

Time Management Skills and Practices of Interior Design Students

Himani Shah

Temporary Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Resource Management, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, INDIA
Email - himani.shah-fcrm@msubaroda.ac.in

Abstract: Time is the most important resource for a human being, due to its limited nature. Due to this, conscious utilization of time is necessary. Proper management will ensure optimal use of time as a resource, in turn ensuring maximum output of work and creating a work-life balance. And so, time management is vital for every individual. A student pursuing any graduate degree has shifted from years of school level timetables to higher education time schedules, which are different from one another. Hence, students are required to adapt to new time management demands. In a higher education programme for Interior Design, the students are engaged in multiple activities related to their learning. Over and above classroom learning in terms of theoretical lectures and practical work, an interior design student is required to engage in many assignments such as market surveys, model making, site visits and may other practical tasks. Therefore, they require to manage their time to the best of their ability. Thus, the present study was undertaken to identify time management practices and skills of students of Interior Design. Descriptive research was carried out wherein data of 52 Interior Design students, of Vadodara City, was collected using a questionnaire. The findings revealed and concluded that the students sometimes found it challenging to follow good time management practices and had average time management skills. And so, some tips for better time management were developed for the students of Interior Design field.

Key Words: Time Management Practices and Skills, Students of Interior Design, Optimal use of Time, Higher Education.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Time is a finite and non-renewable resource, making its effective utilization essential for achieving academic success and maintaining psychological and functional balance in life. Time management is commonly defined as a set of behavioural processes that involve planning, prioritizing, scheduling, and monitoring tasks to maximize productivity and efficiency (Claessens et al., 2007). These behaviours enable individuals to allocate limited time resources effectively across competing demands, thereby enhancing goal attainment and reducing stress. In the context of higher education, students undergo a significant transition from highly structured school environments to relatively flexible and self-directed academic systems. This shift increases the need for self-regulation, as students must independently organize their schedules, manage deadlines, and balance academic as well as personal responsibilities. Empirical evidence suggests that effective time management is positively associated with study engagement, academic performance, and self-regulated learning behaviours (Zimmerman, 2002; Pintrich, 2004). Recent research further demonstrates that time management not only directly enhances study engagement but also indirectly influences it through improved self-control and reduced distractions such as mobile phone dependence (Fu, 2025). This indicates that students with better time management skills are more capable of maintaining focus, regulating their behaviour, and sustaining academic involvement. Furthermore, time management plays a critical role in fostering adaptive learning behaviours. Students who effectively manage their time tend to exhibit higher levels of discipline, better goal-setting abilities, and improved academic persistence (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017). Conversely, poor time management is often linked with procrastination, academic stress, and lower performance outcomes, highlighting its importance as a foundational academic skill. Interior Design students face additional and unique challenges that intensify the need for effective time management. Unlike many traditional academic programmes, Interior Design education requires a balance of theoretical knowledge and extensive practical engagement. Students are required to handle:

- Practical assignments such as model making and studio work
- Field-based activities including site visits and market surveys

- Creative tasks that demand ideation, visualization, and iterative development

These activities are often time-intensive and unpredictable, requiring both cognitive effort and physical involvement. The creative nature of design work further complicates time management, as tasks cannot always be completed within fixed time frames and often require sustained focus and iterative refinement. As a result, students must continuously prioritize, adapt, and allocate time efficiently across diverse tasks. Therefore, effective time management becomes not only a functional necessity but also a critical determinant of academic success and professional preparedness for Interior Design students. It enables them to balance creative exploration with academic deadlines, optimize productivity, and maintain overall well-being in a demanding educational environment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

