

Personal Skills and Organizational Skills; Time Management Among Managers of Zabol Medical Sciences University in 2015

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ABSTRACT

Background: Time management skills are a determining factor in a manager's success. These skills comprise a wide range of activities including planning, scoping, analyzing spent time, monitoring, organizing, scheduling, and prioritizing. This study investigated the relationship between the personal and organizational time management skills of managers at Zabol Medical Sciences University.

Methods: This descriptive-analytical study was conducted in 2015. The study's statistical population included all managers of hospitals and centers covered by Zabol Medical Sciences University. A total of 75 managers were selected for participation using the simple random sampling method, and the response rate was 93%. Data was gathered using a two-part questionnaire composed by the researcher. The first part of the questionnaire measured personal time management skills, and the second part measured the organizational skill of time management and six dimensions of it.

Results: The findings showed that even though the relationship between interpersonal skills and organizational skills of time management is a positive one with a 0.45 correlation coefficient, the mean interpersonal and organizational skills of time management scores of managers, both male and female, undergraduate and high school level, had no significant statistical differences.

Conclusion: Time management is one principle of management; it requires special organizational and individual skills and plays an important role in improving leadership and organizational productivity. Thus, it is essential that all centers and organizations of a country, especially educational and health centers, put considerable focus on this issue.

Key words: Time Management, Personal Skill, Organizational Skill

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Introduction

Time and its dimensions are important structures in organizational psychology; they are the rarest resources and, if used properly, they create early and favorable changes in all organizational pillars (1, 2). Webber believes that time is a rare and important resource for organizations. Time management refers to a whole range of skills, tools, and techniques used to manage the time needed to do specific tasks, complete projects, and achieve goals. The issue of time management includes a wide range of activities, including planning, scoping, analyzing spent time, organizing, scheduling, and prioritizing (3).

Managers and professionals in the field of health work in a high-pressure environment and must have effective leadership and management skills, one of which is time management. The broad concept of this skill in various managerial and administrative fields correlates with improvement in performance quality, and its application can reduce or eliminate much of the daily work pressure faced by managers, especially in the field of health (4, 5).

Today, the importance of time management as a determinant of success is increasing. Experts believe that preventing the waste of time and controlling time spent can increase managerial skills, maintain human resources, reduce stress, and improve the mental health of managers (6).

Time management was first introduced as a way to deal effectively with the various aspects of working time in the late 1950s and included techniques such as goal-setting, converting goals into action, planning, and prioritizing (3). Experts believe that one of the necessary conditions for managers to be effective is that they apply time management. Lockett asserted that time management is key in self-governance and effectiveness. He considered controlling time as a crucial matter for any manager who wants to achieve fundamental results in his/her work (7).

Most managers complain about workloads and a lack of time, while the main issues that hurt them may be lack of planning and division of time. Some managers consider the factors of wasting

time to be a lack of the power to say no, a lack of delegation options (even in principles and logical cases), unnecessary and lengthy phone conversations, and engaging in minor and unimportant matters.

Time management allows managers to make better use of time and prevent energy waste in an organization. To better manage time, having the proper understanding of applied methods of time management is very important. One of the important factors in this context is understanding goals and keeping them up-to-date (8). If managers want to effectively use time in the workplace, they must have coordinated and regular scheduling, and they should react against the waster of time. The first step to doing this is having better control over time and how it is spent (9). According to studies conducted by professionals of time management, time management skills can be divided into two general categories: individual (personal) skills and organizational skills.

Personal time management skills include some public patterns of behavior that most ordinary people use in their personal and family lives. In fact, one environment in which this skill is applied is the private, familial environment of a person. The organizational skill of time management is only allocated to people who are responsible for managing an organization; it includes those skills that a manager applies for the optimal use of time, to achieve the organization's objectives, and in relation to the performance of his/her professional duties (10, 11).

Stopping the waste of time and controlling time can enhance management capabilities, maintain human resources, reduce stress, and improve the mental health of managers (6). With rising expectations and new technologies that impose even greater expectations on personnel, time management in the workplace and organization become increasingly difficult. Therefore, it is essential to be up-to-date on time management skills, and identifying the latest methods and newest developments in this field is necessary in order to obtain maximum performance each business day (12).



The issue of time management has been considered in developed countries with expansive industries in a more obvious form, such that employees in these countries were working three shifts so as to create a dynamic economy. However, in developing countries, the issue of time management and the meaning and concept of time has been forgotten, there is no control of time, and people carry out their tasks without a plan or schedule (13).

