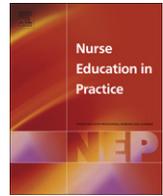


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Assessing time-management skills in terms of age, gender, and anxiety levels: A study on nursing and midwifery students in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The success of university students depends on their ability to utilize time properly and completely. Students are required to learn to manage time so that they are able to apply the same degree of efficiency in the profession they choose after completing their education.

Methods: This descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted to determine nursing and midwifery students' time management skills in terms of their age, gender, and anxiety levels. The study population consisted of 1002 students, of which 584 students were selected for sampling. A Student Information Form, Time Management Inventory, and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory were used to collect data.

Results: Among the students, 89.9% were female, and the average age was 20.58 years ($SD = 2.10$). The average score of the Time Management Inventory was 87.79 ($SD = 11.78$), the mean score of the State Anxiety Inventory was 40.11 ($SD = 10.84$), and that of the Trait Anxiety Inventory was 43.95 ($SD = 7.98$).

Conclusions: Nursing and midwifery students' time management skills are at mid-level point. Female students were able to manage time better than male students and the time management skills of the students decreased as the anxiety level increased.

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Introduction

Time management refers to planning the time available in line with personal goals and lifestyles, while keeping individual preferences, likes, and dislikes in mind. The criterion for efficient time management lies not only in achieving set goals, but also in attaining them in the minimum time possible (Özgen, 2000; Yeşilyaprak, 2003; Karaođlan, 2006; Eldelekliođlu, 2008). The important point is how to use the available time most efficiently and effectively (Karaođlan, 2006). Those who are able to use their time efficiently are individuals who do not focus on a single subject within the given time, but those who distribute their time among various activities, such as work, private life, and individual fields of interest (Sayan, 2005). By prioritizing activities, one can use time appropriately. Planning includes the two most important steps

involved in the organization of human life: how to arrive from the present point to the target point and how to achieve a goal within the shortest time (Özgen, 2000; Yeşilyaprak, 2003; Waterworth, 2003; Eldelekliođlu, 2008).

Inadequate time planning reduces the scope of academic achievement, causes insufficient time allocation for other personal and social activities, decreases individual satisfaction, increases stress levels, and leads to an inability to acquire positive personality traits, such as decision making, leadership, and critical thinking (Campbell and Svenson, 1992; Simpson and Courtney, 2002; Gran-Moravec and Hughes, 2005; Karaođlan, 2006). According to Smith (1998), the way individuals handle time determines whether they will become psychologically tense or depressed. Sabuncuođlu and Tüz (1998) suggest that those who cannot organize their time well inevitably experience stress, and the majority of those who complain about having little amounts of time do not know how to use and manage their time.

University students' success depends on their ability to utilize time properly and most efficiently. Thus, students are required to learn how to manage their time so that they are able to apply the same degree of efficiency in the profession they choose after completing their education. This is an extremely important skill that nursing students must acquire during their academic life so that they can enhance their competence and quality of service.

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Indeed, a positive correlation has been found among issues related to time management and academic achievement (Britton and Tesser, 1991; Sabuncuoğlu and Tüz, 1998; Alay, 2000; Alay and Koçak, 2002, 2003; Sayan, 2005; Erdem et al., 2005; Karaoğlu, 2006; Demirtaş and Özer, 2007; Başak et al., 2008).

Based on this fact, the present study was conducted with a focus on Turkish nursing and midwifery students to understand the correlation between time management skills and factors, such as age, gender, and anxiety levels and thereby make further recommendations on time management.

Methods

Purpose and type of study

This descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted with Turkish nursing and midwifery students to determine how factors such as age, gender, and anxiety levels influence the ability to manage time.

Research questions

- What are students' time management skills?
- What is the state-trait anxiety level of students?
- What is the correlation between students' age, gender, and anxiety levels and the ability to manage time?

