

TIME MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS OF PROJECT PROFESSIONALS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON INDIVIDUAL AND PROJECT SUCCESS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

This review examines how time management strategies influence individual success, with particular attention to outcomes relevant to project-based work, including productivity, task performance, well-being, and academic or professional achievement in various fields. A structured review of the literature was conducted using Scopus, Web of Science, APA PsycInfo, and Google Scholar. Studies were screened against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, focusing on empirical evidence linking time-management practices to measurable outcomes. The synthesis indicates that prioritisation techniques, structured scheduling, task-batching, and digital planning tools are generally associated with higher performance, lower perceived stress, and stronger self-efficacy. However, effects vary according to context, personality, occupational demands, and the degree of flexibility built into the method. The review also suggests that excessively rigid systems may undermine creativity or increase pressure in dynamic environments. The paper contributes by consolidating fragmented evidence across educational and professional domains and by showing that time-management capability may be understood not merely as a personal productivity skill, but as a behavioural competence relevant to project execution, coordination, and sustainable performance.

1. Introduction

Time management is widely recognised as a key determinant of individual effectiveness in contemporary academic and professional life [1][2]. In environments characterised by multiple deadlines, competing priorities, and continuous interruptions, the ability to organise tasks, allocate effort, and control attention shapes both performance and well-being [3][4]. This is

particularly relevant in project-based work, where delivery depends not only on technical planning tools but also on the everyday behavioural capability of individuals to prioritise, schedule, and coordinate their work effectively [5].

Although time management has been examined in educational psychology, organisational behaviour, and professional development, the literature remains fragmented. Studies differ in their

populations, measures, and conceptualisations of time management, ranging from daily to-do lists and planning routines to prioritisation matrices and digital task systems [6][7]. As a result, practitioners often lack clear guidance on which strategies are consistently effective, for whom, and under what conditions.

This review contributes in three ways. First, it consolidates fragmented empirical evidence on time-management strategies across educational and workplace settings into a single cross-study perspective. Second, it distinguishes between major strategy types, including prioritisation, scheduling, task-batching, and digital support tools, rather than treating time management as a single undifferentiated construct. Third, it extends the discussion to project-based environments, where individual time-management capability can influence schedule adherence, coordination quality, workload control, and contribution to project success.

The review addresses the following questions:

1. Which time-management strategies are most consistently associated with enhanced productivity and higher levels of individual success?
2. How do demographic and contextual factors moderate these relationships?
3. What roles do digital tools play in supporting or hindering time-management practice?
4. What risks or unintended consequences arise from highly structured time-management systems?

The topic has both practical and theoretical significance. Practically, it can inform training, educational support, and project routines. Theoretically, it intersects with frameworks such as Covey's Time Management Matrix and Parkinson's Law, while also connecting to self-regulation, attention management, and adaptive performance [8][9]. In project settings, where work is milestone-driven and coordination-intensive, time management should be seen not only as a personal habit but also as a project-relevant behavioural competence.

2. Methodology

2.1 Review Design

This study adopted a structured literature review with systematic elements. Because the included studies varied considerably in design, setting, and outcome measures, a narrative synthesis approach was selected instead of meta-analysis. The review process was informed by PRISMA 2020 principles to improve transparency in study identification, screening, and reporting.

2.2 Search Strategy

A structured search was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, and APA PsycInfo, with supplementary searching in Google Scholar and citation chaining [10][11]. These databases were selected because they cover psychology, education, management, and social science research relevant to time-management behaviour.

Key search terms included:

- "time management"
- "productivity"
- "academic success"
- "workplace performance"
- "personal effectiveness"
- "self-regulation"
- "goal-setting"

Boolean combinations and synonyms were used to refine the search. A typical string was: ("time management" OR "time-management") AND ("productivity" OR "performance" OR "academic success").

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they:

1. Examined individual-level time-management practices or interventions.
2. Reported empirical data using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods.
3. Linked time management to measurable outcomes such as academic achievement, workplace performance, or psychological well-being; and
4. Provided sufficient methodological detail for appraisal [12][13].

Studies were excluded if they were non-empirical, focused on unrelated scheduling contexts,

duplicated previously reported datasets, or lacked adequate methodological transparency [14].

