

The Effects of Social Media Multitasking on Working Memory of State University Students in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Social Media multitasking is the concurrent use of multiple digital media streams where users are addicted to social media sites and handle more than one social media site. It has been found by many empirical studies that above all the other groups, university students were identified to be the democratic group that has the highest propensity to involve in social media activities. As a negative result of that, social media multitasking has also been an increasingly pervasive concept among university students. Students are so obsessed with social media and even they have biological responses when they cannot participate. After presenting the smartphone, the situation became even worse. People started to experience phantom vibration syndrome. That is where a person thinks his phone went off when not getting notifications, and they check and it did not. Almost all check their mobiles incessantly, even distracted in conversations. When people see something important or attractive in the real world; most probably their first reaction would be to take out their mobile phones and post it on social. Therefore, the general objective of this study was to find the effects of social media multitasking on the working memory of state university students in Sri Lanka. The population of this study was all the students, who are reading in University Grant Commission (UGC) governed universities in Sri Lanka. 250 undergraduates from the aforementioned universities were selected as the study sample and data was collected by using an online questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed and regression and correlation were calculated to get the final result. The value of the correlation analysis indicated a significant negative relationship between the independent and dependent variables while regression analysis results confirmed it. The research results conveyed that social media multitasking has a significantly negative effect on students' working memory and there was not a big deviation of the social media addiction level among both male and female users. Those who are experiencing a high level of social media addiction should practice preventative strategies and coping strategies to protect their working memory.

Keywords: Social media, social media multitasking, working memory