



## **Time Management Practices of Single Working Mothers**

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### **Abstract**

Time management has become a fundamental competency among working women, especially to single working mothers who have to carry the burden of both their work career and family life on their own. This paper will explore the time management strategies used by working single mothers and how the strategies affect their managing work and life as well as their output and general well-being. The time pressure faced by single working mothers is usually more intense because they have to balance both work and parenting, and proper time management is the key to being able to maintain their personal and career lives.

The study is descriptive and analytical with data being drawn on the single working mothers who work on different sectors. The structured questionnaire was employed to gather primary data that concerned the daily scheduling, prioritization method, task delegation, technology use, and coping with stress associated with time. The secondary data were obtained using literature, reports and past research on time management and working women. Data collected were processed with the help of suitable statistical tools to find the patterns, challenges, and successful practices.

The research findings have shown that single working mothers seek planning, prioritization, and routine-based scheduling as the key factors in coping with their tasks. Although some of them have embraced various time management tactics, most respondents indicated that they were still facing problems of role overload, insufficient personal time and work stress. Another factor that has been brought to light in the study is that the organizational support, flexible work arrangements, and availability of childcare are important as they contribute to time management effectiveness.

The paper concludes that single working mothers have high adaptive time management skills; however, the systemic support of employers and policymakers is essential to enhance their quality of life. The results will aid in the enhanced comprehension of the distinctive time management issues among single working mothers as well as contribute to the understanding of how supportive workplace practices, as well as social policies, could be formulated.

**Keywords:** Time Management, Single Working Mothers, Work–Life Balance, Occupational Stress, Role Overload, Flexible Work Arrangements

### **1. Introduction**

The issue of time management has been a matter of serious concern in the contemporary life, and particularly among individuals who need to balance two or more and demanding things simultaneously. Among the most time-strapped and burdened groups in the workforce, single working mothers are considered as one of the most responsible groups, as far as this category is concerned. They also have a double burden of: being a professional and ensuring that they take care of the whole family without any frequent emotional, financial, or logistical support. Therefore, time management is not only an instrument of productivity but a survival strategy that has an immediate impact on their health, performance at work and their family cohesiveness.

Single working moms also have special challenges including strict work hours, child care, and care of the house as well as social demands. What makes these issues even more problematic is that, in most cases, they are accompanied by lack of access to flexible work schedules, affordable childcare centers, and social support networks. Here, time planning, prioritizing, and use has a major part in stress level, work-life, and general quality of life determinants. Ineffective time management is likely to result in burnout, emotional fatigue, and decreased productivity, whereas positive behaviours will provide more personal control, resilience, and satisfaction with life.

Although facing the increased trend of single working mothers all over the world, their time management trends are still an under researched field. Available literature tends to concentrate on working women or parents, without paying much attention to unique experiences of single mothers that have to cope with the workplace and family life alone. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating time management behaviours embraced by working single mothers, the most important challenges, coping, and areas of good time management. Such practices are vital in understanding so as to come up with supportive workplace policies, specific interventions, social structures that will enable single working mothers to have sustainable work-life integration.

## **2. Background of the study**

The role of women in the labour market has gained a lot of ground in the modern societies due to economic needs, individual ambitions, and the social trends. Single working mothers are a very useful and growing population among working women. They also bear the responsibility simultaneously of earning income, caring after children, housekeeping and emotional support to their families without a partner on regular basis. This dual role subjects them to the severe time constraint hence good time management is not an ability but a survival strategy.

Single working mothers tend to be operative in an environment with limited time arrangements which are predetermined by rigid working schedules, parental roles and a low accessibility to social and institutional support systems. Unlike the situation in the dual parent family, role overload and time pressure are exaggerated because domestic chores are not shared. Profession and taking care of children may also require prioritization, multitasking, self-sacrificing and individual requirements may influence their physical health, psychological well-being, work performance, and quality of life.

