

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**TIME MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

GLADYS A. AMEDZAKE

2009

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THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

BY

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Dissertation submitted to the Institute for Education Planning and Administration
of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment for
the award of Master of Education Degree, in Educational Administration

MAY 2009

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's signature..... Date

Name: Gladys A. Amedzake

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Mr. S. K. Atakpa

ABSTRACT

Time management is a conscious control of the amount of time spent on work activities in order to maximize personal efficiency. In nearly all institutions, there are many trivial events that waste time that have to be identified and separated from the vital few on which scarce time must really be spent. The study attempted to investigate time wasters which inhibit the amount of planned time spent on work in University of Education, Winneba (UEW) by educational administrators and administrative staff. The study also explored the time management practices used in order to maximize efficiency. The research design employed for the study was a descriptive survey. In view of the varying professional groups among the subjects of the study, a convenient sample of both the administrators and their staff were used for the study. The sample size of 83 consisted of 22 educational administrators and 61 administrative staff who worked in offices of these administrators. Questionnaires which contained both open and closed ended items were administered to these subjects.

The results showed that both the administrators and staff perceived receiving drop-in visitors, receiving calls on private mobile phones, and looking for documents because of inefficient filing systems, as the three worst culprits in terms of wasting time in UEW. While the administrators ranked “saying 'NO' to work which was outside their plan” as the seventh time waster, the staff ranked it among as the fifth. Thus, they both agreed to some extent that ‘saying 'no' to work outside one’s plan’ was one of the worst culprits in terms of wasting time in UEW. The administrators and staff however disagreed on the fourth time waster, “running out of materials needed to carry out work”, with the latter rating it very high. Finally, on the measures used to curb time mismanagement practices in UEW, it was found that over 90% of

the administrators 'set priorities in order of importance of the tasks that staff do' and 'use diary or personal organizers' in their offices. However, it was found that over a quarter of the administrators do not use planners, fail to prepare weekly schedules and do not use time book in the office to track staff movements.

It was recommended that administrators in UEW put in place a policy to make use of good time management measures in order to minimize time that is wasted. In particular, the policy should ensure administrators set goals which are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (i.e. SMART), prepare and keep to daily, weekly, monthly and yearly planner/diary, as well as use time book to track staff movement in and out of their offices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to record my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. S.K. Atakpa, my supervisor at the Institute for Educational Planning & Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast, whose able and dynamic leadership geared me in working on this project. I am grateful to him for his advice, and for painstakingly working through the script and making necessary correction.

I wish also to thank all the lecturers of the Institute for Educational and Planning and Administration of the University of Cape Coast, especially Mrs. Janet Koomson and Dr. George Oduro, whose teachings and support in the last two years have equipped me with the ideas and skills that have led to the successful completion of this project work.

I also have to express my gratitude to my dear husband, Prof. Kofi Mereku, of the Mathematics Education Department, University of Education Winneba, who guided me to do the analysis of the data with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Senami and Senyo.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Educational administration basically involves the arrangement of the human and natural resources and programmes available for education and carefully using them systematically for the achievement of educational objective (Nwankow, 1982). Educational administrators usually work in schools, universities or education ministries. The educational administrator is an organiser and implementer of plans, policies and programmes meant for specific educational objectives. The educational administrator may contribute one way or another, in planning, policy-making and programme designing, for the efficient and effective implementation of such plans, policies and programmes for the benefit of education (Mensah & Adu, 1999). Like any administrator, he or she functions as a coordinator who organises activities in such a way that, things work smoothly, quickly and efficiently.

Universities are institutions of higher learning for those who have completed secondary education. In Ghana, there are six public and over twenty private universities. The oldest of the public universities is the University of Ghana, Legon and the youngest is the University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa. These institutions of higher learning have the authority to award bachelors and higher degrees and usually have research facilities that make them key actors in national development in terms of their contributions to social progress and economic growth

(UNESCO, 1998). Universities cannot achieve all these without the collective coordinating efforts of their administrators. They perform various functions in coordinating the efforts of people in the institutions, in pursuing and making decisions, in initiating ideas, in inspiring others to act, in understanding and analysing problems and finding solutions to them.

All staff, both administrative and professional, who direct affairs of an educational institution (or the various units within it) such as faculty, department, or section, are usually referred to as '*educational administrators*'. In the university system these people include the chief executive or vice chancellor, the pro vice-chancellor, registrar, deputy registrars and assistant registrars. Others are the finance officer, directors, deans, heads of departments/sections/units and their administrative assistants. The Association of University Administrators (AUA) in the United Kingdom has indicated that there is no 'typical' job profile for university administrators. Administrators may have student recruitment, funding, quality assurance, marketing, or public relations roles; or they may be responsible for budgetary/financial administration, project management or human resources management (AUA, 2007). Many work in a general capacity - undertaking tasks from all of these areas.

The administrator in the university performs tasks which are either reposed or delegated to him. According to Mensah & Adu (1999), these tasks may be loosely classified as follows:

- (i) Curriculum development and programme instructions handled by the Academic Affairs Section of the Registry, Academic Faculties, Departments and Units;

- (ii) Staff personnel matters, also co-ordinated by the Personnel Section of the Registry;
- (iii) Student personnel matters also handled by the Students' Affairs Section of the Registry;
- (iv) School-Community relationships handled by the Public Relations Section of the Registry;
- (v) Equipment and physical facilities by the Development and Estate Section of the Registry; and
- (vi) Finance by the Finance and Audit Section of the administration (pp85-100).

In order to carry out the above tasks satisfactorily, the institutional head and/or the administrative head delegates authority to deputies and administrators, sections and units of the institution. However, the internal organisation of the University is so structured that officers to whom responsibilities are delegated ultimately report directly to the Registrar.

In Ghana, many factors pose a challenge to administrators in tertiary institutions. As a result of the introduction of the on-going educational reforms all tertiary institutions (including recently established ones) are undergoing change, reform, development and expansion (Anamuah-Mensah et. al., 2002). Also charges of moral laxity and indiscipline have been made against students. Cases of drug addiction, vandalism and violent demonstrations which have lately become features of our tertiary educational institutions have aroused public concern about the type of future national leaders and productive force the institutions would produce (Brown-Acquaye, 2001). Besides, there are also innovations in the curricula or programs in all tertiary institutions. All these, need to be implemented under the collective co-

ordinating efforts of administrators. But the low motivation of both teaching and non-teaching staff is just the tip of the iceberg of the problems administrators face in coordinating such activities in their institutions. Moreover, the unattractive salaries repel many prospective administrators from taking up appointments in tertiary institutions leaving only a bunch of inadequate staff to shoulder the tasks (Mensah & Adu, 1999).

Expansion in student enrolment in higher education, a development referred to as ‘massification’, is another challenge facing universities especially in the developing world (Fehnel, 2002). Massification with an increasing percentage of the age cohort of 18-24 year olds attending universities was spurred by the introduction of compulsory basic education at the lower levels of the educational structure by governments of many developing countries which resulted in huge expansion in enrolments (Fehnel, 2002). In Ghana, the increases became pronounced following the tertiary education reform in the early 1990s (Effah, 2003). This rapid expansion in student numbers has created pressures on facilities, faculties and administrators and other categories of staff in the universities.

Increasing financial constraints is another challenge that universities in the developing world face. Unfortunately, massification has not been accompanied by proportionate rise in the resources available to higher education (Anamuah-Mensah, 2002). Further, the rapid changes in information and communications technology (ICT) is another challenge that faced Ghanaian universities in the last two decades that has made the job of the administrative personnel more demanding and intriguing. The rapidity with which ICT has been changing demands the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by all actors in the university system.

Statement of the Problem

In the changing agenda of higher education, notions of quality assurance and quality enhancement have become the focus of attention by governments. Traditional academic controls, such as the system of external examiners, are no longer considered adequate either as accountability mechanisms of employers to assess their graduates (Effah, 2003). Governments now want to be assured that higher education programmes are relevant, responsive and institutions can provide them as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible (Dearing, 1997). In addition, students and parents as they are called into making increasing investments in higher education want to be assured that institutions are offering quality education.

Massification and the increasing diversity of programmes in universities are making tremendous demands on the scarce time of administrative personnel. The job can be stressful at busy times of the academic year and requires good time management. Typical responsibilities of the university administrative personnel's job include

- recruiting, training and managing staff;
- handling correspondence;
- organizing and servicing committee meetings (producing agendas, taking minutes etc.); researching and writing reports;
- timetabling; and
- administering and coordinating student recruitment, examinations and assessment activities.

