Research Students' Time Management Skills to Improve Learning Outcomes for Weak Students

Vo Ngoc Hien
FPT University, Vietnam
Corresponding Author Email: hienvn2@fe.edu.vn

Abstract

Each year, new workers in the labour market will increase by thousands. This amount of human resources are graduates from intermediate schools, colleges and universities plus students who have graduated before but have not yet had a job. Besides, trainees and international students return to the country to find work. This makes the odds of applying for a job increase. When employers have more choices, they will demand higher qualifications and competencies of candidates and will screen candidates based on more factors. One of the important factors that employers consider is what skills candidates have to integrate into the job and benefit them. Therefore, along with improving the level of knowledge, students need to pay attention to accumulating soft skills. In which, time management is one of the necessary skills for all students in general and FPT University students in particular. By implementing of the sociological survey method and then using quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the information obtained from the survey, this research has obtained results on the current situation of FPT University students' time management. The results show that there are students who are not interested in this besides the students who have chosen the suitable time management method for themselves. Therefore, the research paper will give some effective time management methods and suggest references in making FPT University students focus on accumulating of soft skills in general and time management skills in particular.

Keywords: FPT University students, methods, time management, soft skills

1. Introduction

In the context of international integration and the strong development of the industrial revolution 4.0, the quality of the workforce is a central factor that plays a decisive role in determining the competitiveness of each country. The impact of this revolution led to a sharp divide between low-
skilled and high-skilled workers. Therefore, it threatens the employment of low-skilled workers, but even middle-skilled workers will be affected. Regarding this challenge, all students in general and students of FPT University, in particular, are forced to equip themselves with knowledge and accumulate soft skills to compete in work confidently. The same goes for time management skills. In particular, when learning online to cope with the complicated developments of the COVID-19 epidemic, the critical role of time management skills is even more apparent. At this time, students need to arrange how to use their time to balance their studies, family life (most students will live with their families when the school decides to suspend classes) and relationships are different.

2. The importance of soft skills and time management skills
Rani & Mangala (2010) argue that, along with a high sense of responsibility and strong work ethic, the key to success at work is a perfect combination of ideas and attitudes with appropriate communication skills in each field, each situation orally, in writing or in non-verbal forms. Instead of just focusing on studying for the sake of earning a diploma, students should strive to both graduate and master soft skills, such as time management.
Time is a precious asset that everyone has and has the same: a year has 12 months, a month has 30 days, a day has 24 hours, an hour has 60 minutes and a minute has 60 seconds. Because it is precious, time is also limited. In addition to other factors, the use of limited time resources is also a determining factor in each person's life. “Time is an existence outside of man but man can manage it effectively”, this point of view is presented in the work of Hieu & Son (2011).
Effective time management will bring many benefits such as: Reducing pressure at work; Prevent wasting time, complete work with high efficiency, in reasonable time; Limit bad habits such as procrastination, "don't know how to say no"; Working with joy, excitement and sense of the meaning of work; Increase the amount of time dedicated to yourself and your family; Improve creativity and quality of life (Toan, 2020).

3. Research history
Time management is one of the most interesting topics in the field of study and research. This skill takes center stage in courses and is becoming more and more methodical. One of the most frequent complaints students have with teachers is that they do not have enough time to do all the tasks assigned to them in different subjects and departments, both in high school and in high school.
University. Students say that there are many classes, individual projects, group projects, tests, and continuous work for a long time. School psychologists also receive many requests for assistance, from teachers and students, to improve study habits, especially those related to organization and time management (García-Ros & associates, 2004).

According to Hieu & Son (2011), time management does not mean always saving time, but rather the process of mastering, arranging and using time in a scientific and artistic way. The arrangement of time is not only to achieve high results in study and work, but also to create a balance between study, work and rest and relaxation. A 2008 study by the University of Illinois showed that working for long hours reduces productivity, and frequent short breaks help focus and have more energy (Giesbrecht, 2015).

4. Actual situation of using time of students at FPT University

FPT University is a university with a training model in the form of close association with businesses, associating training with practice, research and the most modern technologies. This is a school with a modern educational philosophy and methods, with a training program that is always updated and complies with international standards (Training philosophy of FPT University). Except for Political Theory subjects, specialized subjects here are always taught in a bilingual form. Therefore, in order to study in this environment, it is required that students have foreign language ability and the ability to memorize and acquire selective knowledge. Simultaneously, any subject can conduct group discussions, group topics and many other individual topics. Therefore, in addition to the volume of exercises and topics assigned by the lecturers, FPT University students also have to supplement their own gaps in foreign languages if their foreign language ability is weak. Thus, arranging how to have time to be able to complete assigned assignments and improve knowledge for yourself, while participating in leisure activities, resting and balancing other relationships is important in regulating life.

