Time Management Strategies among Students in the National Open University of Nigeria

Fidel O. Okopi

Okopifidel@yahoo.co.uk

Directorate of Learner Support Services

National Open University of Nigeria

Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) students' time management strategies with a view to identifying the level of non- adherence to their self -assigned time assuagement strategies (TMS) during the course of their studies. The researcher also wanted to find out whether their gender, age, marital and employment statuses have influence on their adherence/non-adherence to the plan or not. The researcher also examined the academic stress replications for not adhering to study time management strategies. A self -designed 30- item questionnaire was used for the research. Five null hypotheses were formulated and tested via SPSS platform. Sample of 2 60 students were selected from 18 study centres across six geopolitical zones of Nigeria for the study using simple random stratified sampling technique (3 study centres per zone and 120 students per centre). The findings of this research indicated no significant difference between NOUN students who did not adhere to their study time management strategies and those who adhered. Gender, age, marital and employment statuses had significant influence on NOUN students' non-adherence to their study time management strategies. The possible implications of the findings are that the majority of NOUN students may be experiencing academic stress and if not properly counselled, would have profound epact on their wellbeing as well as their academic programmes completion rate.

Keywords: National Open University of Nigeria, time management, academic stress, distance learner

Introduction

Most distance learners are adults with busy lives, family and work commitments and therefore, with little or no time for learning. In other words, to many distance learners, learning at a distance is a part time and a secondary activity. Academic stress- provoking encumbrances facing distance learners include enrolment and choice of programmes, when and how to study, when to seek for special clinics for academic guidance, institutional regulations and routine, personal and special need, difficulty with study, selection and registration of programmes/courses, choice and management of peer group for the purpose of tutorials and other instructional facilitation. Furthermore, other areas that remain problematic to a distance learner also comprise personal difficulties like level of preparedness (psychological, physical, emotional and social) to take to new form of study, poor study and reading skills, poor time management skills, state of isolation, interactivity, extent of peer pressure, support or feedback, level of anxiety and frustration (Ipaye, 2005).

Some other external factors which may constitute problems to distance learners include wrong choice of programme/courses, difficulty level of course materials, nature and level of assignments, not getting feedback on assignments, problems of course material delivery, conducive learning environment for group work, group study, laboratory experience, individualised study, linkage with study materials, use of virtual environment, problem of getting money for registration and course fees, even enrolment and registration. Other concerns of distance learner also involve lack of immediate responses to their needs, issue of interactive sessions and delays in communicating results of tests and examinations, issue of pregnancy during the course and inability to continue, lack of motivation and discouragement from lecturers especially slow learners and issues of changing one's job and/or transfer from current place of work.

Statement of the Problem

With the series of changes and challenges as well as adjustments which students of ODL system have to make, the ODL system can produce unusual tress for the students, especially those with full-time employment and families. For these reasons, the researcher deemed it necessary to investigate whether NOUN students have necessary study time management skills and strategies to cope with the challenges inherent in ODL system of education or not. If at all they have, the researcher also warned to find out whether they adhere to their study time management strategies or not? Research has shown that distance learners at various stages, may feel overwhelmed, afraid, and confused or exhibiting other emotional responses to changes, challenges and adjustment needs of DL system of education, if not assisted by support staff especially student counsellors (Northedge, 2007). One of the supports needed by the distance learners is to be helped to learn time management skills. Pressure of time (adult learners with job or family obligations) makes it inevitable for a distance learner to have well thought out study plan and try as much as possible to keep to the plan. In other words, with proper time management, the effects of the above mentioned academic stress - provoking challenges on the distance learners' physical, emotional, mental md psychological wellbeing or dropout rate among them would be minimised. If otherwise, the distance learners might be experiencing some signs and symptoms of stress in the course of trying to overcome these challenges of studying in ODL system of education and invariably start considering dropping out as the best option. Apart from pressure of performing well in studies, the ODL students face many of other situations, which may cause stress in them (Ipaye, 2005).

