



Enhancing academic mindfulness through shaping-based time management: Evidence from a quasi-experimental study

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ABSTRACT

College students often experience academic pressure stemming from performance demands, study load, and organizational activities, which can trigger stress and reduce academic mindfulness—the ability to be fully present during the learning process. Such pressure also hinders effective time management, thereby increasing mind-wandering and decreasing cognitive engagement. This study aimed to examine the effect of a shaping-based intervention targeting effective time management behaviors on the enhancement of academic mindfulness. The research employed a pre-test–post-test nonequivalent control group design involving 20 participants, consisting of 10 in the control group and 10 in the experimental group. The intervention was conducted in three sessions using shaping techniques through time blocking, self-reflection, and priority setting. Academic mindfulness was measured using an adapted version of the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) for the academic context. The results indicated a significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group ($p = 0.009 < 0.05$). These findings suggest that the shaping-based intervention effectively enhances academic mindfulness and has the potential to expand experimental psychology research as well as contribute to the development of campus-based psychological interventions aimed at improving students' academic well-being

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KEY WORDS:

time management; academic mindfulness; students; shaping; time blocking; behavior modification



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Introduction

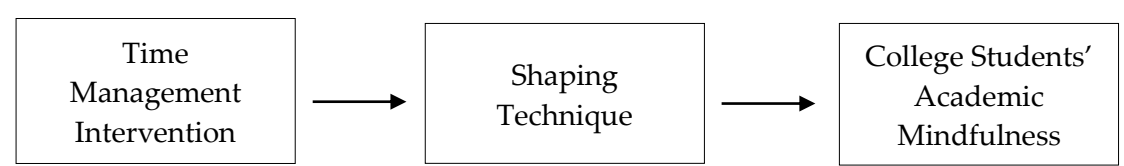
This condition is increasingly relevant in the context of Indonesian college students, particularly when facing final projects, midterm exams, or final examinations. Many students report difficulty maintaining concentration during lectures and are easily distracted by social media and the pressure of multitasking (Deng et al., 2024). This phenomenon is further supported by findings from Ardiyanti et al., (2025), which indicate that social media use can lead to focus disruption, decreased learning effectiveness, and a tendency toward multitasking. These patterns reflect a low level of mindfulness in the academic context defined as the ability to be fully present in the learning process without distraction (Khairunnisa & Dewi, 2025). One of the main factors contributing to this low level of mindfulness is poor time management skills, which result in irregular schedules, task accumulation, and ongoing stress (Ardiyanti et al., 2025).

Previous studies have demonstrated a relationship between time management and the enhancement of mindfulness within the academic context. Marais et al., (2020) explained that mindfulness-based programs effectively improve mental well-being and time management skills, showing an average significant increase of 28% in related variables. In line with this, Osgood et al., (2017) stated that college students with higher self-control and mindfulness exhibit better time management abilities, particularly when facing academic pressure. These findings are further supported by Nignam & Pirani, (2024) who reported that combined time management and mindfulness interventions can enhance academic enthusiasm and attention by up to 24%. However, Adams & Blair, (2019) found that not all aspects of time management have positive effects; specifically, long-term planning showed no significant correlation with academic achievement. Therefore, this study proposes a new approach emphasizing the role of time management in improving academic mindfulness, aiming to address the research gap in previous studies that have not specifically examined this relationship experimentally.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated a relationship between time management and academic well-being, there remains a limited number of intervention approaches that specifically focus on enhancing academic mindfulness through the strengthening of effective time management behaviors. In this context, the shaping technique becomes relevant, as it enables the gradual development of adaptive behaviors through reinforcement of responses that approximate the target behavior (Cecilia & Wicaksono, 2024), in this case, effective time management skills. This approach is believed to help students establish learning regularity, enhance focus, and reduce academic stress. Most previous studies have been descriptive or correlational in nature; therefore, an experimental approach is needed to examine the effectiveness of shaping interventions in improving students' academic mindfulness.

