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Investigating the Factors that Affect Students to Manage their Time Properly

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ABSTRACT

In modern times, many students lack proper time management skills, making it crucial for them to develop this ability as a beneficial habit. The exploratory research encompassed 103 secondary, college, and university students. A valid and reliable survey was employed to gather information about the student population and address specific questions regarding time management. The results revealed that a significant percentage of students believe that the availability of suitable study spaces or environments influenced their capacity to adhere to their timetables. Furthermore, the study's findings shed light on various strategies for managing timetables and how the structure and flexibility of timetables directly impact overall time management.

1. Introduction

Time management is the course of regulating and managing the amount of your time on tasks to maximize productivity. It is also an ability to use your time effectively and skillfully by adjusting and organizing your tasks. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), effectively and beneficially regulating the time you have is known as time management. Punctuality, not procrastinating and productivity are the criteria of time management. As Benjamin Franklin said, "By failing to prepare, you are prepared to fail" (Wallen, 2013), this quote emphasizes the critical importance of time management, as it can significantly impact the success or failure of our endeavors. In our daily life, we frequently recognize the importance of time management, especially when we find ourselves surprised at how quickly time flies when we realize that we still have a lot of tasks left on our to-do lists. Additionally, time management is not limited to daily activities; it also profoundly affects our mental well-being. Academic stress can result in poor physical and mental health, including losing self-confidence (Nayak, 2019). Many of us have experienced anxiety and stress before bedtime, triggered by the burden of unfinished work, which directly impacts the quality of our sleep. What is surprising is that this often results from poor time management, a factor we may not immediately recognize. Furthermore, most people suffer from tension and anxiety when they feel overwhelmed by a lack of control over life's happenings and tight schedules, all stemming from inadequate time management. This phenomenon is not exclusive to a particular group; even university students commonly encounter it. Academic stress is related to students' poor time management skills and procrastination (Nayak, 2019). Numerous university students frequently find themselves lacking sufficient time to complete their homework, assignments, and projects, leading to significant stress. The mismatch between their study time and rest time hinders them from taking the right kind of breaks and effectively relieving stress. As Kearns and Gardiner indicate, lower stress levels will appear among students with more time management behaviors (as cited in Sigmar & Cooper, 2011, p.112). All these issues stem from poor time management. But why do students struggle to organize their time effectively? What factors contribute to their difficulties in managing their timetables? This journal aims to investigate and identify the numerous factors that lead students to mismanage their time.

2. Literature View

Investigating the factors that affect students to manage their time properly

As Gall (1988) stated time management plays a crucial role in students' academic performance and mental well-being (as cited in Macan et al., 1990). Having a well-structured timetable is essential for students to achieve good grades and maintain a healthy state of mind.

2.1 Lack of Self-Discipline

Lack of self-discipline is a major factor that affects students' time management (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). Most students lack self-discipline, which negatively affects their learning and adherence to schedules. Consequently, they fail to follow timetables, leading to missed deadlines and incomplete assignments. Additionally, many students prioritize momentary comfort over following their schedules, opting to play with their cell phones instead of completing after-school assignments. This behaviour indirectly results in accumulating unfinished tasks and heightened stress levels. Secondly part of

the reasons for students' lack of self-discipline includes a lack of motivation since students do not think their effort will help them achieve better academic performance (Carnegie Mellon University, n.d.). Initially, some students are inspired to create a schedule by studying bloggers or people they admire. However, as time goes on, their motivation wanes, causing them to deviate from the schedule and eventually give up. While they may start following the schedule due to momentary motivation, the lack of sustained enthusiasm results in the eventual abandonment of the timetable.

