Challenges of Time Management Among Employees in Hungary: A Correlational and Impact-Effort Matrix Approach

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Abstract: This mixed-methods study examines time management challenges and techniques among employees in Hungary, with a particular focus on mid-level managers in multinational corporations. A questionnaire survey of 345 employees identified eight prevalent time management problems—including procrastination, meeting overload, frequent interruptions, email and chat overload, and multitasking—and tested their association with organizational context using chi-square analysis. To identify potential remedies, a systematic content analysis of 49 peer-reviewed and practitioner business publications was conducted, yielding 12 frequently recommended time management techniques. These challenges and techniques were linked in a correlational matrix and prioritized using an Impact–Effort Matrix that combined perceived effectiveness with implementation effort. The findings indicate that techniques such as delegation, the Eisenhower Matrix, task batching, and the Pareto principle offer the most favorable balance between impact and feasibility, yet overall awareness and regular application of structured time management methods remain low among mid-level managers. The study closes an empirical gap by jointly analyzing time management challenges and techniques in a Central and Eastern European setting and provides an evidence-based framework for selecting interventions. The results have practical implications for managers, HR professionals, organizational developers and continuous improvement specialists, including Lean Six Sigma practitioners, who must navigate constant urgent demands while protecting time for high-impact improvement work within the human-centric, Industry 5.0 context.

Keywords: Continuous Improvement, Impact–Effort Matrix, Mid-level Managers, Time Management, Workplace Productivity

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1 Introduction

Effective time management has become a critical competency in contemporary workplaces characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity—collectively referred to as the VUCA environment. Employees, particularly those working in multinational companies, regularly face intense time pressures, interruptions, excessive meeting loads, and frequent multitasking demands, which significantly impact productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance.

Although numerous time management techniques exist to address these challenges, their practical effectiveness and ease of implementation often vary significantly depending on individual circumstances and organizational culture. Despite the breadth of existing research, there is a notable gap in comprehensive, empirical examinations specifically investigating the correlation between particular time management challenges and the techniques used to address them, especially in the context of multinational organizations operating in Hungary.

To fill this gap, this study employs a dual-method approach: a quantitative analysis based on a survey of 345 respondents, primarily from Hungarian multinational organizations, but also including respondents from domestic companies and public sector organizations for comparative analysis, and a qualitative content analysis of 49 carefully selected, peer-reviewed articles from reputable business sources on time management. Informal sources, such as blogs, were deliberately excluded to maintain the reliability and rigor of the research. This methodological choice was reinforced by preliminary survey findings indicating limited awareness of several established time management techniques among respondents.

In recent years, the discourse around organizational efficiency has been increasingly influenced by the principles of Industry 5.0, which emphasizes not only digital transformation but also human-centric innovation, sustainability, and resilience (European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2021; Nahavandi, 2019). Unlike its predecessor, Industry 4.0, which focused primarily on automation and smart technologies, Industry 5.0 recognizes the importance of human well-being, creative collaboration, and adaptability in volatile environments. Within this framework, time management is not merely an operational concern but a strategic capability that enables organizations to balance technological advancement with human factors. This study contributes to this evolving paradigm by exploring how employees perceive and respond to time-related challenges, and by identifying techniques that align with both individual productivity and organizational agility.

The study seeks to answer four research questions:

1. What are the most frequent time management challenges faced by employees in Hungarian multinational companies?
2. What specific time management techniques are commonly employed to tackle these challenges?
3. How effective are these techniques in addressing the identified challenges, based on correlational analysis?
4. Which techniques provide the highest returns relative to the effort required to implement them, as analyzed through an Impact–Effort Matrix?

By addressing these questions, the findings of this research aim to offer practical recommendations for employees, managers, and HR professionals striving to enhance personal and organizational efficiency through targeted, evidence-based time management strategies.

2 Literature Review

Effective time management is recognized as an essential factor influencing productivity, work quality, and employee well-being, particularly within knowledge-intensive roles. The increasing complexity of modern workplaces, characterized by the VUCA paradigm, has intensified the challenges employees face in managing their time efficiently.

