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Time as Capital: Exploring Time Management and Business Performance Among Traditional and Digital Marketplace Sellers in Uzbekistan

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Abstract

Time management is a critical determinant of business success, especially in fast-evolving marketplace environments. In Uzbekistan, where traditional bazaars coexist with emerging digital commerce platforms, sellers face unique challenges in balancing task prioritization, delegation, and responsiveness. This study examines how marketplace actors in Uzbekistan allocate their time across traditional, digital, and hybrid business environments. Anchored in the Eisenhower Matrix and Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT), the research employs a qualitative case study design involving semi-structured interviews with 15 marketplace sellers in Tashkent, Samarkand, and the surrounding regions. Findings reveal that digital sellers partially align with urgency-based prioritization due to platform notifications yet often neglect non-urgent strategic tasks. Traditional vendors are primarily reactive, focusing on repetitive, urgent routines at the expense of long-term growth. Across all categories, procrastination is a persistent issue, rooted not only in workflow gaps but also in cultural resistance to delegation and low engagement with digital planning tools. The study highlights how time management practices are deeply embedded in socio-cultural norms and infrastructural constraints. A conceptual model is proposed linking cultural attitudes, delegation behaviours, motivational responsiveness, and workflow structuring to time efficiency and operational performance. This model offers a foundation for future quantitative research and potential interventions tailored for hybrid marketplaces. The findings suggest the need for culturally adaptive time management strategies, mobile-integrated planning tools, and behavioural support systems to enhance marketplace productivity in Uzbekistan's digital economy.

Keywords: Time Management; Marketplace Efficiency; Eisenhower Matrix; Temporal Motivation Theory; Digital Transformation in Uzbekistan

A. INTRODUCTION

Effective time management is essential for enhancing operational efficiency and achieving business success, especially within fast-paced marketplace environments that demand quick decision-making and coordination. In Uzbekistan, the marketplace sector is undergoing a significant transformation as traditional bazaars increasingly coexist with digital commerce platforms. This shift has been driven by rising internet penetration, mobile usage, and government-backed digitalization initiatives. E-commerce adoption has become a strategic necessity, offering businesses greater operational flexibility and market reach (Afiat & Rijal, 2023; Jaén et al., 2023). Empirical evidence also highlights the positive impact of e-commerce on supply chain optimization and financial resilience, particularly for micro and small enterprises (MSMEs) during periods of disruption, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Gao et al., 2023). Efficient logistics systems further contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty, making streamlined time management a competitive advantage in digital trade (Tulong et al., 2024). However, the digital transformation journey is not without obstacles—limited infrastructure and cybersecurity concerns continue to hinder full-scale adoption, especially among traditional vendors. Thus, integrating time-efficient practices into both traditional and digital operations is crucial for the Uzbek marketplace to thrive in an increasingly digital economy.

Despite the rapid digital transformation of Uzbekistan's marketplace, many actors—both traditional and digital—continue to face significant challenges related to inefficient time management. Traditional vendors still rely on manual operational processes, resulting in frequent delays and reduced responsiveness, particularly in rural areas where connectivity and digital resources are limited (Morris et al., 2022). Meanwhile, digital sellers often struggle with procrastination and poor task prioritization, which negatively impact productivity and

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customer engagement (García-Ros et al., 2022; Rezaei et al., 2024; Thomas et al., 2023). These inefficiencies are exacerbated by a cultural reluctance toward delegating tasks, driven by fears of losing control or compromising quality—factors that (Bähr & Fliaster, 2022) identify as critical barriers to innovation in digitally transitioning economies. The result is a measurable decline in sales performance and customer satisfaction, with literature consistently linking ineffective time use to lower business outcomes and diminished customer loyalty (Alabdali et al., 2023; Wiratmo et al., 2022). Without targeted efforts to improve time management and foster digital adoption, marketplace participants in Uzbekistan risk falling behind in an increasingly competitive economic environment.

While time management theories have been extensively developed and validated in Western contexts, their applicability in emerging economies, particularly in Central Asia, remains underexplored. Uzbekistan's hybrid marketplace, which blends traditional and digital commerce, presents unique cultural, behavioral, and infrastructural dynamics that challenge the direct adoption of global time management models. Cultural tendencies such as reluctance to delegate, high personal responsibility, and informal communication styles often impede the practical implementation of time-efficient practices (Boyratan et al., 2022; Mburu et al., 2022). Moreover, infrastructural limitations, especially in rural regions, restrict access to digital tools essential for effective time use (Kamnde & Wu, 2024). Behavioral factors, such as fear of failure, resistance to change, and procrastination—profoundly shaped by cultural views on productivity and timeliness—further complicate this issue (Herminingsih & Ratnasari, 2024; Thomas et al., 2023). These conditions underscore the urgent need to contextualize and adapt existing time management frameworks to align with the realities of Uzbekistan's evolving marketplace environment.

