



Exploring the Influence of Social Media Usage on Academic Procrastination Undergraduate
Students.

Craig Farrell

22497994

Supervisor: Dr. Conor Thornberry

BA (Hons) Psychology

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Name: Craig Farrell

Student Number: x22497994

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Abstract

Aim: The objective of the current study is to provide a correlation between social media usage on academic procrastination in full-time undergraduate students in Ireland. Also looks at if there was a difference between male and female participants, finally it investigated if mature students scored lower in social media usage scores and procrastination scores in comparison to younger students. **Method:** A survey was administered to participants ($N=85$) through social media and flyers, which contained questions in relation to social media usage and academic procrastination. Social media usage is examined through the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS) and Academic Procrastination is examined through the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS). **Results:** Results indicated that a relationship between social media usage and academic procrastination exists, also indicated that higher levels of social media use were associated with higher academic procrastination levels in younger students compared to mature students. However, no significant difference in terms of gender. **Conclusion:** Findings from this study provided a deeper understanding on the relationship between social media usage and academic procrastination in undergraduate students. Importantly, results showed a significant difference in relation to age, but gender showed no significant difference.

Keywords: Social Media Usage, Academic Procrastination, College Students.

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Introduction

In the digital world of today, mostly everyone has some sort of access to social media platforms. The Digital portal reported that 3.54 million 18-year-olds and older are users of the top social media platforms in Ireland (DataReportal, 2023). This number is expected to rise with the continual development of new platforms, potentially exacerbating procrastination levels among students. Research suggests distinctive features of social media, such as notification systems, are designed to trigger dopamine release in our brains (Hansen, 2022) and would encourage prolonged engagement with these platforms. Moreover, social media has demonstrated a stronger influence and distinct appeal than traditional electronic media, which may lead to more problematic use (Van Deursen et al., 2015). This highlights the relevance of psychological theories such as the Uses and Gratification theory (Blumer & Katz, 1974), which helps explain students' social media usage. Studies indicate that social media gratifies cognitive needs such as fulfilment and relaxation (Rosaline et al., 2016), further reinforcing its appeal.

Procrastination is defined as the voluntary delay of an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off (Steel, 2007). The Self-Regulation Theory (Bandura, 1986) is relevant in this context, as procrastination is associated with students' inability to control impulses and prioritize short-term pleasure over long-term objectives. Social media interferes with self-regulation and makes it harder for students to maintain focused. Previous studies have highlighted that students are particularly prone to this phenomenon (Muslikah et al., 2018; Anwar et al., 2022), with negative outcomes such as increased stress, reduced academic performance and compromised well-being (Klingsieck, 2013). This can hinder students from fulfilling their academic potential and failing to reach their academic goals (Nwosu et al., 2020). Research into the relationship between procrastination and social media use is compelling, with evidence suggesting that social media platforms offer instant gratification and distractions that may increase procrastination tendencies (Rozgonjuk et al., 2019). This present

study aims to investigate whether this relationship is evident among undergraduate students in Ireland and whether it varies according to age and gender.

Most existing research have been conducted abroad. A study by Irish psychologist Cormac Monaghan and colleagues in 2025, looked at the impact of procrastination and preventative healthcare in the older US population. The sample of this study was 1,338 people with 62.48% of those were women, which highlights the significant gender difference in the sample. Results indicated that procrastination could be a potential risk factor in relation to maintaining optimal health (Monaghan et al., 2025). It was also stated that interventions that target procrastination could potentially improve preventive health behaviours (Monaghan et al., 2025), and with these interventions could be altered so they can be implemented to support students with their procrastination levels and look at variables that instigate procrastination tendencies. Another study by Lee and colleagues in 2013 looked at the impacts of social media connection demands in Irish college students. The sample of this study was 202 college students with a relatively equal representation of male (47.5%) and female (52.5%). The study found that social media platforms can have both positive and negative consequences (Lee et al, 2013) which was similar with previous studies. Study suggests that staying connected with “friends” and “followers” across social media platforms can have negative effects (Lee et al, 2013). Connection demands were positively related to negative affect via habit and deficient self-reactions, connection overload causes compulsive use, also referred to as poor self-reaction, which causes people to battle with self-control over their connection behaviours (Lee et al. 2013) this also highlights the influence of the self-regulation theory. This is particularly relevant, as compulsive use of social media could contribute to increased procrastination levels among students.

Self-Report Method

A recurring methodological feature in previous literature is self-reporting, which

allows participants to provide further information which scales may not capture. In a study by Nowsu and colleagues in 2020, they used a correlational design incorporating a self-report aspect along with the use of the Internet Addiction Scale and the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS), scoring 0.86 on Cronbach's Alpha value (Busko, 1998). Their study, with a sample size of 500 participants, revealed a significant correlation. However, gender bias was a limitation, with 72.2% of participants were female and 27.8% were male. Although it can be difficult to achieve an equal sample, a more balanced sample would enhance the validity of the findings. The relationship demonstrated that a large effect of time spent on social media had an equal effect on academic procrastination at a significant level (Nowsu et al., 2020). Although a relationship was shown to exist between the two variables, an issue that can arise from a self-reporting model could lead to bias. Participants might change their answers to achieve more favorable results and lead to insignificant results.

