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A Study on the Awareness and Adoption of Digital Detox Practices among Employees in Mangaluru City

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ABSTRACT

Digital devices are now part of almost every workplace, supporting communication, information sharing and the completion of daily tasks. It is frequent notifications and continuous screen use may affect concentration and make it difficult to separate work from personal life. Digital detox refers to consciously reducing non-essential digital use and taking planned breaks from screens. This study examines awareness and adoption of digital detox practices among employees in Mangaluru city. A descriptive research design and a structured questionnaire are used as the proposed method, with a sample size of 38 employees. The questionnaire covers awareness, screen-break habits, and common practices, perceived effects on work-life balance, barriers and preferred HR support. A structured questionnaire was administered to 38 respondents to collect primary data on the awareness and adoption of digital detox practices among employees in Mangaluru city.

Keywords: Digital detox, employee awareness, digital well-being, screen time, work-life balance, human resource management, Mangaluru city.

Introduction

Digital technology has changed the way organisations operate. Employees use smartphones, computers, email and messaging platforms to communicate, maintain records, and attend meetings and complete work. These tools make many tasks faster, but constant connectivity can also encourage frequent checking of devices and extend work communication beyond office hours. Digital detox is a practical effort to use technology more intentionally. It may involve taking screen breaks, switching off non-essential notifications, keeping a phone away during focused work and setting reasonable boundaries around after-hours communication. It does not mean avoiding technology altogether. It aims to create a healthier balance between digital activity and other parts of life.

Awareness is an important first step, but awareness alone does not guarantee that employees will adopt these practices regularly. Work demands, personal habits and workplace expectations may affect their ability to disconnect. Understanding these issues can help HR departments develop practical digital well-being initiatives. This study focuses on employees in Mangaluru city and considers their awareness, adoption patterns and the support they would find useful.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess employees' awareness of digital detox practices.
- To identify the digital detox practices followed by employees.
- To understand employees' views on digital-device use and work-life balance.
- To identify the major barriers to adopting digital detox practices.
- To suggest HR measures that may encourage healthier digital habits.

Research Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected from 38 employees working in Mangaluru city through a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected using convenience sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions covering personal details, awareness of digital detox, screen breaks, digital detox practices, perceived benefits, challenges faced by employees, and the support they expect from their organisations. The responses were organised and analysed to understand employees' awareness and adoption of digital detox practices.

Scope of the Study

The study is confined to employees in Mangaluru city and focuses on their awareness and everyday adoption of digital detox practices. Depending on the respondents recruited, the sample may cover employees from different sectors and levels of work experience. The study may help employees reflect on their digital habits and help HR managers consider screen-break guidance, notification management, focus periods and clear expectations for non-urgent after-hours communication.

Limitations of the Study

- **Limited Respondents:** The study covers only 38 employees in Mangaluru city, so the opinions collected may not reflect the views of all employees.
- **Selection of Respondents:** The study uses convenience sampling, which may limit the variety of opinions included in the research.
- **Personal Opinions:** The findings are based on the answers given by the respondents. Their answers may not always reflect their actual digital habits.
- **Time Constraint:** The study considers responses collected during a particular period and does not examine changes in digital detox practices over time.
- **Limited Coverage:** The study is restricted to employees in Mangaluru city, so the findings may not apply to employees in other places.
- **Accuracy of Responses:** The results depend on the honesty and accuracy of the information provided by the respondents through the questionnaire.

Importance of the Study

- **Employee Well-being:** The study helps understand how digital device usage affects employees' daily work and personal life.
- **Awareness of Digital Detox:** It examines employees' knowledge of digital detox and the steps they take to reduce unnecessary screen time.
- **Work-Life Balance:** The study highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between work-related digital activities and personal time.
- **Role of HR Department:** The findings may help HR departments understand the difficulties employees face in reducing excessive digital usage.
- **Improved Work Efficiency:** Taking regular breaks from screens and reducing unnecessary notifications may help employees concentrate better on their work.
- **Stress Management:** The study draws attention to the possible benefits of managing continuous digital engagement and work-related screen time.
- **Organisational Support:** The findings may encourage organisations to introduce practical measures such as screen breaks, awareness programmes and reasonable after-office communication practices.
- **Scope for Further Research:** The study may be useful for researchers who wish to explore digital detox, employee well-being and workplace practices in greater detail.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Awareness of Digital Detox

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	24	63.2%
No	10	26.3%
Not sure	4	10.5%
Total	38	100%

Interpretation: In this Table 63.2% of respondents have heard of digital detox, while 26.3% have not and 10.5% are unsure. This suggests that awareness may be reasonably common, but some employees may still benefit from basic information about digital well-being.

