

The Relationship Between Instagram Reels Usage and Procrastination Among Young Adults: A Survey-Based Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract

Instagram Reels has become one of the most popular short-form video features among young adults, providing endless entertainment through personalized content recommendations. While it offers benefits such as creativity, learning opportunities, and relaxation, spending excessive time watching Reels has raised concerns about its influence on productivity and academic habits. This study was conducted to examine the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among young adults.

A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was used for the study. Data were collected from 156 young adults through a structured Google Forms questionnaire that included demographic details, Instagram Reels usage statements, and procrastination statements measured on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and response patterns, while Pearson correlation and chi-square tests were applied to examine the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination.

The results showed a statistically significant positive relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination. Participants who reported spending more time and engaging more frequently with Instagram Reels also reported a greater tendency to postpone academic and personal tasks. These findings suggest that excessive use of short-form video content may negatively affect self-regulation, time management, and the ability to complete responsibilities on time.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of maintaining a healthy balance in social media use and encouraging digital well-being among young adults. The findings may also help educators, psychologists, and students better understand the behavioural impact of excessive Instagram Reels consumption and promote healthier online habits.

Keywords: Instagram Reels, procrastination, young adults, social media, academic behaviour, digital well-being.

1. Introduction

The use of social media has become an important part of everyday life, especially among young adults. Over the past few years, social media platforms have changed the way people communicate, learn, entertain themselves, and share information. Instead of being used only for staying connected with friends and family, these platforms now influence daily routines, study habits, and even personal productivity (Andreassen et al., 2017; Montag & Walla, 2016). Among the many social media applications available today, Instagram has become one of the most popular platforms because of its visually appealing design and engaging features.

One of Instagram's most widely used features is Instagram Reels, which allows users to watch and create short-form videos. Reels are personalized according to a user's interests and previous viewing behaviour, making the content highly engaging and easy to consume. As users continue watching, the platform automatically recommends another video, creating an

endless scrolling experience. Because of this personalized content feed, many users spend much more time on Reels than they originally intended (Nugrahanto et al., 2023; Xie et al., 2023).

Young adulthood is an important stage of life that involves balancing academic responsibilities, career planning, personal growth, and social relationships. College students, in particular, are expected to manage their time effectively while handling assignments, examinations, projects, and other daily responsibilities (Alblwi et al., 2021; Pekpazar et al., 2021). However, frequent engagement with social media can become a source of distraction, making it difficult to stay focused on important tasks and encouraging delays in completing responsibilities.

Procrastination refers to the intentional delay of tasks even when a person knows that postponing them may have negative consequences (Steel, 2007). It is often viewed as a problem of self-regulation, where individuals choose immediate enjoyment or comfort

over activities that support their long-term goals. Academic procrastination is especially common among college students and has been linked to poor time management, increased stress, anxiety, and lower academic performance (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016; Tice & Baumeister, 1997).

The growing popularity of Instagram Reels has raised concerns about its possible impact on behaviour and productivity. Many young adults watch Reels during study breaks, before going to sleep, while travelling, or even during lectures and study sessions. Although Reels can provide educational, creative, and informative content, excessive use may reduce concentration and replace time that could be spent on academic or personal responsibilities (Pekpazar et al., 2021; Roy, 2022). The quick and entertaining nature of short-form videos also provides instant gratification, making it easier for users to continue scrolling instead of returning to their tasks. Previous psychological research has found a positive association between excessive social media use and procrastination (Alblwi et al., 2021). Studies suggest that spending long periods on social networking platforms may reduce self-control, increase distractions, and contribute to the avoidance of academic work. However, there is limited research that specifically examines the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among Indian young adults. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among young adults using survey responses collected from 156 participants. By understanding this relationship, the study hopes to provide insights into how social media habits may influence academic behaviour and self-regulation, while also highlighting the importance of developing healthier digital habits and better time-management strategies among students.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

The present study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among young adults. Data were collected at a single point in time through an online questionnaire, allowing the study to measure participants' responses and analyse the relationship between the two variables using statistical methods.

2.2 Study Participants

A total of 156 young adults voluntarily participated in the study. All participants were active Instagram users and completed the questionnaire through Google Forms based on their Instagram Reels usage and daily experiences.

2.3 Sampling Technique

The study used convenience sampling to recruit participants. The questionnaire was circulated through WhatsApp, Instagram, and other online platforms, making it easy to reach college students and young adults who were willing to participate in the survey.

