

WORK-RELATED STRESS IN ACADEMIA: EXPLORING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIME MANAGEMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

HINA TEHREEM¹, FARIHA SOHIL²

¹PH.D SCHOLAR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE WOMEN UNIVERSITY MULTAN, MULTAN PAKISTAN.

²ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE WOMEN UNIVERSITY MULTAN, MULTAN PAKISTAN.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: FARIHA SOHIL

Email: Drfariha.6493@wum.edu.pk

Abstract

This research explores how time management practices affect work-related stress among university faculty and investigates the mediating role of administrative support. While efficient time management can reduce stress, its effectiveness often relies on the support provided by the institution. The study surveyed 700 faculty members from eight public and eight private universities in Punjab, Pakistan, selected through a multi-stage sampling strategy. Employing a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative analysis was conducted using correlation and mediation techniques via PROCESS Macro Model 4, while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically using NVivo. Results reveal that well-implemented time management strategies significantly alleviate work-related stress, and administrative support enhances this effect. The findings underscore the critical role of institutional interventions and provide actionable insights for improving faculty well-being, enhancing productivity, and supporting professional development in higher education institutions.

Keywords: *Time Management, Work Related Stress, Administrative Support, University Faculty, Higher Education Punjab*

INTRODUCTION

Being a teacher is a demanding job, which entails a great deal of work, emotional resilience, and will to transform the attitude and behavior of pupils towards learning within a limited duration (Manroop & Petrovski, 2023). It is therefore positive to explore the approaches to daily issues by the lecturers and develop the best time management strategies that can make their careers sustainable. Good planning and organization reduce stress even more, but make instructors engaged, creative, and professional (Pensar & Mäkelä, 2023).

Professional career can be both a great source of stress and can bring happiness, social bond, and sense of meaning, and at the same time. Stress is a universal phenomenon that has an impact on human beings working in several diverse occupations differently and to different extents (Saeed et al., 2023). Reorganization of work, alteration of wages, pressure of promotion on employees, alternation of institutional policies can cause employees to be more stressed, more tired, and frustrated. Many individuals refer to the concept of stress but few of them know how to manage it effectively (Savolainen, 2023).

According to Walker, stress occurs when anything external or internal to a person interferes with their balance and they have to change (Singer et al., 2023). These aspects may be emotional, physical, social and financial. Although a small amount of stress is initially a motivational step or a positive challenge, a long-term experience that lacks proper coping strategies can lead to unfavorable mental and physical health outcomes. Psychological exhaustion, depression, and burnout can be among the effects of chronic stress in the teaching profession (Tang et al., 2023). These problems have been worsened by globalization, advances in technology, and competitive education environments that put additional demands on teachers to meet institutional goals with limited resources (Eilam & Aharon, 2003).

The aspect of administrative support is a contributing aspect in why academic staff working experiences are influenced. The administrative management of the university has a capability to facilitate or significant work against effective time management approach (Abo-Khalil, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

It has been empirically proved that academics can experience increased occupational stress than most other professionals, which hurts their teaching, research, job satisfaction, and well-being (Meng & Wang, 2018). The

primary purpose of this study is, hence, to investigate the mediating effect of administrative support between time management and work related stress through empirical research. This is achieved by administrative support in form of university communication, administrative and professional development support among others. Once there is a good administrative support within an institution, the aspect can facilitate the efficiency of the academic staff to efficiently manage the administrative duties. The research study will play a crucial role in researching administrative support as a central mediating variable in the comprehension of the institutional setting and an efficient time management plan in alleviating stress in academic staff (Shank, 2023).

Significance of the Study

The study is important for the teachers, heads and researchers for the time management and stress management, this research addresses this gap by offering some more specific empirical data, which can be used to create more specific policies and interventions to help improve the working environment at Pakistani universities. Due to the social-cultural and economic issues that educational institutions in Pakistan encounter, it is essential to realize how time management and administrative assistance can help reduce the level of stress and ensure that the overall academic experience of the faculty is enhanced (A. K. Y. Wong et al., 2020).