Time management habits are also important in the coping mechanisms of single working mothers in these issues. Planning, scheduling, delegation, boundary setting, etc. can enable them to maximize the use of the limited time resources, lessen stress, and enhance both the work-life balance and productivity. On the other hand, time mismanagement is likely to worsen work-family conflict, emotional fatigue, and job dissatisfaction. Determining how single working mothers utilize their time, the techniques that they are employing, and the challenges they are facing is thus important in formulating some helpful workplace regulations and social interventions.

Although the number of single working mothers is rising, there is scanty empirical evidence that has specifically investigated the time management practices of single working mothers especially in the developing economies and in different socio-cultural settings. A lot of the literature available deals with the work life balance or occupational stress amongst working women in general and never considers the peculiar limitations of single mothers. The lack of knowledge creates the need to undertake particular research that will examine time management as one of the main constructs influencing their lives as personal and professional.

It is against this background that the present research will explore the time management behaviour of single working mothers and how they spend their time on work, family and personal life, the challenges they face in attempting to balance their competing needs, and how the behaviour impacts them and their performance at work. The research would lead to the generation of context-specific results that can contribute to the academic literature and can provide worthwhile suggestions to employers, policymakers, and support institutions that are working towards developing inclusive and family-friendly working environments.

## **3. Justification**

Single working mothers are a socially important and an increasing number of a working population that must balance the professional with the single parenting and household chores burden. The working moms must take on a new role and not always be supported in the same way as having two parents and, therefore, good time management is not only a challenge that will help them to be productive but also a trait that defines their well-being, their career, and their family cohesion. Although they gain a higher meaning in the business and informal worlds, they lack in experience and coping strategies on how to manage their time in the academic literature.

This study is justifiable since it is necessary to know how single working mothers distribute, assign priorities and focus their time on conflicting needs. Their work schedules, childcare, personal and household requirements are likely to conflict with one another and this results in time pressure that in turn can have an impact on their performance at work, mental health and work life balance. The way these mothers spend their time and how they spend their time can be scrutinized to find how these moms manage their daily constraints, to what extent are they making a trade-off as well as strategies that they employ to accommodate the needs of both their career and family.

Organizationally, the current research is warranted because it can be used to guide policies and human resource practices at the workplace. The awareness of the time management problems experienced by single working mothers can assist employers that can create more supportive systems, including flexible working hours, the possibility to work remotely, childcare, and realism in performance expectations. These interventions will be able to increase employee retention, job satisfaction and productivity besides encouraging gender equity in the work environment. The research is also socially applicable in that it draws socially and structurally relevant issues that affect how time is used such as lack of access to support systems, cultural norms and economic constraints. The research can have an impact on the policy discourse concerning the childcare infrastructure, labour law, and social welfare strategies to support single-parent families because of recording these realities.

#### 4. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the time management routines used by single working mothers on a daily basis in managing work and life.
2. To study the most critical issues that single working mothers have in time management between work, childcare, and house chores.
3. To analyze how various time management strategies can be used to alleviate stress and enhance work-life balance among single working mothers.
4. To examine how factors at workplace including working hours, flexibility and organizational support impact on time management practices.
5. To determine whether or not social support systems, such as family and community resources, are useful in improving time management efficiency.

#### 5. Literature Review

Time management in single working mothers is a complex problem with several dimensions of work-family balance, time use, stress, and well-being. The studies always point out that single mothers have to deal with a complicated scheduling process and conflicting responsibilities, and the outcomes of their psychological state and social abilities.



