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## INVESTIGATING TURKISH EFL LEARNERS' TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN RELATION TO SOME LEARNER VARIABLES

### *Research Article*

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## INVESTIGATING TURKISH EFL LEARNERS' TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN RELATION TO SOME LEARNER VARIABLES

### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the correlation between Turkish EFL learners' time management skills and some learner variables. To achieve this aim, 73 students studying the English Language and Literature program at the Arts and Science Faculty of a state university located in the west part of Turkey took part in the study. The time management questionnaire (TMQ) developed by Britton and Tesser (1991) and adapted to Turkish context by Alay and Koçak (2002) was utilized in this study by the researchers. The findings of the research showed that the participants had a moderate level of time management skills in terms of time planning, time attitudes, and time-wasters. The results of the study showed that there is no significant relationship (a) between age and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills and (b) between academic achievement and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills. However, a significant relationship was seen between gender and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills concerning the time attitudes subscale. Finally, a significant relationship was detected between the year of study and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills with respect to the time-wasters subscale.

*Keywords:* time management, age, gender, academic achievement, year of study

### 1. Introduction

Time management is an essential aspect of foreign language study. Since good time management is critical to achievement in studying a foreign language, foreign language students should prioritize improving their time management skills. Time management is described by Claessens, Eerde, and Rutte (2005) as behaviors that seek to achieve optimal use of time when doing certain purposive activities. As Cyril (2015) indicates, students generally have busy and stressful lives due to attending classes, doing homework, and preparing for exams. Besides this, they have their own daily activities and social lives. However, finding time to do all these activities can be demanding and tiring. At this point, students should learn how to successfully handle their time. Procrastination and anxiety can be reduced by having good time management skills. (Khan, Farooqi, Khalil & Faisal, 2016).

Turkish EFL learners' time management skills have been overlooked by EFL teachers in our country who teach English as a foreign language to these students in universities. EFL teachers do not provide their students with guidance as to how to manage time effectively during the act of foreign language learning and teaching. This situation causes students to have difficulties when they study English as a foreign language both within and outside of the classroom.

As a result, the aim of this study is to look into Turkish EFL learners' time management skills and see if there is an interrelation between some individual variables like age, gender, year of study, success, and students' time management skills.

### 2. Literature Review

#### 2.1. Age and time management

Many researchers have investigated the relationship between a student's age and their time management abilities. Although some researchers (e.g., Trueman and Hartley, 1996; Siadat, Hoveida, Keshavarz, and Mohammadi, 2015) found a substantial relationship between

students' age and their time management abilities, others (e.g., Al-Rahimi & Al-Mardini, 2014) did not. To illustrate, in the British ESL context, Trueman and Hartley (1996) investigated the scores collected from 293 first-year psychology students on a British version of an American time-management scale by grouping the participants under three age categories: traditional-entry students (N = 172), borderline mature students (N = 50) and older mature students (N = 71). The study found that older mature students were slightly better at time management when they were compared to the other two groups.

In the Iranian EFL context, Siadat, Hoveida, Keshavarz, and Mohammadi (2015) examined the relationship between age and time management by selecting a sample of 70 students randomly from the educational sciences department of the Payame Noor University of Abadan City. The researchers utilized a self-administrated questionnaire to gather the research data. The research data were analyzed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics. An important positive relationship between age and time management was found in the research. In the Jordanian EFL context, the relationship between age and time management was studied by Al-Rahimi and Al-Mardini (2014). To collect the research data, a sample of 300 students from Irbid Private University was selected. The findings that this study suggest displayed no significant relationship between age and time management among students.

## **2.2. Gender and time management**

Various researchers have studied the relationship between students' gender and their time management skills in the literature. Although some researchers (e.g., Misra and McKean, 2000; Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, Kucuk, 2012) found a substantial relationship between students' gender and their time management abilities, others (e.g., Akyürek, 2021) found no such relationship. For instance, in the American ESL context, Misra and McKean (2000) studied the time management habits of 249 university students. The study found that females had more successful time management habits than males.

In the Turkish EFL context, Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, and Kucuk (2012) assessed 584 nursing and midwifery students' time management skills by utilizing a time management inventory. The findings of the study revealed that there were substantial differences in time management abilities between female and male students. To put it differently, in terms of time utilization, female students outperformed male students. In the same EFL context, using the time management questionnaire created by Britton and Tesser (1991) and adapted to Turkish by Alay and Kocak (2002), Akyurek (2021) investigated 384 university students' impressions of their time management skills. The study found no major gender differences in students' views of their time management ability level.

