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# Time Management and its Application in Academic Life: A Study of Omani Students at Dhofar University, Sultanate of Oman

**Linguistics**

**Keywords:** TM: Time Management, Study Skills, Omani Students, EFL, Procrastination, Dhofar University.

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## Abstract

The basic aim of this study is to identify and discuss the awareness of Time Management (TM) and its application in the academic life of Omani Students in English Unit, Dhofar University, Sultanate of Oman. This paper also inculcates and indoctrinates the importance of TM in students' practical life. It has been observed by the researchers that students complain about the scarcity of time rather than lack of time. The study upholds that pedagogically, TM and its applications in EFL scenario are crucial. Thus the paper advocates that students' sufferings can be subsided by enhancing their TM skills. This paper finds out that the most of the Omani students at the University of Dhofar suffer from Mismanagement of Time due to lack of focus on study skills.The researchers also give fruitful suggestions in order to overcome the confronted problems such as procrastination, distractions and so on.

**Introduction**

It has been commonly observed that students complain about the scarcity of time rather than lack of time. It has also been noticed that students are overwhelmed with trivial and unimportant commitments/activities. This is mostly because of not making To Do list, not prioritizing or not scheduling the task. Therefore, students keep doing unprofitable, non-constructive activities. The researcher noticed due to mismanagement of time, many students forget notebooks, textbooks, pen or they don't follow the home work. Another problem which heightens the mismanagement of time is sleeping routine. The majority of the students stay up late during weekdays, which leads students to doze in the class.

Time management is a process that helps people live their lives the way they want, efficiently and effectively (Alalf & Elfattah, 2002).Time management means exercising deliberate control over the amount of time to increase efficiency and productivity. Time is an equal opportunity to everyone which can be utilized effectively. If a student is suffering from procrastination, it can easily be inferred that he is a victim of mismanagement of time.

When the physical and social environment is changed, human beings tend to follow the previous understanding, routine and habits. When students face a transition from a school to a college, they follow the same habits and routine they learnt at school. This very transition period requires balance and time management. Firstly, many students enters the college with ineffective or no work hard yet remain unsatisfied due to lack of study skill, so they remain unable to recognize the importance of skills. Effective study skills help student to retain information for long term, whereas simply cramming and vomiting out the same material during exam remains in short term memory.

Secondly, students are not well equipped to tackle time robbers such as distracters, anxiety, social media negative impact, restlessness and procrastination. College students' age is full of distractions. Especially, nowadays students are suffering from social media. A large amount of time is consumed on social media which has endless entertainment resources to distract the students from their main objective. The mobile phone is one of the causes to spoil all priorities set by a student. Therefore, students are under a direct attack of electronic gadgets. No doubt all these gadgets facilitate life, and students can obligate their tasks efficiently with the help of these tools if used in a planned manner. If students respond and react after thinking over the matter rather than just reacting to impulsive actions, they can manage their time. This attitude is possible only when a proper academic support centre is established in the institution.

There is usually room for improvement in time management if students rethink and review their plans or routines. Students must be made aware of the importance keeping in view that time does not have any rewind, retake, return or reverse pattern. There is a crucial need to highlight the mismanagement of time and its effects on the academic life of students. The present study highlights the importance and management of time and its effects on the academic life of students in English Unit, Foundation Program, Dhofar University.

**Review of Literature**

Much has already been written on the importance of time management by different scholars. In any field of life time management plays a pivotal role in determining its future. Trueman et al asserted in 1996, there has been a deficient research on this topic with students despite the Time management skill is acknowledged to be very crucial (Trueman & Hartley, 1996).

Many of our students suffer due to lack of time management skills. Poor time management leads to a set of features of counterproductive to effective foreign language learning. Students prefer rote learning instead of real learning because students are not well equipped with basic study skills (Ammar, 2004). Gracia-Rose et al stated in 2004 that Time management is the phenomenon of organizing, arranging, scheduling, and allocating one's time for the aim of gearing an effective work and productivity (Ammar, 2004). Britton and Tesser (1991) studied to evaluate the short and long-term advantages of time management

skills. The findings of the study indicated that students' time management skills were significant predictors of the average score of students' performance (Britton & Tesser, 1991).