A substantial body of research has examined the relationship between time management and academic performance, consistently highlighting its positive impact on student outcomes. One of the earliest empirical studies by Britton and Tesser (1991) demonstrated that time management practices significantly predicted students' academic performance, accounting for approximately 36% of the variance in grade point average (GPA), indicating a strong predictive relationship. Their findings further revealed that components such as short-range planning and long-range planning were critical determinants of academic success. Similarly, Macan (1994) found that students who engaged in goal setting and prioritization reported a higher perceived control over time, which in turn led to improved performance outcomes. Supporting these findings, a replication study conducted among university students confirmed that planning behaviors had a statistically significant, though moderate, relationship with examination scores and coursework performance. More recent research continues to validate these associations. A cross-sectional study among university students reported a significant positive correlation between time management skills and academic performance measured through GPA, reinforcing the importance of time management as a predictor of academic achievement. Furthermore, Adams and Blair (2019) found that effective time management behaviors were associated with higher academic performance and lower levels of anxiety among undergraduate students. Intervention-based studies also provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of time management training. For instance, Nadinloyi et al. (2013) reported that students who received time management training demonstrated significant improvements in academic time management skills and overall academic performance. Additionally, a meta-analysis covering two decades of research concluded that structured time management strategies significantly enhance academic performance, self-efficacy, and student satisfaction. However, some studies report mixed findings. For example, certain research indicates that while time management positively influences academic performance, its predictive strength may vary across disciplines and student groups. Overall, the literature consistently supports the conclusion that effective time management is a key determinant of academic success, though its impact may be moderated by contextual and individual factors.

3. OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess time management skills of Interior Design students.
2. To identify time management practices of Interior Design students.

4. METHODOLOGY: The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the time management practices and skills of undergraduate Interior Design students. A descriptive design was considered appropriate as it enables the systematic collection and analysis of data to describe characteristics, behaviors, and patterns without manipulating variables (McCombes, 2019). This approach is widely used in educational research to understand existing conditions and practices among specific groups. The study was conducted in Vadodara city, Gujarat, India, focusing on undergraduate students pursuing Interior Design programmes as the unit of inquiry. This group was selected due to the demanding nature of their curriculum, which involves balancing theoretical knowledge with practical and creative tasks. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of relevant respondents. A total of 105 students were contacted, out of which 53 students responded and were selected as the final sample. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through a Google Form. Survey-based data collection is considered effective in descriptive studies as it allows for standardized data collection from a defined population (Aggarwal, 2019). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: the first section included background information such as age, gender, family type, and income, while the second section assessed time management practices and skills of the respondents. The items were measured using a three-point scale (Always, Sometimes, Never), ensuring ease of response and consistency. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures the internal consistency of a scale and determines how closely related a set of items are as a group (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Based on the collected data, the Cronbach's alpha value for the time management scale was found to be 0.78, indicating acceptable to good reliability. A value above 0.70 is generally considered satisfactory, suggesting that the questionnaire items were sufficiently consistent in measuring time management practices among students. The reliability was estimated using

aggregated response data due to the availability of summarized item-wise frequencies. Thus, the research design, sampling method, data collection tool, and reliability assessment collectively ensured that the study provided a valid and reliable understanding of time management practices among Interior Design students.

5. FINDINGS: The findings of the study are presented based on the analysis of responses obtained from 53 undergraduate Interior Design students. The results are discussed under key areas including background characteristics, time utilization patterns, and time management skills and practices.

5.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents

The analysis revealed that the majority of respondents (84.9%) were female, indicating a higher representation of female students in the Interior Design programme. The mean age of the respondents was found to be 20.28 years, reflecting a typical undergraduate age group. More than half of the respondents (56.6%) were from the third year of study. A large proportion (94.3%) resided with their families, and 77.4% belonged to nuclear families. Additionally, 52.8% of the respondents reported experiencing difficulty in managing time for college-related work.

These findings suggest that despite having family support systems, students still face challenges in balancing academic responsibilities, which aligns with previous research indicating that academic workload significantly impacts students' time management abilities (Macan, 1994) (Table 1).

