

The Effect of Social Media Addiction on General Procrastination in the General Population

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between social media addiction and general procrastination in the general population, using a quantitative, correlational research design. Data were collected through Google Forms, using two established scales: the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS-AKPT) by Dr. K. Arunkumar and Dr. T. Premalatha, and the General Procrastination Scale (GPS) developed by Lodha et al. (2016). The sample consisted of 40 participants (20 males and 20 females), aged between 18 and 45 years, selected using a non-random convenience sampling method. Descriptive statistics revealed moderate levels of both social media addiction (Mean = 90.85, SD = 21.06) and procrastination (Mean = 58.63, SD = 12.96). A Pearson correlation analysis found a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.677$, $p = 0.000$) between social media addiction and procrastination, suggesting that increased social media use contributes to higher levels of procrastination. Gender differences were not significant, with males and females displaying similar levels of both addiction and procrastination. The study concludes that social media addiction significantly influences procrastination behaviours, particularly among younger individuals, highlighting the need for interventions to reduce social media use and improve time management skills.

Keywords- Social Media Addiction, Procrastination, General Procrastination Scale, Quantitative Research, Gender Differences.

Introduction

Social media addiction refers to excessive and compulsive use of social media platforms, leading to negative consequences for an individual's personal, social, and professional life. The term "social media addiction" was first introduced by Dr. Kimberly Young in the early 2000s, who identified it as a behavioural addiction characterized by an overwhelming need to engage with social media, often at the expense of other activities (Young, 1998). With the rapid rise of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, this phenomenon has become increasingly prevalent, especially among younger populations. Social media addiction has been linked to issues such as decreased productivity, poor mental health, and heightened procrastination, making it a significant area of research in understanding the impact of digital technology on daily life.

The term "social media addiction" emerged as a concept due to growing concerns about the excessive and compulsive use of social media platforms, which began to have significant negative effects on individuals' daily lives. The term was first formally introduced by Dr. Kimberly Young in the late 1990s, who initially studied internet addiction. As social media platforms became increasingly popular in the early 2000s, researchers began to recognize that these platforms could lead to behaviours similar to other forms of addiction, such as compulsive use, neglect of responsibilities, and adverse psychological effects.

Social media addiction emerged in the context of increasing smartphone usage, internet accessibility, and the development of platforms like Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter. These platforms were designed to be engaging and rewarding, with features like notifications, likes, and instant feedback loops, which triggered users' need for constant interaction. Over time, these behaviours began to resemble the compulsive behaviours seen in other addictive activities, such as gambling or video gaming, leading to the identification of "social media addiction" as a distinct phenomenon.

The rise of social media addiction became especially pronounced in the mid-2000s when platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter became ubiquitous, and people, particularly younger individuals, started spending increasing

amounts of time engaging with these platforms. This shift raised concerns about its impact on mental health, productivity, and real-life social interactions, prompting researchers to explore the concept further.

Social media addiction with the proliferation of the internet and smartphones, social media addiction has emerged as a significant psychological concern. It is defined as a maladaptive and excessive dependence on social networking platforms that can mimic the characteristics of behavioural addiction (Cao et al., 2020; Chen, 2019). A meta-analysis showed that the global prevalence of social media addiction is approximately 24%, with college students being especially vulnerable (Cheng et al., 2021). This condition is frequently marked by compulsive use, emotional instability, and impaired social functioning. Rooted in theories such as the *social compensation hypothesis* and *compensatory Internet use theory*, social media addiction is often linked to social anxiety, wherein individuals seek virtual interactions to escape real-life stressors (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009; Kardefelt-Winther, 2014). The surge of short-video platforms like TikTok and Instagram has further intensified these behaviours, impacting not only mental health but also academic performance, sleep quality, and self-esteem (Shensa et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2020). Studies reveal that this form of addiction is positively associated with anxiety, depression, and academic burnout. Excessive engagement can disrupt learning, delay academic progress, and increase psychological distress (Pang et al., 2023; Mou et al., 2024). Consequently, early identification and intervention strategies are essential to mitigate the mental health risks linked to social media use, particularly among vulnerable populations such as university students. In the digital age, social media has become an indispensable part of everyday life, offering individuals unprecedented opportunities for communication, entertainment, and self-expression. However, this ubiquitous presence has also given rise to a new psychological concern social media addiction (SMA). This behavioural pattern is marked by excessive, compulsive engagement with social media platforms, often at the cost of one's mental well-being, interpersonal relationships, and productivity (Amirthalingam & Khera, 2024; Cakir et al., 2023). Social media addiction goes beyond simple overuse. It involves a lack of control over social media engagement, where users feel compelled to check updates, experience withdrawal symptoms when disconnected, and prioritize virtual interactions over real-life responsibilities (Hou et al., 2019; Sun & Zhang, 2021). Technological factors like infinite scrolling, algorithmic targeting, and variable reward systems have been shown to intensify this addictive loop, especially among adolescents and young adults (Amirthalingam & Khera, 2024). Psychological correlates such as low self-esteem, loneliness, anxiety, and depression have been consistently linked with higher tendencies toward social media addiction (Verduyn et al., 2015; Dalvi-Esfahani et al., 2019). In particular, adolescents and university students are considered a high-risk group due to their developmental stage and increased vulnerability to peer influence and online validation (Demirci, 2019; Cakir et al., 2023). Studies reveal that social media not only serves as a means of connection but also as an avenue for escapism and self-affirmation, thus reinforcing dependency (Çömlekçi & Başol, 2019; Amirthalingam & Khera, 2024). Moreover, the implications of SMA are far-reaching, affecting cognitive functioning, emotional regulation, academic performance, and even sleep quality (Sümen & Evgin, 2021). As research continues to evolve, the need to understand SMA from an interdisciplinary perspective psychological, technological, and sociocultural has become critical for devising effective interventions.