2.2 Influenced by electronic devices

Another secondary factor that hinders students from managing their time effectively is their susceptibility to electronic devices. In the 21st century, electronic products like cell phones, computers, and gaming consoles have become ubiquitous. While technology has undoubtedly improved convenience in people's lives, it has also indirectly made them dependent on it. The persuasive presence of social media and the internet has made cell phones an inseparable part of people's daily lives, and the introduction of various captivating games has further intensified this reliance, especially among college students. Among all demographic categories of Internet users, college students have been deemed as one of the most vulnerable to developing Internet addiction (Yeap et al., 2015). Undoubtedly, electronic devices have introduced various harmful habits into our daily lives, and one of these is the detrimental impact on students' time management due to constant distractions. Social media, messaging apps, and certain video games act as persistent distractions, making it exceedingly difficult for students to concentrate on their studies (Kim et al., 2019, as cited in Sifat, 2021) and adhere to their schedules. Regardless of whether they are working on crucial assignments or tasks, the constant temptation to check their phones disrupts their organizational efforts and hinders effective time management. Moreover, procrastination has emerged as another negative habit resulting from excessive use of electronic devices. As Oswal, Pal, Patel, Doshi, and Gandhi find out that the masses of entertainment apps and social media sites have been argued to hinder learning and promote procrastination (as cited in Faimau et al., 2022). While these devices offer entertainment and leisure activities for most students, improper or chronic usage can lead to intentional procrastination through excessive internet browsing, leading to missed deadlines and a failure to meet planned schedules. Procrastination leads to several consequences, including accumulating numerous assignments and being unable to complete or submit them within the given time, resulting in increased stress and unsatisfactory grades.

2.3 Sleep late

Sleeping late is the third factor that affects students' ability to professionally manage their time. Insufficient sleep will lead to poor academic performance and impact studies (Hershner & Chervin, 2014, p.7). The impact of poor sleep includes inattention, mental tension, and a lack of wakefulness. Sleep deprivation negatively affects our productivity during the day, making it challenging to stay focused on tasks and absorb knowledge while reading. Although we know of the need to attend school the next day, we often find it difficult to control ourselves from staying up late, leading to exhaustion and reduced productivity throughout the day. Late sleep can also result in poor decision-making (Salfi et al., 2020). For instance, students may struggle to make rational choices, such as deciding whether to take a nap or prioritize important tasks. This difficulty in effectively prioritizing tasks leads to unproductive time allocation, impacting their overall productivity.
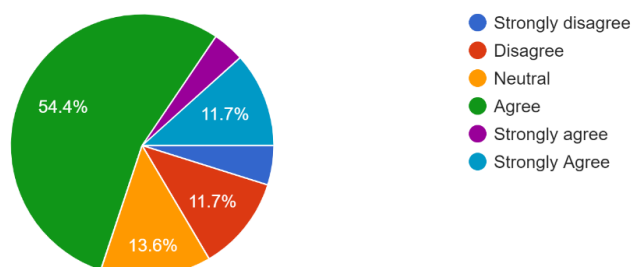
3.0 Research Findings

Questionnaires

Figure 1: External distractions affect the ability to manage time effectively.

I think external distractions (e.g., social media, and friends) affect my ability to manage my time effectively.
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
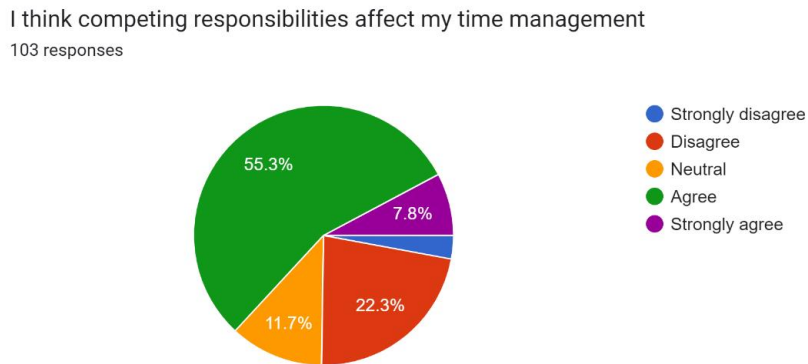- Strongly Agree

54.4% | 11.7% | 11.7% | 13.6%

According to question 1, responders were asked whether external distractions affect their ability to manage their time effectively. Only 15.6% of responders agree that external distractions affect their ability to manage time effectively. Almost 54.4% agree, and 4.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 2: Confident in prioritizing tasks and activities within a timetable.

I am confident in prioritizing tasks and activities within a timetable
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agreee
- Strongly agree

51.5%
17.5% 22.3%

According to question 2, responders were asked whether they are confident in prioritizing tasks and activities within a timetable. Only 4.9% of responders are confident in prioritizing tasks. Almost 51.5% agree, and 3.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 3: Competing responsibilities affect time management.