This study examines how time is managed by marketplace participants in Uzbekistan, with a focus on both traditional retail settings and emerging digital platforms. It aims to identify recurring patterns in task prioritization, delegation, and responsiveness while critically assessing the applicability of selected time management theories—namely, the Eisenhower Matrix and Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel & König, 2006)—to the local business context. Particular attention is given to how these frameworks intersect with cultural norms and behavioral tendencies that influence operational efficiency. The following questions guide the research: How do Uzbek marketplace sellers prioritize and allocate their time? In what ways do time-based incentives and urgency influence their behavior? What are the key cultural and behavioral barriers to effective delegation and the adoption of digital time management tools? By addressing these questions, the study aims to develop culturally sensitive strategies that enhance productivity and streamline operations within Uzbekistan's evolving marketplace. Ultimately, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of time management in emerging economies by contextualizing global theoretical models within the specific socio-economic and cultural landscape of Uzbekistan.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Time Management in Marketplace Contexts

Time management is a critical pillar of operational success in marketplace environments that demand timely decision-making, task coordination, and responsiveness to consumer needs. In both traditional and digital commerce, the ability to plan, prioritize, and allocate time effectively has a direct impact on sales performance, workflow efficiency, and customer satisfaction. As digital transformation accelerates in emerging economies like Uzbekistan, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are under increasing pressure to adopt structured time management strategies that align with modern operational demands. The integration of digital tools is shown to enhance business digitalization and efficiency, offering pathways to reduce time waste and meet shifting customer expectations (Santos-Jaén, 2023). However, many global time management theories are developed in Western contexts and often lack consideration for the cultural, behavioral, and infrastructural realities specific to Central Asia. In Uzbekistan, resistance to delegation and reliance on manual processes hinder the practical application of such models (Tulong et al., 2024). Infrastructure limitations further constrain adoption, particularly in rural areas where digital resources are scarce (Narzullaev et al., 2023).

Research indicates that embedding strategic time management practices—such as formal scheduling, reward systems, and task monitoring—can significantly enhance SME resilience and operational sustainability, especially in post-pandemic contexts (D. N. A. M. Dewi & Sari, 2024). Cultural influences also play a role; when employees are granted autonomy in managing their time, motivation and performance tend to improve, suggesting that culturally adapted frameworks may yield better results in traditional marketplaces (Conde et al.,

2022). In competitive environments, SMEs that adopt structured time management are better positioned to implement strategies such as competition, which foster both innovation and operational agility (Gernsheimer et al., 2024). Moreover, the integration of digital marketing, data analytics, and automation tools can further refine time use by streamlining workflows and enhancing customer engagement (R. S. Dewi et al., 2023; Liu, 2024). Effective time management—when tailored to local cultural and infrastructural contexts—serves as a strategic lever for enhancing marketplace performance and sustaining competitiveness in Uzbekistan's complex economic environment.

Eisenhower Matrix and Task Prioritization

The Eisenhower Matrix, also known as the Urgent-Important Matrix, is a widely utilized time management framework that categorizes tasks into four quadrants based on urgency and importance. This model allows individuals and organizations to distinguish between tasks that require immediate attention and those that should be scheduled, delegated, or eliminated. In dynamic marketplace environments, particularly where multitasking is a daily occurrence, this approach helps reduce time spent on low-value activities and aligns operational focus with strategic goals (Lucantoni et al., 2023; Zyoud, 2024). Figure 1 illustrates the Eisenhower Matrix, which divides tasks into four distinct categories: 1) Quadrant I (Do) – Tasks that are both urgent and important, such as responding to time-sensitive customer issues; 2) Quadrant II (Decide) – Tasks that are important but not urgent, like long-term planning or training, which are often neglected in favor of immediate issues; 3) Quadrant III (Delegate) – Tasks that are urgent but not important, such as routine administrative work, which can be outsourced or assigned; and 4) Quadrant IV (Delete) – Tasks that are neither urgent nor important, often distractions or redundant activities.



Figure 1. The Eisenhower Matrix
Source: Adapted from Eisenhower Decision Principle

In the context of Uzbekistan's evolving marketplace ecosystem, the application of this matrix is increasingly relevant for both digital and traditional sellers. Digital vendors operating through platforms such as Uzum and Mybox face time-sensitive demands, including customer response, order processing, and inventory updates. Prioritizing tasks using structured frameworks has been proven to enhance workflow efficiency, expedite delivery, and improve customer satisfaction. Sellers who incorporate digital task management tools report increased scheduling accuracy and reduced operational overload (Santos-Jaén, 2023; Tulong et al., 2024). Conversely, traditional market vendors often rely on repetitive manual tasks such as face-to-face negotiations and routine stock checks. While perceived as urgent, these tasks may fall into the "urgent but not important" quadrant, offering little contribution to long-term growth. Without a precise prioritization mechanism, these vendors may overinvest time in immediate demands and underinvest in strategic activities, such as product diversification or digital outreach (Brown & Ma, 2023; Hong-quan & Faridah, 2023).