According to Nickell, Rice & Tucker (1975), time is scarce and costly. Like money, time has value and can be quantified. Its use therefore has to be managed for

the attainment of any given level of output. Three decades ago, Mackenzie (1972) asserted that time management is actually self management. Administrators usually become frustrated with a day that is unproductive. They would like to get more done in a day. Time indeed, is scarce and costly. Despite its scarcity and cost, time wasting is all around among administrative personnel in the universities. In fact, some of the specific examples of time wasters observed during the researcher's interactions with four junior staff members working in a university were

- i. excessive use of paper due to poor editing
- ii. meetings with unplanned agenda
- iii. telephone conversations
- iv. getting to work late
- v. terminating work and preparing to leave office before the official closing time.

These time wasters, most frequently, reduce effectiveness in the offices. Time wasters may exist in all organizations and institutions. This is because, in carrying out official duties, administrators are often interrupted by time wasters as mentioned above. These time wasters are matters or events that disrupt planned use of time during working hours and they occur more rampantly where the administrators lack the tools for planning time and skills for controlling time wasters. The need to minimise time wasters in offices in University of Education, Winneba (UEW) provided the impetus for this study.

Purpose of the Study

Our attitudes to time are frequently changing. Many of these changes are due to the advent of new technology which affects our work. The increase in options available has made it possible for us to do more in a day, but has also increased the pressure on our time. This makes it all the more necessary to research into the time management practices among educational administrators and their staff.

The purpose of the study was to investigate how UEW educational administrators and their staff manage time. The study was aimed specifically at identifying poor time management practices that exist in UEW and measures used to minimise these.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What types of time wasters do UEW educational administrators and administrative staff experience?
2. Which time wasters are the worst management practices among UEW educational administrators and administrative staff?
3. How are time wasters managed by Educational Administrators in UEW?

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the study would contribute to knowledge and rekindle general awareness that time is a valuable resource and should be effectively managed just as money and other resources are managed. The study identified the possible time wasting areas that could inhibit the work output of educational administrators and their administrative staff in UEW. The suggestions formulated from the study should be of great value to educational administrators in developing policies on how to minimise or manage time wasters.

From the study, it is expected that personnel directly concerned with time wasting will be encouraged to plan toward effective time management. Finally, the report will serve as a written document for record purposes to assist personnel for institutional evaluation.

Limitations

Due to the constraints of time and finance, this study could not be extended to the Kumasi and Mampong Campuses of UEW, and also to other universities.

Delimitation

The study covered UEW educational administrators and their administrative staff at the Winneba campus only. It took into account only the measures adopted by UEW management in managing time waters among the administrative personnel.

Definition of terms

In this study, '*educational administrators*' and their '*administrative staff*' were defined as follows:

- **Educational Administrators** are senior members in administration under the Registrar's Department, which comprise Assistant Registrars, Senior Assistant Registrars, Deputy Registrars and Registrar; and senior members in faculties, which comprise Deans, Heads of Department, examination officers and coordinators of academic units.
- **Administrative Staff** are messengers, typists, clerks, technicians and administrative assistants who work directly under Educational Administrators.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

The chapter explores the review of the related literature on the research area. The purpose is to consider what authors have said about issues related to the topic. Researched information on time management practices in organisations in Ghana is limited. Quantitative data on the need to minimise time management practice as a good time management practice in UEW if available is yet to be identified. Related literature for this study, which was therefore based mainly on studies carried out in other parts of the world, was focused on the following areas: conceptual framework of the study, major time wasters, research into time management practices, and dealing with time wasters.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Time measurement in brief retrospect

In the past the cock has been the time keeper in most ancient civilizations still, it is in some societies today. The cock's crow at specific epochs of the night or day marks the beginning of economic or social activities in such Communities. Other societies or individuals also measure time by the position of the sun during the day or by the length and direction of the human shadow.

Time, according to Collins Gem Dictionary is the past, present and future as a continuous whole or unspecified interval instance or Occasion etc. No matter how

organised we are, there are always only 24 hours in a day. Time does not change. All we can actually manage is ourselves and what we do with the time that we have time is measured in units accord to the occasion. For example, millennium equals one thousand years, a century is one hundred years and a day twenty four hours.

According to the new Encyclopaedia Britannica (1993) Time Zones were adopted by US and Canadian railroads in 1883. Then in 1884, an international conference, held in Washington, D.C, adopted the meridian of the transit instrument at the Royal Observatory (England), Known as the Greenwich meridian, the prime or zero meridian. This led to the adoption of the 24 standard time zones. The boundaries are determined by local authorities and in many places deviate considerably from the 150 intervals or longitude implicit in the original idea. The times in different zones differ by an integral number of hours, minutes and seconds are the same. Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) therefore came into being and occurred initially at noon. In the year 1925, however, the numbering system was changed so that the day began at mid-night as we now have it. (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1993).

The clock is the only object that generates a precise time scale and tells time. Clocks serve as a basis of scientific and legal clock time. The sub-division of the day in to twenty-four hours, the hour into sixty minutes and the minutes into sixty seconds is an ancient origin but came into wider use about 1600 A.D. The ordinary calendar year contains 365 days and 366 days for a leap year.

The system of numbering consecutively the years of the Christian Era was devised by Dionysius Exiguus in about 525. It included the reckoning of dates as either A.D. Anno Domino, (Year of Our Lord) or B.C. (before Christ). The year before A.D 1 was B.C.

Concept of Time

Some cultures have alternative views of promptness and timing. Before colonization by the Europeans, African cultures had no concept of time, since time was considered as inherent in the event, not external and absolute. Until the advent of western education, there were no words to estimate the duration of events or actual time of events occurred. Even though such words are taught in schools today many Ghanaian's cannot estimate time used for many events. For instance, when you ask a Ghanaian "when is the meeting tomorrow, and how long will it take?", "in the morning and will not be long" is a typical answer to expect. Similar observations had been made in other African cultures.

According to Watkins (1986), similar observations were made about the Nuer people of Eastern Sudan. It was observed that

The Nuer have no concept of time and, consequently, not developed abstract system of time-reckoning. ... There is no equivalent expression in the Nuer Language for our word "time", and they cannot, therefore, as we can speak of time as though it were something actual, which passes, can be wasted, can be saved, and so forth ... Certainly they never experience the same feeling of fighting against... since their points of reference are mainly the activities themselves, which are generally of a leisurely and routine character (Giddens, 1981, cited in Watkins, 1986).

This may explain why many Africans do not have or attempt to make conscious control of the amount of time spent on work activities. In contributing to a BBC discussion on the topic “Can Africa keep time?” Mutungi (2003), a Ugandan intimated that

time management is one of Africa's incurable diseases.

In Africa time is taken for granted as if it is a renewable resource, and we "mismanage" time as we do to other resources. In Africa we tend to value other things like our relations more than time. Unless there is a strong drive for time management, everything in Africa will always be behind schedule (BBC News, 2003, p1).

In American society, people generally perceive time as a material resource, in that it is spent, saved, wasted and scheduled. Among some subcultures within this same society and in other societies, time is viewed differently. In Europe during the Middle Ages, time and its measurement were essentially associated with religious activities rather than any secular practices. In England, church and public clocks were erected in the major cities and towns from about the fourteenth century onwards so that bells could mark the religious practices of the day. However, the accuracy of these clocks was a matter of dispute. People in more technically-oriented cultures may wake to an alarm, eat at specific times whether or not they are hungry and return to bed according to clock time. In applying time-referred to here as a resource, which is used in combination with other resources to reach goals individual as well as cultural concepts are taken into consideration.

In her contribution to the BBC discussion on the topic “Can Africa keep time?” Bert saw this dichotomy between the Western and African concept of time as

one of the wonders of human beings. She explained that her time in various East African countries taught her the wonders of humans being more concerned about people than the watch. Sometimes, people in the West tend to be more time-centric than people-centred. In the end, which one is really more important? (BBC News, 2003).

Sense of Time

Individuals differ in their orientation to time. While some people can accurately estimate the length of time they have been reading, working, or visiting, other people consistently overestimate or underestimate time. Individuals' sense of time can be affected by extremes in temperature, by the presence or absence of light, by loneliness, enthusiasm or boredom and by a number of other factors.