MacCann et al., stated in 2009, Students who acquire the handling of their time reported significantly greater evaluations of their performance, greater work and life satisfaction, less role ambiguity, less role overload, and fewer job-induced and somatic tensions (MacCann, Duckworth, & Roberts, 2009).

It is observed that students easily become victim of distractions dealing emergency with a classmate, ignoring potential hour of work on petty matters. The scenario is often referred to as "The Tyranny of the Urgent" *Nick Repak* (2012)The researchers assume that students ignore the small amounts of time therefore overwhelmed themselves with the common cliché scarcity of time. They need to be realized that smaller amounts of time if planned well, the rest of the tasks get pretty easier. It is well said by Lord Chesterfield about time managements, "If you watch the minutes carefully, the hours will take care of themselves" (Chasterfield, 2014).

The majority of students suffer from the inherited study skills, problem from schooling where there is no proper subject to focus on skills. Most of the students just waste their time by copying and transferring on another note rather than learning. Many students remain busier in copying resources than managing their time. A huge amount of time goes for copying rather than real study. The study of Kaminski et al (2006) concluded that academic success was positively correlated with time management skills (Ammar, 2004). Furthermore, less academically successful students spent more time using coping mechanisms and therefore had less time to study (Ammar, 2004).

It is due to lack of study skills, students carry different notebooks every week or month, which shows total confusion on the part of student management skills. If they are well aware of short term and long-term goals would have produced better results (Britton & Tesser, 1991). As per the report of NCES in 1993 stated, better utilization of instructional time was found to be one of the greatest influences on student learning opportunities and outcomes (Ammar, 2004).

**Method**

A Questionnaire used by Britten et.al was adopted and amended with some additional questions, keeping in view the EFL scenario, to examine Foundation Programme students' Time management skills and their awareness of the importance of time in academic life. The reliability of the questionnaire was analyzed by using Cronbach's alpha method via SPSS XVII. The reliability coefficient was 0.912.

The participants were given a bilingual questionnaire in order to obtain accurate results .They were given full confidence by not showing their name and comments to any person or institution. The researcher explained the purpose of the questionnaire by highlighting the importance of time management in their life. The complete guideline was given to the participants how to fill up the questionnaire in order to avoid any ambiguity or confusion of the questions.

**Presentation of data**

All 15 items on the questionnaire were analyzed individually. The data were analyzed by using SPSS XVII and presented in bar graph and frequency chart showing mean score.

**Findings and discussion**

The frequency and mean score table (fig.1) shows that 58 per cent students agreed with the statement that they make lists of the things that they had to do each day. The table (fig.2) shows 69 percent students agreed that they spend time each day to cover the syllabus while 80 percent students agreed that they have a clear idea of what they have to accomplish before exams (fig.3) .The table (fig.4) shows 33 % students disagreed that they spend more than two hours on social media on a daily basis. As a matter of fact, only 27 % students disagreed that social media networks are a big hurdle to manage their time effectively. (Fig.5).Table shows 13 % of the participants disagreed that they use social media in free or extra time to enhance their learning (fig.6).The table(fig.7) shows 40 % participants agreed that they spend more time on personal grooming than doing class work or homework on an average day. The frequency table(fig.8) and mean score sheet shows 60 % participants who agreed that students should not spend much time on internet/computer for entertainment purpose. The data shows (fig.9) 55 % participants agreed that they review their class notes regularly even when the exam is not imminent. The frequency and mean sheet item 10 reflects 48 % students agreed that they still they keep doing the work night before the assignment is due. The mean score and table (fig.11) shows that only 19 % percent of the participants are aware of prioritization.The data shows 43 % participants agreed that they sleep well the night before exam.The data also reflects 38% students disagreed that they sleep late during weekdays due to watching movies, using the internet, chatting with friends (fig.13).The frequency and mean table(fig.14) demonstrates 25 % students agreed that they usually come late to class.15 The data shows (fig.15) 34 % students agreed that they often forget their notebooks, textbooks, workbooks and pen at house before getting to the class.

| ***Descriptive Statistics*** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Items** | **Number** | **Mean** |
| Do you write a set of goals for the entire term? | 86 | 2.4884 |
| Do you spend time each day planning to cover the syllabus? | 85 | 2.1412 |
| Do you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish before the exam? | 85 | 1.8000 |
| Do you spend more than two hours daily on the internet (using social media, i.e. whatsapp , Skype, Tango, Viber , Google hangout)? | 85 | 2.6353 |