Cultural resistance to delegation further complicates task management in traditional sectors. Many business owners are hesitant to delegate tasks, even when they are not critical to growth, due to concerns over trust, quality control, and personal responsibility (Wenyang et al., 2024; Yuan, 2024). This hesitancy limits the effective use of the Eisenhower Matrix, particularly in its recommendation to delegate less important but urgent tasks. As a result, vendors often bear the full workload, which increases inefficiency and stress while reducing their capacity for scaling operations (Rahimi et al., 2024). Recent research suggests that the introduction of prioritization tools, such as mobile inventory apps and automated task alerts, can serve as a gateway for marketplace actors to adopt structured time management frameworks. For digital sellers, these tools support timely execution and improve strategic focus. For traditional vendors, such technologies—when culturally and

contextually adapted—can offer a gradual transition into more efficient task-planning systems (Adekuajo et al., 2023; Cutinha & Mokshagundam, 2024). Ultimately, the practical application of the Eisenhower Matrix in Uzbekistan requires more than technical training; it demands cultural alignment and behavioral change to shift entrenched attitudes toward delegation and planning.

Temporal Motivation Theory and Procrastination

Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) (Steel & König, 2006) offers a behavioral lens for understanding how urgency, expected rewards, and deadline proximity influence individual motivation toward task completion. This framework is especially relevant in e-commerce environments, where digital sellers operate under constant time pressure to respond to customer inquiries, manage promotions, and maintain high service responsiveness. In such high-paced contexts, procrastination can result in missed sales opportunities and reduced customer satisfaction, particularly for sellers lacking structured workflows or ongoing motivational systems (Cheng et al., 2022; Ye et al., 2023). TMT posits that tasks with closer deadlines and higher expected value are more likely to be completed promptly. In digital marketplaces, strategies such as time-based incentives, gamification, and task reminders have been widely used to mitigate procrastination and sustain engagement. Gamification—integrating game-like elements into routine business tasks—has proven effective in boosting motivation, task completion, and user satisfaction, especially among small and medium e-commerce vendors (Restrepo-Tamayo et al., 2025). These interventions are particularly impactful when combined with structured workflows, such as scheduling apps and real-time reminders, which have been shown to enhance on-time delivery and reduce seller fatigue (González-Limón & Ramos, 2022; Rahiman et al., 2023).

In Uzbekistan, digital sellers operating through platforms like Uzum and Mybox can significantly benefit from such motivational frameworks, especially as they navigate complex hybrid marketplaces. However, traditional vendors also face procrastination-related challenges—though driven by different dynamics. Many still rely on manual processes and are consumed by urgent but low-priority tasks, such as repeated inventory checks or prolonged face-to-face interactions. These practices divert attention away from strategic actions such as digital marketing or product innovation (Malonda et al., 2023). TMT helps identify how such misalignments between urgency and business value can impair long-term growth. Cultural factors also shape procrastination tendencies. In traditional marketplaces across Uzbekistan, there is a widespread reluctance to delegate tasks, stemming from concerns over quality, trust, and control. This resistance places the entire workload on the vendor, increasing the likelihood of task avoidance or delay, especially for non-urgent yet important functions. Research indicates that without cultural adaptation and changes in task ownership norms, even structured time management systems may be underutilized (Misra et al., 2022). The growing body of research supports the effectiveness of TMT-informed interventions in improving time allocation and reducing procrastination. Techniques such as gamified task management and digital reminders can be instrumental in aligning seller behavior with operational objectives (Azzery, 2022). When designed with cultural context and infrastructure in mind, these tools offer a practical pathway toward enhanced responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and, ultimately, marketplace competitiveness.

Cultural and Infrastructural Barriers to Time Efficiency

Time management practices in hybrid market systems, such as those in Uzbekistan, are significantly influenced by cultural attitudes, organizational behaviors, and infrastructural limitations. A strong preference for personal control over tasks and a general reluctance to delegate are deeply embedded in cultural norms, often hindering the adoption of efficient workflows and time-saving digital tools. This resistance is often rooted in concerns about quality control and trust, leading to individual overload and reduced productivity (Mburu et al., 2022; Nakata et al., 2025). In traditional marketplaces, these cultural dynamics are reinforced by long-standing business practices that emphasize individual accountability and hands-on operations. As noted by (Lombongadil & Djamil, 2023), organizational cultures that discourage delegation often correlate with low employee engagement and increased inefficiencies. When delegation is not normalized, business actors—particularly in small enterprises—may find themselves overwhelmed with responsibilities that could otherwise be distributed more effectively. This undermines productivity and impairs long-term planning (Filomeno et al., 2024).

In addition to cultural constraints, infrastructural disparities pose a significant barrier to effective time management. Many vendors in rural Uzbekistan face limited access to stable internet connections and modern digital devices, making the adoption of time management tools impractical or inconsistent. These infrastructural gaps hinder the full utilization of digital platforms designed to improve efficiency, such as automated reminders, scheduling systems, or inventory apps (Vishkin et al., 2023). As a result, even theoretically sound time

management models struggle to deliver results without adequate technological support. Furthermore, resistance to digital tools is not solely technical but often rooted in cultural perceptions. Traditional vendors may view the integration of technology with skepticism, perceiving it as incompatible with their customary practices. Such resistance mirrors findings in other sectors, where lack of standardization and hesitancy to adopt new systems lead to decreased efficiency and increased stress (Crevacore et al., 2022; Shousha et al., 2023). In this context, the success of time management interventions depends on their adaptability to local cultural values and infrastructural realities. Research suggests that flexible, culturally sensitive time management strategies can foster higher job satisfaction and operational success. In contrast, rigid applications of external frameworks without cultural adaptation may lead to resistance and inefficiencies (Beshka, 2022; Vishkin & Kitayama, 2024). Therefore, addressing both cultural and infrastructural barriers is essential to enhance time efficiency in hybrid marketplaces, such as those in Uzbekistan.

