



## Time Management Practices and Job Effectiveness among University Lecturers in Rivers State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated time management practices and job effectiveness among university lecturers in Rivers State. A 29 item questionnaire was designed, validated and administered on a sample of 150 lecturers drawn from a population of 260 (57.6%) Lecturers from Faculty of Educations University of Port Harcourt and Faculty of Education Ignatius Ajuru University Rivers State. The result of the data analysis revealed that university lecturers indicated minimal level of time management practice which reflected in ranking their priorities daily; establishing time frame to achieve personal career goals; limiting the amount of time spent on TV and internet; completing important task when energetic and working on the most important task before the less important one. They equally indicated high level of job effectiveness which reflected in prompt planning of lectures, being regular in class, timely completion of course outline, timely assessment of students and grading of their scores, available for consultation, attending academic conferences and timely met requirements for their next promotion. The result also revealed a significant positive relationship between time management practice and job effectiveness. The study recommended among others that planning of schedules, prioritization of activities, resistance to unrewarding activities, avoiding time wasting habits etc were important time management techniques that needed to be imbibed by lecturers for individual and organizational goal attainment.

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### Introduction

Time is a universal phenomenon that cut across all spheres of human life. It is constant and fixed, that is why it is popularly said that “time waits for no man”, an indication that man cannot manage time rather he can only manage himself to suit the time. This is why Robert and Robert (1984) opined that we cannot really manage time in the strict sense of it, but atmost, we can only manage ourselves.

Ebong (2011) identified two types of time, clock time and event time. The clock time helps to co-ordinate the activities of individuals and groups. It is measured in seconds, minutes and hours using Arabic numerals, hence 60 seconds make one minute, 60 minutes make one hour, 24 hours make one day, 7 days make one week, 4 weeks make one month and 12 calendar months or 365 days make one year, plus one extra day for a leap year.

The event time as explained by Ebong (2011) is historic and is used to mark the period when an action or event took place, for example in human history the birth of Christ was used to redefine time into BC- (Before Christ) and AD, (After Christ). These two periods in time has been used to describe major occurrences and events that took place in world history within the different era.

How we use our time make much meaning to our life chances and achievement. Every day, we are faced with a lot of things to do, that leaves us with little or no time for ourselves. A common phrase among so many people is “too little time and too much to do”, “time is not on our side”, “if time permits” etc.

But in all situations, we do have choices about how to spend our time. Balancing what we need to do with the time available to us and how this affect our effectiveness in job performance is the subject matter of this paper.

The study is an academic exercise which surveyed time management practices and job effectiveness among lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

### Conceptual Framework

Time management as a concept connotes how people plan and organize what to do, how to do it and when to do using available time most efficiently.

In line with this view Cudabuck (1981) sees time management as what you want to get out of life, and efficiently pursuing these goals. According to him, good time management brings with it increased relaxation, less stress, more satisfaction and greater accomplishment. Buttressing this view, Tracey (2004) explains time management as a vehicle that carries you from wherever you are to wherever you want to go. Scholar cited in Nwabueze (2016:28-29) see time management as the process by which an individual more effectively accomplishes tasks and goals. To Oncken & Was in Nwabueze (2016:29) time management is “a process by which an individual obtains control over the timing and the content of what he or she does”.

In the light of the above, and within the context of this study, we can define time management as the way and manner an individual or groups organize and plan their schedules to achieve most efficiently their desired set objectives and goals within a given time frame.

Good time management practices explains the reason why some people achieve so much more with their time than others. It is for this reason that lecturers of the same qualification and rank employed the same day may not become professors the same time. This is so because their time management practices may differ. This confirms our earlier stand in this paper that our time management practices and preferences significantly affects our life chances and achievement.

The survival of any organization depends on its effectiveness, that is the ability to carry out its purpose. Infact effectiveness is a factor of organizational survival (Ukeje, Okorie and Nwabara (1992). Organizational effectiveness is a function of the employees ability to accomplish organizational goals. Thus for any organization to be effective its workforce must be effective. Tertiary institutions are not left out in goal attainment. The lecturers are the major factors in goal attainment in tertiary institutions and need to be effective in their job.

Job effectiveness as a correlate of good time management has been established by scholars. Ebong (2003) in a study on the relationship between years of schooling and productively found that people exposed to many years of schooling enhanced productivity in different responsibilities such as execution of duties, achieving set goals, keeping time etc. Studies by Nwabueze (2016), Francis-Smythe and Robertson (2001), Ekundaya, Konwea and Yuyef (2010) and Kalu (2012) all revealed that lecturers who managed their time well were apt in marking their students scripts and recording scores, achieved much and avoided stress and frustrations. Their studies also revealed that those who manage their time well were found to be involved in proper scheduling of their task, right ordering of their priorities and allocation of time according to their degree of importance in achieving educational goals.