This study is a complete understanding of how organizational factors can affect levels of stress in teachers by analyzing how administrative support can mediate the correlation between time management and work-related stress. This research study does not only matter as far as personal well-being is concerned but also as far as the general productivity and efficiency of educational institutions is concerned.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the administrative support and time management strategy Practices among the university teachers.
2. To evaluate the correlation between Work-related Stress and Administrative Support among the university teachers.
3. To analyze the relationship between time management strategies and work-related stress among the university teachers.
4. To propose the mediating role of administrative support in the relationship between Time management strategies and work related stress among university teachers.

Research Questions

1. What is the association between administrative support and time management strategy practices among the university teachers?
2. What is the association between work-related stress and administrative support among the university teachers?
3. What is the relationship between time management strategies and work-related stress among the university teachers?
4. Does administrative support mediate the relationship between time management strategies and work-related stress among the university teachers?

Delimitation of the Study

Although it would be more appropriate to include all the public and private universities of Pakistan, due to time and resource constraints, this study will only cover the public and private universities located in the province of Punjab.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework weights the current study in existing knowledge and to examine these relationships expected among them, for this purpose the theoretical model of this study pulls mainly on Time Management Lakein Theory, Eilam and Aharon Theory and work related stress on Transactional theory of Stress and coping Theory and Administrative Support on Organizational Support Theory (OST).

1. Time management expert Alan Lakein proposed an effective model, which emphasizes the importance of task organization, goal setting, and prioritization as a key element of time management efficiency. Eilam and Aharon (2003) have come up with a theory of time management that emphasizes the multidimensional nature of the concept of time management, as opposed to a single skill. They argue that time management would entail a combination of several interconnected factors that, when put all together, would enhance productivity and reduce stress levels.
2. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) came up with an important model of Transactional Theory/ Model of Stress and Coping and it is amongst the most significant theories of psychological stress in workplaces. The theory does not explain stress as an immediate consequence of the environmental demands but as an outcome of a dynamic interaction of the distinct with their environment. This theory holds that stress can arise in case people believe that the demands imposed on them are beyond their coping resources when balancing multiple responsibilities.
3. The ERI Theory highlights the fact that organization structures and reward systems are also vital in development of stress. Even when employees are highly committed to their work, without receiving relevant rewards (e.g., recognition, promotion opportunities, or job security) in the institutions they work in, they have greater chances of

being stressed in their jobs. In this theoretical model, the work-related stress can be defined as the result of the perceived discrepancy between effort and reward.

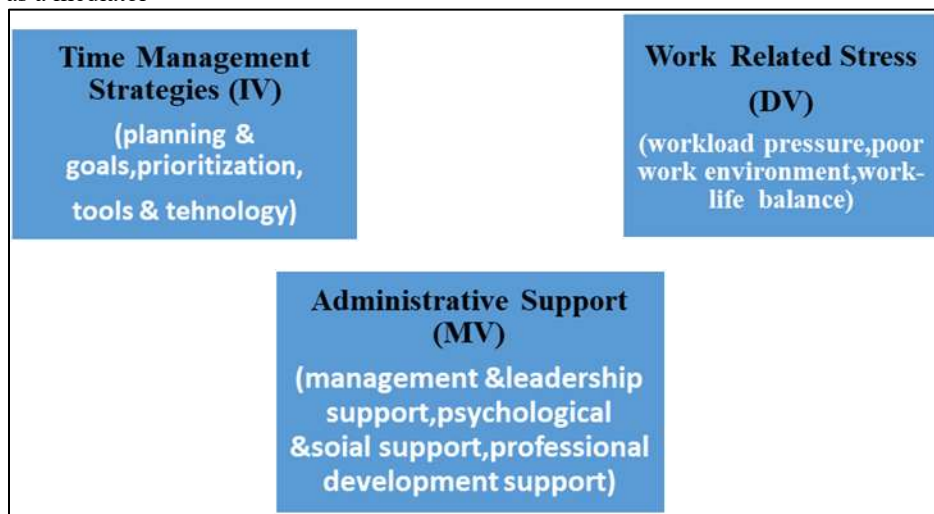
4. The Organizational Support Theory (OST) provides a strong theoretical foundation upon which one can understand the impacts of time management and administrative assistance on work-related stress in academic environments. OST suggests that employees form generalizations regarding the degree to which the organization values the contribution they make and that it is concerned about their well-being, which is usually referred to as perceived organizational support (POS).

