

NEXUS BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF UNDERGRADUATES AT RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SMARTPHONE ADDICTION

W.M.A.G.N.K. Wasala^{1,*} and K.A.K.S. Rathnakara²

^{1,2}Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: hr2019385@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Social media have become an essential part of the day-to-day lives of individuals, particularly in the young population. Social media can improve people's interactions and allow them to express themselves, but there have also been concerns about its possible harmful impacts on psychological well-being among university students. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of social media use on psychological well-being and smartphone addiction among undergraduate students at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Social media usage was the independent variable and psychological well-being was the dependent variable. Smartphone addiction was used as the mediating variable. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire from 368 undergraduates from a population of 8369 within six faculties at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka using a stratified sampling technique. The reliability of the measures was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The hypotheses were tested using correlation, regression, and ANOVA analyses. All proposed hypotheses were supported according to the study findings. The results of the study revealed that social media usage had a negative impact ($R = -.167$) on psychological well-being, but this negative impact increased with smartphone addiction. The study findings will benefit university students, parents, university administrators, academic staff, and the government. Further, it was recommended that undergraduates have self-control when using social media, avoid smartphone addiction, and take responsibility for their psychological well-being.

Keywords: psychological well-being, smartphone addiction, social media usage