I think competing responsibilities affect my time management
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

55.3%
7.8%
11.7% 22.3%

According to question 3, responders were asked whether competing responsibilities affect my time management. Only 7.8% of responders strongly agree with competing responsible affect their time management. Almost 55.3% agree, and 2.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 4: Confident in handling unexpected changes or disruptions to the timetable.

I am confident in handling unexpected changes or disruptions to my timetable
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
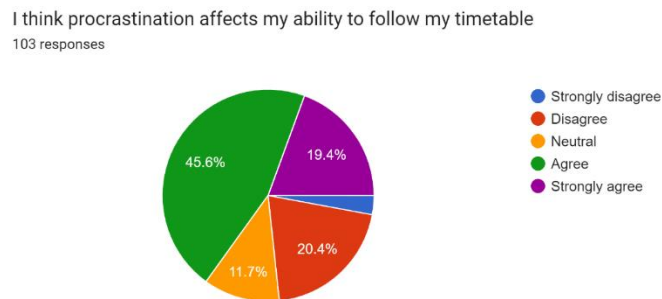- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

45.6%
13.6%
35%
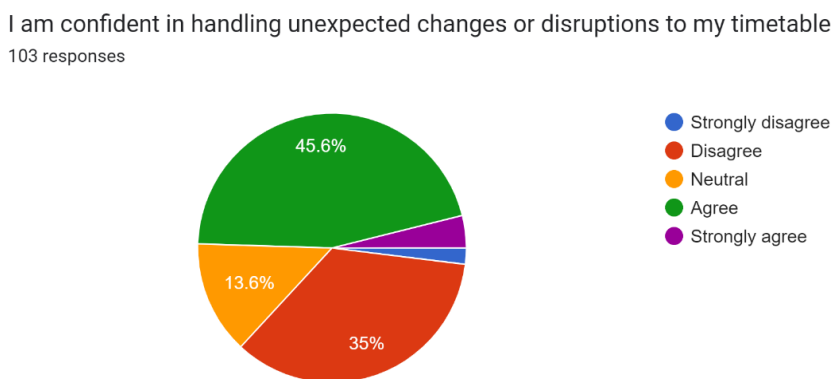
According to question 4, responders were asked whether they are confident in handling unexpected changes or disruptions to their timetable. Only 3.9% of responders are confident to handle unexpected changes to their timetable. Almost 45.6% agree, and 1.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 5: Time management skills are effective for the academic workload.

I think my time management skills are effective for my academic workload
103 responses

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

54.4% | 9.7% | 22.3% | 11.7%

According to question 5, responders were asked whether their time management skills were effective for their academic workload. Only 9.7% of responders are confident in their time management for their academic workload. Almost 54.4% agree, and 1.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 6: Procrastination affects the ability to follow the timetable.

I think procrastination affects my ability to follow my timetable
103 responses

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

45.6% | 19.4% | 20.4% | 11.7%

According to question 6, responders were asked whether procrastination affects their ability to follow the timetable. Only 19.4% of responders strongly agree that procrastination affects their ability to follow their timetable. Almost 45.6% agree, and 2.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 7: Good at allocating time for studying and completing assignments within the timetable.

I think I am good at allocating time for studying and completing assignments within my timetable
103 responses

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

42.7% | 12.6% | 32%
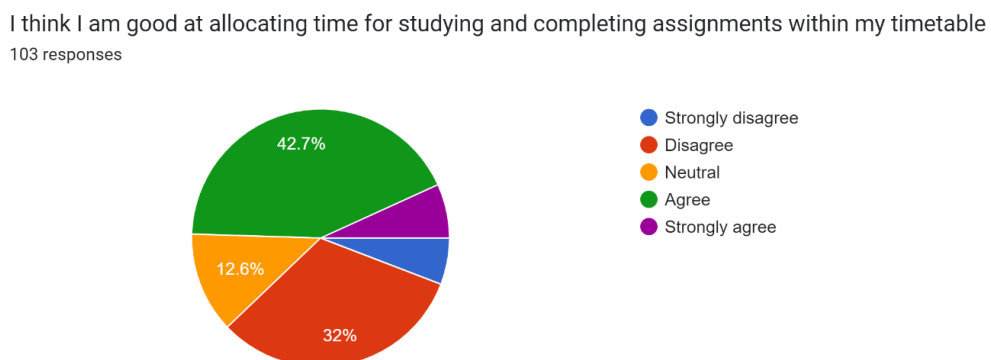
According to question 7, responders were asked whether confident in allocating time for studying and completing assignments within their timetable. Only 6.8% of responders were confident in allocating time for studying and completing assignments within the timetable. Almost 42.7% agree, and 5.8% strongly disagree.