Conceptual Framework

This research is based on the statement that time management strategies are critical in reducing work-related stresses in university teachers. Time management is considered an important personal skill, which enables faculty to be able to balance their teaching, research and administrative responsibility in the increasingly demanding higher education environment. In this context, time management strategies are perceived to be the independent variable. These strategies include planning, prioritization, goal setting and ensuring that academic and personal tasks are shared in a manner that is at the best (Svajda-Hardy & Kwok, 2025a). It is assumed that when teachers make good use of time management strategies, their stress levels may be lowered considerably. The dependent variable is work-related stress, which is a mental and emotional pressure caused by workload, timeframes, and contradictory academic demands on the part of the members of the faculty. Stress reduction should be considered to not only be healthy for members of the faculty but also productivity of the entire institution.

Administrative support is also considered as the mediating variable in the study, as the organizational support (such as clarity of policies, digital time management tools, workload distribution, and supportive leadership) is known to increase the correlation between time management strategies and stress relief. The administrative support does not only enhance time management at the individual level of teachers but also an institutional setting that reduces stress levels on a more permanent basis. The control variables such as gender, age, teaching experience, and workload distribution have also been considered because they may also influence the ability of the time management and administrative support to influence stress levels (Svajda-Hardy & Kwok, 2025b; Thi Nga et al., 2024).

The complicated nature of the conceptualization of the study is also another reason to utilize a mixed method design. According to Aeon and Aguinis (2017), it is a multidimensional concept, as time management and stress are being affected by organizational, environmental, and individual factors. The same can be said about the area of teacher lived experiences and perceptions exploration in order to possess an exhaustive comprehension of administrative assistance as a mediator



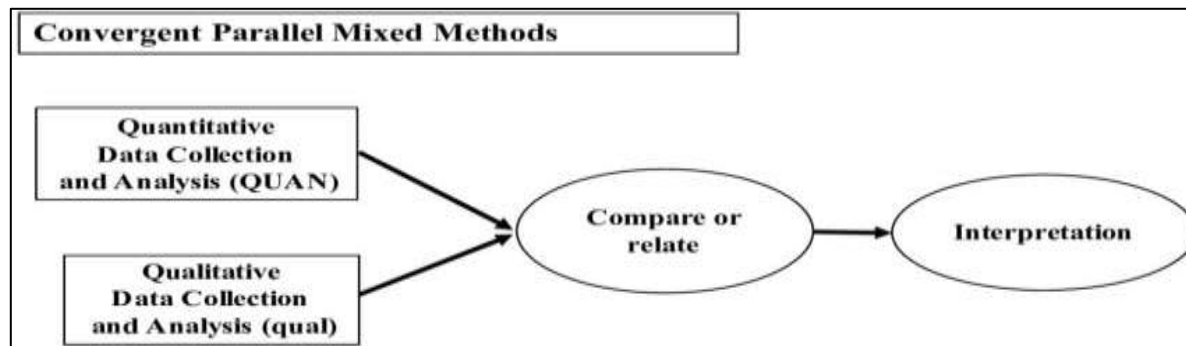
Research Design

In this research study Convergent Parallel Design was used to achieve both scope (generalizability) and deepness (contextual understanding) (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

In terms of understanding a convergent parallel design is a mixed-methods research design that encompasses both collecting quantitative and qualitative data at the same time (simultaneously) but analyzing both of them separately at final stage linking or merging the results to achieve a broader and inclusive understanding of the specific research problem. This method uses two different but corresponding data sets to validate its findings by provide a general view while combining quantitative configurations with qualitative depth of the data and offer proficiency due to parallel data collection. As part of the quantitative stage of the research study a formal structured questionnaire was directed to a large sample of both public and private university teachers at Punjab level. In addition, a selected subdivision of university administrations i.e. head of the departments, controllers, and registrars and deans etc. took part in semi structured interviews within the qualitative section.