The phenomenon of time seems so natural that once people have developed a perception of time, they have difficulty understanding that other people could perceive time differently. For instance, Walt (1997) reported that, the white westerners tend to become very irritated with their fellow black citizens. According to them, Africans are regularly late for important appointments and waste the whole meeting time. They do not adhere to work schedule, do not plan ahead – they are simply too slow. The whites want to start their meetings at exactly the specified time, while they still have more important things (other than the meeting) to do first. Thus, the perception of time is also influenced by cultural values. In actuality, people differ widely in their orientation to time and these perceptions affect their behaviour in many ways (Rice & Tucker, 1986). It is stated that an individual's subjective sense

of time has four dimensions: biological time, estimates of time spans, historical time and continuity (Nickel, Rice & Tucker, 1975).

Biological time, according to Nickell, et. al., (1975), is the awareness of cyclical occurrence of certain bodily experiences such as temperature, heart beat and hormonal secretions. The “diurnal rhythm” or “circadian rhythm” is the term used to describe cycles of approximately 24 hours – day and night, sleeping and waking time. Natural phenomena, such as changes in the phases of the moon or in seasons, are examples of other rhythmic cycles that signify the passage of time. The regularity of breathing, heart rate and other physiological functions are parts of biological time. Orme & Strughold (1969) reported that a number of days are needed to adjust to a new time zone or work schedule because of the change in circadian or 24 hour rhythm. If these rhythms are completely ignored, a person’s concept or reality can become distorted or confused.

Time span or the passage of time is today indicated by clocks. In estimation of time span, Nickell, et. al., (1975) observed that people differ in how accurate their subjective estimates approach objective clock time. They explained that moods such as boredom, hunger and the specific nature of an activity, like its urgency, also affect people’s estimates of duration or time span.

Nickell, et. al., (1975) also observed orientating past events in time as another dimension of subjective sense of time. Historical time gives order to previous event. They pointed out that, just like perception, interpretation of past events is influenced by culture and language. History or personal experience as viewed by an Arab citizen might be interpreted differently from the interpretation of a Chinese or an African because of language and cultural background.

Finally, Nickell, et. al., (1975) described continuity of time as the linkage of past, present and future activities. With continuity, people become attuned to the flow of time and to their personal identities. A person's subjective sense of time, then, forms a part of a perception of reality, influences the arrangement of activities in time, and affects goal setting and goal attainment. If objective clock time would be considered, then time could be classified as a standard against which progress is measured.

According to Walt (1997), the white sees man as a slave of time and so time regulates the whole of his life; therefore they tend to have more thorough planning and tight schedule and procedures which make one effective. Hall (1959) observed that, among the whites, time is handled much like a material; they earn it and they spend it. This statement is supported by Rice & Tucker (1986) as they reported that the perception of time divisions being allocated to specific activities is brought about by the concept of time being taken as a consumer commodity. Its management is therefore very crucial for the success of organisations.

Time management is a conscious control of the amount of time spent on work activities, in order to maximize personal efficiency. Time management involves analyzing how time is spent, and then prioritizing different work tasks. Activities can be reorganized to concentrate on those that are most important. Various techniques can be of help in performing tasks more quickly and efficiently, these include information handling skills, verbal and written communication skills, delegation, and daily time planning. Time management is an important tool in avoiding information overload.

Time management skills are especially important for people in business (or administrators in institutions) who often find themselves performing many different

jobs during the course of a single day. No matter how organised they are, there are always only twenty-four hours in a day. Time does not change; all they can actually manage is themselves and what they do with the time that they have. Many businessmen and administrators fall prey to time wasters that steal time they could be using much more productively.

Major Time Wasters

Time wasters may exist in all organizations and institutions. This is because, in carrying out official duties, administrators and their staff are often interrupted by several time wasters. These time wasters are matters or events that disrupt planned use of time during working hours.

Mackenzie (1972) identified several time wasters in organisations. Several other researchers have since added to the list (Carnahan, Gnauck, Hoffman, & Sherony, 1987; Hawkins, 1996; Gordon, 2002; Brenner, 2007). Some of the major time wasters in institutions identified by these researchers are: telephone interruptions, drop-in visitors, inadequate planning, misused meetings, leaving task unfinished, indecision, procrastination, inability to say 'no', attempting too much at once, insufficient and unclear communications, lack of self-discipline, email and internet.

O'Brien (2002) agreed with Mackenzie (1972) on major time wasters in organizations in the United States of America. He also identified among others as excessive paper work, meetings, telephone calls, inability to say 'no' to people, procrastination, unclear goals and practices, poor delegation and stress as major contributors to time wasting at workplaces. O'Brien (2002) also attempted to describe

time wasters in organizations. The following are how he described some of the time wasters in organizations:

Time waster	How time is wasted
<i>Excessive paper work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Spending too much time on routine paper workb) Resorting to paper work even in situations where phone call could have been more effective.
<i>Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The value of decisions reached being disproportionate (less) with the amount of time spent on the meetingb) Attending meetings without contributing ideas to proceedings
<i>Telephone calls</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Situation in which one has little or no control over number of telephone (including cell phones) calls receivable during work time.b) Hanging too long on the phone.
<i>Inability to say 'no' People</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Feeling pressurized to say 'yes' to work given.a) Letting people interrupt and even stop one from working.b) Having no control over drop-in visitors; friends and relations.
<i>Stress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Inability to achieve one's objectives for the day due to anxiety generated from pressures at home or at work.
<i>Delegation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Having a great deal of work to complete within a specified time frame but finding it difficult to allocate part to idle subordinates

- b) Having unclear or precise criteria for delegation.
- c) Over-delegation by assigning nearly all duties to subordinate.

- Procrastination*
- a) Finding it difficult to apply oneself to a task especially high priority work.
 - b) Applying one's talents only to tasks one finds interesting and rewarding immediately at the expense of other official duties (O'Brien, 2002 pp11-13).

According to Ahmad (2007), there are two main categories that time wasters or time bandits can fall under. The first category is self generated internal time wasters. These are the things that you do yourself to waste time and are the easiest to control. The second category is the external time wasters. These are the things other people do to waste your time. The latter can be more difficult to control, though it can be controlled with a little bit of effort and ingenuity. Ahmed pointed out that self generated internal time wasters include the lack of planning and priorities, disorganization and procrastination; while external time wasters include visitors, telephone calls, mail and email.

Research into Time Management Practices

Many of the studies into time management practices used the survey method (Hawkins, 1996; Office Team, 2001; Freud, 2003; Bartlein, 2004; Brenner, 2007). In a survey that Gothberg (1986) evaluated time management practices among managers of large academic libraries, a majority of directors indicated team management as their preferred management style and selected the following as top three time wasters

simultaneous acceptance of duties; personal disorganization; and amount of time spent on committee work.

A survey developed by an Office Team (2001), a leading staff service specializing in highly skilled administrative professionals in the United States of America, investigated the worst culprit in terms of wasting the most time in organisations. The study covered 613 men and women, all 18 years of age or older and employed. The survey respondents were asked “which one of the following would you say is the worst culprit in terms of wasting the most time? Their responses were as follows: meetings that last too long – 27%; unnecessary interruptions – 26%; socializing too much with colleagues – 21%; disorganized work area – 21% and don’t know/no answer – 5%.

According to Bartlein (2004) runaway meetings are the top time waster at work; she cited an example from the nationwide Office Team survey which found that “runaway meetings” were the biggest time waster in the workplace. Bartlein also found that more than 27 percent of workers polled said meetings were the largest culprit for inefficiency and lack of productivity.

Bartlein (2004) again said there were some “red flags” that could indicate mismanaged meetings. These were meetings without anyone in charge – thus, if the leadership of the meeting is not clear, there is tendency for attendees to waste time, pontificate their points and not draw any conclusions. Another ‘red flag’ she talked about was lack of objectives or agenda. With no clear purpose or agenda to follow, it is easy for any meeting to get off track. Participants may not be clear as to what needs to be discussed or for how long. Therefore not every meeting should take place. The right times to schedule a meeting are when conflicts need to be resolved, groups of people need to start working together or information needs to be shared at

the same time. Meetings are group activity so they can be effective when a group needs to reach consensus or rally around an idea or plan.