2.4 Screening Outcome

The database search yielded 1200 records. After duplicate removal, 700 unique records remained for title and abstract screening. Of these, 400 were excluded because they did not address individual-

level time management or lacked relevant outcome measures. Full texts of 300 studies were assessed for eligibility, leading to the exclusion of 275 articles due to non-empirical design, insufficient methodological detail, irrelevant context, or absence of measurable success indicators. A final total of 25 studies was included in the synthesis. The study selection process is presented in Figure 1.

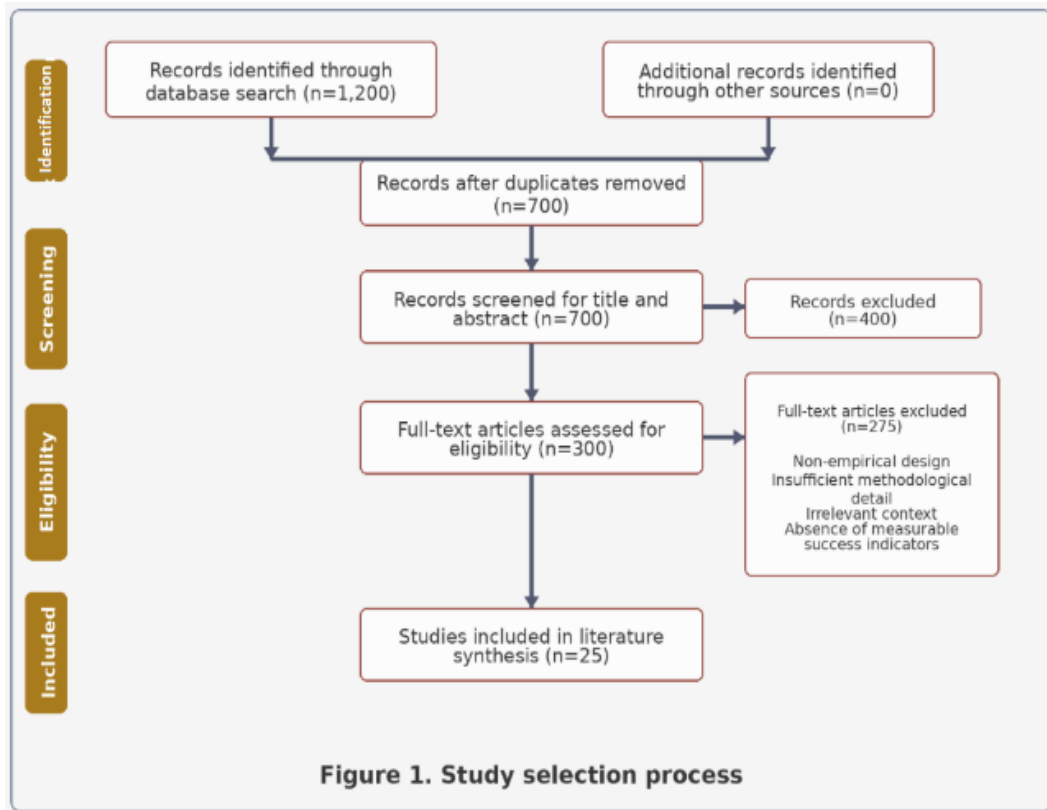


Figure 1. Study selection process

2.5 Quality Assessment and Data Extraction

A customised appraisal checklist was used to assess research design, sample adequacy, measurement validity, and analytical rigour [15][16]. Higher-quality studies tended to use validated instruments and clear outcome definitions; lower-quality studies relied heavily on self-report measures, convenience samples, and cross-sectional designs.

Data was extracted using a structured template covering citation details, setting, population, time-management strategy, outcome measures, key findings, limitations, and implications. This data informed Table 1, which summarises the characteristics of the included studies.

Table 1: Characteristics of included studies

Study ID	Author(s) and year	Context / population	Study design	Time-management focus / strategy	Outcome measure(s)	Main contribution to the review
S1	Aeon, Faber and Panaccio (2021)	Mixed populations across prior studies	Meta-analysis	Overall time-management behaviours and practices	Performance, well-being, distress	Provides the strongest cross-study evidence that time management is positively associated with performance and well-being outcomes.
S2	Wilson, Joiner and Abbasi (2021)	University students	Empirical educational study	Time-management skills development	Student academic performance	Shows that improved time-management capability is associated with stronger academic outcomes.
S3	Kim et al. (2019)	Users of a smartphone-based system	App-based empirical intervention	Self-regulation and smartphone-supported time management	Time use, self-regulation, efficiency	Demonstrate the relevance of digital tools in supporting structured time use and behavioural regulation.
S4	Yener, Arslan and Kilinç (2021)	Employees	Quantitative workplace study	Time management as a moderating capability	Burnout, technostress, employee performance	Shows that time management can buffer negative workplace pressures and support performance.



