tasks, objectives, and goals, a variety of abilities, tools, and methods may be employed to manage time. Because students develop coping mechanisms that help them to navigate conflicting requirements, proper time organization is linked to higher academic accomplishment.³

Amongst the most precious assets is time. A certain amount of time could be devoted with interesting or boring activities, leaving different perceptions and consequences on people. People have therefore developed a variety of methods for planning ahead. Although some people have an inherent ability to manage their time, others must work hard to build these abilities.⁴ Academic stress is buffered more by time management, and bad time management has been demonstrated to be a determinant of distress.⁵ Academics and time management, in particular, were frequently highlighted as sources of stress. The goal of time management is to increase efficiency and effectiveness of work done in a restricted amount of time. Time is a finite resource for students. In order to improve a student's academic performance, they must learn to manage their time effectively.⁶

The university years serve as a training ground for the stage of taking accountability and profession. Because of this, students nowadays must master strategies for time management if they want to succeed both in their university education and in their regular living.⁷ One of the most essential variables in educational excellence is the use of personal time management abilities. It may be used by students to coordinate their time. Individuals who could really develop efficient working strategies and put time management techniques into operation offer a foundation for self-regulation of managing time and perseverance.

There is a correlation between student accomplishment and the ability to concentrate on a task for extended periods of time, with students in higher academic record needing fewer interruptions.⁸

Time management is the process of planning, arranging, prioritizing, and allocating time in order to increase the efficacy and profitability of one's job. Appropriate strategies of time management aid in the sensible co-ordination of time spent on various tasks with the goal of increasing performance and enhancing life quality.⁹ Medical students have a broad curriculum. Some of them may find it tough to balance their education and free time, which might result in anxiety. For medical students, this emphasizes the significance of time management skills. There appears to be a gap in research on capabilities of medical students regarding time management, especially in Faisalabad city as there was no study conducted on this important aspect of medical students. As a result, the purpose of this study was to evaluate medical students' time management abilities. This study will help in finding out the reasons for poor time management among medical students which will be of help to others as well to improve their time management skills in order to manage their studies and other matters professionally.

METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study was carried out in a medical institute of Faisalabad. Study duration was 4 months (October 2021 to January 2022). A total of 250 students were enrolled in a study. Undergraduate medical students who provided consent and met the inclusion criteria were included; those who did not provide consent or who were not medical students were omitted. A total of 50 students were enrolled from each class of MBBS through non-probability convenient sampling technique. About 10 min were required to complete the questionnaire. A questionnaire titled "Time Management Assessment Questionnaire" containing 25 items developed by Wayne State University was used.¹⁰ It consisted of two sections; demographic data and questions related to time management. It has three options for each question as Always, Sometimes, Never with scoring as 2, 1, 0 respectively. The results of all 25 questions were summed for each individual. A

Received on 22-07-2022

Accepted on 12-11-2022

participant might score a maximum of 50 points for the 25 managing time items. A participant who had a mark of ≤ 29 was deemed to have poor time management abilities. A participant had average time management abilities if their overall score ranged from 30 to 44, and they had exceptional time management skills if their overall score ranged from 45 to 50. The IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 was used to evaluate the data. Percentages and frequencies were computed. To examine the relationship between medical students' sociodemographic traits and time management abilities, chi-square test of significance was used.

RESULTS

Total sample size was 250. Most of the participants age group was more than 21 years i.e. 140(56%) while less than 21 years comprise 110 (44%). Study participants include 135(54%) females and 115 (46%) males. There were 50(20%) students from each class of MBBS. Mostly study participants were day scholars i.e. 134(53.6%) while number of students living in hostel were 116(46.4%). Most of the students were from urban areas i.e. 194(77.6%) while from rural areas were 56(22.4%). Table 1 shows the participant responses to each question of time management assessment questionnaire. Fig. 1 shows percentage of students with inadequate, fairly well and excellent time management skills. Inadequate time management skills were found in more than half of study participants. Association between socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and their time managing capabilities is presented in Table 2. There was no significant difference of time management skills between younger and older age group of 21 years, male and female participants, students of MBBS classes, living in hostels and homes, and urban vs rural students.

Fig. 1: Time management skills of students

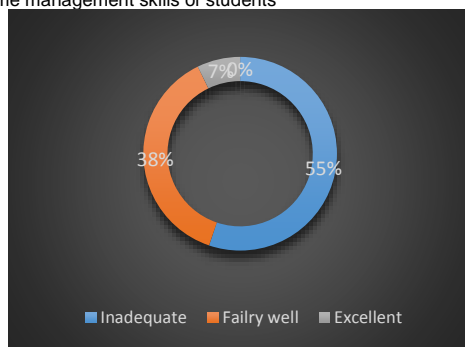


Table 1: Time management assessment questionnaire responses by students

Questions	Participants responses (n = 250)			Mean±SD.	Mode
	Always (2)	Sometimes (1)	Never (0)		
I do things in a priority sequence	112	115	23	1.36±0.64	1
During the day, I complete all of my tasks	68	151	31	1.15±0.61	1
I always complete assignments on time	131	90	29	1.41±0.69	2
I believe I make good use of my time	63	125	62	1.00±0.71	1
I don't procrastinate when it comes to difficult or unpleasant jobs	67	127	56	1.04±0.70	1
I make a conscious effort to schedule time for planning	102	126	22	1.32±0.63	1
I devote adequate time to planning	73	132	45	1.11±0.68	1
I make a "to do" list on a daily or weekly basis	64	119	67	0.99±0.72	1
I organize my to-do list by importance rather than urgency	95	116	39	1.22±0.69	1
I can fulfil timelines without having to hustle at the last hour	93	116	41	1.21±0.7	1
I remain updated with my reading and research tasks	98	116	36	1.25±0.69	1
I avoid being distracted from high-priority activities by avoiding	93	127	30	1.25±0.66	1