Study subjects and sample selection

The research study involved 1002 students from the Istanbul University Florence Nightingale School of Nursing, Istanbul University Bakırköy Health Sciences School of Nursing, and Trakya University Health Sciences School of Midwifery in Turkey during the 2009–10 academic year. A total of 584 students were selected for sampling. A stratified sampling method was used, and the sample was stratified according to the three schools included in the study population. Male students accounted for 15% of the study population; the number of male students included in sample group was representative of the study population. Table 1 shows the total number of students in each school and the number of students used for sampling.

Data collection tools

The data were collected using a Student Information Form, Time Management Inventory (TMI), and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI).

Student information form

The Student Information Form was prepared as an instrument to collect relevant information on intervening variables, including the students' age, gender, and the school they were attending (Başak et al., 2008; Eldeleklioğlu, 2008).

Table 1
Universe of the study and sample distribution.

	Universe, N	Sample	
		n	%
School of Nursing	580	321	55.34
Health Sciences School of Nursing	212	139	65.57
Health Sciences School of Midwifery	210	124	59.05
Total	1.002	584	58.28

Time management inventory (TMI)

The Time Management Inventory was developed by Britton and Tesser (1991). It was developed to determine the time management skills of university students. Validity and reliability studies for the TMI in Turkish society were performed by Alay and Koçak (2002). They adapted the inventory to the variables existing in Turkish society and conducted a principal components analysis and factor analysis. Three subscales of different sizes as well as twenty-seven items were determined. These sub-dimensions were grouped under the following headings: 'time planning', 'time attitudes', and 'time spent'.

The time planning subscale in the TMI represents long-term and short-term (daily or weekly) planning. There are sixteen questions, and one of them is calculated inversely. The students who scored high on this subscale spend their time better than other students, which indicate that they have control over how their time is spent.

The time attitudes subscale defined how an individual managed their time. There were seven questions, four of which were calculated directly and three (items 2, 6, and 7) of which were calculated indirectly. According to the scores of this subscale, it was evident that students who had high scores could manage their time well by adapting their needs to the time available.

The time spent subscales portrayed how students spend their time in a negative way. The activities consisted of four questions, and 'time spenders' referred to everything that distracted the students. The students who scored high on this subscale did not waste their time, while those who scored low seemed to spend their time in negative ways.

The sum of the scores obtained from these three sections gave the TMI. The minimum possible TMI score was 27, and the maximum score was 135 (Başak et al., 2008; Eldeleklioğlu, 2008).

State-trait anxiety inventory (STAI FORM TX-I, STAI FORM TX-II)

This scale, developed by Spielberger, was implemented by Öner and Le Compte et al. for the Turkish population in 1995. This scale measures the anxiety level of individuals aged 14 and above. The STAI consists of two subscales: State and Trait Anxiety.

The State-Anxiety scale consisted of twenty statements that evaluated how the respondent felt at that moment. The Trait-Anxiety scale consisted of twenty statements that determined how the respondent felt 'in general'. When responding to the State-Anxiety scale, the subjects chose the number that best described the intensity of their feelings: (A) not at all, (B) somewhat, (C) moderately, or (D) very much so. When responding to the Trait-Anxiety scale, subjects rated the frequency of their feelings based on the following four-point scale: (A) almost never, (B) sometimes, (C) often and (D) almost always. Each STAI item was given a weighted score of 1–4. Points between 0 and 19 derived from both subscales indicated no anxiety points between 20 and 39 and indicated low-level of anxiety; points between 40 and 59 indicated mid-level anxiety; and points between 60 and 79 indicated severe anxiety levels (Öner and Le Compte, 1998).

In the studies conducted in Turkey, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the State Anxiety Scale was 0.83–0.92, and for the Trait Anxiety Scale, it was between 0.86 and 0.92. However, in this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the State Anxiety Scale was 0.92, while that of the Trait Anxiety Scale was 0.85.

Ethics

Prior to the study; written permission was obtained from Istanbul University Florence Nightingale School of Nursing, Istanbul University Bakırköy Health Sciences School of Nursing, and Trakya University Health Sciences School of Midwifery. The researchers informed the students about the purpose and scope of the study,

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