Freud (2003) reported another study that investigated “biggest time wasters” conducted by Pace Productivity in some organisations across North America. The study which involved 690 employees and entrepreneurs was to find out how much people take responsibility for wasting their own time. Of the 30 items listed by the survey, there were ten that received the most responses: These were

1. Paperwork/administrative tasks – 135
2. Customer requests – service/problems/complaints – 115
3. Phone calls/phone interruptions/inquiries – 101
4. Computer/system/equipment problems – 86
5. Paperwork/administrative tasks – 71
6. No internal support/other departments’ efficiency – 58
7. Interruptions by phone or in person – 52
8. Unspecified interruption – 45
9. Time management – 44
10. Traffic/travel – 43.

Dealing with Time Wasters

The findings of Lewis, & Dahl’s (1976) study on time management in higher education administration indicate that there is considerable commonality across individuals and that it is possible for administrators to deal with such issues as time management, job stress, and enjoyment on an organizational level. Time management is a conscious control of the amount of time spent on work activities, in order to

maximize personal efficiency. Time management involves analyzing how time is spent, and then prioritizing different work tasks. Activities can be reorganized to concentrate on those that are most important. Various techniques can be of help in performing tasks more quickly and efficiently, these include information handling skills, verbal and written communication skills, delegation, and daily time planning. Time management is an important tool in avoiding information overload.

Time management skills are especially important for people in business or administrators in institutions who often find themselves performing many different jobs during the course of a single day. No matter how organised they are, there are always only twenty-four hours in a day. Time does not change; all they can actually manage is themselves and what they do with the time that they have. Many businessmen and administrators fall prey to time wasters that steal time they could be using much more productively.

Research into time management practices suggest a number of solutions for overcoming time wasters (Hawkins, 1996; Mueller, 2006; Ahmad, 2007; Brenner, 2007). To deal with internal time wasters, these researchers recommended similar solutions. On the lack of planning and priorities, Ahmad (2007) suggested that administrators should keep a weekly schedule; list their priorities in order of importance; discuss the priorities with their co-workers; make a schedule that starts at the beginning of each week and incorporates all of their priorities into the schedule with goals for completion dates. Hawkins (1996) asserted that administrative workers should schedule and plan ahead but allow for the unexpected; they should avoid the costly mistakes and oversights of rushing. He believed they should do it right the first time, slow down, take time and relax.

Disorganized people may spend too much time looking for lost items. To save precious time, researchers on time wasters recommend that administrative workers should keep their offices neatly organized and free of clutter. If they cannot do these themselves, someone should be hired to help them (Mackenzie, 1972; Hawkins, 1996; Mueller, 2006; Ahmad, 2007; Brenner, 2007).

Procrastination is a big time waster. Mueller (2006) and Ahmad (2007) found that setting deadlines for projects, planning rewards for oneself when finished, and working on the project in small chunks until completed are very helpful steps in curbing time wasters. They observed that sometimes it helps to work on the project first thing in the morning to get it out of the way.

The second category of time wasters, the external time wasters, is not as easy to control since it involves external factors. To deal with external time wasters these researchers found similar solutions that can help control or at the very least, keep them to a minimum (Mackenzie, 1972; Hawkins, 1996; Mueller, 2006; Ahmad, 2007; Brenner, 2007). They observed that if an administrator or an assistant gets a lot of visitors dropping to its work area this could be a huge time waster for the organization. They recommend that the solution is to move one's desk so that one's back is to the door. They pointed out that this would make one seem less approachable. They also suggested that when someone stops in to talk, stand up; this they believe will send the message that you do not have time to chat. (Ahmad, 2007) pointed out that if these failed, thank the visitors for dropping by, but tactfully let them know that you need to get back to work.

To minimize time management practices due to telephone calls, Ahmad (2007) recommended that calls should be screened; voice mail should be made to take some of the calls during the day when one is busy. He also recommends that

administrators should schedule their time during each day when they will return calls and should let their clients know when those times would be. In addition, he advised that administrators should keep their answers short and to the point and end conversation politely when it has achieved its purpose.

To minimize time management practices due to mails and emails Brenner (2007) pointed out that administrators should not allow their desks to be flooded; they should schedule time each day to go through their mails; make it a rule to handle each piece of mail only once; throw out the junk mail immediately, and file "information only" mail in a file box to be read later and respond to the others by telephone or fax. She also advises administrators to clean out their email box daily and do not use their business email address for personal use.

Like email, Internet usage (personal usage specifically) can be a big time waster; and work-related Internet usage can be a big time waster too. To manage or minimize this Mueller (2006) recommended the use of common sense, pointing out that wasting time using the Internet probably just means one has to end up staying late at work or bringing work home that can otherwise be done at home.

Waldron, Vsanthakumar, & Arulraj (1998), pointed out that efficient administrators those who are able to schedule their time effectively in order to carry out their multiple and complex roles which include solving problems quickly, make decisions, avoiding frustration, handling crises, working on set goals and priorities, and managing stress. They stated that the guidelines for effective scheduling time include:

1. Always put your schedule in writing.
2. Focus on the objectives you are trying to accomplish.

3. Continually review objectives, priorities, and scheduled actions to keep on track.
4. Schedule around key events and actions.
5. Get a productive start by scheduling early-day actions.
6. Group related items and actions whenever possible.
7. Do not hesitate to take large time blocks for important tasks.
8. Be sure to allow enough time for each task, but not too much time.
9. Build in flexibility for unexpected events.
10. Include some thinking time for yourself.
11. Consider how to make waiting and travel time useful or otherwise productive.
12. Try to match your work cycles to your body cycles.
13. Learn to control your unscheduled action impulses.
14. Prepare tomorrow's schedule before you get to the office in the morning.

Hawkins (1996) observed that time management practices due to paperwork, reports and memos could be reduced when one has a purpose for writing. Hawkins (1996) recommends 'Keeps It Short and Sweet' (i.e. KISS); gets to the point immediately and be clear about it and thus avoiding unnecessary writing and duplications. He also pointed out that meetings should have a purpose, subject and scope. Hawkins (1996) however cautioned that meetings should be scheduled carefully taking into consideration the time, date, location, length, type, attendees, and an agenda that will make everyone prepared to avoid unnecessary time wasting.

Summary

Time has different dimensions and peoples' perception of time is influenced by several characteristics. Time in developed economies is handled much like a material or consumer commodity which can be earned and spent. Its management is therefore very crucial for the success of organisations. Time management practices are real in organizations and institutions. Time management is a conscious control of the amount of time spent on work activities, in order to maximize personal efficiency. Time wasters are activities that usually interfere or inhibit the amount of planned time spent on such work activities. In nearly all institutions, there are many trivial events that waste time and which have to be identified quickly and separated from the vital few on which scarce time must really be spent. Minimising time wasters therefore is necessary to achieve maximum personal efficiency. The literature review has brought to the fore salient principles that are worthy of noting in minimizing time wasters as a good time management practice. The present study focuses on time wasters and the time management skills used by educational administrators in minimising them.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The chapter reports on the method used in obtaining information from the respondents. It discusses the research design, population and sample. It also describes the instrument used; methods used in collection of data and how the data collected were organised and analysed.

Research Design

The research design employed for the study was a descriptive survey. Robson (1993) describes a survey as creating a questionnaire and collecting responses from a sample to draw a profile of the group as a whole, and perhaps perform some cause and effect analysis to understand their feeling. This design was chosen because the researcher found it to be the most convenient way to describe time management practices in a tertiary institution in Ghana as well as to look at the measures adopted in managing it. Polit & Hungler (1995), who pointed out that a survey is primarily for describing, observing and documenting aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs, asset the advantage of using survey is that responses can be collected from a very wide range of people.

Population

The population encompass all educational administrators and administrative staff of UEW. Table 1 shows the distribution of educational administrators and administrative staff of UEW from all three campus – Winneba, Kumasi and Mampong.

Table 1

Distribution of Educational Administrators and their Staff in UEW

	Male	Female	Total	(%) of population
<hr/>				
Educational Administrators (senior members)				
Faculty	54	10	64	
Administration	51	15	66	
Total	105	25	130	19
Administrative staff (junior and senior staff)				
Senior Staff	110	34	144	
Junior Staff	280	130	410	
Total	390	164	554	81

(Source UEW Planning Unit, 2007)

Table 1 shows that educational administrators who were senior members working in the main Administration and Faculty constitute 19% of the workers engaged in administration, while rest (81%) are administrative staff (i.e. messengers, typists, clerks, technicians and administrative assistants), who work directly under the Administrators.