A prominent area within time management research focuses on identifying common obstacles that hinder workplace productivity. Among the most frequently cited challenges are frequent interruptions, excessive multitasking, meeting overload, procrastination, email and messaging overload, unclear responsibilities, and excessive administrative tasks (Allen, 2015; Baethge & Rigotti, 2013; Claessens et al., 2007; Newport, 2016). These factors not only disrupt workflow but also negatively affect employee satisfaction and increase stress levels (Cheng & McCarthy, 2013).

Several established time management techniques have emerged to address these common challenges. Methods such as the Eisenhower Matrix, Getting Things Done (GTD), and the Pomodoro Technique provide structured approaches to task prioritization, workflow management, and sustained focus (Allen, 2015; Cirillo, 2018; Covey, 2009). Additionally, task batching, delegation, the Pareto principle (80/20 rule), and blocking dedicated time slots for focused work have been shown to significantly improve individual productivity and reduce stress (Newport, 2016; Tracy, 2016).

Despite extensive literature on these time management techniques and their theoretical effectiveness, empirical research providing concrete correlations between specific time management challenges and the effectiveness of individual techniques is sparse. Additionally, there is limited evidence on the relative practicality of these techniques,

specifically concerning the effort required for their successful implementation versus their actual impact on productivity in organizational contexts, particularly within multinational companies.

In the Hungarian context, several studies have also addressed time management and organizational efficiency. For example, (Bácsné Bába, 2011, 2012) examined the role of self-management in public sector efficiency improvement, while (Csapai, 2023) focused on managerial practices related to time use in organizational settings. These studies underscore the relevance of time management not only at the individual level but also in shaping organizational outcomes. Furthermore, (Pataki-Bittó, 2021) highlighted how time management directly contributes to improved well-being and reduced stress, aligning with international findings (Claessens et al., 2007).

Previous international syntheses, such as those by Macan (1994) and Aeon and Aguinis (2017), emphasized the multidimensional nature of time management and its complex relationship with performance and psychological health. These perspectives provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the mechanisms through which time-related behaviors influence work effectiveness.

This study addresses existing research gaps by quantitatively analyzing a diverse sample of employees from multinational and domestic companies as well as public sector organizations in Hungary, combined with qualitative insights derived from peer-reviewed, reputable business articles. The integrated methodological approach adopted in this research not only strengthens the reliability of its findings but also enhances their applicability to real-world organizational contexts.

3 Research Objectives and Methodology

This study aims to explore the relationship between common time management challenges and the techniques used to mitigate them among employees in Hungary. The research specifically targets workers employed in multinational corporations, domestic firms, and public sector institutions to allow for comparative analysis across organizational contexts.

3.1 Research and Methodology Objectives

The research pursues four interrelated objectives. First, it identifies the most frequent time management challenges employees face in their daily work. Second, it examines which specific techniques individuals currently apply to address these challenges. Third, it evaluates the perceived effectiveness of these techniques in mitigating particular problems. Finally, it assesses the relative impact and required effort associated with each technique in

order to determine which methods provide the best return on investment from an organizational perspective.

3.2 Research Design

The study applies a mixed-methods research design that combines quantitative and qualitative components. On the quantitative side, a structured online survey was administered to 345 respondents employed in multinational companies, domestic firms and public sector organizations in Hungary. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions related to time management challenges and techniques. On the qualitative side, 49 peer-reviewed and editor-validated articles were selected from reputable business sources for in-depth content analysis. These sources were deliberately chosen to ensure practical relevance and conceptual rigor, avoiding informal blog-type content. The analysis combined manual coding with automated natural language processing tools (e.g., NLTK in Python) to extract dominant categories of challenges and techniques.

3.3 Data Integration

To integrate the quantitative and qualitative strands, two analytical frameworks were used. First, a correlational matrix was constructed to map the relationship between specific challenges and the perceived effectiveness of each technique based on expert-assigned scores. Second, an Impact–Effort Matrix was developed to visualize which techniques offer the highest impact relative to the effort required for implementation, thereby supporting prioritization in workplace interventions. Together, these tools provide a robust empirical basis for deriving actionable recommendations for both individual employees and organizational stakeholders.

4 Results

This section presents the empirical findings derived from both the primary and secondary research components. The primary research is based on a questionnaire survey administered to employees of multinational companies, domestic firms, and public sector organizations in Hungary. This stage aimed to identify the most significant time management challenges and the awareness and usage level of various techniques.