The researcher also deemed it necessary to investigate the influence of some variables such as gender, age, marital and employment statuses of NOUN students which are likely to influence their adherence or non-adherence to their study time management strategies since the majority of them are adults, married with family responsibilities, and employed either

in public service, private organisation or self- employed. Lack of study time plan or non- adherence to study time plan has been identified as one of the sources of stress among open and distance learners (www.website-huddle.com). Evidence abound to confirm that ODL students especially NOUN have study time plan, however, non- adherence to such plans is as good as not having a study plan at all. It is hypothesised that the problem most of NOUN students are facing is non -adherence to their study time plan and inadvertently not utilising the study time effectively and efficiently towards achieving their academic objectives.

Objective

This study intends to find out whether NOUN students adhere to their study time strategies or not; also to determine the influence of age, employment, gender and marital status on students' adherence or non-adherence to their study strategies.

Literature Review Time Management

A pertinent question to ask is what is time management? There seems to be no concrete definition of what time management really is. Conventional time management is a systemic application of common sense strategies and techniques in order to become more effective in one's personal and professional life (www.website-huddle.com). Time management refers to a range of skills, tools, and techniques used to manage time when accomplishing specific tasks, projects and goals. This set encompasses a wide scope of activities which include planning, allocating, setting goals, delegation, analysis of time spent, monitoring, organising, scheduling, and prioritising (Wetzel, 2009). It starts with commitment to change and identifying areas that needed to be changed about one's habits, routines and attitudes. The key to successful time management is planning and then protecting the planned time. If you plan

what to do and when, and then stick to it, then you are in the process of managing your time. One characteristic of distance learners who are successfully completing courses is that they develop a plan for success (Wetzel, 2009). Often, managing and coping with stress or anxiety is eliminated by simply makinglists of everything that must be accomplished. Prioritising this list based on importance provides anxiety relief, along with successfully completing distance education goals (Northedge, 2008: 35).Time management is mainly about conditioning your environment rather than allowing your environment to condition you. What is obvious about effective time management is that it brings many benefits by helping the individual achieve his or her goals and prioritises his or her daily life and makes him or her generally a happier person. The principle behind effective time management is to become more productive in life**.** On one hand, while decreasing the anxiety and pressure one feels time, on the other hand, effective time management can help the dual meet both his and her needs and wants (Ipaye, 2005). Although there are techniques and steps for developing effective time management, they are slightly different for individuals. This is because people are different with differing needs and wants (Wetzel, 2009).

The first step in time management in life is that you must first list your wants and needs. That is, list what you need to get done and what you to get done. Another step is to prioritise each area of one's wants and build a set of specific tasks to help one achieve it. One of the most effective tips on time management methods is creating a task list. To get benefits, you need to prioritise the items you place on the task list. The trick to getting your task list to work is to be highly organised in your approach. When creating one's task list, one should categorise the task in one of four different categories: - **Do now list, do later list, perhaps never and projects list** (www.websitc-huddle.com.). With a task list, one needs to build oneself a system that will be kept up to date. The learner needs to consider what he or she will do day to day and how to incorporate the task lists into his or her daily life. Tips on time management are only useful if the individual can work them into his or her daily life. There is no

point making an effort to create tasks list if one is not going to use it day by day (www.website-huddle.com.'). Like the wants list, the task list should be prioritised to enable the distance learner know what the most important tasks are.

Another important step to take towards effective time management is to set goals to be achieved within the timeline and keep to it. Goals are something that one must have in order to live purposeful and meaningful life to its fullest and to recognise one's true potentials. With written or understood goals, one can achieve life dreams and better one's life. Without a goal, one has nothing to strive for and nothing to achieve. The achievement of goals through structured schedules and activities allows one to live in a better way. Goals should be integrated into one's wants assessments and task lists (Covey, 1989).

In the ODL system of education, learners among other things are expected to take full responsible of their studies and managing their own progresses through the course work. The learner has his or her own reason for studying and under his or her own peculiar circumstances with his or her own background in the subject. A learner taking control of his or her study implies that, it is up to him or her to work out where he or she needs to direct his or her efforts and time. It is important to note that every academic activity is time - bound and has time line. In most of the time, the learner faces the pressure of meeting deadline and of performing well in studies; these create panic and stress in the learner. The issue of finding time and developing a strategy to effectively manage the study time is purely a learner's own responsibility and if not properly handled will swirl out of control.