Sample

In view of the varying professional groups among the subjects of the study a convenient sample of both the administrators and their staff were used for the study. That is, all the educational administrators and staff that the researcher met on the day the questionnaires were distributed at the Winneba campus constituted the convenience (or self-selected) sample. In the views of Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley (2002), convenience sampling as the name suggests, is selecting the research participants on the basis of being accessible and convenient to the researcher. They also pointed out that this type of sampling is less expensive, not so time consuming, more convenient and gives results as valid as the results obtained from probability sampling. Table 2 shows the distribution of educational administrators and their staff involved in the study.

Table 2

Sample of Educational Administrators and their Staff Involved in Study

	Total	(%) of
	Sampled	Sample
<hr/>		
Educational Administrators (senior members)		
Faculty	7	9
Administration	15	18
Total	22	27
Administrative staff (junior and senior staff)		
<hr/>		

	Total	(%) of
	Sampled	Sample
Senior Staff	13	16
Junior Staff	48	58
Total	61	73

The study covered a total sample size of 83 consisting of 22 educational administrators constituting 27% of the sample; and 61 junior and senior staff who work in offices of these administrators also constituting the remaining 73% of the sample. Though the sample used for the study was done by self-selection, it can be seen in Table 2 that the process yielded a sample that was representative of the population. This corroborates Harris (2002) assertion that most convenience samples are reasonably representative of the population of interest.

Instrumentation

Questionnaires were used to collect data from educational administrators and their staff (see Appendix A1 and A2). The questionnaires, which contained both open and closed ended items, were designed with the assistance of the project supervisor and other lecturers from the University of Education, Winneba to ensure face validity. The items were developed to cover the key questions raised in the research.

There were three parts to the educational administrators' questionnaire. The first part had items on the subjects' bio-data; the second part had items on ways of managing time management practices; and the final part had items that required the respondents to indicate their top five time wasters. The staff of educational administrators' questionnaire, on the other hand, had three parts. The first part had

items on the subjects' bio-data; the second had item on types of time wasters in the work place; and the final part had Likert items that required the respondents to indicate their top five time wasters.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The Likert items were scored from 5 'at least once a day', 4 'at least once a week', 3 'at least once a month', 2 'rarely' and 1 'never'. Where the statement was negative, a positive response was obtained by reversing the scoring. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire colleagues on the M.Ed programme were made to confirm whether the items of questionnaires were easy enough for the subjects and its contents unambiguous. The expertise of the research supervisor was also drawn on to validate the items.

The questionnaires were piloted on educational administrators and their staff in two departments that were not involved in the study. This helped to correct any ambiguities that were detected in order to ensure reliability of the questionnaires. According to Coolican (2000) piloting is able to help in establishing the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire because it serves among other things: to check the clarity of the questions, give feedback on validity of test items and also to make sure that the data required answered the research questions.

A discussion held after the pilot study with respondents indicated that the items were similar to the experiences they encounter on the field. Also, the data obtained on the time wasted were further analysed to ascertain reliability of the items. The test yielded a reliability coefficient of .625 which presupposes that the test was reliable.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The researcher visited the Central Administration, Faculties, Departments and other units of the university that had both administrators and staff. In each unit the researcher first met with the administrator, explained the nature of her study, and sought the consent of the administrator for the study. After this the questionnaires were left with the administrators and their staff. The researcher gave about a week and began going round for the completed questionnaires. In all 22 out of the 128 (i.e. 27%) educational administrators targeted for the study completed the questionnaires; while 61 out of the 554 (i.e. 73%) staff targeted completed the questionnaires. Data were collected between November 19 and December 15, 2008 in units of the university.

The data obtained from the questionnaires were coded and quantified, and then recorded on data summary sheets, following the format required by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software, described by Norusis (1991). The data were subsequently entered into the computer and the SPSS was used in the statistical analysis. In analyzing the data, basic descriptive statistics such as percentages and means were computed. For easy discussion, some of the results of the analysis were presented in graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview

This section discusses the analysis of the data collected in the study. The data collected in the study were analyzed under the following areas:

- (i) Background of Educational Administrators and their staff;
- (ii) Types of time wasters that are common among staff of Educational Administrators in UEW;
- (iii) Educational Administrators and their staff perception of practices that are top worst time wasters in UEW;
- (iv) Measures used to manage time management practices by Educational Administrators in UEW.

Demographic characteristics

Gender and Status of Educational Administrators and their Staff

Out of a total of 22 Educational Administrators who completed the questionnaires, 8 (36%) were females and 14 (64%) were males; and out of the total of 61 junior and senior staff that completed the questionnaires, 31 (51%) were females and 30 (41%) were males. The distributions of respondents by gender are shown in Figure 1.

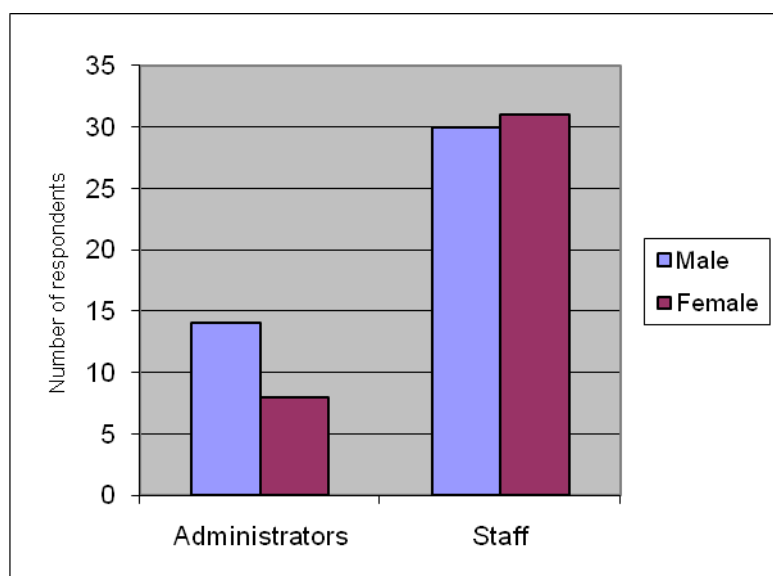


Figure 1: Gender distribution of administrators and staff in sample

About half of the administrative staff involved in the study were administrative assistants or senior staff and the rest were junior staff. Table 3 shows the proportion of the different categories of administrative staff involved in the study.

Table 3

Categories of administrative staff

	Number	Percent
Administrative Assistants	35	57
Clerks	13	21
Technician	3	5
Typists	5	8
Messenger	5	8
Total	61	100

Age profile and working experience

The majority (70%) of the Educational Administrators were over 40 years of age while about 77% of the Administrative staff were under 40 years of age (see Table 4). This is useful since in the African context age plays a significant role in commanding authority. Older leaders are more likely to be feared and obeyed by their subordinates when enforcing regulations than their younger counterparts.

Table 4

Age Distribution of Educational Administrators and Staff in Sample

	Educational Administrators		Administrative Staff	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Below 30 years	-	-	19	31
30 - 39 years	5	23	24	39
40 - 49 years	6	27	9	15
50 years and above	11	50	9	15
Total	22	100	61	100

Information presented in the Table 5 was of particular interest because it provided the number of years each respondent had served in the University. The table shows the distribution of work experience of senior and junior staff involved in the study.

Table 5

Length of work experience of educational administrators and staff

	Educational		Administrative	
	Administrators		Staff	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2 years or less	2	9	14	23
3 to 5 years	11	50	13	21
6 to 10 years	6	27	22	36
over 10 years	3	14	12	20
Total	22	100	61	100

It can be observed from the table that about 90% of the Educational Administrators and 77% of the administrative staff had been working for at least 3 years and for that reason were likely to be well informed about the rules and regulations governing working in offices of the university. Good time management practices of longer serving officers could imperceptibly be passed on to new ‘entrants’ such as those who are serving for less than 2 years.

Number of staff in Educational Administrator’s offices

The Educational Administrators and their junior staff were asked to indicate the number of administrative staff in the various Faculties, Departments, and Sections/Units of the university. There was agreement between the Educational Administrators and their staff on the number of junior and senior staff working in the

offices. Figure 2 shows the proportion of respondents indicating the number of staff in the offices.