The secondary research builds upon these results by analyzing 49 selected peer-reviewed, business-relevant publications. This content analysis provided additional dimensions—such as estimated impact and implementation effort—necessary for constructing the Correlational Matrix and Impact–Effort Matrix. These matrices could not have been

developed solely from questionnaire data, as they require qualitative interpretation and expert-based comparisons across different techniques.

4.1 Primary Research Results: Employee Survey

Respondent Profile

The survey was completed by 345 respondents working in a variety of organizational contexts. The sample included 44% men and 56% women, with an average age of 42.0 years (SD = 11.0). In terms of position, 9% were senior managers, 26% mid-level managers and 65% employees or specialists. Regarding organizational type, 44% worked in multinational companies, 35% in Hungarian-owned firms and 21% in public sector organizations.

The questionnaire was designed to explore employees' perceived time management challenges, the frequency and type of interruptions, the level of workload pressure, and their awareness and application of time management techniques. Both closed and open-ended questions were included to allow for quantifiable and interpretive insights. The data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis and chi-square tests to identify statistically significant relationships between variables, particularly with respect to company type and job position.

These data show that a significant proportion of the sample consists of mid-level managers working in multinational companies—precisely the target group of this study. As a result, the findings provide relevant insights into the characteristics of this segment. However, it is important to note that the survey was distributed online and participation was voluntary, meaning that the sample cannot be considered strictly random. While the age distribution broadly corresponds to national estimates by job category, there may be an overrepresentation of individuals more interested or motivated in the topic, particularly women (self-selection bias). Despite this limitation, the heterogeneity of the sample—including various organizational backgrounds—suggests that the findings can be cautiously generalized to mid-level managers in multinational firms operating in Hungary.

Key Time Management Challenges Identified

Based on the responses and statistical analysis using chi-square tests at a 5% significance level, eight primary time management challenges were identified. These were found to be particularly pronounced among employees in multinational corporations.

The challenges are as follows:

1 **Procrastination** – the postponement of tasks, often due to unclear priorities or a lack of motivation, was one of the most frequently mentioned issues.

2 **Meetings** – the quantity and duration of meetings were seen as excessive, often taking time away from focused work.
3 **"Do you have a minute?" type interruptions** – informal, ad hoc questions from colleagues frequently disrupted work and concentration.
4 **Multitasking** – constant task switching without completing one task before starting another significantly reduced efficiency.
5 **Chat messages** – internal messaging platforms contributed to a fragmented workday and frequent interruptions.
6 **Emails** – the constant influx of emails, many of which were perceived as low priority, overwhelmed employees and impaired time allocation
7 **Unclear responsibilities** – lack of clarity about task ownership led to delays and duplicated **efforts**
8 **Administrative burden** – excessive administrative documentation and reporting obligations consumed valuable time.

These eight challenges closely mirror patterns reported in prior empirical studies on time pressure, interruptions and role ambiguity, which show that fragmented workdays, frequent meetings and administrative overload undermine both performance and well-being (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017; Baethge & Rigotti, 2013; Cheng & McCarthy, 2013; Macan, 1994). Hungarian research likewise highlights that time-related inefficiencies and lack of clear task ownership are especially problematic in managerial roles (Bácsné Bába, 2011, 2012; Csapai, 2023), which is consistent with the elevated frequencies observed in our subsample of mid-level managers in multinational firms. The present results therefore extend earlier work by documenting a similar constellation of time management problems in the specific context of Hungarian employees working in multinational corporate environments.

These problems are supported by both the quantitative analysis and qualitative feedback from respondents. For instance, one participant noted: *"Much of my day is lost to unnecessary admin work that doesn't contribute to my real KPIs."*

The analysis confirms that these problems are not uniformly distributed: mid-level managers in multinational environments report significantly higher frequencies across most of these categories compared to respondents from domestic or public-sector organizations. These patterns are broadly consistent with international findings, but the very strong salience of administrative burden and unclear responsibilities appears particularly pronounced in the Hungarian corporate context.

Awareness and Application of Time Management Techniques

The survey also explored the level of awareness and use of various time management techniques. Respondents were asked to indicate which tools they had heard of and which they regularly applied in practice.