Planning for Study Time

Despite the fact that in most cases planning study time management is individualistic, yet, in many cases, counsellors and managers of distance learning institutions provide a guide to assist the learners. In NOUN for

instance, every course material has a course guide. The course guide among other things has a whole section/unit devoted to expected time schedule and the strategies to be considered by an open and distance 'earner in managing study time. Also NOUN offers courses on learning and study skills and strategies which include study time management. These courses are GST 103 Study Skills and GST 107- The Good Study Guide. In addition, one of the primary duties of the student counsellor in NOUN is to assist the students in developing appropriate learning and study skills, and strategies that would enable them cope effectively with earning at a distance (NOUN, 2007). The researcher is therefore concerned with the reactions of NOUN students in utilising the strategies put in place by the university in assisting them develop effective individual learning strategies including time management plan and adhering to them. A lot depends on the quality of learning done with the number of study hours set aside if the student is focused. A student of flexible mode with a full-time job may likely do very well in NOUN if he or she sets aside 2 to 4 hours a week for intensive study of a course but with lighter tasks squeezed into any other spare moments. A distance learner on a flexible mode must be realistic in trying to balance significant demands of family, job and other social commitments to the number of hours she/he could actually utilise for his/her study. As Vorkink (1995:70) puts it, "the amount of time isn't the issue it's how that time is spent." Northedge (2008:35) stated that effective study requires a lot of time in reasonably good sized chunks. According to him, one way of doing this is for the learner to create a chart and fill in the hours spent on the main non-study activities for each day. These activities include work, family commitment, travel, leisure etc. Write down the target number of study hours for each day in the total hour's row and assess whether the target has been achieved or not (Wetzel, 2009). He went further to explain that the first steps in managing study time are to estimate how much time the learner requires for each course and workout how s/he can release an adequate amount of study time within his/her work schedule. This brings us to the issue of high and low quality study time.

Strategies to be considered by an open and distance learner in managing study time include:

High and low-quality study time: Not all available time would be of the same quality. The quality of study time ranges between high quality to low quality time (Northedge, 2008:35). The concept of high quality study time on one hand, comes in when the learner is at alert, able to concentrate and can work undisturbed for a decent chunk of time. On the other hand, low quality study time is when a learner is tired, having poor concentration, a lot of distraction around and does not have long enough time to get deeply involved in study. The learner needs to manage his or her study so as to use the best time for the tasks that need it. It is important to give quality time to demanding task when the mind is alert and the learner has a good stretch of time ahead of him or her. It is worthy for the learner to experiment to find which times of the day are best for different kinds of tasks.

Mapping the Course Weeks

The learner should actually map out what s/he needs to achieve within the time that is ahead of him or her. Learner must draw up course study calendar using highlighter pen to mark the key milestones such as dates when assignments are due, then stick it on a wall in a prominent place (Wetzel, 2009). Study week chart provide an overall map of the course task for the weeks and tell where to find time in a typical week. The learner's 'to - do - list' shows the tasks immediately ahead. More importantly, the learner needs to work out how to fix or fit the tasks into the actual week ahead of him/her in order to keep abreast of the targets on the calendar. The learner can consult his or her study plan or **to-do-list** if s/he feels time is running out and sees where there is room for manoeuvring in his or her schedule. And if actually time is running out, his or her **to- do- list** will tell which activities to prioritise (Northedge, 2008 : 34).

Time versus Task Management

In an effort to balance time against task management, the learner could me too obsessed with time and tend to think in terms of hours put in rather than what s/he has achieved. In this case, the learner finds him/herself filling up time with relatively unimportant tasks. On the other jane, if the learner focuses too much on completing a task, s/he can let it drag for too long and it will stop him/her attending to something else just as as important. The learner needs to switch his/her attention between ask and time management to achieve a balance.

Time Management and Academic Stress

Encarta Dictionaries (2011) defines stress as a strain felt by somebody: mental emotional or physical strain caused, e.g. by anxiety or overwork. Stress is an intense demand on body, mind or resources that can only be met with great effort. It may cause such symptoms as raised pressure or depression. Stress and anxiety are often a normal human reaction to life's and 'downs' and part of life (Counselling Centre, 2007). Stress affects virtually everyone at sometime in his/her life and if s/he does not take step to checkmate it, it may have profound impact not only on the individual emotional wellbeing but also his /her overall health. It is also operative to recognise that one is not in control of all the aspects of one's fife but it is worthwhile making effort in controlling one's environment.