However, at FPT University, if there are students who go to school with a relaxed and happy mood, there are also students who come to school with a sluggish and lack of vitality. The same is true in the classroom: In contrast to the students who listened attentively to the lecture, some students lost focus due to drowsiness, even fell asleep in class despite the teacher's lecture; Or besides individuals/groups who submit assignments on time with good work quality, are individuals who cannot complete assignments on time, of course, quality is no longer needed. These pictures show
that: Among the total number of students at FPT University, there are students who have not yet managed to use their time properly.

5. Methods, subjects and scope of research
In parallel with the research and information analysis of previous research papers, this article is also completed based on the process of implementing sociological investigation method, then using quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze data the collected information. The survey was conducted with the participation of 42 students from different disciplines and 2 lecturers specializing in "Working in group" at FPT University. The reason these subjects were selected is because the space, time and distance to conduct the research have many advantages and are suitable with the research content. In particular, 2 lecturers specializing in "Working in group" are often exposed to many different groups of students, so they have practical and diverse information. In addition to using survey forms, supporting tools such as Facebook, Gmail, etc. have also been used to obtain the most appropriate and accurate survey results.

6. Research results
The actual survey on time management of students at FPT University has obtained the result that 100% of the respondents answered "Yes" when asked "In your opinion, is time management necessary?" Are not?". Although 100% of students think that time management is important and necessary for life, there are still some students who are still not interested in this. This is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

Table 1. Actual situation of implementing time management methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods of time management</th>
<th>Amount of people use</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement effective time management methods introduced by books and internet (Pomodoro, Kanban, etc.)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use time management apps/devices</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simply write down what needs to be done</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't use/implement anything</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table, comparing the first question of the survey, there are two hypotheses as follows: One is that 27.3% of these students are still confused and have not found a way to accumulate information/knowledge related to time management. Second, 27.3% of these students have seen the importance of time management. 27.3% of these students along with 29.5% of students answered “Simply write down things what needs to be done” – more than 50% of students in the survey showed that most students have not used their time appropriately. While writing todos is far more advanced with no formality, without setting deadlines or prioritizing tasks can be ineffective. According to Hieu & Son (2011), "estimate the amount of time needed for each job" is a very basic job that everyone must do before performing a certain job. While our time budget is only 24 hours a day, it is essential to estimate the amount of time needed for each type of work.

![Figure 1. Intentions related to time management skills](image)

Next, when asked "What do you plan to improve your time management skills?", 45.5% of students answered "Still learning to choose the right method." suitable” and 18.2% of students answered “Currently not needed, will think about when graduating” (Figure 1). This result strengthens the two hypotheses posed above. So, what is the cause of this situation?
Table 2. Factors that adversely affect time management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of ineffective time management</th>
<th>Level of approval</th>
<th>total answer number</th>
<th>total the point</th>
<th>The point median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Not planning, setting goals and prioritizing work</td>
<td>2 4 8 16 14</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not planning, setting goals and prioritizing work</td>
<td>4 3 10 17 10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Has a habit of procrastinating</td>
<td>6 8 1 13 16</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Not controlling emotions well</td>
<td>7 6 6 14 11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Including respect, eager to play; easily tempted by fun, entertainment tools, social networks, etc.</td>
<td>7 2 10 16 9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. No rest, relaxation, reasonable health care</td>
<td>3 6 12 13 10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do not review to change the inappropriate after implementing a plan</td>
<td>4 5 13 18 4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Often planning with short-term goals, no long-term goals</td>
<td>5 7 5 19 8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Often judge the quality of work results based on the amount of time spent</td>
<td>9 8 8 14 5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3881</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of approval of the survey subjects showed that there are many factors that adversely affect the time management of FPT University students. In general, the above are all subjective factors from the student's side. Besides the cause with the highest rating is “Not estimating the time needed for each task”, the two reasons for not paying attention to “long-term goals” when planning and “not reviewing to change” the inappropriate things after implementing a plan”, is considered by the majority of survey respondents as a factor that makes time management still
ineffective (Table 2). Simultaneously, in the face-to-face interview at FPT University, objective factors such as "the status/influence of family or roommates", "the lecturer assigns too many assignments and topics" is the most received answer.

In addition, whether sleep quality is good or bad is also a determining factor in effective time management. The quality of sleep has a great influence on a person's daily life. A study by (2018) has shown that being in a state of sleep deprivation or poor sleep reduces motivation to study, leading to poorer, worse results, and students tend to tendency towards depression. When asked about their sleep status, nearly 50% of 4th-year students - graduating students of FPT University shared that they have "unstable sleep time" (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Sleep status of FPT University students](image)

Most of the 3rd and 4th year students have a rather bad sleep condition: 44.2% of the 3rd year students and 27.9% of the 4th year students answered “short sleep time”; 35.3% of 3rd year students and 41.2% of 4th year students answered “sleeping time is not stable” (Figure 2). This can be explained because the amount of knowledge and lessons learned during this period is more than the first 2 years of university. In year 3 there is a semester called OJT. This is the semester that FPT University students are required to participate in the practical study program at enterprises. During this semester, students will not go to school at all, but will gain practical and
professional knowledge at the companies they come to. Perhaps due to sudden changes in environment, learning patterns and assigned tasks, the quality of sleep deteriorated. In particular, students often face time pressure when entering the end of year 4 - the stage of completing their graduation thesis (including graduation project). Most students in this stage tend to sleep less, either because they try to finish work and sleep very late.

