

Living Better by Logging Out: Investigating Digital Detox and Life Satisfaction in Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Digital Detox is deliberately taking short breaks from technology use and is increasingly recognized for helping the individuals to manage stress and maintain emotional balance. Life satisfaction reflects a person's overall judgement about their life as a whole, and is one of the important aspects of an individual's overall well-being. This study investigated the relationship between digital detox and life satisfaction, among 201 young adults aged 18–29 years, using the Multi-Dimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale and Digital Well-Being Scale. Digital detox showed a positive and significant correlation with life satisfaction ($r = .288, p > 0.05$). No significant gender differences were found in life satisfaction ($t = 1.05$), though males scored higher in digital detox ($t = 2.95, p < 0.05$). ANOVA test showed no significant differences across age and education levels for life satisfaction ($F_s = 2.71, 0.64$), but significant differences in digital detox scores across age groups ($F = 4.55, p < 0.05$). The results suggest that digital behaviours may have some minor influence on life satisfaction. The study highlights the complexity of factors affecting young adults' well-being and the need for further research on digital habits and their engagement.

Keywords: Digital Detox, Life Satisfaction, Young Adults

Digital detox is a conscious effort to reduce or completely disconnect from digital media for a specific period to regain control over media consumption (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). During this period, individuals intentionally step away from technologies like social media, smartphones, computers, and other connected gadgets. The duration of a digital detox can vary from a few hours to several days, aiming to enhance both mental and physical health. Digital detox is important as it helps to restore mental balance, enhance focus and efficiency, improves productivity, and also helps us in reconnecting with our loved ones

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in person. Some of the techniques for digital detox could include mindfulness practice, meditation, engaging in offline games, etc.

Life satisfaction is an individual over all evaluation and subjective perception of life. It is a subjective measure of well-being that encompasses a person's cognitive evaluation and emotional response to his or her life circumstances, achievements, relationships, and overall fulfilment (Proctor et al., 2017). Individuals who are satisfied with their lives are also more likely to cope effectively with stressors and therefore report lower levels of stress (Milas et al., 2021).

Understanding the relationship between digital habits and well-being has gained attention in recent years, especially among young adults who are heavily involved in the world of digital technology. Even though there are many advantages to digital connectivity, increased and uncontrolled screen time can cause digital fatigue, short attention spans, and psychological distress, etc (Kushlev et al., 2019). In this way, digital detox is a practical intervention that could help people regain control over their time and attention, which could have a positive impact on lifestyle satisfaction. According to several of studies, even short breaks of digital disconnection can improve mood, sleep, and interpersonal communication and can lead to a higher level of life satisfaction (Vanman et al., 2018; Wilcockson et al., 2019). However, some of the personal factors like age, lifestyle context can also have an impact in their digital detox efforts.

This study aims to explore the relationship between digital detox and lifestyle satisfaction among the digitally dependent young adults. By examining the interplay between digital detox practices and lifestyle satisfaction we can gain a deeper insight into how young adults can build a more balanced and fulfilling life in a digitally saturated world.

Objectives:

- To explore the relationship between digital detox level and life satisfaction.
- To explore the differences in life satisfaction and Digital Detox practices among young adults across various demographic variables.

Hypothesis:

- **H1:** There will be a significant relationship between digital detox and life satisfaction.
- **H2:** There will be significant difference in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across both genders.
- **H3:** There will be significant differences in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across different age ranges.
- **H4:** There will be significant differences in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across different educational qualification.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Digital detox practices have been increasingly recognized for their potential to enhance life satisfaction, particularly among university students where most of them are young adults. Frericks (2024) found that excessive engagement with digital media is negatively associated with life satisfaction, while intentional digital disconnection can significantly improve it. Similarly, Garg et al., (2024) reported that students who engaged in regular digital detoxification experienced not only greater life satisfaction but also enhanced learning outcomes, emphasizing the positive role of digital disengagement in promoting both

emotional well-being and academic functioning. Like-wise Wood & Munoz (2021) also reported that that disconnecting from digital devices positively influences life satisfaction by reducing distractions and improving focus on in-person interactions. Even though digital detox is a positive aspect which increases the well-being of an individual, engaging in sudden and short-term digital detox could have some psychological effects. Wilcockson et al. (2019) have proved that the participants might have increased craving for the use of digital technology. So, this suggests a more gradual, steady approach for digital detox. Due to over consumption of digital usage some individuals also procrastinate their works which can be improved by digital detox which is supported by the research Nobbe (2024) which he proved that the participants experienced a reduction in procrastination and lower screen time post detox, where it helps individuals in enhancing the focus, productivity and contributes to improved life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction has become the crucial indicators of psychological well-being in the context of growing digital engagement and changing the social environment. Marquez and Long (2021) found that over the past decade, adolescents' life satisfaction has decreased globally. They connect this to a number of factors like digital habits, peer relationships, academic pressure, and excessive social media use. Similarly, Coyne and Woodruff (2023) reported that even a two weeks of social media digital detox on smart phone and social media usage could increase the life satisfaction and enhance the well-being of every individual.