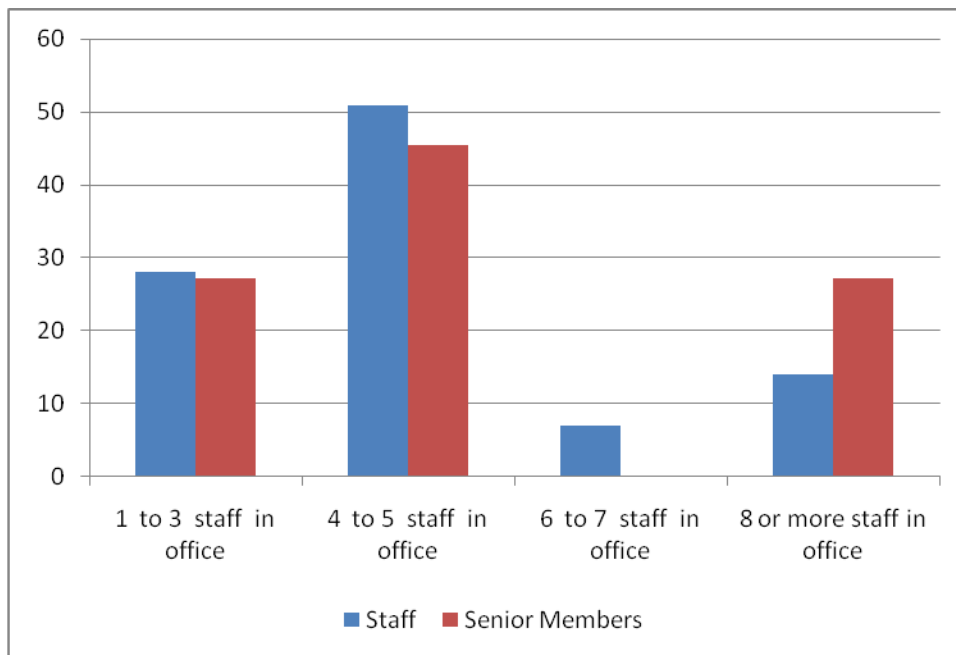


Figure 2 Proportion of respondents indicating the number of staff in offices

Over 25% of both the Educational Administrators and their staff indicated that the number of staff in their offices ranged from 1 to 3; and about 45% indicated the staff in their offices was either 4 or 5 (see Figure 2). While about 28% of the administrators indicated that there was at least 8 staff in their offices, only about 15% of the staff also said they had at least 8 working colleagues in their offices.

Time wasters common among administrative staff of in UEW

The research question that guided this aspect of the study was stated as ‘which practices are worst culprits in terms of wasting time of staff of Administrative staff in UEW’? In items 8 to 21 of the staff questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the frequency at which the time waster occurred. As described in Chapter 3, the responses were coded as: at least once a day (5), at least once a week (4), at least once a month

(3), rarely (2) and never (1). The mean ratings of occurrences were calculated for each time waster and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Staffs' mean rating of occurrence time waster

Time waster	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Electricity outages	59	3.02	1.24
2. Computer breaking	54	2.98	1.19
3. Inefficient filing or storage system	58	2.60	1.50
4. Your boss asking you to carry out yet another task when you are already working to full capacity and you are not firm enough to say 'no'	58	2.53	1.33
5. Agreeing to work for other officers or lecturers when you are already doing more than your fair share of such work	59	2.51	1.36
6. Making time for external visitors who have made no appointment and for whom you really cannot spare the time	60	2.23	1.23
7. Having a large amount of paperwork on your table because you do not have an effective system for dealing with it	57	2.18	1.40
8. Taking telephone calls when you are in the middle of important work and wish to concentrate solely on that	60	2.15	1.36

Time waster	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
9. Leaving the office for food every morning regardless of whether you can really afford the time to do so	59	2.10	1.34
10. Colleagues dropping in for a chat, or passing the time when they themselves do not have enough to do	60	2.05	1.17
11. Getting to work late	59	2.00	1.11
12. Stopping work to deal with your mail, e-mail or chat with friends on the internet	59	1.86	1.15
13. Getting up and leaving meetings that are totally not relevant to your work to get on with something more important	59	1.76	1.01
14. Stop working, switching off your computer and preparing to leave office before the official closing time	58	1.76	1.00

The top five time wasters that the administrative staff rated as what they experienced most were

1. Electricity outages (i.e. light-offs) make it difficult for you to complete your work.
2. Your computer breaking down making it difficult for you to complete your work.

3. Wasting time trying to look for papers and documents because you do not have an efficient filing or storage system.
4. Your boss asking you to carry out yet another task when you are already working to full capacity and you are not firm enough to say 'no'.
5. Agreeing to work for other officers or lecturers when you are already doing more than your fair share of such work.

‘Leaving office before the official closing time’ and ‘leaving meetings that are totally not relevant’ were rated as the least occurring time wasters.

Practices perceived as top worst time wasters in UEW

In addition to making staff rate time management practices that they experienced most, they were also, together with their administrators, asked to indicate practices they perceived as the top worst time wasters in UEW. Table 7 shows Administrators and staff perception of top worst time wasters in UEW.

Table 7**UEW Administrators and staff perception of top 5 worst time wasters**

	Administrative					
	Staff			Administrators		
	Number	Percent	Rank	Number	Percent	Rank
i. Receiving drop-in visitors (i.e. visitors without prior appointment)	37	61	1	16	73	1
ii. Receiving calls on your private mobile phone	37	61	2	9	41	3
iii. Running out (or shortage) of materials needed to carry out or complete work	35	57	3	0	0	14
iv. Looking for papers and documents because of inefficient filing or storage system	30	49	4	12	55	2
v. Saying 'NO' to work which is outside your plan	22	36	5	6	27	7

The following were the three worst culprits in terms of wasting time perceived by the administrators and staff:

1. Receiving drop-in visitors;
2. Receiving calls on private mobile phones;
3. Looking for documents because of inefficient filing system.

While the administrators ranked “saying 'NO' to work which is outside your plan” as the seventh time waster, the staff ranked it among as the fifth. That is, they both agreed to some extent that ‘saying 'no' to work outside one’s plan’ was one of the worst culprits in terms of wasting time in UEW. The administrators and staff however disagreed on the fourth time waster, which is, “running out of materials needed to carry out work”.

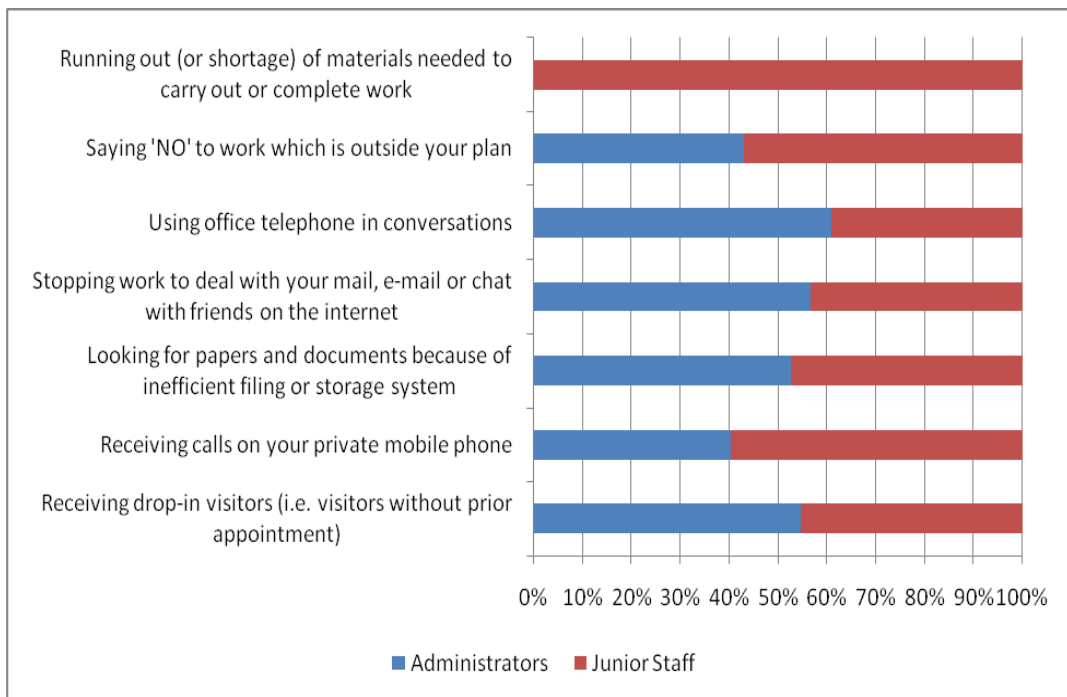


Figure 3 UEW Administrators and staff perception of top 5 worst time wasters

While the staff ranked this time waster third among the top five, it was ranked fourteenth, that is, the last by the administrators. This is most likely to be due to the fact that the administrators are the probable cause of this problem but do not want to contend that the problem sometimes exist in UEW.

