

TIME MANAGEMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper is grounded in a sociological thesis which argues that managing university students' time is not merely an individual organizational skill, but rather a complex social phenomenon resulting from the conflictual interaction between institutional structures and the self-awareness of the actor. It addresses the issue of how temporal behavior is shaped under the tension between "institutional time" as a tool of control and regulation, from a Michel Foucault perspective, and "lived time," which represents the student's space of autonomy and personal representations. The analysis, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's approach, reveals that the ability to "rationalize time" is closely linked to habitus and class background, making time a non-democratic resource influenced by variables such as gender, economic status (e.g., working students), and the nature of spatial environments. The study also highlights the challenges of "liquid time" and the digital attention economy, which have produced fragmented time lacking academic depth. It suggests that phenomena such as procrastination or time waste may, in essence, represent a silent protest or an expression of student alienation within the system. The paper concludes with the need to move from "waiting time" to "action time" by humanizing university time and fostering critical awareness among students. It emphasizes that time management is fundamentally a process of "self-politicization," reflecting the degree to which students are integrated into the values of modernization and rationalization, thereby determining their position within the dynamics of academic and professional success.

Keywords: Time management, student, educational process, university, sociological analysis.

Introduction

Time management among university students within the university environment constitutes a central issue that extends beyond its technical and organizational dimensions to touch upon

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the very social construction of the student's identity. In the university context, time is not merely a neutral physical framework within which the educational process unfolds; rather, it represents a strategic social resource and a value-laden arena shaped by the tension between institutional time, with its structural constraints, and personal time, which reflects the student's autonomy and agency. From this perspective, the present paper seeks to provide an in-depth sociological analysis of how time is transformed from a mere sequence of scheduled hours into a form of cultural capital that students may possess or lack, while examining the everyday practices through which their academic identity is constructed. Sociologically, time management can be understood as a process of self-governance within the educational system, whereby the ability to regulate temporal rhythms is closely associated with students' integration into the values of modernization and the rationalization of action. Ultimately, this capacity plays a decisive role in shaping their position along the continuum of academic success and failure.

Methodological Framework

Research Problem and Objectives

The study of university time represents one of the most profound sociological issues in understanding students' experiences within higher education. In the academic context, time should not be viewed merely as a quantitative sequence measured in hours and minutes; rather, it constitutes a strategic social resource and a normative arena shaped by the ongoing tension between institutional time, governed by organizational structures and disciplinary constraints, and subjective time, which reflects students' autonomy, agency, and lived experiences. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the contradiction between the objective time imposed by the university institution and the lived time experienced by students as social actors. It further investigates how digital distraction and social inequalities contribute to academic procrastination and inefficient time use, ultimately transforming time into a form of cultural capital that some students are able to accumulate and mobilize, while others remain disadvantaged in accessing and utilizing it.

Literature Review Methodology

This study adopts a Conceptual and Narrative Literature Review approach. To ensure methodological rigor and academic reliability, the literature was systematically identified, reviewed, and critically analyzed through a structured search of internationally recognized academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIH PLUS, and Google Scholar.

The selection and analysis of the reviewed literature were guided by explicit methodological criteria, as outlined below.

Inclusion Criteria: The literature included in this review met the following criteria:

- Scholarly publications written in Arabic, English, and French addressing the sociology of time, socialization, academic procrastination, and digital social acceleration.
- Foundational theoretical works that establish the conceptual framework of the study, particularly those of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Zygmunt Bauman, Hartmut Rosa, and Erving Goffman.
- Recent empirical and theoretical studies published between 2018 and 2025 in peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIH PLUS.

Exclusion Criteria: The review excluded studies that approached time management exclusively from a managerial or administrative perspective without addressing its sociological or class-related dimensions. It also excluded publications lacking explicit methodological rigor or those that had not undergone peer review.

Analytical Strategy: The selected literature was examined using Critical Thematic Analysis, a qualitative analytical approach that enabled the identification of recurring themes, the comparison of theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, and the development of an integrated sociological model capable of explaining the dynamics of university time in contemporary higher education

Theoretical Framework: The Dialectics of Power, Habitus, and Social Acceleration

A Critical Dialogue between Foucault, Bourdieu, and Rosa: From a Foucauldian perspective, university time can be understood as a disciplinary technology through which institutional power is exercised. Academic timetables, attendance requirements, examinations, and assessment procedures function as mechanisms of surveillance and normalization that regulate students' behavior. Rather than serving merely administrative purposes, these temporal arrangements contribute to the production of disciplined individuals whose academic conduct conforms to institutional expectations. (Foucault, 1990)

Critical Perspective: Although Foucault's analysis provides a powerful explanation of disciplinary power within educational institutions, it pays limited attention to students' agency. University students should not be viewed as passive recipients of institutional discipline; instead, they actively develop strategies of negotiation, adaptation, and symbolic resistance that allow them to reinterpret or challenge institutional temporal regulations.