Linking Time Management to Business Performance

Effective time management is increasingly recognized as a critical determinant of business performance across both traditional and digital marketplace environments. Sellers who implement time-efficient practices—such as digital scheduling, inventory automation, and structured daily planning—are more likely to achieve timely order fulfillment, improved customer retention, and scalable operations. The ability to track, optimize, and strategically allocate time is now viewed not merely as an internal efficiency measure but as a core competitive advantage in fast-moving and hybrid markets (Gaoat et al., 2023; Song & Li, 2022). Digital tools play a pivotal role in this transformation. The integration of inventory systems, automated reminders, and workflow scheduling enables businesses to reduce redundancies, enhance responsiveness, and ensure consistent service delivery. For example, inventory optimization enables sellers to manage stock levels efficiently and respond to demand fluctuations, which directly contributes to improved financial performance and customer satisfaction (Gaoat et al., 2023). These benefits are especially relevant for digital sellers in Uzbekistan who must maintain operational agility while engaging with an increasingly digital consumer base.

Structured time management frameworks such as the Eisenhower Matrix further reinforce this relationship by helping sellers prioritize high-impact activities and avoid reactive, low-value tasks. This systematic approach to decision-making enhances workflow focus and supports strategic planning, leading to improved adaptability in fluctuating market conditions (Ren, 2023; Zennaro et al., 2022). The matrix is beneficial for marketplace actors who balance urgent operational duties with long-term business development efforts. As marketplace dynamics evolve, the ability to monitor and adapt time use emerges as a performance differentiator. Studies show that businesses adopting structured time management systems experience gains in operational efficiency, reduced stress, and increased strategic alignment across teams (Hou et al., 2024). Moreover, emerging practices such as gamification and time-based incentives have shown promise in improving motivation and productivity. These tools not only combat procrastination but also reinforce a culture of accountability among digital sellers (Ren, 2023).

Traditional vendors, while facing different challenges, can also benefit from structured time management. Exposure to digital tools and prioritization strategies—such as inventory apps or mobile task alerts—can help them transition from manual, reactive work patterns to proactive, performance-oriented workflows. However, the full realization of these benefits often depends on the seller's willingness to delegate and adopt change, which may be shaped by cultural and organizational norms (Rahimi et al., 2024; Zyoud, 2024). Ultimately, the link between time management and business performance is mediated by both technological capability and human behavior. Whether in digital or traditional contexts, implementing structured, context-sensitive time management strategies leads to measurable improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, and scalability, positioning sellers more competitively within Uzbekistan's rapidly evolving marketplace.

C. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study design to investigate how marketplace sellers in Uzbekistan manage their time across traditional and digital environments and how these time management practices relate to their business performance. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for uncovering the nuanced cultural, behavioral, and infrastructural dynamics that shape time use—factors that may be difficult to quantify but deeply inform practical decision-making and operational strategies. Through this lens, the study seeks to interpret time management not only as an individual behavior but as a socio-cultural construct embedded in a hybrid economic

landscape. The research is conducted in the context of Uzbekistan's evolving marketplace, where traditional bazaars remain culturally significant while e-commerce platforms like Uzum and MyBox are gaining traction among tech-savvy consumers. These dual systems coexist and reflect different time-use challenges: manual repetition and routine tasks in bazaars versus speed and responsiveness in online marketplaces. As such, the study aims to explore both types of marketplace structures to identify shared patterns, contextual barriers, and adaptive strategies. Data are collected through semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of 12 to 15 marketplace sellers, ensuring representation across various business models (traditional and digital), locations (urban and rural), and experience levels. Participants must be actively involved in business for at least one year. Diversity in gender, age, and enterprise-scale is also considered to ensure a wide variety of perspectives. Table 1 presents the intended structure for participant distribution:

Table 1. Informant Description and Categories

No.	Seller Type	Location	Gender	Years in Business	Platform/Market
1	Traditional	Urban (Tashkent)	Male	12	Chorsu Bazaar
2	Digital	Urban (Tashkent)	Female	4	Uzum
3	Traditional	Rural (Fergana)	Male	8	Village Bazaar
4	Digital	Urban (Samarkand)	Female	6	MyBox
5	Hybrid	Semi-Urban	Male	10	Local + Online (Instagram)
6	Traditional	Rural (Kokand)	Female	5	Farmers' Market
7	Digital	Urban (Andijan)	Male	3	Uzum
8	Hybrid	Urban (Bukhara)	Female	7	Bazaar + Telegram sales
9	Traditional	Urban (Namangan)	Male	15	Central Market
10	Digital	Urban (Tashkent)	Male	2	MyBox + TikTok Shop
11	Hybrid	Semi-Urban	Female	6	Local Shop + Online Store
12	Traditional	Rural (Karakalpakstan)	Female	11	Mobile Street Market
13	Digital	Urban (Tashkent)	Female	4	Etsy (Export-based)
14	Hybrid	Urban (Fergana)	Male	9	Bazaar + Online Orders
15	Traditional	Urban (Samarkand)	Female	13	Siab Bazaar