S5	Lušňáková, Dicsérová and Šajbidorová (2021)	Managers	Workplace empirical study	Managerial time management	Efficiency and managerial performance	Supports the argument that time management is linked to effectiveness in managerial roles.
S6	Sutharshini, Thevanes and Arulrajah (2019)	Employees in financial institutions	Organisational empirical study	Effective time-management practices	Individual and organisational performance	Suggests that time-management capability benefits both employee output and wider organisational functioning.
S7	Alvarez Sainz, Ferrero and Ugidos (2019)	Learners / training context	Applied empirical study	Time-management skills acquisition and application	Learning-related performance and skill practice	Reinforces the practical teachability of time-management skills.
S8	Islam, Ali and Osmani (2021)	Employees	Workplace quantitative study	Time management for better job performance	Job performance	Directly links time-management practices with improved workplace performance.
S9	Nouri et al. (2022)	Nursing students	Workshop-based intervention study	Time-management workshop / training	Time-management skill improvement	Provides evidence that formal training interventions can improve time-management competence.
S10	Dmytryshyn and Goran (2022)	General management / organisational context	Applied management study	Effective time-management system	Effectiveness and work organisation	Contributes a systems-oriented understanding of how time management can be

						organised and implemented .
S11	Lukianova, Androshchuk and Banit (2019)	PhD students	Educational empirical study	Time management as self-management pedagogy	Effective self-management	Extends the evidence base to doctoral-level learners and self-directed study contexts.
S12	Agormedah et al. (2021)	Students	Quantitative educational study	Time-management practices	Academic achievement; gender moderation	Highlights academic benefits and indicates that demographic moderators may shape outcomes.
S13	Akintayo et al. (2020)	Banking-sector employees	Organisational empirical study	Time management in business operations	Business performance	Strengthens the evidence linking time management and professional effectiveness in commercial settings.
S14	Chase et al. (2013)	Researchers / academic professionals	Applied professional study	Time-management strategies for research productivity	Research productivity	Relevant for professional contexts where output depends on self-directed scheduling and prioritisation.
S15	Cuje (2022)	High-school online learners	Intervention study	Specific time-management technique	Coursework completion and submission	Provides evidence that structured time-management techniques improve task completion

						in online learning.
S16	Antoniadou and Antoniadis (2024)	Healthcare academia	Applied empirical study	Time management and resilience	Academic/work functioning, resilience-related outcomes	Broadens the literature by linking time management with resilience in demanding professional-educational environments.
S17	Ahmetoglu, Brumby and Cox (2024)	Task-management app users	Human-computer interaction study	Planning fallacy mitigation in task-management app design	Planning accuracy, task management	Shows how digital design features can influence the effectiveness of time-management behaviour.
S18	da Rosa, de Carvalho Picinatto and Rodrigues (2024)	Organisational case setting	Applied organisational study	Structured time management	Productivity and well-being	Demonstrates that structured time-management systems may support both output and employee well-being.
S19	Pedersen, Muhr and Dunne (2024)	Employees in a four-day workweek company	Qualitative organisational study	Pomodoro tool adoption	Productivity, work organisation, experience of time	Offers contextual evidence on task-batching techniques in alternative work-organisation settings.
S20	Callula et al. (2024)	Dynamic work environments	Applied management study	Structural framework for effective time management	Work effectiveness	Contributes a framework-oriented view of how time management can be embedded in

