

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The utilisation of “off time” by the modern South African business student: An exploratory study

A. A. Braam Rust

Faculty of Business, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa.  
E-mail: [rustb@cput.ac.za](mailto:rustb@cput.ac.za). Tel: 021-4603716, 021-4603301.

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**This paper examines data information about the time-use patterns of students at the Business Faculty, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa. The objective was to find out what students actually do with the time that could potentially be allocated to their studies. This paper makes a substantive contribution in that it provides one of the first explorations into the importance of effort, as measured by study time, in the production of education. The results are largely descriptive in nature. All evidence in this paper points to a conclusion that a real, and most probably a potential problem exists regarding time spent on studies by students during their off time. These figures are alarming if, on an average, around 10% of the potential time is spent on academic activities. If this is an indication of the readiness of the current student to fulfill the demands of the modern workplace, no wonder the modern employer is hesitant to employ workers. This study shows, in particular, that the South African business student is not ready to manage off time properly. With exceptions, the effect of this is a student that is not ready for the work place/market, particularly because of what the market expects from a worker.**

**Key words:** University transformation, future employee, time management, perceptions of time, time-use and time-waste, education production, study time, free or off time.

## INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education in South Africa has followed more or less the same operational system as done during the apartheid era. In terms of race, the tertiary educations catered in the past for the four main race groups: whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians. The institutions were mainly race related – that means specific institutions for specific races. After 1994, attempts have been made to remove the race focus; more integrated on a race basis.

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) is no exception, although coloureds make up a rather significant number (10% in 1990, 28% in 2005 and 31% in 2011) of the total student body, since the late eighties (Richter, 2012). After the first democratic election in 1994, education and more specifically, tertiary education, experienced dramatic transformational changes regarding the numbers of people of colour (coloureds,

blacks and Indians). The most dramatic change occurred from 1998. Since then, the ratio black to white at the CPUT accelerated every year: Black (1998 = 18%, 1999 = 21%, 2000 = 26%, 2001 = 28%, 2002 = 30%, 2003 = 34%, 2004 = 37%, 2005 = 38%); White (1998 = 52%, 1999 = 49%, 2000 = 44%, 2001 = 43%, 2002 = 39%, 2003 = 36%, 2004 = 34%, 2005 = 32%, 2011 = 48%). During the same time (1997 to 2012), the growth in total student numbers at CPUT was: 1997 = 10187, 2004 = 17458, 2007 = 28953, 2008 = 28894, 2009 = 30958, 2010 = 32157, 2011 = 31232, and 2012 = 30844 (growth of 203.74%) (Karra, 2012).

The change in the numbers and ratios has had a wide range of influences on a variety of aspects, socially, economically, culturally, and religiously (University World News, 2008). Deep rooted methods, systems,

procedures, principles, and values had to change to become acceptable for the bigger variety of role players. A very important change took place in the classroom. This part of education is still seen as the engine room of the CPUT, because most of the training and education of the student is still done by way of lecturing. Although outcomes based education is very much part of today's curriculum, the classroom is where the student is transformed into what the market or industry demands.

Due to the important role the classroom plays in training, and, therefore, the role of the lecturer, dramatic changes had to be made there. Lecturers primarily experienced the demands made by changes regarding different cultures and races. Suddenly, the majority of students in the class were of another (black) race. To accommodate this, many changes had to be made. The most common changes were about teaching methods and the style of lecturing, curricula design, assessment methods and the frequency of it, the design of practical assignments and tutorials, and the use of case studies. The aim would be to prepare students for the modern world where globalisation (and the electronic highway) is the environment where business is done. Lecturers were confronted with new problems where old solutions were ineffective. Notwithstanding the changes lecturers made, many efforts seemed unsuccessful if student results (pass rates) are used as tests for the success of tertiary education in South Africa.