Similarly, a study was completed by Rozgonjuk and colleagues in 2018 that also used the self-reporting model and achieved comparable results. The sample used in this study was from an Estonian University and 366 students were gathered, with the age of participants ranging from 19 to 55 years old. The participants' age range provides the opportunity to look at if the relationship differs between younger and mature students. Along with self-reporting, this study also incorporated the Estonian Smartphone Addiction Proneness Scale was developed by Rozgonjuk and colleagues in 2016 and found a Cronbach alpha score of 0.87 (Rozgonjuk et al., 2016) indicating its reliability. The other scale used in this study was the Aitken Procrastination Inventory with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.89 (Aitken, 1982), this scale is effective in measuring low, moderate, and high procrastination levels. Their findings demonstrated a positive correlation between problematic smartphone use, procrastination and social media use. The self-report aspect showed that the participants turned to social media with high procrastination levels when attending lectures (Rozgonjuk et al., 2018). As stated,

the self-reporting method can have positive effects in gaining a deeper understanding of the reasoning behind the relationship, however, it is prone to bias. Previous research has shown self-reporting bias occurs when researchers selectively report positive or significant results while omitting negative or non-significant outcomes (Rost & Ehrmann, 2017). Student self-reported data has shown a significant bias (Wilson & Zietz, 2004) and this self-report bias can arise in multiple forms such as social desirability (Dodd-McCue & Tartaglia, 2010).

Social Media and Academic Procrastination

As stated, the phenomenon of procrastination and its link with social media has been a growing interest of many researchers and especially its effect on third-level students. In a study by Anierobi and colleagues 2021, used a simple coinvent sampling at Nnamdi Aziki University in Nigeria, with 965 participants gathered. The Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) and Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) were used to measure the relationship in this study and discovered that there was a correlation between compulsive social media usage and academic procrastination, which highlighted a high positive relationship between the two variables. Although the study was effective in providing evidence of the relationship, the issue with these results is the generalizability of the results as all participants are only from one university. This is supported by a study by Kamper in 2020 that stated results are significant when they can be applied to the population (Kamper, 2020), which is the case with the results from this study. In relation to current research, the sample size of Anierobi and colleagues study was arguably too big to achieve significant results, similar results were discovered from a study by Shaibani in 2020 examined academic procrastination and if a relationship with social media addiction exists in students from the Taif University in Saudi Arabia. Two different scales compared to the other studies were used here, to measure the Internet Addiction Scale which has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.86 (Tateno, 2023) and to measure procrastination they use the Tuckman Procrastination Scale which has a Cronbach alpha score

0.90 (Mahdi et al., 2023). Results provided a significant association between academic procrastination in students and social media addiction and showed social media as a predictor for procrastination in students with 22.2% variation with an increase during lecture time (Shaibani, 2020). Although results were significant, a common limitation is the generalizability of the results which was also seen in the study by Anierobi and colleagues in 2021. These studies were conducted in one university and can be easily adjusted by acquiring the sample from different universities to gather a variety of results and this can make the results more applicable to the population following the directions of the study by Kamper in 2020.

Impact of Age

In contrast to the two previous studies, Jerin and colleagues in 2021, found no significant relationship between procrastination and social media usage. This study focused on undergraduate and postgraduate students and used the Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986; Jerin et al., 2021) and SMAS to measure the relationship. It was reported that both undergraduate and postgraduate students show a weak negative correlation between the variables (Jerin et al., 2021). For more accurate results, the study should have been completed on possibly just one of the groups as 60 participants insufficient to yield statistically significant results. If the study was completed on both groups at separate times with a slightly larger sample size, results could be compared and would allow for meaningful comparisons between age groups. In a study by Gürültü & Deniz in 2017, showed that adolescent male students exhibited more academic procrastination in comparison to females and mature students (Gürültü & Deniz, 2017). This study examined the impact of both age and gender in relation to procrastination and social media usage, however, an issue evident in this paper is the cross-sectional design of the study. Results do not investigate the long-term effects of this

relationship; however, it can be achieved by making the study a longitudinal design which would be able to measure this relationship and how it evolves over time.

Impact of Gender

The impact of gender on the relationship between social media use and procrastination remains an area of inconsistency in the literature. In a study by Prezepiorka and colleagues in 2016 showed that females were more likely to use social media more intensely and become addicted to Facebook in comparison to males (Prezepiorka et al., 2016) however, no clear difference regarding procrastination with social media use. The results from the previous study are consistent with research completed by Anwar in 2022, who examined the same relationship between students from intermediate, graduate, and post-graduate. The sample size for the study was 240 participants consisting of equal representation of gender and the study used the APS and the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS). Both scales have proven to be effective and provide significant results and SONTUS scoring 0.724 (Olufadi, 2016). Results showed a correlation between the variables were significant, however there was no significant difference found in relation to gender (Anwar et al., 2022) Although the relationship was evident, results follow a similar pattern to previous research that states no significant difference regarding gender. Given these inconsistencies, the present study aims to assess whether gender plays a role in procrastination and social media usage among Irish undergraduate students.

Muslikah's paper from 2018, the aim was to discover a relationship between a student's academic procrastination with social media usage (Muslikah et al., 2018). For this study, 419 students were recruited from Semarang State University. Another similar issue with this study is that it could be considered biased, and generalizability cannot be applied, as students are from one university offering no diversity in results. As Kamper in 2020 discovered, results are only considered significant when results can be applied to the population, which in this

case the results cannot be applied to every other student from various universities. The scales in this study were the APS and the SONTUS which is similar to Anwar and colleagues in 2022. Both scales have proven to be effective and provide significant results, from this study it found there was a significant correlation between the two variables in the students at Semarang State University (Muslikah et al., 2018). Although this study provided significant results in showing that there is a relationship between social media usage and procrastination in students, a considerable issue is the problem of generalizability of results, which is a considerable limitation in this research. This can be amended in future research by gathering a sample from different universities so it can be to the general population.

