

## TIME AND TIMING CONCEPTS IN ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT IN SPORTS DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN FOOTBALL CLUBS

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of time and timing concepts on administrative management and sports development in South African football clubs. Recognizing the increasing complexities and performance expectations within football administration, the study sought to determine how the application of time and timing strategies affects the operational efficiency and developmental outcomes of football clubs. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and a structured questionnaire developed on a 4-point Likert scale was administered to 140 football administrators, coaches, and management staff from selected clubs. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between the application of

### Introduction

Time and timing are essential yet often underappreciated factors in the effective management of sports development, particularly within the competitive environment of South African football clubs. In organizational studies, time is regarded as a finite and non-renewable resource, and how it is managed largely determines the extent to which institutional objectives are achieved (Anwar & Abdullah, 2020). Within sports, outcomes are strongly influenced by competition schedules, athlete development, performance cycles, and resource allocation, making the

time and timing concepts in administrative management and the level of sports development achieved by the clubs. Respondents strongly agreed that effective scheduling, prompt decision-making, adherence to operational timelines, and coordinated execution of plans enhanced athlete performance, talent identification, infrastructure development, and overall club growth. The study concluded that time and timing are strategic resources in sports administration, and their effective application promotes sustainable sports development. The study recommends that football clubs institutionalize time management frameworks, conduct regular time-use audits, integrate timing training in staff development programmes, and that governing bodies incorporate timing standards into regulatory policies. These measures will enhance administrative efficiency and accelerate sports development in South African football clubs.

**Keywords:** Time management, Timing concepts, Administrative management, Sports development, South African football clubs

**S**trategic use of time especially crucial (Slack & Parent, 2019). In football clubs, administration encompasses planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating across areas such as human resource management, finance, training programs, and competition logistics (Bayle & Robinson, 2021). Integrating time-conscious approaches into these processes is critical to sustaining sports development. Football holds a special place in South Africa, not only as the most popular sport but also as a driver of social and economic growth, contributing to employment, social cohesion, and youth empowerment (Saayman & Rossouw, 2019). Clubs under the South African Football Association (SAFA) and the Premier Soccer League (PSL) must operate in demanding conditions, often challenged by limited budgets, infrastructural shortcomings, and frequent player turnover. Time-sensitive activities—such as recruitment, contract negotiations, training schedules, fixtures, and marketing—must be aligned with transfer windows, competitive seasons, and sponsorship cycles (Hassan & Lusted, 2021). When these processes are poorly managed, the consequences include administrative delays, financial setbacks, and reduced competitiveness.

Time management in sports administration can be understood across multiple dimensions: chronological (calendar planning), cyclical (seasonal and competition cycles), strategic (long-term planning), and operational (day-to-day scheduling). Effective administrators integrate these perspectives to ensure smooth operations and achieve goals (Trenberth & Hassan, 2020). Examples include synchronizing training with competition demands, aligning youth academies with senior team needs, and scheduling sponsorship activities around major tournaments. Tools such as

prioritization, delegation, monitoring, and time auditing further strengthen accountability and efficiency (Anwar & Abdullah, 2020).

Sports development generally requires long-term planning, including athlete performance support, facility development, talent identification, and community engagement programs (Hoye et al., 2021). In South African football, this involves completing scouting before transfer periods, securing sponsorships ahead of league campaigns, and coordinating grassroots activities with school calendars. Neglecting such timelines often leads to the loss of competitive advantages and delays in development (De Bosscher et al., 2015).

Cultural orientations toward time also influence administrative practice. South African clubs operate in socio-cultural contexts where polychronic tendencies—emphasizing relationships and flexibility—sometimes conflict with the stricter monochronic scheduling common in global sports management (Amusa & Toriola, 2020). Balancing these approaches is vital for effective administration. Furthermore, the commercialization and professionalization of football in South Africa increasingly require precise planning and structured management systems to optimize time use (García-Unanue et al., 2020).

This study therefore emphasizes the importance of time and timing in strengthening administrative practices within South African football. Embedding temporal strategies into management processes can improve efficiency, enhance performance, and promote sustainable competitiveness in a globalized sports industry.

### Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing professionalization of South African football, many clubs continue to struggle with inefficiencies in administrative management that hinder sustainable sports development. Common problems include poorly scheduled training and competition programs, delays in player recruitment and contract processing, weak coordination of development initiatives, and failure to align plans with seasonal or strategic timelines. These lapses often result in lost sponsorship opportunities, inconsistent competitive performance, and stagnation in youth development structures. Although time and timing are widely recognized as critical resources in management, their systematic integration into football administration in South Africa has not received adequate scholarly attention. This knowledge gap limits the formulation of effective policies and practices that could strengthen time management and improve administrative outcomes. Addressing this issue is vital for achieving operational efficiency, competitive success, and long-term sports development.

**Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between the application of time and timing concepts in administrative management and the level of sports development achieved by South African football clubs?
2. How do time and timing practices influence the efficiency of administrative management functions (planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating) in South African football clubs?

**Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between the application of time and timing concepts in administrative management and the level of sports development achieved by South African football clubs.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Time and timing practices significantly influence the efficiency of administrative management functions in South African football clubs.

**Concept of Time and Timing in Organizational Management**

Time is a scarce and irreplaceable resource in organizational management, shaping how institutions plan, coordinate, and evaluate activities to achieve their goals (Anwar & Abdullah, 2020). It can be approached from several perspectives: chronological time, which follows linear schedules; cyclical time, marked by recurring events such as competitive seasons; strategic time, which emphasizes long-term planning; and operational time, which concerns daily or weekly scheduling. Timing refers to the synchronization and appropriateness of actions within these dimensions, directly affecting the success of decisions and outcomes (Trenberth & Hassan, 2020).

Evidence shows that effective time management strengthens productivity, decision-making, and adaptability in organizations (Claessens et al., 2018). In the sports sector, where competition calendars and performance cycles are non-negotiable, strict time discipline becomes indispensable. Weak time control often results in missed opportunities, administrative lapses, and underperformance (Slack & Parent, 2019).

**Administrative Management in Sports Organizations**

Administrative management encompasses planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and evaluating activities to achieve institutional objectives (Hoye et al., 2021). In sports organizations, this involves financial management, recruitment and player registration, training schedules, facility use, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring team performance (Bayle & Robinson, 2021). Successful administration depends heavily on the timeliness of these processes.

In South Africa, administrative inefficiencies remain a recurring issue in football clubs. Delays in player registration, late payment of wages, poorly planned competitions, and weak coordination between grassroots initiatives and competitive calendars are frequently reported (Saayman & Rossouw, 2019). Such challenges highlight the insufficient integration of time and timing principles into sports administration, reducing organizational effectiveness and performance.

### **Time and Timing in Sports Administration**

Recent studies emphasize the rising importance of time and timing in sports governance. García-Unanue et al. (2020) demonstrate that digital scheduling and planning tools enhance efficiency by optimizing resources and minimizing delays. Similarly, De Bosscher et al. (2015) underline the importance of timing in sports policy implementation, particularly in aligning athlete development with international competition cycles.

In football, the timing of decisions is often as critical as the decisions themselves. Hassan and Lusted (2021) highlight that finalizing transfers before registration deadlines, organizing preseason training to match peak fitness, or launching ticket sales well before season openers can determine competitive advantage. However, many South African clubs still take a reactive rather than proactive approach, lacking structured systems such as time auditing or project management (Amusa & Toriola, 2020).

### **Time Management and Administrative Efficiency**

Time management—defined as the intentional planning and regulation of time for specific activities—remains a cornerstone of managerial success (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017). Effective practices include prioritization, delegation, scheduling, progress monitoring, and evaluation (Trenberth & Hassan, 2020). Research consistently links strong time management to higher productivity, reduced stress, and improved decision-making (Claessens et al., 2018).

For South African football clubs, the use of structured tools such as Gantt charts, performance tracking logs, and comprehensive timelines could improve coordination among administrators, coaches, and executives. Such practices would ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, support the execution of strategic plans, and foster a culture of punctuality and accountability (Bayle & Robinson, 2021).