Temporal Habitus and the Reproduction of Social Inequality (Pierre Bourdieu):

Bourdieu argues that the capacity to organize and manage time is not merely an individual skill but the product of a socially acquired habitus shaped by family socialization and cultural capital. Students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds generally possess a future-oriented temporal disposition that makes planning and self-regulation appear natural. In contrast, students from less privileged backgrounds often encounter cultural constraints that contribute to what may be described as temporal anomie, limiting their ability to organize academic responsibilities effectively. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001)

Critical Perspective: Despite its significant explanatory value, Bourdieu's perspective tends toward structural determinism, emphasizing the enduring influence of social origin while underestimating individuals' capacity to acquire new temporal competencies. Participation in higher education may itself become a transformative experience through which students develop new habits of time management that extend beyond the dispositions inherited from their family backgrounds.

Social Acceleration and Liquid Time (Hartmut Rosa and Zygmunt Bauman): Rosa's theory of social acceleration and Bauman's concept of liquid modernity provide an essential framework for understanding university time in the digital age. Technological innovation, permanent connectivity, and the rapid circulation of information have transformed relatively stable temporal structures into increasingly fragmented and fluid patterns of everyday life. Consequently, students experience continuous pressure to respond to multiple and competing demands within an accelerated digital environment. (Bauman, 2011; Rosa, 2013).

Critical Perspective: A more comprehensive sociological interpretation emerges when the perspectives of Foucault, Bourdieu, Rosa, and Bauman are considered together. Contemporary university students are confronted not only with institutional disciplinary mechanisms, as emphasized by Foucault, or with socially unequal distributions of cultural capital, as explained by Bourdieu, but also with the dynamics of digital capitalism, where algorithm-driven platforms continuously compete for users' attention. This interaction creates a profound tension between the slow temporal rhythm required for critical academic inquiry and the accelerated pace of contemporary digital culture.

Section One: Sociology of University Time (The Prescribed Versus the Lived)

The issue of time from the student's perspective can only be understood by deconstructing the tension between the logic of the institution and the logic of the social actor. This relationship can be examined through the following points:

Institutional Time: “The Architecture of Regulation and Control”

Time in the university is not merely a matter of scheduling; rather, it functions as an instrument of power, in line with Michel Foucault's concept of discipline (Foucault, 1990). The university institution imposes what may be described as objective time, which is characterized by several distinctive features:

Linearity and Rigidity: It is a form of time that waits for no one, beginning with attendance registration and ending with the submission of the examination paper.

Behavioral Standardization: Through structured timetables, the university seeks to normalize students' behavior, transforming them from autonomous individuals into disciplined members of the educational system.

Time as a Criterion of Legitimacy: Students who fail to comply with institutional time (e.g., through lateness or absenteeism) are sociologically categorized as marginal or uncommitted. This classification generates significant social and psychological pressure, compelling individuals to adapt to the temporal rhythm imposed by the collective.

Lived Time: “Autonomy and Subjective Representations”

On the other hand, subjective time refers to the way students experience the passage of time beyond the constraints of institutional schedules:

The Relativity of Time: Students may perceive a one-hour lecture as lasting an eternity—a manifestation of temporal alienation—whereas hours devoted to independent research or interaction with peers may seem to pass in an instant.

Freedom from Institutional Control: Lived time represents the space in which students seek to reclaim their autonomy by deciding when to study and how to allocate their efforts. It is within this sphere that individual strategies emerge. Students are not merely passive recipients of institutional time; rather, they are active agents who reinterpret and negotiate temporal structures according to their own priorities.

Social Background and the “Temporal Habitus” (Bourdieu’s Perspective)

The ability to reconcile objective time and subjective time is not an innate skill; rather, it is the outcome of a process of socialization (Bourdieu, 1984):

The Inheritance of Discipline: Students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds often possess what Pierre Bourdieu describes as a habitus that is aligned with institutional expectations. Within their families, they have learned the value of investing time and engaging in long-term planning.