Thesis Objectives and Rationale

Overall, majority of previous literature evaluated that a relationship does exist between social media usage and procrastination. Procrastination as stated could be a risk factor (Monaghan, 2015) especially in later life and when paired with social media usage it could lead to very damaging consequences for students. Many students struggle with procrastination, which prevents them from reaching their full academic potential. In addition to reminding students of the potential drawbacks of constant social media use, it is critical that educational institutions understand this potential link and provide them with an achievable way of avoiding this kind of behavior. Although majority of previous literature states a relationship exists, however, the studies tend to suffer from similar limitations such as gender bias (Prezepiorka et al., 2016; Gürültü & Deniz, 2017), large sample sizes (Lin et al., 2013) or bias orientated methods such as self-reporting (Wilson & Zietz, 2004; Dodd-McCue & Tartaglia, 2010; Rost & Ehrmann, 2017). This present study aims to explore the relationship of the two variables in undergraduate students across Ireland, while also considering variations in gender and age.

The 3 key research questions and aims of this study are:

RQ 1: Is there a relationship between social media usage on academic procrastination on college students?

H1: Higher levels of academic procrastination are associated with higher levels of social media usage in undergraduate students

RQ 2: Is there a difference in scores between male and female participants?

H2: Female participants would experience higher levels of procrastination along with social media usage compared to male participants

RQ 3: Do older students score lower on all scales compared to younger students?

H3: Younger students would record higher on both APS and SONTUS compared to mature students.

This research study builds upon previous literature to use the most appropriate scales and methodologies for obtaining significant results in relation to the relevant hypotheses. The Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) (Busko, 1998) is a reliable and common scale for measuring procrastination. However, the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS) (Oufladi, 2016) which is less common, however it is well-suited for measuring social media usage in different contexts. As stated, the theoretical framework of this research is influenced by the self-regulation theory as well as the uses and gratifications theory as they are both instrumental in understanding this relationship further. The rationale for completing this study is stems from the ever-growing area of social media platforms, and students often face minimal to accessing them. When combined with procrastination it could potentially lead to negative outcomes and work as a barrier to achieving their full potential. This highlights the significance of exploring this topic further, through this current study.

Methods

Participants

Convivence and snowball sampling was implemented to ensure no bias in results and to investigate if there are differences in results across courses, ages, and colleges around Ireland. The inclusion criteria of this study are full-time undergraduate students, and the exclusion is no undergraduate student under the age of 18 or postgraduate student can take part. From using the G Power software, for a correlation study with a medium effect size, alpha level 0.05 and a power level of 0.80 (Kang, 2022), it is calculated that 85 participants are needed to detect a statistically significant result. For this research 85 of participants were gathered, with 51 male (60%) and 34 female (40%) participants. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 34 and the mean age of the participants was 23 ($M = 23.31$, $SD = 3.56$).

Measures

Demographics

Before taking part in the survey, participants were required to provide basic demographic information. Participants were asked to provide their age in numbers, and their gender (male, female and other), as part of the current research is concerned with age and gender differences regarding the relationship of social media usage and academic procrastination in undergraduate students.

The Academic Procrastination Scale (APS):

The questions in this scale assess habits and routines as a student. Students are to answer the 5-point Likert Scale in accordance with how they agree with the following statements: (Scored on a 1 to 5 Likert- type scale, with 1= Totally Disagree and 5= Totally Agree). The APS was originally created in 1998 by Busko and showed significant reliability and validity by scoring 0.86 on Cronbach's Alpha value (Busko, 1998). It has also shown its validity and reliability in a study by McCloskey in 2011 showed a particularly good internal consistency

reliability estimate and a good convergent validity (McCloskey, 2011). A reliability test was run on SPSS, which showed a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.77 confirming its effectiveness in measuring procrastination.

The Social Networking Time Use (SONTUS):

This scale aims to look at time allocation on social networking sites, the role these sites play in a person's daily routine and how it will potentially affect the person. The original scale is an 11-point Likert scale with a 29-item scale (Oufladi, 2016), however due to software being used and practicality it was redesigned to a 5-point Likert scale, with elements from the 11-point Likert scale have been taken and shortened to fit the 5-point Likert scale (See Appendix 2C; for scoring). From the 29-items only questions that were related to "academic related periods" and "stress-related periods" were used as it was the area of concern for this research. Shorter scales have shown to offer practical advantages such as reduced respondent burden and potentially higher response rates (Franke et al, 2013). The original SONTUS scoring 0.72 on the Cronbach's Alpha (Olufadi, 2016) and in a study by Parrella and colleagues in 2021, showed that the scale has a reliable internal validity and is pivotal to providing a potential insight into different scenarios that can potentially provide higher social media usage (Parrella et al., 2021). The altered scale was run on SPSS; it scored 0.83 on the Cronbach's Alpha which confirmed the reliability of the scale.

Research Design

The design of this study is a quantitative, cross-sectional study using a correlational survey model through a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. The participants answered two scales issued and provided responses needed to input to SPSS, several participants are needed to ensure no bias in the results. The findings from the questionnaires are integrated into the final report.

