

IMPACT OF ONLINE DISINHIBITION ON THE SUCCESS OF E-LEARNING OF FINAL YEAR MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

E.M.I.S. Ekanayake^{1,*} and H.M.R.D. Kularathne²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: imashiiekanayake@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, e-learning has seen exponential growth, particularly in the field of higher education. The flexibility, accessibility, and adaptability of e-learning platforms have made them crucial components of modern education. In Sri Lanka, e-learning has become increasingly popular, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating a shift from traditional classroom-based learning to online platforms. Universities across the country have adopted various Learning Management Systems (LMS) to facilitate this transition. However, online disinhibition, which refers to the phenomenon in which individuals exhibit online behaviors that they might not display in face-to-face interactions, can affect the success of online education. Given the existing empirical gap in this context, this research aims to explore the effect of online disinhibition on e-learning success, focusing on its implications within the academic context of Sri Lanka. By nature, this study was positivistic, deductive, quantitative, and cross-sectional. Data were collected from a sample of 327 final-year management undergraduates from three leading universities in Sri Lanka, as per the Webometrics Rankings 2023: University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Colombo, and Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, selected through the simple random sampling technique (N=2250). The study used the SPSS statistical package (version 25) to analyze the data, facilitating descriptive and inferential data analysis. The multiple regression analysis results indicated a significant negative effect of dissociative anonymity ($\beta = -0.086$, $p = .001$), invisibility ($\beta = -0.446$, $p = .000$), asynchronicity ($\beta = -0.293$, $p = .000$), solipsistic introjection ($\beta = -0.314$, $p = .020$), dissociative imagination ($\beta = -0.349$, $p = .000$), and minimization of authority ($\beta = -0.259$, $p = .010$) on e-learning success. Overall, the findings highlight that each dimension of online disinhibition has a statistically significant negative impact on the success of e-learning, emphasizing its critical role in the refinement of e-learning methodologies, the design of more effective online platforms, and the implementation of tailored interventions that foster a supportive and respectful digital learning environment. Ultimately, this study seeks to offer actionable insights that will enhance the educational experiences of management undergraduates in Sri Lanka and potentially serve as a model for similar contexts in other educational institutions.

Keywords: E-learning, online disinhibition, undergraduates, digital education, Sri Lanka