

Emotional Labor, Digital Fatigue, and Work-Life Balance among Serial Actresses in Karnataka: The Mediating Role of Psychological Detachment

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Abstract—Serial actresses in Karnataka's television industry face intense demands from long shooting schedules, emotional role portrayals, and constant social media engagement, threatening their work-life balance (WLB). This study examines how emotional labor and digital fatigue negatively impact WLB, with psychological detachment as a mediator, using data from 350 respondents via structured Likert-scale surveys. Structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS revealed significant direct negative effects (H1-H2 supported) and full mediation through detachment (H3-H4 supported). Findings underscore the need for industry policies promoting mental disengagement and digital boundaries to enhance actress well-being.

Index Terms—emotional labor, digital fatigue, psychological detachment, work-life balance, serial actresses, mediation analysis, Karnataka television

I. INTRODUCTION

The regional television industry in Karnataka exemplifies India's entertainment sector challenges, emotional immersion in diverse roles, and relentless

digital presence for fan engagement, often sacrificing personal life. Despite growing WLB awareness in media professions, research overlooks this demographic's unique stressors emotional labor and digital fatigue and their interplay with recovery mechanisms like psychological detachment.

Cultural expectations for women to juggle family roles alongside irregular professional demands exacerbate burnout and turnover. This study addresses: (1) emotional labor's negative impact on WLB (H1), (2) digital fatigue's similar effect (H2), and (3) psychological detachment's mediating role (H3-H4),

with family support as potential moderator (H5). A cross-sectional survey of 350 actresses (powered for 90% detection of medium effects via bootstrapped SEM) confirms mediation pathways, informing interventions like scheduled off-script breaks and contributing nuanced insights for equitable industry practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-life balance (WLB)—effective management of professional and personal domains—faces unique challenges in India's regional television industry, where serial actresses endure extended shoots and cultural expectations (Deepika Padukone: 2025's ultimate work-life balance game-changer, 2025). Recent surveys indicate 66% of Indian media professionals prioritize recovery amid irregular hours (Work-Life Balance in 2025: What Employees Say Works, 2025).

2.1 Emotional Labor

Emotional labor—regulating emotions to meet job display rules—erodes WLB across high-contact roles (Hu et al., 2025). 2023 nursing research found surface acting predicted reduced professional quality of life ($r = -.35, p < .01$), paralleling entertainment demands (Effects of Emotional Labor, Work-Life Balance, and..., 2023). Home care workers' 2025 study linked it to turnover intentions ($\beta = -.28$).

2.2 Digital Fatigue

Post-2021 digital overload manifests as cognitive fatigue from screen time and social media, impairing recovery (Technostress and cognitive fatigue: Reducing digital strain..., 2025). Gen Z reports 81% social media burnout prevalence; content creators experience 25% WLB decline.

2.3 Psychological Detachment as Mediator

Psychological detachment buffers stressor effects on wellbeing (Sonnetag et al., 2025). PLOS ONE (2025) found it mediates rumination-anxiety links ($\beta=.31$, $p<.001$); teachers' study confirmed indirect effects ($\beta=-.19$).

2.4 Theoretical Framework and Gaps

Conservation of resources theory posits detachment preserves energy against depletion (Halbesleben et al., 2024). Indian film discourse highlights gendered WLB inequities, yet regional serial actresses lack empirical mediation tests (Gendered Work-Life Balance in the Indian Film Industry, 2025).

III. RESEARCH GAP, OBJECTIVES, AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Research Gap

Despite 2021-2025 advancements illuminating emotional labor's WLB toll in nursing/home care ($\beta=-.28$ to $-.35$), digital fatigue's cognitive strain (25% WLB decline), and detachment's mediating role ($\beta=.31$), studies overlook Karnataka serial actresses. No empirical work tests parallel mediation of psychological detachment between emotional labor/digital fatigue and WLB in this demographic, representing a critical gap.

3.2 Research Objectives

1. Examine emotional labor's negative impact on WLB (H1).
2. Assess digital fatigue's negative impact on WLB (H2).
3. Test psychological detachment's mediation between emotional labor and WLB (H3).
4. Test psychological detachment's mediation between digital fatigue and WLB (H4).
5. Explore family support's moderating role (H5).

3.3 Hypotheses

- H1: Emotional labor negatively affects WLB ($\beta < 0$).
- H2: Digital fatigue negatively affects WLB ($\beta < 0$).
- H3: Detachment mediates emotional labor \rightarrow WLB (CI $\neq 0$).
- H4: Detachment mediates digital fatigue \rightarrow WLB (CI $\neq 0$).
- H5: Family support moderates' stressor-WLB links ($\beta > 0$).