Source: Research data, 2025

Each participant is interviewed using a flexible interview guide developed based on themes from the Eisenhower Matrix (task prioritization) and Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) (urgency, delay, reward). Key questions examine daily routines, the use of digital tools, delegation practices, and perceived relationships between time use and business outcomes. Interviews are conducted in either Uzbek or Russian, recorded with the participant's consent, and transcribed for analysis. Thematic analysis is used to process and interpret the data, combining both deductive coding (based on prior theory) and inductive coding (based on emergent themes from the field). Coding is conducted using a structured framework that maps responses against four analytical dimensions: task prioritization, time delay or procrastination, adaptation to digital tools, and perceived efficiency or performance outcomes. Themes will then be synthesized across traditional and digital seller profiles to allow for contrastive interpretation. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applies member checking, peer debriefing, and reflexive journaling. Participant responses will be anonymized, and ethical approval will be obtained prior to the commencement of fieldwork. All participants will be informed of their rights, and interviews will be conducted concerning confidentiality and cultural sensitivity.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the main findings from semi-structured interviews with 15 marketplace participants in Uzbekistan, comprising traditional, digital, and hybrid sellers. Using thematic analysis, four major themes emerged: 1) Task Prioritization Practices, 2) Procrastination and Motivational Barriers, 3) Delegation and Cultural Attitudes, and 4) Impact of Time Management on Business Outcomes. These findings offer a grounded understanding of how time is perceived, managed, and optimized in hybrid marketplaces.

Task Prioritization Practices

Analysis of the interviews indicates a prominent divergence in how traditional, digital, and hybrid marketplace actors in Uzbekistan approach task prioritization. Traditional vendors often engage in reactive task management, relying on visible cues and habitual practices rather than structured planning. For example, Informant I03 (traditional, Fergana, 8 years) stated: "I open the stall and start with whatever seems most urgent—usually arranging the items and checking what is missing. I do not write anything down." This behavior aligns

with the "reactive-routine" code, which emerged frequently among traditional sellers (coded 9 times). These vendors tend to associate task importance with physical proximity or the immediacy of customer demand, lacking any formal distinction between urgency and strategic importance. Conversely, digital sellers—especially those using platforms like Uzum and MyBox—show more structured time use, although their prioritization is often externally driven by system alerts. Informant I07 (digital, Andijan, 3 years) reported: "The platform tells me what to pack and ship, and I try to do those first. However, I often postpone updating my store visuals or replying to less urgent messages." This reflects the "notification-driven prioritization" pattern, which was coded 12 times across digital sellers. Although somewhat more organized, this model still lacks planning, particularly for important but not urgent activities such as marketing or inventory forecasting.

Interestingly, only 3 out of 15 informants reported using any deliberate task scheduling method. These were typically hybrid sellers who experimented with both written lists and mobile reminders. For instance, Informant I05 (hybrid, semi-urban, 10 years) explained: "I use Telegram reminders for order delivery, but when I am in the bazaar, I do not follow a plan. It depends on the day." This represents a "dual-mode planning" strategy, yet still limited by inconsistent application and role-switching between physical and digital environments. The "context-switching fatigue" code (6 mentions) frequently appeared in hybrid sellers' accounts, illustrating the difficulty in balancing platform demands with on-site responsibilities. The following table consolidates the core codes and patterns identified across seller types:

Table 2. Coded Patterns of Task Prioritization by Seller Type

Seller Type	Common Codes	Frequency	Sample Informants	Description
Traditional	reactive-routine	9×	I01, I03, I09	Task priority based on habit or immediate visibility
	urgency-over-strategy	7×	I06, I12	Immediate needs outweigh longer-term planning
Digital	notification-driven prioritization	12×	I04, I07, I10	Platform alerts guide task order
	low-strategic-task compliance	5×	I02, I13	Delays in non-urgent but important tasks like marketing
Hybrid	dual-mode planning	6×	I05, I08, I14	A mix of manual and digital scheduling
	context-switching fatigue	6×	I05, I08	Struggle to balance offline and online workflows

Source: Research data, 2025

While the Eisenhower Matrix offers a structured model to distinguish between tasks that are urgent, important, both, or neither, none of the participants explicitly referenced it or any similar framework. Instead, the quadrant of "important but not urgent"—which includes tasks such as strategic planning, brand positioning, or long-term customer engagement—was consistently underprioritized across all seller types. The data suggests a systematic neglect of strategic tasks, which is particularly problematic for sellers seeking to grow or transition into digital spaces. In several interviews, informants recognized the value of planning yet lacked the tools or training to implement it. As Informant I11 noted: "I always want to plan the day better, but it gets chaotic. Customers call, deliveries come, and I go with it." The findings in this section indicate that task prioritization in Uzbekistan's hybrid marketplace is largely informal, characterized by varying degrees of reactive behavior, digital dependence, or inconsistent self-management. Introducing culturally adaptable prioritization frameworks—such as simplified Eisenhower models integrated into existing platforms—may help vendors better balance urgent demands with important long-term goals.