The next section will focus on study time management in the ODL system education. An ODL student is likely to experience academic stress when it becomes hard for him/her to find time to study or relax for a second under course workload. A situation where it becomes difficult to relax in the face of conflicting demands of work or family and still have enough time to study, to do assignments and prepare adequately for examinations, often creates a feeling of anxiety in the ODL student. The real challenge facing the ODL student in the academic world is time management and how to avert or manage academic stress. It is pertinent

to note that the majority of ODL students are under great academic pressure because of their multifarious commitments in life thus making coping and managing stress very difficult for them.Signs and symptoms of stress can be categorised into four;

O **Feeling anxious,** edgy, scared, nervous, irritable, wound up, moody and alarmed
O **Thoughts such as** low self-esteem, hazy thinking, fear of failure, mental blocking, inability to concentrate, worrying about the future, getting embarrassed easily and preoccupation with thoughts/tasks
O **Behaviours like** stuttering and other speech difficulties, crying for no apparent reason, acting impulsively, startling easily, laughing in a high pitch and nervous tone of voice, grinding your teeth, increasing smoking, use of drugs and alcohol, being accident- prone and losing appetite or overeating
O **Physiological signs and symptoms like** perspiration / sweaty hands, increased heart-beat, trembling, nervous ticks, dryness of throat and mouth, tiring easily, urinating frequently, sleeping problems, diarrhea / indigestion / vomiting, butterflies in stomach, headaches, pain in the neck and or lower back, loss of appetite or overeating, susceptibility to illness (Counselling Centre- Texas Woman's University, 2007).

Official Time available for Teaching and Learning Activities in Nigerian Universities

Effective time management is just one of the many ways distance learners can keep away from succumbing to stress overload when enrolled in the ODL education system. In Nigerian conventional universities, courses are measured in credits and each credit is notionally fifteen hours of teaching activity. There are two semesters in an academic year. Courses are organised in semesters. Courses are weighted according to their credit hours or credit load. The credit hours indicate the number of times such a course is taught or studied in a week in a semester. One credit unit course notionally takes one hour teaching activities per week for the fifteen

week make a semester. For two credit units course takes, there are two hours per week which translate into thirty hours teaching activities per fifteen weeks per semester while a- three credit course takes three hours per week, forty-five hours per semester. One important fact to note here is that, for one credit unit course the student is expected to spend one hour attending lectures and another hour studying on his/her own per week. The same principle applies to two and three credit course units. In any semester, a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 24 credit units may be registered except in 1st semester of the 300 and 400 Levels when students whose programmes include SIWES might exceed this maximum by 6 credit units. If a student has to offer ten (10) courses of two credit units each, it means he or she is expected to spend a total of forty hours studying activity per week (NOUN, 2007).

Mostly a full -time student is required to earn 120 credit units to graduate in eight semesters' programme which falls around 40 hours study time a equivalent to a working week in many jobs. Meanwhile, a distance learner is expected to offer half the number of the courses offered by a full-time student per semester. A distance learner is expected to offer five courses of two credit units per semester in order to have adequate time to attend to family, job and other commitments (Northedge, 2008). The distance learner needs twenty hours per week for his/her study (this covers time spent on getting things sorted out at the beginning of the searching the internet, managing his/her note, talking with his/her facilitators and other support staff, preparing for examination and so on). A lot depends on the learner's quality of learning- if s/he is focused, distance learner with a full-time job will do very well in his/her studies if s/he utilises twelve hours a week for intensive study (Northedge, 2008: 34)