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|---|---|---|
| Do you think social media, i.e. (whatsapp , Skype, Tango, Viber , Google hangout) is a big hurdle to manage your time effectively ? | 86 | 2.6395 |
| Do you use whatsapp , Skype, Tango, Viber , a Google hangout for learning in your free or extra time to enhance you're your learning ? | 84 | 2.3690 |
| On an average day do you spend more time on personal grooming than doing class work and homework? | 85 | 2.8235 |
| Do you think students should not spend much time on internet /computer for entertainment purpose? | 86 | 2.5581 |
| Do you regularly review your class notes, even when the test is not imminent? | 86 | 2.3953 |
| The night before the assignment is due, you are really still working on it. | 82 | 2.7805 |
| When you have several things to do, do you think it is best to do a little work on each one? | 85 | 3.0118 |
| Do you sleep well the night before the exam? | 79 | 2.7468 |
| Do you often sleep late during weekdays due to watching movies, using the internet, chatting with friends, etc? | 86 | 2.9419 |
| Do you really reach your class late? | 83 | 3.4337 |
| Have you usually forgotten home work because you are busy with family matters? | 85 | 3.3176 |

***Suggestions***

There is a dire need to incorporate learning in all unavoidable networks of social media so that the students may use time effectively**.** As the students are well equipped with technology and its usage, it is also suggested that teachers need to develop educational blogs to assist students benefitting from social media rather than browsing irrelevant and unprofitable websites. Students must also be encouraged to have academic buddy blogs to utilize time constructively, and enhance their learning through social media. For this purpose they may be given free blog creating websites such as www.wordpress.com or www.blogspot.com.

Mobile usage, a continuous source of disturbance, should be totally banned during class time, if not used for teaching /learning process. The researcher observed many times students use mobile by keeping it under the book or notebook. Free classes must be used to follow up studies. There should be a special focus on slow learner through differentiated instructions while class performs routine work. By adopting this strategy slow learner are likely to utilize time effectively.

Since time is an equal opportunity and it has no retake, rewind pattern, therefore students must be taken out of common trap of thinking "unlimited free time at college."

It is an obligation upon teachers to discourage late arrival in the class as the very first fifteen minutes of any lecture are very crucial to get the clear cut idea of the topic. Many students are suffering due to mismanagement of time therefore they cannot meet the deadlines of any research project. It is highly recommended that they must be trained how to use the Assignment Research Calculator. There is a plethora of free websites to break down the assignment and follow it accordingly. The researcher himself used this practical source for students from time to time. It is recommended that this calculator can serve the purpose http://ios.lib.csufresno.edu/arc/

There is utmost need to make students realize that Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance by scheduling their routines, prioritizing their tasks, meeting their deadline and catching up the required-cum-desired goals at college to achieve the best possible grades.

**Conclusion**

The study believes time management at the college level has received less attention in research as compared to time robbers such as social media and modern technological development .Because of lack of attention on this issue, students sufferings are increasing day by day due to the endless list of entertainment and irrelevant information. As college life is full of many desires and ambitions, time might does not seem to be a serious issue. This research is in line with Britten et al (1991) where time management is very crucial in academic achievements. Secondly, sleep routine of the students is one of the major factors of mismanagement of time. It is recommended that further research may be carried out on the effects of unavoidable social media on college students' achievements on a broader scale.