Procrastination and Motivational Barriers

The analysis reveals that procrastination is a recurring barrier to effective time management, particularly among digital and hybrid sellers, whose workflows often lack consistent structure and are frequently disrupted by multitasking or motivational fatigue. Applying the lens of Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT)—which links urgency, expected reward, and deadline proximity to task execution—sheds light on the psychological dynamics underpinning this pattern. Many sellers delay essential but non-urgent tasks until external stimuli (such as customer complaints or platform warnings) create an artificial sense of urgency. Digital sellers, in particular, reported deferring non-critical actions such as marketing, content updates, or even inventory documentation unless these directly impacted immediate sales. Informant I04 explained: "If there is no promotion going on, I do not focus on uploading new photos. Only when I see fewer visitors do I panic and start updating." This aligns

with the "deadline-triggered action" code, appearing 11 times across interviews, and reflects how urgency is often externally imposed rather than internally planned.

Moreover, a lack of internal motivation was a recurring issue in seller accounts. Without formal work schedules, many digital participants described themselves as struggling with time discipline. Informant I13 (digital seller, Tashkent) stated: "Sometimes I sit with my phone, telling myself I will reply to chats later. Then it gets late, and I miss the orders. It is not about being lazy; it is hard to stay on track alone." This was coded under "solo-motivation fatigue," a theme mentioned nine times, especially among one-person micro businesses operating online. In hybrid contexts, sellers face unique distractions that worsen procrastination. Having to shift between the demands of physical stalls and online platforms contributes to fragmented workflows. Informant I08 shared: "I am often too tired after standing all day at the bazaar, so I delay processing the online orders until late. Sometimes I forget." This highlights the "offline-online overload" code, which recurs in 6 participants, demonstrating the toll of hybrid multitasking on task completion.

Traditional vendors, by contrast, reported fewer instances of procrastination, not due to better discipline but because their tasks are generally immediate, tactile, and reactive. Their challenge lies less in delay and more in overcommitment to repetitive low-impact tasks, which they do not perceive as optional or deferrable. To counter procrastination, some informants spontaneously described mechanisms resembling TMT-aligned incentives, including using platform-based notifications, daily quotas, or public visibility metrics as motivators. For instance, Informant I10 shared: "Seeing that little progress bar from the app makes me want to finish tasks. It is like a game." This suggests the effectiveness of gamification and digital feedback systems in nudging behavioral engagement—a concept strongly supported in TMT literature. The following table summarizes the key motivational barriers and coping mechanisms, categorized by seller type:

Table 4. Procrastination Patterns and Motivational Triggers by Seller Type

Seller Type	Dominant Codes	Frequency	Examples / Quotes
Digital	deadline-triggered action	11×	“I wait until it is urgent to do listings." (I04)
	solo-motivation fatigue	9×	“Hard to stay focused alone." (I13)
	gamified motivation response	5×	“Progress bar motivates me." (I10)
Hybrid	offline-online overload	6×	“Too tired after the bazaar to do digital." (I08)
Traditional	over-commitment to routine	7×	“I just keep doing what I always do." (I01)

Source: Research data, 2025

While some participants use reminders or visual progress tools, none reported formal systems for tracking task completion or performance reviews. The absence of structured motivation systems leaves many sellers vulnerable to procrastination, especially when tasks lack clear or immediate consequences. Procrastination in Uzbekistan's hybrid marketplace arises not only from individual behavior but also from systemic gaps in workflow design, digital incentives, and a culture of time awareness. Addressing these motivational barriers requires more than training—it calls for embedding behavioral triggers and micro-rewards into the platforms and routines sellers already engage with.

Delegation and Cultural Attitudes

A central theme that emerged from the interview data is the strong cultural hesitancy among marketplace actors in Uzbekistan, particularly among traditional and hybrid vendors, toward delegating tasks. Sellers generally express a preference for personal task control, often citing trust issues, concern over quality, and perceived loss of accountability as reasons for not delegating even routine or low-impact tasks. This was especially evident in responses from traditional sellers, many of whom operate as sole proprietors. Informant I09 (traditional, Namangan, 15 years) shared: "Even if I have a helper, I still prefer to count the goods myself. If something is missing, it is on me." This perspective reflects a broader "self-responsibility culture," which was coded 10 times across interviews with traditional sellers. The code captures the belief that responsibility cannot be shared without risking integrity or control.

Among hybrid sellers, the reluctance to delegate stems more from role-switching fatigue than principle. For example, Informant I14 (hybrid, Fergana, 9 years) explained: "I want to trust someone to handle online replies, but I have not trained anyone. Moreover, when it is busy at the bazaar, I forget." This quote was coded under "missed delegation opportunities"—cases where delegation is acknowledged as useful but is not practiced due to lack of process, time, or trained personnel. Digital-only sellers, especially those who are younger, were slightly more open to task-sharing but still hesitant to hire or delegate formally. Informants cited cost and control concerns.