Table 8 shows that the administrators and staff agreed on what the least time wasters in UEW were.

Table 8

Perceived bottom 3 worst culprits in terms of wasting time

	Staff			Administrators		
	Number	Percent	Rank	Number	Percent	Rank
i. Having a large amount of paperwork on table because of lack of effective system for dealing with it	9	15	14	1	5	13
ii. Using paper excessively due to poor editing skills (i.e. inability to use grammar/spell check on the computer	10	16	13	6	27	9
iii. Terminating work and preparing to leave office before the official closing time	13	21	12	5	23	11

Measures used to manage time management practices

The findings of Lewis, & Dahl's (1976) study on time management in higher education administration indicate that there is considerable commonality across individuals and that it is possible for administrators to deal with such issues as time

management, job stress, and enjoyment on an organizational level. One step to dealing with such issues was to identify the factors that are responsible. In this study, the educational administrators were made to indicate whether or not they use the following measures to manage time management practices in their offices:

1. Using year planner or semester planner in the office
2. Preparing weekly schedule of work for staff in the office
3. Setting priorities in order of importance of the tasks that staff do
4. Using a diary or personal organizer
5. Using time book in the office to track staff movements.

The responses of the 22 educational administrators are presented in Table 9.

Table 9**Measures used to manage time wasters by Educational Administrators in UEW**

Management Measure	Uses Measure		Not using measure	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. Has year planner or semester planner in the office	16	73	6	27
2. Prepares weekly schedule of work for staff in the office	14	64	7	36
3. Set priorities in order of importance of the tasks that staff do	21	95	1	5
4. Use a diary or personal organizer	20	91	2	9
5. Has time book in the office to track staff movements	14	64	8	36

The table reveals that 73% of the administrators have year planner or semester planner in their offices which help them to forecast and plan towards what to do in the academic year. The other 6 which represents 27% do not use the planner and for that reason do anything at anytime or make costly mistakes and oversights of rushing. The table also shows that 36% of the administrators do not prepare weekly schedule of work for their staff in the office and the same proportion (36%) have no time book in their office to track staff movements. However, many of them (64%) are satisfied and hold the view that preparing weekly schedule makes working easy and not time wasting for the administrator and 95% indicated that they set priorities in order of importance of the tasks that staff do.

A substantial proportion (91%) of the administrators indicated they use diaries or personal organizers in their offices to aid their planning a number of ways including:

1. itemizing list of things to be done
2. booking meeting dates and keeping telephone numbers
3. setting and monitoring goals to attain
4. keeping records of meetings and important events, appointments and deadlines;
5. sharing various tasks among staff members, each according to his/her expertise and progress accordingly

It was interesting to find out that one of the administrators said he/she used his computer as his/her diary and planner. Another stated that the whiteboard and marker in the office were used for the planner to take notes of scheduled meetings and proposed activities with corresponding dates and venues.

Discussion

Both the administrators and staff perceive receiving drop-in visitors; receiving calls on private mobile phones; and looking for documents because of inefficient filing system; as the worst three culprits in terms of wasting time in UEW. This corroborates the findings of Gothberg (1986) who reported that majority of managers of large academic libraries indicated team management as their preferred management style and selected the following as top three time wasters simultaneous acceptance of duties; personal disorganization; and amount of time spent on committee work.

However, the administrators tend to disagree with their staff on practices under their management that are culprits in terms of wasting time in the offices. These practices are

1. Boss asking staff to carry out yet another task when staff is already working to full capacity and cannot say 'no'.
2. Agreeing to work for other officers or lecturers when staff is already doing more than a fair share of such work.
3. Running out (or shortage) of materials needed to carry out or complete work
4. Saying 'NO' to work which is outside staff's plan

For effective time management, it is important that the administrators take note of the staff concerns about these practices and put in steps to minimize them, particularly the top time wasters. Administrators must decide what to do, when, where, how, and by or with whom. Time management is the process of monitoring, analysing, and revising your plan until it works. Effective planning is a skill that takes time to acquire. It is difficult to implement because you have no one but yourself to monitor how effectively you are using your time. Everyone has the same amount of time per week. How that time is managed is up to the discretion of each person.

According to literature, a number of methods are available to manage such practices (Mackenzie, 1972; Hawkins, 1996; Mueller, 2006; Ahmad, 2007; Brenner, 2007). To minimize poor time management practices such as looking for documents because of inefficient filing system, it is important for administrators to note that disorganized people spend too much time looking for lost items. To save precious time, researchers in time management practices recommend that administrative workers should keep their office neatly organized, use a systematic filing system and

make sure documents are filed soon after action had been taken on them (Mackenzie, 1972).

If one gets a lot of visitors dropping to his or her work area, this could be a huge time wasting for that person. Ahmad (2007) recommended that the solution is to move one's desk so that one's back is to the door. He pointed out that this will make one seem less approachable. To minimize receiving drop-in visitors, stand up when someone stops in to talk; this is likely to send the message that you do not have time to chat; if this fails, tell the visitor thanks for dropping by, but tactfully let them know that you need to get back to work.

To minimize time wasters due to receiving calls on private mobile phones Ahmad (2007) and Brenner (2007) recommend that calls should be screened; voice mail should be made to take some of the calls during the day when one is busy. They also recommend that administrators and their staff should schedule their time during each day when they will return calls and should let their clients know when that time will be. In addition, they should keep their answers short and to the point and end conversations politely when it has achieved its purpose.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was a systematic attempt to look at the measures adopted by UEW management in controlling or minimising time wasters among their administrative personnel. The study identified the types of time wasters that exist in UEW. It also investigated measures being used by educational administrators to minimise or control time wasters in UEW. The research design employed for the study was a descriptive survey. A convenient sample of 83 respondents consisting of 22 educational administrators and 61 staff completed questionnaires which contained both open and closed ended items.

Findings

When staffs of educational administrators were asked about the time wasters that are common among office workers, they rated the following as the top five:

- Electricity outages (i.e. light-offs) making it difficult for work to be completed;
- Computer breaking down making it difficult for work to be completed
- Wasting time trying to look for papers and documents because you do not have an efficient filing or storage system
- Boss asking staff to carry out yet another task when staff is already working to full capacity and cannot say 'no'.
- Agreeing to work for other officers or lecturers when staff is already doing more than a fair share of such work.

Both the administrators and staffs perceive three of the time wasters as worst culprits in terms of wasting time in UEW. These were

- receiving drop-in visitors;
- receiving calls on private mobile phones; and
- looking for documents because of inefficient filing system.

The administrators and staffs however disagreed on “*running out of materials needed to carry out work*” as a top time waster in UEW.

Finally on the measures used in curbing time wasters in UEW, it was found that over 90% of the administrators ‘set priorities in order of importance of the tasks that staff do’ and use diary or personal organizers’ in their offices. However, it was found that over a quarter of the administrators do not practice the following:

- Use year planner or semester planner in the office
- Prepare weekly schedule of work for staff in the office
- Use time book in the office to track staffs' movements.

Conclusions

Effective time management involves philosophy and common sense. Time is not a renewable resource - once it is gone, it is gone forever. To function effectively, Administrators have to be able to prioritize and replace less important tasks with more important ones. Effective and efficient time management encourages them to achieve and be productive while developing good employee relations. Therefore the revelation of this study that over a quarter of the administrators do not use planners, fail to prepare weekly schedules and do not use time book in the office to track staff movements, should be a matter of great concern to management. For effective time

management Ahmad (2007) cautioned that administrators should keep a weekly schedule; list their priorities in order of importance; discuss the priorities with their co-workers; make a schedule that starts at the beginning of each week and incorporates all of your priorities into the schedule with goals for completion dates. Hawkins (1996) added that administrative workers should schedule and plan ahead but allow for the unexpected; they should avoid the costly mistakes and oversights of rushing. He believes they should do it right the first time, slow down, take time and relax. There is the need for management to organize in-service training for both administrators and staff to ensure they use practices that minimize time management practices.