The overall results show limited familiarity with most structured methods. Apart from general concepts like prioritization and email handling, only a few techniques such as time blocking and the Eisenhower Matrix were known to a larger portion of respondents. Even among mid-level managers in multinational firms—our focus group—detailed awareness and systematic application remained modest.

The limited awareness and systematic application of formal time management techniques is in line with previous studies that point to a persistent gap between the availability of proven tools and their actual use in everyday managerial practice (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017; Macan, 1994). In the Hungarian context, research on self-management and managerial time use similarly indicates that managers often rely on ad-hoc routines rather than structured methodologies (Bácsné Bába, 2011, 2012; Csapai, 2023; Pataki-Bittó, 2021). Our findings corroborate these observations by showing that, even in knowledge-intensive multinational settings, respondents predominantly refer to general notions such as "prioritization" or "handling emails," whereas well-defined approaches like the Eisenhower Matrix, Getting Things Done (GTD) or structured deep-work practices (Newport, 2016) remain comparatively underutilized.

Chi-square analysis showed statistically significant associations ($p < 0.05$) between organizational type and awareness of certain techniques. For instance, multinational mid-level managers were more likely to know about time blocking, delegating, and the 80/20 rule, compared to their counterparts in public or domestic firms.

These findings support the necessity of secondary analysis, as the questionnaire data alone provided only a partial overview of the relevant time management approaches.

4.2 Secondary Research – Identification of Techniques

Since the questionnaire results indicated a limited awareness of formal time management tools among respondents, it became necessary to complement the primary research with a structured secondary analysis. This was especially important in identifying techniques for which impact and implementation effort could be assessed later.

The secondary research phase focused on exploring time management solutions discussed in high-quality, practitioner-oriented, peer-reviewed business publications. Academic databases and scientific journals were initially reviewed, but these yielded few articles that addressed practical methods in a comprehensive way. Books on the topic were also considered, but their subjective nature and inconsistency in terminology and structure posed a challenge for systematic comparison.

To overcome this limitation, the analysis focused on expert-curated business sources such as Harvard Business Review, Forbes, McKinsey Insights, and Inc. magazine, among others. These outlets are widely recognized in the business community and often provide actionable, experience-based tools that are not only academically grounded but also tested in corporate practice. The full list of these references is available in Appendix A.

The identification process followed a multi-step procedure. First, a keyword brainstorming session was conducted to identify popular phrases and concepts related to time management (e.g., "time blocking," "Eisenhower Matrix," "Pomodoro technique"). Second, these terms were analyzed using Google Trends and search frequency data to validate their prominence in practical discourse. Finally, the refined keyword set was used to identify and collect 49 structured articles from the aforementioned business publications, which were then content-analyzed for their practical recommendations.

The following 12 time management techniques were selected for correlation and impact-effort analysis. Each represents a distinct approach to optimizing time use and addresses different facets of the eight key challenges previously identified. Below is a brief explanation of each technique:

1 **95% Rule** – Encourages focusing only on tasks that deliver maximum value, and consciously dropping or delegating the least productive 5% of activities.
2 **Delegation** – The process of assigning responsibility for specific tasks to others, helping managers focus on higher-value activities.
3 **Eisenhower Matrix** – A decision-making framework that helps categorize tasks by urgency and importance, making prioritization more systematic.
4 **Disabling notifications** – Turning off digital alerts (e.g., emails, chat) to reduce interruptions and enable deep work.
5 **Task prioritization** – Organizing tasks by importance and deadlines to ensure critical objectives are achieved efficiently.
6 **Getting Things Done (GTD)** – A structured productivity methodology focused on capturing, clarifying, organizing, reviewing, and executing tasks.
7 **Time blocking** – Allocating fixed periods in one's calendar for specific tasks to ensure focused execution without overlap.

8 **Batch processing of tasks** – Grouping similar tasks together to reduce setup time and mental switching costs.
9 **Saying no** – The ability to reject non-essential requests or meetings to protect time and energy.
10 **Pareto principle (80/20 rule)** – Based on the idea that 80% of results stem from 20% of efforts, encouraging focus on high-impact tasks.
11 **Pomodoro technique** – A time management method where work is divided into focused intervals (typically 25 minutes) followed by short breaks.
12 **Reducing distractions** – Identifying and minimizing environmental or cognitive factors that impair concentration and workflow.

