The relationship between social media use and procrastination

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Abstract
This study aims to investigate the relationship between SMU and procrastination traits among university students. The population of students selected for the research was 67 that was used to investigate the desired relation. The materials used for the study are online survey questionnaires and diary of social media use. The students were required to fill the columns on the report, which contained demographic information about age, gender, and the number of minutes spent in social media accounts. The research found that students who spent the longest time in social media sites had a high probability of delaying academic tasks. The analysis also indicated a variance in gender where most of the females engage in social media than male students. The research was limited since important information, such as the reason for using social media, was left out. For instance, if social media is used for academic purposes can instead reduce procrastination.

Keywords: Social Media Use, Procrastination, University Students, Psychological traits.
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Procrastination refers to the voluntary delay of urgent tasks that may lead to consequences such as low productivity or anxiety. Social media use has been speculated to be the leading cause of such behaviors among university students. Delays caused by the event can negatively affect the students, such as poor performance (Alblwi, 2019). Students tend to waste considerable time on social media platforms that could instead be invested in academic programs. Social media use (SMU) leads to procrastination because students spend ample educational time hence poor performance.

Astonishing facts exist in social media use as a component that makes most universities vulnerable to procrastination. Various researches indicate that excessive social media use (SMU) such as Facebook contributes to impaired psychological functioning in young individuals (e.g., Muller et al., 2018). For instance, recent researches have shown that social media applications are active causes of dysfunctional procrastination (e.g., Lavoie and Pychyl, 2001: Meir et al., 2016). Internet activities have also proved to be among the leading causes of mental problems as well as procrastination of chores, as demonstrated by a sample of young internet users (Reinbeck et al., 2018). Thus present studies aim to build on the investigation of social media use link trait to procrastination to impaired psychological response in university students.

The nature between mental health and social network sites (SNS) has attracted more researchers, yet the relationship remains contentious (e.g., Frost, R. L., & Rickwood, D. J., 2017). Previous researches have also been conducted to determine the effect of social media multitasking on academic performance (e.g., Lau, 2017). Several questions are also asked pertaining to gender and personality. Research conducted investigating the trait of individuals using social media to make new friends more so to keep existing friends. The study depicted that many males used SNS to establish new relations while most females used the same to
Social media use and procrastination is ongoing research. Facebook has shown relation with six mental domains, namely: body image, depression, Facebook addiction, alcohol drinking, drinking cognitions, and disorder eating. The research examined the relationship between social media use and procrastination with the aid of self-reported diary similar to past studies (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). Precise knowledge is known concerning social media effects among university students. Related research was conducted using time-diary and survey data to investigate various social media platforms and their respective influence among first years (Jacobsen, W. C., & Forste, R. 2011).

The research is carried out purposefully to investigate the relationship between social media use (SMU) and procrastination. The hypothesis to be tested is, “SMU leads to the high percentage of procrastination among university students.” The research question is, “what is the relationship between social media use and procrastination?” Multidimensional traits among students who use social media are investigated in relation to procrastination.

Method

Participants

A total of 79 students from CQUniversity, Australia, participated in the survey. However, 12 of the students were excluded due to incomplete datasets or non-typical use within three days.
Therefore, the final sample contained 67 participants inclusive of one participant that reported not to use social media in the three days. They ranged between the age of 16 and 59 years (M=30.52, SD= 11.27), consisting of 54 females and 12 males.

**Materials**

Survey questionnaires were made available to CQUniversity students. The demographic questionnaire constituted questions about age, gender, and daily social media use for three days. Diary of social media use was filled by students that enable carrying out of the statistics. The diary contained columns of Date, site visited (e.g., Facebook or Twitter), No. of SMU separate time that each site got visited, estimated time in minutes per day, and type of activity (sharing, viewing, or both).

**Procedure**

A social media diary was made available to CQUniversity students. The participants were required to fill in the demographic details i.e., gender, age, and average minutes spent in respective social media sites. A person correlation analysis was conducted on the data. The study compared the average time wasted on the websites and corresponding procrastination as evident in general procrastination scale GPS-9.

**Results**

A personal correlation analysis was used to provide an actual relationship between social media use and procrastination. The two variables being investigated are SMU and procrastination. A scatterplot was employed to provide a visual aid of the information.
Scatterplot and line of best fit depicting average SMU time in minute (x-axis) and score in general procrastination scale (y-axis).

Generally, a weak but significant correlation was evident from the data. It is evident that most students spend a lot of time in social media accounts (M = 117.60, SD = 110.10) was associated with higher tendency of chronic procrastination (M = 2.80, SD = 0.76, r = 0.28, p = 0.020). The correlation coefficient interpretation are as follows: 0-0.3 (weak), 0.3-0.5 (moderate), 0.5-0.9 (strong) and 0.9 to 1.0 (very strong).

**Discussion**

The result of the relation between SMU and procrastination supports the hypothesis. Higher usage of social media use gave a higher score of procrastination. The correlation analysis provided three useful information. First, there is a significant linear relationship between the data; SMU relates linearly to the procrastination rate. The second informs that the nature of the relationship is positive, whereby an increase in social media use also
increases procrastination probability. Lastly, the analysis provides the strength of the relation ranging from weak to powerful connection. Averagely, a student must log into at least one Social media account where he/she either views or posts and sometimes does both. Thus there is a direct relationship between SMU and procrastination.

The study found an interesting phenomenon where most students use most of their time in social media accounts, making it difficult for them to complete assignments in time. The research depicts a direct relation between SMU and procrastination among university students. For instance, advanced technology has provided several social media accounts at the palm of students. Most university students have access to at least a smartphone, tablet, or laptop. Most of these accessories are portable and even carried in classrooms during classes. Therefore, there are high chances of logging into any social media account of interest at any time of the day.

There is also an effect of gender on SMU among university students. It is evident that most females use social media more than male students. Besides, the younger age is the one getting affected most with social media. The student who spent the longest time in the site is a female of 17 years who had an average of 137 minutes. The individual had a procrastination score of 4.33, indicating significant risk of delaying tasks—most of the students who were older-aged 40 and above spent lesser time on social media sites. Most of the older students had lower procrastination scores ranging between 1.44 and 3.0. Thus, students of younger age spend more time on social media sites leading to a higher score in procrastination.

Based on the nature of results, this research suggests the future investigation of methods to reduce social media use. There is a need to implement strategies that will reduce the probability of students venturing into social media accounts. Conversely, the students will be able to save time and venture into academic programs instead. More so, there is a need to
investigate the performance of students in relation to SMU. The research recommends further investigation of theories related to SMU and psychological effects attracted by the activities.

The methodological study of SMU resulted in some limitations. For instance, additional information pertaining to social media use and demographic details were asked but not included in the analysis. Therefore, there may be other reasons for logging into social media accounts other than entertainment, viewing, and posting. Some students log into social media accounts for academic purposes. Students have formed various groups where they can share useful information. Using social media sites for educational purposes reduces procrastination leading to improved performance. Therefore, the research was limited to stating the reason for logging into a social media site.

Overall, SMU has a relation to the psychological functioning of students that lead to procrastination. Excessive use of social media may consume a lot of time required for academic excellence. The research indicates that more time spent on Social media sites gives a higher score in procrastination. The study shows a direct relation between procrastination and SMU. However, the research had some limitations since it did not include some additional information, which should indicate the reasons for using the account. Future research needs to be conducted so as to find convenient methods of reducing unnecessary social media use.
References