Time has value and is a resource that must be managed like any other valuable for the attainment of any given level of output. Time actually, must be managed like money and should not be wasted.

Recommendations

Curiously, no natural or human resource can be productive without the use of time, and most importantly, its effective use. The following recommendations are therefore to enhance manage over time management practices among the junior staff:

1. Administrators must ensure that goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART). Once the goals are known, it is important to think about how they can be achieved.
2. Effective time administrators facilitate planning by listing tasks that require their attention, estimating the amount of time each task will take to complete, and prioritizing them - deciding what tasks are most important to do first and numbering them in rank order. It is essential to know what is crucial and what

is not. Some activities have relatively low levels of importance in completing a given task. By planning ahead, Administrators can decide what to do and take the time to come up with ideas on how to do it. They can make their own list of steps to eliminate or reduce time wasters. Administrators should also maintain a daily "To Do" list with priorities attached and maintaining a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly diary. They should analyse their daily activities to see which are directed toward results and which are simply activities.

3. Educational administrators should learn how to manage meetings more effectively since considerable management time seems to be wasted in non-directional formal meetings.
4. Educational administrators should train their staff to use strategies which will discourage them from entertaining drop-in visitors.
5. Educational administrators should ensure their staff keep their offices neatly organized, use a systematic filing system and make sure documents are filed soon after action had been taken on them.
6. Further studies should be carried out on other pertinent time wasters which were not covered by the study such as excessive use of paper due to poor editing, cluttered desk/personal disorganization, leaving task unfinished, ineffective delegation of responsibilities, indecision, procrastination and insufficient and unclear communications.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A1 Questionnaire for Educational Administrators

University of Cape Coast

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION (IEPA)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS IN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

(Administrative Asst, Clerks, Typists, Technicians & Messengers)

This questionnaire is part of a UCC M.Ed project being carried out into time management practices among junior staff of educational administrators in UEW.

You will require only about 10 minutes completing the questionnaire. I can wait as you complete it, or come back for it in 3 days time.

Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for the purpose of academic work. Please respond candidly to the questions

Thank you for your cooperation.

A. In each case, TICK the appropriate box and or COMPLETE the statement (s)

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age: Below 29 years 30 – 39 years
40 – 49 years Above 50 years
3. Academic/Professional Qualification Pre-University
First Degree Post Graduate
Any other (Please Specify)
4. Present status (e.g. Typist, Clerk, Administrative Assistant, etc.).....
5. Faculty/Department/Section/Unit.....
.....
6. Years in full time service in the University of Education
7. How many colleagues do you share your office space with?
.....

B. Please indicate how often you experience the following in your office.

	At least once a day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Rarely	Never
8) Your computer breaking down making it difficult for you to complete your work					
9) Electricity outages (i.e. light-offs) making it difficult for you to complete your work					
10) Wasting time trying to look for papers and documents because you do not have an efficient filing or storage system					
11) Having a large amount of paperwork on your table because you do not have an effective system for dealing with it					
12) Your boss asking you to carry out yet another task when you are already working to full capacity and you are not firm enough to say 'no'					
13) Agreeing to work for other officers or lecturers when you are already doing more than your fair share of such work					
14) Leaving the office for food every morning regardless of whether you can really afford the time to do so					
15) Stopping work to deal with your mail, e-mail or chat with friends on the internet					
16) Getting up and leaving meetings that					

	At least once a day	At least once a week	At least once a month	Rarely	Never
are totally not relevant to your work to get on with something more important					
17) Getting to work late					
18) Stop working, switching off your computer and preparing to leave office before the official closing time					
19) Taking telephone calls when you are in the middle of important work and wish to concentrate solely on that					
20) Colleagues dropping in for a chat, or passing the time when they themselves do not have enough to do					
21) Making time for external visitors who have made no appointment and for whom you really cannot spare the time					

	Yes	No
22. Do you always have everything you need to carry out or complete your work or you have to stop work sometimes in order to get them in another office?		

23 If NO, which of the following are NOT available in your office

	Yes	No
a) Photocopier		
b) Printers		
c) Scanner		
d) Filing Cabinets		

24. Below are some of the things that waste administrative staff time in the office.

TICK the top FIVE (5) which your administrative staff engage in that waste most of their time.

i. Using paper excessively due to poor editing skills (i.e. inability to use grammar/spell check on the computer	
ii. Attending meetings with unplanned agenda	
iii. Receiving calls on your private mobile phone	
iv. Using office telephone in conversations	
v. Receiving drop-in visitors (i.e. visitors without prior	

appointment)	
vi. Procrastinating or postponing work you have to finish (i.e. Leaving tasks unfinished)	
vii. Lacking of priorities/objectives	
viii. Saying 'NO' to work which is outside your plan	
ix. Stopping work to deal with your mail, e-mail or chat with friends on the internet	
x. Getting to work late	
xi. Terminating work and preparing to leave office before the official closing time.	
xii. Running out (or shortage) of materials needed to carry out or complete work	
xiii. Looking for papers and documents because of inefficient filing or storage system	
xiv. Having a large amount of paperwork on table because of lack of effective system for dealing with it	

*Thank you for spending time to answer these questions for me

Appendix A2

Questionnaire for Staff of Educational Administrators

University of Cape Coast

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

(IEPA)

(Assistant Registrars, Snr. Asst. Registrars, Registrars, Deputy Registrars, etc.)

This questionnaire is part of an M.Ed project (UCC) being carried out into time management practices among senior staff of educational administrators in UEW.

You will require only about 10 minutes completing the questionnaire. I can wait as you complete it, or come back for it in 3 days time.

Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for the purpose of academic work. Please respond candidly to the questions

Thank you for your cooperation.

A. In each case, Tick the appropriate box and or COMPLETE the statement (s)

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Age: Below 30 years 30 – 39 years
40 – 49 years 50 years and above

3. Academic/Professional Qualification.

Pre-University First Degree Post Graduate

Any other (Please
specify).....

4. Faculty/Department/Section/Unit.....

5. Present status (e.g. Deputy Registrar, Asst. Registrar, Faculty officer,
Senior Staff etc)

.....

6. Years served on the present status in the University of Education

.....

7. How many administrative staff work under you?

.....

B. In each case, Tick the appropriate box and/or answer the question

8) Is there a 'Year Planner' or 'Semester Planner' of some sort in your office to be mapping out on a month-by-month basis activities to be under taken?

Yes No

9) Do you keep a weekly schedule of work for you and your staff to do in the office?

Yes No

10) Do you usually set priorities in order of importance of the tasks you do and you want your staff to do?

Yes No

11) (a) Do you use a diary or personal organizer of some sort?

Yes No

(b) If Yes, briefly describe.....

.....

12) How many weeks or days ahead do you normally book your weekly schedule of work in your diary or personal organizer?

.....

...

13) Do you have a time book in the office to track staff movements?

Yes No

14) What measures do you adopt to ensure staff maximizes time on only official jobs?

.....

.....

15) What other time control measures do you use in your office?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Below are some of the things that waste administrative staff time in the office.

TICK the top FIVE (5) that waste most of your time of your administrative staff.

i. Using paper excessively due to poor editing skills (i.e. inability to use grammar/spell check on the computer	
ii. Attending meetings with unplanned agenda	
iii. Receiving calls on your private mobile phone	
iv. Using office telephone in conversations	
v. Receiving drop-in visitors (i.e. visitors without prior appointment)	
vi. Procrastinating or postponing work you have to finish (i.e. Leaving tasks unfinished)	
vii. Lacking of priorities/objectives	
viii. Saying 'NO' to work which is outside your plan	
ix. Stopping work to deal with your mail, e-mail or chat with friends on the internet	
x. Getting to work late	

xi. Terminating work and preparing to leave office before the official closing time.	
xii. Running out (or shortage) of materials needed to carry out or complete work	
xiii. Looking for papers and documents because of inefficient filing or storage system	
xiv. Having a large amount of paperwork on table because of lack of effective system for dealing with it	

*Thank you for spending time to answer these questions for me