The Cultural Gap: By contrast, students from social environments characterized by traditional or less structured conceptions of time may experience difficulties adapting to the rigidity of university time. This mismatch often results in a form of temporal shock, which may ultimately contribute to academic attrition or reduced academic achievement.

Conflict and Reconciliation: Toward Temporal Rationalization

Sociological analysis suggests that success in the educational process is, in essence, the outcome of a successful reconciliation between objective time and subjective time (Pronovost, 1996).

The most successful students are those who are able to internalize institutional time, transforming it into an integral part of their personal routines and everyday practices. Conversely, when students fail to achieve this reconciliation, they often exhibit what may be described as temporal resistance—manifested in behaviors such as recurrent absenteeism or chronic procrastination. From a sociological perspective, these behaviors reflect an inability to integrate into the values of modernity embodied by the university as an institution of rationalization and productivity.

Academic success largely depends on achieving a successful reconciliation between objective institutional time and subjective lived time through a process of temporal rationalization, whereby students progressively internalize institutional temporal norms until they become part of their everyday routines. This process enables students to regulate their academic responsibilities more effectively while adapting to the organizational demands of university life. (Pronovost, 1996)

When this process of temporal rationalization fails, students may develop forms of temporal resistance, manifested in absenteeism, repeated postponement of academic tasks, and chronic procrastination. Such behaviours should not be interpreted merely as individual shortcomings; rather, they reflect difficulties in adapting to the institutional values of academic discipline and rationalized time management. (Hamza, 2018).

Section Two: The University Student as a Social Actor in Managing Time Within the Educational Process

Time management in the university environment extends beyond the boundaries of individual will to become a fundamentally social practice, one that is shaped by and embedded within broader social structures. It is primarily influenced by two key structural variables (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001):

Cultural Capital and the Rationalization of Time

The concept of cultural capital, as developed by Pierre Bourdieu, refers to the body of knowledge, skills, and dispositions acquired through the family and the broader social environment. In the context of time management, it reveals a clear pattern of social differentiation:

Planning as a Form of Social Inheritance: Students who come from social backgrounds that value planning tend to develop a future-oriented perspective on time. They perceive university years as an investment in their professional and social future. For these students, the rationalization of time is not merely a learned technique but a habitual practice rooted in family socialization that emphasizes order, discipline, and long-term planning.

Temporal Anomie: By contrast, other students may experience a condition of temporal anomie. The transition from a secondary education system—characterized by parental and school supervision—to the relatively autonomous university environment often creates a regulatory vacuum. The absence of a sociological framework for organizing time leaves students unable to structure their time independently, resulting in a substantial loss of valuable academic time. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001).

Social Networks and the Influence of Peer Groups

Students' individual time is transformed into collective time once they become integrated into friendship circles and peer groups within the university environment. These groups exert a subtle yet significant form of social influence over how time is used and valued:

Time as Investment (Positive Social Integration): When students become part of academically oriented or high-achieving peer groups, shared time is transformed into a space for exchanging knowledge, collaborative learning, and intellectual competition. In this context, spending time in the library or research facilities becomes a meaningful social practice that enhances academic performance.

Time as Waste (Negative Social Integration): Conversely, campus street culture or café culture may foster patterns of wasted time. Demonstrating indifference toward time may become a form of social resistance or a means of gaining acceptance within certain peer groups. In such contexts, prolonged engagement with social media or spending hours without a clear purpose becomes the prevailing social norm, which students often conform to in order to avoid social isolation.

The Attention Economy and Digital Time

The role of technology as a new social actor cannot be overlooked. Today, university students manage their time within a constant competition for attention. Social media platforms are no longer merely communication tools; rather, they constitute alternative social environments that appropriate focused time and transform it into consumption-oriented time.

From a sociological perspective, students increasingly navigate between academic time, which requires depth and sustained engagement, and digital time, characterized by speed and immediacy. This tension contributes to structural distraction and fragmented attention. Recent studies indicate that algorithmic features such as infinite scrolling, personalized content, and real-time notifications intensify competition for students' attention (Akgunduz et al., 2023; Rosen et al., 2022).

Continuous interruptions can weaken sustained concentration and reduce the quality of academic engagement. Consequently, longer study periods do not necessarily produce deeper learning when attention is repeatedly fragmented (Newton & Turner, 2024).

