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Research Paper

Time Use and Time Management Among Youths

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ABSTRACT

Time use and time management are foundational components of youth development, directly influencing academic performance, personal well-being, and future readiness. This study aimed to explore how young individuals, aged 18–25, allocate their time across daily activities and how effectively they manage it, with particular attention to the roles of gender and academic discipline. A sample of 120 participants—equally divided by gender and enrolled in either regular academic or vocational courses—completed structured survey assessing their time distribution across eight domains: study, daily life activities, extracurricular activities, socialization, online activity, health behaviours, pro-environmental practices, and procrastination, along with a standardized time management questionnaire. A 2×2 between-groups ANOVA revealed that gender significantly affected overall time management ability, indicating potential differences in time regulation and planning styles between male and female students. Academic discipline significantly influenced extracurricular participation and procrastination levels in youth, suggesting that course demands and academic culture shape how youths engage with and prioritize their time. Additionally, significant interaction effects between gender and course were observed in health behaviours and pro-environmental engagement pointing to a complex interplay between identity and institutional context allocating time. These findings provide valuable insight into how time is both experienced and managed by youth, emphasizing that time management is not only a personal competence but a product of gendered expectations and academic environments. The study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of youth time behaviour and highlights the need for context-aware strategies to support balanced and effective time management in young populations.

Keywords: *Time use, Time management, Youths*

Time management have become increasingly pertinent areas of inquiry in understanding the developmental trajectories of youth in a rapidly evolving global context. As young individuals navigate academic demands, social responsibilities, and personal development, how they allocate and manage their time significantly influences their psychological well-being, academic achievement, and future employability (Claessens et al., 2007; Nonis & Hudson, 2006). The digital age has further complicated time use patterns, introducing both new opportunities for productivity and new forms of distraction, with research suggesting that excessive engagement with digital media can impair effective

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time management and lead to procrastination (Junco, 2012). Moreover, time management behaviors—such as goal-setting, prioritization, and scheduling—have been positively associated with self-regulation and life satisfaction among adolescents and young adults (Macan et al., 1990; Britton & Tesser, 1991). These behaviors are not only critical in academic contexts but also play a vital role in the development of autonomy and identity, which are central tasks during the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). Importantly, socio-cultural and economic factors also shape how youth perceive and utilize their time, with disparities in access to structured opportunities and support systems contributing to differing time use profiles across demographic groups (Larson & Verma, 1999). Despite the evident significance of time-related behaviors, empirical research focusing specifically on the time use patterns and management practices among contemporary youth—especially in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts—remains limited, underscoring the need for further investigation into how young people make temporal choices and the implications these choices have on their personal and professional outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding how young people use and manage their time requires us to examine not only their individual behaviors but also the shifting technological, cultural, and socio-economic landscapes that shape those behaviors. In recent years, the omnipresence of digital technology has dramatically transformed time use among youth. While devices and applications offer tools that can enhance organization—through calendars, reminders, or habit trackers—they also present endless distractions. Rosen et al. (2013) observed that when digital tools are used with intention and digital literacy, they can support better time management. However, this potential benefit is often undermined by poor self-regulation, leading to procrastination or fractured attention spans. This dual nature of technology highlights a recurring tension in youth time management: between the tools that can empower and the temptations that can derail.

Adding to this concern, Junco (2012) found that excessive engagement with screen-based media—especially when unstructured—can displace important activities such as sleep, exercise, or studying. These patterns of time displacement are not just about productivity loss; they can also lead to heightened anxiety, disrupted routines, and diminished well-being. Rideout et al. (2010) echo this concern, emphasizing that the sheer volume of screen time among young people today has reshaped daily routines in ways that often crowd out more developmentally enriching activities. Together, these studies emphasize that how youth *interact* with technology is as critical as the amount of time they spend with it.

At the same time, structured use of leisure—such as participating in extracurriculars, creative hobbies, or volunteer work—has been shown to promote emotional resilience and social development. Larson (2000) highlighted the value of "initiative" in these structured environments, suggesting that when youth are engaged in activities that challenge and interest them, they are more likely to develop competence, motivation, and a sense of purpose. This reinforces the idea that the *quality* of time use matters as much as the quantity. Looking more broadly, socio-economic and cultural contexts continue to exert a strong influence on how youth manage their time. Larson and Verma (1999) brought attention to how youth in lower-income settings often face time poverty due to external responsibilities like caregiving or paid work. These obligations limit access to structured opportunities and may compromise both academic performance and personal development. Gender also plays a crucial role. Offer and Schneider (2011) reported that young women disproportionately

shoulder domestic responsibilities, which may restrict their time for academics or self-care, highlighting an often-unseen burden in time allocation patterns.