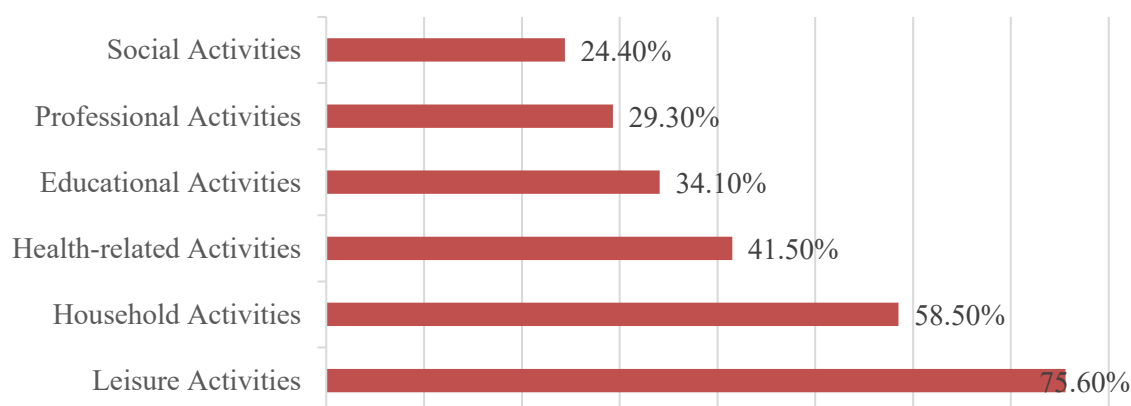
Table 1: Background Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	84.9
	Male	15.1
Year of Study	Second Year	43.4
	Third Year	56.6
Family Type	Nuclear	77.4
	Joint	22.6
Residence	With Family	94.3
	Others	5.7

5.2 Time Utilization Beyond Academic Work

The study found that 77.4% of respondents engaged in activities other than college work. Among these, leisure activities were the most common (75.6%), followed by household responsibilities (58.5%), health-related activities (41.5%), and educational activities beyond coursework (34.1%). A smaller proportion of students engaged in professional (29.3%) and social activities (24.4%) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Time Utilization Beyond Academic Work

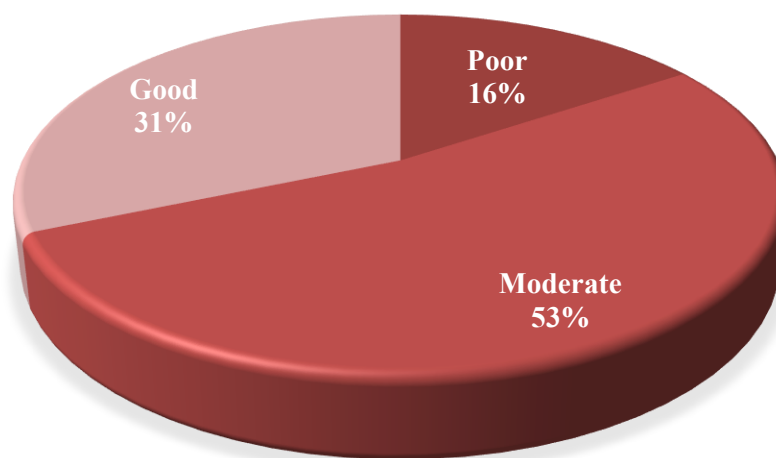


These findings indicate that students allocate a considerable portion of their time to non-academic activities, which may contribute to time constraints. Similar findings have been reported in earlier studies, where increased involvement in non-academic activities was associated with reduced academic efficiency when not properly managed (Misra & McKean, 2000).