4.3 Correlational Matrix: Linking Challenges to Techniques

Matrix structure

To quantify the relationship between the identified time management challenges and the techniques gathered through secondary research, a correlational matrix (Table 1) was developed. This matrix provides a structured comparison based on qualitative evaluations extracted from 49 business-relevant publications.

The matrix combines the eight main time management challenges identified from the primary research (columns) with the twelve techniques derived from the content analysis of business publications (rows). Each cell contains a score on a 1-to-5 scale indicating the estimated relevance of a given technique for addressing a given challenge, where 1 denotes no or minimal relevance, 2 weak relevance, 3 moderate relevance, 4 strong relevance and 5 very strong, direct relevance. The scores are based on evidence from the literature, expert evaluations and practical examples.

Table 1. Correlational matrix of time management challenges and techniques.

Technique	Procrastination	Meetings	"Do you have a minute? " type interruptions	Multitasking	Chat messages	Emails	Unclear responsibilities	Administrative burden
95% Rule	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
Delegation	1	5	3	3	3	5	5	5
Eisenhower Ma	5	5	3	3	3	3	5	3
Disabling notifi	1	1	5	5	5	5	3	1

Task prioritizati	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Getting Things (GTD)	5	5	3	5	3	3	5	3
Time blocking	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	3
Batch processin tasks	3	3	3	5	3	3	3	3
Saying "No"	5	3	5	3	3	3	3	3
Pareto principle (80/20 rule)	5	3	3	1	3	3	3	3
Pomodoro techn	3	3	1	5	3	3	1	1
Reducing distra	3	1	5	5	5	5	1	1

This matrix serves as the foundation for prioritizing techniques not only by their individual applicability but also by their overall alignment with the most critical workplace challenges reported by respondents.
The following section will elaborate on the most significant linkages and their implications.

Interpretation of Key Relationships

The correlational matrix reveals several strong associations between specific time management challenges and techniques. These patterns are broadly consistent with prior work showing that targeted behavioral interventions can mitigate the negative effects of fragmented workdays, role ambiguity and digital overload on performance and well-being (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017; Claessens et al., 2007; Macan, 1994).
Procrastination shows particularly strong links with the Eisenhower Matrix, task prioritization, Getting Things Done (GTD), time blocking, saying “no” and the Pareto Principle. All of these techniques help clarify urgency and importance, reduce cognitive overload and encourage timely execution. This supports earlier arguments that structured prioritization and clear task ordering are among the most effective remedies for procrastination and avoidance (Allen, 2015; Tracy, 2016).
Meeting overload is most strongly connected to delegation, the Eisenhower Matrix, GTD and time blocking. These associations imply that excessive meetings often stem from unclear responsibilities, insufficient preparation and lack of decision focus. This finding aligns with practitioner-oriented analyses that emphasize redesigning meeting structures and reallocating decision rights as key levers for improving organizational time use (London et al., 2010; Mankins et al., 2014).

"Do you have a minute?" type interruptions are closely linked to disabling notifications, as well as to saying "no", time blocking and reducing distractions. Together, these techniques help create uninterrupted focus periods by setting clearer boundaries around availability. This reflects the broader literature on attention management, which highlights the need to control access to one's time in environments characterized by constant digital and face-to-face interruptions (Newport, 2016; Pedersen, 2018).

Multitasking is strongly associated with disabling notifications, batch processing of tasks, the Pomodoro Technique and reducing distractions. These relationships indicate that minimizing digital fragmentation and grouping similar tasks into dedicated time blocks are particularly effective in counteracting multitasking. Prior research similarly shows that task switching undermines deep work and that structured single-tasking practices can restore cognitive efficiency (Newport, 2016; Schwartz & McCarthy, 2007).

Chat messages and emails are both most strongly addressed through disabling notifications, batch processing and, in the case of emails, delegation. These patterns underscore the burden of digital communication platforms and support recommendations to process messages in focused batches rather than continuously, as well as to redirect lower-value exchanges to appropriate levels in the hierarchy (Dean & Webb, 2011; Oncken & Wass, 1999).

Unclear responsibilities and administrative burden are most closely linked to delegation, the Eisenhower Matrix and GTD. All three techniques contribute to clarifying task ownership, separating higher-value from routine work and systematically offloading repetitive administrative tasks. This resonates with studies that emphasize self-management, role clarity and conscious allocation of managerial time as critical drivers of effectiveness (Bácsné Bába, 2011, 2012; Csapai, 2023; Pataki-Bittó, 2021).

