

Disconnect to Reconnect: Employee Wellbeing through Digital Detoxing

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Abstract

The human life on the earth moving far from eco life and marching towards a digital life. In the 21st century, any white-collar employee cannot imagine a gadget-free work practice in his/her work life. While the Digital workplace becomes the order of the day, employee wellbeing became the million-dollar question that needs an answer. Will digital wellbeing possible through digital detoxing? This paper aimed to address the issues in achieving employee wellbeing at the digital workplace and provide a viable solution to ensure digital wellbeing in the post covid era. Few of the existing literature answers become contrary after the implementation during the pandemic. Holding this as a research gap, this research would be carried out using descriptive research design with survey technique using a structured questionnaire containing multiple constructs measuring various aspects of employee digital detoxing and digital wellbeing. The study's target population would be the Employees working in the IT sector who has adopted remote work. A simple random sampling technique will be assumed to reach them and collect primary data. This research would incorporate prevailing changes in the current working condition due to covid-19 and tries to bring a great addition to the existing body of knowledge. This study proposes a conceptual model with multiple constructs tested on the Structural Equation Modelling technique using AMOS. Few of the study outcomes may contrast with the existing literature and suggest the practitioners' implications in human resource management by bringing a new dimension to employee wellbeing.

Keywords: Digital Wellbeing, Digital Workplace, Digital Detoxing, Work Unplugged, Post Covid Era, Reverse Domestication, Structural Equation Modelling.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee wellbeing is an enduring demand for an organization to achieve higher employee performance. Employee wellbeing can be categorized as Physical wellbeing, Emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing, and financial wellbeing. Among the four, physical and emotional wellbeing can be ranked as vital factors that affect employee performance as they are directly related to the work environment and people around. Understanding this, employers have taken various steps in ensuring employee wellbeing in the workplace. Ranging from ergonomic work settings to statutory welfare facilities, organizations are keen on providing many things to improve employee wellbeing. Though it may be an expenditure in terms of the

financial aspect, it is a kind of investment that an organization guarantees uninterrupted employee performance. With the arrival of technology, the workplace becomes more sophisticated and supported both the employee and the employer to meet their expectation. As organizations move towards industry 4.0, technology becomes an unavoidable element, where computers are communicating and controlling machines. It won't be a false statement if it is said that technology is ruling the current industrial sector globally.

As the workplace becomes more digitally driven, especially in IT and ITES industries, employee wellbeing needs a different perspective. In industrial revolution 4.0, the employees are connected with gadgets more

than machines. A significant portion of their work is one way or other done through these gadgets such as desktops, laptops, and smartphones. Though these gadgets are more convenient and efficient, they have their demerits as well. This digital workplace is more vulnerable to the employee's physical and emotional wellbeing, especially during the pandemic where employees are asked to work from home and are virtually connected. Though it looks desirable and an employee-friendly decision, the outcome is not as expected. Because of this digital workplace, the employees lose their sense of time, sense of place, and self. Organizations are devising strategies to ensure the wellbeing of employees through digital detox. Hence, this paper aimed to identify the common ways to digital detox and its impact on employees' emotional and physical wellbeing leading towards their performance.

1.1 Digital Detox

As an idea, a digital detox is not exactly ten years old, yet the utilization has quickly expanded. In 2013, the idea was included in the Oxford word reference characterized as 'A timeframe during which an individual ceases from utilizing electronic gadgets, for example, cell phones or PCs, viewed as a chance to decrease pressure or spotlight on friendly collaboration in the actual world.' In self-improvement guides (Price, 2018 and Zahariades, 2016) the periods to computerized detox vary from going through a bit of while without a cell phone to occasions of half a month of not using a computer. The media projects it differently that not using a computer to watch programmes, while computerized detox unavoidably intends to avoid utilizing web media and games, it might again infer abstaining from other media like TV and other business-related instruments and projects.