Figure 8: Social commitments or obligations interfere with the timetable study time.

I think social commitments or obligations interfere with my timetable study time
103 responses
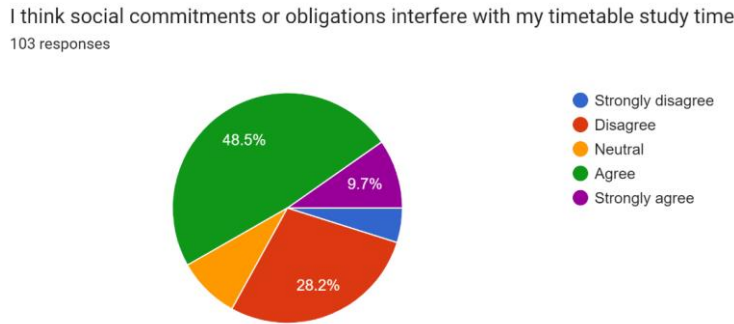
According to question 8, responders were asked whether social commitments or obligations interfere with their timetable study time. Only 9.7% of responders were confident that social commitments or obligations do not interfere with their timetable study time Almost 48.5% agree, and 4.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 9: The availability of resources (e.g., study materials, library access) impacts timetable management.

I think the availability of resources (e.g., study materials, library access) impact my timetable management
103 responses
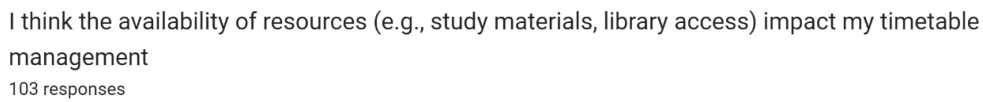
According to question 9, responders were asked whether resource availability impacts their timetable management. Only 8.7% of responders strongly agree that the availability of resources impacts their timetable management. Almost 43.7% agree, and 4.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 10: Confident at estimate the time required for various tasks and activities in the timetable.

I am confident at estimate the time required for various tasks and activities in my timetable
103 responses
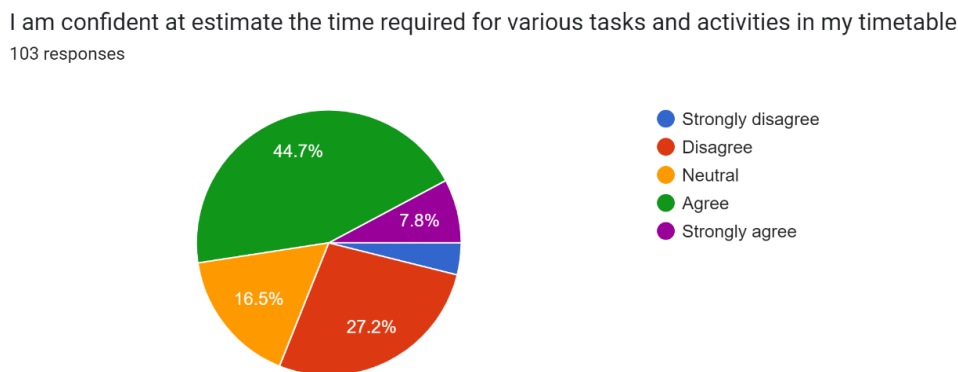
According to question 10, responders were asked whether confident at estimate the time required for various tasks and activities in their timetable. Only 7.8% of responders were confident at estimate the time required for various tasks and activities in their timetable. Almost 44.7% agree, and 3.9% strongly disagree.

