

Exploring Preventive Measures on Social Media Addiction among Teenagers: Evidence from Colombo District of Sri Lanka

A.A.D. Ariyadasa^{1,*} and H.M.B.P. Ranaweera²

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

*Corresponding author: ayeshadilrukshiariyadasak@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media addiction (SMA) has become a significant behavioural concern among teenagers, influencing their academic engagement, emotional well-being, and social relationships. Despite global recognition of this issue, research on preventive strategies remains limited within the Sri Lankan context. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of five preventive measures: parental control, educational programmes, self-control strategies, digital literacy, and peer influence in reducing SMA among teenagers in the Colombo District. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 390 active social media users aged 14–19 years using a structured questionnaire. The study utilised descriptive statistics to determine the existing level of SMA among teenagers and inferential analyses, such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression, to identify the most influential preventive factors. The findings revealed that peer influence and self-control strategies demonstrated the strongest positive relationships with reduced SMA, indicating that supportive peer networks and self-regulation play crucial roles in promoting balanced digital behaviour. Educational programmes, parental control, and digital literacy also contributed meaningfully to moderating excessive social media use. The results emphasise the need for multi-dimensional preventive approaches that combine family guidance, school-based awareness, and peer-led interventions. The study concludes that fostering self-control among teenagers and promoting healthy peer environments can effectively mitigate the risk of SMA. These insights provide valuable guidance for educators, parents, and policymakers in developing evidence-based strategies to cultivate responsible and mindful social media engagement among Sri Lankan youth.

Keywords: digital literacy, parental control, peer influence, preventive measures, social media addiction