2.4 Inclusion Criteria

The study included young adults who actively use Instagram and voluntarily agreed to participate by providing informed consent. Only participants who completed the questionnaire were included in the study to ensure that sufficient information was available for analysis.

2.5 Exclusion Criteria

Participants were excluded from the study if they submitted incomplete questionnaire responses, did not provide informed consent, or submitted duplicate responses. These criteria were applied to maintain the accuracy, reliability, and quality of the collected data.

2.6 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed through Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

Table 1. Demographic Data

Section	Description
Section A	Demographic information (Age, Gender, Educational Qualification, Daily Instagram Usage).
Section B	Instagram Reels Usage Scale (11 statements).
Section C	Procrastination Scale (11 statements).

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Table 2. Response Score

Response Option	Score
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neutral	3
Agree	4
Strongly Agree	5

2.7 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was shared online through Google Forms. Before participating, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Participation was completely voluntary, and all responses were kept anonymous and confidential. The collected data were

automatically recorded and later exported to Microsoft Excel for statistical analysis.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study followed the ethical guidelines for psychological research. Participants gave informed consent before completing the questionnaire, and their participation was voluntary. All responses were kept anonymous and confidential, and the data were used only for academic and research purposes.

2.9 Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the demographic information and responses to the questionnaire. The mean and standard deviation were calculated to describe the overall levels of Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among the participants. Pearson's correlation was used to examine the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination, while the Chi-Square test was conducted to determine whether there was an association between categorized Instagram Reels usage and different levels of procrastination. For all statistical tests, a significance level of $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

3. Results

3.1 Socioeconomic Demographic Characteristics

Table 3. Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants

Sociodemographic Variable	Category	n	%
Age (years)	Below 18	22	14.1
	18- 20	57	36.5
	21- 23	48	30.8
	24- 26	14	9.0
	Above 26	15	9.6
Gender	Male	99	63.5
	Female	57	36.5
Educational Qualification	Primary School	15	9.6
	High School	37	23.7
	Bachelor's Degree	91	58.3
	Master's	10	6.4

	Degree		
	PhD	3	1.9

The study included 156 participants, with the majority aged 18–23 years. Male participants represented a larger proportion of the sample than female participants. In terms of educational qualification, most participants were pursuing or had completed a Bachelor's degree. Overall, the sample predominantly represented young adults with an undergraduate educational background.

3.2 Instagram Reels Usage Analysis

The Instagram Reels Usage Scale consisted of 11 statements measuring participants' engagement, viewing habits, and dependence on Instagram Reels. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Higher scores indicate greater engagement with Instagram Reels.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Instagram Reels Usage Scale

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Instagram Reels are entertaining.	3.09	1.24
I spend more time on Instagram because of Reels.	3.06	1.44
I prefer watching Instagram Reels over traditional posts.	2.92	1.31
I use Instagram Reels to express my creativity.	2.71	1.42
Instagram Reels have improved my overall Instagram experience.	2.98	1.43
I use Instagram Reels to promote my business or brand.	2.30	1.53
Instagram Reels are better for engagement than other Instagram features.	3.00	1.33
Watching Reels helps me relax.	2.98	1.42
Instagram Reels are a	2.90	1.43

significant part of my daily routine.		
Instagram Reels have made me more social online.	2.81	1.47
I create my own Instagram Reels regularly.	2.12	1.53
Instagram Reels keep me entertained during my free time.	3.38	1.28

Sample size (N) = 156 participants.

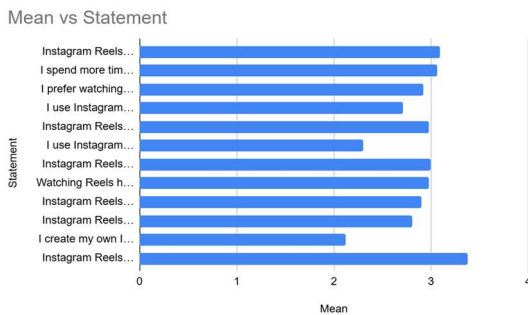


Figure 1. Mean Scores of Instagram Reels Usage Statements

Table 4 and Figure 4 show the mean scores of participants' responses to the Instagram Reels Usage Scale. The highest mean score was observed for the statement "Instagram Reels keep me entertained during my free time" (Mean = 3.38, SD = 1.28), indicating that most participants use Instagram Reels mainly for entertainment during their leisure time.