In this intervention, the shaping technique was applied through the gradual reinforcement of students' time management behaviors, such as the ability to set priorities, create structured study schedules, and reduce procrastination. This process encourages the formation of more organized and planned academic behavior patterns, which in turn strengthen self-regulation and enhance awareness of the learning process (Adedoyin, 2025; Zimmerman, 2015). Such awareness of academic activities reflects the development of mindfulness, which grows alongside behavioral regularity and the ability to consistently manage time through a gradual habituation process (Roziqin et al., 2024). Calonia et al., (2023) also explained that strong time management skills play a crucial role in improving learning efficiency and reducing academic pressure. Therefore, a shaping-based intervention that focuses on cultivating effective time management behaviors represents a strategic approach to enhancing college students' academic mindfulness.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of the Study



This study examines the effectiveness of a shaping-based intervention targeting effective time management behaviors to enhance academic mindfulness among college students. The intervention was designed in response to increasing academic pressures and distractions that contribute to a lack of

present-moment awareness in the learning process. The shaping approach was chosen because it allows for the gradual development of adaptive behaviors through positive reinforcement of responses that approximate the target behavior. In this case, the ability to manage time in a structured, directed, and mindful manner. Thus, reinforcing effective time management behaviors is expected to help students improve focus, reduce stress, and strengthen academic mindfulness. The researcher hypothesizes that the time management intervention will have a significant effect on increasing students' academic mindfulness. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to enrich experimental psychology research and provide practical contributions to the design of campus-based psychological intervention programs aimed at enhancing students' academic well-being.

Method

This study used a quantitative method with a Quasi-Experimental research design with a pre-test, post-test, nonequivalent control group design. This design included an experimental group receiving treatment and a control group receiving no treatment and serving as a comparison group (Hastjarjo, 2019). This study aimed to demonstrate the effect of Time Management intervention on improving academic mindfulness in students. The structure of Table 1 allows researchers to evaluate the treatment effect while considering the pretest effect. By comparing the results across these two groups, researchers can identify the effectiveness of the treatment.

Table 1

Research Design (Pre-Test Post-Test Nonequivalent Control Group Design)

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Post Test
Experiment	X	X	X
Control	X	-	X

The participants in this study consisted of two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The population in this study were students who were members of an organization. A total of 20 students were taken as the sample for this study. From this sample, they were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. Ten participants were included in the experimental group and ten participants were included in the control group.

The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling with convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a sampling method based on ease of access and the availability of participants who meet the research needs

(Sugiyono, 2017). Therefore, participants were selected from students who were easily accessible and willing to participate in the research activities. The determination of the experimental and control groups was carried out using existing groups (intact groups) within the student organization unit. This condition has the potential to cause selection bias, so the researcher attempted to minimize initial differences between groups by considering the equality of pre-test scores.

Table 2

Demographics of Research Participants by Group, Gender, and Semester

Group	Subject Code	Gender	Semester
Experiment	E1	F	4
	E2	M	6
	E3	M	4
	E4	F	6
	E5	F	4
	E6	F	4
	E7	F	4
	E8	F	4
	E9	M	4
	E10	M	6
Control	C1	F	6
	C2	M	6
	C3	F	2
	C4	F	6
	C5	F	4
	C6	F	6
	C7	F	6
	C8	F	6
	C9	M	6
	C10	F	4

The subjects in this study were 20 UIN Malang students, consisting of 10 in the experimental group and 10 in the control group. All participants were from semesters 4 to 6, with a relatively balanced gender composition between men and women, as shown in Table 2.

