

Impact of Social Media Addiction on Life Satisfaction among Management Undergraduates in Sri Lanka: Mediating Role of Mental Health

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Abstract

The significant growth in social media usage has notably affected students' life patterns, mental well-being, and social interactions. However, limited studies have investigated the mediating role of mental health in this relationship within the Sri Lankan undergraduate context. This study explored the impact of social media addiction on life satisfaction, with the mediating effect of mental health among Sri Lankan management undergraduates. A quantitative approach was adopted, and data were collected from 221 participants representing 4 state universities using a questionnaire based on the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21). Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software. Results revealed that 74.2% of undergraduates spend more than 3 hours per day on social media, and Facebook is the social media platform they most often use during their free time. According to results, there is a significant negative relationship between social media addiction and life satisfaction ($\beta = -.2527$, $p < 0.05$), and there is a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and mental health ($\beta = .4933$, $p < 0.05$). However, the positive relationship between mental health and life satisfaction is not statistically significant ($\beta = .7254$, $p > 0.05$), and the bootstrapped indirect effect further confirmed it (effect = $-.0157$). The study highlights the need for university-based mental health awareness programmes and the addition of digital health education. Future researchers could replicate this study with a larger sample in different contexts. They could also study the effects of other mediators, and a longitudinal method could also be used to study long-term effects.

Keywords: life satisfaction, mental health, social media, social media addiction, undergraduates, Sri Lanka