Notwithstanding common-sense contrasts, a typical reason in every portrayal of detoxing digital gadgets is that the existing client designs used to be risky and undesirable. Accordingly, the term is similar to wellbeing utilized by media pundits and those who oppose it (Syvertsen, 2017: 121ff). Almost immediately, mainstream media was compared to contaminations, junk, sewage, toxic substance, and real allegories proceeded with articulations, such as 'habitually lazy person' for portraying TV-prompted aloofness, and a few

performers' mind' will be hyper which is instigated through online programs (Carr, 2010: 115). Detoxing the use of digital gadgets through clinical cycle is less hazardous, when compared to alcoholic detoxing and comparative strategies. As opposed to the prescribed abstention to digital detox is suggested to have a less time frame to 'purifying' – which stay mainstream and, when compared to other advanced detox (Palermo, 2015) like alcoholic detox.

Just like all cultural and social trend, digital detox attracts an assortment of motivations, and intentions in rehearsing advanced detox fluctuate. Advanced detox will fit inside a practice of corporate self-improvement (Guyard and Kaun, 2018) where people are encouraged to enhance effectiveness using innovation and programming, including programming to decrease computerized interruptions (Gregg, 2015;). Besides, computerized detox kindles the thoughts of equilibrium, care which includes both physical and mental health. From the middle of 2010s, occasion bundles arose for computerized detox name as side projects and the main yoga market, otherworldliness, and maintenance (Euromonitor, 2012). Glomb et al. (2011: 123) indicates, practices based on care are not, at this point, attached to their beginnings in Buddhist reflection rehearses yet are generally instructed to develop self-guideline of considerations, feelings, and patterns, just as to improve strength among laborers despite challenges. An equal effort to be drawn among work environment utilization of care to improve laborers' execution and advanced detox to accomplish a 'more adjusted media life.

2. Literature Review

Digital Detoxing is a new term with minor literature available. The study has to lean on other related phrases like employee wellbeing, usage of gadgets to complete the work, meeting, etc. The gadgets help the employees' access information (Chen & Yan, 2016) from the server and help work from home, which was used earlier to communicate with others. When used in between the work, the same gadgets affect the employees' productivity (Duke & Montag, 2017), which increases the stress among the employees at the workplace (Tarafdar et al. 2007) which is known as technostress. It

explains the distortion of using smartphones during work which has a negative impact on their productivity. The advancement in technology and the information available in social media facilitates the job if not overused (Lepp, Barkley, & Karpinski, 2014). It had revealed that gadgets' overuse reduces productivity (Montag & Walla, 2016).

The stress is created as the employees feel that they may miss out on work-related work, which negatively affects their long-term productivity (Scott, Valley & Simecka, 2017). As the employees use smartphones during work hours, which reduces their ability, like the same, it affects their work-life balance. Smartphones make them available 24 x 7, which affects the quality of time they spent at home. This directly affects the Work-Life Balance. The employees are forced to attend the calls from customers or superiors without any delays that affect the relationship and affect the health as the sleeping time is extended (Shallcross, 2012). Late-night sleeping (Son et al. 2008) affects the efficiency in the morning and reduces employee engagement in the job (Lanaj, Johnson & Barnes, 2014). The usage of smartphones minimizes the difference between office and home. This results in an overload of work (Bucher, Fieseler & Suphan, 2013). The employees are forced to work even though they are at home and not in the workplace or during their family outings (Lanaj, Johnson & Barnes, 2014).

Elhai et al. (2016) discussed the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), a personality construct; the employees constantly keep in touch with their smartphones. It interferes with their work-life balance (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan & Gladwell, 2013), overuse of social media, and their tendency to use digital technology because of peer pressure (Reinecke et al., 2017; Alt, 2015); The overuse will result in depression, anxiety which reduces efficiency and productivity.

The youngsters are worried too much if they are not able to touch the smart phone (Kim, 2018), and the distress of poor connectivity and results in loneliness (Dongre, Inamdar, and Gattani, 2017) and techostressis discussed (Tams, Legoux and Leger; 2018). Digital technology using smartphones makes the sleepless night for the employees affect the wellbeing negatively (Chang & Choi, 2016; Perlow, 2012) and stress

and depression (Wolniewicz et al. 2018; Stepanikova, Nie & He, 2010). The sleepless nights will reduce the employee's productivity (Lanaj, Russell & Barnes, 2014), as the employee needs more time to get sleep as they work late at night. Many persons tend to keep the mobile near their bed to be available at all times (Perlow, 2012). Chang and Choi (2016) examine the variables which affect youngster's sleep and their addictive behaviour of using smartphones. Haug et al. (2015) study young people's addiction and use smartphones as soon as they are raised from the bed. This results in depression, stress, and anxiety.