Digitalization has also encouraged selective accelerated learning, such as watching recorded lectures at increased playback speeds or relying on condensed summaries. Although these practices may respond to time pressure, they can shift learning toward rapid consumption and away from sustained reflection (Zhang & Zhao, 2024).

Instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram further blur the boundaries between private and institutional time. Continuous notifications can reduce opportunities for recovery and uninterrupted concentration (Zhang & Zhao, 2024).

Section Three: Temporal Practices and Social Inequality (A Micro-Sociological Approach)

This section is based on the assumption that time is not democratically distributed; in other words, university students do not possess the same quantity or quality of time. Rather, the allocation of their time is shaped by social privileges and structural constraints. University time is not distributed equally among students; rather, it is socially structured through unequal distributions of privileges and constraints. Consequently, students' ability to manage their time is shaped by the interaction between social advantages, structural limitations, and everyday obligations that influence their academic experiences (Al-Zughoul, 2010):

Gender and the Conflict of Temporal Demands A sociological analysis reveals significant gender-based differences in patterns of time use:

Domestic Time versus Academic Time: Female students are often subject to what may be described as a double temporal burden, as they are expected to contribute to household responsibilities—including caregiving, cooking, and domestic chores—after returning from university. This temporal depletion reduces the time available for studying and research compared with male students, who generally enjoy greater amounts of discretionary time outside the university environment.

Social Surveillance: Female students' time is frequently monitored and constrained by expectations of returning home early for reasons related to safety or social traditions. Such restrictions may limit their access to evening library services and late extracurricular activities, thereby creating inequalities in the accumulation of social capital within the university setting.

Working Students: Time as Scarcity Working students represent a social category that experiences continuous time pressure:

Fragmented Time: These students face an ongoing tension between their roles as workers and learners. Consequently, time ceases to function as a resource for creativity and intellectual development, becoming instead a scarce commodity that must be carefully allocated and managed. (Al-Zughoul, 2010).

The Sociology of Fatigue: The overlap between working time and learning time often diminishes the quality of academic engagement and comprehension. From a sociological perspective, working students tend to develop academic survival strategies, focusing primarily on what is necessary to pass examinations rather than pursuing deeper intellectual inquiry, owing to the limited time available for independent learning and research. (Al-Zughoul, 2010).

The Impact of Spatial Context (University Residence vs. Family Residence)

Space structures time, and the type of residence significantly shapes students' temporal rhythms:

Family Residence: Living with one's family may provide temporal stability through regular routines, structured meals, and a relatively stable environment. However, it may also impose social obligations—such as family visits or household distractions—that interrupt study schedules. (Al-Zughoul, 2010).

University Residence: Student housing represents a distinctive setting of collective time. From a sociological perspective, it can either foster academic engagement through collaborative learning and peer support or undermine effective time management through excessive late-night socializing and prolonged informal interactions. In this context, the principal challenge lies in students' ability to preserve individual time within a densely shared social environment. (Al-Zughoul, 2010).

Gender and the Double Shift: Female students frequently experience what has been described as the double shift, whereby academic responsibilities are combined with domestic duties and caregiving responsibilities after returning home from university. This additional burden significantly reduces the time available for independent study and academic research compared with their male counterparts. Furthermore, mobility restrictions and stricter family supervision, such as expectations of returning home early, may limit their opportunities to accumulate social capital through extracurricular and evening academic activities. (Al-Qudah et al., 2023)

Working Students and Temporal Scarcity: Working students experience a persistent condition of temporal scarcity, as they are required to balance the competing demands of employment and higher education. Under these circumstances, time becomes an increasingly scarce resource, compelling many students to adopt academic survival strategies that prioritize meeting minimum academic requirements rather than engaging in deep learning, critical reflection, or sustained intellectual development. (Mounier & Cam, 2020).

Section Four: The Sociology of Leisure Time in Higher Education (From Free Time to Investment Time)

From a sociological perspective, leisure time is defined as institutionally unstructured time. It represents the true test of students' capacity for self-management and self-regulation (Bauman, 2011):

Perceptions of Leisure Time: A Gap or an Extension of Learning?

Students perceive the periods between lectures—such as breaks and free intervals—in different ways:

Leisure Time as a Break: Some students regard these intervals as an opportunity to escape the demands of academic work by socializing aimlessly, smoking, or engaging in digital media consumption. In such cases, their connection with the educational process effectively ends once they leave the classroom.