						changing work settings.
S21	Ashurbayev and Axmatov (2024)	Business setting	Applied empirical study	Time management for productivity improvement	Productivity	Supports the productivity-enhancing role of time-management practices in business.
S22	Melhem (2022)	Employees	Workplace study	Task prioritisation	Employee performance	Relevant for the prioritisation strand of the review, especially in relation to performance outcomes.
S23	Gloire Ingabire (2024)	Project setting	Project-based empirical study	Time management in project work	Project performance	Particularly important for linking time management to project-related outcomes and project success.
S24	Aruğaslan (2024)	Distance-education students	Quantitative educational study	Time management in relation to procrastination	Academic dishonesty, procrastination, learning-related behaviour	Helps explain behavioural mechanisms that may weaken or strengthen time-management effectiveness.
S25	Antoniadou and Antoniadis (2024) / Konte (2021)*	Managers / healthcare-academic professionals	Pilot / applied study	Mindfulness-linked time management and resilience	Managerial or academic functioning, stress-related outcomes	Supports the contemporary strand of the review by connecting time management with mindfulness and adaptive functioning.



2.6 Analytical Approach

The findings were synthesised narratively through thematic clustering. Studies were grouped according to the main time-management strategy investigated, the context in which it was used, and the success outcomes reported. This allowed

comparison of convergent and divergent patterns across student, professional, managerial, and project-related settings. Table 2 presents a cross-study synthesis of strategy categories, typical outcomes, limitations, and project relevance.

Table 2. Cross-study synthesis of time-management strategies and outcomes

Strategy category	Common tools / examples	Typical positive outcomes	Reported limitations	Most relevant settings	Relevance to project-based work
Prioritisation frameworks	Eisenhower Matrix, Covey’s Time Management Matrix, ABC prioritisation, priority ranking lists	Clearer task sequencing, better focus on high-value activities, reduced decision fatigue, improved deadline adherence, stronger perceived control over workload	Can become overly rigid if priorities are not reviewed regularly; users may oversimplify complex tasks; less effective where priorities shift rapidly without adaptation	Higher education, managerial work, administrative roles, knowledge work	Highly relevant because project environments require constant distinction between urgent issues and strategically important tasks, especially under deadline pressure
Daily task listing	Daily to-do lists, action logs, checklists, end-of-day planning lists	Increased short-term organisation, stronger sense of accomplishment, improved task visibility, lower risk of forgetting routine tasks	Long or unrealistic lists may create guilt, stress, or avoidance; often weak for complex interdependent work unless combined with prioritisation	Students, office workers, self-managed professionals	Useful for managing daily deliverables in projects, but should be linked to milestones and dependencies rather than used as a standalone control tool
Weekly and medium-term planning	Weekly planners, planning templates, rolling weekly reviews, work-block scheduling	Improved workload distribution, better anticipation of deadlines, stronger goal progression, reduced last-minute rush,	Requires disciplined review habits; may lose value in highly volatile contexts if plans are not updated frequently; can	Students, professionals, hybrid workers, managers	Strong relevance because project work depends on short-cycle planning, milestone preparation, and alignment of individual

		enhanced work-life balance	create false certainty		effort with team schedules
Calendar-based scheduling	Digital calendars, Outlook, Google Calendar, shared calendars, time blocking	Better punctuality, improved coordination, fewer missed deadlines, lower cognitive burden, clearer visibility of commitments	Overreliance on reminders may reduce self-regulatory habits; calendar saturation may increase stress; scheduled plans may not reflect actual task complexity	Corporate settings, remote teams, academic settings, service roles	Very relevant for project meetings, milestone tracking, stakeholder coordination, and shared visibility of time-sensitive commitments
Task-batching	Grouping emails, meetings, admin tasks, reading blocks, communication windows	Reduced task-switching costs, improved concentration, time savings, more efficient routine execution	Less suitable for highly interrupt-driven roles; may delay response to urgent issues; requires boundary control	Knowledge work, administrative work, academic study, digital work environments	Valuable in projects where fragmented communication disrupts deep work; helps protect focused time for analysis, planning, and delivery tasks
Pomodoro and interval-based work methods	Pomodoro Technique, 25-5 work cycles, timed sprints, structured focus sessions	Higher concentration, reduced mental fatigue, stronger time awareness, better initiation of difficult tasks, improved momentum	Can interrupt flow during creative or analytical immersion; may feel artificial to some users; not equally effective across personality types	Students, writers, analysts, remote workers, knowledge professionals	Useful in project tasks requiring disciplined progress, especially for documentation, coding, analysis, and review work, though it may be less suitable for highly creative design phases
Self-regulation and goal-setting approaches	SMART goals, self-monitoring, progress tracking, reflection logs, implementation intentions	Stronger accountability, better habit formation, higher persistence, increased self-	Demands internal discipline; benefits may weaken without follow-up support;	Education, professional development, leadership roles, research work	Highly relevant because project performance depends not only on schedules but also on self-