## **2.3. Year of study and time management**

Some researchers (e.g. Lokam, 2007; Chanpisut, 2018) have examined the relationship between year of study and time management. For instance, in the Thai EFL context, Lokam (2007) examined 415 undergraduate students' time management capabilities by using a 58-item questionnaire with a five-point rating scale as a data collection instrument. It was found in the study that juniors had higher scores than seniors in the area of assessment of time usage. This was due to the fact that senior students were planning to continue their academic careers in their last year of study, and hence they concentrated on preparing to search for jobs, while junior students undertook responsibility for university activities for the younger students. Junior students were also taking major courses that required more effort. Despite these further duties, which gave rise to junior students' having heavy workloads, they felt a

sense of satisfaction and achievement that is displayed in the higher assessment of time usage scores.

In another study, Chanpisut (2018) investigated 320 undergraduate students' time management capabilities by using the adapted version of Lokam's (2007) questionnaire as the research instrument. Three of the time management measures were found to have major differences in the study: (1) Sophomore students exhibited better time management capabilities to analyze problems than junior students did; (2) Freshmen students displayed better abilities to implement projected plans than junior students; (3) Senior students showed better abilities to use projected time and revise wasted time activities.

#### **2.4. Academic achievement and time management**

Many researchers have concentrated on the relationship between good time management capabilities and student success over the past three decades. While some researchers (e.g., Britton and Tesser, 1991; Tanriogen and Iscan, 2009; Indreica, Cazan & Truta, 2011) have found a substantial relationship between good time management skills and students' achievement, others (e.g., Yilmaz et al., 2010) have found no such relationship. For instance, in the American ESL context, Britton and Tesser (1991) investigated the impact of time management techniques on college grades. The study found that students' time management habits had a positive impact on their college achievement.

Tanriogen and Iscan (2009) used the time management questionnaire created by Britton and Tesser (1991) to investigate 375 university students' time management practices in the Turkish EFL context. The findings of the study revealed a strong relationship between academic performance and students' time management abilities. Indreica, Cazan, and Truta (2011) investigated 130 students' time management practices about their academic success in a Romanian EFL setting. Academic success and students' time management skills were found to have a significant relationship in the research. In another study, Yilmaz, Yoncalik & Bektaş (2010) investigated 271 students' time management behaviors related to their GPAs and figured out that there was no relationship detected between time management and GPA.

### **3. Research Design**

#### **3.1. Participants**

A total of 73 English Language and Literature program students from the Arts and Science Faculty of a state university in Turkey took part in this research. The age of students ranged from 18 to 24, with a mean of 20. Sixteen students were male and fifty-seven students were female. Thirty-nine students were in freshman year, twenty-five students were in sophomore year and nine students were in junior year. Cumulative grade point averages of the participants were as follows: twenty-six students ranging from 2.00 to 2.49, twenty-nine students ranging from 2.50 to 2.99, fourteen students ranging from 3.00 to 3.49, and four students ranging from 3.50 to 4.00.

Table 1 shows the age, gender, year, and cumulative grade point average distribution of respondents.

Table 1. Age, gender, year, and cumulative grade point average distribution of respondents

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-20	34	46.6
	21-23	36	49.3
	24-24+	3	4.1
Gender	Male	16	21.9
	Female	57	78.1
Year of Study	Year 1	39	53.4
	Year 2	25	34.2
	Year 3	9	12.3
Cumulative Grade Point Average	2.00-2.49	26	35.6
	2.50-2.99	29	39.7
	3.00-3.49	14	19.2
	3.50-4.00	4	5.5
Total		73	100

### 3.2. Participants

The time management questionnaire (TMQ) created by Britton and Tesser (1991) and adapted to the Turkish context by Alay and Koçak (2002) was used in this study to assess Turkish EFL learners' time management skills. The questionnaire consisted of four parts, the first part asking about personal information such as age, gender, year of education, and cumulative grade point average, the second part related to time planning containing sixteen items, the third part relevant to time attitudes including seven items and the final part dealing with time wasters, with four elements described on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=occasionally, 4=usually, and 5=always.

