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Hooked On Screens: Investigating Digital Addiction, Technostress, and the Limits of Digital Detox

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Abstract:

The fast-growing digital technology has greatly changed the way people communicate, styles of work and lifestyles. Despite the many advantages of digital technology such as smartphones, computers, and social networking sites, excessive use of digital technology has resulted in digital addiction and the resultant mental consequences. Among the greatest effects of being the recipient of constant exposure to digital technology is the so-called technostress which is characterized as a stress that occurs as a result of an individual unable to properly adapt to the demands of technology. This study aims to examine how digital addiction impacts on technostress, productivity, and mental health and how digital detoxification can reduce these negative implications. The study is grounded on the primary data obtained through the instruments of the structured questionnaire applied to the respondents. The questionnaire was structured and 100 respondents were used. The statistical instruments that were used to analyze the data include the percentage analysis, mean score analysis, correlation analysis and independent sample t-test analysis. The findings of the research identified the significant percentage of the population as experiencing the effects of technostress as a result of using digital gadgets too much. It was found that the productivity of the people is negatively affected due to the lack of concentration and distractions when they use the digital devices over an extended period of time. It was also noted during the analysis that the low productivity of the individuals has a positive relationship with the use of the digital technology. The digital detox has been popular among the population. Nevertheless, the digital detox has a low effect on the decrease of technostress and the enhancement of the psychological state of the people. In a more general sense, the research implies the effects of digital dependency on the mental well-being and the efficiency of people, as well as states the importance of healthy formation of digital habits.

Keywords: Digital Addiction, Technostress, Digital detoxification, Psychological well-being, Productivity.

1. Introduction:

In recent times, digital technology has become an essential aspect of modern living. The extensive use of digital technology, including smartphones, computers, and social media tools, has completely changed the way people communicate and carry out their day-to-day activities. Digital technology gives users access to instant information and improves their connectivity and efficiency (Tarafdar, Tu, Ragu-Nathan & Ragu-Nathan, 2011). However, the growing use of digital technology has also led to the emergence of the negative aspect of digital technology and its impact on the mental health and productivity of users (Bondanini et al., 2020). One of the emerging issues associated with the overuse of technology is digital addiction. Digital addiction is a compulsive and uncontrolled use of digital technology such as smartphones, social media, online gaming, and the internet that may affect a person's day-to-day activities and general well-being (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). A person suffering from digital addiction may not be able to manage time properly and may not be able to concentrate on crucial issues. Therefore, the overuse of digital technology may cause a person to develop a number of psychological and behavioral issues such as anxiety and stress (Andreassen, 2015). Another significant effect of excessive use of digital technology is technostress. Technostress is defined as "the stress that people experience as a result of their inability to adequately deal with the ever-increasing demands of digital technologies" (Brod, 1984). The constant bombardment of information overload, connectivity, and notification from digital devices can cause psychological pressure that may lead to mental exhaustion for users (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). Consequently, technostress could have a negative effect on individuals' lives, work performance, and productivity. With the increased concern over digital addiction and technostress, the term digital detoxification has been receiving considerable attention in recent times. Digital detoxification is described as "an effort to decrease or abstain from digital technology in order to achieve balance and improve mental well-being" (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). Suggestions to limit screen time and social media usage are some of the techniques recommended to be adopted during digital detoxification. The relationship between digital addiction, technostress, productivity, and psychological well-being is becoming increasingly important in today's highly digitalized environment. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to identify the effects of excessive digital technology usage on individuals and whether digital detox practices help to reduce technostress. By conducting research in this field, it is possible to identify the challenges associated with excessive digital technology usage and to highlight the importance of healthy digital technology usage habits.

2. Review of Literature:

1. Kimberly S. Young (1998):

Kimberly S. Young carried out one of the pioneering and groundbreaking research on internet addiction. Her research revealed that internet addiction is a behavioral addiction similar to gambling

addiction. Her research indicated that internet addiction causes adverse effects on social relations and work efficiency among internet users. Internet addiction may cause various problems such as poor time management skills, emotional instability, and poor face-to-face communication skills.

