

Impact of Social Media Addiction on Work Engagement among Academics in State Universities in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Social media has transformed the way academic labourers socialise, network, and communicate knowledge. As much as networking and visibility of scholarly productions have been facilitated through these media, their overuse is increasingly linked to behavioural addiction that destroys attention, productivity, and occupational commitment. While social media addiction has been rigorously studied in global contexts, in Sri Lanka, it remains a narrow focus of investigation. More critically, studies on the repercussions of such addictive behaviour for academics who are saddled with teaching, research, and knowledge dissemination duties are extremely limited. Such a lack of empirical investigation points to a critical research gap that this study seeks to address. The current study investigates the impact of social media addiction on the work engagement of state university academics in Sri Lanka. A quantitative methodology was followed using a structured 47-item questionnaire adapted from the Social Media Addiction Scale for Adults (SMAS) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). Data were collected from a sample of 90 academics representing six universities, including Colombo, Peradeniya, Sri Jayewardenepura, Kelaniya, Rajarata, and Sabaragamuwa. The sample represented lecturers, senior lecturers, and professors from management, arts, science, and social sciences faculties. Descriptive statistics revealed moderate levels of both social media addiction and work engagement. Regression analysis confirmed that social media addiction was a significant predictor of lower work engagement ($\beta = -0.226$, $p = 0.002$), explaining 10.5% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.105$). The study contributes by filling the empirical gap on Sri Lankan academics, showing the adverse effect of addictive digital habits on engagement, and extending theoretical insights from self-determination and conservation of resources theory.

Keywords: academics, social media addiction, state universities, work engagement