### 3.3. Procedure

#### 3.3.1. Validity of the questionnaire

One assistant professor of English language teaching and three non-native EFL teachers with a master's degree in ELT reviewed the questionnaire for content and face validity, and they concluded that it was appropriate and descriptive for the context of the study.

#### 3.3.2. Reliability of the questionnaire

The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire for the current analysis, and the reliability was  $=.833$ , indicating a high degree of reliability.

#### 3.3.3. Ethics approval

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from Usak University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Approval Number: 2021-132, Date: 10.06.2021).

#### 3.3.4. Administering the questionnaire to the subjects

In June 2021, the questionnaires were distributed electronically to 130 English Language and Literature program students from the Arts and Science Faculty of a state university in western Turkey. The researchers sent the electronic link of the Google Forms formatted questionnaire to the students from the WhatsApp groups of these students and asked them to complete the questionnaire. The return rate from these EFL teachers was 56 % (N=73).

### 3.4. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0) was employed to analyze the data. To compute percentages, means, and standard deviations, descriptive statistics were used. Means and standard deviations were computed to answer the research question number one. ANOVA tests were used to determine (a) whether there was a significant relationship between age and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills and (b) whether there was a significant relationship between year of education and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills in order to answer the research questions two and four. An independent samples t-test was utilized to determine whether there were significant differences in time management skills between male and female Turkish EFL learners in order to address the research question three. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to detect whether there was a significant relationship between academic achievement and students' time management abilities in order to answer the research question five. The following research questions are attempted to be answered in this study:

1. *What are Turkish EFL learners' time management skills in terms of time planning, time attitudes, and time-wasters?*
2. *Is there a significant relationship between age and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills?*
3. *Are there significant differences between male Turkish EFL learners and female Turkish EFL learners concerning their time management skills?*
4. *Is there a significant relationship between the year of study and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills?*
5. *Is there a significant relationship between academic achievement and students' time management skills?*

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Turkish EFL learners' time management skills in terms of time planning, time attitudes, and time wasters

The averages and standard deviations of three subscales of the time management questionnaire, time planning, time attitudes, and time wasters, were calculated in order to demonstrate Turkish EFL learners' time management abilities. The mean scores for time planning, time attitudes, and time wasters, as shown in Table 2, were 3.19 (SD = 0.67), 3.16 (SD = 0.55), and 3.35 (SD = 0.62), respectively. As a result, in terms of time planning, time attitudes, and time wasters, the participants had a moderate level of time management skills.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations related to Turkish EFL learners' time management skills

Time management subscales	M	SD
Time planning	3.19	0.67
Time attitudes	3.16	0.55
Time wasters	3.35	0.62

#### 4.2. Age and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills

To compare the possible differences derived from age groups, the researcher classified participants into three groups: age 18-20 group, age 21-23 group, age 24-24+ group. The ANOVA tests presented that age did not play a role in time planning ( $F=0.17$ ,  $p>.05$ ), time attitudes ( $F=0.40$ ,  $p>.05$ ), and time-wasters ( $F=0.05$ ,  $p=.05$ ) subscales.

Table 3. Turkish EFL learners' time management skills as regards age

Subscales	Age			F (ANOVA)
	(1) 18-20 (n=34) (M, S.D)	(2) 21-23 (n=36) (M, S.D)	(3) 24-24+ (n=3) (M, S.D)	
Time planning	3.12 (0.77)	3.19 (0.55)	3.88 (0.38)	0.17
Time attitudes	3.26 (0.50)	3.08 (0.60)	3.10 (0.33)	0.40
Time wasters	3.51 (0.64)	3.17 (0.56)	3.58 (0.52)	0.05

#### 4.3. Gender and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills

To compare male Turkish EFL learners' ( $n=16$ ) mean scores for time management skills with female Turkish EFL learners' ( $n=57$ ) mean scores for time management skills, a series of Independent-Samples T-tests were executed. Among three subscales examined (exhibited in Table 4), only one subscale was found to be significantly different. It was in the subscale of time attitudes that male students ( $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=.64$ ) were found to have significantly higher time attitudes than female Turkish EFL learners ( $M=3.06$ ,  $SD=.47$ );  $t(71) = 3.391$ ,  $p<.05$ . However, there were no significant differences between male ( $M=2.91$ ,  $SD=.64$ ) Turkish EFL learners' mean scores and female ( $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=.66$ ) Turkish EFL learners' mean scores in regard to time planning subscale. Likewise, there were no significant differences between male ( $M=3.30$ ,  $SD=.54$ ) Turkish EFL learners' mean scores and female ( $M=3.36$ ,  $SD=.64$ ) Turkish EFL learners' mean scores in regard to time wasters subscale.