The data collection instrument in this study used the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), which has been adapted into Indonesian and adapted to the academic context of college students. This scale consists of 15 items measured using a Likert scale with five response levels: 1 = always, 2 = often, 3 =

sometimes, 4 = rarely, and 5 = never. The MAAS has been tested for construct validity, with an item-total correlation value of 0.57, indicating adequate validity (Ferdian & Helmi, 2023). Furthermore, reliability testing results in the college student context showed Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.777 to 0.823, indicating a high level of internal consistency (Nurida & Widyasari, 2020). In this study, the MAAS was used to measure academic mindfulness levels at the pre-test and post-test stages for both the experimental and control groups. The higher the score obtained by respondents on this scale, the higher the level of academic mindfulness they possessed.

Table 3

Time Management Intervention Session Program

Session	Topic	Purpose	Technique	Duration	Activity
Session 1	Introduction to Time Management	Understanding the importance of time management for academic focus	Psychoeducation, Time blocking, worksheet	60 Minutes	Introduction to material, time blocking practice, filling in daily schedules Review worksheet, analyze focus rhythm, write down distractions and solutions Regular schedule practice, follow-up plans, habit strengthening motivation
Session 2	Optimizing time management based on focus rhythm	Evaluate schedules, identify distractions, and formulate solutions.	Reflection, identification of distractions	45 Minutes	
Session 3	Forming Sustainable Habits	Instilling consistent time management habits	Shaping, gradual strengthening	30 Minutes	

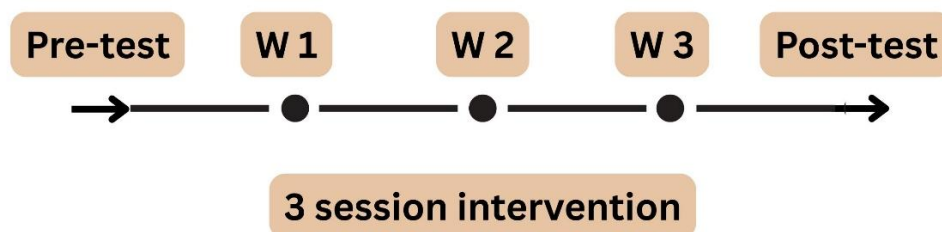
After a pre-test, participants were asked to consent to participate in three time management intervention sessions designed to enhance academic mindfulness. This intervention was based on a gradual learning approach and behavioral reinforcement through habit formation, in accordance with B.F.

Skinner's operant conditioning theory, which states that positive reinforcement can shape long-lasting adaptive behavior (Andriani et al., 2022). In the first session, participants were given an introduction to the importance of time management skills in supporting concentration and mindfulness in an academic context. This material was supplemented with concrete time management strategies, such as time blocking techniques and creating a time management schedule, provided in the form of worksheets to be completed and practiced.

In the second session, the material focused on optimizing time management based on individual focus rhythms. Participants were invited to evaluate the use of the previous worksheet and identify distractions they experienced during the implementation process. They were then asked to formulate appropriate solutions to these distractions. To support this reflection process, a follow-up worksheet was distributed with additional columns for identifying distractions and alternative solutions. The final session focused on forming sustainable habits through the application of shaping techniques, namely the process of forming new habits through gradual reinforcement, with the aim of instilling effective time management patterns in participants' academic routines.

Figure 2

Intervention Duration and Time Scheme



This intervention was facilitated by two final-year psychology students supervised by a lecturer specializing in behavior modification. This intervention module modified the research of Kader & Eissa, (2015) by adapting the concept of self-regulated time management to the student context, through structured habituation, distraction control, and the application of gradual focus strategies to improve learning effectiveness and academic attention retention. This intervention was also based on the shaping process, in line with behavior change theory which emphasizes the importance of repeated practice and reinforcement for consistent new habits to form (Amsari et al., 2024). This intervention was expected to not only improve time management skills but also encourage increased mindfulness in daily learning activities. After the intervention was administered to the experimental group, all participants (n = 20) took a post-test

using the same instrument to measure the effect of the time management intervention on improving academic mindfulness.

