

Time Management Behaviors Sanction Adoption of Flexible Work Arrangements

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Abstract

Regardless of the concern with time management and flexible work arrangements, there is lack of empirical scientific research. This study develops linkages for time management behaviors that facilitate the adoption of flexible work arrangements. It proposes that the time management model (Macan, 1996) may be broken down in a path that may facilitate employee in usage of flexible work arrangements. The planning behavior impacts the employee's organizing and mechanics behaviors that have a positive impact on the use of flexibility options for that employee. This study also hypothesizes that the perceived control of time has an impact on the employee planning behavior; this relationship is strengthened if the employees receives time management training; time management training is studied as a moderating variable.

1 Introduction

Comments like, "there is not enough time" have become a part of everyone's routine. From students to top level managers all of us face this dilemma, where did time go? This shows that having control of our time is an important sense of achievability - more so, in the 21st century. The society we live in is marked by constant change and dynamism. Thus, in order to survive the accelerating competition, every individual needs a grasp on his/her ability to manage time.

More so, the nature of work done in organizations has changed due to multiple factors in the last few decades since the inception and dissemination of information communication technologies (ICTs); and this change in the nature and contours of work has been relevant from workforce perspective as well as from organizational perspective. Therefore, many organizations have changed the way they manage their human resources (Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, & Bolino,

2002). These changes warrant investigation of new temporal phenomena (Rogelberg et al., 2014), including the Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA). Leading businesses such as Nestle and Vodafone are now actively implementing flexible working to help their organizations compete with others for the best employees (Bruhn, 2010). However, the employee's adoption of these policies remains a challenge (Poelmans, Chinchilla and Cardona, 2003).

Simultaneously, over the past couple of decades, the importance of time management behaviors in organizational context has received more acknowledgment. Orlikowsky and Yates (2002) attribute this significance of temporal dimension because of the world becoming a global village; immense competition is leading to increased demand for immediate timely availability of goods and services. Garhammer (2002) pointed to the rapidity of life through a study that demonstrated acceleration, habits of spending time (e.g. eat faster, sleep less), and actions of compression (e.g. making a phone calls over lunch). Similarly, some authors have scrutinized the aspect of time in organizational framework (Palmer and Schoorman, 1999) and have tried to understand the role of pressure in time management context among employees (Major et al., 2002; Trueman and Hartley, 1996). The growing importance of time is mirrored in both, theoretical and practical publications. Some authors argued regarding the need for integration in theoretical models with the research models (Ancona et al., 2001; George and Jones 2000). While other writers focused on how employees manage their time, and how can these efforts can be improved (Macan, 1994).

Regardless of the concern with time management and flexible work arrangements, there is lack empirical scientific research, especially with regard to Pakistan. This lack of the review of empirical research findings about time management issues was addressed by Classens et al., (2005) and regarding flexible work arrangements was highlighted by Allen et al., (2013).

This study proposes that the time management model (Macan, 1996) may be broken down in a path that may facilitate employee in usage of flexible work arrangements. The planning behavior impacts the employee's organizing and mechanics behaviors that have a positive impact on the use of flexibility options for that employee (refer to Fig 1). This study also hypothesizes that the perceived control of time has an impact on the employee planning behavior; this

relationship is strengthened if the employees receives time management training; this training is studied as a moderating variable.

