

Social Media Use and Academic Procrastination: Behavioral and Functional Evidence from Mexican University

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Abstract

In Mexico, more than 70% of young people spend over three hours per day on social media, raising questions about its impact on academic performance. This study sought to examine the relationship between social media use and academic procrastination among university students. A quantitative, correlational, cross-sectional design guided the analysis, drawing on a non-probabilistic convenience sample of 113 students from three public universities. Data collection relied on a validated questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.89$) assessing five dimensions: frequency of use, cognitive interference, procrastinatory rationalization, functional use for academic purposes, and academic procrastination. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analyses indicated that frequency of use correlated significantly with academic procrastination, as well as with the functional use of these platforms, whereas no associations emerged with cognitive interference

or rationalization. Overall, the findings suggest that the influence of social media on task postponement stems primarily from behavioral patterns, shaped by users' intentionality and their capacity for self-regulation.

Keywords: Academic procrastination, Social media, University students

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Introduction

The impact of social media use within educational settings has gained increasing relevance in recent years, as these platforms have consolidated themselves as spaces for social interaction, information consumption, and academic support. Recent studies help capture the complexity of this phenomenon. López-García et al. (2022), in Spain, demonstrated that social media addiction correlates with difficulties in executive functions such as planning and emotional control, which directly affect the postponement of academic tasks. By contrast, Romero Astocondor et al. (2025), in Peru, reported an inverse yet significant relationship between social media use and academic procrastination, suggesting that, under functional management, these platforms may foster students' self-regulation. Together, these findings reveal differentiated dynamics shaped by sociocultural context and highlight the need to deepen this line of inquiry in other settings. In Mexico, particularly within higher education institutions in the northern region of the country, empirical studies addressing this issue remain scarce, which underscores the relevance of contextualized research capable of informing pedagogical strategies and digital self-regulation practices.

In response to this knowledge gap, the present study aimed to analyze the relationship between social media use and academic procrastination among university students in Sonora, Mexico, with the objective of identifying behavioral patterns and contributing evidence to the design of educational interventions grounded in social marketing principles. This population proves especially relevant due to its high level of access to digital devices and social platforms, factors that influence both academic performance and the organization of study time. In addition, the research sought to examine specific dimensions such as cognitive interference, procrastinatory rationalization, and the functional use of social media, thereby expanding understanding of how these variables mediate the relationship between digital technology and study habits.

The guiding research question asked: How does the frequency of social media use relate to academic procrastination among Mexican university students, and which patterns of cognitive interference, rationalization, and functional use mediate this relationship? To address this

question, the study adopted a quantitative approach with a correlational scope and a cross-sectional design. The analysis relied on a non-probabilistic convenience sample of 113 undergraduate students enrolled at three public universities in the state of Sonora: the Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora (ITSON), the Universidad de Sonora (UNISON), and the Universidad Estatal de Sonora (UES).

The sample included students from a wide range of academic programs, including engineering, business administration, psychology, educational sciences, law, and communication, which enabled a heterogeneous approach reflecting diverse academic profiles. Data collection employed a structured questionnaire comprising five dimensions: frequency of social media use, cognitive interference, procrastinatory rationalization, functional academic use, and academic procrastination. The instrument demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$). Statistical processing took place using Jamovi software (version 2.6.26), applying descriptive and correlational analyses to identify the most relevant associations among the variables under study.

Accordingly, the general objective of the research focused on analyzing the relationship between social media use and academic procrastination among Mexican university students. This aim expanded into four specific objectives: to describe the frequency of social media use within the participating sample; to identify levels of cognitive interference and academic procrastination; to recognize patterns of rationalization associated with task postponement; and to evaluate the functional use of these platforms for academic purposes. Achieving these objectives allows not only for a detailed description of students' digital interaction patterns but also for the provision of elements to design educational strategies that strengthen emotional self-regulation and conscious technology use in academic life.

