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## **THIRD YEAR PUBLIC HEALTH MAJORS' TIME MANAGEMENT AT UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC HEALTH, VIETNAM**

*Abstract: time management is the key to perfectly organizations, there for be the key to great success in life. Time is an abstract value that people can easily slip out the most precious moment in a blink of an eye. To manage such a complex object can be difficult task for youngster without experiment in real life, especially college students. This study gives a general look into third-year Public health majors' time management and their corresponding to their time schedule. A monolingual questionnaire was designed to generally survey student's time managing skills as well as some relevant factors that may link to their behaviors towards time management. It has been revealed that a number of students still haven't in total control of managing time with the lack of essential methods. In addition, procrastination, interruption and disorganization seemed to be the main factors that influenced many students' management of time. In the recommendation, techniques are suggested to help students organize work and schedule better, also methods to stop procrastinating and improve their time management.*

*Аннотация: рациональное использование времени – это ключ к идеальной организации, а, следовательно, и ключ к огромному успеху в жизни. Время – абстрактная ценность, которое незаметно пролетает в самые лучшие моменты жизни. Студентам очень сложно управлять временем из-за нехватки опыта в реальной жизни. Исследование подробно описывает, как студенты третьего курса в институте общественного здравоохранения распределяют время и их отношение к расписанию. Разработана анкета на одном языке для подробного опроса студентов о рациональном использовании времени и некоторых соответствующих факторов, которые помогли бы понять поведение студентов во время их организации рабочего времени. Установлено, что определенное число*

*студентов не могут эффективно использовать свое время, из-за незнания важных методик. Более того, медлительность, постороннее вмешательство и дезорганизация являются главными причинами неправильного распределения времени. В работе представлены рекомендации для более эффективной организации рабочего времени.*

**Keywords:** *time management, college students, procrastination, interruption, disorganization.*

**Ключевые слова:** *рациональное использование времени, студенты колледжа, медлительность, вмешательство, дезорганизация.*

### *Introduction*

Time management is not only planning working or studying time but also leisure time. Using a correct method can provide a suitable timetable that balance one's work task and health as well. Understanding the importance of time management is essential for everyone. A complete control of the amount of time and all of the tasks would enable a person to choose their priorities and set a deadline. Therefore, they can accomplish work within the set time limit. Time management is possible by understanding the theories, principles and techniques proposed by scholars and philosophers who have understood its significance.

Vilfredo Pareto was an Italian economist and philosopher who formulated 80–20 rule: «80% of productivity came from 20% of working employees, this 20% comprised the most efficient people who conducted their work within a specific span of time, thereby contributing to high rate of productivity». The 80–20 rule could be applied everywhere where time plays a major role to uplift productivity and success of organizations. The key of this theory is that 20% of your work produces real net result. Focusing and planning to complete your tasks within that 20% of time can help you expand your ways and methods to manage your time logically.

Maslow's time management theory [5], also known as the theory of hierarchy of needs, effectively combined time management with everyone needs. The theory includes a hypothetical pyramid where the physiological level needs (food, water, shelter, etc.) are put at the base of the pyramid while self-determination was placed on

the top. In between these two extreme levels, safety, human bonding and self-esteem are positioned. The 5 levels were examples of different strata of human life. The theory doesn't specify the time period required all 5 levels, but it actually helps to understand the importance of these elements. Once understanding all needs, a person can differentiate between them and set a time period to fulfill their tasks.

The pickle jar theory [3] gives us a closer look into involving factors to one's time management. The final result indicates that your life is mostly full of major responsibilities which need more time to achieve. There are interferences such as hobbies – which require lesser time than the real goals and chores – which occur on a daily base within your juggling between goals and hobbies. Lastly, the theory introduces the distractive force in your life that can take away your attention from the path of achieving one's goals. The major factors that have negative effects on time managing ability are proven more precisely in other researches: procrastination – «the act of putting off something that needs to be done» [1], interruptions [7], and disorganization [13].

Pintrich et.al's study in 1991 [10] indicated that time management involves scheduling, planning, and managing one's study time. «As a college student, you will quickly learn that time management is an important key not only to success but to survival» [2]. Responding to this, a great number of research and study have been conducted in this area. There are several elements important to successful time management. These include setting realistic goals and setting aside blocks of time to study as well as effectively using that study time [10]. In addition to using good time management strategies, research indicates that those who practice good time management are clearer about what they are doing and perceive that they perform better as a result [12].

In this research, three major factors affecting third year Public Health majors' time managing ability are explored. The purpose is to find out their problems and give them recommendations for better time management.