		efficacy, improved alignment between effort and goals	self-report bias often affects evaluation of success		regulation, ownership, and the ability to sustain progress across phases
Training and workshop-based interventions	Time-management workshops, coaching sessions, academic skills training, organisational development programmes	Improved awareness of planning strategies, better prioritisation habits, short-term performance gains, stronger confidence in managing workload	Effects may fade over time without reinforcement; transfer from training to practice is uneven; some interventions are too generic	Universities, training institutions, organisations, healthcare education	Relevant for project-based organisations that want to strengthen delivery capability through behavioural skill development rather than relying only on formal project controls
Digital task-management systems	Trello, Asana, Todoist, Notion, Microsoft Planner, task apps with reminders and dashboards	Better task tracking, improved visibility, stronger collaboration, easier prioritisation, reduced memory burden, transparency of progress	App fatigue, notification overload, dependence on external prompts, fragmented tool ecosystems, uneven adoption across users	Teams, project-based organisations, remote work, students	Very high relevance because project-based work depends on shared visibility, assignment tracking, deadline monitoring, and coordination across multiple actors
Mindfulness-informed time management	Mindfulness routines, pause-and-plan methods, reflective scheduling, attention management	Reduced stress, improved emotional regulation, greater awareness of procrastination, more adaptive responses to workload pressure	Evidence base is still smaller than for scheduling tools; may be seen as abstract without practical integration; outcomes may vary by user engagement	Healthcare, academia, leadership, high-stress professional environments	Relevant where projects create cognitive overload and uncertainty; supports adaptive performance, emotional control, and sustainable

					contribution under pressure
Flexibility-oriented adaptive planning	Buffer time, rolling reprioritisation, flexible scheduling, contingency planning	Better coping with uncertainty, lower disruption from unexpected tasks, improved resilience, more realistic workload management	Too much flexibility may weaken accountability; difficult to evaluate consistently; can drift into under-structuring if not anchored to goals	Dynamic workplaces, entrepreneurial contexts, project teams, consulting	Particularly relevant because project settings frequently involve change, emerging risks, and shifting stakeholder demands, requiring structure with adaptability
Technology-assisted self-monitoring	Progress dashboards, automated reminders, planning analytics, habit-tracking apps	Greater visibility of progress, stronger adherence to routines, easier identification of delay patterns, support for behavioural consistency	Can become surveillance-like or demotivating; data may be tracked without meaningful reflection; may increase pressure rather than reduce it	Remote work, digital learning, project platforms, productivity-oriented settings	Relevant for project-based work where milestone visibility and early warning signals are important, but should support judgment rather than replace it

3. Findings

3.1 Theoretical Foundations of Time Management

The reviewed literature draws on both classical and contemporary perspectives. Among classical frameworks, Covey’s Time Management Matrix remains particularly influential. It distinguishes between urgent and important activities and argues that long-term effectiveness depends on protecting time for important but non-urgent work [17]. Studies reviewed in this paper generally support the value of this orientation, especially where proactive planning reduces crisis-driven working and perceived overload.

The Pareto Principle also informs time-management thinking by suggesting that a relatively small number of tasks often generate the greatest impact. Although direct empirical testing is less common, many workplace studies indirectly

support the view that high performers focus selectively on high-value activities rather than distributing effort evenly across all tasks [18].

Contemporary approaches increasingly integrate digital tools and mindfulness. Productivity apps, digital calendars, and collaborative task systems support planning, reminders, and shared visibility of deadlines. At the same time, mindfulness-oriented approaches focus on awareness, emotional regulation, and attentional control, suggesting that effective time management depends not only on schedules but also on how individuals respond to stress, distraction, and competing demands [19].

3.2 Main Time-Management Strategies and Outcomes

The studies reviewed point to four broad groups of strategies: prioritisation, structured scheduling, task-batching, and digital support systems.

3.2.1 Prioritisation

Prioritisation frameworks such as the Eisenhower Matrix, Covey's Matrix, and structured to-do lists were consistently associated with better task sequencing, reduced decision fatigue, and improved deadline control. In academic settings, students using prioritisation tools reported clearer distinctions between immediate and long-term tasks. In workplace settings, prioritisation supported better delegation, reduced overload, and greater perceived control over work [20].