Procedure

The participants first point of contact with this research is after interacting with the QR code on the flyers or after accessing the link sent to them by friends, relatives etc. Once they have accessed the link will take them to the Microsoft form containing all the relevant information sheet, consent form, scales and debrief sheet. The first page of the Microsoft form contained the information sheet. This sheet contained all relevant information regarding objectives of the study, reasoning for the study, why involvement is necessary etc. Once the participant read the information sheet, they then read the consent form. Once participants agreed and digitally signed the consent form to proceed with answering the scales. Once the consent form has been agreed, the participants then go on to answer the scales provided, this took participants between 5-10 minutes to complete. Once the 2 parts were answered, participants were thanked for their involvement and time taken to take part in the research. Participants were also encouraged to spread the link with their peers to help gain a wide variety of answers, however it was not obligated. In the debrief sheet also contained mental health services that participants could access if they wished after their involvement.

Ethical Consideration

The data collected in this research study took all ethical guidelines into consideration. The study was approved by the National College of Ireland Ethics Committee, with the Ethical Approval Number 04112024x22497994, which is also in line with Psychological Society of Ireland (2010) and National College of Ireland ethical guidelines and procedures for human participants. (See Appendix 3B)

Data Analysis

This is a quantitative research proposal using a correlational survey model, all results will be examined and researched further through IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28.10. For this research, procrastination is the dependent variable and social media usage is the independent

variable. One of the statistical analyses planned to run is a descriptive to explore the sample being investigated. Then a Pearson R correlation will be run for RQ1, to explore if a relationship between the two variables exists. To answer RQ2 the statistical procedure would be an Independent Samples T-Test, which will measure whether the mean scores differed between male and female participants. Finally, to answer RQ3 an independent sample t test will be run again to compare scores from the scales across the age groups.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The current data in this study is taken from an Irish sample of 85 participants ($n=85$) which was comprised of 60% males ($n=51$) and 40% females ($n=34$). Descriptive statistics were run for both categorical and continuous variables. The categorical variable included is gender. Frequency and valid % were acquired, and in conjunction with tests of normality. The results for the categorical variable are demonstrated in table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Gender in the Study

Variable	Frequency	Valid %
Male	51	60%
Female	34	40%

Continuous variables in this study are academic procrastination, social media usage and age. Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and range were acquired. Preliminary analysis was completed which indicated that all continuous variables followed the assumptions of normality. The results for the continuous variables are reported in table 2 below.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Age, APS Scores & SONTUS Scores

Variable	n	M [95% CI]	SD	Range
Age	85	23.31 {22.54,24.07}	3.56	15
APS Scores	85	75.33 {73.30,77.36}	9.41	41
SONTUS Scores	85	27.52 {25.80,29.24}	7.97	44

Inferential Statistics

Correlation

From table 3, results from a Pearson r correlation are represented. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Results indicates a moderate negative relationship between SONTUS scores and age categories ($r = -.41, n = 85, p < .001$), it also indicated a strong negative relationship between APS scores and age categories ($r = -.55, n = 85, p < .001$). Results indicate that for both scales as age increases, scores from both scales tend to decrease. However, it also indicated that there is a weak, positive correlation between the SONTUS and APS scores ($r = .39, n = 85, p < .001$). The two variables shared 15.21% of variance in common, this indicates that higher levels social networking scores are associated with a similar increase in levels of academic procrastination, however the relationship is not very strong.

Table 3

Correlation Table for SONTUS Scores, APS Scores & Age

Variable	1.	2.	3.
1. SONTUS Scores	-		
2. APS Scores	.39**	-	
3. Age	-.41**	-.55**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Independent Samples T-Test

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare levels of APS scores between male and female participants. There was a significant difference in scores, with males ($M = 77.36$; $SD = 8.10$) scoring slightly higher than females ($M = 72.30$; $SD = 10.49$), $t(83) = 2.50$, $p = 0.04$, two-tailed. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 5.10, 95% CI: 1.04 to 9.10) was medium effect (Cohen's $d = .55$).

Another independent sample t-test was conducted to compare levels of SONTUS scores between male and female participants. The scores were alike between participants, with males ($M = 27.37$; $SD = 8.49$) scoring similarly with females ($M = 27.74$; $SD = 7.25$), $t(83) = -.20$, $p = .82$, two-tailed. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = $-.36$, 95% CI: -3.89 to 3.17) was small effect (Cohen's $d = -.05$).