### *Method*

### *Participants*

Participants include 100 third year Public Health students at Hanoi University of Public Health. Participants are college age, mostly 19 and 20, predominately female and suburbs origin (due to enrolled conditions of the university). All of the participants are chosen on voluntary basis.

#### *Time and places*

The survey was carried out at break time at Health Promotion's period for Public Health major third year students at Hanoi University of Public Health on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2010. A hundred students were then given the monolingual questionnaires and were left 5 minutes to read through all the questions. All queries from the surveyed students were responded satisfactorily. After that, they began to complete the questionnaires and all the handouts were collected after 30 minutes.

#### *Measures*

A set of monolingual questionnaire which consisted of 10 items was developed. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the techniques third year Public Health majors used to manage their time and the level of problems which several main factors caused to their ability of time management.

Since the purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of students' time management skills, the questionnaire used the time management questions from the subsection of the learning strategy section of the MSLQ to measure time management to be a valid measure. The MSLQ also has relatively good internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 in the time management subsection of the learning strategies section of the MSLQ [11].

#### *Time managing methods*

The independence variables are students' time managing methods. These include their choices of methods they employed in order to use time effectively (question 4–6), their attitude and behaviors towards time managing and planning (question 1–3).

#### *Contributing factors*

The dependence variables are the frequency which some contributing factors exerted negative influence on students' time managing which was then explored through the final five questions.

#### *Results and Discussion*

##### *1. Attitude toward time management.*

If students wish to gain success in managing time, it is essential for them to understand its importance. Thus, our study firstly examined their attitude toward time management.

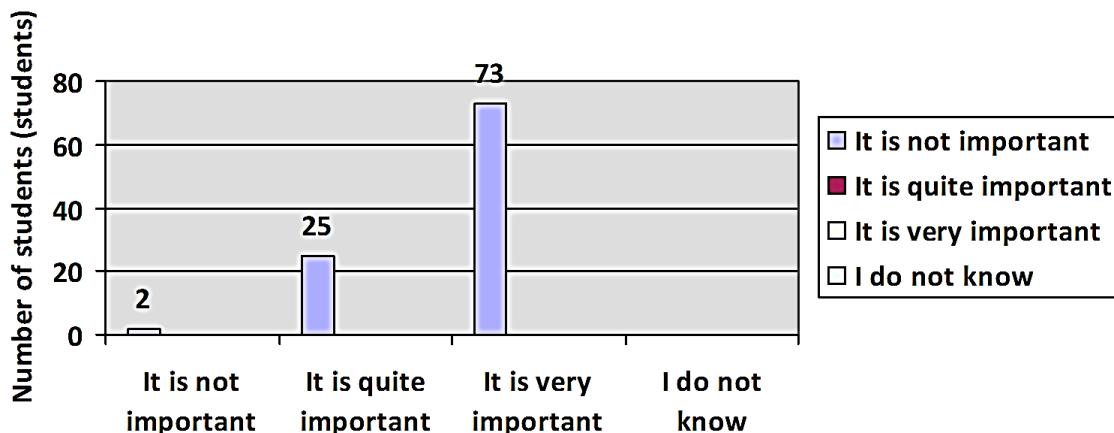


Chart 1. Chart of students' attitude toward time management

It appeared that all students were aware of time management and its function among life. As it was illustrated in the chart above, 73 students think time management as a very crucial tool in their life, taking up 73% in the whole. One in four students realizes time managing can be quite helpful. While most students know how important it is to their study in college, 2% of students claimed time management was not that well affective for themselves. It is well described that time managing plays quite significant role within students' point of view. This result was congruent with Paul's research finding that whether a student become successful in college or not depends on the way they manage their time. He even asserted: «That's why the management of time is the number-one skill to master in college» [8].

## 2. Time management techniques

*Table 1*  
*Frequency of using time management methods*

Methods	Frequency			
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Goal setting	10	42	42	25
Scheduling	17	19	46	18
Prioritizing	2	22	35	41

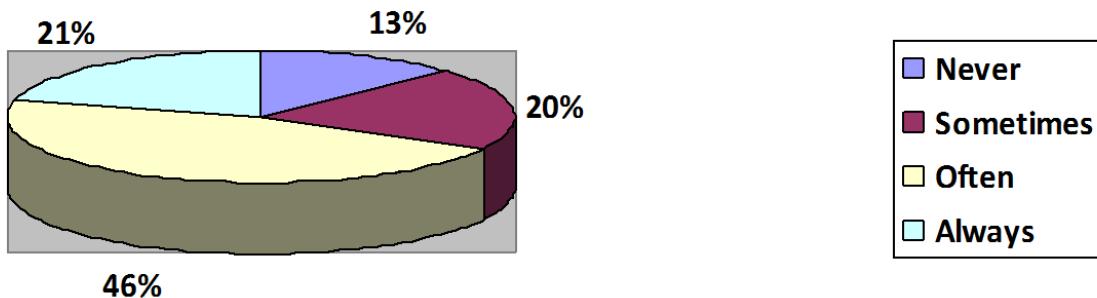
The table above demonstrates the frequency which students used three common techniques for effective time management. Such three techniques are researched and

