



State Boredom and Procrastination in Gen Z: The Mediating Role of Social Media Addiction

¹Anuraddha Deepak, *Department of Psychology, Jain (Deemed-to-be-University), Bangalore*

²Shamala Rudrappa, *Department of Psychology, Jain (Deemed-to-be-University), Bangalore*

shamala.r@jainuniversity.ac.in

Abstract: The pervasive integration of social media into daily life has raised growing concerns about its impact on the behavioral functioning of Generation Z, particularly in relation to procrastination. State boredom, a transient state characterized by a lack of stimulation and disengagement, has emerged as a key emotional trigger that drives individuals toward excessive digital engagement. Despite independent evidence linking boredom, social media addiction, and procrastination, the mechanism underlying this relationship remains underexplored among Generation Z. The present study examined the mediating role of social media addiction in the relationship between state boredom and procrastination. A correlational design was employed, with 119 Generation Z participants aged 14-29 years participating in the study. The Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (MSBS), Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), and Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS) were used as the measures of the study. Pearson correlation and bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed significant positive associations between all three variables ($r = .515-.702$, $p < .01$). The findings further indicated that social media addiction partially mediated the relationship between state boredom and procrastination, with a significant indirect effect ($B = 3.53$, $p < .001$), accounting for 56.2% of the total effect, while the direct effect of state boredom on procrastination also remained significant ($B = 2.75$, $p = .017$). These results underscore the need for targeted interventions addressing boredom regulation and problematic social media use among Generation Z.

Keywords: *Generation Z, Procrastination, Social Media Addiction, State Boredom*

1. Introduction

The rapid proliferation of digital technology and widespread internet accessibility has significantly transformed the daily lives of young adults, especially Generation Z. According to recent statistics, Generation Z is considered the most active social media user group, spending approximately 3.5 hours per day on social media platforms (Kemp, 2024). Such extensive engagement has made social media an integral part of daily life, influencing communication patterns, emotional experiences, and behavioral habits. Although these platforms provide avenues for socializing and sharing information, there has also been growing concern about problematic social media usage and its psychological consequences.

A major issue surrounding the overuse of digital media is that of procrastination, which is the conscious delay of an action despite awareness of potential negative consequences. The negative consequences of procrastination are related to poorer academic performance, higher stress levels, and poorer psychological well-being (Tang & He, 2025). Contemporary studies highlight that procrastination is a complex phenomenon driven by emotional and motivational processes rather than solely by ineffective time-management. Generation Z is especially at risk of developing these patterns, given their constant exposure to the digital world and the immediate gratification that is provided by the social media platforms, which far outweigh any goal-directed behaviors.

Among the emotional factors contributing to procrastination, state boredom has received growing empirical attention. State boredom is a transient affective state characterized by a sense of lack of stimulation, lack of concentration on the current event, and lack of meaningful involvement (Kolas & von Mühlenen, 2024). Individuals experiencing boredom are typically motivated to seek sources of stimulation to alleviate this discomfort. In the current digital environment, social media platforms have emerged as a primary outlet for such relief, offering personalized content and gratification. Repeated reliance on social media as an emotional coping strategy may, over time, contribute to compulsive and uncontrolled usage.

Social media addiction is characterized by excessive and uncontrollable engagement with social networking platforms despite awareness of its detrimental consequences (Rahmawati et al., 2020). The negative effects include decreased self-control, attention problems, psychological problems and decreased productivity (Hou et al., 2019; Rasouli et al., 2025). While prior research has independently established significant associations between boredom, social media addiction, and procrastination, the mechanism through which state boredom translates into procrastination remains empirically underexplored, particularly among

Generation Z (Xie et al., 2023; Tang & He, 2025). Specifically, there has been limited empirical attention directed toward the mediating role of social media addiction in this relationship.

The present study addresses this gap by examining whether social media addiction mediates the relationship between state boredom and procrastination among Generation Z, as doing so could contribute to understanding the emotional and behavioral mechanisms underlying procrastination and pave the way for developing interventions for boredom regulation and healthier digital media use among Generation Z.

2. Methodology

The present study examined the mediating role of social media addiction in the relationship between state boredom and procrastination among Generation Z. This section outlines the aim, objectives, hypotheses, study design, sample, tools and procedure.

2.1 Aim

To examine the relationship between state boredom, social media addiction, and procrastination among Generation Z, and to explore whether social media addiction mediates the relationship between state boredom and procrastination.