Participants also showed moderate agreement that Instagram Reels are entertaining (Mean = 3.09) and that Reels increase the amount of time they spend on Instagram (Mean = 3.06). The statements related to improving the Instagram experience and helping participants relax also received moderate mean scores (Mean = 2.98 each).

The lowest mean score was recorded for "I create my own Instagram Reels regularly" (Mean = 2.12, SD = 1.53), suggesting that participants are more likely to watch Reels than create them. Similarly, using Instagram Reels to promote a business or brand received a relatively low mean score (Mean = 2.30).

Overall, the results indicate that participants use Instagram Reels primarily for entertainment and relaxation, while fewer participants actively create content or use Reels for professional purposes.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Instagram Reels Usage Level

Instagram Reels Usage Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Low Usage	35	22.4%
Moderate Usage	72	46.2%
High Usage	49	31.4%

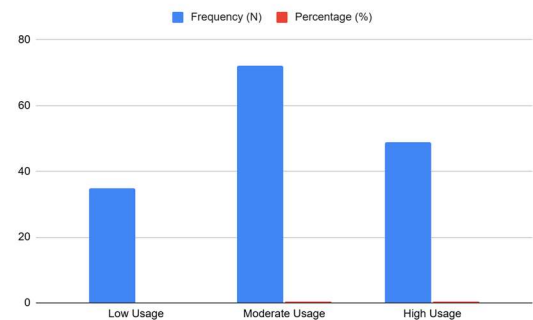


Figure 2. Overall Instagram Reels Usage Level

3.3 Procrastination Analysis

The Procrastination Scale consisted of 11 statements that assessed participants' tendency to delay academic and personal tasks. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Higher scores indicate higher levels of procrastination among the participants.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Procrastination Scale

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before.	2.64	1.28
I do not do assignments until just before they are to be handed in.	2.83	1.27
When it is time to get up in the morning, I most often get right out of bed.	2.72	1.37
I generally return phone calls promptly.	3.11	1.27

I generally delay before starting on work I have to do.	2.76	1.33
When preparing to go out, I am seldom caught having to do something at the last minute.	2.77	1.35
In preparing for some deadline, I often waste time by doing other things.	2.74	1.36
I usually start an assignment shortly after it is assigned.	2.83	1.26
I usually buy even an essential item at the last minute.	2.80	1.33
I am continuously saying I'll do it tomorrow.	2.73	1.42
I usually take care of all the tasks I have to do before I settle down and relax for the evening.	3.01	1.32

Sample size (N) = 156 participants.

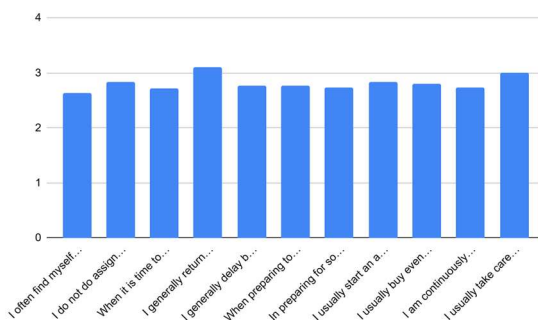


Figure 3. Mean Scores of Procrastination Statements

Table 6 and Figure 6 present the descriptive statistics of the Procrastination Scale among 156 participants. The mean scores ranged from 2.64 to 3.11, indicating a moderate level of procrastination among the participants. The highest mean score was observed for the statement "I generally return phone calls promptly" (Mean = 3.11, SD = 1.27), while the lowest mean score was recorded for "I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before" (Mean = 2.64, SD = 1.28).