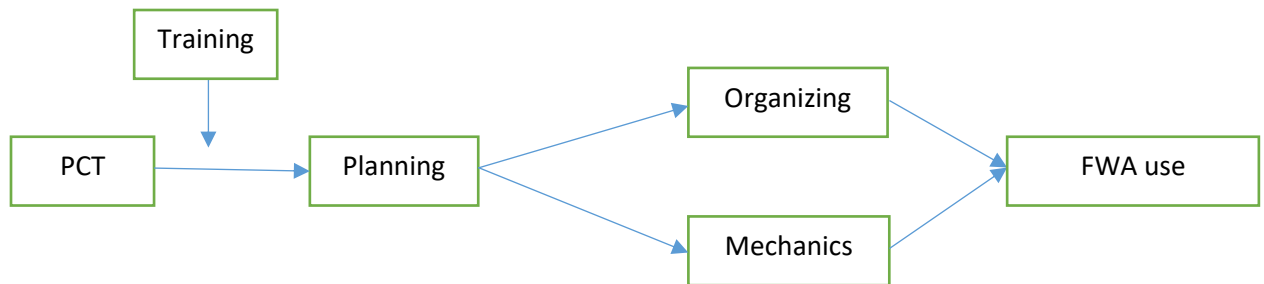


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

2 Literature review

The recognition of the issues involved in time management is not an innovation. The problems associated with time management have already been topic of research attention in the decades of 1950s and 1960s. Authors outlined methods on how to address issues of time at work (Drucker,1967; McCay, 1959; and Lakein,1973). They suggested straightforward solutions like making to-do-lists and writing work plans in order to facilitate job performance. Researching on this phenomenon, Drucker (1967) documented that planning the tasks and activities will not necessarily lead to the completion of work, especially under pressure. Adding to the literature, McCay (1959) proposed the concept of a training program for enhancing time management skills. The essential elements were: an overview of tiresome activities, changing the pattern how time was spent, and increasing the efficiency by training people about scheduling, prioritizing and dealing with unexpected tasks. Numerous books and articles have been published that convey these basic concepts to managers.

The phrase "time management" in itself is misleading. Time cannot be managed because it exists as an inaccessible factor. Nonetheless, how a person uses that time can be due to the person's predisposition. Keeping this in consideration Eilam and Aharon (2003) theorized that time management can be measured as a means of monitoring and controlling activities. According to this view, it makes more sense to speak of self-management. However, the literature describes self-management as supervision and regulation of oneself, but without any specific reference to the use of technical monitoring of time.

2.1 Planning

Literature identifies the activities of planning and setting goals to be of utmost importance with respect to time management behavior (Bond and Feather, (1988); Macan (1994). Planning behavior has been considered as a particular means of goal-setting. The goal-setting theory assumes that human actions are directed by conscious goals. These goals regulated goal directed action, even if they are not in conscious awareness at all times. Plans can be made to reach sub-goals, rather than to research the end goal. Incessantly focusing on the end goal can be a distraction from taking the actions needed to reach it (Locke and Latham, 1990). Literature uses terms of “goal-setting” and “prioritizing”, and “short-range planning” as synonyms for planning behavior (Britton and Tesser, 1991). Planning, for this research, refers to the strategy of setting goals to achieve desired results. This includes activities like splitting difficult tasks into smaller doable chunks, or evaluating one’s pace of work. Various studies have focused upon the effects of planning and setting goals. Adam and Jex (1999), Macan et al., (1990), and Davis (2000) have reported a positive relation of planning with job satisfaction. Jex and Elacqua (1999) explained that strain decreases as tasks become better organized and planned. According to Britton and Tesser (1991) short term planning has a positive impact on student performance while the impact of long term planning was found not significant. Also, they found that short term planning was a better measure of time management. They defended their finding by associating short term planning with greater flexibility, thus, ease to accommodate change prevailing in the surrounding.

2.2 Mechanics

Another aspect of time management behavior is mechanics of time management. Mechanics aspect of time management behavior involves the use of behaviors that are normally promoted in time management training programs and books (Lakein, 1973). This includes behavior of making ‘to do’ lists. The literature about decision making behavior shows that people normally discount future outcomes. This phenomenon is applicable for time management mechanics because their use usually entails short run costs and future benefits. In other words, employees focus on smaller tasks with sooner outcomes instead of long term oriented tasks. If certain people discount future outcomes more steeply than others, they should also discount the future benefits of using time management mechanics more steeply. Therefore, they were found using time management mechanics less frequently (Konig and Kleinmann, 2006).

2.3 Organizing

Preference for organizing your work space has been reported to enhance time management behavior (Macan et al., 1990). Having a methodical approach to work is likely to be relevant in time management behavior (Macan, 1994). For example if someone anticipates that they will be spending time waiting, then they will bring along a book to better utilize that time (Adams and Jex, 1999). Another example of a behavior consistent with this dimension would be organizing one's desk before beginning work each day (Macan et al., 1990).

2.4 Perceived Control of Time (PCT)

Subject of time within organizational context has received growing theoretical attention. Still few claims have been subjected to empirical investigation of perceived control of time (Kearns and Gariner, 2007). The variable of perceived control of time was introduced by Macan et al., (1990) in the time management process model. The same dimension has been studied by Britton and Tesser (1991). This construct takes into account the sensitivity that the individual feel he/she is effectively managing his/her time. Britton and Tesser (1991) suggested that this time related attitudes reflected a sense of self-efficacy, which was plausibly an outcome of engaging in better time management behaviors. Later, perceived control of time surfaced as a mediating variable between time management training and planning (Macan, 1994). According to Macan at al, (1990) the most important mediating relationship between time management and stress was reported to be the perceived control of time. Their analysis revealed that having the feeling of control of the situation lowered the levels of stress among respondents. Such stress is frequently noticeable when an individual fails to complete tasks within a given time. Multiple replication studies were conducted to validate these claims, such as Adams and Jex (1999), Davis (2000), Jex and Elacqua (1999). However, Classens et al., (2005) has argued that better time management behavior, and planning can have a direct impact on job satisfaction as planning can lessen overload.