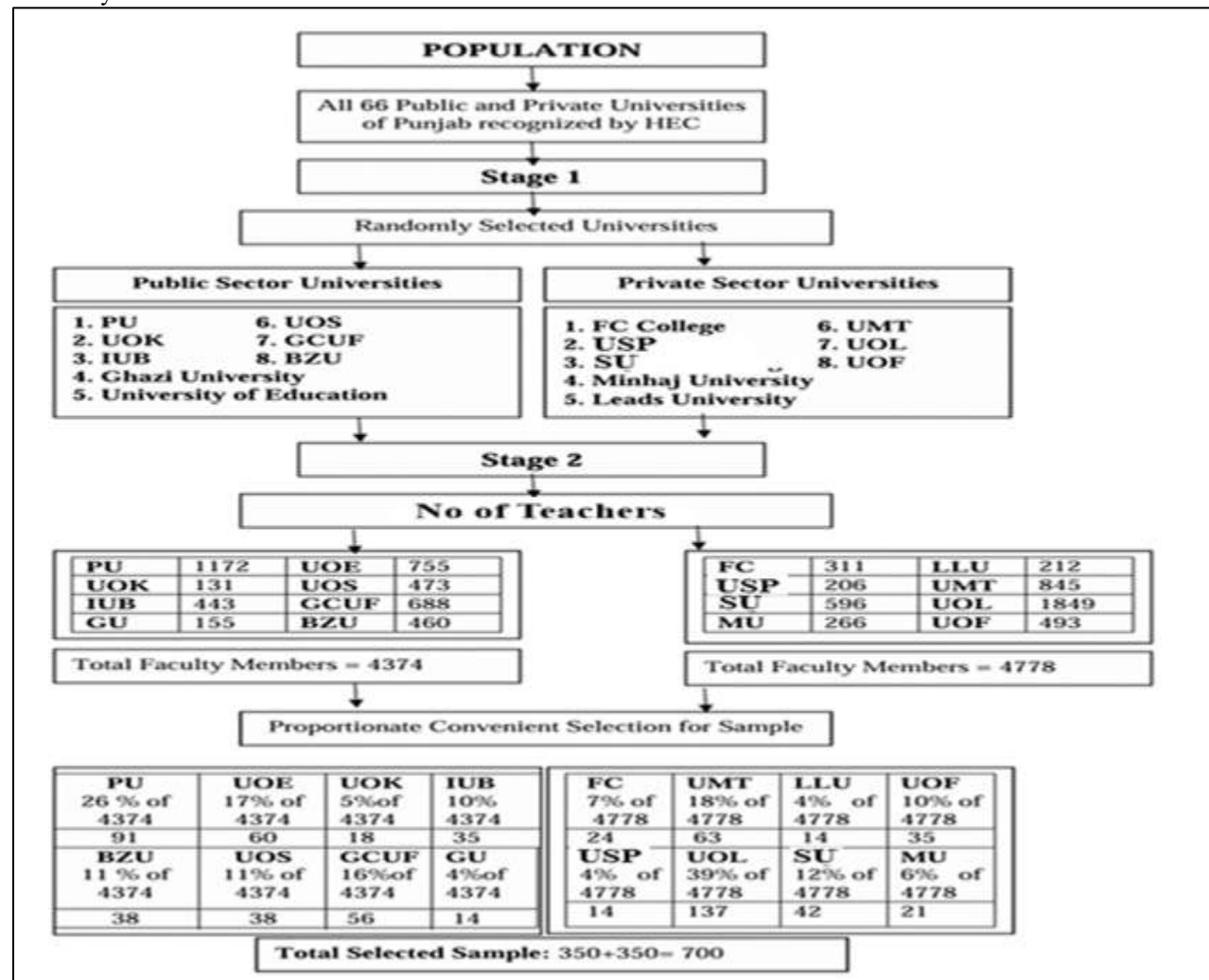
Figure 1 *Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Population of the Study*

All teaching staff members working for Punjab's public and private universities comprised the study population.



Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher adopted a multistage sampling approach/technique. In the initial stage, eight universities were selected from the 31 public sector general universities and eight universities from 35 private sector general universities of the Punjab through the stratified random sampling. Next, in the second stage the researcher enlisted the overall number of university teachers in each nominated university was obtained from the official records lastly in the 3rd stage 700 teachers as sample size were selected using proportionate convenience sampling and the actual proportion of the concerned respondents were taken from the total number of respondents against each selected university. 700 university teachers from the randomly selected eight public and eight private universities as the sample of the study; as Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2011) posited that if the population exceeded five thousand, a sample of 700 is sufficient for survey studies.



Data Collection

Two stages of data collection were conducted. 700 university instructors from the 16 chosen universities received the structured questionnaire during the quantitative phase. To increase participation, both offline (printed copies) and online (Google Forms) approaches were employed. Depending on participant availability, 23 semi-structured interviews were conducted during the qualitative phase either in-person or via Zoom/Google Meet. With the participants' permission, audio recordings of each 30- to 45-minute interview were made.

Validity and Reliability of Tools

Multiphase validation guarantees instrument integrity. Reviewing five experts in Education, psychology, English, sociology and management science help one to evaluate content validity by evaluating items clarity, theoretical coherence, and contextual relevance. Pilot testing with 300 teachers from four universities excluded from the main sample—verifies construct validity; exploratory factor analysis confirms dimensional coherence. Cronbach's α allows one to measure dependability; all constructions surpass 0.7 Two trial interviews help to improve uniformity of interview protocols.

Reliability Analysis

Table 1 *Reliability and Validity Values*

Construct	Cronbach Alphas	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Time Management strategies	0.812	0.839	0.691
Work-Related Stress	0.795	0.823	0.712
Administrative support	0.775	0.807	0.602

The Cronbach's alpha values for Time Management strategies, work-related stress, and administrative support are 0.812, 0.795, and 0.775, respectively. Such significant components surpass the standard threshold of 0.7, which is applied to each construct to indicate strong dependability. Composite reliability (CR) is an additional internal consistency evaluation that looks at both item loadings and shared variations across items. The values obtained for Time Management, Work-Related Stress, and administrative support are 0.839, 0.823, and 0.807, respectively. All constructions have acceptable values, which are greater than the recommended threshold of 0.70. The commonly used Average Variation Extracted (AVE) test measures the amount of variation across variables caused by measurement error in comparison to the variance caused by the true construct. The trial values for Time Management strategies, work-related stress, and administrative support are 0.691, 0.712, and 0.602, respectively. While the value of AVE for Time Management strategies, work-related stress, and administrative support launches exceeds 0.5.

Table 2 *Divergent Validity Results*

Construct	Time Management strategies	Work-related Stress	Administrative support
Time Management strategies	0.832	0.513	0.359
Work-related Stress	0.513	0.844	0.121
Administrative Support	0.359	0.121	0.776

As shown in Table 2, the stereotyped validity rot matrix, a measurement that determines the correlations between the constructs of Time Management strategies, administrative support, work-related stress, yields the following end conclusion. The populations of these gaps correspond to the correlation values of the constructs. In all situations, the correlations are less than the square root of the respective constructs' EVV, indicating significant divergent validity. The connection between Time Management strategies and administrative support is 0.359, yet the square root of Time Management's AVE (0.832) is larger than this correlation. Time Management strategies is determined to have a correlation coefficient of 0.513 with Work-Related Stress, and its square root does not surpass the AVE of Time Management strategies (0.832).

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 *Variable wise Correlation Analysis using Pearson Correlation Coefficients*

Variable	Administrative Support	Time Management Strategies	Work-Related Stress
Administrative Support	1		

Time Management Strategies	0.96**	1	
Work-Related Stress	0.98**	0.94**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 showed the results of variable wise correlation analysis using Pearson correlation coefficients. The diagonal values (set to 1) represent the perfect correlation of each variable with itself. The correlation value 0.96 showed a very high positive and significant nexus between administrative support and time management strategies. The correlation value 0.98 showed a very high positive and significant nexus between administrative support and work-related stress. The last variables correlation value 0.94 also showed a very high positive and significant nexus between time management strategies and work-related stress.