Leisure Time as a Learning Space: High-achieving and academically engaged students, by contrast, perceive leisure time as an extension of the learning process. They use these intervals to discuss ideas with peers or spend time in the library. From a sociological

perspective, this perception is closely associated with students' academic motivation and the extent to which they view higher education as a pathway to social mobility.

The University as a Space for Shaping Temporal Practices: The role of the university extends beyond delivering lectures to creating environments that encourage productive uses of time:

Libraries and Student Clubs: By providing modern libraries and cultural organizations, universities encourage students to invest their time productively within the campus environment.

The University Café: Sociologically, the university café is more than a place to eat. It functions as a student public sphere, where news is exchanged, collective discussions emerge, protests are organized, and social networks are formed—all of which occupy a substantial portion of students' daily time.

Time Wasting as a Form of Symbolic Resistance: This represents a significant sociological dimension inspired by theories of everyday resistance:

Silent Protest: In some cases, deliberately wasting time or repeatedly skipping lectures constitutes a sociological response to a dysfunctional educational system, authoritarian teaching practices, or course content perceived as disconnected from students' lived realities.

Institutional Alienation: When students feel that the university fails to meet their aspirations, they may engage in what can be described as temporal withdrawal. Although physically present in the classroom, they become mentally disengaged, often devoting lecture time to activities such as using their mobile phones. From a sociological perspective, this form of time wasting constitutes an implicit act of protest against an academic environment that students perceive as offering limited value for their future. (Bauman, 2011)

Section Five: The Impact of Technology and Digitalization on the Rhythm of Learning (Liquid Time).

Technology is no longer merely a supporting tool; rather, it has become a sociological environment that reshapes university students' temporal experiences, transforming time from a structured and bounded resource into liquid time, characterized by flexibility, fluidity, and the absence of clear temporal boundaries (Rosa, 2013):

The Culture of Speed and the Transformation of Self-Directed Learning

Digitalization has given rise to what may be described as rapid selective learning, whereby students exercise increasing control over the pace at which they consume information:

Accelerated Viewing (1.5×/2×): From a sociological perspective, watching recorded lectures at accelerated speeds reflects students' desire to compress time and acquire knowledge with the least possible temporal investment. This practice transforms learning from a process of deep reflection into one of rapid consumption, often resulting in superficial knowledge that fades shortly after examinations.

Beyond the Traditional Instructor: Digital platforms such as YouTube and Coursera provide an alternative temporal framework for learning. Students are no longer confined to the temporal structure of the classroom; instead, they exercise greater temporal autonomy by studying late at night or while commuting, thereby weakening the university's traditional authority over academic time.

Digital Temporal Alienation: The Power of Algorithms

Beyond formal study hours, students increasingly experience digital temporal alienation, a condition in which personal agency gradually loses control over time:

The Attention Economy: Social media algorithms are designed to sustain user engagement through practices such as infinite scrolling and personalized content. From a sociological perspective, this process appropriates focused time and makes sustained academic concentration more difficult.

Fragmented Time: Digital alerts repeatedly interrupt reading and academic work, weakening continuity of attention. As a result, study time may increase without producing equivalent gains in deep learning or academic productivity.

The Blurring of Boundaries Between Private and Public Time

Traditionally, leaving the university signified the end of academic time and the beginning of students' private time. Today, however, communication technologies—including WhatsApp, Telegram, and email—have largely dissolved this distinction:

The Intrusion of Leisure Time: Messages from instructors and student groups may arrive during evenings, weekends, and holidays. This continuous connectivity creates pressure to remain available and reduces the restorative function of private time.

The Permanent Virtual Classroom: Digital communication groups extend the university beyond its physical boundaries. While they facilitate communication, they also consume cognitive resources and may reduce opportunities for independent learning and constructive solitude.

The Fluidity of Knowledge and the Clash of Temporal Rhythms

A fundamental sociological tension emerges between two contrasting temporal logics:

The Rhythm of Technology: Fast, immediate, and condensed.

The Rhythm of Scientific Inquiry: Slow, cumulative, and dependent upon sustained intellectual patience.

As a consequence, students accustomed to the immediacy of digital search engines often experience difficulty adapting to the slower pace of lectures, extensive reading, and rigorous academic research. This mismatch contributes to a decline in academic patience and weakens their capacity for sustained scholarly engagement.

