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Digital Habits and Academic Procrastination Among Health Care Students Aged 16-25 Years

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Abstract: ***Background**: Social media is increasingly integrated into students' daily lives and may compete with academic activities. This study examined the relationship between time spent on social media and academic procrastination among health care college students aged 16–25 years. **Methods**: A correlational observational study was conducted among 28 undergraduate and postgraduate health care students selected by convenience sampling. Social media use was assessed using the Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS), while academic procrastination was assessed using a self-developed questionnaire. Daily social-media time was recorded in hours. Descriptive statistics, Shapiro–Wilk testing, and Pearson's correlation were used. **Results**: Mean daily social-media use was 4.32 ± 1.89 hours. The mean SMUS score was 39.04 ± 9.44, with 17 (60.7%) participants classified as having high social-media usage. The mean academic procrastination score was 43.39 ± 13.63; 15 (53.6%) participants had moderate and 10 (35.7%) had high procrastination. A statistically significant weak negative correlation was observed between daily social-media time and academic procrastination ($r = -0.377$, $p = 0.048$). **Conclusion**: Although the association was statistically significant, its weak magnitude indicates limited practical significance. Larger studies using objective screen-time measures are warranted*

Keywords: social media, academic procrastination, healthcare students, screen time, correlation

1. Introduction

Academic procrastination refers to the voluntary postponement of academic tasks despite the intention to complete them.[1] It is commonly observed among university and medical students and may be influenced by academic demands, self-regulation, time management, and behavioural factors.[2,3] Social media has become an integral part of students' daily lives, providing opportunities for communication, information seeking, learning, and entertainment. However, excessive or problematic use may interfere with academic activities and focus.[4,5]

Previous studies have reported an association between social media addiction or problematic social media use and academic procrastination among university and medical students.[5,6] Al Shaibani also reported that social media addiction, daily hours of social media use, and phone use during lectures were associated with academic procrastination among university students.[7] However, much of the existing evidence has focused on social media addiction or problematic use, rather than specifically examining the actual amount of time spent on social media, particularly among students from diverse health care disciplines. The original study identified this as an important gap. Therefore, the present study aimed to determine the correlation between time spent on social media and academic procrastination among health care college students aged 16–25 years.

2. Methodology

Study design and setting: An observational correlational study was conducted in a community-based setting among undergraduate and postgraduate health care college students aged 16–25 years.

Participants and sampling: The sample size was calculated using a correlation-based sample size formula, considering a correlation coefficient of 0.539 reported in a previous study. The calculated sample size was 28 participants.

Exclusion criteria: Students with diagnosed psychiatric or neurological conditions that could affect response accuracy, incomplete or inconsistent responses, students not using social media, and those without access to a mobile phone or digital device capable of accessing social media were excluded.

Instruments: Social media use was assessed using the Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS), described in the source study as a 12-item five-point Likert instrument assessing frequency, intensity and purpose of social-media use. The reported internal consistency was Cronbach's alpha 0.78–0.85 and test–retest reliability r = 0.72–0.80. Scores of 12–23, 24–36 and 37–60 were interpreted as low, moderate and high usage, respectively. Academic procrastination was assessed using a self-developed questionnaire that underwent face content validation by subject-matter experts for clarity, relevance and content validity. Its academic procrastination and behaviour section contained 14 items scored from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always), giving a total score range of 14–70; scores of 14–28, 29–49 and 50–70 were categorized as low, moderate and high procrastination.

Procedure and ethics: Participants were recruited according to the stated eligibility criteria and provided informed consent before completing the questionnaires. The study protocol states that Institutional Review Board and Institutional Ethics Committee approval was to be obtained before data collection. The source document does not provide an ethics approval number; this should be added to the manuscript if available.

Statistical analysis: Data were summarized using frequency, percentage, mean, median and standard deviation. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for normally distributed variables. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

3. Results

A total of 28 health care college students aged 16–25 years were included in the study. Of these, 21 (75.0%) were females and 7 (25.0%) were males.