The National Open University of Nigeria' Experience

In the National Open University of Nigeria, the duration of the degree programmes ranges between four years for full-time student and eight years for flexible mode learning for undergraduate study. Post-graduate diploma programme takes one year to complete if taken full-time mode arc two years using flexible mode, while Master degree programme for full-time student is two years for students charting flexible mode. To graduate students who started at the 100 level of an undergraduate

programme, must earn a total of 120 credits (minimum) while those who started at the 200 level (direct entry) must earn a total of 90 credits including General Studies (GST) and electives courses. In both cases, students will require at least 120, 90, 60, and 70 credit units to earn an award for the Bachelors, Post-graduate Diploma, Certificate and Master degree certificates respectively. For example, for those spending four years in the degree programme, they will take about 18 to 25 credit units per semester while those spending five years will take 12 to 15 credit units per semester. For undergraduate degree, the credit units depend on the programme and have a minimum of 30 credit units (NOUN, 2007). The aim of the flexible mode of learning is to ease the pressure of time, allowing the distance learner to attend to other commitments outside his/her studies. In NOUN, despite the existence of flexible mode, most of the students are eager to graduate within the minimum time whereby putting pressure of time on themselves. This may be attributed to the fact that the majority of the students fall between 20 to 30 years of age and some are unemployed and need the certificates for employment. Even students who are employed need the certificate for either a change of job or promotion to the next level of their careers.

Research Methodology Research Design

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design on the platform of causal comparative techniques.

Population and Sample

The population for the study included all registered students in the National Open University of Nigeria as of April, 2009, a total of 54,168. The breakdown of the figure showed that 4,158 students registered for the 2003/2004 session, while 17,523 registered for the 2005/2006 session. Also, 19,637 and 12,850 students registered for the 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 sessions respectively. 5,847 students registered for the 2009/2010 session (CNS, NOUN, 2010).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 2.160 registered students, selected through stratified simple random from 18 study centres in the six geopolitical zones of participated in the research. The sample population consisted of 1,280 male and 880 female. The choice of 2,160 sample size for the study was based on the population of students in the stratified randomly selected centres in each of the six geopolitical zones with the average population of 2,642 students.

Research Instrument

A self- designed 30-item questionnaire was used for the study. In the questionnaire, students were asked to indicate whether they had study time management strategies and if they adhered to them. The respondents were expected to tick 'yes' or 'undecided' or 'no' column that matches their responses. Before use, the questionnaire was distributed to experts for content validity and the pilot test was used to measure the face and content validity. The test- retest technique with the interval of two weeks was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained using spearman rho.

Administration of Questionnaire

The copies of the questionnaire were administered on the samples between 12 and 28 October, 2010 by the student counsellors who served as research assistants. The assistants were instructed to administer the questionnaire and collect them back from the samples within two weeks. By 30 November, 2010, a total of 2,160 questionnaires were returned to the researcher by the research assistants for analysis.

Data Analysis

Since the scale of measurement for the study was nominal, Kendall's coefficient of concordance statistics via SPSS version 16 and percentile were used to analyse the data. Pearson Chi Square Goodness of fit was used also.

Null hypotheses

i. A significant number of NOUN students do not adhere to study time management strategies
ii. Gender has no significant influence on NOUN students' adherence/non- adherence to study time strategies
iii. Age has no significant influence on NOUN students' adherence/non- adherence to study time management strategies
iv. Marital status has no significant influence on NOUN students' adherence/ non- adherence to study time strategies
v. Employment status has no significant influence on NOUN students' adherence/non- adherence to study time strategies.

Bio Data

Characteristics of the sampled population: Out of the total sample population of 2,160, the male samples constituted 59% while female samples constituted the remaining 41%. Sixty four (64%) per cent of the sampled population were married while 36% others were single. Seventy-nine (79%) per cent of the sampled population were employees while the remaining 21% were unemployed. Twelve per cent of the sampled population were within the age range of 15 to 25 years. Forty per cent of the sampled population were within the age range of 25 to 34 years. Thirty-six per cent of the sampled population were within the age range of 35 to 44 years. Fourteen per cent of the sampled population were within the age range of 45 to 54 years while four per cent fell between the age range of 55 years and above.

Data Analysis

Table 1: NOUN Students' Non -adherence to Study Time Management Strategies

	Non-Adherence Status	Yes	Undecided	No	Total
1	Total sample population				
	2,160	640 (30%)	260(11%)	1260 (59%)	2,160

Table 1 shows that, 30% of the total sample population of NOUN students indicated that they adhered to study time management strategies while 59% of them did not.. The remaining 11% of the sample were undecided.