However, at the end of year 4, students will have to leave the school environment and go to a social environment with a completely different way of working when they are still at school. If persistent sleep disturbances add up to an inability to adjust to another life during the transition between the two environments, students may experience stress or irritability reactions when exposed to a different environment. This has an adverse effect on relationships, work and later life. Therefore, improving the sleep of college students not only plays a role in smoothing university life, but also plays an important role in making later life healthy.

In order to improve sleep, overcome the above causes, and at the same time adjust to be in harmony with the changes that life brings, students in particular, each person in general must know how to coordinate knowledge, skills you have, and then gradually raise the level. That is, each knowledge, each skill has a binding relationship with each other. For example, in the cause of “Not planning, setting goals and prioritizing work” (Table 2), if you don't have the skills to divide, analyze and evaluate problems, then of course you won't be performed.

95.5% of students participating in the survey answered questions with similar content "Will participate", when asked "If FPT University organizes training activities and improves management skills, time as well as other soft skills, do you participate or not?". In addition, students also shared some of their wishes for these activities, details of which will be provided in the recommendations section below.

7. Recommendations on improving time management skills and enhancing soft skills for students
7.1 Improve time management skills – Some methods and applications to help
Using time effectively is knowing what you need to do, when, where, how and how. As mentioned above, each person must apply their knowledge and skills to answer these questions. Therefore, students need to be more active in learning knowledge and fostering soft skills for themselves (Thuy & Anh, 2019). Here are some skills that students need to work together with time
management: Self-study and self-discipline in learning; Organizing and evaluating work; Creative thinking; Manage yourself; Positive thinking; Negotiation and persuasion; Communicate and expand relationships; etc. At the same time, students also need to create and try to create a neat, comfortable and clean study space. This helps students have more active motivation and comfort while studying.

Use a pen, ruler, notebook, etc. draw a board and record details of work and time to perform each task to make a plan with reasonable working and resting time, and then set an alarm and alarm name for each item to remind. If you can't always carry a planner or planner with you, use one of these apps instead: Trello, Pomodoro Focus Timer, Toggl, Workflow, Shift, RescueTime, Timely, Forest - Stay focused, etc.

For students who have not been able to arrange an effective time plan for themselves, these students can refer to some of the following time management methods such as Eisenhowser Matrix; Pomodoro tomato; Principles of Personal Kanban such as 5A; 4D; 40 – 30 – 20 – 10. These are methods that have a lot of appreciation by users.

7.2 Solutions in training and improving soft skills for students of FPT University

According to Nicola et al (2018), the state of isolated knowledge, focusing only on too different topics has not brought much effect in the past, and may not meet the needs in the future. Thus, in order to contribute to the creation of professional workers who meet the high requirements of society in the present and in the future, the university should have an appropriate direction in promoting and motivating lecturers and staff. The school's staff participates in building a correct and complete information system as possible, in order to provide students with a safe and accurate place to look up information and accumulate knowledge. At the same time, the school continues to raise the awareness of students as well as lecturers about the importance of soft skills, continues to expand and improve the quality of training activities, to practice soft skills for students. Through the survey, the majority of students expressed their wish that the school would invite more speakers to present on topics, organize more extra-curricular activities to learn more about reality, create more favorable conditions and support for students school clubs in organizing programs/events. Besides, lecturers need to actively share their own experiences with students; take measures to integrate soft skills training into specialized lectures; control group work to promptly give instructions to overcome limitations, handle weaknesses, as well as monitor and evaluate students'
progress; and at the same time keep up with the changes of the times in order to find and bring more suitable teaching methods, especially in the context of online classes today. Moore & Pearson (2017) argue that, in order for online classes to be effective, teachers should come up with a basic set of rules about class participation. This code must also be polite, appropriate and acceptable and respectful of the students.

8. Conclusion
The current context has shown the fact that just having a great intelligence quotient is not enough, each person must accumulate more knowledge and different skills and coordinate their use so that effective. Each individual, each organization needs to have practical measures to improve soft skills, overcome limitations in order to change the way of studying and working in a more scientific way. The current status of students' awareness and the practice of time management skills training activities are still limited, which raises the need for further research on time management processes that take into account the characteristics of students and educational institutions at all levels.

9. Limitation
The article has certain limitations due to the influence of time and knowledge. Hopefully the article will be developed and improved better in the near future.

10. Acknowledgement
Thanks to the extremely enthusiastic support of the lecturers and students of FPT University, this article was able to be completed. A big thank you to everyone for their help during this research.

References