Earlier foundational studies laid the groundwork for understanding the link between time management and youth development. Claessens et al. (2007) and Nonis and Hudson (2006) underscored the importance of time management skills in enhancing academic performance and psychological well-being, particularly in high-pressure environments. These studies emphasize that effective time use is not simply a matter of being efficient—it also contributes to better emotional health and long-term goal attainment.

Macan et al. (1990) and Britton and Tesser (1991) were among the first to empirically link time management behaviors such as planning, scheduling, and prioritization with improved academic outcomes and self-perceived control. Their work established that these skills help young people build a sense of agency and are predictive of greater life satisfaction. Later, Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) deepened this perspective by connecting time management with the broader developmental tasks of adolescence, including identity formation and autonomy. They argued that time-related decisions play a critical role in helping youth build self-regulation and forward-thinking strategies.

Taken together, the literature paints a picture of time management as a dynamic and multifaceted process. It is influenced by internal traits like discipline and motivation, external pressures such as socioeconomic constraints, and increasingly, the digital environments youth inhabit. While effective time management can be a gateway to academic success, mental well-being, and personal growth, it is clear that not all youth begin with the same opportunities or support systems. As such, future research must continue to explore how youth from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds experience, interpret, and manage their time—because behind every time choice lies a story of opportunity, constraint, and adaptation.

Objective of the present study:
The primary aim of this study is to explore how young individuals allocate their time across various daily activities, and to examine whether time management practices differ based on gender and academic disciplines.

METHODOLOGY

Research hypothesis

- **H_1**: There is a significant difference in time management across various daily activities between male and female youth.
- **H_2**: Academic discipline (general and vocational) is a significant predictor of the effectiveness of time management strategies among youth.

Sampling method

The sample for this study consisted of 120 individuals aged between 18 and 25 years, selected using convenience sampling. The sample was equally divided by gender and academic stream to ensure a balanced representation. Specifically, 60 male participants and 60 female participants were included. Additionally, 60 participants were enrolled in regular academic courses (BA, BSc, MA, Msc), while the remaining 60 were pursuing vocational courses (MBA, BBA, B.Tech, M.Tech). This approach allowed for an examination of potential differences in time management practices based on both gender and academic discipline.

Participants were selected after following the given **inclusion criteria**:

1. They shall fall under the age group of 18 to 25 years.
2. The participants must be able to read and comprehend English.
3. Participant must be enrolled in some regular academic discipline.
4. Participant must be in sound mental health (according to PGI wellbeing scale measured before collecting final data)

Sampling distribution

	General Courses	Vocational Courses	Total
Male	25	35	60
Female	35	25	60
Total	60	60	120

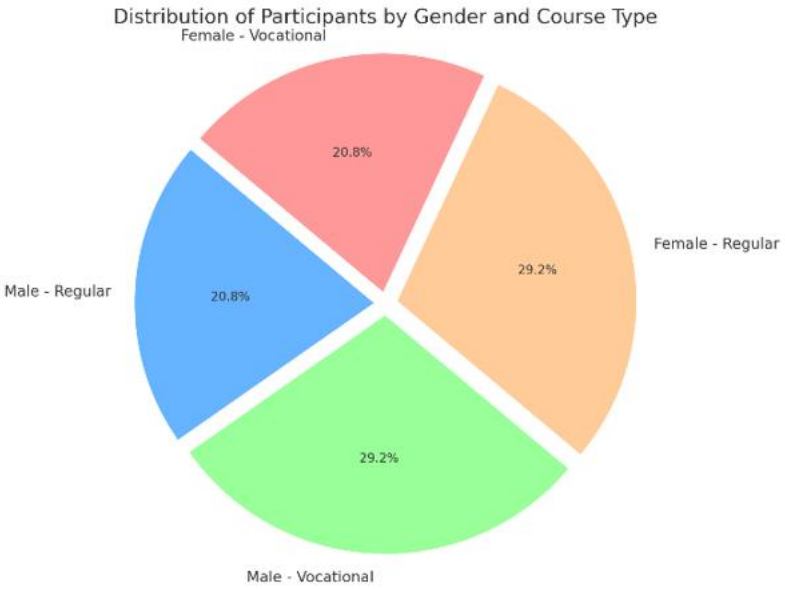

Figure 1: Sampling distribution

Measuring tool

Time management survey and time management questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The time management survey has 8 subgroups which measures the time spent by the youths in different kinds of activities, all day long. These subgroups are-Time spent on Study, Daily life activities, Extracurricular activities and skill development, Socialization with friends and family, Online activities (social media, gaming, content creation etc.), Health behaviours (yoga, gym, meditation etc,)

Pro-environmental behaviours and Procrastination. Time management questionnaire has 20 items which can be rated from 1-5 scale, where higher scores indicate better time management and lower scores indicate poor time management among young adults. Time management questionnaire, used in this study is a standardized questionnaire with 0.89 internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha= 0.89 measured on SPSS), and this was developed by California Baptist University to measure the time management skill among their students.