Perhaps a critical factor to mention was the lecturer numbers and the transformation that happened since the late nineties and, particularly, the last five years (2007 to 2012). Lecturers have their own views regarding the content and information students should receive the skills needed to be equipped for the future. Although the background of the lecturer, (for example, race, culture, experience, social and academic circles in which they operate), as well as other factors, may influence their views about the future, a common understanding of the future market, workplace and worker, appears to be in place. The future employee should adhere to the future demands of the market, employer and career. The market wants highly competent, skilled, equipped and hardworking workers who can be left alone with projects, take initiative, think laterally, and meet deadlines (Badat, 2007, 2010; Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012:1; Steyn and Kotze, 2004:4-6). Students are therefore, under tremendous pressure to adapt to the demands of the environment.

In the South African context, if time and time management is under investigation, the view of Rousseau and Venter (2004:16) highlights another problem in the educational and work environment against globalisation. In their study it was found that different cultures have different perceptions of time and may value different aspects of it. For instance, Xhosa-speaking South Africans represent a more collective and

relationship-orientated behaviour pattern, referred to as "Afro-centric". The latter conceives of a past, an ancestral, and a present time orientation. English- and Afrikaans speaking South Africans, on the other hand, represent a more Euro-centric culture that tends to be more individualistic and materialistic, with a future-orientated time perspective. This indicates that time perception, with in the African context, can be strongly influenced by culture.

Along with all these changes, the National Department of Education expected tertiary institutions to aim for excellence in pass rates (Higher Education in Context, 2004; Reddy, 2004:9). This has compelled institutions to support and facilitate the process of transformation. Many different functions had to be established in order to support students with a variety of services. One of the aims was to make the transformation easier for the "new" student. Examples of services delivered presently which was not part of the CPUT (previously the Cape Technikon) during 1990 include: an academic writing centre, student counseling, numeric and language support centre, tutoring and a student learning support centre. The new support programmes grew in numbers and in variety. At the CPUT most of them form part of the Professional Staff function. An indication of this growth in the specialist/support professionals group is: 1997 = 35, 2004 = 105, 2005 = 139, 2006 = 171, 2007 = 174, 2008 = 197, 2009 = 228, and 2010 = 245 (growth of 700%) (Wessels, 2012).

The lecturer: student ratio also shows a growth, with a slight improvement lately: (1997 = 283:10187 or 1:36; 2004 = 367:17458 or 1:48; 2007 = 657:28953 or 1:44; 2008 = 692:28894 or 1:42). The occupation of facilities (for example, usage of classrooms) also increased (Wessels, 2012). These factors played a significant role towards transformation. In order to be effective as a lecturer, some critical factors had to be addressed and drastic changes had to be made. Some of these are: providing students with pre-reading in order to save time with lecturing; setting more tasks homework in order to learn the skills of self-help, self exploration, self-study, self-learning as well as the skill of punctuality; using effective and creative ways of communication in order to decrease the chances of misunderstandings; and using more lecturing time to cover, do, and explain, the work in class that students had to do at home (De Wet and Wolhuter, 2009; Jansen and Taylor, 2003:6-10; Dell, 2011:2).

The objective of this article was to find out what students actually do with the time that could potentially be allocated to their studies. This was necessary in the light productive time usage is seen in the modern business environment. The question was how students see time usage. A common experience by lecturers is apathy (Dell, 2011:1-2; Wolpe, 1995:279). Lecturers cannot always get to the reasons for this and rightfully or

wrongfully accuse students of a lack of concern, a lack of interest, laziness, boredom, listlessness, and are not willing to understand the seriousness of their (lecturers') efforts to teach them the necessary skills for the future (Thaver, 2009:408-410; Meier and Hartell, 2009:183-185).

On the other hand, students will accuse lecturers of an unwillingness to change, to adapt and to understand their needs. The result is an underlying conflict waiting for a time and place to surface. Whenever they feel the need, students readily make use of avenues other than the respective lecturer, as was mostly done in the past, to voice their concerns. A common procedure is to call in the Student Representative Council (SRC), or student political body, that will make use of their power to inform higher decision-making people within the institution (for example, deans, senate, rectorate, or council). A full investigation usually follows and the result could be disciplinary action against the lecturer (Kadali, 2009).