However, prioritisation tools were less effective when users failed to review priorities regularly or when their tasks were highly interdependent and rapidly changing. Long or unrealistic to-do lists could also become sources of guilt and stress rather than productivity support.

3.2.2 Scheduling and Planning

Weekly planners, work-block scheduling, and digital calendars were among the most frequently studied strategies. Structured planning was linked to improved workload distribution, better anticipation of deadlines, and stronger work-life boundaries [21]. In project-relevant settings, such approaches supported milestone preparation and coordination with others.

Digital calendars reduced the cognitive burden of remembering appointments and deadlines, but the evidence was mixed regarding overreliance. Some studies suggested that constant reminder systems can weaken internal planning habits or contribute to "calendar saturation," where people schedule excessively without allowing realistic task time.

3.2.3 Task-Batching and Pomodoro

Task-batching, including grouped email handling, administrative blocks, and reading sessions, was associated with lower switching costs and greater concentration. The Pomodoro Technique and

other interval-based work methods also showed benefits for focus, time awareness, and task initiation, especially among students and knowledge workers [22].

These methods were not universally effective. For some individuals, especially those engaged in creative or immersive analytical work, fixed interruptions could disrupt flow. This suggests that batching and interval timing are useful but should be adapted to task type and individual preference.

3.2.4 Digital Systems and Self-Monitoring

Digital task-management tools such as Trello, Asana, Todoist, and planning apps supported task visibility, transparency of progress, and collaborative coordination. These were particularly relevant to project-based work because they enabled assignment tracking, deadline monitoring, and communication alignment across multiple actors [23].

At the same time, studies also reported app fatigue, notification overload, and a risk of dependence on external prompts [24][26]. Technology-assisted systems were most effective when they supported judgement and self-regulation rather than replacing them [27].

3.3 Success Outcomes

Across the included studies, success was most commonly measured in three domains: academic performance, workplace productivity, and psychological well-being.

Academic outcomes included GPA, assignment completion, test performance, and self-reported study efficacy [28]. Time-management interventions in student populations generally supported stronger academic achievement, especially when combined with realistic planning and proactive study routines [29].

In workplace settings, common indicators included supervisor ratings, output measures, project completion, and job performance [30]. Employees with stronger planning and prioritisation habits often performed more reliably and showed better deadline adherence [31]. Some studies also linked time management with career

growth, partly because it enabled individuals to allocate time to development, networking, and strategic tasks [32].

Psychological well-being emerged as a major outcome across both academic and workplace studies [33]. Effective time management was frequently associated with lower stress, greater self-efficacy, improved autonomy, and higher life or job satisfaction [34]. However, overly rigid systems sometimes produced the opposite effect, increasing pressure or anxiety when schedules could not accommodate real-world disruptions [35].

3.4 Contextual and Individual Moderators

The effectiveness of time-management strategies depended strongly on context and user characteristics.

Student populations often benefited from structured tools because they were still developing self-regulatory habits and often operated within externally imposed timetables [36]. In contrast, professionals, especially those in self-directed or project-based work, faced more complex coordination demands and benefited more from flexible scheduling, shared calendars, and adaptive planning systems [37].

Cultural context also mattered. Time-management methods grounded in individual accountability and strict prioritisation may be less compatible with environments that place stronger emphasis on group harmony, relational obligations, or collective decision-making [38]. In such settings, time management may need to be framed less as individual optimisation and more as coordination and relational effectiveness.

Personality and life stage further shaped outcomes. Conscientious individuals tended to benefit more from structured systems, while highly open or creative individuals often preferred looser approaches that preserved spontaneity [39]. Younger adults and students often relied on micro-level tools such as daily lists, whereas mid-career professionals more often used strategic planning approaches linked to role complexity and family demands [40].

3.5 Cross-Study Patterns and Gaps

Several consistent patterns emerged. First, strategic planning through prioritisation, scheduling, or batching was positively associated with performance and well-being across most contexts [41]. Second, the benefits of time management extended beyond output to psychological outcomes such as autonomy, reduced anxiety, and stronger perceived control [42]. Third, time-management skills appeared teachable: workshops, coaching, and structured interventions often produced measurable improvement [43].