Research Design

The research design of this study is quantitative using objective survey and questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and a 2x2 between-group ANOVA design was employed. The first independent variable of the study was gender which was varied at two levels, i.e., male and female. The second independent variable of the study will be academic disciplines which was also varied at two levels, i.e., regular academic courses (BA, BSc, MA, Msc), while the remaining 60 were pursuing vocational courses (MBA, BBA, B.Tech, M.Tech). The effect of gender and academic courses was observed on time management among youths.

Procedure

After getting permission from authorities, the questionnaire was conducted through Google form which was further sent to the participants. The data was collected only after implied consent from the participants. In this way, all the data was collected individually from each participant and after data collection all the participants were thanked for their valuable cooperation and help. The Google form was then reflected in an excel sheet. It was further analysed with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to develop a result.

RESULT TABLE

Table 1: ANOVA table

Measures	**Gender (F)**	**Gender (Sig.)**	**Course (F)**	**Course (Sig.)**	**Gender * Course (F)**	**Gender * Course (Sig.)**
Time management	**6.718**	**.011**	0.003	.954	0.000	.993
Survey (total)	0.000	.990	0.600	.440	2.432	.122
Study	0.040	.843	0.082	.776	1.365	.245
Daily life activities	0.193	.661	2.144	.146	2.165	.144
Extracurricular activities	2.064	.154	**11.316**	**.001**	0.220	.640
Socialization	0.891	.347	0.891	.347	0.148	.701
Online	0.970	.327	2.275	.134	1.112	.294
Health behaviours	0.185	.668	2.961	.088	**10.760**	**.001**
Pro-environmental behaviours	0.761	.385	0.103	.749	**5.457**	**.021**
Procrastination	1.640	.203	**8.197**	**.005**	0.568	.453

After analysing data in SPSS, from Levene's test of equality of error variances, homogeneity of data was found significant at 0.391 level. This concluded that, we can run ANOVA (Analysis of Variances) as sample represents the population in homogeneous way. The obtained results of 2*2 between group ANOVA are portrayed in table 1.

From the result table, we can clearly see that, the gender and academic discipline has different impacts on different measures of time use and time management among youths. Some of them are significant (at $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$ levels). The significant effects are mentioned below in table 2. This will give a more comprehensive view of the study. The obtained result is elaborated further in discussion.

Table 2: Significant Effects ($p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$):			
Independent Variable	**Dependent Variable**	**F value**	**Significance Level**
Gender	Time Management	6.718	p = .011 → Significant at **0.05** level
Course	Extracurricular activities	11.316	p = .001 → Significant at **0.01** level
Course	Procrastination	8.197	p = .005 → Significant at **0.01** level
Gender * Course	Health behaviour	10.760	p = .001 → Significant at **0.01** level
Gender * Course	Pro-environmental behaviours	5.457	p = .021 → Significant at **0.05** level

Table 3: Mean Scores and Descriptive statistics of Significant Variables									
Dependent Variable	**Female General**	**Female Vocational**	**Female Total**	**Male General**	**Male Vocational**	**Male Total**	**Total General**	**Total Vocational**	**Total participants**
Time Management	44.80 (10.68) [35]	44.72 (9.44) [25]	44.77 (10.10) [60]	49.08 (7.02) [25]	48.97 (7.60) [35]	49.02 (7.30) [60]	46.58 (9.51) [60]	47.20 (8.60) [60]	46.89 (9.03) [120]
Extra Curricular Activities	8.46 (3.46) [35]	11.56 (5.06) [25]	9.75 (4.44) [60]	10.00 (3.12) [25]	12.34 (5.32) [35]	11.37 (4.65) [60]	9.10 (3.38) [60]	12.02 (5.18) [60]	10.56 (4.60) [120]
Procrastination	2.74 (1.52) [35]	1.92 (1.08) [25]	2.40 (1.40) [60]	2.28 (1.17) [25]	1.80 (1.02) [35]	2.00 (1.10) [60]	2.55 (1.40) [60]	1.85 (1.04) [60]	2.20 (1.27) [120]
Health behaviour	8.80 (4.36) [35]	9.96 (4.84) [25]	9.28 (4.57) [60]	10.92 (4.10) [25]	7.20 (2.75) [35]	8.75 (3.83) [60]	9.68 (4.35) [60]	8.35 (3.97) [60]	9.02 (4.20) [120]
Environmental behaviour	6.49 (2.57) [35]	8.00 (3.55) [25]	7.12 (3.08) [60]	7.32 (3.78) [25]	6.17 (2.60) [35]	6.65 (3.17) [60]	6.83 (3.13) [60]	6.93 (3.13) [60]	6.88 (3.12) [120]