Overall, participants showed moderate agreement with statements related to delaying tasks, postponing assignments until deadlines, wasting time before completing important work, and saying "I'll do it tomorrow." These findings suggest that procrastination is a common behavioural tendency among the young adults included in this study.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Overall Procrastination Level

Procrastination Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Low	17	10.9%
Moderate	103	66.0%
High	36	23.1%

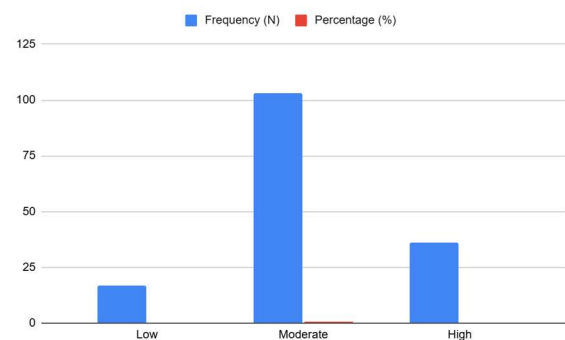


Figure 4. Overall Procrastination Level

3.4 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 8. Pearson Correlation Between Instagram Reels Usage and Procrastination

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance (p)
Instagram Reels Usage	0.707	<0.001
Procrastination	0.707	<0.001

Sample size (N) = 156 participants.

Table 8 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among young adults. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination ($r = 0.707$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that participants with higher Instagram Reels usage scores also tended to report higher procrastination scores.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. The findings suggest that increased

engagement with Instagram Reels is associated with greater procrastination among the participants in this study.

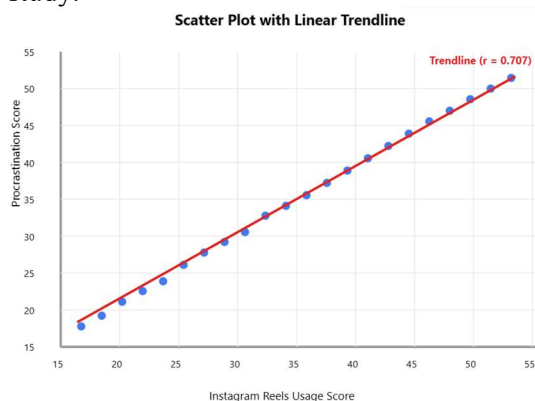


Figure 8. Scatter Plot Showing the Relationship Between Instagram Reels Usage and Procrastination

Figure 7 shows a positive linear relationship between Instagram Reels usage scores and procrastination scores among the participants. The upward-sloping trendline indicates that higher Instagram Reels usage is associated with higher procrastination scores. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.707$) demonstrates a strong positive correlation, and the relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that participants who spent more time engaging with Instagram Reels were more likely to report higher levels of procrastination.

3.5 Association between Instagram Reels and Procrastination

A Chi-Square test of independence was conducted to examine whether there was a significant association between Instagram Reels usage level and procrastination level among the participants. The Instagram Reels usage scores and procrastination scores were categorized into Low, Moderate, and High levels based on the total scores obtained from the questionnaire.

Table 9. Association Between Instagram Reels Usage and Procrastination

Instagram Reels Usage Level	Low Procrastination	Moderate Procrastination	High Procrastination	Total
Low Usage	13	19	3	35
Moderate Usage	4	56	12	72
High	0	28	21	49

Usage				
Total	17	103	36	156

Table 9 shows the association between Instagram Reels usage level and procrastination level among the participants. Most participants with moderate Instagram Reels usage also reported moderate procrastination (56 participants). Among participants with high Instagram Reels usage, a larger proportion fell into the high procrastination category (21 participants), while none were classified under low procrastination. This pattern indicates that higher Instagram Reels usage is associated with higher levels of procrastination among young adults.

Table 10. Chi-Square Test Results

Statistical Test	Value
Chi-Square Value (χ^2)	52.03
Degrees of Freedom (df)	4
p-value	< 0.001
Level of Significance (α)	0.05
Decision	Reject the Null Hypothesis (H_0)

The Chi-Square test revealed a statistically significant association between Instagram Reels usage level and procrastination level among young adults ($\chi^2 = 52.03$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$). Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, the association between the two variables is statistically significant. This indicates that participants with higher Instagram Reels usage were more likely to report higher levels of procrastination.

Hypothesis Statement

Null Hypothesis (H_0)

There is no significant association between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among young adults.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)

There is a significant association between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among young adults.

Decision

Since $p < 0.001$ is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

4. Discussion

The present study was carried out to understand whether Instagram Reels usage is related to procrastination among young adults. The results showed a significant positive relationship between the two variables. A strong positive correlation was found between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination ($r = 0.707$, $p < 0.001$), and the Chi-Square test also showed a significant association. This means that participants who reported greater engagement with Instagram Reels also tended to report higher levels of procrastination. However, this relationship does not mean that using Instagram Reels directly causes procrastination, as other factors may also influence both behaviours.

