

Exploring Time Management Skills of Prospective Teachers

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Abstract

Effective time management is very important for prospective teachers, as it enables them to balance their academic and personal responsibilities within their lives while maintaining overall well-being. At the university level, all prospective teachers are prepared for multitasking in a variety of situations, like their professional lives. Many prospective teachers are facing problems managing their time. Struggling with time management leads to stress, missed deadlines, and reduced productivity. The main objectives of this study were to assess the existing level of time management skills of prospective teachers and to identify the areas where they face challenges in managing their time. The study followed a quantitative descriptive research design. This study assessed the existing level of management skills among prospective teachers using the Time Management Survey. Pilot testing was conducted, and Cronbach's alpha value was 0.822. No significant difference was found between BS and B.Ed. students in time management skills ($t = 1.34$, $p = 0.18$), although BS students had a slightly higher mean score. However, within the B.Ed. Program, 5th-semester students showed better time management skills than 1st-semester students, indicating improvement with academic progression. Based on these findings, the study recommends there is a need for specialized training programs to enhance time management skills among prospective teachers. By fostering self-regulation, structured reflection, and targeted time management training, these practices can help prospective teachers develop sustainable time management habits. Ultimately, these interventions can improve academic performance, productivity, and overall effectiveness.

Keywords: Time management, prospective teachers, reflective practices, self-regulation

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Introduction

Time management is an extensive challenge across all disciplines, but it holds essential importance in the field of teacher education. Unlike other academic programs, teachers are not only students, but they are also future facilitators, future teachers, role models, and classroom managers. The success of their teaching is based on their time management skills, their planning, their execution of their plan, balancing workload, lesson planning with effective teaching methods, managing class time, meeting administrative responsibilities, and reflecting on their teaching (Zimmerman, 2002; Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, & Phillips, 1990). The process of planning and organizing lies in the process of time management, in which dividing the time between specific activities improves productivity.

Time management is an essential skill for prospective teachers, as it plays an important role in their academic performance, stress management, and future professional success. However, many teacher trainees face challenges such as poor planning, procrastination, and difficulty in prioritizing tasks, which negatively impact their learning and preparation for the teaching profession. This lack of skill can negatively affect their teaching practices, professional preparation, and self-confidence. If time management issues are not addressed during teacher education, these future educators may carry poor habits into their professional careers. Effective time use is linked to better planning, reduced burnout, and improved classroom outcomes. This problem is significant because if such habits continue into their professional careers, they may result in poor classroom management, missed deadlines, and reduced effectiveness in fulfilling their teaching responsibilities.

This study is based on the most important theory, which is related to this topic and helps improve time management through reflection. Zimmerman's self-regulated learning theory is a theory related to this topic that helps to develop time management skills in prospective teachers. The purpose of the study is to determine how well they currently manage their time. The present study aims to assess and analyze the existing time management skills of prospective teachers, focusing on their abilities in goal setting, task organizing, and managing their distractions. This study followed a quantitative descriptive research design.

Literature Review

Time management skills involve planning for goal setting, strategies, and practices to make time productive (Aeon & Aguinis, 2021). Time management helps prospective teachers to plan their time well and handle their tasks more accurately. Managing their time, it allows them to balance studies, personal life, and social activities. Good time management also

supports better learning and personal growth (Kader et al., 2020). But a good many prospective teachers lack these skills, which affects their academic studies. Time management skills can be improved through reflective practices, where prospective teachers critically assess their behaviors and reflect on their daily use of time. This helps them learn from their actions, foster personal growth, and enhance problem-solving abilities (Fook, 2022).

According to recent research (Zhiqiang Zhao et al., 2024), educational institutions can play a crucial role in enhancing the self-management skills of prospective teachers by offering training and fostering a supportive environment that encourages reflective practices. These reflective practices enable them to think critically, as all prospective teachers spend their time identifying their time wasters. According to this study, those who follow these time management techniques report feeling less stressed, more focused, and having a better work-life balance. Time management has been extensively studied in educational and professional contexts, with numerous researchers emphasizing its significance in achieving personal and academic success. According to Britton and Tesser (1991), effective time management is positively correlated with increased academic performance and reduced stress.