***Acknowledgment***

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***Appendix: Bar graphs***

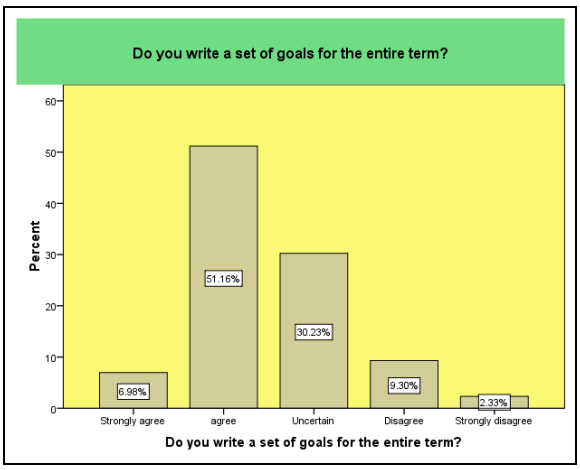


**Fig.1**

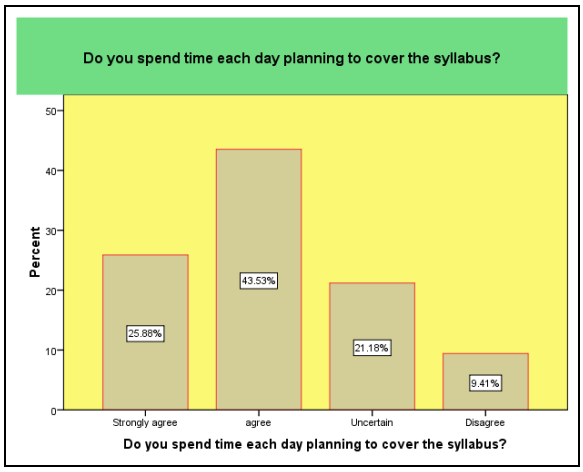


**Fig.2**

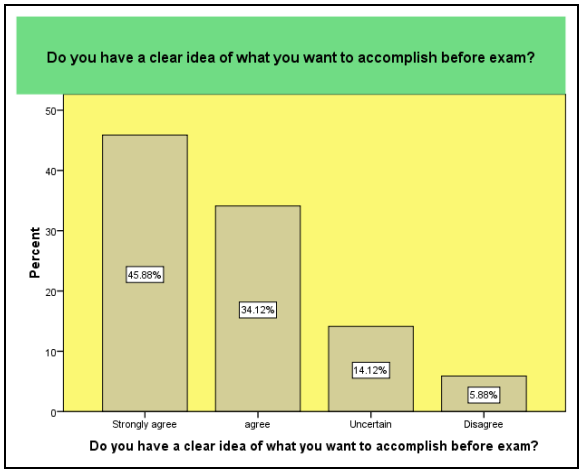


**Fig.3**

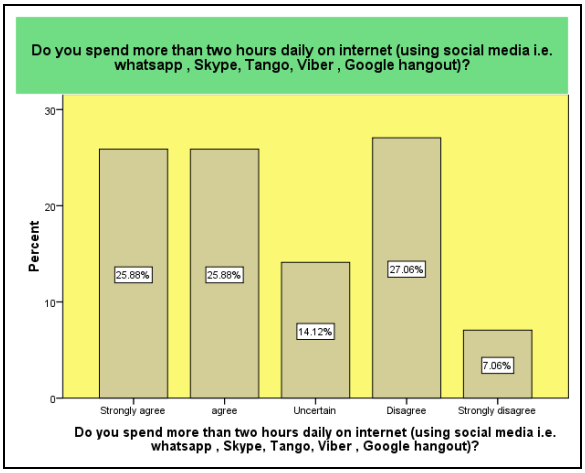