Perceptions of controllability are closely related to the acceptance of responsibility for any given outcome (Weiner, 1995). In particular, the more control people feel they have over their actions, the more responsible they feel (Caouette, Wohl, Peetz, 2012). Better time management behavior provides the perception that a person has control over time (Noins, Hudson, Logan, Ford, 1998).

The notion of perceived control of time was introduced by Macan et al., (1990) on the theoretical base of self regulation and goal setting theory (Classens et al., 2005). The self regulation

theory suggests that behavior is regulated by feedback (Carver and Scheier, 2001). The goal setting theory claims that setting of goals is related to self efficacy in being able to control behavior (Bandura, 1977). Thus, Macan (1994) concluded that by employing the components of time management behavior (planning, mechanics and organizing) a sense of control over how time can be allotted is gained. Thus, the concept of perceived control of time in essence is the temporal version of self regulation and goal setting theory. Employees with high perception of control over time can be more goal oriented and responsive to feedback.

Macan (1994) reported that planning behavior had a significant relationship with perceived control of time, which in turn was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively to job-induced and somatic tensions. Using a sample of 353 part-time students, who were also employees of two organizations, Macan found that perceived control of time acted as a mediating variable between planning and job satisfaction. Various replication studies were conducted to study this phenomenon and limited support was found for this mediation effects of perceived control of time (Jex and Elacqua, 1999, Adams and Jex, 1999, Davis, 2000). Planning and preference for organization were positively related to perceived control. Mechanics of time management were found to be negatively related to perceived control of time. The evidence is not conclusive and needs further investigation (Classens et al., 2005)

Classens et al (2005) conducted an empirical investigation and found that job autonomy and planning behavior of employees were positively related to perceived control of time. They also reported that perceived control of time was positively related to job performance and job satisfaction. Kearns and Gariner (2007) conducted a study to empirically investigate the impact of perceived control of time. The sample consisted of university staff and students to investigate the relationship between time management related behaviors, perceived effectiveness, and work-related morale and distress. Having a clear sense of career purpose was most important for perceived control of time. Results suggested a hierarchy of time management behaviors effectiveness at work, followed by planning and prioritizing.

Whereas, Haug and Uen (2012) found that employee with strong perceived control of time were more goal oriented. They had higher interpersonal and physical adaptively under work context. Thus, to achieve goals they could communicate with other members of the organization in advance and set up check points and adjust work routines accordingly. They were more inclined to team work and were sensitive to work politics. They were more confident to handle delay or

pressure situations by adjusting goals and reorienting tasks. In this regard perceived control of time seemed linked to employee adaptive performance.

In the light of the literature, Macan's (1994) proposed that perceived control of time is a better predictor of performance as a combined outcome of time management behaviors and time attitudes, rather than either of time management behaviors or time attitudes taken singly. However, Macan concluded that more research was required in this field.

2.5 Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA)

The flexibility system is advantageous for both organizations and employee (Galea, Houkes, & De Rijk, 2014). Hill et al., (2008) have defined FWA as the choice available to employees of an organization regarding where, when, and how much work to perform. These flexible work practices are increasingly becoming part of the strategy of organizations to attract, motivate, and retain talented employees (Hill et al., 2008; SHRM¹, 2010). Many countries, including Canada, UK, and America have introduced legislations enabling employees to request FWA (Joyce, Pabayo, Critchley & Bambra, 2010). However, this facility is not without accompanied problems. It is perceived that such employees are not up to the mark as an ideal worker, therefore, they are likely to suffer career penalties. This flexibility stigma is being researched these days (Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl, 2013).

For Organizations FWA benefits in the form of cost reductions have been reported. Twenty Two Britain's biggest companies (including Ford Motor Company) have signed a commitment to FWA on discovering that flexibility in staff hours and locations reduces workforce costs by approximately 13%. They say that a report "shows that in the areas we reviewed we are enjoying cost reduction equivalent to 3% to 13% of workforce costs" with potential to increase that further by 3% to 7%. Accountancy giant KPMG, has acknowledged that flexibility options saved £4.7million pounds during the recession by offering flexible working hours to staff.²

For employees, FWA have been considered as work place practices that may help reduce work-family conflict (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, and Shockley, 2013). Precisely, one's control over

¹Society for Human Resource Management. Founded in 1948, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest HR membership organization devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 275,000 members in over 160 countries

²On 11 December, 2014 Telegraph published an article titled, "Flexible working 'cuts cost to employers', say business leaders"

deciding what, when, and how much work to do may be significantly more helpful in avoiding work–family conflict (Lapierre and Allen, 2012); and may increase workers’ job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover intentions (McNall, Masuda, and Nicklin, 2009).