As Misra and McKean (2000) note, the ability to manage time effectively is essential for teachers, as poor time management can lead to burnout, decreased productivity, and negative impacts on students' learning experiences. Zimmerman (2002) argues that reflective practices can play a key role in improving time management skills. Additionally, studies have shown that goal setting is an essential aspect of time management.

Theoretical Framework

This study was supported by Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning Theory to understand the role of time management in the development of prospective teachers. Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning Theory: Understanding Self-Regulation and Its Role in Time Management.

According to this theory, students are most productive when they take control of their own learning processes. Self-regulated learners take responsibility for their behavior, which supports the development of efficient time management skills. Self-regulation helps prospective educators prioritize, plan, and organize their work, which helps them strike a balance between their personal and academic obligations. In the context of this study, time management is considered a key component of self-regulation, as it enables prospective teachers to prioritize tasks and allocate time effectively. Effective time management

requires the development of self-regulation, which is critical for success in both academic and professional contexts, as suggested by Zimmerman (2000).

Research Objective

1. To identify the existing level of time management skills of prospective teachers

Research Question

1. What is the existing level of time management skills of prospective teachers?

Methodology

The study followed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the time management skills of prospective teachers.

Population and Sampling

The population consisted of all prospective teachers enrolled in teacher education programs at a public sector university in Pakistan. A sample of 221 participants was selected through random sampling, including 108 prospective teachers from the BS program and 113 prospective teachers from the Bed program.

Instrumentation

Data were collected using the Time Management Survey by Tremayne & Kimberley (n.d.), with a Cronbach's alpha reliability score of 0.85, confirming the internal consistency of the instrument. Only those prospective teachers who agreed to participate were included, and they were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, means, and percentage) and inferential statistics (independent sample t-test). The main limitation of this study is the use of convenience sampling, which limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the selected sample from the University of Sargodha.

Findings

Findings of the study are in two parts, i.e., descriptive and inferential.

The demographic and background characteristics of the participants

Table 1

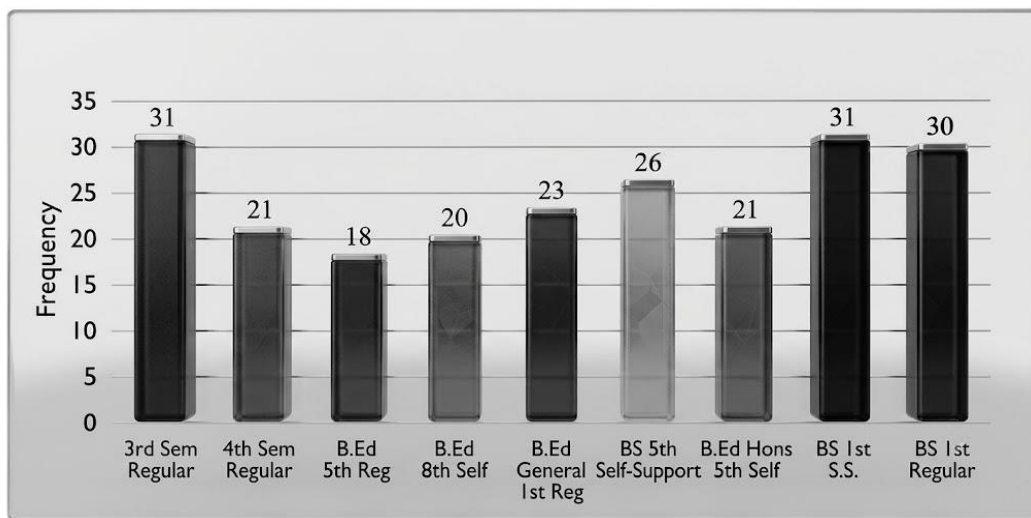
Demographic and background information of prospective teachers (N = 221)

Sr.	Variables	Categories	n	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	93	42%
		Female	128	58%
2	Program	B.Ed.	113	51%
		BS	108	49%

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of prospective teachers across two programs, B.Ed. and BS: 113 and 108 prospective teachers from BS and B.Ed., respectively. This helps to compare time management across different teachers' educational programs.