Informant I10 (digital, Tashkent, 2 years) mentioned: "I sometimes ask my brother to help pack, but I still check every order myself." This points to "informal delegation with supervision," a pattern coded in 5 digital interviews.

Across all seller types, a common barrier to effective delegation is the absence of clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) or onboarding routines—vendors who attempted to delegate often reverted to doing things alone due to errors or mismatched expectations. As Informant I12 (traditional, Karakalpakstan) put it: "I tried letting someone arrange the goods, but they did it wrong. Better to do it myself." This attitude is reinforced by broader social norms, especially in rural areas, where business practices are heavily personalized and informal. Delegation is often seen as a luxury or risk rather than a strategic function. The following table summarizes the delegation patterns and barriers identified:

Table 5. Patterns and Barriers to Delegation by Seller Type

Seller Type	Common Attitudes / Codes	Frequency	Example Quote
Traditional	self-responsibility culture	10×	"If something is wrong, it is on me." (I09)
	delegation as risk	7×	"I do not want mistakes from others." (I12)
Hybrid	missed delegation opportunities	8×	"I forget to train anyone." (I14)
	role-overload leads to isolation	5×	"Too much to handle, but no one helps." (I08)
Digital	informal delegation w/ supervision	5×	"I let my brother help, but I still check." (I10)
	trust-cost balance hesitation	6×	"I do not want to pay for help unless I must." (I13)

Source: Research data, 2025

The data suggests that cultural and practical constraints deeply shape how (and whether) delegation happens, even in cases where it would objectively improve efficiency. Without formal delegation frameworks or internal training systems, sellers continue to bear full operational loads, increasing fatigue and limiting scalability. To overcome these barriers, capacity-building interventions—such as micro-training in delegation, task templates, or app-based task sharing—must be tailored to respect the informal and personal nature of these businesses while gradually introducing structure.

Digital Tools and Workflow Structuring

The integration of digital tools into daily workflows remains uneven among marketplace actors in Uzbekistan. While digital-first sellers display moderate adoption of e-commerce platforms and social media channels, many still lack structured systems to organize their tasks, track progress, or evaluate performance. Traditional and hybrid vendors, by contrast, rarely utilize digital task management systems, and their workflows are almost entirely informal, shaped by habit and immediate needs rather than planning or automation. Among digital sellers, the most commonly used tools are mobile-based platform features such as chat alerts, order trackers, and sales dashboards. However, none of the participants reported using dedicated task management apps, such as Trello, Asana, or Google Calendar. For many, the digital organization is passive rather than active—reacting to platform cues rather than proactively structuring the day. Informant I07 noted: "I use whatever the app gives—when there is a red alert, I act. However, I do not plan my day separately." This was coded under "platform-dependent scheduling," appearing in 9 digital interviews.

Hybrid sellers face the most complexity, often juggling between physical tasks at the bazaar and digital demands. Many expressed difficulty in synchronizing their online responsibilities with face-to-face sales. Informant I08 shared: "Sometimes I am too busy at the stall to check the phone, and by the time I respond, the customer is gone." This reflects the "desynchronization gap," a theme found in 6 interviews. Without integrated scheduling or delegation tools, sellers struggle to maintain workflow consistency across modes. Traditional vendors, who often have very limited or no use of digital tools, operate entirely based on manual routines, relying on memory, repetition, and daily experience. This mode provides consistency but also leads to rigidity and limited scalability. Informant I01 said: "I come, open the stall, arrange the goods, wait for customers. That is my routine, same every day." While some digital platform features (e.g., MyBox seller centre, Uzum stats) offer potential for structured planning, very few sellers explore these functions beyond basic order tracking. The absence of digital literacy training was cited as a key reason. Informant I13 explained: "I did not know there was a calendar inside the app. I only see the orders." This theme was coded as "untapped tool features," highlighting the underutilization of available resources.

Some participants expressed interest in better digital organization, particularly younger sellers. When asked what tools they wished they had, responses included "reminder systems," "simple to-do lists," and "sales tracking by week." These point to an appetite for light, mobile-friendly solutions that align with sellers' daily habits and constraints. Below is a summary of tool usage and workflow structuring patterns:

Table 6. Digital Tool Usage and Workflow Structuring Patterns

Seller Type	Common Tools Used	Workflow Pattern	Barriers Identified
Digital	Platform dashboards, chat	Platform-triggered, reactive	Low awareness of full features, no planning
Hybrid	Phones, manual logs	Desynchronized, fragmented	No tool unifying offline-online tasks
Traditional	None	Habitual, manual	Digital illiteracy, no incentive to switch

Source: Research data, 2025

While some digital tools are available in the marketplace, their use is often superficial or incidental. To improve time management and operational flow, workflow structuring must move from passive to intentional use. This may include mobile-friendly apps integrated into existing platforms, visual schedules, or gamified planning tools tailored to the realities of microenterprises.