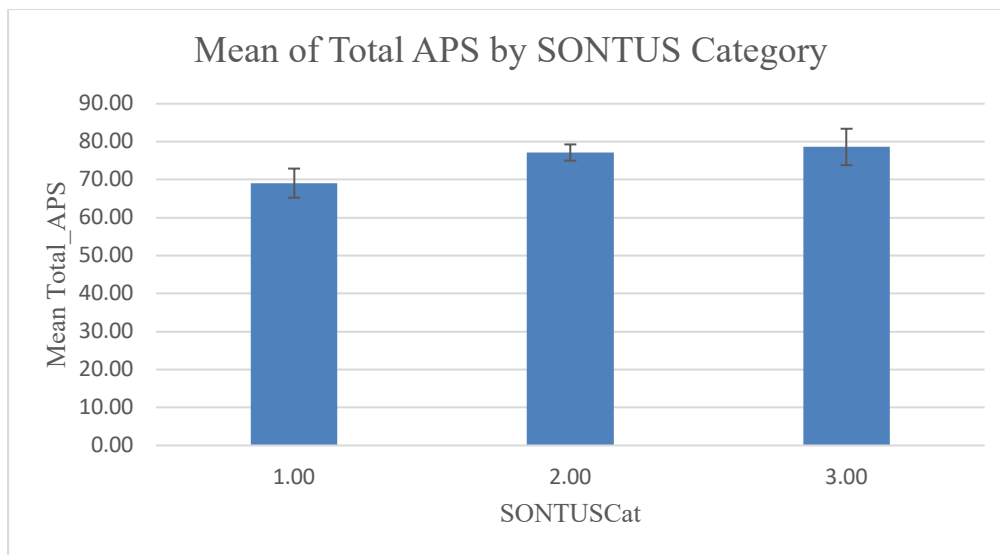
The final independent sample t-test was run to compare the levels of scores obtained from both the APS and SONTUS scores in relation to two different age groups. The participant's ages were divided into two different groups with younger students (18-23 years old; $n = 58$) and mature students (24 years old and older; $n = 27$). There was a significant difference in scores from the APS, with younger students ($M = 78.72$; $SD = 7.92$) scoring significantly higher than mature students ($M = 68.04$; $SD = 8.20$), $t(83) = 5.73$, $p = 0.70$, two-tailed. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 10.69 , 95% CI: 6.98 to 14.40) was a large effect (Cohen's $d = 1.33$). There was also a significant difference in scores from the SONTUS, with younger students ($M = 29.57$; $SD = 7.76$) scoring significantly higher than mature students ($M = 23.11$; $SD = 6.61$), $t(83) = 3.74$, $p = 0.23$, two-tailed. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 6.46 , 95% CI: 3.02 to 9.90) was a large effect (Cohen's $d = .87$).

One Way ANOVA

The one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were differences in academic procrastination scores in comparison to levels of social media usage. Participants were divided into three groups according to their SONTUS scores using the 25th, 50th and 75th percentile values (low levels = ≤ 22 ; moderate levels = 23 to 30 ; and high scores = 31 and above). There was a statistically significant difference in academic procrastination scores for three social media usage levels, $F(2, 82) = 8.63$, $p < .001$. The effect size indicated

a large difference in academic procrastination levels ($\eta^2 = .17$). Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for low social media usage levels ($M = 69.10$, $SD = 9.21$) was significantly different ($p = .002$) from moderate social media usage levels ($M = 77.20$, $SD = 6.86$) and high social media usage levels levels ($p = .002$ $M = 78.62$, $SD = 11.00$). However, there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between moderate and high social media usage levels ($p = .803$). (See Figure 1)

Figure 1



Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between academic procrastination and social media usage in undergraduate students, in hopes to provide a greater understanding of the prevalence of procrastination and how social media usage may contribute to increased levels of this phenomenon. Additionally, this study also investigated whether there was a difference in scores between different age groups and gender.

Prior findings have brought mixed findings, suggesting that there was a weak correlation with academic procrastination and social media usage in undergraduate and postgraduate students with no significant relationship reported (Jerin et al., 2021). In contrast, other research has suggested that there was a high positive relationship between compulsive social media usage and procrastination (Shaibani 2020; Anierobi et al., 2021). Majority of research has indicated that the relationship more pronounced is in students (Muslikah, 2018), and it was also reported that problematic social media use has predicted academic procrastination in students (Serrano et al., 2022). However, research regarding differences in gender have been inconsistent, with a study by Anwar and colleagues in 2022 found no significant difference regarding gender (Anwar et al., 2022). In addition to this, a study by Prezepiorka and colleagues in 2016, found females were more likely to use social media more intensely (Prezepiorka et al., 2016), through this current research the aim is to identify if a difference exists and if so, to demonstrate how impactful the relationship is to a particular gender. Additionally, the current research is aimed at identifying if there is a difference in relation to APS and SONTUS scores from younger students in comparison to mature students. From previous findings, male adolescent students scored higher in academic procrastination in comparison to female adolescent and mature students (Gürültü & Deniz, 2017). It is evident that further research is needed to explore this relationship and its influence on undergraduate students.

It was hypothesized, (H1) that higher levels of academic procrastination are associated with higher levels of social media usage in undergraduate students. Through conducting a Pearson r correlation, the aim was to discover a potential relationship between the two variables and if age played an essential role in the scores as well. Results indicated a moderate negative relationship between SONTUS scores and age, it also indicated a strong negative relationship in APS scores and age. This demonstrates that as age increases, levels of academic procrastination and social networking usage decrease. It was also indicated that there was a weak positive correlation between the scores of the two scales which demonstrates that higher levels of social networking scores are associated with a similar increase in academic procrastination which demonstrates that this hypothesis is accepted. This finding is also supported by previous literature by Shabini in 2020 and Anierobi and colleagues in 2021, as it was discovered there was an association between academic procrastination and social media usage (Anierobi et al., 2021; Shabini, 2020). These findings are pivotal to the further hypothesis discussed in this research.

The second hypothesis, (H2) female participants would experience higher levels of procrastination along with social media usage compared to male participants. An independent sample t-test was run to compare levels of both APS and SONTUS scores between male and female participants. Although previous findings have been inconsistent as in a study by Prezepiorka and colleagues in 2016 found females were more addicted to social media apps such as Facebook than males (Prezepiorka et al., 2016). Whereas males have shown to procrastinate more compared to females (Kuss & Griffiths, 2015; Gürültü & Deniz, 2017), current findings indicated that males scored slightly higher than female participants in relation to academic procrastination scores. However, from current findings there were no differences in relation to scores from SONTUS, contrary to expectations, gender differences were not statistically significant in social media usage meaning that this hypothesis must be rejected.