Taken together, these relationships suggest that a relatively small set of techniques—particularly delegation, the Eisenhower Matrix, time blocking, batch processing of tasks and disabling notifications—function as high-leverage interventions across multiple, interrelated time management challenges. The subsequent Impact–Effort analysis further refines these insights by considering the implementation difficulty of each technique.

4.4 Impact-Effort Matrix

Matrix structure

To support the prioritization of time management techniques from an implementation perspective, an Impact–Effort Matrix was constructed (Fig. 1). This tool evaluates each technique along two key dimensions: impact, defined as the perceived effectiveness of the technique in addressing the eight identified time management challenges, and effort,

defined as the estimated difficulty of implementation, including required time, cognitive load and potential organizational barriers.

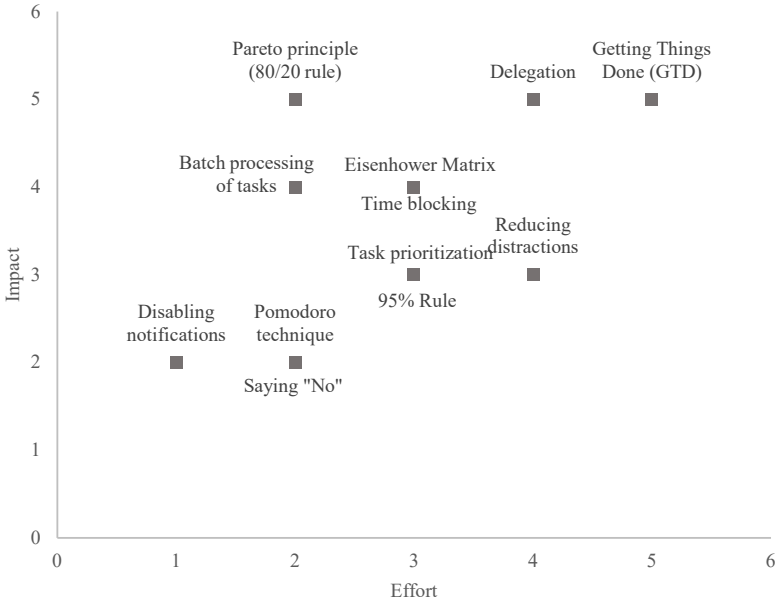

Fig. 1. An Impact-Effort Matrix of Time Management Techniques

In the Impact–Effort Matrix, both dimensions are measured on a five-point scale. Effort scores range from 1, indicating minimal additional time or resources required, to 5, indicating very high implementation effort. Impact scores similarly range from 1, reflecting only marginal improvement in perceived control or performance, to 5, reflecting a very strong and direct contribution. Plotting the techniques on this plane enables decision-makers to classify them into four strategic zones: “Quick Wins” (high impact, low effort), “Major Projects” (high impact, high effort), “Fill-ins” (low impact, low effort) and “Time Wasters” (low impact, high effort).

Interpretation of Priority Areas

The analysis of the Impact–Effort Matrix yields several observations that are particularly relevant for practitioners who must decide where to focus limited development resources. The results confirm that different techniques offer markedly different return-on-effort profiles, and that successful implementation requires aligning chosen methods with both organizational readiness and strategic priorities.

In the Quick Wins quadrant, the Pareto Principle (80/20 rule) and batch processing of tasks combine high impact with relatively low implementation effort. These techniques encourage employees and managers to concentrate on a small number of high-value activities and to group similar tasks into dedicated time blocks. This finding is consistent with prior work that frames time as a scarce, strategically managed resource and highlights the disproportionate effect of focusing on the most important activities (Mankins et al., 2014; Stillman, 2024). Given their conceptual simplicity and low barrier to entry, these methods are well suited as starting points for short training interventions or pilot programs.

The Major Projects quadrant contains GTD and delegation, both rated as high impact but also high effort. Implementing GTD typically requires individuals to adopt new habits around capturing, clarifying and reviewing tasks, while effective delegation often demands cultural and structural changes in how responsibilities and decision rights are distributed. This echoes findings from leadership and self-management research which stress that mastering these practices can significantly improve managerial effectiveness, but only if organizations invest in training and sustained support (Allen, 2015; Bácsné Bába, 2012; Saunders, 2025).