The study finds its justification in the need to generate contextualized knowledge capable of addressing one of the most pressing challenges in higher education: time management in the face of digital technology influence. The results hold potential to guide pedagogical interventions that promote more balanced digital practices, reduce procrastination, and simultaneously harness the educational opportunities offered by social media. Furthermore, the findings may provide valuable input for the development of institutional policies that reinforce students' digital self-regulation while strengthening study habits and academic performance.

This article unfolds across six sections. First, the theoretical framework contextualizes the problem and reviews the most relevant literature on academic procrastination and social media. Second, the methodology details the research design, sample, instruments, and analytical procedures. Subsequently, the results receive presentation, followed by a discussion that situates the findings within existing literature. Finally, the conclusions outline the main contributions of the study and propose directions for future research. Through this structure, the article offers an integrated perspective that links empirical evidence with practical applications aimed at improving learning outcomes and student well-being in university contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Social Media

Within the university context, digital social media platforms have consolidated themselves as spaces of everyday interaction that shape both students' personal and academic lives. Beyond facilitating communication, these platforms function as environments where identities take form, experiences circulate, and learning opportunities emerge. As González and Ramírez (2021) note, content creation and sustained user interaction may exert a formative effect by encouraging active participation and the exchange of ideas. In a complementary vein, Silva et al. (2022) caution that algorithms, through the organization and recommendation of information, gradually configure digital habits that influence how young people allocate time and establish priorities.

Similarly, studies such as those by López and Hernández (2023) and Martínez (2020) highlight the pedagogical potential of these platforms by recognizing them as environments that foster academic socialization and cultural exchange in virtual spaces. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that social media platforms extend far beyond entertainment, operating instead as dynamic environments that permeate students' social, emotional, and academic dimensions. From this standpoint, examining how their use relates to high-impact academic behaviors—such as procrastination—becomes especially relevant, as such behaviors may intensify when social media function as distractors, yet diminish when students employ them for learning and collaboration purposes.

Procrastination

Procrastination has attracted scholarly attention across multiple fields of knowledge, giving rise to a broad and diverse theoretical framework. In general terms, scholars conceptualize it as a recurrent tendency to delay previously planned tasks, reflecting difficulties in self-regulation and time management, as proposed by Díaz-Morales (2019). From a psychological perspective, this behavior links closely to negative emotions—such as anxiety, guilt, and frustration—which intensify when delays compromise personal or academic goals. From a neuropsychological standpoint, Bertolín-Guillén (2023) associates procrastination with personality traits such as impulsivity and neuroticism, underscoring the need to strengthen emotional regulation through the development of executive functions.

Within educational theory, Atalaya Laureano and García Ampudia (2019) interpret procrastination as a form of avoidance of academic responsibilities, shaped by factors such as perfectionism, low motivation, or a perceived lack of control over tasks. On this basis, they advocate for preventive strategies tailored to specific pedagogical contexts.

Overall, the different approaches converge on the notion that procrastination cannot reduce itself to a mere lack of discipline or willpower; rather, it constitutes a multidimensional process requiring comprehensive responses. Among the most relevant responses stand the strengthening of emotional self-regulation, the development of metacognitive skills, and the creation of educational conditions that promote student autonomy and engagement.

Academic Procrastination

Within university settings, procrastination acquires a specific nuance when situated in the academic domain, as research has demonstrated its association with cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors, as well as with environmental conditions. In this regard, Embleton Sánchez (2025) explains that students often justify task postponement through beliefs and rationalizations that ultimately consolidate the habit. Complementarily, Silva Castillo et al. (2025) argue that this behavior connects to low motivation, heightened anxiety, and particular features of the study environment that facilitate avoidance.

Furthermore, Cordovez Angel et al. (2023) emphasize the negative effects of academic procrastination on psychological well-being, noting that feelings of guilt and frustration directly undermine students' self-perceptions of performance. Likewise, Chávez-Fernández et al. (2024) highlight a close relationship between procrastination and low emotional intelligence, which constrains students' capacity to manage emotions associated with fear of failure.