Excessive use of screen time will affect digital wellbeing (Lupton, 2018) and affects the employee and may have a chronic illness. Digital wellbeing reduces the use of smartphones (Lee et al., 2019), their withdrawal from addictive behavior (Eyal, 2019; Roffarello and De Russis, 2019) is very much needed during the pandemic. VandenAbeelee (2020) argues that digital wellbeing is essential for health, reduces depression, stress, etc., and can control smartphone usage.

3. Objectives

The study's main objective is to study the impact of digital detoxing on employees' emotional and physical wellbeing and find the influence of these two on achieving employee performance. For this, the study identified seven different digital detox strategies with the help of an extensive literature review.

4. Methodology

There are very few studies discussing the need for digital detox among human beings in general. Almost no studies found links between the impact of digital detoxing, employee wellbeing, and employee performance. Hence this study adopted a descriptive research design to address the research gap. The research selected employees of the IT industry as the target population as they will be more appropriate for the study context. Since the study uses a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool through virtual mode, it doesn't restrict geographical boundaries. The sample size for this study is

calculated based on the standard deviation formula suggested by Israel, 2009. The target population was selected based on simple random sampling techniques using LinkedIn data. Four hundred sixty-three final completed datasets were taken for statistical analysis and analyzed with SPSS and AMOS software packages. The questionnaire consists of four components. Questions fetching demographic details of the employee are the first component, followed by statements measuring the different strategies of digital detoxing—the third and fourth components of the questionnaire related to employee wellbeing and employee performance, respectively.

4.1 Research Framework

The study devised the following research framework to achieve the study's objective and answer the research questions raised. The proposed conceptual model is devised using model proposed by (Grawitch et al. 2006) and subsequently modified to suit the current context along with reverse domestication theory (Silverstone et al. 1992). The model consists of seven components under the digital detoxing strategies which are treated as exogenous

variables. To measure the digital detoxing strategies, new 29 item scales have been developed on the basis of reverse domestication theory proposed by (Silverstone et al. 1992). The model contains two mediating variables namely mental wellbeing (9 item scale adopted from Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)(Tennant et al., 2007)) Physical wellbeing (7 item scale adopted from (Chan et al., 2014)). Employee Performance has been treated as endogenous variable measure with 7 item scale adopted from (Koopmans et al., 2013)

5. Result and Discussion

The study includes employees working in various IT and ITES companies as target respondents. As displayed in table 1, the respondents were mostly females (60%) aged between 31-40 years (33%), mostly working in Foreign MNCs (46%), have the professional qualification required for the job (42%), spread over all the job levels, most of them with permanent employment (82%), experience between 1-3 years and their monthly income spread over all the levels. 54% of the employees responded that their spouse is working in IT.