Interruptions					
I try to avoid wasting time on things that aren't important	68	135	47	1.08±0.67	1
I devote sufficient time to work-related tasks	86	133	31	1.22±0.65	1
I plan time each week to chill and get out with friends	105	119	26	1.32±0.65	1
I have a weekly plan on which I keep track of established obligations like working schedule	71	125	54	1.07±0.7	1
I strive to do the most critical activities during my most enthusiastic moments of the day	123	100	27	1.38±0.67	2
I make good use of the time I spend commuting	61	134	55	1.02±0.68	1
I evaluate my efforts in connection to my objectives on a regular basis	83	136	31	1.21±0.64	1
I have stopped doing any activities or habits that were inefficient or unproductive	74	131	45	1.12±0.68	1
I filter my phone calls so that I can manage phone interruptions	55	132	63	0.97±0.68	1
I evaluate myself based on how well I do tasks rather than how much I do	103	115	32	1.28±0.68	1
My behaviors are mostly decided by myself, rather than by circumstances or other people's agendas	117	103	30	1.35±0.68	2
I am quite clear on what I want to do in the upcoming time frame	115	101	34	1.32±0.7	2
I am happy with how I spend my time	80	119	51	1.12±0.72	1

Table 2: Association between socio-demographic characteristics and time management skills

Socio-demographic characteristics		Participants' time management skills (n=250)			Total	p-value
		Inadequate	Fairly well	Excellent		
Age group	Above 21 years	60	42	8	110	0.98
	Below 21 years	78	52	10	140	
Gender	Male	60	44	11	115	0.36
	Female	78	50	07	135	
Academic year	1 st year	30	15	05	50	0.44
	2 nd year	32	15	03	50	
	3 rd year	25	23	02	50	
	4 th year	29	17	04	50	
	5 th year	22	24	04	50	
Residence	Urban	106	73	15	194	0.82
	Rural	32	21	03	56	
Residence during study	Day scholar	73	50	11	134	0.80
	Hostel	65	44	07	116	

DISCUSSION

Most of the students were found to have inadequate time management skills. Class 2nd and 1st year MBBS students were found to have more inadequate time management skills followed by 4th, 3rd and final year students. Fairly well time management skills were shown by around 1/3rd of participants and excellent time management skills were shown by less than 10% of participants.

A study done by Iqbal Amin Khan et al showed that the moderate or fairly well time management skills were shown by medical students.¹¹ Similarly, a study done by Arezoo Mohamadkhani Ghiasvand et al showed that mostly students exhibited moderate time management skills.¹² A research done by Turgut Karakose et al also showed moderate level of time management by participants.¹³ A study done by Hatice Kaya et al also showed that time management skills were at moderate level.¹⁴ This is in contrast to our study where mostly students showed inadequate skills. A study done by Asmidar Alias et al showed that for their academic duties, the majority of participants require time management skills.¹⁵ Similarly, a research done by Najnin Khanam et al showed that more than half of study participants showed moderate to low level of time management.¹⁶ This is similar to our study where mostly students need to manage their skills in order to manage time efficiently. Another study done by Richelle V. Adamset al depicted similar results as in our study.¹⁷ In contrast to results of our study, a research done by Sahebe Yousefi et al showed significant association between age, gender, educational level with time management skills.¹⁸

The use of a validated time management questionnaire created by Wayne State University to examine the association between participants' sociodemographic traits and their ability to manage their time, as well as the study's substantial sample size (n=250), are two of its strengths. However, given the cross-sectional nature of this study, it is crucial to avoid extrapolating its findings. Because the questionnaire was self-administered, reporting bias can be conceivable.

CONCLUSION

According to this research, well over half percentage of medical students have poor time management abilities. Based on their socio-demographic characteristics, there are no differences in time management abilities among participants. Reading books and other publications on the subject, as well as attending related workshops and seminars, can help students improve their time management abilities. Teachers should act as mentor to promote students' engagement in such exercises. Students should be provided time management therapy sessions by academic counsellors and psychologists. To determine how effective time management affects several measures of student academic performance over long run, prospective research may be done.

Contribution of authors: MD: Study design, data analysis, final drafting, final approval, TI: Study design and concept, questionnaire design, BASA: Introduction, study design and data collection, LK: Data analysis, AM: Study design and concept, Final drafting, MI: Study design and concept, Final drafting

Acknowledgements: None

Conflict of interest: None

Funding disclosure: None

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