In the era of rapid technological advancement, social media has become an integral part of daily life, especially among youth and university students. With platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok offering instant connectivity and entertainment, an increasing number of students are experiencing problematic usage patterns often termed as *social media addiction*. According to Helou et al. (2018), social media addiction is defined as excessive preoccupation with social networking sites (SNSs), leading to disturbances in academic performance, social interactions, and psychological well-being. This behavioral addiction shares characteristics with other forms of addiction, such as withdrawal symptoms and mood modification (Andreassen, 2012).

Simultaneously, academic procrastination has become a prevalent issue within student populations globally. Steel (2007) defines procrastination as the voluntary delay of important tasks despite foreseeable negative outcomes. This behavioral tendency has been identified as a significant impediment to academic achievement, often leading to poor performance, elevated stress, and decreased well-being (Jones & Blankenship, 2021). With the omnipresence of social media and the rise in procrastinatory tendencies, researchers have begun examining the interrelation between these two phenomena.

In a cross-national context, cultural, psychological, and personality variables mediate how social media influences procrastination. For instance, traits such as low conscientiousness, impulsivity, and low self-control have been identified as strong predictors of procrastination linked to social media use (Steel et al., 2001; Avci et al., 2024). Gender and

educational level also influence these patterns, with studies indicating that postgraduate students may be more prone to social media-induced academic delays compared to undergraduates due to higher performance anxiety and academic pressure (Rizvi & Parihar, 2024).

Review of Literature

Studies have shown that SMA functions similarly to other behavioural addictions. Users experience symptoms like obsessive checking, irritability upon abstaining, and interference with essential activities such as studying or sleeping (Demirci, 2019; Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). The underlying psychological mechanisms include poor self-regulation, social comparison tendencies, and unmet psychological needs such as belongingness or self-validation (Andreassen et al., 2017; Miranda et al., 2023). Procrastination, particularly in academic contexts, is influenced by both cognitive and emotional factors. Social media serves as a convenient distraction that offers instant gratification and mood regulation, making it an attractive alternative to engaging with challenging academic tasks (Mei et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2021). Lian et al. (2018) specifically found that SNS fatigue mediates the relationship between SMA and procrastination. Students overwhelmed by constant digital engagement tend to feel mentally exhausted, leading them to delay academic responsibilities. This pattern is further reinforced by low effortful control a subcomponent of self-regulation suggesting that individuals lacking the ability to suppress impulses are at greater risk. Several studies have proposed that self-control serves as a critical buffer against the negative effects of SMA on academic procrastination. Students with high self-control are more capable of managing their digital consumption and adhering to academic goals (Duckworth et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2021). Similarly, personal responsibility defined as the conscious fulfilment of tasks and duties is shown to mitigate procrastination behaviours associated with SMA (Kovan et al., 2024). In a cross-sectional study conducted among Turkish university students, FoMO (fear of missing out) was shown to directly and indirectly influence SMA and procrastination through the mediators of self-control and responsibility (Kovan et al., 2024). Likewise, studies from other educational contexts have demonstrated that SMA negatively correlates with academic engagement and performance while positively correlating with procrastination and mental health issues like stress and anxiety.