To the extent of our knowledge, Adams and Jex (1999), Lapierre and Allen (2012), Gold and Mustafa (2013) are the only few studies addressing the potential benefits of time management behavior in relation to work–family conflict. Lapierre and Allen (2012)³ have considered these benefits as resulting from an interaction between control and planning behavior of employees.

The review of the literature suggests that pertaining to flexibility “several areas are in need of additional research” and work place flexibility and related stigma are “poorly understood” phenomena (Allen et al., 2013).

3 Methodology

This paper conducted an empirical quantitative and cross sectional study to answer the research questions. A survey form was created in ‘google docs’ and sent to respondents via email and social media (including LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook). To ensure randomization, the Google form option to shuffle questions randomly was enabled. Although the sample was unique to Pakistan, the model evaluated remains generic (Mael and Ashforth, 1992).

The final useable sample was of 234 managers. 89% of respondents were male while 11% of respondents were female. This gender ratio was expected based on the low female participation in the corporate sector in Pakistan. 57% of participants were 40 or less than 40 years old and were middle level managers. Majority of the respondents were married (80%). A cumulative percentage of work experience for 52% of respondents was 5 years and cumulative 75% of respondents had 16 years of education.

3.1 Measures

Planning behavior, organizing, mechanics of time management and perceived control of time were measured on items by Macan et al., (1990). Flexible work arrangement use was measured on

³Lapierre and Allen (2012) defined control as, “the extent that individuals feel they can directly influence their environments”. Their findings suggested that “control at work was more strongly related to reductions in WIF among employees who used more rather than less planning behavior”.

4 items adapted by Crowley and Kolenikov, (2014). All items were measured on a 5 point likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

4 Results

A t-test was conducted to compare early to late respondents (Miller and Smith, 1983). Responses were compared with each item of the instrument to investigate the non response error (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Structured Equation Modeling was conducted to test the hypothesis after establishing reliability and validity of the constructs through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Structural Equation Modeling was conducted in Amos 18. The benchmark of 0.5 for all the factor loadings was used. There were no item with a factor loading of less than 0.5. Reliability of the constructs was tested by composite reliability with the standardized solutions in CFA (Shook, Ketchen, Hult, and Kacmar, 2004) using the benchmark of 0.7 (Diallo, 2012). The data was also examined for convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 1 shows the results of the path analysis. Support for significant positive impact of (i) Perceived control of time on planning behavior (ii) planning behavior on mechanics of time management and organizing behavior (iii) organizing behavior had an impact on use of flexible work arrangements. This study failed to provide support for mechanics of time management as a predictor of usage of flexible work arrangements.

As for training as a moderating variable, this study provides support for the hypothesis that attendance of workshop positively moderates the impact of perceived control of time on planning behavior (refer to Table 2). The sample was divided into 2 groups. The first group consisted of respondents that had never attended a time management workshop. In this case a nonsignificant (p-value >0.05) was generated for the impact of perceived control of time on planning behavior. The second group consisted of respondents that had attended at least one or more workshop on time management behavior; resulting in a significant impact of perceived control of time on planning behaviors (p-value <0.05, $\beta=0.403$).

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
planning	<---	PCT	.260	.079	3.303	***
mechanics	<---	planning	.546	.047	11.513	***
Organizing	<---	planning	.160	.058	2.776	.006
FWA	<---	Organizing	.275	.342	.805	.021
FWA	<---	mechanics	-.140	.337	-.416	.677

Table 1 Path Analysis

			No training		Training	
			Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value
Planning	<---	PCT	0.154	0.156	0.403	***

Table 2 Training as Moderator

5 Discussion

Despite the growing popularity of flexible work arrangements and time management behaviors, there is a dearth of theoretical and empirical knowledge on which practitioners can draw when establishing appropriate structures for implementation. This paper adds to the literature by contributing time management behavior as a measure that would facilitate the adoption of flexibility policies in the organization by employees. The managers may facilitate in shaping the perceptions of their employees regarding the employee's time management by offering them workshops on various time management behaviors. According to the empirical research conducted in this paper, the training provided to employees would help strengthen the impact of perception of control over time towards planning short and long term goals. Once these goals are set, the employee will be able to better organize and use various mechanisms for time management which will in turn facilitate the adoption of flexible work arrangements.

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