At the same time, the review identified important gaps. The long-term sustainability of interventions remains underexamined, as many studies focused on short-term improvements [44]. Digital tools showed mixed effects, indicating that their value depends on how they are embedded into routines. Cross-cultural evidence remains limited, and explicitly project-based studies are relatively scarce compared with student and general workplace research [45].

4. Discussion

4.1 Interpretation of Findings

The findings reinforce the view that time management is not merely a set of practical tips but a broader behavioural and self-regulatory capability. The recurring benefits of prioritisation, structured scheduling, and feedback-based planning align with Covey's focus on deliberate attention to important work and with broader self-regulation theories that emphasise monitoring, control, and adaptation [46].

At the same time, the review indicates that no single approach is universally effective. Structured systems are most useful when they are realistic, reviewed regularly, and adapted to context [47]. Excessive rigidity can undermine creativity, heighten stress, or become misaligned with the unpredictable nature of many professional tasks [48]. This is why recent work linking time management with mindfulness, resilience, and adaptive planning is important: it shifts attention from control alone to control plus flexibility.

4.2 Relevance to Project Management

Although much of the evidence comes from education, psychology, and general workplace settings, the findings are highly relevant to project management. Project work is time-bound, milestone-driven, and coordination-intensive [49]. In such environments, an individual's ability to prioritise, protect focused work time, schedule tasks realistically, and adapt to changing demands affects not only personal productivity but also deadline reliability, team coordination, and overall project contribution [50].

Time-management capability should therefore be viewed as a behavioural competence that supports project execution [51]. It complements formal project-control tools by influencing how individuals actually allocate effort, respond to interruptions, and maintain progress across interdependent tasks [52]. This perspective aligns with the broader shift in project management research toward behavioural and organisational dimensions of performance rather than purely technical control.

4.3 Practical Implications

For project managers and project-based organisations, the findings suggest that time management should not be treated solely as a private discipline issue [53]. It can be supported through project routines such as realistic milestone planning, meeting discipline, visible priorities, protected focus time, and the use of shared digital task systems. Training in time management may be especially valuable in environments characterised by multitasking, compressed deadlines, and high coordination complexity [54].

Beyond project settings, the review also has implications for educators, managers, and individuals. Educational institutions can build planning and self-monitoring skills into curricula [55]. Managers can support employees through clear priorities and reasonable review cycles [56]. Individuals can improve outcomes by selecting methods that fit their tasks, cognitive style, and life context rather than copying highly rigid systems that may not suit them.

5. Limitations and Future Research

The review has several limitations. First, the included studies varied considerably in design, measures, and quality, which limited direct comparison and precluded meta-analysis. Many relied on self-report data and cross-sectional designs, restricting strong causal inference [57]. Second, the evidence base was dominated by students and general employees, while older adults, gig workers, and explicitly project-based professionals were less well represented. Third, most studies originated in Western settings, limiting confidence in cross-cultural generalisability.

Future research should prioritise longitudinal designs to test whether time-management improvements endure over time and under changing conditions [58]. More work is also needed on project professionals specifically, including how time-management behaviours interact with formal project controls, team routines, and stakeholder pressures. Finally, integrating time management with theories of self-regulation, resilience, and adaptive performance may help explain why some individuals sustain effective routines while others do not [59].

6. Conclusion

This review demonstrates that time management has a clear and generally positive influence on academic, professional, and psychological outcomes. Across the literature, prioritisation, structured scheduling, task-batching, and digital planning tools were most consistently associated with improved productivity, lower stress, and stronger self-efficacy. However, their effectiveness depended on context, user characteristics, and the extent to which flexibility was preserved alongside structure.

The review contributes to scholarship by showing that time management is best understood as a context-sensitive behavioural capability rather than a universal productivity formula. In project-based work, this capability is especially important because it supports milestone progression, coordination quality, and sustained contribution under deadline pressure. Effective time

management therefore involves not only planning and prioritising, but also adapting, reflecting, and aligning personal routines with the demands of dynamic work.

As project environments become more complex and digitally mediated, the challenge is not simply to work faster, but to structure time in ways that support both performance and well-being. Future research that is more longitudinal, cross-cultural, and project-specific will help clarify how these behaviours can be strengthened and sustained over time.

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