Section Six: A Methodological Approach to Change Management (Sociological Solutions)

The transition from time as waste to time as investment requires a comprehensive approach that integrates students' self-awareness as social actors with the structural role of the university as a supportive institution (Goffman, 1959).

Sociological Assessment Tools: The Time Diary as a Mirror of the Self

From a sociological perspective, behavior cannot be transformed unless it is first observed and systematically documented. In this regard, the time diary should be viewed not merely as a technical instrument but as a critical tool for self-reflection:

Revealing the Invisible: By recording their daily activities over the course of a week, students become aware of the "black holes" in their schedules, including excessive digital consumption and unproductive waiting periods. This process challenges the illusion of busyness and confronts students with the reality of how they allocate their time.

From Spontaneity to Intentionality: The time diary transforms time from an unstructured flow into intentional action. Sociologically, this process strengthens students' sense of self-responsibility, enabling them to become active observers and regulators of their own behavior rather than relying solely on institutional forms of supervision, such as examinations.

Toward a New Temporal Culture: The Institutional Role of the University

Responsibility for effective time management should not rest solely with students. As a social institution, the university has a central role in fostering a culture of temporal rationalization:

Strengthening Academic Advising: Academic advising should extend beyond course selection to include guidance on time-based learning strategies, adaptation to the rhythms of university life, and the sociological foundations of academic success.

Improving the Learning Environment: Providing attractive learning spaces—including digital libraries, collaborative work areas, and cultural cafés—encourages students to spend more time on campus. From a sociological perspective, the more engaging the university environment becomes, the more students shift from escaping the campus to productive engagement within it.

Humanizing Academic Timetables: Universities should take students' diverse social circumstances—including working students and those living away from home—into account when designing class schedules in order to reduce unnecessary idle time between lectures.

Building Personal and Professional Projects: Time as an Investment in the Future

The strongest foundation for effective time management is a clear sense of purpose. Sociologically, there is a positive relationship between possessing a well-defined future project and recognizing the value of present time:

Time as a Bridge to the Future: When students possess a clear professional vision, they no longer perceive academic study as a temporal burden but rather as an essential stage in achieving their future aspirations. Consequently, time acquires the meaning of a valuable resource worthy of investment.

Professional Anticipation: Linking academic learning with future career aspirations reduces the tendency toward academic procrastination. Students who recognize that the labor market increasingly values transferable skills—such as time management and self-regulation—are more likely to view their university years as practical preparation for professional life.

Transforming Knowledge into Value: Effective time management becomes possible when knowledge is no longer regarded merely as information required for examinations but as a resource for social mobility and personal development. This perspective provides students with strong intrinsic motivation to overcome both digital distractions and broader social pressures.

Section Seven: Sociological Perspectives on Barriers to Time Management in Higher Education

Numerous obstacles contribute to transforming university time into unproductive or wasted time. The most significant of these include the following:

Digital Distraction and Fragmented Time: Digital saturation can interrupt the continuity of academic attention. Rather than treating this as a purely individual failure, the sociological perspective emphasizes how students' academic time is increasingly organized within competing institutional and digital temporal environments.

The Competition Between Physical and Virtual Reality: Social media and other virtual environments compete with the classroom for students' attention, diverting portions of lecture time toward immediate digital interaction.

The Fluidity of Time: Digital technologies weaken the boundaries between academic, private, and online time. Students may therefore remain physically present while becoming psychologically disengaged from the learning process.

The Attention Economy: Algorithm-driven platforms turn attention into a socially and economically valuable resource. This dynamic helps explain why sustained academic engagement is difficult to maintain in digitally saturated environments (Hamza, 2018).

The Loss of Future Orientation: When students fail to perceive a meaningful relationship between their academic education and future career opportunities, they often experience a condition resembling temporal indifference. Under these circumstances, academic time becomes burdensome because it is no longer associated with a tangible purpose.

Social Procrastination: In this context, procrastination should not be interpreted simply as individual laziness. Rather, it represents an unconscious coping strategy through which students distance themselves from an educational environment in which they no longer find personal meaning. As the perceived significance of learning declines, so does the value attributed to academic time, leading students to postpone their academic responsibilities until the final moments—substituting crisis management for effective time management.