Figure 11: Personal factors, such as fatigue or mood, will affect adherence to the timetable

I think personal factors, such as fatigue or mood, affect my adherence to my timetable
103 responses
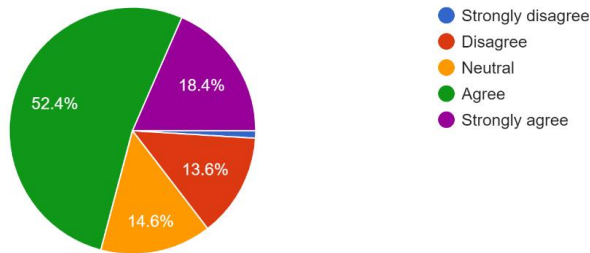
According to Question 11, respondents were asked whether personal factors, such as fatigue or mood, will affect adherence to the timetable. 18.4% of respondents strongly agree, 52.4% agree, 12.9% are neutral, and the remaining 13.6% and 1% felt that personal factors would not affect their adherence to the timetable.

Figure 12: Confident in handling time pressure or tight deadlines within the timetable

I am confident in handling time pressure or tight deadlines within my timetable
103 responses
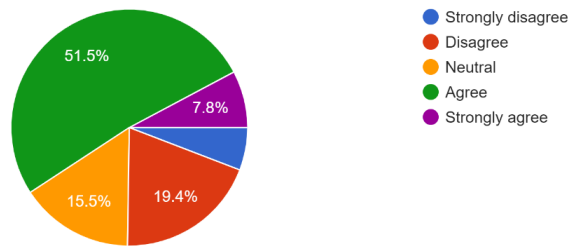
According to Question 12, respondents were asked whether they were confident in handling time pressure or tight deadlines within the timetable. 7.8% and 51.5% of respondents are confident in handling time pressure or tight deadlines within the timetable, 13.9% of respondents are neutral and the remaining 19.4% and 5.8% of respondents are not confident in handling time pressure or tight deadlines within the timetable.

Figure 13: Effectively using technology or productivity tools to manage the timetable

I think I am effectively using technology or productivity tools to manage my timetable
103 responses
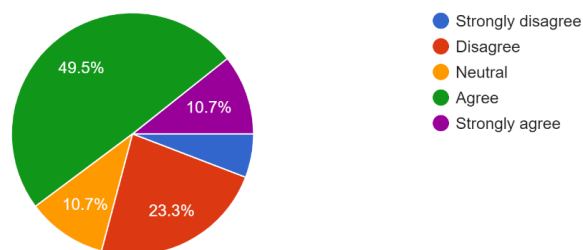
Question 13 asked respondents whether they effectively used technology or productivity tools to manage the timetable. 10.7% and 49.5% of respondents are effectively using technology or productivity tools to manage their timetable, 10.7% are neutral and the remaining 23.3% and 5.8% of respondents are not effectively using technology or productivity tools to manage their timetable.

Figure 14: The structure and flexibility of the timetable impact overall time management

I think the structure and flexibility of my timetable impact my overall time management
103 responses

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

58.3% / 9.7% / 17.5% / 11.7%
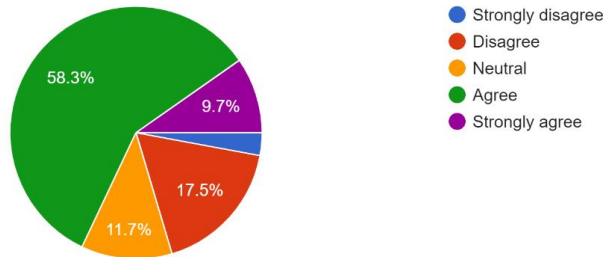
According to Question 14, respondents were asked whether the structure and flexibility of the timetable impacted their overall time management. 9.7% and 58.3% of respondents agree that the structure and flexibility of the timetable impacted their overall time management, 9.9% of respondents are neutral, and the remaining 17.5% and 2.9% of respondents felt that the structure and flexibility of the timetable did not impact their overall time management.

Figure 15: Often experience conflicts between extracurricular activities and scheduled study time

I often experience conflicts between extracurricular activities and my scheduled study time
103 responses

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

45.6% / 7.8% / 13.6% / 30.1%
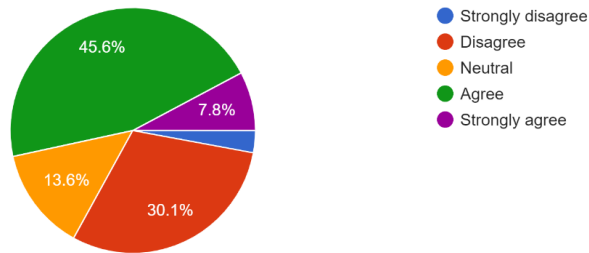
According to Question 15, respondents were asked whether they often experience conflicts between extracurricular activities and scheduled study time. 7.8% and 45.6% of respondents agree that they often experience conflicts between extracurricular activities and their scheduled study time, 13.6% of respondents are neutral, and the remaining 30.1% and 2.9% of respondents said they do not often encounter conflicts between extracurricular activities and scheduled study time.