#### Statement of Problem

Studies on time management for job productivity has been a major topic of academic discourse in recent time. Why is it that some people achieve much more within the same 24 hours available to all than others? Several factors contribute to the differences in time management among individuals and groups. Among these factors are planning for time utilization, organizing activities into appropriate time schedules, values placed on achievable targets, attitudes toward time; interruptions in time schedules, individual priorities, workload and so on.

#### Research question 1. How do lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State manage their time.

S/N	Accessed items	N	Sum	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1.	I use "to do list daily	150	135	1.93	0.80	Rejected
2.	I use daily planner or dairy to record important task I have to do.	150	300	2.00	1.00	Rejected
3.	I rank my priorities daily from most to the least important.	150	388	2.59	1.07	Accepted
4.	I schedule and limit the amount of time each day that I devote to phone calls and social media.	150	300	2.00	1.00	Rejected
5.	I set aside time for my publication	150	373	2.49	0.96	Rejected
6.	I establish time frame to achieve personal career goals.	150	388	2.59	0.97	Accepted
7.	My planned schedules are most times interrupted by unplanned activities.	150	376	2.51	0.85	Rejected
8.	Procrastination is a major source of set back to my personal goal achievement.	150	325	2.17	0.96	Rejected
9.	I take time off for relaxation and to take care of myself.	150	325	2.17	0.79	Rejected
10.	I have adequate time to be with my family and friends.	150	354	2.36	0.85	Rejected
11.	At the end of each day, I look back on my to do list and find out that I have accomplished the most important task.	150	285	1.90	0.92	Rejected
12.	At the end of most days I found out that I was busy doing nothing.	150	280	1.870	0.92	Rejected
13.	I limit the amount of time I spend on TV and internet.	150	384	2.56	0.90	Accepted
14.	I am aware of my daily energy level in accomplishing specific task.	150	354	2.37	0.94	Rejected
15.	I complete my most important task when I fell most energetic.	150	441	2.94	0.89	Accepted
16.	I work on my most important task before I work on the less important ones.	150	448	2.99	0.91	Accepted
17.	I strive to achieve set objectives by saying "no I don't have time for unrewarding activities.	150	360	2.40	0.80	Rejected
GRAND MEAN				2.18		

It is possible that these factors act singly or in combination in affecting time management practices and job effectiveness among workers.

Research have shown that on the average a man – hour of 177 hours is lost in the Nigeria universities due to strikes and unplanned activities (Ebong 2011), a situation suggestive of poor time management in the Ivory towers. Researches have also shown that among individuals, those who manage their time well achieve greater productivity and efficiency, better professional reputation, less stress, increased opportunities for advancement and greater opportunities to achieve important life and career goals (<https://www.mindtools.com>). While research efforts are on-going on most of the concerns raised above, the researcher in this study is specifically bothered by the need to establish whether university lecturers manage their time well, if they do how does it affect their effectiveness in job performance. The relationship between time management practice and job productivity is equally important.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the time management practices among university lecturers and their level of job effectiveness. In specific terms, the study intends to achieve the following:

1. Ascertain the time management practices of lecturers in tertiary institutions.
2. Determine how time management practice affect lecturers job effectiveness in tertiary institutions.
3. Establish if there is a significant relationship between lecturers time management practice and their job effectiveness.

#### Research Question

1. How do lectures in tertiary institution in Rivers State manage their time?
2. How does time management practice affect lecturers job effectiveness.

#### Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between lecturers time management practices and their level of job effectiveness.

#### Methodology

A descriptive research of the survey design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised all university lecturers from the faculty of education University of Port Harcourt Rivers State and the Ignatius Ajuru

University of Education also in Rivers State with staff strength of 176 for University of Port Harcourt and 84 for Ignatius Ajuru University of Education given a total population of 260 lecturers. A sample size of 150 lecturers (representing 57% of the target population) were purposively drawn from the target population and used for the study. Two types of questionnaire, Time Management Practice Questionnaire (TMPQ) and Lecturers Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (LJEQ) were validated and used for the study. The questionnaire was structured on the 4 point Likert scale (very frequent<sup>4</sup>, frequent<sup>3</sup>, sometimes<sup>2</sup>, and seldom<sup>1</sup>). The mean responses were used to answer the research questions while r- co-efficient was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