Academic Alienation: This disconnect produces a sense of alienation within the university. Students begin to invest their time primarily to satisfy institutional requirements and obtain academic credentials rather than to pursue intellectual growth and self-development. Consequently, university time is experienced as lost time, merely endured until graduation.

Peer Pressure and the Social Normalization of Time Wasting, From a sociological standpoint, certain student cultures cultivate what may be described as a collective norm of idleness. Within these environments, students who organize their time efficiently may be perceived as socially distant or isolated, whereas those who waste time are often regarded as more sociable and approachable. Such peer pressure encourages students to sacrifice their personal schedules in order to preserve group belonging, thereby producing a pattern of negative temporal conformity.

Conclusion

The review also highlights that digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped university students' temporal experiences. Rather than merely introducing new learning technologies, digital environments have reconfigured how academic time is organized, perceived, and

utilized. The emergence of the attention economy, fragmented temporal routines, selective accelerated learning, and the decline of opportunities for deep work illustrate that contemporary students increasingly struggle to maintain sustained intellectual engagement. These findings suggest that digital competence should be accompanied by temporal competence, enabling students to regulate technological distractions while preserving the cognitive conditions necessary for meaningful learning.

Another important outcome of this review is the recognition that university students do not experience time under equal conditions. The capacity to organize and invest academic time is significantly influenced by gender-related responsibilities, employment obligations, and residential contexts, all of which contribute to unequal temporal opportunities. These findings reinforce the need for higher education institutions to adopt more inclusive and flexible academic policies that acknowledge students' diverse social realities and promote equitable conditions for academic achievement.

Taken together, these findings indicate that effective time management cannot be reduced to individual self-discipline or technical planning skills alone. Instead, it should be understood as a socially embedded process shaped by the continuous interaction between institutional regulations, class-based cultural resources, and the rapidly changing digital environment. This integrated perspective provides a stronger analytical foundation for understanding students' academic experiences and for developing educational policies that foster both equity and sustainable academic success.

In conclusion, university students' time management extends far beyond being merely a technical skill or a collection of practical recommendations. Rather, it constitutes a fundamental sociological struggle in which students, as social actors, confront both the distractions of liquid modernity and the structural constraints embedded within contemporary society. The present analysis has demonstrated that university time is not an empty temporal container but a contested arena shaped by the tension between institutional time, which seeks regulation and behavioral standardization, and subjective time, which aspires to autonomy yet often becomes trapped in patterns of digital distraction and temporal waste. These dynamics are further intensified by persistent social inequalities that grant some students the privilege of abundant time while condemning others to conditions of temporal scarcity.

Moreover, the synthesis of classical sociological perspectives with contemporary research demonstrates that university time should be conceptualized as a multidimensional social phenomenon rather than a neutral chronological resource. Institutional power, cultural capital, digital infrastructures, and students' everyday social conditions collectively influence how academic time is produced, negotiated, and experienced. Consequently, addressing academic procrastination and ineffective time use requires coordinated institutional, pedagogical, and technological interventions rather than relying exclusively on students' individual responsibility.

Accordingly, success in contemporary higher education requires an epistemological shift from a time of waiting—where the university is perceived merely as a transitional stage toward obtaining a degree—to a time of action, in which higher education becomes an existential space for self-construction and personal development. From this perspective, students should recognize time as a form of capital, whose value is determined not by its mere availability but by the ways in which it is invested and utilized. Likewise, universities should move beyond a model based on temporal surveillance toward one centered on

temporal empowerment, achieved through more human-centered institutional policies and improved learning environments that support students' effective use of time.

As a driving force of social transformation, the contemporary university is called upon to rethink its philosophy of time in ways that are more flexible and responsive to the challenges of digitalization, ensuring that the years of higher education become not merely a period of chronological passage but a genuine process of human development and future building

Academic Contribution: The present study also demonstrates that university time is fundamentally embedded within broader structures of power, culture, and social inequality. Students' temporal practices are shaped simultaneously by institutional disciplinary mechanisms, socially acquired dispositions, and the accelerating rhythms of contemporary digital society. Accordingly, improving students' academic performance requires moving beyond technical training in time management toward a comprehensive sociological approach that recognizes time as a socially constructed resource, unequally distributed and continuously negotiated within higher education. Such an approach offers a more comprehensive framework for understanding students' academic experiences and for designing educational policies that promote both equity and academic success.