Result

Table 4

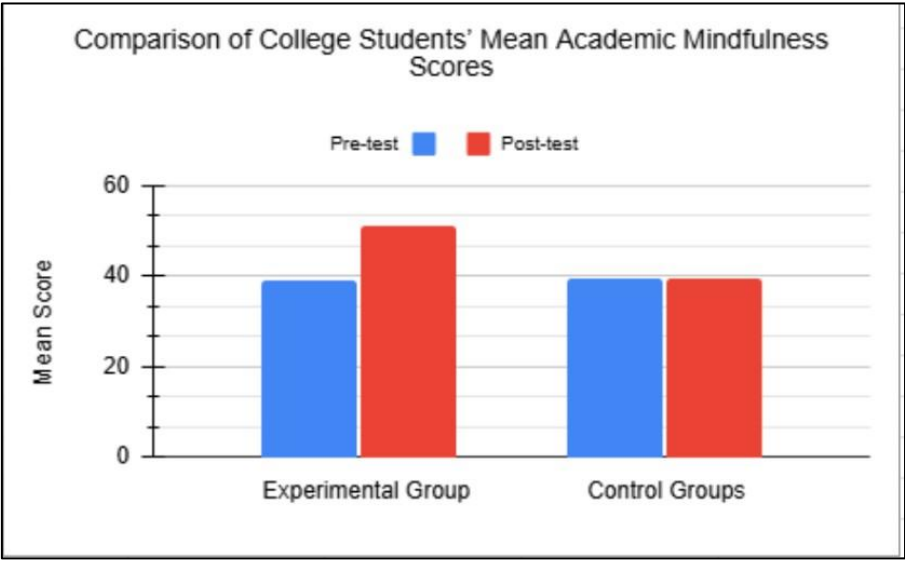
Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Group	Participant Code	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
Experimental	E 1	34	40
	E 2	42	59
	E 3	41	44
	E 4	54	62
	E 5	33	39
	E 6	46	66
	E 7	59	36
	E 8	25	47
	E 9	29	54
	E 10	29	66
Control	C 1	34	35
	C 2	29	30
	C 3	39	26
	C 4	42	26
	C 5	39	35
	C 6	46	49
	C 7	45	39
	C 8	33	30
	C 9	40	39
	C 10	46	59

Based on Table 4, the experimental group showed a notable increase in scores from pre-test to post-test for example, participant E2 (from 42 to 59) and E4 (from 54 to 62) whereas the control group exhibited minimal changes, such as participant C1 (from 34 to 35). This indicates that there was no meaningful effect among participants who did not receive the intervention. Interestingly, a unique finding was observed in participant E7 from the experimental group, whose score decreased from 59 to 36, suggesting the possibility of external factors or inconsistency in intervention implementation. The differences in score changes between the two groups are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 3

Comparison Graph of Academic Mindfulness Score Changes



Based on Figure 3, the experimental group that received the shaping-based intervention demonstrated an increase in the average academic mindfulness score from pre-test to post-test, whereas the control group that did not receive the treatment showed relatively stable scores. This finding reinforces the assumption that the shaping-based intervention was effective in fostering structured learning behaviors and enhancing students' full engagement in their academic processes.

Table 5
Paired Sample Test Results

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.(2 tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest-Posttest Eksperimen	-12.100	16.251	.043
Pair 2	Pretest- Posttest Control	2.500	8.196	.360

Based on the results of the Paired Sample Test in table 5, there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group ($p = 0.043 < 0.05$), indicating that the intervention had a measurable impact on the outcomes. Conversely, no significant difference was found between pre-test and post-test scores in the control group ($p = 0.360 > 0.05$), confirming that the changes observed in the experimental group were likely due to the intervention provided.