Figure 16: Confident at communicate the timetable needs and constraints with others (e.g., family, friends, and professors)
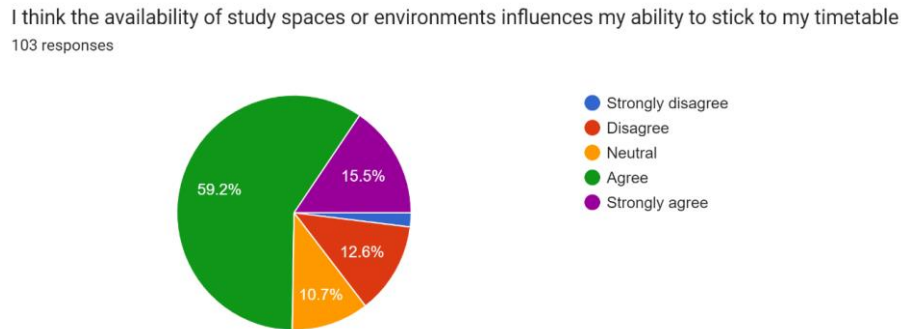

I am confident at communicate my timetable needs and constraints with others (e.g., family, friends, and professors).
103 responses

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
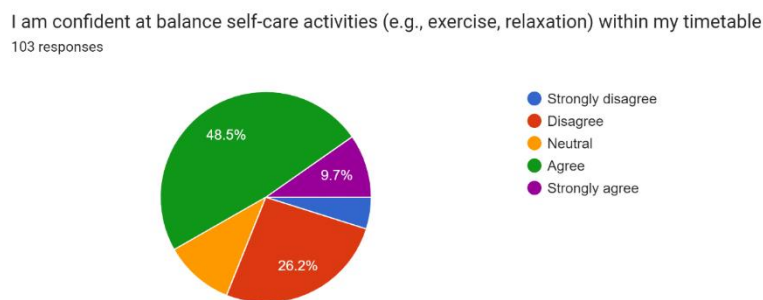- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

49.5% / 31.1%
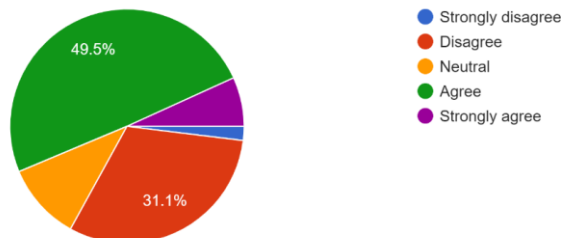
According to Question 16, respondents were asked whether they were confident at communicating their timetable needs and constraints with others (e.g., family, friends, and professors). 6.8% and 49.5% of respondents were confident at communicate their timetable needs and constraints with others, 10.7% are neutral, and the remaining 31.1% and 1.9% of respondents expressed no confidence in communicating their timetable needs and constraints with others.

Figure 17: The availability of study spaces or environments influences the ability to stick to the timetable

I think the availability of study spaces or environments influences my ability to stick to my timetable
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
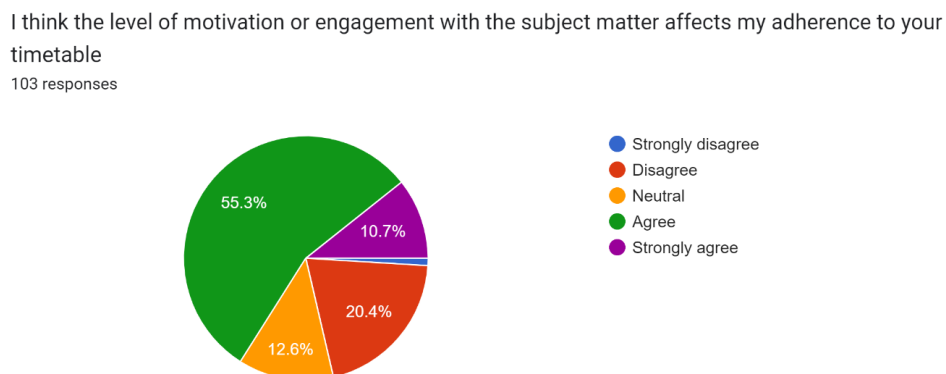
59.2%
15.5%
12.6%
10.7%