Source: <https://lifehackmethod.com/>

#### 1. Time Use and Time Scarcity in Single-Parent Families

One of the fundamental things with respect to the time management in single mothers who work is associated with the way they distribute their limited time that they can get within the day to work, care and personal things. Jang, Jang, and Bang (2023) studied the time use among single-parent families based on a time-diary-based comprehensive dataset. They discovered that the time slots were dominated by sleep and rest then instrumental activities of daily

living (IADLs) and work with gender differences in prioritization of tasks. Female singleton parents (mothers) spent much more time on IADLs and housework which suggests that time management among single mothers is a priority of balancing the work and mandatory duties at home. There are implications of this structural division of time on perceived time deficiency, subjective feeling of not having sufficient time, which is the focus of time management research among single working mothers. In single parents and those who are single, time poverty, which is the shortage of time resources, is experienced and the limited time resources have to be allocated to more roles than in cases where two parents are involved.

## **2. Work-Family Balance and Time Management Strategies**

Another place in which literature in time management places the practices of single mothers is in the context of work-family balance. Harrop (2023) wrote about psychological elements of work-life balance among single working parents and stated that dealing with two roles simultaneously demanded prioritization and planning time. Other people involved in multiple roles have to balance work and family needs without the cushioning of a partner, which only increases the burdens associated with individual plans and, indirectly, time management techniques such as scheduling and prioritization. Furthermore, the work-life balance and stress researches indicate that single mothers also use time management strategies, as one of their coping mechanisms. According to Arumugam (2023), one of the time management strategies that have been found to be regularly employed by single mothers because of upholding high-stress levels due to caregiving and employment demands is the establishment of schedules that are regularly followed, to seek social support and establish boundaries between the two roles in order to regain balance and minimize conflict. The strategies are critical in managing both paid work and caring.

## **3. Quality of Time and Task Prioritization**

In addition to the amount of time that has been given, quality time is a significant aspect to single working mothers. Zaki (2014) investigated the topic of quality time management in working women and found out that working mothers gradually rely more on more intelligent planning strategies to guarantee qualitative communication with family alongside pressure at work. Although the current research was not specific to single motherhood, but aimed at working women in general, the results highlight an important element of time management, but in particular the need to prioritize meaningful activities to task accomplishment. Trade-offs are usually necessitated by such prioritization. Indicatively, time poverty framework would imply that when single working mothers invest more time in paid employment and necessary activities in providing care to their children, it is often the case that leisure and self-care time is diminished or extremely compressed which may lead to deterioration in the well-being and life satisfaction.

## **4. Implications for Work-Life Conflict and Well-Being**

Although not directly related to time management practices, related literature on work-life conflict should be taken into account.

Studies have indicated that women who balance work and household duties without partners complain of being more stressed thus are unable to manage their time effectively. An example can be given of research in this field that has shown that work-family role conflict is associated with decreased job satisfaction and role strain, especially when there are no support systems or flexible work arrangements.

It is therefore true that single working mothers are frequently faced with structural time limits as well as emotional demands which make time management a challenge. Managing time effectively is not only the preference but a required adaptive behaviour in the conditions of the constant work-family conflict.

## **5. Empirical Evidence on Time Use and Childcare**

Independent yet correlative studies have shown that single mothers do not spend any lesser time with their children than their married counterparts, though, childcare time and other duties have to be negotiated on a restricted time budget. The time use study based on survey data of national representativeness revealed that the single mother spent only slightly more time in child-care and the same amount of time in the survey as the married mothers, yet, the single mother has limited social resources and more time on other household chores. This implies that time management in single working mothers is complicated because of the negotiation of overlapping roles instead of childcare or work time reductions.

## **6. Material and Methodology**

### **6.1 Research Design**

The research design used in the study is descriptive and analytical research design, in a bid to study the time management behavior of single working mothers. This design is suitable because it allows a step-by-step description of the current time management practices as well as analysis of factors affecting the same. The study aims at explaining the way single working moms devote their time to work, family life, and personal life. The cross-sectional method was used in which respondents were sampled at one moment in time to get their current time management methods and issues.