Table 6
Independent Sample T-Test Results

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hasil	Equal variances assumed	.881	.360	2.945	18	.009

Table 6 presents the results of the Independent sample T-Test, conducted to compare the means of two independent groups. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of $0.009 < 0.05$ indicates a statistically significant difference between the group that received the treatment and the control group. The t-value of 2.945 with a mean difference of 14.500 suggests that the experimental group achieved a higher average score compared to the control group.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the time management intervention significantly improved students' academic mindfulness. The results of the independent t-test showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t = 2.945$, $p = .009$), with an average score increase of 14.5 points. These findings provide empirical evidence that gradual behavioral changes through shaping techniques with the application of time management can foster mindfulness in students' activities. Theoretically, these results align with the self-regulated learning model proposed by Zimmerman, (2015), which states that effective time management is a key component in student self-regulation. Furthermore, mindfulness in an academic context demonstrates full awareness of learning activities and active engagement in cognitive tasks (Anuar, 2022; Yunita & Lesmana, 2019).

Psychologically, these results demonstrate that increased mindfulness not only emerges from explicit self-awareness training but can also be developed through consistent and purposeful behavior. Structured time management interventions significantly improve academic achievement, reduce procrastination, and enhance student well-being (Patzak et al., 2025). This finding aligns with the findings of Lee et al., (2019), who stated that time management strategies can improve attention and reduce distractions in students. Therefore, the success of this intervention suggests that habit formation and self-monitoring play a crucial role in fostering academic mindfulness, as students learn to focus through routines and purposeful time discipline. This aligns with longitudinal research that shows habits are formed through consistent repetition over weeks or months, so repeated time management practices tend to become automatic and support more stable attention (van der Weiden et al., 2020).

These findings align with previous studies that confirm a positive relationship between time management, mindful attention, and academic well-being. Marais et al., (2020) found that mindfulness-based training can improve psychological flexibility and time management skills. This study extends these findings by demonstrating that improved mindfulness can also be achieved through behavioral aspects, not just mindfulness training. Shah et al., (2024) reported that time management is an important predictor of academic achievement. Other studies have also shown that effective time management skills are closely related to increased mindful attention, decreased academic procrastination, and anxiety (Nisa et al., 2019). Similarly, Lau and Dewi, (2023) found that time management strategies contribute to improved student self-regulation. Patzak et al., (2025) corroborated these findings by demonstrating that time management interventions significantly improved students' psychological well-being in the face of academic pressure. Therefore, these research findings confirm that developing time management behaviors can serve as a functional foundation for the development of academic mindfulness.

However, the results of this study also revealed individual variation in response to the intervention. One participant in the experimental group (E7) experienced a decrease in mindfulness scores from 59 to 36. This phenomenon may be influenced by external factors, such as increased academic load, stress before exams, or difficulty adapting to new routines. This is in line with research showing that increased academic stress or individual uncertainty in facing new routines can temporarily reduce mindfulness and the effectiveness of self-regulation exercises (Fuente et al., 2018; Roziqin et al., 2024). Furthermore, the success of forming new habits through behavioral shaping techniques is strongly influenced by social support and the stabilization of the participant's emotional state (Adedoyin, 2025). These findings emphasize the need for individual adaptation in the implementation of behavior-based interventions.

Theoretically, these findings indicate that time management interventions not only provide statistically significant impacts but also functionally improve students' learning awareness. Based on Zamora-Lugo et al., (2025) executive functioning theory, time management is part of executive function that helps individuals plan actions, manage priorities, and maintain attention while working on tasks. This will directly impact academic mindfulness and self-control. Thus, increased academic mindfulness can be seen as a result of strengthening executive function through structured behavioral interventions. Furthermore, interventions implemented within student organization communities also strengthen participants' social engagement. This is in line with

concept of social learning, which states that social support and learning through group practice strengthen the internalization of productive behavior (Amsari et al., 2024).

This research was conducted within a student organization at a university in Indonesia, providing a specific context for the intervention's implementation. This context strengthens ecological validity, as the intervention was conducted in a real-world setting relevant to students' academic activities (Rahmania, 2024). However, generalization to other institutions requires adjustments to the academic culture, level of institutional support, and student demographics. A study by Galaviz, (2025) showed that the effectiveness of time management interventions varies depending on cultural background and students' level of learning independence. Kim and Seo, (2015) also emphasized that the level of academic procrastination and student lifestyle are contextual factors influencing the intervention's success. Therefore, the development of an adaptive and contextual intervention module is highly recommended for widespread adoption in higher education institutions, both locally and nationally.