This background is probably not as simple as explained, but lecturing in the current South Africa is very different to the eighties and earlier (De Wet and Wolhuter, 2009; Jansen and Taylor, 2003:6; Dell, 2011:3). Many will argue that these phenomena are normal. Indeed the political, social and economical environment has changed and will continue to change even more. But, one cannot argue that the world, and for example globalisation, is far away and will not have an effect on us. We are part of it and our positioning at the southern point of Africa makes our vulnerability and necessity to adapt even more serious. The question is who will accept the responsibility to inform the modern South African student that the future demands a person with a different attitude: a person who is responsible towards directives, accountable towards assignments and tasks, willing to accept punctuality, willing to grasp the opportunity to learn the skill of time management, eager to embrace future demands and motivated to accept it.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The importance of time and time management

In all aspects of life, time is considered to be a factor that influences success (Oshagbemi, 1995:31; Anderson-Gough et al., 2001:102). Alexander (1992:5) says: "Business is concerned with wise management of resources: capital, physical, human, information and time". Of these factors, time cannot be stored or kept for later. Therefore, it must be used effectively when it arrives.

Proper time usage provides rewards namely higher productivity, better results (Rousseau and Venter, 2004:17; Adair, 1988:1). This principle applies to all, but

is especially true in the world of work. The potential demands and pressures on time greatly outweigh what is available. Thus time has to be managed wisely. Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner (2003:20) add that, specifically, students experience more joy and higher rewards (in particular to maximize their lifetime earnings, as well as less costs (for themselves and the State) when they study more, or harder.

Although time is seen as an important factor in the organisation, it is also a complex factor to manage due to the flexibility of the environment and people. Old habits and attitudes of traditional patterns will need to change. Organisations will therefore need to cope with new working time arrangements in order to accommodate the needs of the organisation and the individual. The modern individual has a different view towards, for example, labour time (that is, part time, full time, shift work, weekend work, and evening work), care time, and leisure time (Elchardus and Heyvaert, 1990:32; Karsten and Leopold, 2003:407).

The industrialised world is apparently moving away from a once generally embraced combined notion of regularity, standardization, and coordination, which during the industrialisation of western society uniformly arranged working time patterns. Karsten and Leopold (2003:405) argue that these patterns have been culturally determined and are therefore liable to shift under specific socio-cultural changes. One example is the eight-hour working day that is challenged by more flexibility owing to a greater emphasis on individualism, heterogeneity and irregularity. During the last two decades time was promoted, for instance, as the prime performance criterion to assess productivity in manufacturing operations (Hameri and Heikkila, 2002:144). The idea was to achieve time and well-concerted operations with faster throughput time, resulting in rapid and accurate deliveries. It has become a competitive advantage in manufacturing industries. The Japanese secret weapon for their economic success was "lean thinking", which was about low labour costs in manufacturing – flexible manufacturing and time-based operations.

Today, the ability to handle change and time increasingly becomes a critical factor (Harung, 1998:406). The difference between time-use and time-waste is primarily efficiency and cost (or effectiveness and results). It has become vital to make time effective. The purpose of improved time management is: to do less and accomplish more; to think and act in a timely manner, that is, select the most appropriate time for any action.

### Meaning of time

Time is seen as an "independent property of nature"; it is a unique resource; everyone has the same amount; it

cannot be accumulated, or turned on or off, or be replaced (Adam, 1995; Anderson-Gough et al., 2001:103; Haynes, 1987:2).

It is perceived as 'clock time': linear, homogeneous, quantifiable, independent, irreversible and free of contingencies. It can be defined as: "a continuum in which events succeed one another from past through present to future" (Smith, 1994:20). The basic element of time is an event – the occurrence of all the events in a sequence, one after the other. Rousseau and Venter (2004:16) classify this as linear time, where time is experienced as flowing in a straight line from past to present to future.