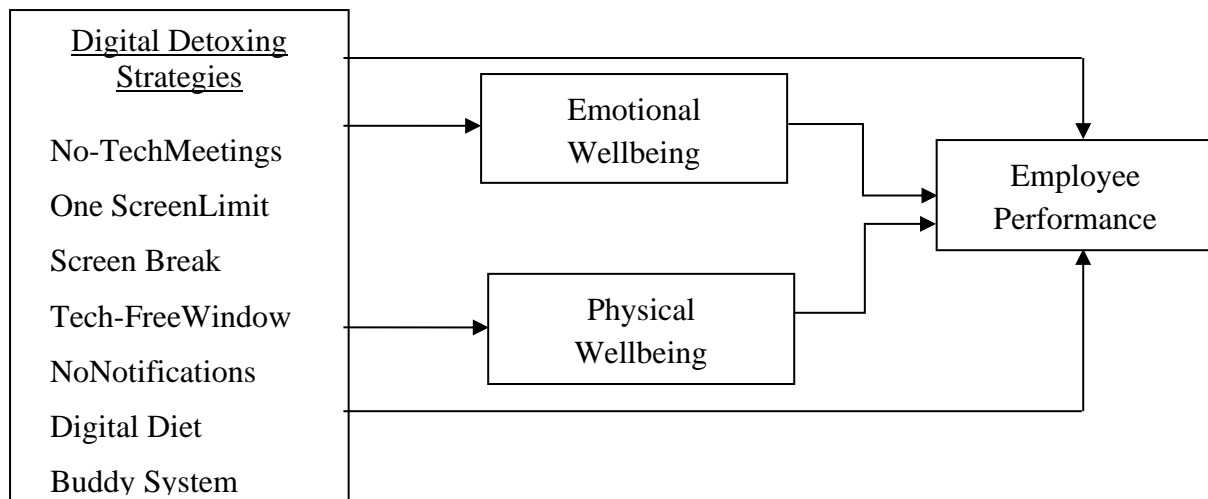


Figure – 1: Research Framework

Table No.1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Profile	Categories	Number of Respondents	% of Respondent
Age	21-30	123	26.6%
	31-40	153	32.9%
	41-50	120	26.0%
	51-60	67	14.5%
Gender	Male	185	40.0%
	Female	278	60.0%

Company type	Indian MNC	157	33.9%
	Foreign MNC	213	45.9%
	Individually Owned	17	3.8%
	Others	76	16.4%
Education	Diploma	34	7.3%
	Graduate	138	29.9%
	Post Graduate	4	0.8%
	Non-professional Qualification	92	19.8%
	Professional Qualification	195	42.2%
Job Level	General Manager	27	5.9%
	Deputy Manager	19	4.2%
	Senior Project Manager	53	11.5%
	Project manager	94	20.2%
	Team Leader	80	17.2%
	Specialist/Staff	106	22.8%
	Others	84	18.2%
Category of Employment	Permanent Employee	378	81.6%
	Probationary Employee	40	8.7%
	Part-Time Employee	12	2.6%
	Others	33	7.1%
Experience	Below 1 years	12	2.6%
	1 – 3 years	177	38.2%
	4 – 6 years	130	28.1%
	7 – 9 years	102	22.0%
	10 years and above	42	9.1%
Monthly Income	Below 25,000	30	6.5%
	25000-50000	140	30.3%
	50001-75000	153	32.9%
	75001-100000	130	28.1%
	Above 100000	10	2.2%
Spouse in IT	No	213	45.9%
	Yes	250	54.1%
Family Type	Nuclear Family	298	64.4%
	Single Parent Family	54	11.7%
	Joint family with parents of the spouse	111	24.0%

Table No.2 displays the values of Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, and squared correlations. The Cronbach's alpha for the final data is greater than 0.7, which establishes the reliability of the constructs. The value of Composite Reliability is higher than 0.7, which indicates that those constructs have a high level of internal consistency reliability. The AVE values are above the threshold value of 0.5. Thus, it can be inferred that the twelve

constructs which have high levels of convergence, which says the data is appropriate for further analysis and model building. Values in diagonal should be greater than the squared correlation values to establish the non-existence of any relationship. From the above table, it is inferred that no relationship exists among the constructs, and the discriminant validity is established.

Table No.2: Reliability and Validity of the study constructs

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	PW	NTM	OSL	SB	TFW	NN	DD	BS	EW	EP
PW	0.914	0.728	0.329	0.201	0.853									
NTM	0.921	0.538	0.646	0.424	0.574	0.734								
OSL	0.885	0.564	0.378	0.309	0.436	0.571	0.751							
SB	0.956	0.845	0.462	0.088	0.015	0.680	0.555	0.919						

TFW	0.870	0.574	0.429	0.306	0.462	0.625	0.580	0.082	0.757					
NN	0.904	0.654	0.410	0.277	0.386	0.523	0.574	-0.014	0.552	0.809				
DD	0.877	0.589	0.493	0.328	0.427	0.663	0.552	-0.025	0.566	0.614	0.768			
BS	0.829	0.620	0.540	0.310	0.434	0.642	0.552	-0.012	0.575	0.555	0.615	0.788		
EW	0.903	0.650	0.646	0.396	0.521	0.804	0.552	0.063	0.655	0.640	0.702	0.735	0.806	
EP	0.919	0.621	0.540	0.358	0.530	0.735	0.615	-0.085	0.650	0.582	0.677	0.575	0.685	0.788