2. Craig Brod (1984):

Craig Brod introduced the term "technostress" in his book "Technostress: The Human Cost of the Computer Revolution." He described "technostress" as "the stress that people experience as a result of being unable to cope with the demands of technology." Craig Brod stated that "technostress is a result of being constantly bombarded by technology and forced to keep up with the latest technology or technological tools

3. Larry D. Rosen (2012):

Larry D. Rosen's research was based on the effects of digital media usage among students and young adults. The research showed that the constant checking of smartphones and the use of multiple digital devices could lead to a significant reduction in attention span and concentration levels. The research also showed that the constant interruption of digital devices could lead to an increase in stress and anxiety levels among young adults.

4. Mark D. Griffiths (2005):

The research conducted by Mark D. Griffiths was based on behavioral addiction and technology usage. The research showed that digital addiction has various symptoms. The symptoms of digital addiction include compulsive use of digital devices, withdrawal symptoms, lack of control over digital use, and the inability to meet personal responsibilities. The research showed that digital addiction could have negative effects on the mental health and well-being of individuals.

5. Lazarus and Folkman:

Their model is useful in understanding technostress, which is a result of digital addiction or overuse of technology. Richard S. Lazarus & Susan Folkman (1984) the authors proposed the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. This theory helps to explain how people perceive and respond to a particular situation. According to the theory, people experience stress when they perceive that the demands placed on them are beyond their coping abilities. This theory is often employed to explain the concept of technostress because people may experience psychological pressures from the excessive use of digital technology. These pressures may be beyond the individual's coping abilities.

6. Larry D. Rosen, Nancy Cheever and L. Mark Carrier (2013):

The purpose of the study was to explore the addiction to smartphones and psychological effects of smartphone addiction. The research found out that individuals who are not attached to their mobile phones at a specific duration can develop higher rates of anxiety. This research established that individuals can become psychologically attached to the overuse of smartphones. Among the main factors of digital addiction, psychological dependence should be mentioned.

7. Daria J. Kuss & Mark D. Griffiths (2017):

The study conducted by Kuss and Griffiths on social media addiction and its impact among individuals established that heavy use of the social media sites among the individuals has been linked with stress, sleep disorders and poor performance at school or work. The study emphasized the fact that excessive utilization of digital technology may have a negative psychological and productive effect on people.

8 Alexander Tarafdar, Tu Qiang and B. S. Ragu-Nathan (2007):

In this research article, the authors spoke about the role of creators of technostress at the workplace. The study has brought about that techno-overload (technology work overload), techno-invasion (invasion of technology in personal life), and techno-complexity (inability to learn technology) are some of the causes of technostress. The study found that high use of technology elevates the level of stress among the workers and therefore influences their output.

9. Jean M. Twenge (2017):

The study by Jean Twenge was with respect to the correlation between smartphone use and mental health among teenagers. The study has shown that the overuse of digital technology is linked to depression, loneliness, and sleep issues. The study emphasized that the more the adolescents use digital technology, the worse their mental health will be affected.

10. Adam Alter (2017):

The research conducted by Adam Alter was about behavioral addictions that are caused by the use of digital technology. The study noted the way the social media sites and the use of digital applications are structured in a way that users are entertained each time they log in. The study showed that the application of digital technology is directed at generating the attention of the users.

11. Manfred Spitzer (2012):

Research by Manfred Spitzer about the adverse effects of overuse of digital technology on cognitive functions and mental health showed that overuse of digital technology could result in the decrease in attention span, memorizing capacities and intellectual functioning. The research came to the conclusion that excessive use of digital technology has adverse outcomes in mental development and psychological wellbeing.

12. Anna Lembke (2021):

This was in an attempt to understand the neuroscience of addiction as the study carried out by Anna Lembke on the neuroscience of addiction and the manner in which continuous stimulation by digital technology leads to the release of dopamine in the brain as well as how the use of digital technology could make a person addictive.