Finally, Arenas Wong et al. (2022) underscore the decisive role of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in shaping study habits, helping explain why some students procrastinate more frequently than others. Collectively, the reviewed approaches agree that academic procrastination represents a voluntary yet harmful behavior, determined by multiple interacting dimensions. Consequently, addressing it requires comprehensive strategies that include strengthening emotional self-regulation, enhancing academic motivation, and improving contextual conditions that support autonomous and effective learning.

Theoretical Model and Relationships Among the Study Variables

Based on the reviewed literature, this study primarily draws on the emotional self-regulation approach proposed by Bertolín-Guillén (2023), complemented by the theory of academic motivation developed by Arenas Wong et al. (2022). The integration of these frameworks enables an understanding of how emotional and motivational dimensions intertwine with the digital environment, revealing that students' academic performance depends not only on their capacity to manage emotions and control impulses, but also on the quality of their motivation and the manner in which they use technological platforms.

In line with this model, the study defined five core variables: frequency of social media use, cognitive interference, procrastinatory rationalization, functional use for academic purposes, and academic procrastination. These variables interact dynamically. For instance, frequent social media use may heighten cognitive interference, generating distractions that hinder concentration and encourage procrastinatory rationalization—that is, the justifications students employ to delay tasks. By contrast, when students use platforms for functional academic purposes, these tools may become resources that strengthen motivation and reduce the tendency to procrastinate. In sum, academic procrastination emerges as the outcome of interactions among these factors, shaped by emotional processes, motivation, and the digital context.

From a methodological perspective, incorporating these variables provides a comprehensive view of the phenomenon by capturing both the intensity of engagement with social media and the psychological processes mediating its impact on learning. The applied instrument demonstrated a high level of reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$), supporting the validity of the measurements obtained. Accordingly, the theoretical framework not only clarifies the relationship between social media use and academic procrastination, but also offers a robust conceptual foundation for future research aimed at strengthening emotional self-regulation and student motivation, with the ultimate goal of mitigating the adverse effects of excessive digital platform use on academic performance.

Methodology

The present research adopted a quantitative approach, selected for its capacity to examine social phenomena through the collection and processing of numerical data. This paradigm enables the identification of behavioral patterns and the establishment of relationships among variables, which proves particularly suitable for the analysis of practices such as academic procrastination within university contexts.

The study employed a non-experimental, cross-sectional design with a correlational scope. This methodological choice responded to the aim of examining the relationship between digital social media use and procrastination without manipulating participants' natural conditions. By capturing data at a single point in time, the cross-sectional design offers a snapshot of the phenomenon within its real context, thereby preserving the authenticity of the observed behaviors.

The target population consisted of university students from the southern region of the state of Sonora, Mexico, enrolled in three public higher education institutions: the Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora (ITSON), the Universidad Estatal de Sonora (UES), and the Universidad de Sonora (UNISON). The geographic and institutional delimitation followed criteria of accessibility and contextual relevance, acknowledging that patterns of social media use and procrastinatory behaviors may vary according to academic and sociocultural environments.

Sampling followed a non-probabilistic convenience approach and included 113 university students from the three public institutions in Sonora. This approach relied on ease of access to participants and their voluntary willingness to collaborate in the study. Although this sampling method does not support statistically generalizable inferences, it suits exploratory research with a correlational focus, where the primary objective involves detecting preliminary trends capable of guiding broader future studies.

The sample comprised 67.3% women and 32.7% men, with ages ranging from 17 to 27 years, a span corresponding to the typical period of undergraduate education. Inclusion criteria required enrollment in one of the selected institutions, regular access to social media platforms, and

informed consent to participate. Questionnaires containing incomplete or inconsistent responses were excluded in order to ensure data quality and reliability.