Techniques such as the Eisenhower Matrix, time blocking and task prioritization occupy a Moderate Leverage position, with balanced impact and effort scores. These structured methods provide clear decision rules for organizing work and scheduling focus time without requiring extensive organizational redesign. As such, they are appropriate candidates for mid-term rollout in teams that already recognize the need for more disciplined time management but are not yet ready for comprehensive system-level changes.

The Fill-ins category includes the Pomodoro Technique and saying “no”, which are relatively easy to implement but, on their own, offer only limited transformation potential. Nevertheless, they can play a valuable complementary role when integrated into broader interventions—for example, using Pomodoro cycles within time-blocked calendar segments, or training employees to apply assertive “no” responses when protecting pre-planned focus periods (Davis, 2024; Vozza, 2023).

Finally, reducing distractions appears in a Cautionary position: it requires substantial effort while yielding only moderate impact in isolation. This does not mean that reducing distractions is unimportant; rather, it suggests that environmental and technological changes—such as open office redesigns or new digital platforms—may not deliver commensurate benefits unless they are combined with behavioral techniques like time blocking, batching and conscious boundary-setting (Pedersen, 2018; Schwartz & McCarthy, 2007).

Overall, the matrix indicates that organizations seeking rapid, visible improvements should prioritize Pareto-based focusing and batch processing as initial interventions, while planning for more resource-intensive initiatives around GTD and delegation over the longer term. By explicitly considering both impact and effort, decision-makers can design phased implementation roadmaps that balance quick wins with deeper, structural change.

5 Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings in the Context of the Literature

The findings of this study align with and extend the existing literature on workplace time management. Several of the most frequently reported challenges—such as procrastination, excessive meetings, multitasking, and constant interruptions—have been consistently cited in both international and Hungarian sources. For instance, research by Macan (1994) and Aeon & Aguinis (2017) confirmed the negative implications of fragmented workdays and role ambiguity on performance and well-being.

The Hungarian literature echoes these themes. Bácsné Bába (2011, 2012) documented that time-related inefficiencies and lack of task ownership are especially problematic in managerial roles, particularly in matrixed or multinational settings. These works support the finding that mid-level managers in multinational corporations reported higher frequencies of all eight key time management problems, a result statistically validated by chi-square analysis.

Furthermore, the observed low awareness of structured time management techniques among respondents is in line with international studies that highlight the gap between available tools and practical application. This was particularly evident in our sample: while general strategies like “prioritization” were broadly recognized, more structured or branded methodologies (e.g., GTD, Eisenhower Matrix) had far lower visibility.

Overall, the study confirms prior research findings, while also illustrating new aspects specific to the Hungarian corporate context, such as the dominance of certain challenges in the multinational managerial environment and the particularly low adoption rate of techniques outside informal routines.

5.2 Strategic Relevance of Key Techniques

The results of the correlational and Impact–Effort matrices highlight a small subset of time management techniques that stand out due to their high potential to resolve widespread problems. In particular, Delegation, the Eisenhower Matrix, and Batch Processing of Tasks emerged as techniques with both strong theoretical support and high practical relevance.

Delegation addresses several critical challenges—including excessive email handling, administrative burden, and role ambiguity—making it a key structural intervention. However, the successful implementation of delegation practices often depends on organizational hierarchy, trust, and leadership maturity. This implies that training and a supportive managerial culture are prerequisites for its effective use.

The Eisenhower Matrix proved especially relevant for problems like procrastination and meeting overload. Its structured approach to prioritizing urgent versus important tasks is not only cognitively intuitive but also easy to visualize, which may facilitate its internalization. Despite this, its application is limited among respondents, suggesting a missed opportunity that organizations can readily act upon.

Batch Processing, while often underestimated, showed strong connections with managing multitasking and digital interruptions. It is particularly well-suited to environments characterized by fragmented workflows. Given its relatively low implementation barrier, this technique deserves focused promotion, especially in digital roles.

Additionally, the Pareto Principle (80/20 rule) surfaced as a “quick win” that combines minimal effort with high impact. It offers a mental model to focus on high-value activities, which could be easily incorporated into time management trainings without requiring complex tools or systems.