According to Question 17, respondents were asked whether the availability of study spaces or environments influences the ability to stick to the timetable. Almost 59.2% and 15.5% of respondents agree that the availability of study spaces or environments will influence their ability to stick to their timetable, 10.7% are neutral, and the remaining 12.6% and 1.9% of respondents felt that the availability of study spaces or environments would not influence their ability to stick to their timetable.

Figure 18: Confident at balance self-care activities (e.g., exercise, relaxation) within my timetable

I am confident at balance self-care activities (e.g., exercise, relaxation) within my timetable
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
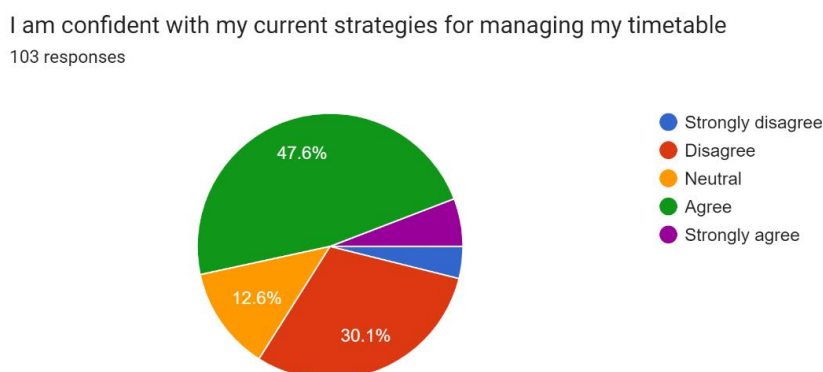- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

48.5%
9.7%
26.2%

According to Question 18, respondents were asked about whether they have confidence in balance self-care activities (e.g., exercise, relaxation) within their timetable. 9.7% and 48.5% of respondents are confident at balance self-care activities (e.g., exercise, relaxation) within their timetable, 10.7% are neutral, and the remaining 26.2% and 4.9% of respondents expressed they are not confident at balance self-care activities (e.g., exercise, relaxation) within their timetable.

Figure 19: The level of motivation or engagement with the subject matter affects adherence to the timetable

I think the level of motivation or engagement with the subject matter affects my adherence to your timetable
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

55.3%
10.7%
20.4%
12.6%

According to Question 19, respondents were asked whether the level of motivation or engagement with the subject matter affects their adherence to their timetable. Almost 10.7% and 55.3% of respondents agree the level of motivation or engagement with the subject matter will affect adherence to their timetable, 12.6% are neutral, and the remaining 20.4% and 1% of respondents felt that the level of motivation or engagement with the subject matter would not affect adherence to their timetable.

Figure 20: Confident with current strategies for managing the timetable

I am confident with my current strategies for managing my timetable
103 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

According to Question 20, respondents were asked whether they were confident with current strategies for managing their timetable. 5.8% and 47.6% of respondents are confident with current strategies for managing their timetable, 12.6% are neutral, and the remaining 30.1% and 3.9% of respondents felt not confident with current strategies for managing their timetable.

4.0 Conclusion

Time management is a skill that enables you to use your time effectively, prioritize important tasks and organize your time to achieve work-life equality. However, following a timetable requires a positive mindset and strong self-discipline. In this study, we investigated the factors that influence students to manage their time. In the survey used for this study, many students were unable to responsibly manage their time due to external distractions such as electronic devices, fatigue, environment, stress, and procrastination. Additionally, we believe that time management can be enhanced by going to bed early to reduce fatigue, planning activities outside of school, keeping an open mind and improving procrastination. Time management is always one of the most important tracks toward success and happiness in life. Time management can alleviate the stress and anxiety we experience from unfinished tasks while feeling fulfilled in life and enjoying the subsequent satisfaction that comes from self-discipline.

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