Discussion

This study sheds light on how time is understood, structured, and utilized by marketplace actors in Uzbekistan, where traditional business norms, digital pressures, and infrastructural realities intersect. Drawing from the Eisenhower Matrix and Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT), the findings suggest that although theoretical models of task prioritization and motivational psychology hold conceptual relevance, their real-world application is highly context-dependent. Across seller categories, task prioritization patterns reveal that traditional vendors largely operate within reactive routines. Their activities are dictated by immediate physical stimuli (e.g., customer arrivals, visible stock shortages), leaving little room for strategic planning. Digital sellers, while more exposed to platform-based cues and deadlines, tend to gravitate toward short-term task execution and often overlook important but non-urgent activities, such as brand development or inventory analytics. This dominant focus on the urgent quadrant of the Eisenhower Matrix highlights a quadrant imbalance exacerbated by limited delegation and workflow fragmentation.

Procrastination emerged as a structural, not merely psychological, barrier. The absence of formal schedules, motivational feedback systems, and clear performance incentives leads sellers—especially in digital spaces—to delay tasks that are low in immediacy but high in strategic value. TMT offers a useful lens here: as sellers discount tasks with low time proximity or vague reward expectancy, performance suffers, particularly in non-routine actions like promotions, engagement-building, or platform optimization. Compounding these inefficiencies is a pervasive reluctance to delegate, especially among traditional and hybrid vendors. Many view delegation as risky, associating it with a loss of control and a reduction in personal accountability. This cultural pattern significantly limits scalability and reinforces time inefficiency. Delegation, where it occurs, is informal and heavily supervised—undermining its potential as a time-saving mechanism.

Workflow structuring remains largely tool-driven but unplanned. Digital sellers depend on platform alerts to guide their activities, rarely integrating their daily work into comprehensive schedules. Hybrid vendors, who balance both physical and digital demands, experience the highest cognitive strain, often failing to synchronize the two environments. Few participants demonstrated awareness of task management apps or digital planning features embedded in their sales platforms. These findings support the development of a conceptual model that links time management behaviors to business performance outcomes mediated by delegation practices, digital workflow structuring, and motivational triggers. This model, illustrated below, offers a testable framework for future quantitative validation:

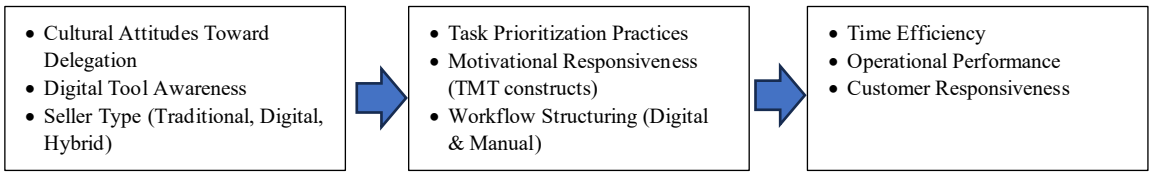


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Source: Research data, 2025

This model can inform a future Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) approach or path analysis, where latent constructs such as "Time Management Behavior" and "Delegation Readiness" can be measured via scaled instruments. Quantitative validation of these relationships can further refine the theoretical understanding of marketplace productivity in emerging economies like Uzbekistan.

E. CONCLUSION

This study examined how marketplace actors in Uzbekistan—encompassing traditional, digital, and hybrid seller categories—manage their time, prioritize tasks, respond to motivational triggers, and navigate delegation in operational contexts. Drawing upon the Eisenhower Matrix and Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT), the findings reveal that time management practices are shaped not only by economic rationality but also by cultural norms, digital infrastructure, and behavioral habits that emerge from hybrid working conditions. While digital sellers demonstrate partial alignment with urgency-driven task prioritization and platform-based scheduling, strategic time use remains limited. Traditional vendors operate with high consistency but low flexibility, often consumed by routine and reactive tasking. Across all types, procrastination is exacerbated by a lack of formal workflows and motivational frameworks, confirming TMT's assertion that tasks perceived as low in immediacy and unclear in reward tend to be deferred. Furthermore, a strong cultural inclination toward task ownership and skepticism toward delegation acts as a systemic barrier to time efficiency and scalability.

Theoretically, this study extends time management literature by contextualizing classical models within the realities of hybrid economies. It challenges the universal applicability of Western time models and highlights the need for culturally responsive adaptations. In practice, the findings suggest the development of lightweight, mobile-integrated tools that enable sellers to visualize, plan, and track their time in alignment with platform demands and customer expectations. The conceptual model proposed—linking cultural factors, delegation practices, task prioritization, and digital structuring to time efficiency and performance—offers a foundation for future quantitative research, particularly through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). Validating this model would not only refine theory but also inform the design of platform features, training programs, and policy interventions to support micro-entrepreneurs in digital transitions. For policymakers and platform developers, this study emphasizes the importance of embedding behavioral design—such as gamified reminders, scheduling tools, and reward feedback—into digital commerce systems tailored for users in emerging markets. For local business support institutions, the implication is clear: time management training must go beyond technical instruction and engage with deeper cultural and motivational drivers.

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