Collectively, these techniques represent a high-leverage toolkit for addressing the majority of time management issues observed in modern corporate settings. Yet, their underutilization—especially among the target group of mid-level managers in multinational corporations—signals a significant opportunity for targeted interventions and capability building.

5.3 Implications for Practice

The study's findings yield actionable insights for organizational leaders, HR professionals, and time management consultants. Given the mismatch between prevalent challenges and the low awareness of effective techniques, organizations should prioritize structured interventions.

First, awareness-building campaigns are necessary to increase familiarity with underutilized but impactful techniques, such as Delegation, Batch Processing, and the Eisenhower Matrix. These could be integrated into onboarding programs, internal communication channels, or microlearning platforms.

Second, pilot programs could be launched within selected departments—particularly among mid-level managers in multinational settings—to test the implementation of high-leverage techniques. For example, a 4-week Delegation Challenge or Eisenhower Planning Sprint could generate data and success stories for broader rollout.

Third, leadership development programs should embed time management modules. Emphasizing role clarity, decision-making delegation, and structured scheduling can normalize these practices at the team level.

Fourth, organizations may consider environmental or system-level enablers, such as reducing unnecessary meetings, setting quiet hours, or configuring digital tools to support focus (e.g., disabling chat alerts during deep work).

Finally, to ensure sustainability, these interventions must be supported by senior leadership and reinforced culturally. Recognition systems, manager coaching, and peer learning groups could all contribute to embedding time-conscious behavior across the company.

These practices not only reduce inefficiencies but can also enhance employee well-being, engagement, and organizational performance.

5.4 Methodological Reflections and Limitations

Several methodological considerations should be acknowledged to contextualize the study's results.

First, the questionnaire was distributed online on a voluntary basis, which introduces potential self-selection bias. Individuals particularly interested in time management or struggling with related issues may have been more likely to respond. Although the demographic characteristics of the sample align with known benchmarks, the results should be interpreted with caution regarding generalizability.

Second, the technique-challenge correlation ratings were derived from qualitative content analysis, rather than direct empirical measurement. While this approach enabled triangulation and incorporation of expert perspectives, it also introduces subjectivity. The scoring was carefully cross-validated, but future studies could benefit from multi-rater validation or Delphi methodology.

Third, cultural context may influence both the perception of time management challenges and the applicability of specific techniques. This study focused on Hungarian organizations, particularly those operating under multinational structures. While the findings are relevant in this context, replication in other cultural or organizational environments would strengthen external validity.

Lastly, the dynamic nature of work and technology—including hybrid work patterns, evolving communication tools, and task automation—may continuously shift both the problem landscape and the relevance of specific interventions. Therefore, the proposed matrices should be revisited periodically.

Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods approach employed in this study provides a robust foundation for understanding time management challenges and informing future interventions in similar professional contexts. The study's findings yield actionable insights for organizational leaders, HR professionals, and time management consultants.

6 Conclusions

This study investigated the prevalent time management challenges faced by employees in Hungary—particularly mid-level managers in multinational corporations—and evaluated the potential of various techniques to mitigate these issues. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, we combined survey data from 345 respondents with content analysis of 49 business-relevant publications to construct both a Correlational Matrix and an Impact–Effort Matrix.

The findings revealed eight dominant time-related challenges, with procrastination, excessive meetings, multitasking, and administrative burden among the most prominent. The matrices highlighted four key techniques—Delegation, Eisenhower Matrix, Batch Processing, and the Pareto Principle—as especially effective in addressing these problems, based on both impact potential and implementation feasibility.

The study contributes to the literature by offering a structured, evidence-based framework for matching specific problems with relevant time management interventions. Unlike prior studies that focus either on subjective perceptions or single techniques, this research triangulates practitioner insights and organizational realities to deliver actionable conclusions.

Future research should aim to validate these findings across broader cultural contexts and organizational types, ideally using longitudinal designs or controlled interventions. Additionally, further exploration into digital tools and AI-supported time management strategies may provide new solutions to emerging workplace demands.
By illuminating both the challenges and the pathways to overcome them, this study serves as a practical guide for organizations aiming to enhance efficiency, reduce burnout, and foster a more time-conscious corporate culture.

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