## 6.2 Data Collection Methods

The study used both secondary and primary data. A structured questionnaire that allowed the gathering of the information concerning the techniques of prioritization, daily schedules, the workplace flexibility, family obligations, stress coping, and perceived time usage efficacy were selected to utilize primary data. This questionnaire contained both closed ended and Likert scale items so that there is no ambiguity and respondents find it easy to answer. To back up the theoretical framework and contextual knowledge of time management and single motherhood in the workplace, secondary sources of data were collected through books, academic journals, research articles, governmental reports, and credible internet databases.

## 6.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

### Inclusion Criteria:

- Single mothers who are currently employed in either the public or private sector
- Women who are solely responsible for the care of at least one dependent child
- Respondents within the working-age group
- Participants willing to provide informed consent

### Exclusion Criteria:

- Married, divorced with shared custody, or widowed women not solely responsible for childcare
- Unemployed single mothers
- Respondents who provided incomplete or inconsistent responses
- Participants unwilling to participate voluntarily

## 7. Results and Discussion

### 7.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The study gathered primary data among 120 single working mothers in the education field, healthcare, IT, retail and public services. Table 1 gives the demographic traits of the respondents.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 120)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30 years	22	18.3
	30–40 years	56	46.7
	Above 40 years	42	35.0
Number of Children	One child	68	56.7
	Two or more	52	43.3
Employment Sector	Education	34	28.3
	Healthcare	26	21.7
	IT	22	18.3
	Public sector	20	16.7
	Others	18	15.0

### Discussion:

The statistics indicate that most of the participants are aged between 30 and 40 years, which is a phase, which is commonly linked with high occupational accountability and rigorous childcare requirements. Over fifty percent of the respondents have one child and this could affect the flexibility in time allocation as opposed to the respondents with more than one child.

### 7.2 Time Management Practices Adopted by Single Working Mothers

Respondents were asked about specific time management practices they regularly adopt. Their responses are summarized in Table 2.



**Table 2: Time Management Practices Followed**

Practice	Regularly (%)	Occasionally (%)	Rarely (%)
Daily task scheduling	62.5	25.0	12.5
Prioritizing tasks	70.8	20.0	9.2
Use of digital tools (apps/calendars)	48.3	31.7	20.0
Delegating household tasks	35.0	40.8	24.2
Allocating fixed family time	54.2	30.0	15.8

**Discussion:**

The findings show that most commonly used strategies by single working mothers are prioritization and daily scheduling. The fact that delegation is used comparatively less, however, indicates that there are not sufficient support systems or financial limitations. The average use of digital tools means that people are becoming increasingly aware but also shows the lack of technology-facilitated time management.

**7.3 Challenges in Managing Time Effectively**

The challenges that people faced that impede effective time management were many. Table 3 gives these challenges.

**Table 3: Major Time Management Challenges**

Challenge	Mean Score*	Rank
Work–family conflict	4.28	I
Fatigue and stress	4.12	II
Lack of external support	3.96	III
Unpredictable work schedules	3.74	IV
Childcare responsibilities	3.61	V

\*Mean score based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

**Discussion:**

Work family conflict is the biggest issue to arise and the focus is on the dual load of the single working mother. Stress and fatigue levels are also high and lower their capacity to plan and follow schedules. The findings point to the additive impact of emotional, professional, and domestic stress on the efficiency of time management.

**7.4 Impact of Time Management on Work and Personal Life Balance**

To assess outcomes, respondents rated the perceived impact of their time management practices on work–life balance.

**Table 4: Impact of Time Management Practices**

Impact Area	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Improved work productivity	66.7	20.8	12.5
Reduced stress levels	52.5	30.0	17.5
Better child engagement	58.3	25.0	16.7
Enhanced personal well-being	49.2	32.5	18.3

**Discussion:**

Most of the respondents do not refute that proper time management is a positive factor in work output and family activity. Nevertheless, the relatively low level of consensus about the benefits of time management implies that this factor is helpful but does not entirely counterbalance structural and emotional issues single working mothers have to deal with.