The researcher examined the time management practices of university lecturers, which was determined by lecturers responses to 17 time management variables in the research questionnaire. A weighted mean and standard deviation (SD) of their responses are presented in table 1. From the weighted mean score shown in table 1, it can be seen that lecturers indication of time management practices is minimally reflected in items 3 (2.59 (ranking of priorities daily from the most to the least important); item 6 (2.59) establish time frame to achieve personal career goals); item 13 (2.56 limiting the amount of time spend on TV and internet); item 15 (2.94 completing the most important task when energetic) and item 16 (working on most important task before the less important ones with mean score of 2.99). For all the other time management indicators, the mean weighting is less than 2.50 which is within the region of "sometimes and seldom and therefore rejected. The standard deviation of the assessed items falls between 0.79 to 0.96 for majority of the items, meaning that the variation of individual responses from each of the items is very low. That majority of the time management indicators fell below 2.50 (the cutoff point for positive score on a four pint scale) is an indication that lecturers time management practices were very poor, this is buttressed by the aggregate mean as shown the in table with a score of 2.18. The result shows that the practice of time management among university lecturers is minimal and poor.

### Research question 2: How does Time Management Practice affect lecturers Job Effectiveness in tertiary institutions.

The result of the data in table 2 shows that the mean scores of all the assessed variable were above 2.50 (the cutoff

pint for positive score) indicating that proper time management positively affected lecturers performance effectiveness in the specified job areas. In summary, the result indicates that good time management resulted in well planned lectures (3.39); regularity in class attendance (3.56); satisfactory delivery of lectures (3.50); and timely completion of semester course outline (3.43). The result equally shows that all the lecturers were in agreement that proper time management enables them publish a minimum of three articles per year; promptly score and grade students (3.04); be available for students' consultation (3.03); and be able to discharge other responsibilities from the university authority (3.14); Those who planned their time well were also found to be able to attend academic and related conferences(2.63); involved in programmes that will enhance their professional growth(2.74); were able to collaborate with colleagues in academic research (2.61) as well as being able to meet the academic requirement for their next promotion (3.14) as revealed in the table.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Time Management Practices and level of Job Effectiveness

**Table 3. Mean, r-coefficient and test of relationship between the extent of Time Management Practice and the level of Job Effectiveness.**

S/N	Variables	Mean	SD	R	Sig. level	Remarks
1.	Extent of Time Management Practice.	2.18		0.980	0.05	Sig.
2.	Level of Lecturers Job Effectiveness	3.08				

The mean, r-coefficient and test of relationship between the extent of time management practice and the level of lecturers job effectiveness as presented in table 2 indicate that the correlation is significant at 0.05 level. We can therefore conclude that there is a significant relationship between time management practice and job effectiveness. This implies that those who manage their time well experience greater productivity in their job performance and achieve better results.

### Discussions of Findings

Time Management Practices among Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions. The findings of the study shows that lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State demonstrated minimal and poor attitude toward time management.

**Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of the effects of Time Management practices on lecturers Job Performance.**

S/N	Accessed Areas	N	Sum	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1.	My lectures are planned ahead of time before actual teaching.	150	508	3.39	0.64	Accepted
2.	I ensure that I am regular in class	150	534	3.56	0.56	Accepted
3.	Satisfactorily deliver my lecturers as planned	150	525	3.50	0.61	Accepted
4.	Able to complete semester course outline	150	514	3.43	0.69	Accepted
5.	Able to publish a minimum of three articles per year.	150	400	2.67	0.90	Accepted
6.	Prompt in scoring and grading students test, assignments and exam.	150	456	3.04	0.69	Accepted
7.	Available for consultation by students.	150	471	3.03	0.82	Accepted
8.	Able to discharge other responsibilities from the university authority, Faculty and Department.	150	394	3.14	0.69	Accepted
9.	Able to attend academic and related conferences.	150	411	2.63	0.84	Accepted
10.	Involvement in programmes that will enhance professional growth and development.	150	391	2.74	0.81	Accepted
11.	Collaboration with colleagues in academic research.	150	471	2.61	0.86	Accepted
12.	Ability to meet the academic requirement for next promotion.	150	220	3.14	0.84	Accepted
GRAND MEAN				3.08		

Out of the seventeen (17) time management indicators examined, they exhibited minimal practice in only five areas which included: setting time frame to achieve personal career goals (2.59); ranking their priorities from the most important to the least (2.59); limiting the time spent on television and the internet (2.56); working on the most important task before the least important (2.94); and completing important task when energetic (2.94).

They exhibited their worst attitude toward time management in the use of "to do list"; use of diary or daily planner, time spend on phone; time allotted for publications; time for relaxation, time for the family, ability to accomplish their daily important task. (Which all had mean scores below 2.50 the cutoff point positive scores). The findings also revealed that majority of the lecturers were not aware of their daily energy levels in accomplishing specific task, neither were they able to develop the ability to say 'no' to unrewarding activities (see table 1 for details).

