# The Relationship Between Digital Detox Practices and Psychological Well-being among College Students

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***Abstract*—In the era of hyperconnectivity, excessive use of digital devices and social media platforms has become a defining feature of student life. Continuous online engagement has been linked to reduced attention span, increased anxiety, and emotional fatigue. In response, digital detox practices—temporary breaks or conscious disconnection from digital technology—have gained attention as a strategy to restore psychological balance. The present study investigates the relationship between digital detox practices and psychological well-being among college students in Pune, India. This research was conducted using primary data collected from 146 undergraduate students enrolled in a management college located in Tathawade, Pune City. A quantitative research design was adopted to assess students' engagement with digital detox routines and their perceived well-being. Data were gathered using a structured online questionnaire comprising demographic details, frequency of digital detox practices, perceived impact, and psychological well-being indicators such as mood stability, concentration, and stress levels. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, and data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, an independent samples t-test, and Pearson's correlation test.The descriptive findings revealed that approximately 75% of respondents had attempted digital detox at least once, indicating rising awareness of technology's psychological influence. The mean psychological well-being score was 2.94 (SD = 0.74), reflecting moderate levels of mental health, while the mean post-detox benefit score was 3.83 (SD = 0.85), suggesting a generally positive perception of detox experiences. However, the independent t-test results (t = 0.138, p = 0.891) showed no statistically significant difference in well-being between students who practiced digital detox and those who did not. In contrast, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r = 0.325, p < 0.001) demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between the perceived effectiveness of detox and psychological well-being. This finding indicates that students who engage more consistently and meaningfully in digital detox tend to report higher well-being levels, improved emotional regulation, and reduced stress. Hence, the null hypothesis of no relationship was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.**

***Index Terms*—Digital detox, psychological well-being, college students, cyberpsychology, screen time**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing penetration of smartphones, social media, and internet-enabled devices has transformed the behavioral patterns and psychological experiences of young adults. While technology enhances connectivity, access to information, and academic efficiency, it also introduces a paradox—continuous digital engagement often leads to stress, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and information overload. The concept of 'digital detox' has emerged as a countermeasure, encouraging individuals to intentionally disconnect from digital devices to regain focus, mindfulness, and emotional well-being. The youth population, particularly college students, are among the most digitally active groups. Their dependence on technology for academic, social, and entertainment purposes makes them vulnerable to digital fatigue. Therefore, understanding the role of digital detox in maintaining psychological health is crucial in modern higher education. This study aims to examine the relationship between digital detox practices and psychological well-being among college students in Pune City, India. The research seeks to evaluate whether taking regular breaks from technology correlates with improved mental health and emotional stability.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies in cyber psychology have established a link between excessive digital media use and psychological distress. Researchers such as Twenge (2019) and Kuss & Griffiths (2017) found that prolonged exposure to digital platforms increases anxiety and social comparison tendencies among youth. Conversely, studies by Syvertsen & Enli (2020) emphasize that digital detox interventions can restore mindfulness, improve sleep, and reduce cognitive overload.However, the impact of digital detox is not uniform. Some scholars argue that short-term detox provides only temporary relief, while long-term behavioral change is essential for sustained well-being. In the Indian context, limited empirical research exists exploring digital detox as a structured psychological intervention. This gap provides a strong rationale for the present study, which focuses on college students in Pune City.

## III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To assess the prevalence of digital detox practices among college students.
2. To analyze the relationship between digital detox practices and psychological well-being.
3. To evaluate whether consistent digital detox improves overall mental health and emotional regulation.

Based on these objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

$H_{01}$: There is no significant difference in psychological well-being between students who practice digital detox and those who do not.

$H_{a1}$: There is a significant difference in psychological well-being between students who practice digital detox and those who do not.

$H_{02}$: There is no significant correlation between perceived benefits of digital detox and psychological well-being.

$H_{a2}$: There is a significant positive correlation between perceived benefits of digital detox and psychological well-being.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive and correlational research design using primary data. The sample comprised 146 undergraduate students from a management institute in Tathawade, Pune City. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of three parts: demographic details, digital detox behavior, and psychological well-being indicators. A 5-point Likert scale measured responses ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree.’

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize participant responses, an independent samples t-test to compare well-being between groups, and Pearson’s correlation coefficient to determine the strength of association between detox effectiveness and psychological well-being. Statistical analyses were conducted using Python and SPSS software.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis revealed that 75% of respondents had engaged in digital detox at least once. The average well-being score among all participants was 2.94 (SD = 0.74), while the perceived post-detox benefit averaged 3.83 (SD = 0.85).

An independent samples t-test comparing the mean well-being scores between students who practiced detox and those who did not showed no significant difference ($t = 0.138$, $p = 0.891$). Thus, the null hypothesis $H_{01}$ was accepted. However, the Pearson correlation test indicated a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$) between perceived benefits of detox and psychological well-being. Hence, $H_{02}$ was rejected, and $H_{a2}$ was accepted.

These findings suggest that while simply attempting detox may not drastically change well-being levels, consistent and mindful detox practices are associated with better psychological outcomes.

## VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study’s results highlight an emerging pattern among college students—most recognize the psychological burden of constant digital connectivity but struggle to maintain consistent detox routines. Students who actively monitor screen time, avoid late-night social media use, and engage in offline

activities report higher satisfaction, emotional balance, and productivity.

These findings align with previous literature indicating that behavioral consistency, rather than sporadic detox attempts, influences psychological health. Students who perceived tangible benefits such as improved focus, better sleep, and emotional calmness displayed stronger well-being indicators. This reinforces the notion that digital hygiene should be treated as a mental health priority in higher education environments.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This research recommends integrating digital wellness programs within college curricula. Institutions can organize workshops on digital mindfulness, introduce screen-time awareness challenges, and create 'tech-free zones' within campus premises. Counseling centers can include modules on digital detox strategies and coping mechanisms for online stress.

The study concludes that digital detox, when practiced regularly and mindfully, contributes positively to students' psychological well-being. Though the sample is limited to one college in Pune, the results reflect a growing awareness of digital overload among youth. Future research may extend this investigation to multiple cities or include cross-cultural comparisons for broader generalization.

This paper contributes to the field of Cyber Psychology by empirically establishing the relationship between digital detox practices and mental well-being among young adults. It serves as a foundation for academic institutions and policymakers aiming to foster healthier digital habits in the digital age.

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