- The scores are mean
- The values in first bracket i.e, (..) denotes standard deviation
- The values in third bracket i.e, [..] denotes the number of participants under that particular condition

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the influence of gender, course of study, and their interaction on various aspects of student life, including time management, academic engagement, extracurricular involvement, social behavior, and well-being. The ANOVA results revealed several noteworthy findings. **Gender** had a statistically significant effect on **time management** with F value- 6.718 (p = .011), suggesting that male and female students may differ in how they manage or perceive time. This could be attributed to differing role expectations, coping styles, or academic pressures experienced by different genders, especially in the context of balancing academic and personal responsibilities. After looking more closely into descriptive statistics, we can clearly see that, male participants scored 49.02 which is higher than the mean score of female participants- 44.77 in the time management scale. Therefore, we can say that male participants tend to manage their time more efficiently than females.

Course of study significantly influenced **extracurricular activities** (F= 11.316, p = .001**)** and the mean score of extracurricular activities of the students of general courses and vocational courses are 9.10 and 12.02 respectively, stating that, participants of vocational courses involve more in extracurricular activities than participants of general courses. Similarly, **Procrastination** also significantly effected the **academic discipline** (F= 8.197, p = .005), the participants of general courses got a mean score of 2.55 and the participants of the vocational courses got a mean score of 1.85 in the case of procrastination, the result clearly signifies that, students of general courses tend to experience more procrastination than students engaging in vocational courses. These findings suggest that students from different academic disciplines may engage with their campus environment and manage tasks differently, potentially due to varying course demands or cultural norms within academic programs. For example, students in humanities (general course) may have more packed up schedules, allowing lesser extracurricular engagement, while those in professional or technical courses might experience more structured and time-sensitive academic routines and skill development, possibly contributing to higher extracurricular engagement and lower levels of procrastination.

Moreover, the **interaction between gender and course** was significant for **health behaviours** (F=10.760, p = .001) and **pro-environmental behaviours** (F=5.457, p = .021). These interactions imply that the combined influence of gender and academic discipline plays a critical role in shaping students' health behaviours and environmental consciousness. For both health behaviours and pro-environmental behaviours the mean scores of female participants are greater than the mean score of male participants (9.28 > 8.75 and 7.12> 6.65 respectively) which signifies that, female participants tend to involve more in health behaviour and pro-environmental behaviour than male participants do. From the mean scores, we found that the mean scores for showing health behaviour is greater in students of general courses (9.68) than vocational courses (8.35), so the participants of general courses used to involve more in health behaviours. This difference in health behaviour may be explained by the differential exposure to health education, peer norms, or stress coping mechanisms embedded within specific courses or gendered expectations. The mean scores for pro-environmental behaviour are 6.83 and 6.93 for general and vocational courses respectively, showing a slightly greater score in vocational course.

While many variables did not show statistically significant differences, the identified effects highlight the nuanced ways in which gender and academic context shape student experiences. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions and support

systems that account for the diverse challenges faced by students across gender and academic programs. Lastly, it was clearly found that, gender, selected course of discipline has significant effects on various ways of managing time among the youths.

CONCLUSION

The present study set out to examine how gender, academic course, and their interaction influence various facets of time use and time management among youths. It highlights the intricate ways in which gender and academic discipline shape students' experiences, influencing how they manage their time, engage with extracurricular opportunities, handle procrastination, and approach health and environmental behaviours. The results suggest that male students tend to be more efficient in managing time, which may reflect differences in social expectations, coping strategies, or approaches to balancing academic and personal responsibilities. In contrast, students enrolled in vocational courses demonstrated greater involvement in extracurricular activities and reported lower levels of procrastination, pointing to the possibility that structured course requirements and practical skill-oriented learning encourage stronger engagement and time-bound discipline. Female students, on the other hand, showed a greater inclination toward positive health practices and pro-environmental behaviours, suggesting that gender-related norms and awareness may foster stronger orientations toward well-being and sustainability. Importantly, the interaction of gender and course reveals that academic environments do not affect all students uniformly; rather, the combined influence of disciplinary demands and gendered expectations contributes to diverse behavioural outcomes and lifestyle choices. These findings emphasize the need for institutions to design targeted interventions and holistic support systems that not only address academic pressures but also promote healthier lifestyles, encourage environmental responsibility, and foster balanced development for students across different streams. By acknowledging these nuanced patterns, educational settings can create more inclusive, responsive, and supportive environments that enable young adults to thrive both academically and personally. Overall, this study enriches our understanding of how time is not just managed but lived. It offers compelling evidence that time-related behaviours among youths are shaped by more than individual choice—they are deeply rooted in who students are and where they are situated academically. Supporting young people in developing effective time management skills, therefore, requires a more contextual and inclusive approach—one that acknowledges the diversity of their lived experiences across gender and academic backgrounds.

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Conflict of Interest

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