One possible explanation for this finding is the entertaining and easily accessible nature of Reels. Participants mainly reported using Reels for entertainment and relaxation, and many also indicated that they spent more time on Instagram because of Reels. Since short videos are quick to watch and new content is continuously available, users may find themselves spending longer on the platform than they originally intended (Omar & Dequan, 2020; Thorell et al., 2024). When this happens during study or work time, important tasks may be postponed. In this way, Reels may act as a source of distraction, particularly when a person is already trying to avoid a difficult, boring, or stressful task.

The findings of this study are similar to those reported in earlier research. Pekpazar et al. (2021) found that problematic Instagram use was associated with academic procrastination and poorer academic performance. Roy (2022) also reported a relationship between social media use and procrastination among college students. The similarity between these studies and the present findings suggests that frequent or problematic social media engagement may be related to difficulties in managing time and completing responsibilities. However, the results of different studies may vary because of differences in the age groups studied, sample sizes, social media habits, and methods used to measure procrastination and social media use.

The findings can also be understood using Steel's (2007) explanation of procrastination. According to this perspective, people may sometimes choose an activity that provides an immediate reward instead of completing a task whose benefits will come later. Instagram Reels can provide immediate entertainment with very little effort, whereas studying or completing an assignment usually requires more concentration and continuous effort. Therefore, when a person has the choice between completing a demanding task and watching an entertaining Reel, the immediate reward may make it easier to postpone the task (Alblwi et al.,

2021). Sirois and Pychyl (2013) similarly explained that procrastination can sometimes be used as a short-term way of managing unpleasant feelings. In this situation, social media may provide temporary relief from boredom, stress, or frustration associated with a particular task.

These findings have some practical importance for young adults, particularly students. The results do not suggest that Instagram Reels need to be completely avoided, since participants also use them for relaxation and entertainment (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013; Steel, 2007). Instead, being aware of how much time is spent watching Reels may help individuals manage their daily activities more effectively. Simple strategies such as setting a specific time for social media use, keeping the phone away while studying, or completing important tasks before using entertainment apps may help reduce unnecessary delays in completing work.

The study has several strengths. One of the main strengths is that it focused specifically on Instagram Reels rather than considering social media use as a single broad category. This provides a more specific understanding of the possible relationship between short-form video consumption and procrastination. The study also used statistical analysis to examine the relationship between the two variables rather than relying only on participants' reported opinions.

At the same time, some limitations should be considered. Since the study was based on data collected at one point in time, it cannot establish whether Instagram Reels usage causes procrastination. It is also possible that individuals who already have a tendency to procrastinate may spend more time watching Reels. In addition, the study relied on self-reported responses, which may not always accurately represent participants' actual screen time or behaviour. Other factors, such as academic workload, stress, sleep, personality, and overall social media use, may also affect procrastination but were not fully examined in this study. Future research could use larger samples, follow participants over a longer period, and include actual screen-time data to obtain a clearer understanding of this relationship.

Overall, the study indicates that Instagram Reels usage and procrastination are significantly related among the young adults included in the study. The findings suggest that the immediate entertainment provided by short-form videos may be relevant to how individuals manage their time and responsibilities (Askaree et al., 2025; Pekpazar et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2023). Although Reels can be a useful source of relaxation, frequent engagement may coincide with delaying important tasks. Understanding this relationship can help highlight the importance of balanced social media use and effective self-regulation among young adults.

5. Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination among young adults using responses from 156 participants. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between Instagram Reels usage and procrastination, indicating that participants with higher Instagram Reels engagement were more likely to report higher levels of procrastination.

The descriptive findings showed that Instagram Reels are primarily used for entertainment and relaxation, while the inferential analysis confirmed that excessive engagement with Reels is associated with delaying academic and personal tasks. The Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive relationship, and the Chi-Square test confirmed a statistically significant association between Instagram Reels usage level and procrastination level.

The study highlights the importance of promoting balanced social media use among young adults. Educational institutions, parents, and mental health professionals should encourage responsible digital habits and effective time-management strategies to reduce procrastination associated with excessive social media engagement (Nugrahanto et al., 2023; Pekpazar et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2023).

Although the study provides valuable insights, it has certain limitations. The research was conducted using convenience sampling and self-reported responses, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research can include larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and comparisons between different social media platforms to better understand the behavioural effects of short-form video consumption.

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