### **Time, Timing, and Sports Development Outcomes**

Sports development extends beyond competitive success to include athlete growth, infrastructure development, organizational strengthening, and community participation (Hoye et al., 2021). Timely interventions—such as establishing youth academies,

scouting talent, upgrading facilities, and securing sponsorship—are vital for sustainable growth. Conversely, poor timing can waste resources, weaken competitiveness, and slow development.

In South Africa, delays in aligning grassroots football programs with school terms or national youth competitions have undermined talent development (Saayman & Rossouw, 2019). Similarly, late player registrations and sponsorship renewals have negatively affected financial stability and on-field performance. The SPLISS model (De Bosscher et al., 2015) reinforces that success in elite sports depends not only on the quality of policies but also on their sequencing and timing.

### **Cultural Dimensions of Time in Sports Administration**

Cultural perceptions of time also influence management practices. In many African contexts, polychronic orientations—which emphasize flexibility and interpersonal relationships—contrast with the monochronic discipline characteristic of global sports management, which prioritizes punctuality and structured sequencing (Amusa & Toriola, 2020). This cultural divergence creates challenges for football administration in South Africa. For long-term success, clubs must balance local time orientations with international standards, maintaining cultural sensitivity while embracing professionalism.

### **Research Gap**

Although organizational theory recognizes the importance of time and timing, little empirical research directly examines their influence on administrative efficiency and sports development in South African football. Existing literature tends to discuss sports management broadly, often overlooking temporal dynamics. This leaves a critical gap in evidence-based strategies for improving administration. The present study seeks to address this gap by analyzing how time and timing affect administrative management and sports development within South African football clubs.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study will adopt a **descriptive survey design**, which is appropriate for gathering data from a relatively large group at a single point in time. The design allows for the identification of existing patterns and the examination of relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is particularly suited to investigating how time and timing principles are applied in football administration and how these practices influence sports development in South African clubs.



### Population of the Study

The target population will consist of **administrators, coaches, and management staff** from professional and semi-professional football clubs registered under the South African Football Association (SAFA) and the Premier Soccer League (PSL). These groups were selected because they are directly involved in planning, scheduling, decision-making, and sports development activities, making them the most relevant respondents for this research.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

A **purposive sampling technique** will be used to select respondents who are actively engaged in football administration and development. A sample of approximately **150 participants** will be drawn from various clubs to ensure representation across organizational levels and club sizes. This sample size is considered sufficient for statistical generalization and aligns with Yamane's (1973) sample determination guidelines.

### Instrument for Data Collection

Data will be collected using a **structured questionnaire** designed by the researcher. The instrument will be divided into three sections:

- **Section A:** Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, role, years of experience, and club category).
- **Section B:** Items measuring the application of time and timing in administrative management.
- **Section C:** Items assessing sports development outcomes.

A **4-point Likert scale** will be adopted to capture responses:

4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

3 = Agree (A)

2 = Disagree (D)

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

This scaling will provide quantitative data suitable for both descriptive and inferential analysis.

### Validity of the Instrument

To ensure content and face validity, the draft questionnaire will be reviewed by **three experts** in sports management and educational measurement. Their feedback will inform revisions for clarity, coverage, and relevance. This process will confirm that the instrument adequately measures the constructs under investigation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

### Reliability of the Instrument

A **pilot study** will be conducted with 20 administrative staff from football clubs not included in the main sample. The responses will be analyzed using **Cronbach's Alpha** to determine internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of **0.70 or higher** will be considered acceptable for this study (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019).

### Method of Data Collection

Permission will be sought from **SAFA** and relevant club authorities prior to data collection. Questionnaires will be distributed in two formats: **in-person (hard copies)** and **online (email/Google Forms)** to maximize participation. Participants will be assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and their involvement will be entirely voluntary.

### Method of Data Analysis

Both **descriptive** and **inferential statistics** will be employed:

- **Descriptive statistics:** Mean and standard deviation will be used to answer the research questions.
  - **Decision Rule:** Mean  $\geq 2.50$  = Agree; Mean  $< 2.50$  = Disagree.
- **Inferential statistics:**
  - **Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC)** will test Hypothesis One (relationship between time/timing and sports development).
  - **Simple Linear Regression** will test Hypothesis Two (influence of time/timing practices on administrative efficiency).