2.2 Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between state boredom and procrastination.
2. To evaluate the relationship between state boredom and social media addiction.
3. To investigate the relationship between social media addiction and procrastination.
4. To assess the mediating role of social media addiction in the relationship between state boredom and procrastination.

2.3 Hypotheses

H1: There will be a positive relationship between state boredom and procrastination

H2: There will be a positive relationship between state boredom and social media addiction

H3: There will be a positive relationship between social media addiction and procrastination

H4: Social media addiction will significantly mediate the relationship between state boredom and procrastination.

2.4 Study Design

A correlational study to investigate the association among state boredom, social media addiction and procrastination among Generation Z and whether social media addiction is a mediating variable between state boredom and procrastination.

2.5 Sample Size

Convenience sampling was used, and 119 Generation Z (14-29 years of age) were recruited. There were 91 females, 26 males, and 1 other participant. In terms of education, 55 were post-graduates, 45 undergraduates, and 18 high school students

2.6 Socio-demographic data sheet

A socio-demographic data sheet was developed to collect basic background information of the participants, such as age, gender, level of education, average daily time spent on social media and primary social media platform used.

2.7 Measures

Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (MSBS): The Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (MSBS; Fahlman et al., 2013) is a 29-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure state boredom across five dimensions: Disengagement, High Arousal, Low Arousal, Inattention, and Time Perception. Participants assess their current experiences using a 7-point Likert scale. The scale has demonstrated excellent internal consistency in the present study (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$).

Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS): The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS; Andreassen et al., 2016) is a 6-item scale for evaluating social media addiction using six core components: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very rarely) to 5 (Very Often). The scale has demonstrated good internal consistency in the present study (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$).

Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS): The Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS; Steel et al., 2010) is a 12-item, self-report scale that assesses general procrastination tendencies on three subscales: decision procrastination, implemental delay, and timeliness. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, 1 (Very Untrue of Me) to 5 (Very True of Me), for each statement. The scale appeared to have excellent internal consistency in the present study (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$).

3. Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Normality indices for State Boredom, Social Media Addiction and Procrastination

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
State Boredom	119	4.40	0.91	-0.745	2.21

Social Media Addiction	119	19.98	4.93	-0.610	-0.288
Procrastination	119	41.49	10.71	-0.350	0.299

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics that were computed for all three variables. Participants reported a moderately high mean level of state boredom ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.91$), suggesting that boredom was a commonly experienced affective state within the sample. The mean score for social media addiction ($M = 19.98$, $SD = 4.93$) indicated moderate to high tendencies toward addictive social media engagement among Generation Z participants. Additionally, the mean procrastination score ($M = 41.49$, $SD = 10.71$) reflected considerable procrastination tendencies within the sample. Taken together, these descriptive findings suggest that the participants experienced notable levels of all three variables, providing a meaningful foundation for the subsequent correlational and mediation analysis.

Table 2: *Correlations Between State Boredom, Social Media Addiction, and Procrastination*

Variables	1	2	3
1. State Boredom	-		
2. Social Media Addiction	.515**	-	
3. Procrastination	.553**	.702**	-

Note. ** $p < .01$.

As presented in Table 2, Pearson correlation analysis was computed to examine the relationship among state boredom, social media addiction, and procrastination. State boredom demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with social media addiction ($r = .515$, $p < .01$) and procrastination ($r = .553$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher levels are associated with increased social media addiction and procrastination tendencies. Additionally, social media addiction showed a strong positive correlation with procrastination ($r = .702$, $p < .01$), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of addictive social media use tend to exhibit greater procrastination. All three variables were positively correlated with one another, providing the prerequisite correlational evidence for mediation analysis.

Table 3: *Path Estimates of the Mediation Model*

Effect	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	Z	P	%Mediated
Indirect	3.53	0.751	2.215	5.01	4.71	<.001	56.2
Direct	2.75	1.158	0.303	4.91	2.38	0.017	43.8
Total	6.29	1.184	3.801	8.52	5.31	<.001	100.0

Note. Estimate = unstandardized coefficient. Bootstrapping was conducted with 5,000 resamples.

A mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether social media addiction mediates the relationship between state boredom and procrastination, using bootstrapping with 5000 samples and 95% confidence interval.

The total effect of state boredom on procrastination was significant ($B = 6.29$, $SE = 1.184$, 95% CI [3.801, 8.52], $p < .001$). The direct effect of boredom on procrastination remained significant after including the mediator ($B = 2.75$, $SE = 1.158$, 95% CI [0.303, 4.91], $p = .017$). Additionally, state boredom significantly predicted social media addiction ($B = 2.80$, $SE = 0.473$, 95% CI [1.877, 3.75], $p < .001$), and social media addiction significantly predicted procrastination ($B = 1.26$, $SE = 0.162$, 95% CI [0.963, 1.59], $p < .001$).