Data collection relied on a structured questionnaire composed of 20 items, distributed across five thematic blocks reflecting the core variables of the study: frequency of social media use, cognitive interference, academic procrastination, procrastinatory rationalization, and functional use for educational purposes (see Table 1). Each block drew on relevant theoretical foundations and sought to capture different nuances of students' behavior in relation to digital platform use.

Responses followed a three-point Likert-type scale: "never," "sometimes," and "always." This format allowed for the recording of perceived frequency of the evaluated behaviors and facilitated analysis from an ordinal perspective. The scale choice responded to practicality within educational settings, as it promotes quick and comprehensible responses among university students. In addition, the reduced number of response options helped minimize respondent fatigue during instrument administration, thereby contributing to the consistency and quality of the collected data.

The first block, addressing frequency of use, examined the regularity and duration with which participants accessed social media during moments related to academic activities. The second block, focused on cognitive interference, assessed the extent to which platform use affected concentration, focus, and study efficiency. The third block approached academic procrastination as the postponement of academic tasks influenced by social media use. The fourth block analyzed procrastinatory rationalization, understood as the explanations or arguments students employ to justify delaying behaviors. Finally, the fifth block explored functional social media use, considering their application for academic purposes such as communication with instructors and peers, task organization, and the search for relevant information.

Table 1. Structure of the Instrument on Social Media Use and Academic Procrastination

Variable	Description	Items
Frequency of use	Assesses the amount of time and regularity with which students use social media during academic activities.	1. I use social media while studying. 2. I check my social media several times during a study session. 3. I devote more time to social media than to my academic tasks. 4. I find it difficult to stop using social media when I study. 5. Social media use interferes with my ability to concentrate.
Cognitive interference	Measures the impact of social media use on concentration and academic focus.	6. Notifications easily distract me while I work on assignments. 7. After using social media, I struggle to regain my study rhythm. 8. Social media negatively affect my academic productivity.

Variable	Description	Items
Procrastination behavior	Explores whether social media use links to the postponement of academic activities.	9. I postponed academic tasks because I spent time on social media. 10. I prefer checking social media before starting my coursework. 11. I have left assignments unfinished due to time spent on social media. 12. I use social media as an excuse to avoid doing assignments. 13. I believe checking social media helps me relax before studying. 14. I consider that spending time on social media does not affect my academic performance.
Procrastinatory rationalization	Examines whether students justify procrastination through social media use.	15. I incorporate social media into my routine before beginning to study. 16. I see no problem in postponing tasks if I enjoy content on social media.
Functional use	Assesses whether students use social media for academic or organizational purposes.	17. I use social media to communicate with classmates about assignments. 18. I follow educational accounts that support my learning. 19. I use social media to organize group work. 20. Social media help me find useful academic resources.

Note. Items employ a Likert-type scale to enable an orderly and precise assessment.

To ensure the questionnaire's validity, the study implemented a review process conducted by specialists in educational psychology and research methodology. These experts examined each item in terms of its alignment with the defined theoretical constructs, as well as its clarity and relevance to the study objectives. This stage ensured that the instrument's content adequately captured the dimensions targeted for measurement.

Subsequently, the research team carried out a pilot administration with a small group of university students, which helped identify potential difficulties in item interpretation. Based on this preliminary test, minor adjustments refined wording and enhanced precision without modifying the instrument's conceptual structure.

To estimate internal consistency, the analysis calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a value of 0.89. This level of reliability qualifies as high in social and educational research, indicating satisfactory item homogeneity and supporting the instrument's robustness for assessing the proposed variables.

Data collection took place during the first semester of 2025 through a digital questionnaire developed in Google Forms. To facilitate participant access and increase response rates, the research team distributed the survey link via multiple channels, including institutional email, social media platforms, and WhatsApp groups. This strategy capitalized on communication media commonly used by university students. The instrument was administered once, in line with the study's cross-sectional design.

The research process ensured respondent anonymity by avoiding requests for personally identifiable information. This decision aimed to reduce potential biases and encourage honest responses, thereby strengthening data quality.