While previous literature often suggests that females tend to engage in more social media use (Kuss & Griffiths, 2015), it also supports the findings of a study by Anwar in 2022 that there was no difference in relation to gender (Anwar, 2021). Current findings indicate that gender may not be a key predictor of social media engagement but could potentially play a role in procrastination tendencies.

Lastly, the final hypothesis (H3) younger students would record higher on both APS and SONTUS compared to mature students. It is clear from previous findings, that the relationship between academic procrastination and social media usage varies across education levels (Anwar et al., 2021), however in contrast with this finding, Jerin in 2021 found no significant correlation between the two variables in undergraduate and postgraduate students (Jerin, 2021). Current findings show that a significant negative correlation was found between age and academic procrastination, showing as a student grows older, the tendency to procrastinate decreases. This finding is consistent with previous research by Steel in 2007, suggesting younger students may struggle more with self-regulation and time management skills (Steel, 2007). Additionally, a significant negative correlation between age and social media usage suggests that younger students are more likely to engage with social media, potentially contributing to their higher procrastination levels. These findings support the idea that age plays a crucial role on both procrastination behaviours and social media usage, which means we can accept this hypothesis.

Further exploratory analysis was completed in relation to social media usage and procrastination, the current findings support previous research that social media usage may contribute to procrastination (Shaibini, 2020). However, the lack of significant difference between moderate and high social media users suggests once a threshold has been met, its impact on academic procrastination may let-up. Further research should be completed to explore why this would occur and what factors might promote this type of behaviour.

Implications

From these current findings, the implications can have a major impact on modern society. The study supports two of the three hypotheses, and when looking at the results from this dataset much of the population is considered young adults and work on the issue of social media use and procrastination in students must begin from a young age. Whilst many second level schools around the country are not required by law to have a social networking policy, many of them have emphasised that using personal social networking sites during school hours is not permitted unless permission is given by a member of staff. The Irish government attempted to implement “phone pouches” in 2024, however the high expenses of these pouches were called for controversy. Through second-level schools implementing workshops that highlight the possible problems associated with procrastination and the overuse of social media sites, this could benefit many students and be able to offer alternative ways for them to manage academic workload and stress without the reliance of social media and participating in procrastination. Workshops have shown positive effects in providing hands-on training and practical experience in helping students develop more effective and responsible social media practices (Al-Qodri et al., 2013). Another implication of the current findings is looking at mental health and well-being in students and possibly older adults in the workplace. As the current findings suggest younger students procrastinate more which could possibly implement higher stress levels in various populations (Sirois, 2023), through encouraging digital detox initiatives it could help combat this issue. Although results indicate that as we get older, procrastination levels decrease, the phenomenon may still affect older adults and the digital detox initiatives can also be implemented in the workplace as well. Through this initiative, people can learn the importance of a break from social media usage and the potentially long-lasting positive effects of this initiative in battling the phenomenon of procrastination.

Strengths & Limitations

Throughout this research study, many strengths and limitations were identified. A strength that was identified is the relevance to the real-world academic context. Not only from this current study, but previous literature indicates that the issue of procrastination is evident in students and many variables can heighten this phenomenon. Through these results, we can begin to apply different initiatives and workshops in schools to help students understand the possible consequences of procrastination and how the possible overuse of social media can heighten the intensity of this phenomenon. A strength that is also evident from this study is the sample size of the participants. From using the G power software, a significant number of participants were generated to run a correlation analysis, to which it was identified a number of 85 participants would be significant. For this research a sample of 85 participants exactly was reached, which is also in association with a study by Kaplan in 2014 which cautioned researchers on large sample sizes as they can be associated with sampling and measurement errors, and possible exclusion of information (Kaplan et al., 2014). The sample also contained a wide variety in an age range of 19 to 34 years old and it also contained a significant split of male to female participants. The final strength was the reliability of the adjusted SONTUS; after running the adjusted scale through SPSS it showed a considerably reliable score. This is a strength in this study as only certain aspects of the scale were needed for this research, and after having to adjust it, it was able to keep a consistent reliability and makes it possible for it to be used in future research.

Although there were strengths to this study, there were some limitations present as well. One potential limitation in the study is the possibility of confounding variables, for example with SONTUS the participants were asked to answer the question in relation to the most recent week. With participants answering this scale at different times, many variables such as academic workload, sleep pattern, or personal circumstances may have influenced their

responses, potentially introducing bias or variability in the results. Another possible limitation in the study is the lack of differentiation in social media usage. Although it was possible to differentiate the participants from low, moderate and high social media usage but no there was no account of the different types of social media activities. For example, passive scrolling v. active engagement, these different types of activities may have different effects on procrastination levels. Following on the results of this current study, the effect of different types of activities could be explored in future research. The final limitation of this study was the cross-sectional design. Cross-sectional designs are fast, effective and a once off time point collecting data. Though this study did find some statistically significant results, however through a longitudinal study more research could explore the long-lasting effect of social media usage on procrastination and possibly what variables have a lasting effect on procrastination. These limitations did not affect the overall results, from the findings of the current research they can help addressing these limitations in future research.