tested the popular by research team to declare that these are the most common. Is it clear that overall, students are familiar with such techniques, but their using are various. Most students choose prioritizing as their «always» method. This infers the importance of prioritizing to college student and confirms by Montgomery, et al.'s statement: «The difference between success and failure is often the person's ability to organize and manage time and to set priorities» [6]. Meanwhile, of 100 students taking the survey, 25 claimed to always set goals for their study and 27 indicated schedule for schoolwork are their regular method. However, on the contrary, there were considerable numbers of respondents who have never tried setting goal (10), scheduling their activities (17), or prioritizing their work (2). The result raised a question of whether students have access to effective time management methods. Therefore, it is suggested that beside prioritization, there students should also make use of these two methods for better control over their time.

In the question, we also asked the students to provide how they'd apply these methods. The results are that 33 of them chose to write down their goals, schedules or priorities whereas the rest just keep the list in their head. The number of «bullet journals» or «planner» appeared frequently, inferring that these list keeping ways are quite popular among youngsters. For those whose choose to keep the lists on their head, we have an extra question asked whether they considered writing down to be better than just keeping in mind, we were given 70 «Yes» answers. That result inferred that even though most students think in the form of writing, managing can be a lot easier and effective, but refuse to do such. However, students are strongly advised to make written list of tasks they have to do since it is impossible to remember everything [13].

### *3. Time management problems*

#### *3.1. Students with time management problems*



*Chart 2. Chart of the frequency of students' time management problems*

The pie chart indicates the frequency of problems with managing time which students encountered. It can be seen that most of them were not completely in control of their time. It is significant that 46% of informants frequently have to face problems and 21% of respondents even admitted always having trouble. These findings called for changing in their behaviors and attitude toward time managements. In response to this, our investigation looked into three among major factors that are likely to blame for these problems: procrastination, interruption and disorganization.

### *3.2. Factors causing problems to time management.*

*Table 2*  
*Frequency of factors' influence*

Factors	Frequency of influence			
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Procrastination	12	45	43	0
Interruption	6	36	52	6
Disorganization	53	26	17	4

Regarding the matter of time management, these three factors seemed to have brought about problems to a great number of students. As can be seen from Table 2, within 100 subjects questioned, most students have experiences all three problems but with different frequency. Even none of the students claimed to always put a hold on their schoolwork or deadline, 43–45% of them admitted being a frequent procrastinator. Each of these 17 students can be considered to be «a chronic procrastinator: one who consistently puts off doing difficult, boring, or time-consuming task» [4]. In his study, Kanar also pointed out that it is natural to procrastinate once in

a while; however, it will be troublesome if procrastinator turns into a habit [4]. Hence, it is advisable that students try to figure out the causes of this action and change the way they act.

As twelve informants believed that they never put off their school assignments, half of that number of respondents claimed they were never interrupted during their self-study time. Nevertheless, over a half appeared to be interrupted at a frequent level. Interruptions such as social media, entertainments are very common to these students, as the generation is experiencing a significant internet explosion. Patterson also viewed in his work that phone calls, social network or drop-in visitors can be responsible for wasting our time. Thus, it is necessary for students to turn off their mobile phone and computer as well as request other people not to interrupt their self-study process.

Unlike procrastination and interruption, disorganization does not seem to have great influences on students, with more than half of them never have trouble with such. The results line accordingly to the number of students who schedule or prioritize their tasks. Being organized is a helpful tool to help student have access to all their work at once and arrange it within their time.

### *Conclusion*

In brief, this small-scale study pointed out the frequency of time management techniques use and the factors that have negative effects on 3<sup>rd</sup> year Public Health majors. It has been found out that they mostly considered effective time management to be important for their academic study. Moreover, students employed methods of prioritizing as an effective method besides goal setting and scheduling. Even though a third of them choose to put down their planning on paper, they seem to employ that very well. The research has also proved that a great number of students encountered problems with time management and they are affected by at least one of three factors: procrastination and interruption, disorganization. Procrastination is taking the lead cause for influencing students work. On the other hand, students are organizing their tasks and time pretty balanced, resulting disorganizations not to be a problem in this situation. It is suggested that students learn to apply all the techniques mentioned, try to become organized, avoid procrastinating and eliminate interruption during study time.

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