Table No. 3 depicts the path relationship between seven digital detox strategies, two dimensions of employee wellbeing, and employee performance. The result revealed that employee performance is more influenced by emotional wellbeing than physical wellbeing. Tech-Free window is the highly influencing strategy among the seven digital detoxing

strategies followed by a digital break. A higher level of emotional wellbeing can be achieved through a Digital diet and No notification strategies as they reduce FOMO (fear of missing out) and improves mental health. Tech free window is the prominent strategy that positively influences the physical wellbeing of the employees.

Table No.3: Result of hypothesized path relationship between the study constructs

Hypothesized Path			Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized Estimate	SE.	CR.	P	R ²
No-Tech Meetings	→	Emotional Wellbeing	.125	.125	.024	5.265	***	0.69
Tech-Free Window	→	Emotional Wellbeing	.146	.132	.023	5.730	***	
One Screen Limit	→	Emotional Wellbeing	.157	.195	.030	6.486	***	
Screen Break	→	Emotional Wellbeing	.047	.043	.018	2.467	.014	
No Notifications	→	Emotional Wellbeing	.315	.330	.029	11.266	***	
Digital Diet	→	Emotional Wellbeing	.254	.340	.034	10.059	***	
Tech-Free Window	→	Physical Wellbeing	.618	.535	.021	25.813	***	0.68
Buddy System	→	Physical Wellbeing	.112	.149	.027	5.498	***	
No Notifications	→	Physical Wellbeing	.120	.120	.028	4.257	***	
Emotional Wellbeing	→	Physical Wellbeing	.154	.148	.028	5.212	***	
No-Tech Meetings	→	Physical Wellbeing	-.065	-.062	.023	-2.747	.006	
Emotional Wellbeing	→	Employee Performance	.277	.259	.034	7.618	***	
Physical Wellbeing	→	Employee Performance	.134	.131	.035	3.723	***	
Tech-Free Window	→	Employee Performance	.291	.246	.031	7.838	***	
Screen Break	→	Employee Performance	.152	.133	.019	6.948	***	
One Screen Limit	→	Employee Performance	.091	.106	.032	3.263	.001	
Digital Diet	→	Employee	.149	.186	.038	4.873	***	

Hypothesized Path		Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized Estimate	SE.	CR.	P	R ²
Performance							
No Notifications	→ Employee Performance	-.137	-.134	.033	-4.049	***	

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has identified seven strategies through which the employees in the IT industry can adopt digital detoxing in their digital workplace. Though there are many dimensions of employee wellbeing have been listed in the literature, the study narrows down to only two dimensions as they are highly suited to the study context. The result imposes the importance of promoting the digital detoxing strategies by the organization among the employees. The study will help policymakers revisit the existing rules and regulations of employee wellbeing or employee welfare.

6.1 No-tech meetings

It's normal for individuals to checking gadgets during gatherings. While taking notes on a PC may not be a wellspring of stress, it can hold numerous interruptions of its own, from Googling around conversation points to troublesome notices from online media, email, and different apparatuses. While quantitative investigations regarding the matter are restricted, recounted reports propose that performing multiple tasks hinders usefulness and that without tech gatherings can help efficiency. Studies additionally suggest that in addition to the fact that people think that gadget use in meetings is impolite or inadmissible, yet composing is superior to writing for maintenance. Why not utilize a notepad and pen to help you detox?

6.2 One-screen limit

Jesse Fox, says: "Performing multiple tasks is truly downright terrible for us. On the off chance that you are zeroing in on an errand and you get diverted, it requires a few minutes to recalibrate our minds back to the first undertaking."

Utilizing each screen is a little advanced towards computerized detox and is ideal for customary practice in the workplace. To do this, keep your telephone far away or off your work area and get

up to make a couple of strides when you need to check your telephone. At the point when you're set, set it aside and plunk down once more. For some, advanced detox will be a culture stun, yet it can offer numerous prizes. It very well may be helpful to observe your efficiency and feelings before establishing one-screen practice and afterward again at stretches in the hours, days, and weeks that follow.