The indirect effect of state boredom on procrastination through social media addiction was significant ($B = 3.53$, $SE = 0.751$, 95% CI [2.215, 5.01], $p < .001$), accounting for 56.2% of the total effect. The significance of both direct and indirect effects indicates a partial mediation, suggesting that state boredom influences procrastination both directly and indirectly through increased social media addiction.

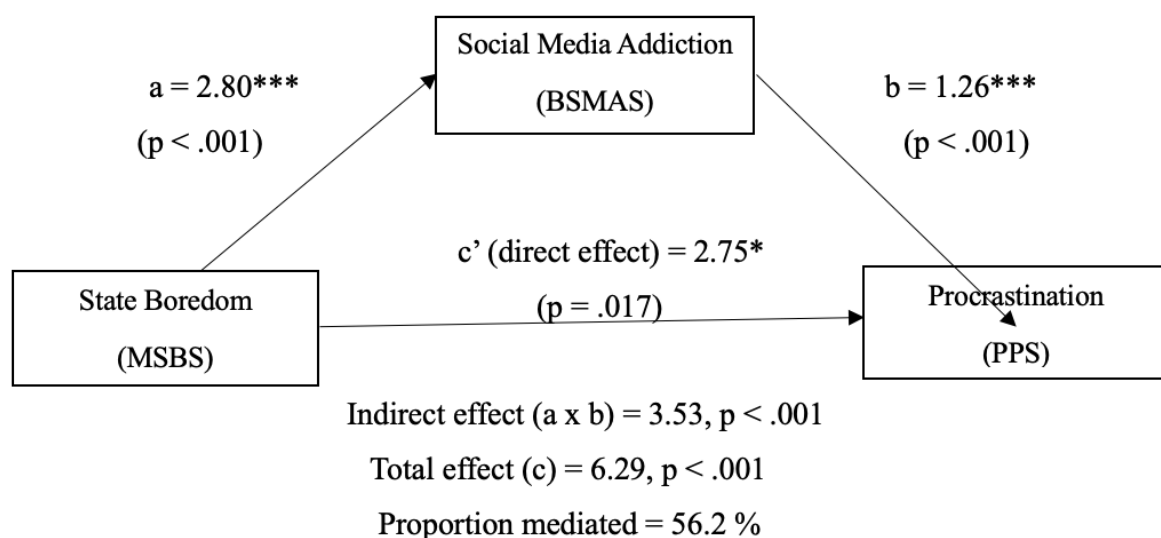


Figure 1: Mediation Model Depicting Relationship Between State Boredom, Social Media Addiction, and Procrastination

Note. MSBS = Multidimensional State Boredom Scale, BSMAS = Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale, PPS = Pure Procrastination Scale

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 1 illustrates the mediation model examining the role of social media addiction in the relationship between state boredom and procrastination. State boredom significantly predicted social media addiction ($a = 2.80, p < .001$), indicating that individuals experiencing higher levels of boredom are more likely to engage in excessive or addictive social media use. Social media addiction, in turn, significantly predicted procrastination ($b = 1.26, p < .001$), indicating that the more addictive social media users are, the more prone they are to procrastination. The direct effect of state boredom on procrastination remained statistically significant after including the mediator ($c' = 2.75, p = .017$), confirming partial mediation.

Taken together, these findings indicate that state boredom influences procrastination through two distinct pathways: directly by reducing motivation and increasing task aversiveness, and indirectly, by driving individuals toward addictive social media use, which subsequently reinforces procrastination.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between state boredom, social media addiction, and procrastination, and to explore whether social media addiction mediates the relationship between state boredom and procrastination among the members of Generation Z. A total of 119 Generation Z participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method. The Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (MSBS), Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) and Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS) were administered, and Pearson correlation and bootstrapped mediation analysis were conducted to examine the relationships between the variables.