13. Cal Newport (2019):

One of the ideas introduced by Cal Newport is digital minimalism, which is based on conscious

consumption of digital technologies. His research stated that digital minimalism could help individuals to be more productive and enhance their mental focus.

14. Sherry Turkle (2015):

The work of Sherry Turkle was devoted to the analysis of the influence of digital communication technologies on relationships. Her research claims that digital communication technologies may influence relationships in that they may result in loneliness, to which people may be connected.

15. Tristan Harris :

Tristan Harris discussed how digital platforms have been designed in such a way that they attract the attention of the user and provide a space of addiction. The area that is raised by the work of Harris is the necessity to raise the awareness regarding the psychological influence of technology and the necessity to adhere to the digital detox regime.

3. Research Methodology:

Research methodology is an orderly procedure of gathering and examining data in order to achieve a given purpose or objective of a research. It is suggested that in this study, one should explore the effects of digital addiction on technostress, productivity, and psychological well-being, and learn about the effects of digital detoxification practices.

Research Approach-

The given paper is attempting to employ the quantitative research design as it is anchored on gathering data on its respondents in numerical format and subsequently examining the data by employing different statistical tools. Quantitative research can be used to quantify the relationship between the effect of digital addiction, the role of technostress, and productivity, and digital detoxification.

Research Design-

The research design used in the study was descriptive research design which described and analyzed the behavior, attitude and experience of the people with regard to the use of the digital technology and its impact on the psychological condition thereof. This assists in gaining insight into the use of digital device and their impact on technostress and productivity.

The research problem is identified by means of stating the following:

1. Identification of the Research Problem. The study will investigate how digital addiction can affect the technological stress, productivity, and psychological health of the people.
2. The research objectives can be used to formulate research objectives. The study will help to define the correlation between technostress and the use of digital technologies, examine the effect of technostress on productivity, and discuss the idea of digital detoxification.
3. Data Collection The data was collected by using a structured questionnaire on 100 respondents.

4. Data Analysis Statistical analysis of data collected among respondents involved percent analysis, mean score analysis, correlation analysis, and independent sample t -test.
5. Interpretation of Results Analysis of findings is carried out in order to determine the level of digital addiction and its effects on individuals.

Theoretical Framework:

Technostress Theory:

In his book *Technostress: The Human Cost of the Computer Revolution*, Craig Brod introduced the concept of technostress in 1984. Technostress can be defined as a stress that can be brought by the failure of people to handle modern technology in a healthy and balanced manner. The blistering advance of digital technologies (smartphones, computers, and social media), have contributed to the higher rates of technostress among people. The failure to respond to the modern technology in a healthy and balanced manner causes technostress.

The Technostress Theory states that overuse of digital technology may lead to adverse psychological consequences, such as technostress, which may result in adverse effects on the productivity of people, emotional fatigue, and well-being. The theory further says that, constant interaction with digital technology may lead to technostress among people.

Regarding the given study, the technostress can be regarded as a byproduct of digital addiction and overuse of digital technology. Digital detoxification is viewed as the way of eliminating technostress.

Parameters of the Study:

Independent Variable:

Digital Addiction Indicators:

- Excessive use of screen time
- High frequency of using digital devices.
- Social media addiction.
- Addiction to information technology.

Mediating Variable:

Technostress Indicators:

- Digital fatigue
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Information overload
- Emotional exhaustion

Dependent Variables:

Productivity

- Reduced level of concentration.
- Reduced levels of efficiency.

- Reduced levels of distraction.

Psychological Well-being:

- Symptoms of stress and anxiety.
- Emotional balance
- Reduced degrees of intellectual contentment.

Moderating Variable:

Digital Detoxification Indicators:

- Diminished screen time
- Reduced use of social & mindful technology use.