5.3 Time Management Skills of Respondents

The assessment of time management skills revealed that 16% of the respondents had poor skills, 54% had moderate skills, and 32% demonstrated good time management abilities. The predominance of moderate skill levels suggests that while students possess some level of awareness and ability to manage time, there remains significant scope for improvement (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Time Management Skills of the Respondents

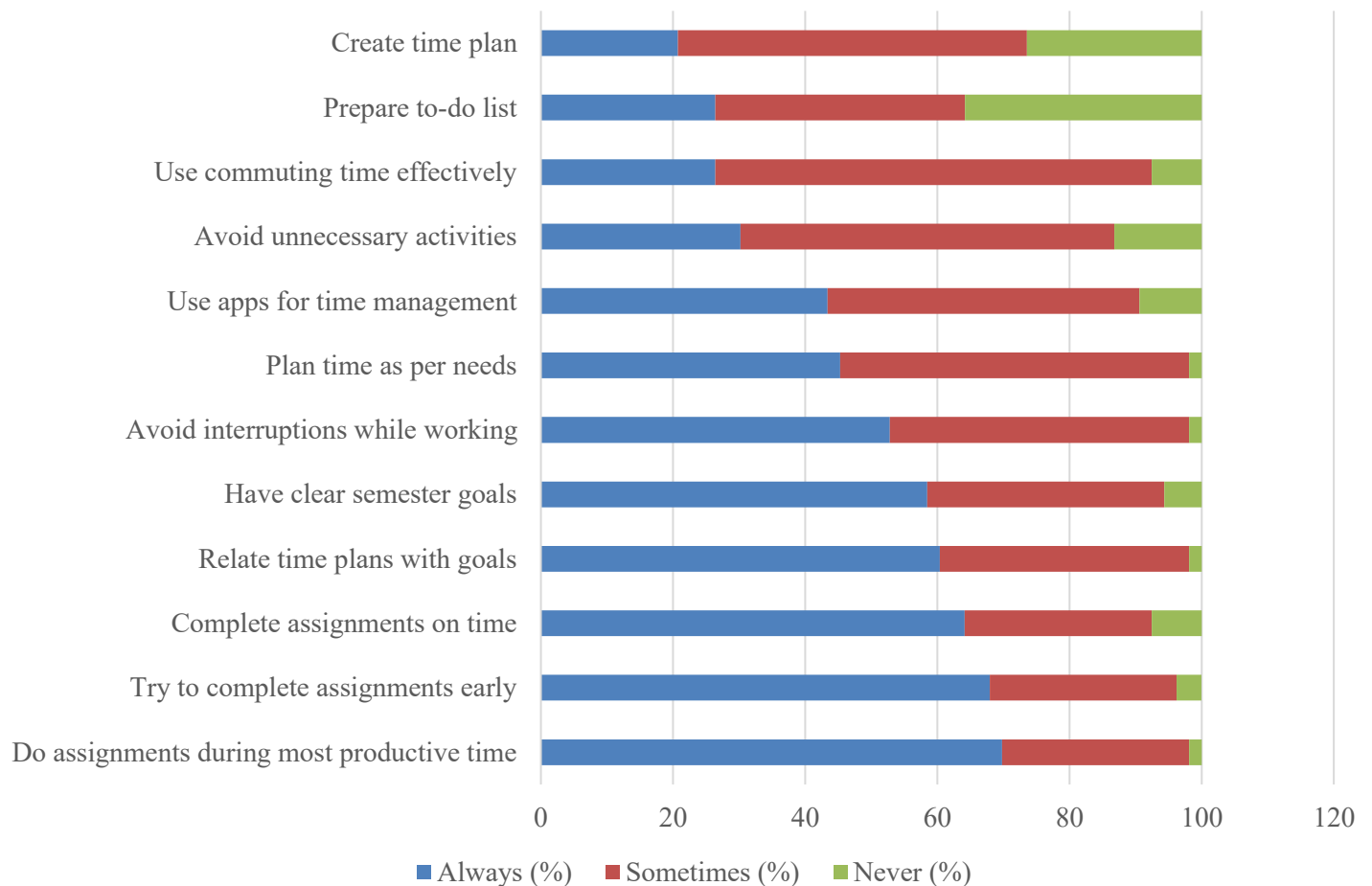


This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that many students exhibit average levels of time management and require structured guidance to enhance their effectiveness (Claessens et al., 2007).