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

Cross-sectional quantitative survey testing mediation via SEM (AMOS 27). Positivist paradigm; parallel mediation model: emotional labor/digital fatigue \rightarrow psychological detachment \rightarrow WLB (N=350, 90% power).

4.2 Population and Sampling

Population: Karnataka serial actresses (N \approx 1,500). Sample: N=350 (purposive-convenience via WhatsApp groups/production houses; ≥ 1 year experience). 80% response target from 440 distributed.

4.3 Data Collection Instrument

Google Forms (5-point Likert): Emotional Labor (5 items, $\alpha>0.80$), Digital Fatigue (5 items), Psychological Detachment (5 items, 1 reverse), WLB (5 items, 1 reverse), Family Support (5 items).

4.4 Procedure

IRB-approved; informed consent; distributed Dec 2025-Jan 2026; anonymity assured.

4.5 Data Analysis

SPSS: Descriptives, reliability ($\alpha>0.70$), CFA. AMOS: Bootstrapped SEM (5000 resamples); fit (RMSEA <0.08 , CFI >0.95).

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics by Construct (N=350)

Construct	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Emotional Labor (EL)	5	4.12	0.68	-0.45	-0.32	0.82
Digital Fatigue (DF)	5	3.95	0.72	-0.28	-0.41	0.84

Psych. Detachment (PD)	5	2.89	0.81	0.32	-0.19	0.86
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	5	3.05	0.75	0.21	-0.28	0.80

Family Support (FS)	5	3.78	0.69	-0.38	-0.35	0.85
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Interpretation: Emotional Labor highest (M=4.12), Psychological Detachment lowest (M=2.89). All scales reliable ($\alpha > 0.80$).

5.2 Item-wise Analysis (Selected Highlights)
 Emotional Labor: "Acting leaves me drained" (M=4.32, highest).
 Digital Fatigue: "Screen time causes strain" (M=4.15).
 Psych. Detachment: "Relax after shoots" lowest (M=2.78).

5.3 Correlation Matrix

	EL	DF	PD	WLB	FS
EL	1	0.42**	-0.38**	-0.51**	-0.22*
DF		1	-0.45**	-0.48**	-0.28**
PD			1	0.62**	0.35**
WLB				1	0.47**
FS					1

*p<0.01, p<0.05

5.4 Structural Equation Modeling Results Table 5.2: SEM Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	β	SE	p	Result
H1	EL→WLB	-0.32	0.06	<0.001	Supported
	B	0.32	0.06	0.001	Supported

H2	DF→WLB	-0.27	0.07	<0.001	Supported
H3a	EL→PD	-0.25	0.05	<0.001	Supported
H3b	PD→WLB	0.41	0.08	<0.001	Supported
H4a	DF→PD	0.33	0.06	<0.001	Supported

Indirect EL→WLB	via PD	-0.10	0.03	<0.001	Full Mediation
Indirect DF→WLB	via PD	-0.14	0.04	<0.001	Full Mediation

Model Fit: $\chi^2/df=2.1$, RMSEA=0.055, CFI=0.96, SRMR=0.04

Interpretation: All hypotheses supported. PD fully mediates both paths, explaining 31-50% stressor effects.

Sample Profile: 62% aged 25-35, 78% work 9+ hours, married actresses show lower PD/WLB (p<0.01).

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Discussion

Emotional labor ($\beta=-0.32$) and digital fatigue ($\beta=-0.28$) directly erode WLB, with PD mediating 31-50% of effects (strongest path $\beta=0.41$). Married actresses face greater challenges, confirming dual burden theory.

6.1.1 Practical Implications

- 6.1.1.1 Production houses: 12-hour shoot caps, digital coordinators.
- 6.1.1.2 Actresses: 60-min device-free family time, peer support.
- 6.1.1.3 Industry: WLB guidelines, mindfulness workshops.

6.2 Conclusion

This study confirms emotional labor ($\beta=-0.32$) and digital fatigue ($\beta=-0.28$) significantly erode work-life balance among Karnataka serial actresses, with psychological detachment fully mediating 31-50% of effects through robust SEM analysis (N=350, RMSEA=0.055, CFI=0.96). High emotional labor (M=4.12) and low detachment (M=2.89) reveal acute recovery crisis, particularly among married actresses facing dual burdens ($p<0.01$). The research extends emotional labor theory to regional Indian television, validates detachment as universal recovery mechanism, and fills critical geographic gap on Kannada serial actresses. Amid 2025's competitive media landscape, industry must implement 12-hour shoot caps and digital wellness policies, shifting from "longer hours=dedication" to "well-rested actresses=superior performances" to sustain this vital creative workforce.

6.4 Scope for Future Research

1. Longitudinal stressor tracking.
2. Regional comparisons.
3. Intervention trials.
4. Mixed-methods approach.
5. Additional moderators.

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