Figure 1

Distribution of prospective teachers across different classes

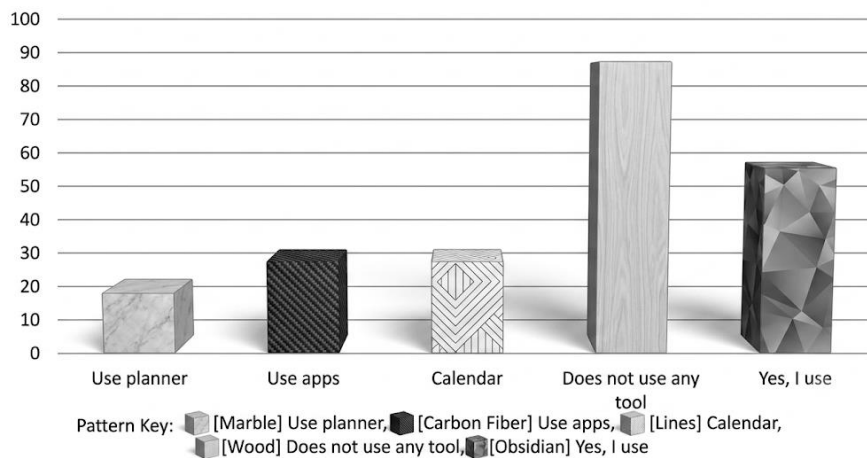


This bar graph shows the distribution of prospective teachers across 9 different classes. Each bar shows the frequency of prospective teachers who participated from each class; this breakdown helps to understand the variety and

spread of prospective teachers. Highest participation from BS first self-support, third semester regular, and BS first semester regular prospective teachers.

Figure 2

Time management tool usage



This bar graph shows useful information: whether prospective teachers use external support to manage their time or rely on habits, like apps, planners, calendars, etc. The majority of the students were not using any time management techniques.

Prospective teachers' perceptions regarding their time management skills

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Prospective Teachers' Responses on Time Management (n = 221)

No.	Description	Not at All f (%)	Rarely f (%)	Sometimes f (%)	Often f (%)	All the time f (%)	Mean	SD
1	I will wait till the last minute to do things.	55 (25%)	21(9%)	103 (47%)	30(14%)	12(5%)	2.65	1.15
2	Throughout the day, I focus on the most important tasks.	12(5%)	65(29%)	51(23%)	61(28%)	33 (15%)	3.18	1.16

3	Every week, I make time to plan for the next week.	55 (25%)	51(23%)	61(28%)	37(16%)	17(8%)	2.59	1.24
4	I mostly attend unproductive meetings.	102(46%)	35(16%)	54(24%)	21(10%)	9(4%)	2.10	1.20
5	I make time to schedule my tasks.	35(16%)	64(29%)	62(28%)	41(19%)	19(8%)	2.75	1.18
6	To determine my most important task, I use goal setting.	13(6%)	33 (15%)	63(28%)	55(25%)	56(25%)	3.50	1.20
7	I usually put off my tasks that I don't like or that seem difficult to me.	46(21%)	34 (15%)	76 (34%)	45(21%)	20(9%)	2.97	2.41
8	I routinely protect time in advance for the most important things.	23(10%)	43 (20%)	60(27%)	53(24%)	42(19%)	3.43	3.51
9	To fulfill my task, I work late at night.	38(17%)	41(19%)	64(29%)	43(19%)	35(16%)	2.98	1.31
10	I spend more time than I want trying to find things.	22(10%)	51(23%)	62(28%)	49(22%)	37(17%)	3.13	1.23
11	My day seems to be overtaken by emails.	88 (40%)	51(23%)	52(24%)	18(8%)	12(5%)	2.29	2.45
12	For each activity, I ask myself, "Is this the best use of my time right now?"	27(12%)	41(19%)	73 (33%)	51(23%)	29(13%)	3.06	1.20
13	I feel stressed because of all the things I need to do.	26(12%)	35(16%)	67(30%)	56(25%)	37(17%)	3.31	2.24
14	How often do I procrastinate/delay?	33 (15%)	68(31%)	69 (31%)	35(16%)	16(7%)	2.97	3.08
15	Interruptions continually disrupt my workday, such as email, Facebook, visitors, or telephone calls.	26(12%)	41(19%)	57(26%)	42(19%)	55 (24%)	3.27	1.34