Figure 2 Structural Equation Model with Factor Loadings

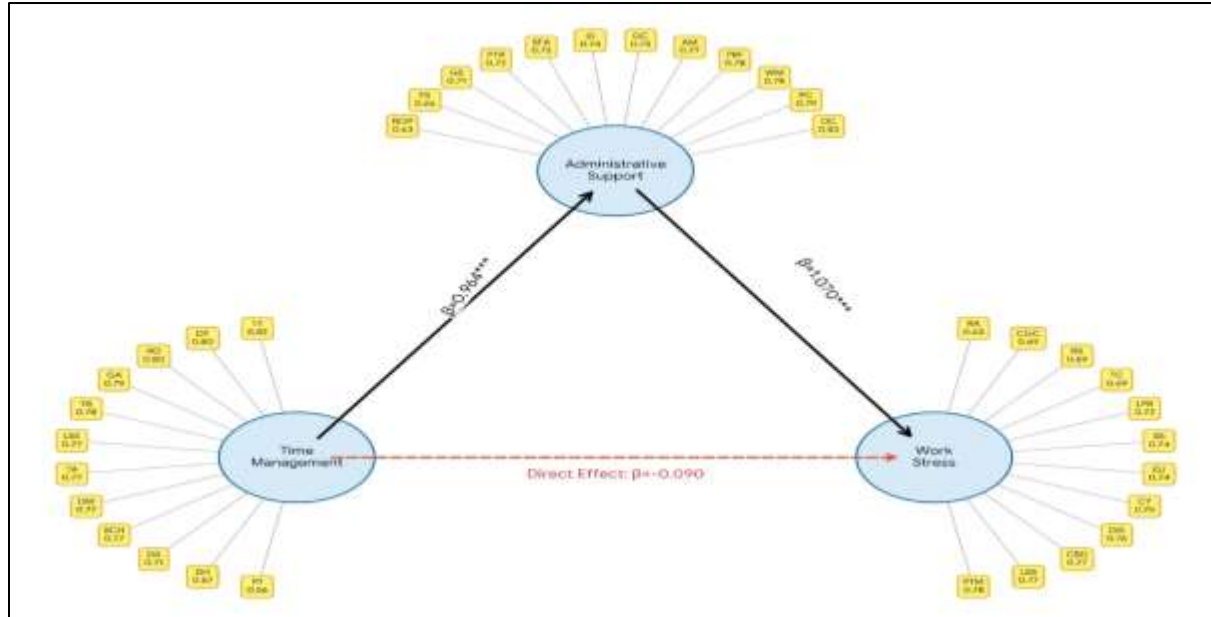


Figure 2 show that the Structural Equation Model (SEM) was developed to examine the relationships among three major latent constructs: Time Management, Administrative Support, and Work Stress. The model includes direct and indirect effects to understand how Time Management Influences Work Stress, both independently and through the mediating role of Administrative Support. Overall, the SEM demonstrates strong construct validity, high factor loadings, and statistically significant pathways, confirming the hypothesized relational structure.

Time Management is represented by multiple indicators reflecting planning skills, scheduling behaviors, prioritization, and delegation. Most factor loadings range between 0.56 and 0.82, indicating that each item contributes substantially to defining Time Management as a stable latent variable. The strongest loading appears for TT (0.82) and DT (0.80), suggesting that task tracking and deadline management serve as the core components of this construct. Even the comparatively lower loadings (PT = 0.56 and DH = 0.57) remain within acceptable SEM thresholds, validating their retention.

Administrative Support shows exceptionally strong factor loadings, ranging from 0.63 to 0.83. This reflects that institutional and managerial policies, communication systems, professional recognition, and departmental coordination are well captured by the indicators. High contributing items include OC (0.83), PC (0.79), and WM (0.78), signifying that organizational culture, policies, and workload management are dominant elements shaping the construct. These values confirm Administrative Support as a reliable mediator and strong predictive mechanism between Time Management and Work Stress.