A significant positive correlation was found between state boredom and procrastination, supporting the first hypothesis. Individuals who reported high levels of state boredom also demonstrated greater tendencies to delay tasks. This finding is consistent with existing literature that conceptualizes procrastination as a failure of self-regulation, wherein individuals prioritize short-term emotional relief over long-term goal-directed behavior (Sümer & Büttner, 2022). Boredom, being an aversive affective state characterized by a lack of stimulation and reduced cognitive engagement, motivates individuals to escape from uninteresting tasks, thereby increasing avoidance behavior and task delay (Xie et al., 2023). In the context of Generation Z, who are accustomed to constant stimulation and instant gratification through digital media, even mild experiences of boredom may amplify the tendency to disengage from effortful tasks, further contributing to procrastination.

The second hypothesis, which proposed a significant positive relationship between state boredom and social media addiction, was also supported. Participants experiencing higher levels of boredom reported greater levels of addictive social media use. This relationship can be understood through the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggests that individuals actively engage with media to fulfil psychological needs such as entertainment, escape, or mood regulation (Przepiorka et al., 2021). Social media platforms provide a readily available way for people to get a dose of stimulation they crave, using their algorithm-driven content and continuous stream of personalized stimulation, serving as an easily accessible coping mechanism for individuals seeking relief from boredom. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that boredom is a significant predictor of problematic digital engagement (Gao et al., 2023; Malik et al., 2023). Over time, repeated reliance on social media for emotional regulation may reinforce habitual and compulsive usage patterns, ultimately contributing to addiction.

A strong positive correlation was observed between social media addiction and procrastination, supporting the third hypothesis. Individuals with higher levels of addictive social media use demonstrate significantly greater procrastination tendencies ($r = .702$, $p < .01$). The finding is consistent with previous studies identifying excessive social media use as a key contributor to task delay (Tang & He, 2025; Rasouli et al., 2025). Temporal Motivation Theory offers a useful explanation for this relationship, suggesting that individuals tend to prefer activities that offer immediate rewards over those with delayed outcomes (Nwosu et al., 2020). Social media platforms provide instant gratification through continuous content, notifications, and social feedback, making them more appealing than effortful academic or occupational tasks. Furthermore, Ego Depletion Theory suggests engagement with social media depletes self-regulatory resources, reducing an individual's capacity to sustain attention and resist distractions, thereby increasing procrastination (Rasouli et al., 2025).

The fourth and main hypothesis proposed that social media addiction would mediate the relationship between state boredom and procrastination. The findings supported the hypothesis. The indirect effect of state boredom on procrastination through social media addiction was significant ($B = 3.53$, $p < .001$), accounting for 56.2% of the total effect, while the direct effect also remained significant ($B = 2.75$, $p = .017$), indicating partial mediation. This suggests that state boredom influences procrastination through two pathways: directly, by reducing motivation and increasing task aversiveness, and indirectly, by driving individuals toward addictive social media use, which subsequently reinforces procrastination. These findings extended prior research by identifying social media addiction as a key behavioral

mechanism linking boredom to procrastination (Kolas & von Mühlenen, 2024; Xie et al., 2023). The digital environment plays a crucial role in shaping these patterns as features such as infinite scrolling, push notifications, and the use of algorithm-driven content are specifically designed to capture and sustain attention, making disengagement particularly difficult for Generation Z.

Taken together, the findings of the present study highlight that procrastination among Generation Z is not merely a consequence of poor time management but is deeply influenced by emotional and behavioral factors. State boredom serves as a key emotional trigger, while social media addiction functions as an important behavioral pathway through which procrastination is reinforced. These results underscore the importance of addressing both emotional regulation and digital behavior patterns in developing effective interventions aimed at reducing procrastination among Generation Z.

5. Summary and Limitations

Major Findings of the study:

1. State boredom was significantly and positively correlated with social media addiction.
2. State boredom was significantly and positively correlated with procrastination.
3. Social media addiction was significantly and positively correlated with procrastination.
4. Social media addiction partially mediated the relationship between state boredom and procrastination, accounting for 56.2 % of the total effect. These findings indicated that boredom contributes to procrastination both directly and indirectly through increased engagement with social media, identifying social media addiction as a key behavioral mechanism in this relationship among Generation Z.

Limitations

1. The study used self-report measures, and this can result in response bias and social desirability effects that could influence the accuracy of participants' responses.
2. Due to the correlational research design, it was not possible to draw causal conclusions between the variables; longitudinal research would be required to establish the causal order of the relationships.
3. The use of convenience sampling may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the broader Generation Z population across diverse geographical and socio-cultural contexts.
4. The sample was predominantly female (76.5%), which may limit the representativeness of the findings across genders within Generation Z.

5. The developmental and contextual differences between age subgroups of Generation Z were not explored separately and may obscure important differences in the relationships between the study variables.

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