**Fig.4**

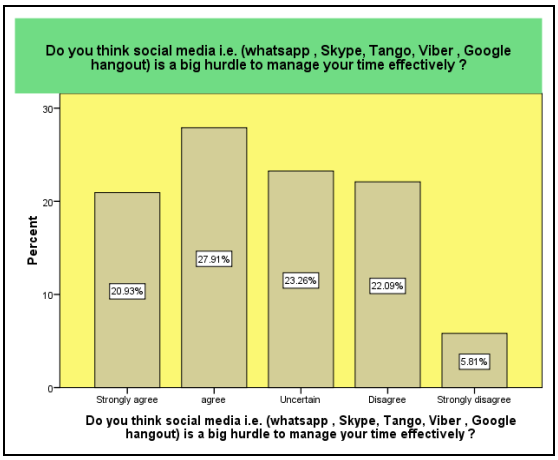


Fig.5

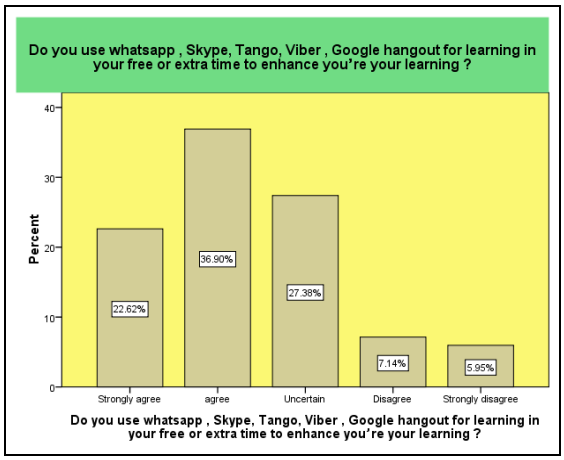


Fig.6

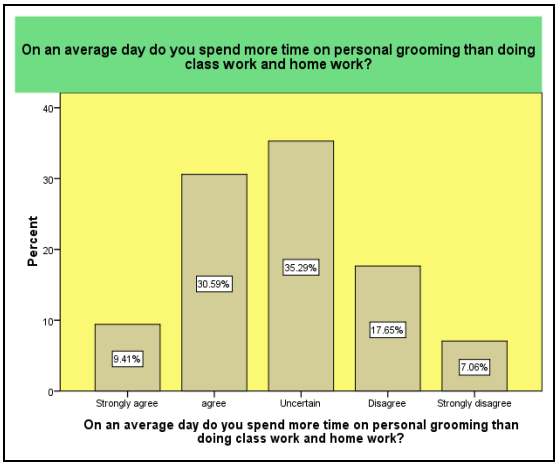


Fig.7

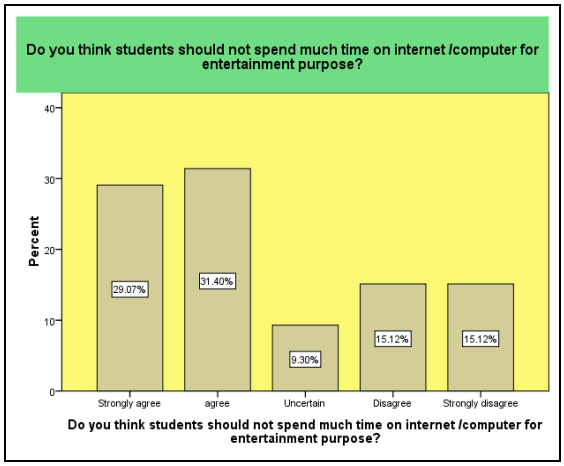


Fig.8

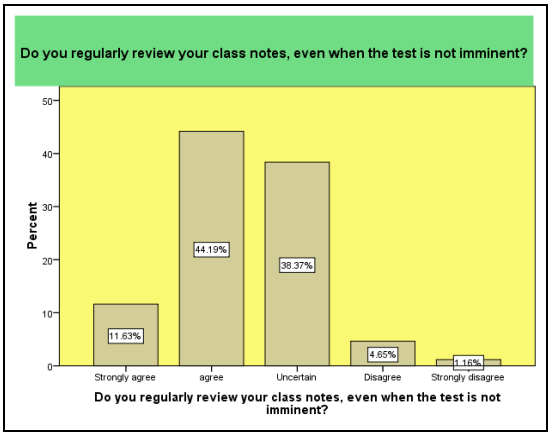


Fig.9