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of prospective teachers' responses regarding their time management skills. The table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of responses across five levels (Not at All, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, and All the Time). It also includes the mean and standard deviation values to indicate the overall trend of responses. This analysis helps in identifying the existing level of time management skills among prospective teachers and highlights areas where improvement is needed. The majority of students, i.e., 47%, with a supporting mean score of 2.6516 and SD=1.15241, responded 'sometimes' to the statement, 'I will wait till the last minute to do things.' Whereas 25% of students responded 'not at all' in their responses, the majority of students, i.e., 29%, with supporting mean scores of 3.1765 and SD = 1.16408, responded rarely to the statement 'Throughout the day I focus on the most important tasks.' Whereas 5% of students responded 'not at all' in their responses, the majority of students, i.e., 28%, with supporting mean scores of 2.5928 and SD=1.24197, responded 'sometimes' to the statement 'Every week, every week, I make time to plan for the next week.' Whereas 8% of students responded to all their responses. The majority of students, i.e., 46%, with a supporting mean score of 2.0950 and SD = 1.20417, responded 'not at all' to the statement 'I mostly attend unproductive meetings.' Whereas 24% of the students responded sometimes in their responses. The majority of students, i.e., 29%, with a supporting mean score of 2.7511 and SD = 1.1818, responded rarely to the statement 'I make time to schedule my tasks.' Whereas 28% of students responded sometimes in their responses. The majority of students, i.e., 25%, with a supporting mean score of 3.5023 and SD = 1.20085, responded 'all the time' to the statement 'To determine my most important task, I use goal setting.' Whereas 28% of students responded 'sometimes' in their responses. shows that the majority of the students, i.e., 34%, with a supporting mean score of 2.9729 and SD = 2.40817, responded 'sometimes' to the statement 'I usually put off the tasks that I don't like or seem difficult to me.' Whereas 21% of students responded not at all in their responses. that the majority of students, i.e., 27%, with a supporting mean score of 3.4299 and SD = 3.5113, responded 'sometimes' to the statement 'I routinely protect time in advance for the most important things.' Whereas 24% of students responded often in their responses. Shows that the majority of students, i.e., 29%, with a supporting mean score of 2.9819 and SD = 1.30720, responded sometimes to the statement 'I work late at night or on weekends to meet deadlines.' Whereas 19% of students responded rarely and often in their responses. that the majority of students, i.e., 28%, with a supporting mean score of 3.1267 and SD = 1.22929, responded 'sometimes' to the statement 'I spend more time than I want trying to find things,' whereas 23% of students responded 'rarely' in their responses. Shows that the majority of students, i.e., 40%, with a supporting mean score of 2.2941 and SD = 2.44567, responded "not at all" to the statement "My day seems to be overtaken by emails." Whereas 12% of students responded all the time in their responses. that the majority of students, i.e., 33%, with a supporting mean score of 3.0633 and SD = 1.19680, responded "not at all" to

the statement "For each activity, I ask myself, 'Is this the best use of my time right now?'" whereas 12% of students responded "not all the time" in their responses. It shows that the majority of students, i.e., 30%, with a supporting mean score of 3.3122 and SD = 2.23755, responded 'not at all' to the statement 'I feel stressed because of all the things I need to do.' Whereas 12% of students responded "not all the time" in their responses. It shows that the majority of students, i.e., 31%, with a supporting mean score of 2.9729 and SD = 3.08356, responded 'rarely' and 'sometimes' to the statement 'How often do I procrastinate/delay?' Whereas 7% of students responded all the time in their responses. It shows that the majority of students, i.e., 26%, with a supporting mean score of 3.2670 and SD = 1.3357, responded 'not at all' to the statement 'Interruptions (email, Facebook, visitors, or telephone calls) continually disrupt my workday.' Whereas 12% of students responded "not all the time" in their responses. The descriptive analysis highlights the existing level of time management skills among prospective teachers. Overall, the findings show that the majority of respondents reported "Sometimes" across several statements, reflecting a moderate level of time management.