Unfortunately, the use of time has not improved. Furthermore, the wasting of time has continued in the private lives of persons and in centers, organizations, and industries to such a degree that, despite some improvements in living conditions, the proper use of time has not yet been instituted in Iran. In fact, Iranians consume millions of hours of time both day and night in vain. To make effective use of time and increase the efficiency of an organization, its managers must coordinate and regulate scheduling and react against time waster(s). The first step to achieving better control over time is to determine how it must be spent (9). Moreover, an appropriate time environment can be created by precise organization, and planning of activities and tasks that will both satisfy the individual and realize the organizational objectives of the staff (14). The current study investigated the relationship between the individual and organizational time management skills of managers at Zabol Medical University. The results of this research will be helpful in identifying more efficient and effective managers. It may further be able to bring about greater productivity in organizations, especially hospitals.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive-analytical study was conducted in 2015. The statistical population included all managers at the Medical Sciences and Health Services of Zabol University working in the departments of Training and Research, Student and Culture, Development and Management of Human Resources, and in the Imam Ali (AS) and Imam Khomeini hospitals in Zabol and the Seyedolshohada Hospital in Zehak from which 15,

9, 16, 14, 12, and 9 persons, respectively, were randomly selected based on the number of employees in the named organizations.

In total, 75 people were selected using the simple random sampling method and based on information received from the Department of Development and Management. A two-part questionnaire composed by the researcher was used for data collection. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to evaluate personal time management skills and consisted of two sections: the first requested demographic information from the respondents, and the second contained questions aimed at measuring personal time management skills. The second part of the questionnaire included questions designed to measure the organizational skill of time management and its dimensions (prioritizing goals and activities, targeting, operational planning, meeting management, communication management, and delegation of options).

This questionnaire used a five-item Likert scale with scores ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". It was given to a number of professors and experts in the fields of health services management and hospital management to validate, and the questions in both parts of the questionnaire were examined. Inaudible questions were modified or removed before being approved. The questionnaire's reliability was also confirmed using the test-retest method; the first questionnaire was given to a team of 10 randomly selected managers, and the scale was given to the same studied group two weeks later.

The first part of the questionnaire was comprised of 25 questions related to personal time management skills. The second part contained 35 questions related to the organizational skill of time management and its dimensions. After analyzing the data, the correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of the two tests; the reliability coefficients for the first and second parts of the questionnaire were 91% and 89%, respectively. Together, the two parts of the questionnaire were deemed significant at a level of 0.001. After the



completed questionnaires were collected and data was extracted, the information was entered into the SPSS₁₈ software; descriptive statistical tests, the independent *t*-test, and Spearman correlation coefficients were used to analyze the data.

Further, in the current study all ethical issues were observed based on the Helsinki Declaration.

Results

Seventy managers completed the study questionnaire (response rate = 93%). The average age of participants was 35.4 ± 8.3 years; 63% ($n = 44$) were male and 37% ($n = 26$) were female. Of the managers, 64.3% were single, and 25.7% had a graduate level education. About 93% of managers (65 people) were Contractual and formal, and the highest frequency of work experience was between 5-10 years. The correlation rate between personal time management skills and organizational skills among managers equaled 0.45. This correlation coefficient was significant at $P\text{-value} < 0.001$ (Table 1). The correlation showed that there is a direct, positive relationship between individual and organizational time management skills. This means that an increase in the personal time management skills score is associated with an increase in the organizational skills scores.

The Spearman correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between individual time management skills and its organizational dimensions among the managers of Zabol Medical Sciences University. The highest relationship rates were determined to be between the individual skill of time management and its goal setting dimensions (44%) and prioritizing goals and activities (39%), and the lowest or weakest relationship was observed between the dimension

of operational planning (-0.001) and personal time management skills. These results suggest that the relationship between personal time management skills with goal setting dimensions and prioritizing goals and activities is significant at the level of $P\text{-value} < 0.001$, but no significant relationship was observed between personal time management skills and the dimension of operational planning (Table 2).

Average scores of personal skill and time management skill were compared in terms of gender and educational level using the independent *t* test. As shown in Table 3, the results indicated that there was no difference between male and female managers in either personal skills or organizational skills of time management. Thus, it can be concluded that gender has no effect on either the individual or the organizational time management skills of a manager.

The average scores of personal and organizational time management skills were compared in terms of education level using the independent *t*-test. As shown in Table 3, no significant difference in personal time management skills was found between managers with undergraduate educations and those with graduate degrees. The results also showed that, despite the organizational skills of managers with a higher education level, those with a Bachelor's degree (139.02) scored higher than those with a Master's degree (119.06); however, the difference was not significant. In conclusion, the results showed that neither gender nor educational level affects individual or organizational time management skills (Table 3).