Future Research

From the findings of the current research, it is evident that these results can be helpful in exploring the phenomenon of procrastination and the possible effect of social media in this relationship further. As stated, through a longitudinal design more information regarding the relationship lasting effects could be identified. Through this type of design, it is possible to measure the relationship over a longer period and gain valuable insights that are not possible from a cross-sectional design. Through current findings and previous literature, it is evident that a relationship between social media usage and procrastination exists. More research on the relationship can be explored and what other factors can affect procrastination; what type of apps makes people procrastinate longer and measure the longer lasting effects of the relationship. Another aspect of future research could look at possible interventions that could

help prevent this relationship from occurring. Intervention types such as digital detoxes and workshops on the negative effects of this relationship could help people understand procrastination tendencies or what types of social media may contribute more to this phenomenon. This would not only be applied to students but could also be used to measure and identify if this relationship is still evident in the workplace and late adulthood.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this current research study has been effective in answering two of the three hypotheses presented. It is evident that the scales used were effective in providing a deeper understanding of the relationship and has been able to open the door to potentially further research in this area. The results demonstrate a clear correlation between academic procrastination and social media usage, which is in alignment with previous research. Additionally, a significant difference in relation to age and both scales, with mature students displaying lower levels of academic procrastination and social media usage. Results also indicate that participants who used social media more tend to procrastinate more. However, no significant results indicated a difference in gender, suggesting that gender may not be a crucial factor in this relationship.. The results of the current research open the door to future studies into the long-term impacts of social media on procrastination, age-related differences, and potential interventions to reduce procrastination levels in both academic and workplace settings.

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Appendices

Appendix 1A: Information Sheet

Exploring the Influence of Social Media Usage on Academic Procrastination

Undergraduate College Students.

You are invited to participate in a research study that will form the basis for an undergraduate thesis. Please read the following information before deciding whether to participate.

What are the objectives of the study?

The main objective of this study is to explore and measure the relationship of social media usage and procrastination levels in undergraduate students. Through answering the questions from the three questionnaires/scales used in this study, we plan to investigate the relationship, as well as the intensity of the relationship when completing academic tasks, assignments etc.

Why have I been asked to participate?

I would like to collect information from other undergraduate college students, and to investigate if they experience academic procrastination from the influence of social media usage. Each participant must meet the following criteria:

- Full-Time Undergraduate Student
- Must use any Social Media
- Must be 18 years old or older

What does participation involve?

Firstly, participants must read the consent form and consent if they wish to take part. Then participants must answer 2 demographic questions provided, after they must answer questions about academic procrastination and social media usage. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time for whatever reason up until the point of data submission. The data is then anonymised and can not be removed.

Are there any benefits from my participation?

While there will be no direct benefit from participation studies like this can make an important contribution to our understanding of some of the processes underlying social media usage and procrastination levels in students. The findings from this research will be included in my thesis, which will be submitted to National College of Ireland. Anonymised data may also be uploaded to a secondary data repository to facilitate validation and replication, in line with Open Science best practice and conventions. Research findings will be presented at the NCI Psychology Conference and may be disseminated through publication in academic journals or conferences.

Are there any risks involved in participation?

There are no risks associated with participation. Any inconvenience involved in taking part will be limited. This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval. Should you feel any discomfort, you may withdraw from the study at any time. Support services are jigsaw.ie/livechat and spunout.ie

Contact Details

If you have any further questions about the research, you can contact the researcher: Craig Farrell at X22497994@student.ncirl.ie. If you have any concerns or feel that the research has not been carried out as described, you may contact my supervisor, Dr Conor Thornberry at conor.thornberry@ncirl.ie.

Appendix 1B: Consent Form

I agree to participate in Craig Farrell's research study titled, *Exploring the Influence of Social Media Usage on Academic Procrastination in College Students*. Please tick each statement below:

Q1. The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing. I've been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily.

I am participating voluntarily, I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating.

The information sheet has made me aware of how my data will be managed.

I am aware that I cannot access my individual results due to anonymity.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q2. I understand that my data, in an anonymous format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

I agree for my data to be used for further research projects ☐

I do not agree for my data to be used for further research projects ☐

Q3. I verify that I am over 18 years of age and voluntarily consent to take part in this study.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Appendix 1C: Debrief Sheet

I would like to thank you again for taking part in this research and for providing the relevant information for me to complete my research. As stated, you provided relevant information for my research on **Exploring the Influence of Social Media Usage on Academic**

Procrastination in College Students. It would be greatly appreciated if you could spread this questionnaire with your peers. For any additional questions, feel free to contact me via email at x22497994@student.ncirl.ie. If you have any concerns or feel that the research has not been carried out as described, you may contact my supervisor, Dr Conor Thornberry at conor.thornberry@ncirl.ie.

If reflecting on these topics has raised concerns following your participation, please consider reaching out to one of the provided services below:

jigsaw.ie/livechat

Is an online platform offering free online text-based mental health support with clinicians for young people.

spunout.ie

Spunout is Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people. Articles and information for young people on many topics, including mental health are available online.

Free-text: SPUNOUT to 50808 to chat with a trained volunteer, any time.

Website: spunout.ie

Appendix 2A: Demographic Questions

1. Which gender do you identify as?

Male _____ Female _____ Non-Binary _____ Prefer to Self Describe _____

2. What age are you?

Appendix 2B: Academic Procrastination Scale (APS)

The following questions assess your habits and routines as a student. Please answer the following as they apply to yourself. How much do you, yourself agree to the following statements? (Scored on a 1 to 5 Likert- type scale, with 1= Disagree and 5= Agree)

1. I usually allocate time to review and proofread my work.
2. I put off projects until the last minute
3. I have found myself waiting until the day before to start a big project.
4. I know I should work on schoolwork, but I just don't do it.
5. When working on schoolwork, I usually get distracted by other things.
6. I waste a lot of time on unimportant things.
7. I get distracted by other, more fun, things when I am supposed to work on schoolwork.
8. I concentrate on schoolwork instead of other distractions.
9. I can't focus on schoolwork or projects for more than an hour until I get distracted.
10. My attention span for schoolwork is very short.
11. Tests are meant to be studied for just the night before.
12. I feel prepared well in advance for most tests. *
13. "Cramming" and last-minute studying is the best way that I study for a big test.
14. I allocate time, so I don't have to "cram" at the end of the semester.
15. I only study the night before exams.
16. If an assignment is due at midnight, I will work on it until 11:59.
17. When given an assignment, I usually put it away and forget about it until it is almost due.