This article makes a conceptual contribution by moving beyond the narrow utilitarian and psychological perspectives that traditionally dominate research on time management. It proposes an integrated sociological framework in which university students' time management is understood as a continuous process of negotiation between the institution's disciplinary power, individuals' class-based habitus, and the structural constraints imposed by the fluid digital environment. Rather than treating time management as a purely individual competence, the study conceptualizes it as a socially embedded practice shaped by the interaction of institutional, cultural, and technological forces.

The review further demonstrates that academic procrastination and the inefficient use of time should not be interpreted merely as indicators of individual weakness or moral failure. Instead, they reflect broader structural conditions associated with unequal access to cultural resources, the fragmentation of attention in digital environments, and the erosion of meaningful temporal experiences in contemporary higher education. By integrating classical sociological theory with recent international literature, this study offers a more comprehensive analytical perspective for understanding students' temporal practices and provides a conceptual foundation for future empirical research and educational policy development.

Limitations of the Study: This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, at the conceptual level, the review primarily focuses on the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of social class, digital technology, and institutional power as they relate to university time management. Consequently, it does not include direct empirical investigation or advanced statistical analyses based on field data. Second, at the contextual level, the reviewed literature draws upon diverse academic settings, including both Western and Arab higher education systems. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution when applied to specific national contexts, as cultural, institutional, and educational differences may influence students' temporal practices and experiences.

Future Research Directions and Practical Recommendations:

- Future research should place greater emphasis on time-budget studies by conducting both quantitative and qualitative empirical investigations that accurately examine

how Algerian and Arab university students allocate and experience their time. The use of innovative research tools, such as digital time diaries, would provide more detailed evidence on students' daily temporal practices and contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors associated with academic time use.

- Another promising avenue for future research concerns the impact of generative artificial intelligence (AI) on students' temporal practices and learning processes. Further studies should examine whether AI-based tools enhance academic efficiency by reducing the time required for information retrieval and knowledge production or, conversely, increase students' dependence on digital technologies at the expense of critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning.
- Higher education institutions are encouraged to move beyond models centered on surveillance and disciplinary control toward a more human-centered approach to temporal empowerment. This transition may be achieved by redesigning academic timetables to better accommodate the needs of working students and female students with additional family responsibilities, while simultaneously improving campus facilities to create learning environments that promote academic engagement, collaborative learning, and the effective use of time.

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UPRAVLJANJE VREMENOM KOD STUDENATA: SOCIOLOŠKA PERSPEKTIVA OBRAZOVNOG PROCESA U VISOKOM OBRAZOVANJU

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Apstrakt

Ovaj rad polazi od sociološke teze da upravljanje vremenom studenata na univerzitetu nije samo individualna organizaciona veština, već složen društveni fenomen koji proizlazi iz međusobnog delovanja institucionalnih struktura i samosvesti društvenog aktera. Rad razmatra način na koji se vremensko ponašanje oblikuje pod napetošću između „institucionalnog vremena“, kao sredstva kontrole i disciplinovanja u smislu teorije Mišela Fukoa, i „preživljenog vremena“, koje predstavlja prostor autonomije studenta i njegovih subjektivnih predstava. Analiza, zasnovana na pristupu Pjera Burdjea, pokazuje da je sposobnost „racionalizacije vremena“ usko povezana sa habitusom i društvenim poreklom, zbog čega vreme postaje nedemokratski resurs na koji utiču faktori kao što su rod, socioekonomski status (na primer, zaposleni studenti) i karakter prostornog okruženja. Rad takođe ukazuje na izazove „fluidnog vremena“ i digitalne ekonomije pažnje, koji su doveli do pojave fragmentisanog vremena lišenog akademske dubine. Istovremeno, sugerise da pojave poput prokrastinacije ili rasipanja vremena mogu predstavljati oblik tihog protesta ili izraz studentske otuđenosti unutar obrazovnog sistema. Rad zaključuje da je neophodan prelaz sa „vremena čekanja“ na „vreme delovanja“, kroz humanizaciju univerzitetskog vremena i razvoj kritičke svesti kod studenata. Naglašava se da je upravljanje vremenom, u svojoj suštini, proces „samopolitizacije“, koji odražava stepen integracije studenata u vrednosti modernizacije i racionalizacije, određujući na taj način njihov položaj u dinamici akademskog i profesionalnog uspeha.

Ključne reči: upravljanje vremenom; student; obrazovni proces; univerzitet; sociološka analiza.

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