Clock time is time measured in hours, minutes, and seconds, and forms the basis on which people organise their lives. It is the way people experience linear time. Adam (1995:52) argues that 'Clock time' forms an integral part of contemporary western societies: time consciousness, time efficiency, time budgeting, time management, they all belong to the clock time conceptualization of time. Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist (1999:290) go further to say that objectively time is characterized by concrete or measurable quantities of time, which people actually have to work with. Subjectively, time is based on people's perceptions of the amounts of time available, relative to the things they have to do.

The impact of the forgoing is that organisations operate according to linear time, where the clock dictates. Time is viewed as a commodity to be bought and sold like any other resource – therefore time becomes money (Rousseau and Venter, 2004:16). A further impact is that time is the only economic resource which is common to all (Oshagbemi, 1995:31). We can therefore manipulate ourselves in order to manage our time effectively.

### **Importance and meaning of time management**

Traditionally time management focuses on 'doing more in less time' (Rousseau and Venter, 2004:16; Clegg, 1999:3). This allows individuals to set realistic goals and to prioritise activities that result in increased task performance, job satisfaction, confidence, exhilaration and inner peace (Smith, 1994:22). Individuals are in charge of decisions regarding the use of their time. Clegg (1999:5) states that time management is about taking control of the demands that are made on your available time, but, Haynes (1987:1), says our problem is a matter of priorities. We live in constant tension between the urgent and the important, where the urgent calls for instant action. Clegg (1999:3) agrees in saying that there seems to be something in the human spirit that rebels against time management, despite realising the benefits. Few of us manage to effectively balance work and home

life, business and pleasure, stress and stress relief. This view is supported by Tyler (2003:7). He says some people seem to be genetically programmed to excel at time management as they can take on more work and complete it while others do not seem to manage their time effectively.

Today, organisations have to deal with an increasing variety of working time arrangements because of the flexibility of the environment and employees. The temptation exists to spend too much time on unimportant things (Elchardus and Heyvaert, 1990:32; Nicholls, 2001:108). Some things that matter most often get pushed aside by less important concerns. Smith (1994:28) mentions that these less important things take control of us and deflects us from what we ought to be doing, and this is usually very costly. They are known as 'time robbers', for example, interruptions and influences (yourself, other people, and other things), procrastinations, shifting priorities, poor planning, and waiting for answers (Clegg, 1999:6).

Smith (1994:30) added that time robbers seem to conspire against us from accomplishing what we really want. He further says that unless the culprits of time robbers are identified, and a plan for eliminating them is created, one will continue to waste time in the same pattern every day. Another problem is that the nature of the workplace and/or profession can have a significant impact on time use and ability to schedule. Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist (1999:292) say a very structured and less-structured situation creates a "time-culture" which will dictate the time-use approach.

### **Time management and student life**

Tertiary education students are part of "education production" and should strive towards effectiveness and efficiency in the process of achieving knowledge and skills towards a qualification (Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner, 2003:25). Proper use of their time will impact their chances towards the success of their achievements. Oshagbemi (1995:31) says the availability of objective and reliable data like those generated by work activity studies can be a powerful catalyst for improving the effectiveness of time management. Unfortunately, not many studies in the field of the time management of students have been done in order to make specific conclusions (Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner, 2003:1). They continue to say that the determinants of educational outcomes, knowledge of the relationship between educational outcomes and perhaps the most basic input in the educational production process – students' study time and effort – have remained virtually non-existent. Generally, empirical studies of how students spend their time are relatively limited in number (Oshagbemi, 1995:19; Ruhm, 1997;

Stern and Nakata, 1991). Three other surveys, though, focus on similar interests:

1. In a survey amongst 9 883 students at Canadian universities (CMSF, 2003:21), the results were: Academic work outside of class (homework, assignments): never or rarely (15%), up to 5 h (24%), 6 to 10 h (28%), 11 to 20 h (21%), and more than 20 h (12%). Time spent on non-academic activities (recreational, leisure activities): never or rarely (7%), up to 5 h (37%), 6 to 10 h (33%), 11 to 20 h (14%), and more than 20 h (9%).