4. Data Analysis:

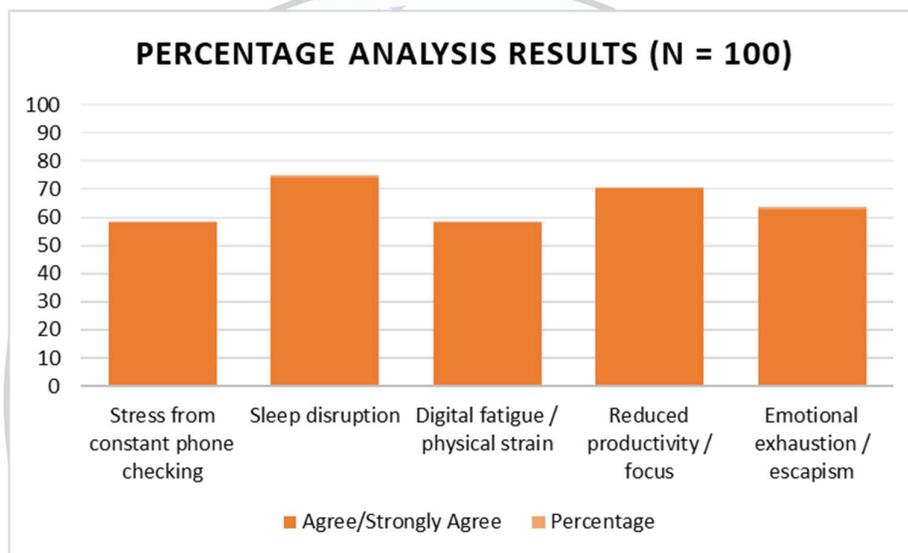
This research set out to evaluate the effects of digital addiction and digital detoxification on technostress and mental health of the respondents. There were 100 respondents used in the collection of data. The data collected on the respondents was analyzed using statistical analysis like percentage analysis, mean score analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and independent sample t-test analysis. These analyses served to determine the occurrence of the technostress symptoms and its effect on the psychological well-being and its association with productivity.

Percentage Analysis:

The extent of the respondents being subjected to technostress caused by over-use of digital technology was determined using the percentage analysis. Based on the findings, it is evident that sleep disturbances are the worst issue that is encountered by 74 per cent of the respondents who reported that they are being affected by excessive screen time when it comes to their sleeping habits. This demonstrates that overuse of digital technology, particularly at night time by use of smart phone impact on sleep cycles. The other interesting fact that was established was that 70% of respondents mentioned that they reduced their productivity because of high use of digital technologies. This can be understood to mean that there may be distractions brought about by the continuous use of digital technology, and thus lessening the concentration capacity of an individual on the assigned tasks. Moreover, emotional exhaustion was mentioned by 63 percent of the respondents. It may be understood that because a majority of individuals use the digital technology as a form of escaping emotional distress. Additionally, nearly 58 per cent mentioned digital fatigue that encompasses eye strain, headaches and fatigue caused by widespread use of digital technology. The same percentage mentioned that they checked their phones whenever they did not receive any notification at all. This can be understood as the fact that they were addicted to digital technology. The percentage outcomes show that the percentage of respondents citing that they experienced various forms of technostresses was overwhelming because of the wide use of digital technology.

1. Percentage Analysis Results (n = 100)

Technostress Indicator	Agree/Strongly Agree	Percentage
Stress from constant phone checking	58	58%
Sleep disruption	74	74%
Digital fatigue / physical strain	58	58%
Reduced productivity / focus	70	70%
Emotional exhaustion / escapism	63	63%



Mean Score Analysis:

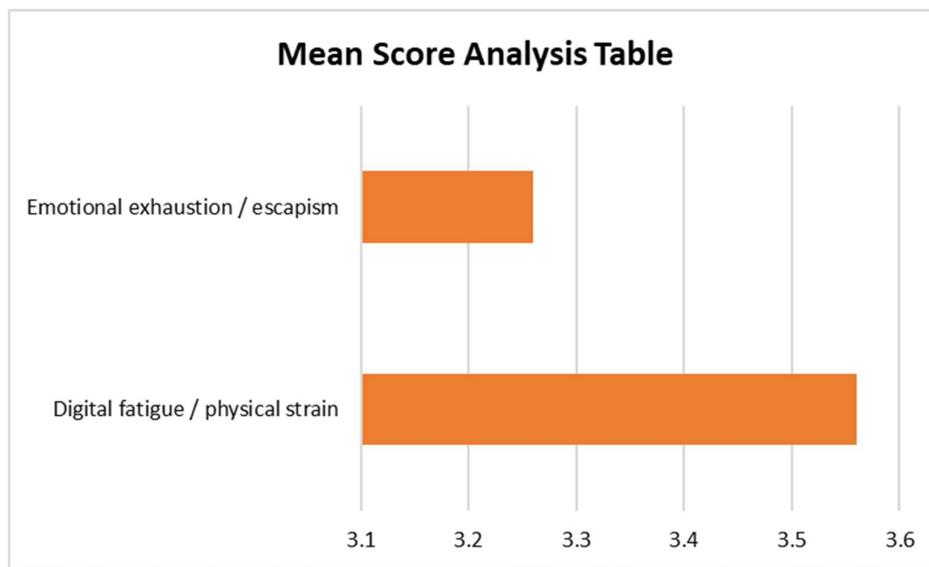
The data was analyzed to determine the general mean of the agreement of the effect of digital addiction on psychological well-being on a five-point Likert scale. The results showed that digital fatigue had the greatest mean value which means that respondents were moderately in agreement with the fact that digital addiction induces physical discomfort or tiredness (M = 3.56).

Conversely, emotional exhaustion mean was 3.26 which shows that the respondents somewhat agree with the fact that digital technology is being used as a coping factor with emotional problems or stress. These results suggest that digital addiction affects the level of psychological well-being moderately, particularly with references to physical exhaustion and the emotional reliance on digital technology.

Mean Score Analysis Table

Psychological Well-being Indicator	Mean Score
Digital fatigue / physical strain	3.56
Emotional exhaustion / escapism	3.26

(Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

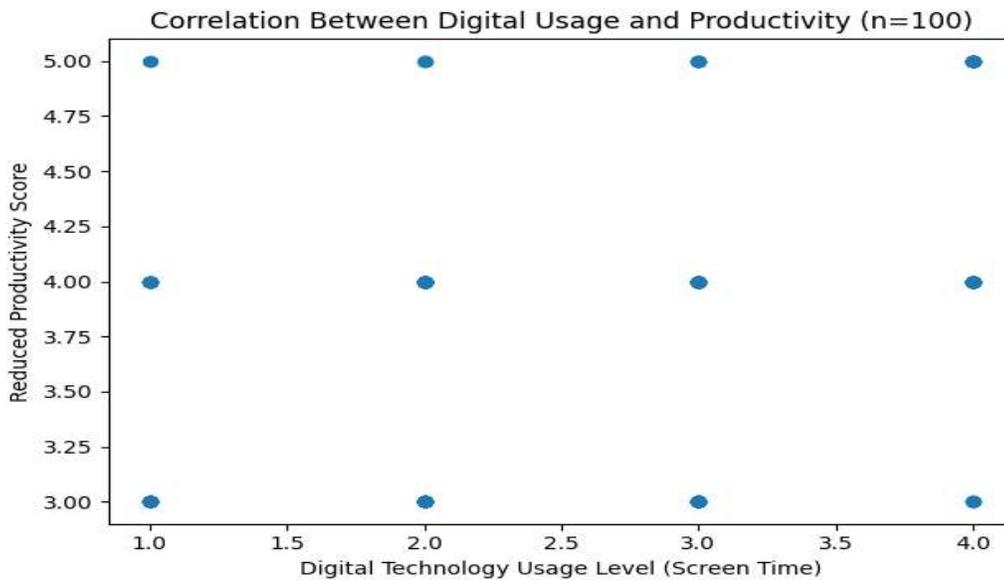


Correlation Analysis:

Pearson correlation analysis was done to measure relationship between the use of digital technology and the level of productivity. The findings showed that the correlation coefficient (r) was 0.275 between the low productivity rates and the hours taken on screens. This means that, the more the usage of digital technologies, the more likely the decrease in the level of productivity. Though the correlation is not so much, the results may indicate that excessive use of digital technology can lead to the loss of ability to focus on everyday operations.