Table 4. Mean Differences between male Turkish EFL learners and female Turkish EFL learners with respect to their time management skills

Subscale	Gender	n	Mean	SD	Mean Dif.	df	t	p
Time planning	Male	16	2,91	,64	-,35	71	-1,900	,061
	Female	57	3,27	,66	-,35			
Time attitudes	Male	16	3,54	,64	,49	71	3,391	,001*
	Female	57	3,06	,47	,49			
Time wasters	Male	16	3,30	,54	-,06	71	-,356	,723
	Female	57	3,36	,64	-,06			

#### 4.4. Year of study and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills

To compare the potential differences obtained from the year of study, the researchers grouped the participants under three categories: the freshman group, the sophomore group, and the junior group. The ANOVA tests exhibited that year of study had an impact on the time-wasters subscale with a significance level of 0.05. However, the year of study did not display significant differences in time planning and time attitudes subscales. A series of post hoc tests (Scheffe tests) were executed after the ANOVA tests in order to make multiple comparisons among three levels of study years. Table 5 displays the outcomes of those tests.

Table 5. Turkish EFL learners' time management skills with respect to year of study

Subscales	Year of Study			F (ANOVA) Scheffe Test
	(1) Freshmen (n=39) (M, S.D)	(2) Sophomore (n=25) (M, S.D)	(3) Junior (n=9) (M, S.D)	
Time planning	3.19 (0.63)	3.25 (0.74)	3.02 (0.63)	0.38
Time attitudes	3.12 (0.50)	3.15 (0.53)	3.35 (0.77)	0.62
Time wasters	3.52 (0.45)	3.14 (0.81)	3.17 (0.43)	3.52* (1)> (3)> (2)

These comparisons indicated that freshmen students obtained higher scores than the scores that the other two groups obtained for the subscale of time wasters ( $F=3.52$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### 4.5. Academic achievement and students' time management skills

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was implemented to evaluate the link between academic achievement and students' time management skills. As shown in table 6, there was no significant relationship between academic achievement and time planning ( $r = .181$ ,  $n=73$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), time attitudes ( $r = .592$ ,  $n=73$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), and time wasters ( $r = .767$ ,  $n=73$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 6. *Correlation between academic achievement and the subscales of time management scale*

Subscales of Time Management Scale			
	Time planning	Time attitudes	Time wasters
Academic Achievement	.181	.592	.767

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the time management skills of Turkish EFL students in connection to specific learner characteristics. To begin with, the findings showed that Turkish EFL students had a moderate degree of time management skills from the standpoint of time planning, time attitudes, and time-wasters. These findings were consistent with the findings of a research done by Chanpisut (2018), which demonstrated that students exhibited moderate overall time management abilities.

Second, the results of the study revealed that there was no relationship between age and time management abilities among Turkish EFL students. These findings were in line with previous research (e.g. Al-Rahimi & Al-Mardini, 2014) that found no influence of age on time management abilities.

Third, the relationship between gender and Turkish EFL learners' time management skills with respect to the subscale of time attitudes was significant. It was also revealed in this study that there was no remarkable correlation between gender and the subscales of time planning and time wasters. This conclusion was consistent with the findings of other studies (e.g., Akyürek, 2021), which found that gender was not associated with the subscales of time planning and time wasters.

Fourthly, no significant relationship was reported between academic success and Turkish EFL learners' time management abilities. This finding supported the findings of a research undertaken by Yılmaz, Yoncalık, and Bektaş (2010), which found no significant link between academic success and time management behavior.

Fifthly, while there was a significant relationship between the year of study and time-wasters subscale, no significant link was detected (a) between the year of study and time planning subscale and (b) between the year of study and time attitudes subscale. These findings were in opposition to Chasiput's (2018) study, which found that sophomore students had superior time management ability to examine problems than junior students.

As a consequence, we believe that the present research will encourage more EFL teachers to teach effective time management skills to their students in their EFL classroom and push more researchers to conduct time management and foreign language teaching-related research studies because research studies on Turkish EFL learners' time management skills are either very few in number or non-existent in the current literature on English language teaching.

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