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The correlation between time and schedule organization patterns and level of academic performance and participation characteristics among undergraduate students

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Abstract

Academic success is very important in Western society. Skills, behaviors and habits that enable learning contribute to students' academic success. An important part of the student role is time organization capability for successful academic performance and active participation in other areas of life. Level of participation in the daily routine plays a central role in occupational independence, and consequently, in health and quality of life. During their course of study, students are exposed to a new, intensive environment and are required to adhere to a complex schedule. They may have difficulty in organizing their time efficiently to manage all their different activities. These difficulties can affect the students' health and sense of well-being, leading to reduced quality of life. In spite of the above, the updated body of knowledge regarding the link between time organization and academic performance and regarding performance and participation characteristics among the student population is scarce. **Therefore, the aims of this study are as follows:** (1) To describe time and schedule organization and participation characteristics among undergraduate students in Israel; (2) To examine the correlation between time and schedule organization and level of academic performance, and participation characteristics among undergraduate students in Israel; and enriching these findings through aim number (3) To describe the insights developed by students after scrutinizing their daily routine and their participation characteristics.

Method. The study design included simultaneous use of quantitative core component and qualitative supplementary component research methods. The study population included 60

undergraduate students, without disability, who had studied at university or college for more than one semester. Convenience sampling was used to recruit the study participants.

The study hypotheses were as follows:

(1) A significant correlation will be found between the four time organization characteristics that will be evaluated by the Time Organization and Participation Scale (TOPS) questionnaire and the level of academic performance (according to the student's average grade), and the four participation characteristics that will be evaluated by the Occupational Questionnaire (OQ).

(2) The four time organization pattern characteristics that will be evaluated by the TOPS questionnaire will predict the four participation characteristics that will be evaluated by the OQ.

The following quantitative research tools were used: (1) a background data questionnaire, which included a question about the level of academic performance (range of grades); (2) the TOPS questionnaire, which is a self-report scale for detecting difficulties in the organization of daily life tasks in time, as perceived by the individual and (3) the OQ, which is designed to examine and document the individuals' participation in their daily routine activities. The qualitative tools that were used were two open-ended questions, which were part of the OQ.

Findings. The study findings show that even a healthy, high-functioning population with the ability for good academic performance experiences time organization difficulties relating to daily functioning. A weak positive correlation was found between the manner of the students' performance in relation to the time factor and their average grades. This indicates a tendency for correlation, and requires further study.

The results of the study show partial support of the correlation between time organization and the students' daily routine participation characteristics. The main influence of time organization measures was found to be on occupational areas of studying and daily living tasks, which constitute a considerable part (44%) of the students' daily routine. Only two significant correlations were found between the time organization measures (Measure C- Frequency of emotional responses following the individual's unsuccessful organisation of time and Measure D1- Unsuccessful organisation of

time during change in routines) and the percentage of participation in occupational areas throughout the day (leisure and sleep, respectively). In the present study, the main participation characteristics that were influenced by the time organization measures were found to be level of performance and enjoyment, whereas only one significant correlation was found between time organization and the degree of the students' motivation. The main influence of emotional responses following unsuccessful organization in time was found to be on participation characteristics of leisure, rest and sleep. Difficulty in time organization during changes in routine was found to be related to lower participation in sleep. In addition, it was found that the more hours during the day that the students spent working, the less time they devoted to study.

Content analysis of the qualitative part of the study showed the hidden potential of the OQ as a tool to raise the respondents' awareness of the way in which they create their daily routine and of their feelings toward this, as well as helping them to gain insights regarding the need to bring about change in the status quo.

Conclusions. This study is the first of its kind. It broadens the existing knowledge of the correlations between the time organization measures and the level of academic performance and participation characteristics. The study findings indicate a tendency for correlation as well as the influence of the students' time organization skills on the level of their academic performance, their percentage of participation in occupational areas and level of performance, enjoyment and motivation to participate. The findings indicate the importance of evaluating students' time organization regarding their daily routine and not only regarding study-related activities. The findings also show that understanding the way in which people scrutinize and are aware of their time organization processes and the way in which these processes are expressed in their daily life routine can assist in expanding the existing scope of knowledge related to participation. The findings of this primary research may assist in developing occupation-based evaluation and intervention practice models, whose aim is to improve academic and general functioning among the student population. In addition, further research is needed to deepen the existing theoretical knowledge in the field.