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Time management skills of undergraduate students during COVID19 pandemic: Sultan Qaboos University Case Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the time management skills among college students of Sultan Qaboos University during COVID 19 pandemic, and if time management skills vary according to their gender and colleges. The survey used to collect data. The study sample included 218 under graduate students' randomly selected. Summarizing, the results of study revealed that total time management" of participants was in high level. In addition, the participants possessed high level in "Short-range planning", and "Time attitudes". While participants possessed low level in "Long-range planning". No significant differences difference between male and female students with respect to their mean of time management and their 3 sub scales: Short-range planning, Time attitudes and long range planning. Difference between students in Humanities and Scientific colleges with respect to their mean of time management and their 3 sub scales was significant in "Time attitudes" and "Total time management", the differences were significant in favor of Humanities colleges. The results of this study can be used to create opportunities for future research of time management skills that influence attitudes and planning of students toward their accomplishing their duties and responsibilities.

Keywords: Time management skills; COVID 19 pandemic, Sultan Qaboos University, Students.

Introduction

If you experience pressured, or have a lot to do you don't realize where to begin, you are not alone. Many students, each graduate and undergraduate students, have those similar reactions to the educational challenges faced. So as to facilitate social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities are shifting to

instruction online. In addition to the logistical demanding situations that come with an on-line learning and from-home arrangement, college students' and people in leadership positions of universities need to discover approaches to promote a healthful learning, online.

Time management has been seen as set of concepts, practices and skills which allow someone to get matters carried out via operating smarter but not tougher. Effective time management techniques help us to prepare and plan time which we spend on numerous activities with the intention to increase productiveness and best of lifestyles, even if time is less and pressures are high (MindTools.com, 2020). Time management is an obtained skill which may be developed at any age to perform duties successfully. It has been noticed that there are a few individuals who discover that they have got enough time for his or her day by day activities, but some people struggle as they rush from one assignment to every other without finishing something. It is not due to the fact former type of people has greater time however due to the fact they know a way to use their time successfully via training right time management skills (SkillsYouNeed, 2020). Time management is in reality self-management. Time management cannot increase the quantity of time we've in a day however it could carry better lifestyles for us by making us more prepared (Misra and McKean, 2000). You possibly can appreciate your life by using careful and dedicating extra time for yourself, for your own family, household and friends; effective time management be able to allow us to accomplish that (Efil I., 2007).

At present, time management is taken into consideration a completely crucial detail for personal and company fulfillment particularly within the expert surroundings (Koch, 1998). A study by Khatib (2014) has explored that powerful time management is related to higher academic overall performance, whilst negative time management in students is related to higher perceived pressure. Being unable to plan and use time suitably and doing remaining-minute study for tests are some elements that can boom pressure amongst students leading to bad academic overall performance (Britton and Tesser, 1991).

Time management for students may be one of the most essential and hard abilities to examine during university years, specifically via disturbing situation like COVID 19 pandemic. Time management is geared toward dealing with the time you spend doing matters that assist you acquire your desires and the things that you individually prioritize and value (Oxford Brookes University, 2012).

Universities across the world have been pressured to replace their classes and administration from in-individual to online. Even then, however, "life happens' issues" dramatically impacted student learning. Although communications software programs have improved, lifestyles continue for students outdoor the classroom. Students struggle with budget, health, and online learning demanding situations. University and college leaders understand that effective transition management is prime to student success all through the COVID-19 pandemic (Katz, 2020). Lucier (2019) argues that within the first few days of starting colleges, many students learn than managing their time is the most challenging, with so much to do, strong time management skills can make all the difference. with a lot of happening, there's time management options that could assist college students take manage in their lifestyle rather of getting exhausted and in the back of in academic.

Lay and Schouwenburg (1993) examine the relation of time management to trait procrastination and behavior wherein time management became conceptualized in terms of placing goals and priorities, the usage of mechanics and the perceived manage of time. Macan *et al* (1990) examine that perceived manage of time is the maximum predictive of time management behavior scale. They argue that students who perceived the need of time management suggested considerably more evaluation in their performance, more work and life satisfaction, less more ambiguity, less function overload, and fewer task-induced and somatic tensions. On this observe, Sood, and Mayo Clinic (2013) opines that prioritization can assist users to coping with time accurately and minimizing consequences. Mindtools.com (2020) says that prioritization calls for making most reliable use of time and sources and calm environment and low pressure level.