Table 1. Correlation coefficient between the interpersonal and organizational time management skills of managers

Variable	Organizational time management skill	P
Individual time management skill	0.48	$< 0.001^*$

*Significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 2.** Correlation coefficient between the individual and organizational time management skill rates of managers

	Aspects of organizational time management skill					
	Targeting	Communication management	Time management	Prioritizing goals and activities	Operational planning	Delegation of options
Individual time Management skill	0.44	0.28	0.19	0.39	-0.001	0.04
P	< 0.001*	< 0.098*	< 0.094*	< 0.001*	< 0.87	< 0.56

*Significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3. Comparison of average individual and organizational time management skills scores in terms of gender and education level

	Gender		Education level	
	Women Mean \pm SD	Men Mean \pm SD	Bachelor degree Mean \pm SD	Upper Bachelor degree Mean \pm SD
individual time management skill	89.68 \pm 7.32	93.38 \pm 7.96	101.58 \pm 7.09	109.68 \pm 8.11
organizational time management skill	114.39 \pm 8.55	127.43 \pm 9.31	119.73 \pm 6.37	139.02 \pm 9.89
P	< 0.45		< 0.58	

*Significant at the 0.05 level

Discussion

Time management holds a special place in Management Science. By following time management strategies and techniques, the efficiency and productivity of an organization can be increased. Moreover, with the proper utilization of time and correct scheduling of activities, the waste of time and increases in costs in an organization can be prevented. Managers contend that they do not have enough time to do their jobs. However, time is absolutely at their disposal, and what they lack is actually the necessary skills to adjust their time management and scheduling of activities (15). The current study investigated the relationship between personal time management skills and organizational skills and six related dimensions of managers at Zabol Medical Sciences University.

The results identified a positive, direct relationship between individual and organizational time management skills (0.45). A positive relationship was also seen between personal time management skills and the two dimensions of

organizational skills, i.e. targeting and prioritization of goals and activities. These relationships were significant at the level of P-value < 0.001. No significant relationship was seen with other dimensions. The results of this study are consistent with those of studies by Mackenzie, Haynes, Rezvanieh, and Hafezi.

The reason for this consistency could be that general time management skills in one's personal life helps with the special skill of time management in one's organizational life. In other words, a manager who cares about time and its management in his/her private life and applies his/her skills in his/her organizational and working life manages and controls the time environment properly (11). In a study conducted by Hafezi et al.(16), the dimensions of prioritization of objectives and activities and communication management had the highest correlation with personal time management skills that, in terms of the prioritizing objectives dimension, are consistent with the findings of the current study.

Hafezi et al .(16), also evaluated the averages of



organizational and personal time management skills in terms of gender using the independent t test. Their results, like those of the current study, showed that gender had no effect on either the level of individual skills or organizational time management skills. The findings of the current study are not consistent with those obtained by Habib Zadeh (17) who indicated that, although there is no positive relationship between personal and organizational time management skills, the average scores for personal skills and some dimensions of organizational skills of time management are significantly statistically different between male and female managers.

The current study compared individual and organizational time management skills in terms of gender. The results showed no significant difference in the average scores of male and female managers. This result, however, is not consistent with those achieved in studies by Strang and Momen Salehi, but it is consistent with the studies of Walker and Parkhurst (18, 19).

The results of a study conducted by Mohammadian et al. (15), showed that there is a significant positive relationship between individual and organizational time management skills in managers. Their study determined that the mean scores of a manager's organizational skills increased with each increase in the scores of personal time management skills. These findings are fully consistent with those of the current study. Khaddam et al.(20), showed that subjects often use the organization and goal setting dimensions. This finding is consistent with the findings of the current study from the goal setting dimension.

In a study conducted by Katbi et al. (21), it was found that women's use of time management skills were significantly higher than men's use; this result is not consistent with the results of the current study. Concerning the relationship between use of individual and organizational time management skills and the demographic characteristics of managers, the results of a research by Kisa (22), like the results of the current study, refer to the lack of relationship with gender, education level, work experience, and type of

employment variables.

There were no significant differences between managers with undergraduate degrees and those with graduate degrees or higher in comparing individual skills and organizational skills of time management. Moreover, no studies of this factor were found. The lack of cooperation from senior executives and the lack of studies in some areas of time management are the main limitations of the current study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that organizational productivity can be increased by controlling the factors that lead to wasting time and increasing managers' ability to plan and organize activities and improve other areas of organizational and individual time management skills.

The findings of the current study also revealed the positive correlation between individual skills and organizational skills of time management and showed that organizational time management skills can be determined on the basis of one's personal time management skills. It is suggested that this skill is strengthened by continuing education courses of time management for managers. No significant relationship was found between gender or education level and individual or organizational time management skills. Thus, it is recommended that innovative techniques be used to strengthen the time management skills of managers in all levels.

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Conflict of interests

Authors have no conflict of interests to declare.



Author's Contributions

Marzban S and Hekmatyar J designed research; Rahimkarimi H and Hekmatyar J conducted research; Marzban S and Hekmatyar J analyzed

data; and Nasrollahzade K, Rahimkarimi H and Hekmatyar J wrote the paper. Marzban S had primary responsibility for final content. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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