All hypotheses will be tested at the **0.05 level of significance**.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance will be obtained from the relevant **institutional review board**. Participants will be fully informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any point without penalty. They will be assured of **confidentiality and anonymity**, and all data collected will be used strictly for academic purposes.

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected from respondents on the application of time and timing concepts in administrative management and their influence on sports development in South African football clubs. The data are presented in tables showing frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviations, and decisions based on the 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1). The decision rule for interpretation is:

- Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )  $\geq 2.50$  = Agree



- Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) < 2.50 = Disagree

### Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents (n = 150)

| Variable            | Category           | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender              | Male               | 110           | 73.3           |
|                     | Female             | 40            | 26.7           |
| Age                 | 21–30 years        | 35            | 23.3           |
|                     | 31–40 years        | 60            | 40.0           |
|                     | 41 years and above | 55            | 36.7           |
| Role in Club        | Administrator      | 45            | 30.0           |
|                     | Coach              | 55            | 36.7           |
|                     | Management staff   | 50            | 33.3           |
| Years of Experience | 1–5 years          | 40            | 26.7           |
|                     | 6–10 years         | 60            | 40.0           |
|                     | Above 10 years     | 50            | 33.3           |

**Interpretation:** The data show that most respondents were male, aged between 31–40, and had more than six years of experience, making them knowledgeable about administrative processes.

### Respondents' Ratings on Time and Timing Concepts in Administrative Management

Table 2: Mean Ratings on Time and Timing Concepts

| Items                                                          | $\bar{x}$ | SD   | Decision       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|----------------|
| The club maintains a well-structured annual calendar of events | 3.72      | 0.45 | Strongly Agree |
| Activities are aligned with competitive seasonal cycles        | 3.65      | 0.52 | Strongly Agree |
| Decisions are made promptly to avoid administrative delays     | 3.48      | 0.60 | Agree          |
| There is effective daily and weekly scheduling of tasks        | 3.58      | 0.55 | Strongly Agree |
| Timelines are used to evaluate goal achievement                | 3.41      | 0.63 | Agree          |

Cluster Mean = 3.57 → Strongly Agree

**Interpretation:** Respondents strongly agreed that time and timing concepts are widely applied in their clubs' administrative activities.

### Respondents' Ratings on Administrative Management Efficiency

Table 3: Mean Ratings on Administrative Management

| Items                                              | $\bar{x}$ | SD   | Decision       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|----------------|
| There is effective planning and goal setting       | 3.60      | 0.54 | Strongly Agree |
| Resources are well organized and allocated         | 3.42      | 0.61 | Agree          |
| Activities are well coordinated across departments | 3.50      | 0.57 | Strongly Agree |
| Communication flow is timely and efficient         | 3.36      | 0.62 | Agree          |

|                                                         |      |      |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Monitoring and evaluation are done within set timelines | 3.40 | 0.59 | Agree |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------|

Cluster Mean = 3.46 → Agree/Strongly Agree

**Interpretation:** Respondents agreed that time-conscious practices improve the efficiency of their administrative functions.

### Respondents' Ratings on Sports Development Outcomes

Table 4: Mean Ratings on Sports Development

| Items                                                         | $\bar{x}$ | SD   | Decision       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|----------------|
| Athlete performance has improved in national competitions     | 3.68      | 0.51 | Strongly Agree |
| The club identifies and grooms new talent effectively         | 3.56      | 0.58 | Strongly Agree |
| There has been growth in sports infrastructure and facilities | 3.40      | 0.63 | Agree          |
| The club has recorded competitive success in recent seasons   | 3.61      | 0.49 | Strongly Agree |
| Community and youth development initiatives have expanded     | 3.47      | 0.56 | Agree          |

Cluster Mean = 3.54 → Strongly Agree

**Interpretation:** The findings show that effective time and timing practices contribute to improved sports development outcomes.