Prioritizing can be accomplished after reviewing your time constraints. The importance of the assignment is essential in comparing wherein it lands on a listing of priorities (Thompson, 2013). Prioritizing duties will assist Internet users manage time correctly such that instructional activities are given good enough interest and sufficient time is given to different schedules.

Kai Analytics diagnosed that essential student feedback can form effective student help within the upcoming months. They directed survey research using the open-ended responses of 424 college students across the USA to recognize six distinct student personalities. Freshmen and sophomores are specifically impacted by using the shift. Generally, 28% of students' experience disturbing about being capable of meet learning goals. One student who transitioned to online learning intended that they needed to teach the courses to themselves. Many college students which can be disappointed appear to feel misplaced in this new environment. They experience that they may be mastering alone without guide from professors, tutorials, or office hours (Katz, 2020).

Dealing with unexpected conditions, like COVID 19 pandemic, may additionally displays as an academic pressure amongst college students. In this condition, college students be afflicted by time management pressure due to the transitional environment of college lifestyles; many college students move away from face to face learning to online and distance learning for the first time, leaving all previously learned support systems along with faculty members and instructors.

Sultan Qaboos University is the realization of the promise announced by His. Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said during the 10th anniversary of Oman's National Day in 1980, and the first students were enrolled in 1986. The University included nine colleges; Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, Education, Science, Arts, Commerce and Economics, Law, and Nursing (<https://www.squ.edu.om/About/About-SQU/Campus-Profile>). SQU's vision is to continue its national leading role in higher education and community service and also to be internationally recognized for innovative research, quality of its graduates, and strategic partnerships (<https://www.squ.edu.om/About/About-SQU/Vision-Mission-Objectives>).

The SQU takes actions toward transition to on-line learning at the beginning of COVID 19 pandemic, and applied several procedures toward this issue. Therefore, this study was survey conducted in Spring semester 2020 among male and female students enrolled in various colleges of Sultan Qaboos University. This study aims to investigate time management of SQU students during COVID pandemic.

Purposes and Research Questions

A survey of the related literature in Sultan Qaboos University indicated paucity of research that addressed the time management of undergraduate students at SQU. In addition, analyze the significant differences among undergraduate students based in their gender, and discipline.

This study addressed the following specific questions:

Question 1: How is the time management perceived by undergraduate students at SQU during COVID 19 pandemic?

Question 2: Do undergraduate students' perception of time management during COVID 19 pandemic differ based on their gender, and discipline?

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a survey to collect data as a quantitative methodology.

Subjects

The population of this paper consisted of undergraduate students at Sultan Qaboos University during the Spring semester 2020. The sample of this study included 218 under graduate students' randomly selected, 101, 46.3% were male, and 117, 53.7% were female. Related to students' college; 123, 56.4% were "humanities", and 95, 34.6% were "scientific".

Data Collection Tools

Research sampling involved of total 218 undergraduate students studying during the 2020 spring semester in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). A questionnaire was directed to students taking elective courses. The "Time Management Questionnaire" developed by Britton and Tesser (1991) was used as a data gathering tool to measure the time management behavior of participant students. The survey contains 18 items: seven items in the short-range planning sub-scale, six items in the time attitudes sub-scale and five items in the long-range planning sub-scale. Each answered on a 5-point scale consisting of the responses always (5), frequently (4), sometimes (3), infrequently (2), and never (1). In scoring, 5 points were assigned to the response at the end of the scale that we defined a priori as the "good" practice and 1 point was assigned to the response at the other end of the scale, with intermediate values given for the other responses. Higher values on the scale correspond to better time management practices.

In this research, the assessment on the reliability of the scale with respect to the Alpha coefficient Cronbach's showed that Alpha value of the scale of all variables was found to be 0.82 which indicated that the scale is "reliable". In the current research during the process of data analysis, the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) package program was used. In order to find answers to the problems of this study, such techniques as standard deviation, mean, t-test, were used. Significance levels of .05 was used during the statistical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

Results were collected, tabulated, statistically analyzed using package SPSS version 23. Data was analyzed as means, standard deviation, t-test were used, and significance levels of .05 was used during the statistical analysis. With regard to cutting points, the response scale for each item will be determined ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) as follows: 1-2.33 = low, 2.34 to 3.67 = moderate, and 3.68-5.00 = high.