Regarding ethical considerations, the study adhered to principles of respect, beneficence, and justice. Prior to survey administration, participants received a digital informed consent form clearly explaining the study objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, the absence of significant risks, and the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. The analysis included only data from participants who explicitly agreed to participate. The research team also guaranteed confidentiality, specifying that data use would remain strictly academic and scientific, while safeguarding participants' rights throughout the process.

For data analysis, the study employed both descriptive and correlational statistical techniques. First, measures of central tendency—such as mean, median, and mode—alongside dispersion indicators, including standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values, characterized response patterns across the evaluated dimensions.

Subsequently, Pearson's correlation coefficient assessed relationships among the study variables, applying a significance level of $p < .05$. This technique allowed examination of the strength and direction of associations between social media use and academic procrastination, while also considering the mediating roles of cognitive interference, procrastinatory rationalization, and functional academic use. Overall, this analytical strategy suited cross-sectional correlational studies aiming to identify statistical relationships without establishing causal links.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The analysis examined responses from a questionnaire administered to 113 university students, with no missing data recorded. Initial data processing relied on descriptive statistics to characterize variables related to social media use and academic procrastination. The analysis incorporated measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), dispersion indicators (standard deviation), and distribution ranges (minimum and maximum values). Table 2 provides an overall overview of the values obtained for each evaluated variable.

The results indicate moderate variability across responses. Frequency of social media use yielded a mean of 2.12 and a median of 2.00, suggesting a distribution centered on an intermediate level of use, with values ranging from 1 to 3. Cognitive interference reached a mean of 2.19 and

showed relatively broad dispersion (SD = 0.610), indicating that some students reported limited impact on concentration, whereas others experienced higher levels of interference.

Regarding procrastination behavior, the mean reached 1.93, with responses clustered around the median value (2.00) and a full range from 1 to 3, evidencing the presence of this behavior at varying intensities within the sample. Procrastinatory rationalization presented a mean score of 2.05 and lower dispersion (SD = 0.350), which suggests greater homogeneity in students' justifications for delaying tasks. Finally, functional social media use recorded the highest mean (2.67) and a narrower range (minimum = 2, maximum = 3), indicating that most participants acknowledged the academic utility of these platforms.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics by Variable (N = 113)

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode ^a	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Frequency of use	2.12	2.00	2.00	0.465	1	3
Cognitive interference	2.19	2.00	2.00	0.610	1	3
Procrastination behavior	1.93	2.00	2.00	0.578	1	3
Procrastinatory rationalization	2.05	2.00	2.00	0.350	1	3
Functional use	2.67	3.00	3.00	0.471	2	3

Note. Authors' elaboration based on data processed with Jamovi 2.6.26.

Pearson Correlation

The analysis applied Pearson's correlation coefficient to systematically examine relationships among the study variables, allowing identification of both the strength and direction of associations between student behaviors and social media use. The procedure evaluated ten variable pairs derived from the questionnaire constructs, with the aim of determining whether increases in one dimension associated with changes in another, in accordance with the stated objectives.

The results provide a quantitative and comparative perspective by reporting correlation coefficients alongside their levels of statistical significance. This approach enabled identification of consistent relationships within the sample while distinguishing statistically meaningful associations from random variation. As a result, the analysis yielded a more precise understanding of the link between social media use and academic procrastination. The procedure revealed both the presence and absence of relevant correlations, thereby enriching the behavioral analysis by highlighting the strongest links among frequency of use, procrastination, and functional use. Detailed statistical results appear in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlations Between Social Media Use and Variables Associated with Academic Procrastination