6.3 Screen breaks

75% of respondents in this research said that limiting screen time in the working hours would assist them with dealing with their emotional wellness better. This fits with examines that recommend screen breaks can prompt a gigantic arrival of stress just as a helping stance and make us more ready. If you're concerned that taking breaks will make you less useful, research has likewise tracked down that the most valuable individuals labour for 52 minutes and afterward take splits for as long as 17 minutes. This may not be ideal for those with requesting occupations. Yet, the UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) proposes that short, continuous breaks are superior to more minor regular, longer breaks, so take a stab at requiring a 5-10-minute break following an hour.

6.4 Tech-free window

Ring-fence a period during which you won't utilize advanced innovation by any stretch of the imagination. You may use any opportunity to peruse a book or something you've printed from the web, or even timetable an up close and personal gathering with somebody, as and whenever the situation allows. For some, innovation is vital for each part of our working life. On the off chance that you need to utilize innovation, you may very well decide to un-plug for an entire hour while you take your lunch — no telephone, no messages, no online media connection.

6.5 No notifications

The network has carried new proficiency to correspondence, yet it has also diminished our capacity to center, thus lessening our efficiency. 76% of workers feel that decreased or confined out-of-hours innovation use could assist them with dealing with their actual wellbeing better whenever upheld by their boss, and email is a crucial factor. Contingent upon your work, you could turn off during mornings to zero in on expectations, or in any event, for an hour daily. You may pick a solitary day or even a couple of hours every week when you turn off notices.

Guarantee, let your partners and important customers know and turn on your out-of-office reaction with a pertinent message. For instance, 'Hello, I am not browsing my messages between 1-2 pm every day. I will peruse your message after 2 pm, yet on the off chance that it is earnest, kindly call me/my partner [NAME] on [phone number]'. Representatives are progressively feeling the strain to browse work messages outside of work. This study tracked down that 62% of workers concur that this makes them more focused. If you don't do anything else, attempt to quit browsing messages when you're at home — define a boundary between your work life and your home life. Once more, set up a pre-programmed message to oversee assumptions and give a contact in the occasion a dire circumstance emerges.

6.6 Digital diet

Indeed, even brief times of contemplation and care can help advanced detox and allow the employee to de-stress at work, so consider adding short meetings into your computerized diet.

6.7 Buddy system

Whatever you decide to do, don't do it single-handedly. Specialists realize that individuals prevail at quitting any pretense of smoking better if they have a 'mate,' somebody to stop with. Additionally, detoxing at work might benefit from some intervention because you partner with the employee who can talk about plans and support with its difficulties.

If the organization upholds advanced detox as a feature of a solid computerized culture, it might help track down a fitting buddy.

7. Managerial Implications

The current study finds that the Tech-free window positively links employee physical wellbeing and employee performance. Managers can adopt Tech-free window culture for at least a week to improve employees' creativity and performance. This study shows that no notification and digital diet can improve employee emotional wellbeing; hence, the organization can promote digital diet among employees and practice notification-free hours, which will eventually improve employees' emotional health. No notification has a negative relationship with employee performance, which indicates that employee performance can be disturbed by screen notifications. Managers can set a time limit for notification, and employees can be allowed to respond to the notification in a fixed time after office hours. Surprisingly the study identifies. No tech meeting has a negative relationship with the physical wellbeing of the employees. So managers can avoid meeting with employees' physical presence, which will be employee love to practice to reduce their physical burden.

8. Future Research Scope

This research has many limitations related to the use of cross-sectional data. Future studies may be able to capture these phenomena over different periods. Although data in this study were obtained from self-report, the survey is based on anonymous data. This study investigates the influence of other digital detoxing practices on employee wellbeing a performance. This study captures the very early signs of the digital workplace on employee wellbeing, especially during the covid-19 pandemic. Future studies suggest investigating the post effect of digital detoxing programs on employee performance and its impact on employee mental, physical wellbeing in an organizational context. As the concept of Flexi work and remote work is getting momentum, future studies may also consider these.

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