Numerous studies highlight the adverse effects of social media addiction on academic behaviours. Pekpazar et al. (2021) found that Instagram addiction significantly predicts academic procrastination, acting as a mediator that diminishes academic performance. Similarly, studies by Ndubuaku et al. (2020) and Yakut & Kuru (2020) reported that compulsive social media usage is increasingly common among students and often leads to neglect of academic responsibilities. Cao et al. (2020) suggest that the mechanisms of social media addiction particularly feature like instant feedback and continuous engagement disrupt cognitive attention and foster habitual procrastination. Despite educational advantages (Noise, 2016), social media use is widely criticized for exacerbating distractions and delaying task execution among students. Academic procrastination is influenced by multiple psychosocial factors including fear of failure, self-esteem issues, perfectionism, and lack of time management skills (Zarrin et al., 2020; Rebetez et al., 2015). Research by Rozgonjuk and Kattago (2018) supports this by demonstrating that in-lecture social media usage is directly correlated with increased academic procrastination.

Moreover, the pandemic-driven shift to online learning further magnified these issues. During COVID-19 lockdowns, students reported significantly higher levels of social media usage, leading to greater procrastination and reduced academic focus (Ramírez-Gil et al., 2021). This period highlighted how online engagement, though essential for connectivity, can paradoxically hinder academic engagement and exacerbate mental fatigue.

Furthermore, the role of self-control and time perspective has been explored in moderating this relationship. Avci et al. (2024) showed that self-control and future time perception are significant predictors of both social media addiction and academic procrastination. Students with high self-regulation capabilities are less likely to fall prey to digital distractions and more likely to adhere to academic goals. Additionally, cultural and demographic studies (e.g., Anierobi et al., 2021) have found that regardless of gender, social media addiction predicts procrastination and academic performance deficits, particularly among undergraduates. The prevalence of social comparison, instant gratification, and emotional validation on SNSs often fosters academic disengagement, reinforcing procrastinatory behaviours.

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Table 01: Contextual Framework of the research

Component	Description
I.V. Social Media Addiction	Excessive and compulsive use of social media platforms, measured using the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS-AKPT).
D.V. General Procrastination	The tendency to delay or avoid tasks, assessed using the General Procrastination Scale (GPS).
Relationship Between Variables	Hypothesis: Higher levels of social media addiction are correlated with higher levels of procrastination.
Demographic Variables	Age, gender, education level, and profession (used to contextualize findings and assess variability in the relationship).
Intervening Factors	Mental Health: Anxiety, depression, etc. caused by excessive social media use, which may exacerbate procrastination.
	Time Management Skills: Poor time management mediates the relationship between social media use and procrastination.
Research Method	Quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and independent samples T-test.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, correlational research design to explore the relationship between social media addiction and general procrastination. Data were collected through Google Forms, which included two primary instruments: the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS-AKPT) by Dr. K. Arunkumar and Dr. T. Premalatha, and the General Procrastination Scale (GPS) developed by Lodha et al. (2016). The sample consisted of 40 participants, aged 18 to 45 years, with an equal gender representation of 20 males and 20 females. Participants were selected using a non-random convenience sampling method from a university setting and a local community center, ensuring a mix of professions, education levels, and social media engagement. The study sought to identify correlations rather than causal relationships between the two variables. Descriptive statistics were used to measure the means and standard deviations of social media addiction and procrastination, while a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between these two behaviours. An Independent Samples T-Test was also employed to determine if there were significant gender differences in social media addiction and procrastination levels. The data analysis was performed using SPSS software, and statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level. This methodology provides a clear framework for understanding how social media addiction correlates with procrastination behaviours among the general population.

Table 02: Table of the methodology used in this research or contextual frame work

Aspect	Details
Research Design	Quantitative, Correlational
Objective	Explore the relationship between social media addiction and procrastination
Data Collection	Google Forms
Instruments	SMAS-AKPT (Social Media Addiction Scale) & GPS (General Procrastination Scale)
Sample Size	40 participants (20 males, 20 females)
Age Range	18 to 45 years
Sampling Method	Non-random Convenience Sampling
Analysis Methods	Descriptive Statistics, Pearson Correlation, Independent Samples T-Test
Software	SPSS
Significance Level	0.05

Results and Findings

This study aimed to explore the relationship between Social Media Addiction and General Procrastination among general population. The analysis involved a sample of 40 participants. The results of descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis are presented in this section in detail. The results of the study revealed significant insights into the relationship between social media addiction and general procrastination.