Compared Variables	Pearson's r	df	p value	Significance	Brief Interpretation
Frequency of use ↔ Procrastination behavior	0.380	112	< .001	Significant	Higher social media use associates with greater procrastination.
Frequency of use ↔ Cognitive interference	-0.004	112	0.963	Not significant	No relationship between use and cognitive distraction.
Frequency of use ↔ Procrastinatory rationalization	-0.014	112	0.883	Not significant	No association with cognitive justifications.
Frequency of use ↔ Functional use	0.312	112	< .001	Significant	Frequent use also links to academic purposes.
Cognitive interference ↔ Procrastination behavior	0.141	112	0.137	Not significant	Weak relationship between distraction and procrastination.
Cognitive interference ↔ Procrastinatory rationalization	0.160	112	0.090	Not significant	Slight trend, yet inconclusive.
Cognitive interference ↔ Functional use	0.037	112	0.694	Not significant	No relationship between distraction and academic use.
Procrastination behavior ↔ Procrastinatory rationalization	0.107	112	0.259	Not significant	Justifications do not clearly explain procrastination.
Procrastination behavior ↔ Functional use	0.275	112	0.003	Significant	Students who procrastinate also use social media for useful purposes.
Procrastinatory rationalization ↔ Functional use	0.106	112	0.262	Not significant	No clear relationship between justification and functional use.

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated using Jamovi 2.6.26; df = degrees of freedom. $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance.

Interpretation of the Obtained Results

Analysis of the ten correlations proposed in the study showed that only four reached statistical significance ($p < .05$), whereas the remaining six yielded no conclusive evidence. This initial outcome suggests that students' behavior regarding social media use does not follow a single uniform pattern, but rather varies according to the specific dimensions under consideration.

In particular, frequency of use displayed a positive and significant relationship with academic procrastination ($r = 0.380$, $p < .001$) and with the functional use of social media ($r = 0.312$, $p < .001$). Both coefficients indicate a moderate effect size, suggesting that increased interaction with

digital platforms associates not only with greater task postponement but also with greater academic utilization of these tools. Although confidence intervals were not calculated, the strength of these associations points to meaningful statistical consistency, allowing these relationships to qualify as significant within the studied context.

In addition, the analysis identified a positive correlation between academic procrastination and functional social media use ($r = 0.275$, $p = .003$), also of moderate magnitude. This result indicates that students who tend to delay academic responsibilities also remain active users of social media for educational purposes. Such a finding highlights that digital platforms do not operate exclusively as distractors; instead, they also fulfill useful functions within the university environment. The coexistence of these two forms of use—one oriented toward leisure and the other toward learning—reveals a complex dynamic that resists reduction to a single explanatory framework.

Similarly, a positive correlation emerged between cognitive interference and procrastinatory rationalization ($r = 0.160$, $p = .090$). Although this relationship failed to reach the conventional threshold of statistical significance, its magnitude suggests a slight trend that may gain relevance in studies involving larger samples or longitudinal designs. From an interpretive standpoint, this result implies that students who report frequent distractions during study also tend to justify their procrastinatory behaviors, opening avenues for deeper exploration of the link between these factors.

By contrast, several associations showed no statistically significant evidence. For example, the analysis detected no meaningful correlations between frequency of use and cognitive interference ($r = -0.004$, $p = .963$), nor between frequency of use and procrastinatory rationalization ($r = -0.014$, $p = .883$). These findings indicate that increased time spent on social media does not necessarily translate into greater distraction or a stronger tendency to justify task postponement.

Likewise, cognitive interference showed no significant associations with the remaining study variables, suggesting that this construct operates in a relatively autonomous manner within the set of analyzed dimensions. Finally, the absence of robust relationships between procrastinatory rationalization and functional social media use reinforces the idea that justifying procrastination does not inherently imply academic use of digital platforms.

Overall, the most consistent findings centered on the relationships among frequency of social media use, academic procrastination, and functional use, revealing a multifaceted impact that may foster both task postponement and learning. In contrast, cognitive interference and rationalization exhibited limited explanatory relevance. These results provide a valuable empirical basis for further exploration of their educational and methodological implications.