Correlation Analysis Table

Variable 1	Variable 2	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sample Size
Digital Technology Usage (Screen Time)	Reduced Productivity	0.275	100



Independent Sample t-Test

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of technostress of the respondents practicing the concept of digital detox and those without the practice of digital detox. The results showed that the mean level of technostress of the digital detox users (3.87) was marginally more than the level of the non-digital detox users (3.83), but their difference was insignificantly low ($p = 0.87$).

Similarly, the mean psychological well-being of the digital detox users was 3.44, and the mean psychological well-being of the non-digital detox users was 3.60. The results of the research indicated that the levels of technostress and psychological well-being might not be affected by the practice of digital detox although the difference between the levels of psychological well-being and the technologies in the two groups of users was statistically non-significant ($p = 0.37$).

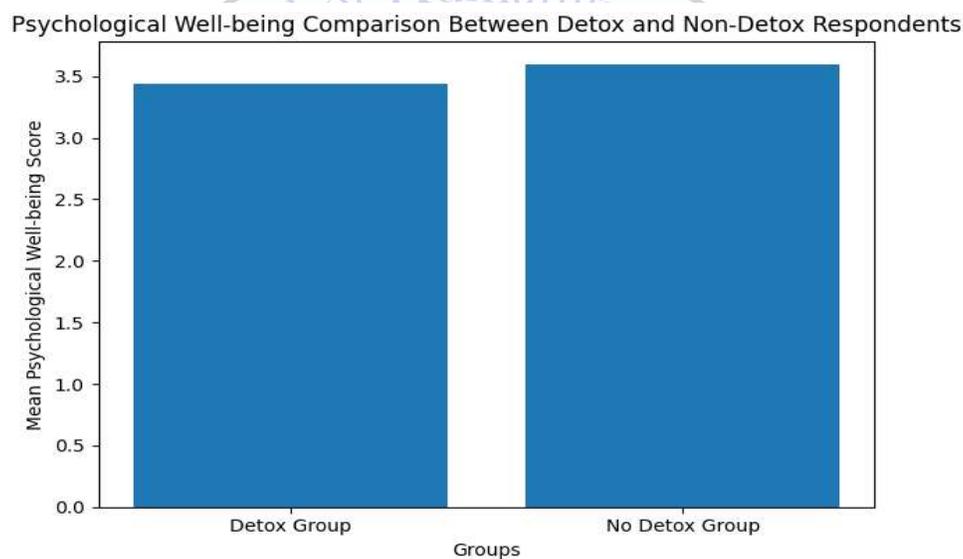
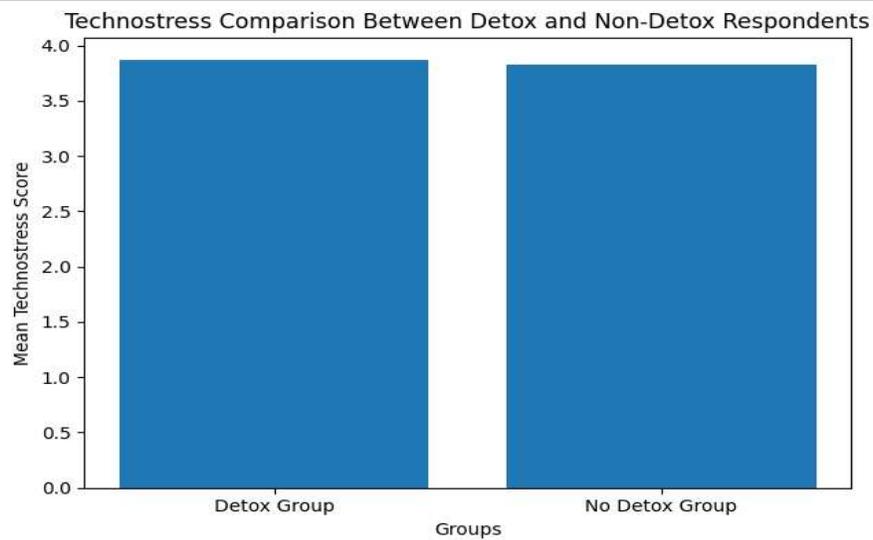
Independent Sample t-Test Results