Table 3

Overall time management skills of prospective teachers (BS vs. B.Ed.).

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
BS	108	3.12	0.85	1.34	218	0.18
B.Ed.	113	3.05				

There is no significant difference in time management skills between BS and B.Ed students ($t = 1.34$, $p = 0.18$). BS students ($M = 3.12$) have a slightly higher mean score than B.Ed. students ($M = 3.05$), but the difference is very small.

Table 4

B.Ed. Students (1st Semester vs. 5th Semester)—Time Management Levels N=60

Time Management Skill Level	B.Ed. 1st Sem (n = 30)	B.Ed. 5th Sem (n = 30)
Effective	6(20%)	15(50%)
Moderate	5(17%)	6(20%)
Poor	19(63%)	9(30%)

Table 4 shows the majority of B.Ed. Students of the 5th semester showed stronger time management skills than the B.Ed. 1st with a higher percentage in the effective category (50% vs. 20%), which indicated that when students reach higher semesters, they can manage their tasks more easily.

Discussion

The present study aims to explore the level of time management skills of prospective teachers. The findings administered to 221 prospective teachers indicated that a significant proportion of prospective teachers lacked structured daily routines, lacked planning, lacked awareness about time wasters, and demonstrated inadequate time management skills. A majority of students (60%) demonstrated poor time management skills, showing difficulty in planning, task organization, and meeting deadlines. 15% fell into the moderate category, indicating a need for improvement in managing distractions and routines. The majority of students demonstrated common challenges, including distractions, procrastination, lack of planning, and not using time management tools, such as planners, apps, or calendars. A similar study was conducted previously by Claessens et al. (2007) that showed time management behaviors are positively linked to academic and professional success, reinforcing the practical benefits of such training for future educators. In terms of contribution to the existing literature, this study adds empirical evidence from the Pakistani teacher education context, highlighting that time management remains a significant development challenge among prospective teachers. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that inadequate time management is a common issue among university students and can negatively affect their academic and professional performance (Classens et al., 2007; Britton & Tesser, 1991). Unlike many previous studies that focus only on academic outcomes, this research specifically identifies behavioral patterns like procrastination, lack of planning, lack of time, and limited use of time management tools. Overall, this study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions within teacher education programs to strengthen self-regulation and time management skills for future professional competencies (Zimmerman, 2002).

Conclusion

The descriptive analysis presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 highlights the existing level of time management skills among prospective teachers. Overall, the findings show that the majority of respondents reported “Sometimes” across several statements, reflecting a moderate level of time management. The descriptive findings indicate that only 25% of prospective teachers demonstrated effective time management skills, particularly excelling in goal setting, prioritization, and task organization. About 15% of participants reflected moderate time management abilities, showing partial control over planning but needing improvement in managing distractions and maintaining productivity. However, a significant proportion, nearly 60% of the respondents, struggled with time management, especially in areas such as task organization, avoiding procrastination, and meeting deadlines. No significant difference was found between BS and B.Ed students in time management skills ($t = 1.34$, $p = 0.18$), although BS students had a slightly higher mean

score. However, within the B.Ed. Program, 5th-semester students showed better time management skills than 1st-semester students, indicating improvement with academic progression.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. It is recommended that institutions foster reflective practices among prospective teachers to strengthen their time management skills.
2. It is recommended that time management content be formally integrated into the curriculum, particularly within the management course.
3. It is recommended that institutions regularly conduct workshops on time management.

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