Table 2: Frequency of Taking Screen Breaks

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Several times a day	12	31.6%
Once a day	9	23.7%
Occasionally	14	36.8%
Never	3	7.9%
Total	38	100%

Interpretation: The largest group in this response takes screen breaks only occasionally (36.8%). While 31.6% take breaks several times a day, 7.9% never do so. This indicates that regular screen breaks may not yet be a consistent habit for all employees.

Table 3: Digital Detox Practices Followed .

Practice	Respondents	Percentage of sample
Taking screen breaks	22	57.9%
Turning off non-essential notifications	18	47.4%
Keeping phone away during focused work	13	34.2%
Avoiding work messages after office hours	14	36.8%
Limiting social media use	16	42.1%
None of these	5	13.2%

Interpretation: Screen breaks are the most commonly selected practice in this table followed by notification management and limiting social media use. Five respondents selected none of the listed practices. Since multiple answers were allowed, percentages do not add up to 100%.

Table 4: Perceived Effect on Work-Life Balance

Response	Respondents	Percentage
To a great extent	8	21.1%
To some extent	17	44.7%
Very little	9	23.7%
Not at all	4	10.5%
Total	38	100%

Interpretation: In this table , 65.8% of respondents report that digital-device use affects their work-life balance to a great or some extent. This points to the value of exploring boundaries between work-related connectivity and personal time.

Table 5: Main Benefit Associated with Digital Detox

Benefit	Respondents	Percentage
Better concentration	12	31.6%
Reduced stress	9	23.7%
Improved sleep/rest	6	15.8%
Better work-life balance	8	21.1%
No noticeable benefit	3	7.9%
Total	38	100%

Interpretation: Better concentration is the most frequently selected benefit in this table , followed by reduced stress and better work-life balance. These are respondents' perceived benefits and should not be interpreted as proven effects.

Table 6: Barriers to Digital Detox (multiple responses)

Barrier	Respondents	Percentage of sample
Work requires constant connectivity	17	44.7%
Habit of checking devices	14	36.8%
Fear of missing important messages	10	26.3%
Lack of workplace guidance	9	23.7%
Personal/social media use	12	31.6%
No major difficulty	4	10.5%

Interpretation: Work-related connectivity is the most frequently selected barrier in this table distribution. Habitual checking and personal/social media use are also common. HR initiatives should therefore consider both work requirements and personal digital habits.

Table 7: Organisational Guidance on Digital Well-being

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	8	21.1%
No	23	60.5%
Not sure	7	18.4%
Total	38	100%

Interpretation: In this table, 60.5% say their organisation does not provide guidance on healthy digital-device use, while 18.4% are unsure. If the actual responses are similar, a clear communication policy and employee awareness programme may be useful.

Table 8: Willingness to Join a Digital Well-being Programme

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	25	65.8%
No	4	10.5%
Maybe	9	23.7%
Total	38	100%

Interpretation: The table shows that nearly two-thirds would participate in a workplace digital well-being programme. This indicates potential interest in practical, voluntary initiatives, although actual participation would depend on programme design and work schedules.

Table 9: Preferred HR Support Measure

HR measure	Respondents	Percentage
Scheduled screen breaks	8	21.1%
Clear after-hours communication rules	11	28.9%
Awareness sessions	6	15.8%
Notification-free focus time	9	23.7%
Employee counselling/well-being support	4	10.5%
Total	38	100%

Interpretation: Clear after-hours communication rules are the most preferred measure in this table, followed by notification-free focus time. This suggests that employees may value organisational boundaries as well as individual efforts to manage device use.

Findings

- In the table, 63.2% of respondents are aware of digital detox.

- Occasional screen breaks are the most common response to the question on break frequency.
- Taking screen breaks is the most frequently selected digital detox practice.
- A majority in the table report that digital-device use affects work-life balance to some extent or to a great extent.
- Work-related connectivity is the most frequently selected barrier.
- Most respondents in the example report that their organisation does not provide guidance on healthy digital-device use.
- Clear after-hours communication rules are the most preferred HR support measure.

Suggestions

- HR departments should introduce short awareness sessions explaining digital detox and practical screen habits.
- Employees can be encouraged to take brief breaks from screens and reduce non-essential notifications during focused tasks.
- Organisations should clarify expectations for responding to non-urgent messages outside working hours, while respecting genuine job requirements.
- Managers can support notification-free focus periods and avoid sending unnecessary after-hours messages.
- Digital well-being initiatives should be practical, voluntary where possible, and adapted to different job roles.
- Future studies should include a larger sample and respondents from a wider range of sectors in Mangaluru city.

Conclusion

Digital detox is not a rejection of technology but an effort to use it in a balanced and intentional manner. The study framework examines employee awareness, common practices, perceived effects on work-life balance, barriers and preferred HR support in Mangaluru city. The analysis of questionnaire responses provides meaningful insights through frequencies and percentages, helping to draw practical conclusions and formulate suitable recommendations. The study can offer a useful local perspective on digital well-being and help HR managers identify practical ways to encourage healthier digital habits.

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