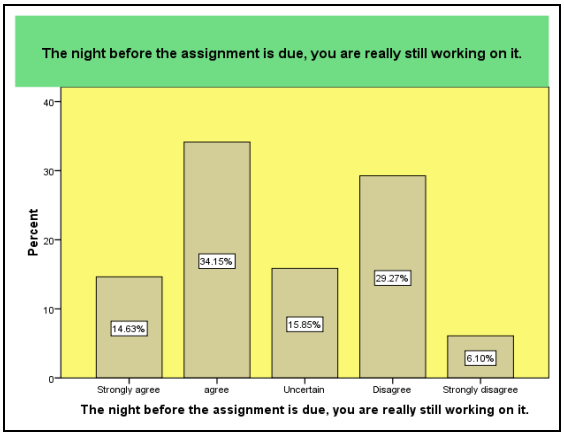


Fig.10

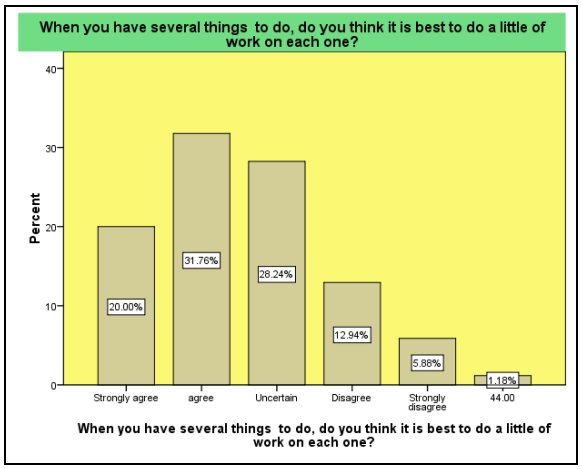


Fig.11

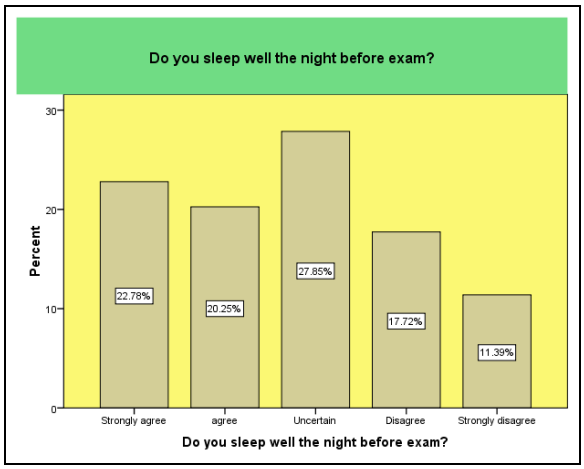


Fig.12

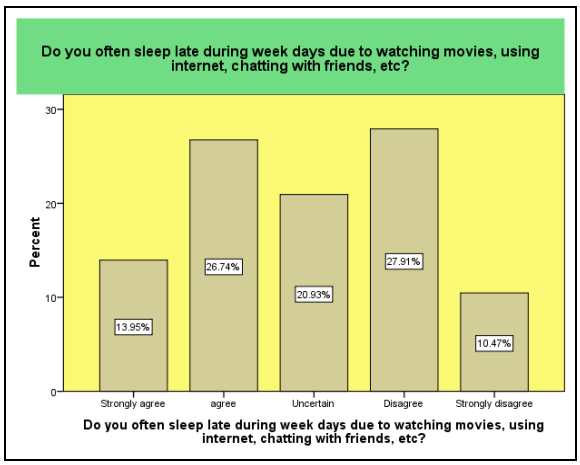


Fig.13

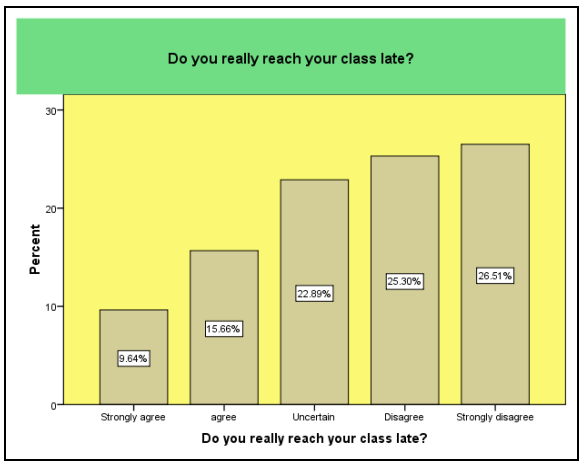


Fig.14

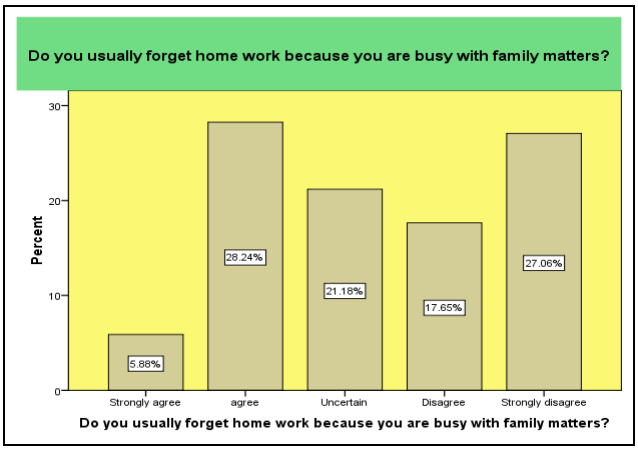


Fig.15