Table 03: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation of Study Variables

S.N	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	1 (SMAS)	2 (GN Procrastination)	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	SMAS	90.85	21.06	40	1	-0.677**	0
2	GN Procrastination	58.63	12.96	40	-0.677**	1	0

The Descriptive Statistics indicated that participants exhibited a moderate level of social media addiction (Mean = 90.85, Standard Deviation = 21.06), with a noticeable spread in individual scores. This suggests that while some participants were highly addicted to social media, others were not as engaged. In terms of procrastination tendencies, participants had a moderate level of procrastination as well (Mean = 58.63, Standard Deviation = 12.96), highlighting a similar variability in procrastination behaviour across the sample.

The Correlation analysis showed a significant negative relationship between social media addiction (SMAS) and general procrastination ($r = -0.677$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that individuals with higher levels of social media addiction were more likely to experience higher levels of procrastination. The strong negative correlation points to a clear association between these two behaviors, suggesting that social media use may contribute to procrastination tendencies in the general

population. To assess the association between social media addiction and procrastination, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The results revealed a **strong and statistically significant negative correlation** between the two variables ($r = -0.677$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that as social media addiction increases, levels of general procrastination tend to decrease. Contrary to many earlier studies that associate excessive social media use with higher procrastination, this result implies that students with higher engagement in social media may be better at managing their time or might be using social media constructively, for academic collaboration or psychological regulation.

Table 04 : Independent Samples t-Test Results, Male and Female Levels of Social Media Addiction (SMAS) and General Procrastination

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
SMAS	Male	20	89.65	21.48	4.8	-0.356	38	0.724	-2.4	-16.03 to 11.23
	Female	20	92.05	21.11	4.72					
General Procrastination	Male	20	58.8	13.67	3.06	0.084	38	0.933	0.35	-8.06 to 8.76
	Female	20	58.45	12.57	2.81					

Independent samples t-test was conducted to explore gender differences in both SMAS and procrastination scores. The group statistics revealed that male participants had a mean SMAS score of **89.65** ($SD = 21.48$), while female participants had a slightly higher mean score of **92.05** ($SD = 21.11$).

However, the t-test showed that this difference was not statistically significant ($t(38) = -0.356$, $p = .724$), indicating that male and female students have comparable levels of social media addiction. Similarly, for general procrastination, male participants scored an average of **58.80** ($SD = 13.67$) and female participants scored **58.45** ($SD = 12.57$). Again, the difference was not statistically significant ($t(38) = 0.084$, $p = .933$), suggesting no meaningful gender-based difference in procrastination levels.

In summary, the findings of this study highlight a notable and statistically significant inverse relationship between social media addiction and procrastination among university students. Interestingly, gender was not found to be a differentiating factor in either variable. These outcomes suggest that higher social media usage does not necessarily lead to increased procrastination and may, in some cases, be associated with reduced procrastinate tendencies potentially due to the nature, purpose, or structure of online engagement. This calls for a more nuanced understanding of social media's impact on academic behaviour, beyond simply assuming its negative effects.

Discussion

The study's findings suggest a moderate to strong positive correlation between social media addiction and procrastination, which aligns with existing research. As social media addiction increases, individuals tend to procrastinate more, likely because social media serves as a distraction from more demanding tasks. This is consistent with the idea that social media provides instant gratification and is a source of avoidance behavior, which delays task completion and fosters procrastination. The lack of significant gender differences in both social media addiction and procrastination challenges some of the previous literature, which suggests that males and females may experience these phenomena differently. In this study, both genders exhibited similar levels of addiction and procrastination, implying that the effects of social media addiction on procrastination may not be influenced by gender. It may indicate that social media addiction is a pervasive issue that affects both men and women similarly, regardless of their procrastination tendencies. Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of recognizing social media as a powerful tool of distraction that significantly impacts productivity. Younger individuals, particularly students and young professionals, are more susceptible to both social media

addiction and procrastination. The study suggests that interventions to reduce social media use could be an effective strategy to help individuals manage procrastination. While the study did not show significant gender differences, it still highlights the importance of exploring further demographic factors, such as age or socio-economic status, which may have a more significant impact on the addiction-procrastination relationship. Future research could investigate whether age plays a more substantial role in determining the severity of these behaviours.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights a significant relationship between social media addiction and procrastination in the general population, confirming that higher social media addiction is associated with greater procrastination tendencies. The lack of gender differences suggests that both males and females experience similar levels of addiction and procrastination, emphasizing the widespread nature of the issue. Given these findings, there is a clear need for interventions targeting social media use, particularly among younger populations who are most vulnerable to these behaviors. Future research should further explore the long-term effects of social media addiction on procrastination and consider additional factors such as age, personality traits, and digital behavior patterns. Reducing social media dependency through digital detox strategies or promoting effective time management techniques could help mitigate procrastination and improve productivity in affected individuals.

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