### 8. Limitations of the study

Although this study is very helpful in shedding light on the time management of single working mothers, it has its own limitations that need to be considered. To begin with, the research is also based mostly on self-reported information gathered using questionnaires and interviews. Consequently, the answer might be biased by individual or personal image or recollection or social desirability leading to inaccurate information given. Second, the research is not very large in terms of sample size and geographic coverage. The results are determined on the case of participants that were sampled in a certain area and profession, which can limit the application of findings to single working mothers in other socio-economic, cultural, or career position. Third, the research concentrates primarily on time management behaviors without a comprehensive analysis of the associated variables (mental health, emotional stress, and support system) that could also play a vital role in determining single working mothers time management. The lack of longitudinal data further restricts the possibilities of evaluating the change in the time management strategies during various periods of life or career development. Lastly, there were external factors like the working policy, childcare facilities, and unforeseen family duties not taken into consideration in this study. This could have influenced the time management behaviour and schedules of the participants on a daily basis thus affecting the overall results.

### 9. Future Scope

The current study of Time Management among the working mothers who do not have children provides various directions to the future scholarly investigation. Although this study offers some knowledge on what strategies are available as well as the challenges, future research has the ability of broadening the scope of knowledge in this critical field. To begin with, future researchers can use the comparative method and explore time management practices of single working mothers in various industries which are education, healthcare, IT, manufacturing and informal work. The comparisons would assist in discovering sector specific constraints and best practice that would be able to provide more specific policy and organization interventions. Secondly, cross-regional and cross-cultural researches are open. The differences between time management of single working mothers in rural and urban areas or various states and countries can be used as the basis of the study to identify how socio-cultural beliefs, family arrangements, and institutional support mechanisms affect the time use and work-life balance of single working mothers. Thirdly, the future studies can combine psychological and well-being aspects, including the level of stress, burnout, emotional resilience, and mental health outcomes in connection with the effectiveness of time management. Longitudinal research on this line would be of great help especially on the changes in practices of time management at various life stages of both the mother and the child. One more avenue is the study of time management enabled by technologies. Further research will be able to evaluate the use of digital tools, remote working, flexible working hours, and organizational support policies as effective time-saving and role conflict reducing interventions among single working mothers. Researchers can also go further to incorporate policy assessment and organizational views whereby the effects of workplace policies, childcare support, and government welfare programs on time management practices and overall quality of life are evaluated. This will be able to add to evidence-based suggestions to employers and policy makers. Lastly, future research may use mixed method/experimental designs to create and implement structured interventions or training programs at single working mothers time management that is specifically designed. This applied research would not only add to the academic literature but also provide the practical solutions that have real world implication.

### 10. Conclusion

This paper has explored the time management habits of single working mothers with special emphasis on how the mothers juggle between the workplace and family and care giving duties. The results show that time management is never a question of individual ability but it is strongly determined by working and family circumstances, as well as by accessibility of social and organizational support. Single working mothers are known to make use of planning, task prioritization, and schedules based on routine to effect control of conflicting demands. Although these have been done, time pressure has been an underlying problem because of role overload and lack of flexibility.

It is also demonstrated in the paper that the existence of supportive policies in the workplace such as flexible work times and supervisors that were supportive is a great sign of the efficiency of single working mothers in managing their time effectively. On the other hand, there is no institutional support that increases the stress and reduces the overall wellness regardless of good time management skills. This means that time management should be considered as a shared duty among individuals and even companies rather than an individual competency.

Overall, the research confirms the need to introduce an inclusive organizational practice and support networks in the community that have the potential to perceive the exclusive restrictions single working mothers face. The productivity and the quality of life may also be improved with the help of establishing the flexible working environment and relevant and helpful provisions. The study contributes to the enhanced understanding of working mothers living alone

and the significance of time management among them as being highly interconnected with structural support instead of individual efforts.

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