2. More than half of the students at the Colorado University, Boulder, reported studying for ten or more hours each week; relaxing and socializing for a similar amount of time; 70% of seniors work 10 h or more off campus for pay each week; more first years (67%) than seniors (55%) reported that they spend more than 10 h in a week relaxing and socializing (Colorado University, Boulder, 2002:5).

3. Female first years at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), are more likely to be engaged in serious activities such as studying or homework. First year males were more likely than females to be engaged in playful activities such as partying, exercising and sports, watching television and playing video or computer games (Astin et al., 2003:1).

With a study where time spent on studies and other activities by students, is measured, one obtains an insight into their management of time which is important for their productivity and indeed for study success (Stevens and Weale, 2004:1). Without necessarily implying that there is a right way of spending one's time, knowledge of the pattern of managerial time allocation, may provide a limited view of some effective and ineffective practices in the management of their time. This helps to see if time is spent on some activities out of proportion with the expected benefits from those activities.

### Research problem

As mentioned, the market requires highly competent, skilled, equipped and hardworking workers, who can be left alone with projects, take initiative, think laterally, and can meet deadlines. Therefore, lecturers (should) focus on homework (assignments, projects and tasks for the students to do in their free or off time) so that the student (should) learn these skills and (should) become accustomed to punctuality.

Lecturers increasingly find that assignments are not completed according to instructions and in some cases in an inferior way. In many cases lecturers do not always have answers to these problems and this requires

lecturers to go out of their way to accommodate students in their effort to get results. Lecturers try to find reasons for these problems in an effort to solve them, as these may often have serious impacts on students' future careers.

### Aim of the study

This study wants to determine the allocation of time by students in the Business Faculty of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town. The study focuses specifically on the time spent on studies during "off time". Off time refers to time available for purposes other than lecture time. This includes off periods, time on weekends, afternoons and evenings away from the education institution. The objective is to find out what students actually do with the time that could potentially be allocated to their studies.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper, we examine data information about the time-use patterns of students at the Business Faculty, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa in 2009. The same study was done in 2004, 2007 and 2009.

Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner (2003:2) suggest an approach to provide accurate measures such as the average number of hours that a person spends studying in, for example, one week, is to ask the student a retrospective question on how much time is spent on certain activities. Past experience of research among students regarding time usage, indicated that they are reluctant to share information in self-administrative questionnaires, in particular where students have to keep a diary of activities; the direct approach (Oshagbemi, 1995:23).

Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner (2003:2) also say it is generally accepted that time-diaries are the most accurate means to collect time-use information, but this is difficult with students. For this reason, it was decided to use the questionnaire technique for data collection, but under the guidance of a lecturer during a specific week during the second term. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire in which they recorded answers to a range of topics concerning the time they had spent on studying and other activities (indirect approach). The week chosen was 20 to 24 August, 2009. It was in the middle of the third term where all activities were at full operation (a normal week for any student). The respondents selected were all first, second and third year students in the Faculty of Business in the National Diploma programmes (Marketing, Human Resources, Public Management, Tourism and Public Relations). Lecturers were called together for an information session to inform them of the content of the questionnaire and to answer possible questions. A field test was conducted with 1004 students. Those surveys that were only partly completed on return were excluded.

### Instrument design

Apart from the independent variables like course, faculty, year of study and gender, the questionnaire consisted of five areas. The five areas are aimed at learning more about how students utilize

their free time. The areas were: free periods between classes; timeslots from Mondays to Thursdays; timeslots on Fridays; timeslots on Saturdays; and timeslots on Sundays. Options to choose from in the area "free periods between classes" vary between: academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work). Study for tests/exams is not included here; chat with friends; doing nothing; hanging around campus, cafeteria, etc.; sleeping; other: (to be specified).