18. Friends usually distract me from schoolwork.
19. I find myself talking to friends or family instead of working on schoolwork.
20. On the weekends, I make plans to do homework and projects, but I get distracted and hang out with friends
21. I tend to put off things for the next day
22. I don't spend much time studying school material until the end of the semester.
23. I frequently find myself putting important deadlines off.
24. If I don't understand something, I'll usually wait until the night before a test to figure it out.
25. I read the textbook and look over notes before coming to class and listening to a lecture or teacher.

Appendix 2C: Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS)

In scoring the SONTUS, it is summed to produce a global score that ranges from 15 to 75.

The altered scale is answered using a 5-point Likert scale.

1. Not applicable to me during the past week / I never used it during the past week.
2. I used it once during the past week.
3. I used it between 2 and 3 times during the past week.
4. I used it more than 3 times during the past week but spent less than 30 min each time.
5. I used it more than 3 times during the past week and spent more than 30 min each time.

Answer in relation to social network use in your most recent week

- Q1. When you are at a seminar/workshop or training program.
- Q2. When you need to reduce your mental stress.
- Q3. When you are doing school or job-related assignment at home.
- Q4. When you have gone through a lot of stress.

- Q5. When you are in the class receiving lecture.
- Q6. When you need to maintain contact with existing friends.
- Q7. When you are reading in the library for academic purpose e.g., recommended text for class.
- Q8. When you need to reduce your emotional stress.
- Q9. When you want to reduce the pressure of your daily routines.
- Q10. When you need to communicate with your families and friends.
- Q11. When you need to find out more about people you met offline.
- Q12. When you need to find people you haven't seen for a while.
- Q13. When you are trying to forget your financial challenges.
- Q14. When you are online doing school or job-related works e.g., project, homework.
- Q15. Watching academic-related video lectures or those related to your job.

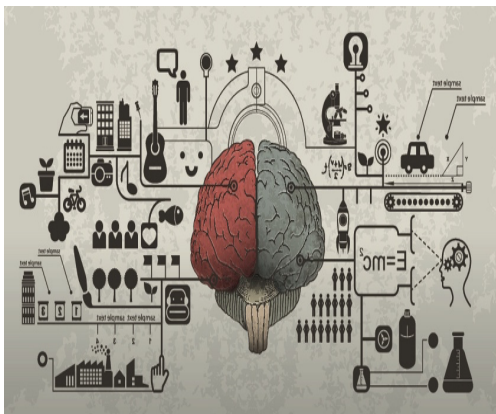
Appendix 3A: Flyer/Poster/Social Media Post**Calling All Fulltime Undergraduate Students****WE****NEED****YOU!**

My name is Craig Farrell, and I'm a B.A Honours Psychology student attending National College of Ireland. I'm conducting a research project on the the relationship between social media usage and academic procrastination in undergraduate students.

With your participation it could help provide results explaining the impact of social media on procrastination, so I encourage undergraduate fulltime students to take part in this exciting study by interacting with this link or QR code:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=wUnbbnK_6k6LP6f9CiW2jC3AOZggIlGlZX8rlvct3BUNlpENVNKMzhVTk9CWUIHNUYyTUJNQjRFQy4u

Thank you!



Appendix 3B: Ethics Approval Letter

National College of Ireland
Mayor Street, IFSC, Dublin 1, Ireland
Colaiste Náisiúnta na hÉireann
Sráid an Mheara, IFSC
Baile Átha Cliath 1, Éire

Tel: +353 1 449 8500
Fax: +353 1 497 2200
email: info@ncirl.ie
Website: www.ncirl.ie

Date: 04/11/2024

Ref: Ethics Approval Number: 04112024x22497994

Proposal Title: *Exploring the Influence of Social Media Usage on Academic Procrastination in College Students*

Applicant: Craig Farrell

Dear Craig,

Thank you for your application to the NCI Psychology Ethics Filter Committee, and for responding to clarification requests related to the application. I am pleased to inform you that the ethics committee has approved your application for your research project. Ethical approval will remain in place until the completion of your dissertation in part fulfilment of your BA Honours Degree in Psychology at NCI.

Please note that:

- Students are responsible for ensuring that their research is carried out in accordance with the information provided in their application.
- Students must abide by PSI ethics guidelines in completing their research.
- All procedures and materials should be approved by the supervisor prior to recruitment.
- Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Fox".

Dr Robert Fox

Chairperson, Psychology Ethics Filter Committee

Ethics Committee members: *Dr Robert Fox (representative on the NCI Research Ethics Subcommittee), Dr Michelle Kelly, Dr Amanda Kracen, Dr Conor Nolan, Dr Lynn Farrell, Dr Fearghal O'Brien, Dr David Mothersill, Dr Michele Kehoe, Dr Barry Coughlan, Dr Conor Thornberry, Dr Brendan Cullen, Cassandra Murphy, Eden Bryan.*