Work Stress is identified by factors reflecting emotional strain, task complexity, pressure, exhaustion, and coping levels. Factor loadings range from 0.63 to 0.78, confirming sound construct representation. Key items such as PTM (0.78), LSS (0.77), and CBD (0.77) demonstrate that physical tiredness, lack of support systems, and cognitive burnout are central indicators contributing to work stress levels.

Time Management → Administrative Support

The model reveals a highly significant and positive path coefficient ($\beta = 0.964, p < .001$). This suggests that higher levels of Time Management behaviors strongly increase the perception and effectiveness of Administrative Support. Employees who manage tasks efficiently are more likely to perceive the institution as supportive, structured, and resourceful.

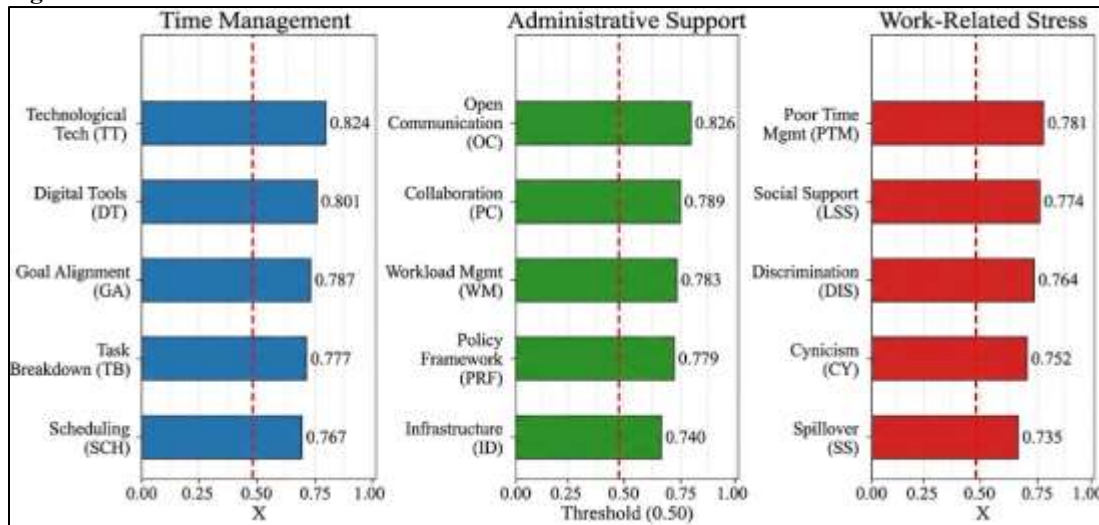
Administrative Support → Work Stress

The pathway from Administrative Support to Work Stress is statistically significant and positive ($\beta = 1.070, p < .001$). The result indicates that stronger administrative structures greatly influence the reduction of work-related stress. In other words, supportive policies and leadership help employees manage workload more effectively, lowering stress.

Time Management → Work Stress (Direct Effect)

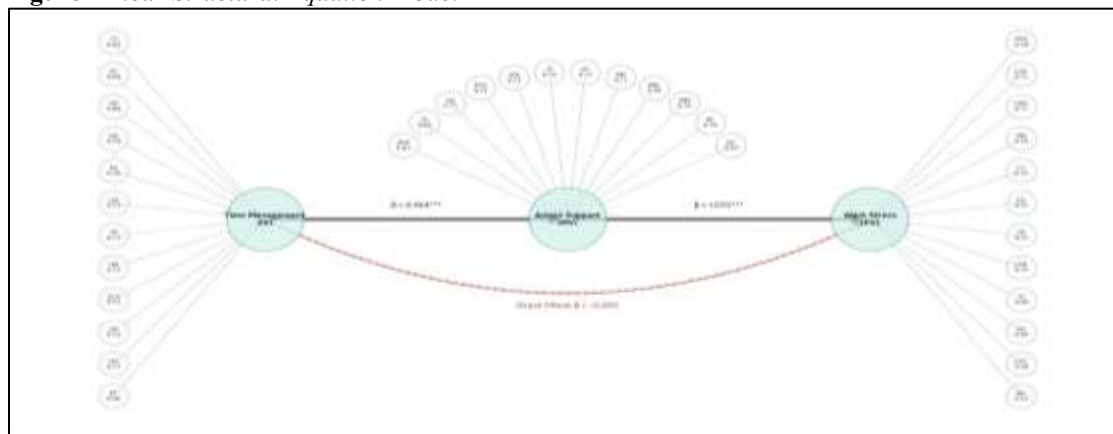
The direct path from Time Management to Work Stress is estimated at $\beta = -0.090$. Although negative in direction, indicating that better time management should reduce stress, the path appears weak in magnitude. Time Management alone does not significantly reduce stress unless it is accompanied by sufficient administrative backing. This further strengthens the mediation claim. The SEM confirms a clear full mediation structure, where the influence of Time Management on Work Stress is transferred through Administrative Support. The strongest indirect pathway — Time Management → Administrative Support → Work Stress — demonstrates that efficient administrative systems play a crucial role in translating individual skills into reduced workplace stress. In summary, Administrative Support emerges as a required mechanism that enables the stress-reducing benefits of time management strategies.