Test Statistics

N	3
Kendall's W[a]	.111
Chi-Square	.333
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.564

a. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

Fig- 1: Kendall's coefficient of concordance statistic test of NOUN Students' adherence/non-adherence to Study Time Management

The Kendall's coefficient of concordance statistic test was used to find out whether there are significant differences in the responses of the sample population to adherence/non-adherence to study time management strategies. The result of Kendall's coefficient of concordance (figure l) on NOUN students' non-adherence to study time management strategies shows Chi- square of .333 while the level of significance is .564. The inference from this result therefore indicates that the differences between number of students who adhered to their study time management strategies and those who did not, was not statistically significant; thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

Though, the result above shows no difference between the NOUN students who adhered to their study time management strategies and those who did not, the researcher went further, as an off shoot of the above findings, to find out whether or not their gender, age, employment and marital statuses would have significant influence on their adherence and non-adherence to study time management strategies. The results of Kendall's coefficient of concordance test and percentile on influence of gender, age, marital and

employment statuses of NOUN students on their adherence and non-adherence are as follows:

Table 2: Influence of Gender on NOUN Students' Non- adherence to Study Time Management Strategies

Gender	Yes	Undecided	No	Total
Male	320(25%)	180(14%)	780(61%)	1280
Female	260(30%)	140(15%)	480(55%)	880

Table 2 shows that 25% of the male sample population and 30% of the female sample population adhered to their study time management strategies while 61% of male sample population and 55% of the female population did not. Fourteen per cent of the male sample population and 15% of female sample population were undecided.

Figure 2: SPSS non- parametric Kendall's Coefficient of concordance test result on influence of gender on NOUN students' non-adherence to study time management strategies is shown below:

N	3
Kendall's W^a	1'000
Chi-Square	3.000
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.083

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

Fig.2: Kendall's

Figure 2 above, shows that the Kendall's coefficient of concordance on the influence of gender on NOUN students' non-adherence to study time management strategies shows Chi Square level of 3.000, against significance level of .083. The results therefore, indicated that the difference between the NOUN students' adherence and non-adherence to study time management strategies was significantly influenced by their gender; thus confirming the null hypothesis 1.

Table 3: Influence of Age on NOUN Students' Non-adherence to Study Time Management Strategies

Age Range				
15-25	62(23%)	14(5%)	188 (72%)	264(12%)
26-34	318(37%)	118(14%)	422(49%)	858(40%)
35-44	188(29%	78(12%)	388(59%)	654(30%)
45-54	84(27%)	46(15%)	176(58%)	306(14%)
55 & Above	20(26%) .	8(10%)	50(64%)	78(4%)

Table 3 shows that, 23, 37, 29, 27 and 26 per cent of the NOUN students within the age range of 15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 44-54 55 and above respectively adhered to their study time management strategies while 72, 58 and 64 per cent of the age range respectively did not. 5, 14, 12, 10 per cent of the age range respectively were undecided.

Figure 3: SPSS non- parametric statistic Kendall's Coefficient of concordance test result on influence of age on NOUN students' non-adherence to study time management strategies is shown below.

N	2
Kendall's W[a]	1'000
Chi-Square	8.000
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.092

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance
Fig. 3: Kendall's W Test

Figure 3 shows the Kendall's Coefficient of concordance test statistics result of Chi square level of 8.000 in all the age range variables against significance level of .092; therefore indicating that age status of the NOUN students has significant influence on the differences in their adherence and non-adherence to study time management strategies, thus accepting the null hypothesis 2.

Table 4: Marital Status Influence on NOUN Students' Adherence/Non-adherence to Study Time Strategies

Marital Status				
Single	280 (36%)	80(10%)	420 (54%)	780 (36%)
Married	414(30%)	179(13%)	787(57%)	1380 (64%)

Table 4 shows that 36 % of the single and 30 % of the married NOUN students adhered to their study time management strategies while 54 of single and 57 % of married did. Ten per cent of the single population and 13% of married population were undecided.

Figure 4: SPSS non- parametric the Kendall's Coefficient of concordance test results on influence of marital status on NOUN students' adherence/non-adherence to study time management strategies is shown below.

N	3
Kendall's W^a	l'000
Chi-Square	3.000
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.083

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance
Fig. 4: Kendall's W Test

Figure 4 shows the Kendall's coefficient of concordance test statistics result. A Chi Square of 3.000 was obtained against significance level of .083; thus indicating that marital status of the NOUN students had significant influence on their adherence/non-adherence to study time management strategies. This confirms the null hypothesis.