5.4 Time Management Practices of the Respondents

The data presented in Table 5.4 indicate that students demonstrate strong performance in execution-oriented practices, such as completing assignments on time (64.15%) and working during their most productive hours (69.81%). A considerable proportion of respondents also reported aligning their time plans with academic goals (60.38%) and maintaining clarity regarding semester objectives (58.49%). However, planning-related practices were found to be comparatively weaker. Only 20.75% of respondents consistently created time plans, and 26.42% prepared to-do lists regularly, while a significant proportion reported either occasional or no engagement in these practices. Additionally, a majority of students reported only “sometimes” making effective use of commuting time (66.04%) and avoiding unnecessary activities (56.60%) (Figure 3). These findings suggest that while students are relatively effective in task execution, they lack consistency in structured planning and prioritization. This imbalance indicates a gap between awareness and implementation of time management strategies, which is consistent with earlier research emphasizing the importance of planning behaviors in effective time management (Macan, 1994; Claessens et al., 2007).

Figure 3: Time Management Practices of the Respondents



5.5 Data Analysis:

Inferential statistics were used to examine relationships between variables and to draw conclusions beyond the descriptive data. Since the study involved categorical and ordinal data, appropriate non-parametric statistical tests such as the Chi-square test and correlation analysis were applied.

1. Relationship between Time Management Practices and Skills

Hypothesis

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between time management practices and time management skills.
- H_1 : There is a significant relationship between time management practices and time management skills.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test of Association

Test	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	18.42	4	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	17.10	4	0.002
N of Valid Cases	53		

Interpretation: The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 18.42$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between time management practices and time management skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This implies that students who exhibit better time management practices are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of time management skills (Table 2). These findings are consistent with earlier studies

which emphasize that structured behaviors such as planning and prioritization significantly contribute to skill development (Macan, 1994; Claessens et al., 2007).

2. Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Correlation between Time Management Practices and Skills

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Practices vs Skills	0.62	0.001

Interpretation: The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$) indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between time management practices and skills. The relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that improvements in time management practices are associated with higher levels of time management skills among students (Table 3). This finding supports the theoretical framework of self-regulated learning, where behavioural strategies directly influence skill development and academic performance (Zimmerman, 2002).

3. Significance of Key Time Management Behaviours: To further understand the importance of individual practices, high-ranking behaviors such as completing assignments on time, working during productive hours, and goal setting were found to significantly contribute to overall skill levels. In contrast, planning-related practices such as preparing to-do lists and creating time plans showed weaker associations, indicating gaps in structured time management.

4. Overall Inference: The inferential analysis clearly demonstrates that:

- Time management practices significantly influence time management skills
- Students with better planning and execution behaviors perform better academically
- Lack of structured planning remains a major limitation
- There is a need for targeted interventions to improve planning skills

6. DISCUSSION :

The findings of the present study provide important insights into the time management practices and skills of Interior Design students and are largely consistent with existing literature. The results indicated that a majority of students demonstrated moderate levels of time management skills, suggesting that while students possess basic competencies, there remains significant scope for improvement. Similar findings have been reported in earlier studies, where students were found to exhibit average time management abilities and required structured interventions to enhance their effectiveness (Claessens et al., 2007). The study further revealed that students performed better in execution-oriented practices, such as completing assignments on time and working during their most productive hours. This aligns with the findings of Britton and Tesser (1991), who reported that effective time allocation and task completion are significant predictors of academic performance. Likewise, Adams and Blair (2019) emphasized that students who engage in structured time use demonstrate higher academic achievement and reduced stress levels. However, the results also highlighted notable gaps in planning-related behaviors, such as preparing to-do lists and creating time plans. These findings are consistent with Macan (1994), who identified planning and goal setting as critical determinants of effective time management. The lack of consistent planning among students indicates a gap between awareness and actual implementation of time management strategies. Additionally, the study found that a large proportion of students were involved in non-academic activities, which may contribute to time constraints and reduced academic efficiency. This supports the findings of Misra and McKean (2000), who reported that increased engagement in non-academic activities can lead to higher stress and lower academic performance when not properly managed. Overall, the findings reinforce that time management is a multidimensional construct involving both execution and planning behaviors. While students demonstrate competence in task execution, deficiencies in planning limit their overall effectiveness, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to improve structured time management skills.

7. CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that Interior Design students demonstrate moderate levels of time management skills, indicating basic competency but insufficient structured application. While students perform effectively in task execution, particularly in completing assignments and utilizing productive time, they show clear limitations in planning-related practices such as scheduling and prioritization. This imbalance reduces overall efficiency and highlights a gap between awareness and implementation. The findings also reveal that involvement in non-academic activities contributes to time

constraints, affecting academic focus and productivity. Effective time management has been widely recognized as essential for improving academic performance, enhancing productivity, and reducing stress among students. However, many students struggle to apply these skills consistently. Overall, the study emphasizes that time management is not limited to task completion but requires a combination of planning, prioritization, and disciplined execution. Strengthening structured time management practices is therefore essential to improve academic outcomes and prepare students for professional responsibilities.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations are suggested to improve time management practices among Interior Design students. Students should be encouraged to develop structured timetables that include academic, personal, and other responsibilities to ensure balanced time allocation. Preparing daily or weekly checklists of tasks can help in organizing work systematically and tracking progress. It is also important for students to prioritize assignments based on deadlines and importance, enabling timely completion of tasks. Students should be guided to utilize free time within college hours effectively, such as completing assignments during breaks, to reduce workload outside class. Identifying periods of high energy and alertness and scheduling demanding tasks during these times can enhance productivity. Additionally, students should be motivated to initiate assignments early rather than postponing work until deadlines. The use of digital tools and applications can further support efficient task management and organization. At the same time, students should maintain a healthy routine by ensuring adequate sleep and engaging in leisure activities to avoid burnout. Peer learning and academic support should also be encouraged, where students can seek help from peers and faculty members when facing difficulties. Overall, adopting these strategies can significantly improve students' ability to manage time effectively and enhance their academic performance.

The present study is limited to a specific sample and location; therefore, future research can be extended to a larger and more diverse population across different institutions and disciplines. Further studies may explore factors influencing time management, such as stress, academic workload, and digital distractions. Comparative studies across academic streams can provide deeper insights into discipline-specific challenges. Additionally, experimental research can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of time management training programs. Longitudinal studies may also help in understanding changes in time management skills over time and their impact on academic performance.

REFERENCES:

1. Adams, R. V., & Blair, E. (2019). Impact of time management behaviors on undergraduate students' performance. *SAGE Open*, 9(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018824506>
2. Britton, B. K., & Tesser, A. (1991). Effects of time-management practices on college grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(3), 405–410. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.83.3.405>
3. Claessens, B. J. C., Van Eerde, W., Rutte, C. G., & Roe, R. A. (2007). A review of the time management literature. *Personnel Review*, 36(2), 255–276. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480710726136>
4. Macan, T. H. (1994). Time management: Test of a process model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(3), 381–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.79.3.381>
5. Misra, R., & McKean, M. (2000). College students' academic stress and its relation to their anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction. *American Journal of Health Studies*, 16(1), 41–51.
6. Pintrich, P. R. (2004). A conceptual framework for assessing motivation and self-regulated learning in college students. *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(4), 385–407.
7. Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53–55. <https://doi.org/10.5116/ijme.4dfb.8dfd>
8. Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory Into Practice*, 41(2), 64–70.