Options to choose from in the second area (timeslots from Mondays to Thursdays) vary between: relaxing (TV, friends, at home); doing domestic work (cleaning, cooking); academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work). Study for tests/exams is not included here; Sport/recreational activities; voluntary community activities; work for pocket money; sleeping; other: (to be specified). This area was divided into eight timeslots of one hour each (from 16:01 to 17:00 to 23:01 to 24:00).

Options to choose from in the third area (timeslots on Fridays) are the same as the second area, but two more timeslots were added (14:01 to 15:00 and 15:01 to 16:00). Options to choose from in the fourth and fifth areas (timeslots on Saturdays and timeslots on Sundays) are the same as the second and third areas, but another six time slots were added. On these two days 16 timeslots were used (begins with 08:01 to 09:00 and ends with 23:01 to 24:00).

Respondents were asked to mark all the possible timeslots in the five areas, to make sure that all possible free time was covered in the survey. In all five areas, as well as under "instructions", it was made clear that any study for tests/exams were not part of this survey. The question that was asked with different timeslots is: On what do you usually spend most of your time? The idea was to ascertain what activities students participate in order to remain abreast of the curriculum (homework), to practice what was taught, to update and revise work, and not studies for tests or exams.

### Data collection

The collection of the data (week 20 to 24 August, 2009) took place during lectures under the auspices of the specific lecturer who handed out the questionnaires and collected them. Students were not allowed to discuss the questions or their answers during the collection phase. A total of 1004 questionnaires were received of which 438 were 1<sup>st</sup> years, 333 (2<sup>nd</sup> years), and 233 (3<sup>rd</sup> years). All the 1<sup>st</sup> years of the different diplomas were grouped together to get an idea of their time usage. The same was done with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis: The field data was captured and analysed with the statistical StatSoft Statistica `99 Edition software package. Frequency tables and descriptive statistics were run on the data.

### First years

#### **Area: Free periods between classes**

The frequency results are: academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising

work) = 25%; chat with friends = 48%; doing nothing = 3%; hanging around campus, cafeteria, etc. = 17%; sleeping = 1%; other: (specify) = 6%. A quarter (25%) of the potential time available is spent on academic activities, whereas close to half of the time is spent on chatting with friends (Table 1).

#### **Area: Monday to Thursday afternoons and evenings**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 18% (Table 2).

#### **Area: Friday afternoons and evenings**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (Doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 9% (Table 3).

#### **Area: Saturdays**

The frequency results are (only interested in the academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, study, assignments, updating and revising work) = 6% (Table 4).

#### **Area: Sundays**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 11% (Table 5).

### Second years

#### **Area: Free periods between classes**

The frequency results are: academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 26%; chat with friends = 52%; doing nothing = 4%; hanging around campus, cafeteria, etc. = 11%; sleeping = 1%; other: (specify) = 6%. A quarter (26%) of the potential time available is spent on academic activities, whereas more than half (52%) of the time is spent on chatting with friends (Table 1).

#### **Area: Monday to Thursday afternoons and evenings**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework,

**Table 1.** Free periods between academic classes.

Activity	1 <sup>st</sup> Years (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Years (%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Years (%)
Academic activities (Doing homework, study, assignments, updating and revising work). Study for tests/exams is not included here.	25	26	29
Chat with friends	48	52	55
Doing nothing	3	4	2
Hang around campus, cafeteria, etc.	17	11	9
Sleeping	1	1	2
Other (specify):	6	6	3
Total	100	100	100

**Table 2.** Monday to Thursday afternoons and evenings (16:00 to 24:00).

Activity	1 <sup>st</sup> Years (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Years (%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Years (%)
Relaxing (TV, friends, at home)	31	28	23
Doing domestic work (cleaning, cooking)	8	8	8
Academic activities (doing homework, study, assignments, updating and revising work). Study for tests/exams is not included here	18	15	17
Sport/recreational activities	5	5	4
Voluntary community activities	1	1	1
Work for pocket money	5	5	5
Sleeping	13	15	13
Other (specify):	19	23	25
Total	100	100	100

studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 15% (Table 2).