Null hypothesis 5:

**Table 5:   Employment Influence on NOUN Students'
Adherence/Non-adherence to Study Time Strategies**

5	Employment Status				
	Employees	460 (27%)	130(8%)	1124 (65%)	1714
	Unemployed	112(25%)	50(11%)	284(64%)	446

Table 5 shows that 27% of the employed and 25 % of the unemployed NOUN students adhered to their study time management strategies while 65% of employed and 64 % of unemployed did not. Ten per cent of the single population and 13% of married population were undecided.

Figure 5: Kendall's Coefficient of concordance test result on influence of employment status on NOUN students' adherence/ non-adherence to study Time management strategies is shown below.

N	2
Kendall's W^a	l'000
Chi-Square	3.000
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.157

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance
Fig. 5: Kendall's W Test

Figure 5 above, shows that, the Kendall's Coefficient of concordance test statistics   result on   the   influence   of   the   NOUN students' employment/unemployment status is Chi Square level 1.000 against significance level of .157 therefore indicating that employment status of population had significant influence on their adherence/non-adherence study time management strategies; thus accepting the null hypothesis.

Research Findings

a.   The findings of this research had indicated that there was no significant difference between the NOUN students who adhered to their study time management strategies and those who did not.

b.   Gender, age, marital and employment statuses had significant influence on NOUN students' adherence/non-adherence to their study time management strategies.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this research are relevant to both students and the support services staff of NOUN, in the sense that though time management is considered an individualistic activity, the researcher is of the opinion that the guidelines provided in course guides and course materials on learning and study skills as regards study time management have not been imbibed by some NOUN students or they found them to be too complex to adopt. Also, there is an indication, that the statutory function of the student counsellors of assisting the students in adopting appropriate learning and study skills has not been very effective. For the support staff, especially the student counsellors, the findings have provided evidences that most of NOUN students lack study time management skills irrespective of their gender, age. marital and employment statuses. Student counsellors therefore need to intensify teaching their students how to develop realistic and effective study time management strategies. For the students, the findings would create the needed awareness in them for the need to develop effective study time management skills and intensify their effort in planning and executing their study time management strategies irrespective of their age, gender, marital and employment statuses. Considering the characteristics of distance learners, it is hoped that the findings of this research would create awareness in ODL students, that it becomes imperative for them to imbibe the principles of effective study time management in order to effectively manage conflicting demands and at the same time achieve success in their studies and avoid the devastating effect of academic stress.

Conclusion

The objective of investigating if students of NOUN adhere to their own strategies of time management led to some significant findings. It is surprising that while on the whole, there was no significant difference between students who claimed to adhere and those who do not adhere to their time management strategies, the study still found that some vital variables like age, gender, marital and employment status had some

significant influence on NOUN students' adherence or non-adherence to their study time management strategies. Also, the consequences of academic stress which may be as a result of non-adherence to study time management strategies have been emphasised. It is suggested that future studies on this topic should adopt a more robust statistical analysis.

References

Counselling Centre- Texas Woman's University (2007). *Coping with academic stress.* Retrieved from http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/counselling.

Covey, S.R. (1989). *The Seven Habits of Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Ipaye B. (2005). *Study Guides and Learning Strategies in Open and Distance Learning.* Lagos, Nigeria; Chayoobi Publishers. pp.I49-154.

Northedge, A. (2007). *The Good Study Guide.* The Open University. Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK76 AA United Kingdom, pp 33-40.

NOUN (2007). *Getting to know your university.* Lagos: Brochure publication of National Open University of Nigeria, pp 28-29.

Vorkink, S. (1998). Time on task. *In:* R. Hatfield (Ed.). *The Seven Principles in Action.* Bolton M.A. Anker Publishing Company.Inc. pp. 67-78.

Time management theory (2011) Retrieved from www.website-huddle.com

Wetzel, D. R. (Oct, 2009). *Stress Management in Continuing Education: CopingWith Anxiety' Caused by Social and Academic Requirements* http://www.suite 101 .com/content/stress- management-in-continuing-education-al56116#ixzz OzhMyJOOO