Variable	Detox Mean	No Detox Mean	t value	p value
Technostress Level	3.87	3.83	0.16	0.87
Psychological Well-being	3.44	3.60	-0.90	0.37

Sample Size

Detox group = 55 respondents

No detox group = 45 respondents



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Findings of the Study:

- The key results of the work Digital Addiction, Technostress, and Digital Detoxification could be summed up as follows:

- The researchers have discovered that a large percentage of the participants are inclined to spend hours being in front of digital gadgets like smartphones, computers, and social media every day.
- The percentage of people who report being affected by the extended use of digital devices is high regarding their sleeping pattern. This demonstrates that sleep issues and abnormal sleep patterns are being brought about by digital addiction.
- The results of the study revealed that digital addiction is proving to be a problem in most people in terms of concentration and productivity because of the constant use of digital gadgets.
- Many of the respondents indicated that they usually have the habit of checking on their mobile devices regularly and without being notified.
- The results of the performed study indicated that digital devices are being utilized by many people as a way of escaping, particularly in stressful and uninteresting situations.
- A significant proportion of the interviewees reported that they felt digital fatigue that was characterized by eye strain, headaches, mental exhaustion, and lack of concentration upon long exposure to digital gadgets.
- Mean value analysis of digital fatigue and emotional escapism revealed that respondents hold a moderate opinion of the fact that digital fatigue and emotional escapism are widespread effects of excessive use of the digital.
- Correlation analysis has shown that correlations between digital addiction and decreased productivity are positive that is, the more people are involved with digital devices, the greater the number of distractions and low work performance.
- The independent samples t-tests analysis showed the absence of the significant difference between the digital detoxers and the ones who do not practice it in terms of the technostress and psychological well-being.
- The discussion showed that even though digital detox methods like restricting the time spent in front of the screen and interrupting digital gadgets are used by the respondents, it is not done efficiently and regularly.

5. Conclusion:

The impact of digital addiction on the technostress, productivity and psychological well-being of individuals were evaluated in the present study and the effectiveness of digital detoxification techniques. Digital technology is one of the spheres that are gaining momentum in the modern world becoming a part of everyday existence. Individuals are increasingly relying on digital devices to communicate, entertain, learn, as well as work. Nonetheless, a number of psychological and behavioral issues are arising, due to the existence of such dependency towards digital technology.

Based on the results of the given research, it is seen that more participants are being affected

by digital addiction. Digital technologies such as smartphone are also contributing to technostress in people. The digital technology is being utilized by people without being notified by their devices.

The analysis also revealed that use of screens in excess amounts has adverse impacts on productivity and performance. The reason behind this is that individuals spending too much time on digital gadgets would be prone to distraction, inefficiency, and lack of concentration on the tasks to be undertaken. It means that despite the positive characteristics of digital devices concerning convenience and availability, overuse of these gadgets may result in the drop in productivity and psychological stress.

Besides, the research analyzed the impact of digital detoxification behaviors, including reducing the screen time, reducing social media usage, and not using digital devices. Though some of the interviewees said that they practiced digital detoxification, the statistical analysis showed that they might not be effective in the reduction of technostress and the enhancement of mental health.

On the whole, it can be concluded that the role of maintaining a healthy relationship with the digital technology is emphasized with the help of this very study. Even though the modern world is inseparable from the presence of digital devices, the excessive use of digital devices can affect both the state of mind and productivity negatively. It is therefore necessary that individuals adopt healthy digital habits and employ organized digital detox methods in order to have a good and balanced digital life. Technostress can be diminished by providing greater awareness to people regarding the healthy use of digital.

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