Table 1: Sociodemographic and Social Media Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Category/Statistic	n (%) / Mean ± SD
Sex	Male	7 (25.0)
	Female	21 (75.0)
Social media usage	Moderate	11 (39.3)
	High	17 (60.7)
Daily social media time (hours)	Mean ± SD	4.32 ± 1.89
	Median	4
	Range	1–7
Social media platform	Snapchat	8 (28.6)
	YouTube	7 (25.0)
	Facebook	5 (17.9)
	Twitter	4 (14.3)
	Telegram	2 (7.1)
	WhatsApp	2 (7.1)

The mean daily time spent on social media was 4.32 ± 1.89 hours, with participants reporting between 1 and 7 hours of daily use. Snapchat was the most frequently reported platform, followed by YouTube. The majority of participants (17, 60.7%) demonstrated high social media usage, while 11 (39.3%) demonstrated moderate usage.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Categorization of Study Variables

Variable	Mean ± SD	Median	Range	Category	n (%)
SMUS score	39.04 ± 9.44	38	25–60	Moderate	11 (39.3)
	High				17 (60.7)
Academic procrastination score	43.39 ± 13.63	41.5	18–70	Low	3 (10.7)
	Moderate				15 (53.6)
	High				10 (35.7)
Self-reflection & awareness score	19.39 ± 3.61	18.5	14–25	Moderate	14 (50.0)
	High				14 (50.0)

The mean SMUS score was 39.04 ± 9.44, with scores ranging from 25 to 60. Academic procrastination had a mean score of 43.39 ± 13.63. More than half of the participants (15, 53.6%) demonstrated moderate academic procrastination, while 10 (35.7%) demonstrated high procrastination. The mean self-reflection and awareness score was 19.39 ± 3.61; 14 (50.0%) participants demonstrated moderate and 14 (50.0%) demonstrated high levels.

Table 3: Correlation Between Daily Time Spent on Social Media and Academic Procrastination

Variables	Pearson's r	p-value	Interpretation
Daily time spent on social media and academic procrastination score	−0.377	0.048	Weak negative correlation; statistically significant

Pearson's correlation analysis demonstrated a statistically significant weak negative correlation between daily time spent on social media and academic procrastination score ($r = −0.377$, $p = 0.048$). In this sample, greater reported daily time spent on social media was associated with slightly lower academic procrastination scores

4. Discussion

The present study found that 60.7% of participants had high social media usage, with a mean daily usage of 4.32 ± 1.89 hours. Academic procrastination was predominantly moderate (53.6%), while 35.7% of participants demonstrated high procrastination. Similar levels of social media use and academic procrastination have been reported among university and medical students.[1,2,5]

A weak negative correlation was observed between daily time spent on social media and academic procrastination ($r = −0.377$, $p = 0.048$). This finding differs from previous studies that reported a positive association between problematic social media use/social media addiction and academic procrastination.[5,6,7] The unexpected direction may indicate that time spent on social media does not necessarily represent problematic use, as students may use social media for communication, learning, information and recreation. Similar research has suggested that the purpose and pattern of social media use may influence academic outcomes.[1,3]

Although statistically significant, the correlation was weak, suggesting that social media time alone may not meaningfully explain academic procrastination. Other factors such as academic workload, motivation, time management and study habits may contribute to procrastination.[2,8]

The findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the small sample size (n = 28), convenience sampling, self-reported measures and cross-sectional design. Future studies should include larger samples, objective measures of screen time and longitudinal designs to better understand the relationship between social media use and academic procrastination.

5. Conclusion

Among the 28 health care college students aged 16–25 years studied, mean daily social-media use was 4.32 ± 1.89 hours and academic procrastination was predominantly moderate. A statistically significant weak negative correlation was observed between daily social-media time and academic procrastination ($r = −0.377$, $p = 0.048$). Because the association was weak and the study used a small convenience sample with self-reported measures, the findings should be interpreted cautiously and should not be generalized broadly

6. Future Scope

Future studies should recruit larger samples from multiple health care and medical colleges, use objective screen-time tracking rather than relying only on self-report, examine platform-specific patterns, compare different academic years and health care courses, and use longitudinal designs to

clarify temporal relationships between social-media use and academic procrastination.

7. Limitations

The main limitations were the small sample size (n = 28), convenience sampling, restriction to health care students aged 16–25 years, reliance on self-reported social-media use and academic behaviour, and the cross-sectional design, which prevents causal inference.

Ethical Considerations

The source study documentation describes informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary participation. The protocol states that Institutional Review Board and Institutional Ethics Committee approval was required before data collection. The ethics approval identifier and institutional name were not provided in the source document and should be inserted before submission.

Conflict of Interest

The source document does not state a conflict-of-interest declaration. The authors should insert the appropriate declaration before submission.

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The source document does not provide a data-availability statement. The authors should insert an appropriate statement according to institutional and journal requirements.

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