Discussion

The study revealed a direct relationship between frequent social media use and academic procrastination, primarily from a behavioral perspective. This association aligns with prior research such as that of Ramírez-Gil et al. (2021) and Bautista-Quispe et al. (2023), who link intensive social media use to increased postponement of academic tasks. This phenomenon may stem from the type of stimuli these platforms provide: immediate gratification through interaction, entertainment, and social validation, in contrast to the cognitive demands of studying, which require sustained effort and tolerance for delayed rewards. This imbalance tends to steer students toward more immediately appealing digital activities, thereby facilitating academic avoidance.

Under conditions of academic pressure, social media use may also operate as a form of emotional escape, transforming procrastination into a self-regulatory strategy rather than a purely dysfunctional behavior. This interpretation resonates with Altamirano Chérrez and Rodríguez Pérez (2021), who argue that procrastination may assume an adaptive role when students confront academic stress.

The findings also revealed a functional duality in social media use: beyond serving as a source of distraction, students actively employ these platforms for academic purposes. This result accords with Islas Torres and Carranza Alcántar (2011), who emphasize their value as spaces for collaborative learning. The fact that functional use achieved the highest mean score in the applied instrument reinforces this perspective, indicating that students recognize the formative potential of these platforms when intentional use guides their engagement.

Conversely, the absence of significant correlations involving cognitive interference and procrastinatory rationalization contrasts with the arguments advanced by Silva Castillo et al. (2025), who associate these factors with performance deterioration. One plausible explanation involves the normalization of digital multitasking in university environments, where simultaneous engagement with social media and academic tasks has become routine. Such normalization may dilute perceptions of distraction and diminish the perceived need to justify task postponement.

Finally, the results contribute to the broader debate on the educational impact of social media. They converge with Pinto Santuber et al. (2023), who acknowledge their formative value under conditions of adequate self-regulation, while diverging from Castro Méndez et al. (2021), who warn about their detrimental effects on concentration. Taken together, the findings suggest that social media influence within university settings remains complex and contingent upon personal, emotional, and contextual factors. Accordingly, rather than restricting use outright, a more productive approach involves understanding how, when, and for what purposes students employ these platforms, thereby guiding their impact toward the enhancement of learning processes and students' emotional regulation.

Conclusions

The present research successfully addressed its general objective by analyzing the relationship between social media use and academic procrastination among university students. The findings demonstrate a significant association between frequent social media use and the postponement of academic tasks, particularly from a behavioral standpoint. No meaningful correlations emerged with cognitive factors such as mental interference or with rationalization mechanisms, suggesting that procrastination does not invariably stem from conscious avoidance processes or internal disorganization.

Regarding the specific objectives, the results indicate that social media use remains moderate overall, with individual variations reflecting relatively stable digital habits. Although the analysis detected some impact on concentration, this effect showed no statistical association with procrastination. Procrastinatory rationalization appeared as a common behavior within the university environment, yet without a direct link to task postponement. By contrast, functional use of social media for academic purposes achieved the highest mean score, confirming that students also acknowledge the formative value of these platforms.

This study contributes value across three dimensions. Scientifically, it broadens understanding of the relationship between the digital environment and academic behavior by integrating behavioral, cognitive, and functional variables. Methodologically, it validates a reliable instrument for assessing procrastination in relation to social media use. Practically, it provides useful evidence to inform the design of educational strategies that promote conscious technology use and strengthen emotional self-regulation.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that educational institutions implement digital training programs focused on developing self-regulation skills, fostering the academic use of social media, and enhancing emotional management in response to academic pressure. In addition, incorporating social media as pedagogical tools within the classroom—under conditions of intentionality and control—may further support learning processes.

As avenues for future research, the study proposes examining the role of variables such as emotional intelligence, executive functions, and the specific type of social network employed (recreational, academic, or professional). Expanding the analysis to other educational levels, study modalities, and sociocultural contexts would also help validate the generalizability of these findings and support the development of innovative educational interventions grounded in social marketing approaches, aimed at promoting responsible digital habits and improving academic performance.

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