However, the results of this study should be carefully considered, as the quasi-experimental design carries limitations in drawing absolute causal conclusions (Capili & Anastasi, 2024). The lack of full randomization has the potential to introduce selection bias, as participants in the experimental group may have higher intrinsic motivation from the start, making them more responsive to the intervention (Hastjarjo, 2019). Furthermore, the small sample size ($n=20$) may limit the generalizability of the findings (Memon et al., 2020). However, this design remains ethically and practically appropriate given the educational context where full randomization is difficult. For future research, it is recommended to involve a larger number of participants, extend the duration of the intervention, and integrate a mixed-methods approach to explore the subjective dynamics of participants. Furthermore, variables such as learning motivation and social support have the potential to act as mediators or moderators of intervention effectiveness, with students with high intrinsic motivation and strong social support tending to be more consistent in implementing time management. Further research is needed to test this relationship to understand the underlying psychological mechanisms more comprehensively (Lau & Dewi, 2023; Patzak et al., 2025).

The implications of this research encompass both theoretical and practical aspects in developing students' soft skills. Theoretically, this study supports the integration of the concept of time management within the framework of

academic mindfulness, which has rarely been explicitly studied. This study is important because time awareness is part of conscious and deliberate self-management (Mucha et al., 2020). Practically, this intervention has the potential to be integrated into campus counseling services, new student orientation activities, or even as part of the character education curriculum. Henderson et al. (2020) suggest that developing non-cognitive skills such as time management is crucial for developing resilient and adaptive students. In Indonesia, the discourse of independent learning (Merdeka Belajar) opens up space for developing psychosocial intervention modules like this within a holistic learning scheme (Kemendikbudristek, 2020). Socially, students with good time management skills tend to experience lower stress, have a better work-life balance, and demonstrate higher life satisfaction (Adams & Blair, 2019). Therefore, this intervention is not only academically relevant but also important in supporting students' overall psychological well-being.

Conclusion

This study indicates that a time management intervention based on the shaping technique significantly enhances students' academic mindfulness. Through gradual reinforcement of time management behaviors, students learn to develop consistent, disciplined, and structured study routines, thereby fostering full awareness in carrying out academic activities. The systematic process of habit formation enables students to improve their focus, organization, and self-regulation in responding to academic demands. These findings support the self-regulated learning model (Zimmerman, 2000) and the executive function theory (Barkley, 2012), both of which emphasize the importance of planning and behavioral monitoring as fundamental aspects of effective learning awareness.

Conceptually, the results of this study broaden the understanding that mindfulness can be enhanced not only through explicit self-awareness training such as meditation, but also through the consistent formation of adaptive behaviors. The shaping-based approach enables students to gradually internalize positive habits through the reinforcement of small, repeated behaviors. The processes of habit formation and self-monitoring that occur during the intervention play a crucial role in stabilizing conscious attention, cognitive engagement, and students' mental readiness toward academic tasks. Therefore, the improvement in academic mindfulness can be understood as the outcome of strengthening goal-directed regulatory behaviors through a structured behavioral intervention.

From a practical perspective, the shaping-based time management

intervention has the potential to be integrated into campus counseling services as a form of behavioral coaching for students experiencing academic stress or procrastination. This program can also be implemented in new student orientation activities, self-development training within student organizations, or incorporated into character education curricula to strengthen self-regulation skills. Conducting the intervention in a group setting may enhance social support, reinforce motivation, and maintain behavioral consistency among students. Therefore, this study not only provides empirical evidence of the effectiveness of shaping-based behavioral interventions but also offers practical contributions to the development of campus-based psychological intervention programs that promote academic performance and students' psychological well-being.

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