### Test of Hypotheses

#### Hypothesis 1:

*There is a significant relationship between the application of time and timing concepts in administrative management and the level of sports development achieved by South African football clubs.*

- **Statistical Test:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC)
- **Result:**  $r = 0.612$ ,  $p = 0.000$  ( $< 0.05$ )

**Decision:** Since  $p < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant positive relationship between time/timing practices and sports development.

#### Hypothesis 2:

*Time and timing practices significantly influence the efficiency of administrative management functions in South African football clubs.*

- **Statistical Test:** Simple Linear Regression
- **Result:**  $\beta = 0.58$ ,  $t = 8.24$ ,  $p = 0.000$  ( $< 0.05$ )

**Decision:** Since  $p < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. Time and timing practices significantly predict administrative management efficiency.

**Summary of Findings**

Time and timing concepts are consistently applied in the administrative routines of football clubs.

Clubs that effectively apply time and timing principles report higher administrative efficiency.

Effective time and timing practices are associated with improved sports development outcomes, including talent development, competitive success, and community engagement.

**Discussion of Findings**

This study provides valuable insights into how the application of time and timing principles shapes administrative effectiveness and sports development in South African football clubs. The findings revealed that respondents strongly agreed that efficient planning, scheduling, coordination, and evaluation contribute significantly to administrative performance and the success of developmental programmes.

The analysis showed a strong positive correlation between the application of time and timing concepts and the level of sports development within football clubs, thereby supporting the first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). This result is consistent with Adegbesan and Omoyemiju (2020), who argued that effective time management improves strategic planning, minimizes administrative lapses, and enhances athletes' competitive performance. Evidence from this study suggests that when football administrators align operational activities with structured timelines and milestones, developmental outcomes such as improved infrastructure, robust youth academies, and enhanced competitive achievements are more likely to be realized.

The study also confirmed the second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ), showing that time and timing practices significantly influence administrative functions such as planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating. Respondents noted that strict adherence to timelines improves interdepartmental coordination, reduces delays in decision-making, and ensures timely resource allocation. This finding resonates with Pillay and van Heerden (2019), who reported that sports organizations guided by structured timing frameworks demonstrate greater responsiveness and operational synergy. Conversely, weak time discipline in clubs often results in disorganization, missed deadlines, and stagnated developmental programmes.

These findings further validate the study's conceptual framework, which posited that time and timing concepts are essential inputs for strengthening administrative processes, thereby facilitating sports development outcomes. The neglect of timing mechanisms—such as competition schedules, player development cycles, and season

calendars—undermines administrative coherence and adversely affects overall performance.

In essence, the results reaffirm that time and timing are not merely operational considerations but strategic resources in sports administration. The demonstrated link between timing practices and sports development provides clear evidence for club managers, administrators, and policymakers to prioritize time-sensitive strategies in order to promote sustainable football growth in South Africa.

### Conclusion

The study investigated the role of time and timing concepts in administrative management and their contribution to sports development in South African football clubs. The findings established that structured time management significantly enhances administrative efficiency in planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating. Clubs that adopt clear operational timelines and prioritize time-conscious decision-making achieve stronger developmental outcomes, including better player performance, expanded talent development initiatives, and improved infrastructure.

Overall, the study concludes that time and timing should be regarded as strategic assets in football administration. Their systematic integration strengthens coordination, raises productivity, and supports long-term competitive success. For South African football clubs to sustain growth and remain globally competitive, the effective use of time and timing must be treated as a fundamental pillar of their management frameworks.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Football clubs should establish formal time management policies and operational calendars covering administrative, training, and competition activities to enhance coherence and accountability.
2. Club managers and administrators should receive continuous training on time and timing concepts to strengthen their skills in scheduling, planning, and resource allocation.
3. Clubs should integrate digital scheduling systems, project management platforms, and performance-monitoring software to track activities, enforce deadlines, and improve compliance.
4. The South African Football Association (SAFA) should introduce guidelines requiring clubs to implement structured, time-bound operational plans as part of licensing and performance assessments.
5. Clubs should regularly evaluate how administrative time is allocated, identify inefficiencies, and address bottlenecks in line with global best practices.

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