

Instagram Reels Addiction and Academic Procrastination Among Young Pakistani Adults

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Abstract

The use of social media, particularly short-form video content like Instagram Reels, is increasingly popular among young adults. However, there is limited literature exploring the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and academic procrastination, especially among young Pakistani adults. This study aims to address this gap and offer relevant implications. A cross-sectional correlational design and purposive sampling technique were used to collect data from 123 young Pakistani adults (92 men, 31 women) aged 18 to 25 years ($M = 24.91$, $SD = 2.57$). The inclusion criteria included being a Pakistani citizen and currently enrolled in college or university, regardless of gender. The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale and the Academic Procrastination Scale were used to assess the variables. Results showed a significant positive correlation between Instagram Reels addiction and academic procrastination. Moreover, Instagram Reels addiction was a significant predictor of academic procrastination in this population. The study concludes with important implications for managing social media use among young Pakistani adults.

Keywords: Instagram Reels, Academic Procrastination, Young Adults.

Introduction

Instagram Reels are 15- to 90-second vertical videos that users can create, edit, and post within the app (Bahtar, 2023). Unlike Stories, Reels remain visible and are designed to be addictive, leveraging the "casino effect" to sustain endless content consumption (Richards & Hartzog, 2024; Sarita, 2024). The rise of Reels has significantly influenced digital behavior, particularly among students. Academic procrastination—the tendency to delay academic tasks despite knowing their

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importance—has been increasingly linked to digital distractions (Day et al., 2000; Zacks & Hen, 2018).

A previous study explored how Instagram Reels contribute to procrastination through personalized content, escapism, and instant gratification mechanisms. While Reels offer creative expression, their overuse may hinder productivity and time management (Åskaree et al., 2025). Previous studies have found that excessive use of Instagram fosters behavioral patterns similar to addiction, including lack of control, disengagement, and escapism—factors that significantly predict procrastination (Roy, 2022). Although much research has addressed Facebook, smartphone, and internet addiction, fewer studies have focused specifically on Instagram addiction.

One previous study of 50 college students aged 18–25 used standardized tests to measure Instagram addiction and procrastination. Results showed a significant positive correlation between procrastination and factors such as lack of control, disengagement, and escapism (Roy, 2022). Another previous study conducted with 54 university students in the Arab Gulf revealed that while short video addiction had no statistical impact on academic achievement, it significantly affected physical and mental health. Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts were the most frequently used platforms (Abulibdeh et al., 2024).

However, there have been very few studies examining Instagram Reels addiction and academic procrastination among Pakistani young adults, specifically college and university students aged 18 to 25. Therefore, the objective of this study is to address this gap and develop targeted implications based on the findings.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the relationship between Instagram Reels addiction and academic procrastination among young Pakistani adults.
- To examine the impact of Instagram Reels addiction on academic procrastination among young Pakistani adults.

Hypotheses

1. There is likely to be a positive and significant relationship between Instagram Reels addiction and academic procrastination among young Pakistani adults.
2. Instagram Reels addiction is likely to have a positive and significant effect on academic procrastination among young Pakistani adults.

Methodology

Research Design and Sampling

The study adopted cross sectional correlational design. A random purposive sampling technique was employed to collect data from college and university students, specifically targeting individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, a critical period in academic and personal development. This age group was selected because academic performance during these years significantly influences future career prospects. A total of 220 individuals were approached for participation in the study, out of which 123 completed the questionnaires. The final sample consisted of 130 students, including 92 men and 31 women. To be eligible, participants had to be university students aged 18 to 25 and have owned a smartphone for at least one year. The study aimed to examine Instagram Reels addiction as a potential contributing factor to academic procrastination.

Research Instruments

Data collection instruments included the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) and the Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (APS). The BSMAS is a six-item Likert scale developed by Andreassen et al. (2016) to assess social media addiction. It was chosen for its relevance and linguistic appropriateness, as English is the official language of Pakistan and widely used in higher education. The APS, developed by Solomon and Rothblum (1988), comprises 44 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, measuring factors such as anxiety, laziness, time management, and peer pressure. The scale's high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$) supports its reliability.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research process. Permissions to use the scales were obtained from their original authors, and ethical approval for data collection was granted by the institutional ethics committee. Informed consent was secured from all participants, who were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity. They were fully briefed about the study's purpose and informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without facing any consequences. Once collected, the data were entered and analyzed using SPSS Version 27.