Results

Question 1: How is the time management level perceived by undergraduate students at SQU during COVID 19 pandemic?

Table 1 indicates "total time management" of participants was in high level with $M=3.79$, $SD=.364$. In addition, the participants possessed high level in "Short-range planning" $M=4.06$, $SD=.511$, and "Time attitudes" $M=3.90$, $SD=.550$. While participants possessed low level in "Long-range planning".

Table 1: Time management levels means and standard deviation of the participants

Dimensions	Mean	SD
Short range planning	4.06	.511
Time attitudes	3.90	.550
Long range planning	3.41	.425
Total time management	3.79	.364

Question 2: Do undergraduate students' perception of time management during COVID 19 pandemic differ based on their gender, and discipline?

Table 2 shows slight difference between male and female participants with respect to their mean scores of Time Management and their 3 sub scales: Short-range planning, Time attitudes and long range planning, but the difference was not significant.

Table 2: t-test of time management along with three sub-scales according to participants' gender

	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Short range planning	Male	101	4.05	.286	216	.775
	Female	117	4.07			
Attitudes	Male	101	3.97	1.733	216	.085
	Female	117	3.84			
Long range planning	Male	101	3.38	1.021	216	.309
	Female	117	3.44			
TOTAL	Male	101	3.80	.339	216	.735
	Female	117	3.78			

Table 3 shows slight difference between participants in Humanities and Scientific colleges with respect to their mean scores of TM and their 3 sub scales: Short-range planning, and long range planning, but the difference was significant in "Time attitudes" and "Total time management", the differences were significant in favor of Humanities colleges.

Table 3: t-test of time management along with three sub-scales according to participants' colleges

	College	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Short range planning	Humanities	123	4.07	.570	216	.569
	Scientific	95	4.03			
Attitudes	Humanities	123	4.04	4.360	216	.000*
	Scientific	95	3.73			
Long range planning	Humanities	123	3.42	.163	216	.871
	Scientific	95	3.41			
TOTAL	Humanities	123	3.85	2.474	216	.014*
	Scientific	95	3.73			

Discussion and Conclusion

Summarizing, it can be concluded that; time management skills should be rapidly growing as a field of practice, specifically during crisis and unexpected situations, like COVID 19 pandemic. The results of this study revealed that time management as a total with level of high, also, short-range planning and attitudes were in high level. While long-range planning was in low level. no difference between male and female participants with respect to their mean scores of TM and their 3 sub scales: Short-range planning, Time attitudes and long range planning. There was difference between participants in Humanities and Scientific colleges with respect to their mean scores of "Time attitudes" and "Total time management", the differences were significant in favor of Humanities colleges. According to Oxford Brookes University (2012) time management for via worrying students can be one of the most crucial and hard abilities to learn all through college years, particularly through stressful situation like COVID 19 pandemic. Time management is aimed at managing the time you spend doing things that help you achieve your goals and the things that you personally prioritize and value, but in this research results, SQU college students emphasize on short-range planning dimension, that may make sense; no one knows what will happen during next month on next day or next semester, even if they have positive attitudes towards "time attitude".

The "long-range planning" dimension of "time management" may needs with what Katz (2020) recognized that crucial student feedback can shape effective student support in the coming months. Overall, 28% of students' sense tense about being able to meet learning goals. The transition to online learning supposed that they had to teach the subjects and courses by themselves. Many students that are dissatisfied seem to feel lost in this new environment. They feel that they are learning alone without support from professors, tutorials, or office hours. Depending on the study results, we can recommend that we can work with one or several of the following skills and strategies: Planning and organization; Calendars and do lists, turning large tasks into small tasks, building routines that increase productivity, Goal setting and pursuit, Organizing class papers, readings, and so on. Academic skills; Enhancing reading strategies, Note-taking methods, Study strategies, Test strategies, Test anxiety. Life balance and well-being; Prioritization when feeling overwhelmed, building motivation and reducing procrastination, managing perfectionism, practicing self-care, Taking effective breaks, Recovery from burnout (students.tufts.edu, 2020; Lucier, 2019).

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