

Information Technology and Undergraduate Mental Well-being: A Study at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

S. Priya^{1,*} and V.K.N. Gamini²

*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka^{1,2}*

*Corresponding author: priyasivanandhan31@gmail.com

Abstract

Although maintaining good mental health is essential for the academic success of students, necessary health resources are limited in most universities. Due to the advancement of digital technology, many students heavily rely on digital devices for their academic activities. Information and communication technology (ICT) usage can have both positive and negative impacts on the mental health of undergraduates. Literature shows that there is an increasing trend of mental health-related issues among adolescents, especially university undergraduates, in recent decades due to the ICT-based education system. On the other hand, studies that explore this topic were limited, given the reluctance shown by individuals to discuss their mental health. Most universities conduct psychoeducational programmes to improve student mental health. This study aims to investigate the impact of the use of information technology on undergraduates' mental health for a better understanding of this relationship. Technology use, social media usage, digital dependency, awareness, and supporting systems were chosen as independent variables, and undergraduates' mental health was chosen as the dependent variable. Primary data were collected from a total of 367 undergraduates from Rajarata University of Sri Lanka using a pre-tested, structured questionnaire using convenient sampling techniques, and questions were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. Data were analysed using SPSS Ver. 21. The results revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between the mental health status of the students and the use of technology, engagement in social media, and addiction to digital media. There is a positive association between the magnitude of these factors and the outcomes of mental well-being. In addressing this issue, the researchers articulate that universities should help in promoting digital literacy and balance in technology use with the aim of fostering undergraduates' well-being. Further research is recommended to validate and generalise the findings in different contexts.

Keywords: depression, digital addiction, information technology, media usage, mental health