Results

Table 1: Socio Demographic Characteristic of Participants (N=123)

Participants' Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender				
Men	92	75		
Women	31	25		
Age			24.19	2.57
Education				
Intermediate	11	9		
Bachelor	66	54		
Master	46	38		

The above table depicts that 92 (75%) are men while women in this study are 31 (25%). The mean of participants is 24.19 and 2.57 is standard deviation. In term of education, most participants are bachelors 66 (54%) followed by 46 (38%) are master and lastly followed by 11 (9%) intermediate.

Correlational Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Matrix between Study Variables (N=123)

Variables	1	2	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.Instagram Reels Addiction	-	.54**	16.41	5.21
2.Academic Procrastination			99.87	19.07

Note: * $p < .05$

The table above shows a significant positive association between Instagram reels addiction and academic procrastination among young Pakistani adults.

Regression Analysis

Table 3: Regression analysis for Academic Procrastination (N=123)

Variable	B	SE	β	R^2	F	95% CI	
						LL	UL
				.30	52.30		
Constant	66.85***	4.78				57.37	76.33
IRA	2.01***	.27	.54***			1.46	2.56

Note: *** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$, LL= Lower Level, UL= Upper Level, IRA= Instagram Reels Addiction

The above table depicts that Instagram reels addiction is a positive and significant predictor of academic procrastination ($F = (1,121) = 52.30$ * $p < .05$) with 30% variance in academic procrastination score.

Discussion

There is extensive literature on Instagram Reels addiction and academic procrastination; however, few studies have specifically focused on young adults aged 18 to 25, particularly college and university students. Therefore, the objective of this study was to examine the impact of Instagram Reels addiction on academic procrastination among young adults. This research aims to fill this gap, propose effective interventions, and offer opportunities for further exploration.

The first hypothesis investigated the association between Instagram Reels addiction and academic procrastination in young adults. The findings support this hypothesis, revealing a significant positive relationship between the two. These results align with previous research showing that TikTok scrolling addiction is significantly associated with academic procrastination among young adults (Manzoor et al., 2024). One reason for this relationship could be the gratification derived from short-form videos, which distract students and contribute to delays in academic tasks. Another contributing factor may be the lack of digital literacy awareness in Pakistan. As a developing country, Pakistan often overlooks the importance of educating youth on responsible digital media usage.

The second hypothesis aimed to determine the impact of Instagram Reels addiction on academic procrastination. Regression analysis confirmed that Instagram Reels addiction has a significant and positive impact on academic procrastination among young adults. These findings are consistent with studies indicating that short-form videos can impair attentional control and increase academic procrastination in college students (Xie et al., 2023). Similarly, another study demonstrated that poor self-regulation in TikTok use negatively affects academic performance and increases procrastination (Miedzobrodzka & Koningsbruggen, 2024). The underlying cause may be the pleasurable and engaging nature of online videos, which distract students and lead to procrastination (Åskaree et al., 2025).

Conclusion

This cross-sectional correlational study, conducted among young Pakistani adults aged 18 to 25, found that Instagram Reels use is positively and significantly correlated with academic procrastination. Moreover, Instagram Reels use significantly predicts academic procrastination, thereby achieving the main objective of the study and providing meaningful insights.

Implications

The findings of this study are valuable not only for students but also for academic institutions, as they address a research gap in countries like Pakistan and encourage further studies on social and educational issues. The results highlight the need for awareness about the excessive use of Instagram Reels and their impact on academic performance. Initiatives such as workshops, seminars, and webinars are recommended to support student well-being in colleges and universities. Additionally, psychotherapy and counseling should be offered in cases of addiction and academic procrastination. Government policies are needed to regulate social media usage among students to mitigate its harmful effects. Parental involvement is also essential, as parents must monitor their children's media consumption and provide appropriate support for their mental and academic health.

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