The present findings have several implications on the career prospects of lecturers and their professional growth. Time management experts agree to the fact that failing to manage your time well and effectively can have some very undesirable consequences: missed deadlines, inefficient work flow; poor work quality; a poor professional reputation; stalled career; and high stress level; (Tracy 2004; Novak 2006; Morgenstern 2000; Crouch 2005; and Dodd and Sondheim 2005).

Close observation and discussions with lecturers in course of instrument administration for this study clearly manifested significant elements of poor time management attitude among most of them. There were clear evidence that most of them did not have time to clear their tables of pile up of useless and accumulated papers; frequent interruptions by colleagues who pump into their offices for unnecessary discussions. Their personal activities were poorly planned and poorly organized. Some were unable to fill and return my questionnaire. This finding support earlier study by Ebong (2011) who found that major time wasters among university lecturers were poor planning; poor organization; paper work; meetings and interruptions. It does appear that poor time consciousness is becoming a common phenomenon among university lecturers and therefore needed to be urgently addressed through seminars and workshop on time utilization and time management techniques, if these attitudes have to change.

#### **Time Management Practice and Lecturers Job Effectiveness**

The study found that time management practice had a significant positive effect on lecturers job effectiveness. A look at the weighted mean as shown in table 2 clearly shows that all the assessed indicators had mean scores that ranged between 2.63 and 3.56 indicating high level effect of time management on job effectiveness. Statistically, the test of hypothesis yielded a positive correlation indicating the existence of significant relationship between time management practice and job effectiveness. The study revealed that lecturers were able to plan their lessons ahead of time; ensured that they were regular in class and completed semester course outlines. They were also prompt in scoring and grading students test CA<sup>s</sup> and exams; and were able to publish a minimum of three papers per year. They equally had time to attend conferences, handle other assignments from school authority, collaborated with their colleagues in research and met requirements for their promotions.

Although this finding is not consistent with the earlier one in table 1, (where lecturers were found to exhibit poor time management practice in their individual lives), it is possible that a lot of factors contributed to this, among which is largely to protect their job and avoid sanctions, queries and repudiation from management.

It is equally possible that institutional setting played a significant role in lecturers compliance to time in job performance. The institutional framework which sets academic calendar into semester, time table and places deadline and dates for goal attainment makes lecturers job performance and other school activities and event to be time bound and therefore compulsory for all and Sunday to key into. Lecturers are therefore by extension forced to stick to the official time and dates fixed for each activity and event, hence the positive result.

It is therefore not surprising that they were effective in managing their time to achieve result in their job, but ineffective in managing their personal time. A study of the time management technique needed by academic staff and administrators in managing time for quality service delivery by Covey, and Merrill (1994); and Lakien (1973) all supported institutional planning dimension to time management as a means of strengthening staff compliance to time. In a related study by Madumere-Obike, Ukala and Nwabueze (2015), it was reported that planning school calendar ahead of time, stipulating time and dates for meetings and related school activities enhanced time management practice of staff and students, and promoted school goal achievement.

Proper time management stands out as effective tool for organizational effectiveness and therefore must be one of the attributes or qualities of a successful manager (Nwabueze 2016). Even God Almighty was time conscious when he created the earth and everything therein in six days and made time to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. And Noah had to build an Ark within a given time frame before the great flood came. All these are indications that time is a resource and if well managed, determines how far an individual or organization will go.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

Within the framework of this study, the researcher tried to establish whether university lecturers manage their time well, if they do, how does it affect their job effectiveness. The study revealed that time management practices among lecturers were minimal and poor, however they were able to manage time well in their job performance. Factors such as protecting their job, to avoid sanctions and not to stall promotion and recognition were found to play significant role in this attitude as well as institutional time bound activities which compelled them to comply with the school time, all combined to make it possible for them to be effective in their job.

The study concludes that time, a universal phenomenon is a management resource that affects our everyday activity, how far we will go in life as individual or organization is dependent on how well we manage our time. Although the times may be hard, it can still be planned and managed to achieve result.

#### **Recommendations**

Arising from the findings of this study, the researcher advance some recommendations on how to manage time for individual and organizational goal attainment.

- i. Plan your schedules and stick to the time allotted to every activity.

- ii. Have an action plan that should include all the things and not one thing that you want to do, and you will discover that you can achieve much more than having only one thing to do.
- iii. Prioritize the things you want to do according to their importance.
- iv. Try to resist unrewarding activities and unnecessary discussions.
- v. Establish a regular routine.
- vi. Reduce interruptions.
- vii. Know your energy level, that is when you are in top form and utilize it well. Most people work well in the morning, some others in the evening. Discover your high energy period and use it well.
- viii. Learn to set short time and long time goals and to achieve them within a given time frame.
- ix. Find time to relax, take break and do exercise.
- x. Have time for your family and friends and eat well.
- xi. Avoid time wasting habits; evaluate your habits and retain only those that save time.

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