Figure 3 Measurement Model Assessment



The measurement model assessment presented in Figure 4.2 demonstrates strong indicator reliability and convergent validity across the three major constructs Time Management, Administrative Support, and Work-Related Stress. All factor loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming that each item significantly contributes to its respective latent variable. Within Time Management, loadings ranged from 0.767 to 0.824, indicating that technological tools, scheduling, goal alignment, and task breakdown strongly explain time efficiency. In Administrative Support, all indicators loaded between 0.740 and 0.826, revealing that open communication, collaboration, workload management, and institutional policy frameworks are key determinants of supportive academic environments. Similarly, Work-Related Stress indicators produced loadings from 0.735 to 0.781, confirming that poor time management, limited social support, discrimination, cynicism, and work spillover accurately explain stress experiences. Overall, the results validate that the measurement model is statistically sound, theoretically reliable, and suitable for further structural and regression analyses.

Figure 4 Linear Structural Equation Model



related stress experienced by faculty members. This universal recognition suggests that administrative support serves as a mediating factor that can either enhance or diminish the relationship between time management practices and stress outcomes in academic environments.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that both administrative support and time management alleviate stress, with administrative support exerting a more significant impact than time management. This suggests that mediations at the administrative level may have more enduring effects on faculty well-being than methods implemented only at the individual level. This study investigated the effect of administrative support and time management on work stress among university lecturers. The research found many important conclusions. To begin with, high positive and significant nexus between administrative support and time management strategies secondly administrative support had a strong negative relationship with work stress, implying that lecturers who receive more support from their institutions experience less stress. This suggests that when institutions have ample resources, clear procedures, and supportive leadership, professors face less psychological stress. Thirdly, the research revealed that work-related stress was negatively predicted by time management strategies. All those employees who reported better skills in scheduling, prioritization, and planning were less likely to show higher stress levels. It justifies the belief that effective self-regulation of time is a crucial personal skill for managing numerous academic responsibilities. Lastly one of the findings was that administrative support had a greater impact in reducing stress compared to time management strategies when the two variables were compared.

Recommendations

1. Longitudinal Research: Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to track how changes in administrative support and technological adoption influence stress over time.
2. Policy Implementation Studies: Future research could scrutinize critically if institutional policies regarding stress and time management are being followed "in true spirit" or are superficial in nature.
3. Introduce Time Management Training: Universities need to introduce frequent workshops or training to enhance time management skills of faculty members so that they could prioritize their tasks and eliminate work-related stress.
4. Administrative Support: Administrative teams should be provided at educational institutions to help the faculty members with tasks related to administration so that they have more time to teach and do research.
5. Encourage Time management in the Institution: The policies of the administration should be formulated to help with the time management of the faculty, which includes minimizing the amount of unneeded administrative procedures, giving timelines to the tasks, and simplifying paperwork
6. Mental Health Support: Universities ought to provide counseling services and workshops that are based on mental health, stress management, and coping strategies to help faculty members stay healthy.
7. Quantitative Validation: Empirically test the mediating role of administrative support via large-scale quantitative questionnaires, possibly with SEM (Structural Equation Modeling), to statistically validate the relationships.

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