**Area: Friday afternoons and evenings**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 6% (Table 3).

**Area: Saturdays**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 5% (Table 4).

**Area: Sundays**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic

activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 9% (Table 5).

**Third years**

**Area: Free periods between classes**

The frequency results are: academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 29%; chat with friends = 55%; doing nothing = 2%; hanging around campus, cafeteria, etc. = 9%; Sleeping = 2%; other: (Specify) = 3%. Over a quarter (29%) of the potential time available is spent on academic activities, whereas more than half (55%) of the time is spent on chatting with friends (Table 1).

**Area: Monday to Thursday afternoons and evenings**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic

**Table 3.** Friday afternoons and evenings (14:00 to 24:00).

Activity	1 <sup>st</sup> Years (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Years (%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Years (%)
Relaxing (TV, friends, at home)	39	35	34
Doing domestic work (cleaning, cooking)	7	7	8
Academic activities (doing homework, study, assignments, updating and revising work). Study for tests/exams is not included here	9	6	7
Sport/Recreational activities	5	4	5
Voluntary community activities	2	1	1
Work for pocket money	9	9	9
Sleeping	7	7	6
Other (Specify):	22	31	30
Total	100	100	100

**Table 4.** Saturdays (8:00 to 24:00).

Activity	1 <sup>st</sup> Years (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Years (%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Years (%)
Relaxing (TV, friends, at home)	37	34	30
Doing domestic work (Cleaning, Cooking)	6	6	7
Academic activities (doing homework, study, assignments, updating and revising work). Study for tests/exams is not included here	6	5	7
Sport/recreational activities	5	5	7
Voluntary community activities	1	1	1
Work for pocket money	11	10	9
Sleeping	10	10	9
Other (specify):	24	29	30
Total	100	100	100

activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 17% (Table 2).

#### **Area: Friday afternoons and evenings**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 7% (Table 3).

#### **Area: Saturdays**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 7%

(Table 4).

#### **Area: Sundays**

The frequency results are (only interested in academic activities): academic activities (doing homework, studying, assignments, updating and revising work) = 10% (Table 5).

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Averages of the frequencies show that first years spend an average of 17.3% of their available total and potential free time, during the week (free periods between classes, Monday to Thursday afternoons and evenings, Friday afternoons and evenings) participating on academic



**Table 5.** Sundays (8:00 to 24:00).

Activity	1 <sup>st</sup> Years (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Years (%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Years (%)
Relaxing (TV, friends, at home)	30	26	28
Doing domestic work (cleaning, cooking)	7	6	7
Academic activities (doing homework, study, assignments, updating and revising work). Study for tests/exams is not included here	11	9	10
Sport/Recreational activities	3	3	3
Voluntary community activities	1	1	1
Work for pocket money	6	7	6
Sleeping	14	13	12
Other (specify):	28	35	33
Total	100	100	100

activities (homework) and an average of 8.5% over weekends. Second years spend an average of 15.7% and 7% over weekends of their time on academic activities. Third years spend 17.7% of their available and potential free time on academic activities (homework) and an average of 8.5% over weekends.

Although this paper is exploratory in nature, it makes a substantive contribution in that it provides one of the first explorations into the importance of effort, as measured by study time, in the production of education. As a result, we view our results as largely descriptive in nature. All evidence in this paper points to a conclusion that a real, and most probably a potential problem exists regarding time spent on studies by students during their off time. These figures are alarming if, on an average, around 12.45% of the potential time is spent on academic activities. If this is an indication of the readiness of the current student to fulfill the demands of the modern workplace, no wonder the modern employer is hesitant to employ workers.

This study shows that the South African business student is not equipped to manage their off time properly. With exceptions, the effect of this is a student that is not ready for the work place/market, particularly because of what the market expects from a worker. It also shows, in the light of development, that students should be informed by academic institutions about this specific shortcoming in their make-up. Academic institutions in South Africa should also make a much bigger effort to make time management a reality within the curriculum and to reinforce the notion that students should become and behave more responsible towards their studies and careers. In this way, they share accountability for their success.

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