In this digital age where young adults are in the stage where they try to build their own identity or try to identify their purpose of life, they indulge in social media a lot. Sometimes because of over comparison or over stimulation they face in social media their overall life satisfaction level is decreases. This lower life satisfaction level could also lead to engagement in risky behaviour as a form of coping or escape. One risky behaviour among them could be digital over usage. To support this Esposito et al., (2020) found a significant association between low life satisfaction and an increase in the engagement of risky behaviours among adolescents across various cultural backgrounds.

In the generation, where digital engagement is accepted as normal, many young adults are naturally escaping themselves from digital saturation, by indulging themselves in physical activity and travelling. Through this consciously or unconsciously, they not only achieve fitness but also to achieve some of the aesthetic goals. Whether practicing yoga for inner peace, going for long walks to clear the mind, or playing sports for social interaction, these activities frequently function as indirect forms of digital detoxification. Supporting this, An et al. (2020) found that high levels of physical activities are significantly associated with greater life satisfaction and happiness across all age groups, with the most notable effects were observed in older adults, and Hassan & Saleh (2024) has also proved that digital detox tourism enhances the life satisfaction by reducing the digital stress and promote mindfulness highlighting how physical activity and tourism can improve general well-being, whether intentionally adopted as a means of maintaining health or naturally accepted as an escape from digital overload.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative approach, in order to collect numerical data from participants digital detox practices and their life satisfaction scale. The methodology will include the research design, sample size, data collection and analysis of data.

Research Design

The research design of this study was quantitative approach which adopted a correlational research design to explore the relationship between digital detox and life satisfaction among young adults. This design was chosen to statistically determine the strength and direction of association between the variables without manipulating them.

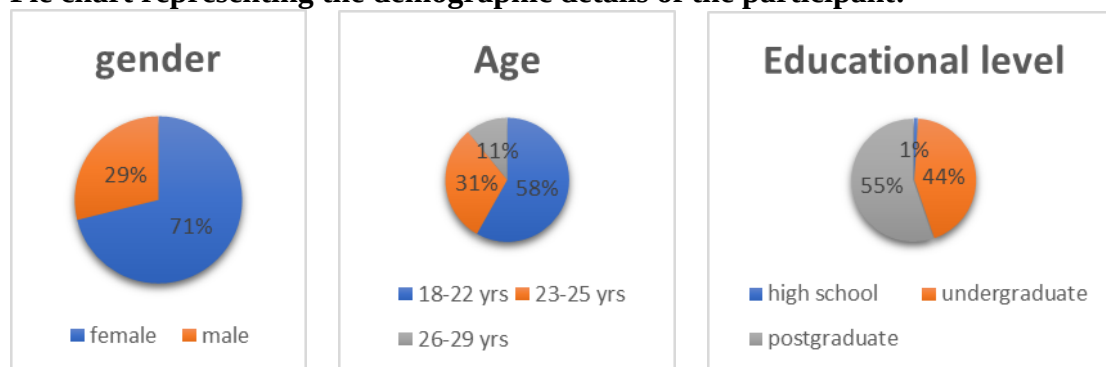
Sample

The study included a sample of 201 young adults aged between 18-29 who were selected using purposive sampling technique. The participants represented a diverse group who were actively using digital media.

Table 3.1: Demographic Details of the Participant:

Demographic variables	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	71 %
	Male	29 %
Age Range	18-22 yrs	58 %
	23-25 yrs	31 %
	26-29 yrs	11 %
Educational Qualification	High School	1 %
	Undergraduates	44 %
	Postgraduate	55 %

Pie chart representing the demographic details of the participant:



Data collection:

The data was collected through self-report questionnaires designed in google forms and was shared in online to ensure wide reach.

The inclusion criteria were

- The participants should be within the age range of 18-29.
- They must have exposure to digital devices.
- They must be willing to provide informed consent and must participate in the study voluntarily.

The exclusion criteria were

- Participant who are above or below the target age range or incomplete responses.
- Participants who have a history of psychological diagnosis or mental health disorders.
- The digital detox and life satisfaction levels of the participants were assessed using The Multidimensional Student Life satisfaction scale and Digital Well-Being scale.

Participation was completely voluntary, and the informed consent was obtained from all of the participants.

RESULT ANALYSIS

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study. Various statistical tools were used for the data analysis. The statistical tools employed in this study were calculating the mean, Pearson's correlation, t-statistics, and ANOVA.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Digital Detox	201	42.47	6.711	24.00	59.00
Life satisfaction	201	177.50	27.557	90.00	233.00

Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics for digital detox and life satisfaction among 201 participants. The mean value of digital detox is 42.47 within the score range of 24.00 to 59.00 and its standard deviation score is 6.711, which indicates that the participants engage in moderate level of digital detox behaviours. Whereas, the mean value of life satisfaction is 177.50 within the score range of 90.00 to 233.00 and its standard deviation score is 27.557, which indicates that the participants relatively have high level of perceived life satisfaction.

H1: There will be a significant relationship between digital detox and life satisfaction.

Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the relationship between digital detox and life satisfaction.

Table 4.2: Pearson's correlation for digital detox and life satisfaction

	Pearson Correlation	Sig(2-tailed)	N
Life satisfaction & Digital Detox	0.228**	0.001	201

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.2 shows Pearson's Correlation among the variables under the study. Digital detox shows a positive significant correlation with life satisfaction ($r = .288$, $p > 0.05$). This suggests that participants who have high digital detox level showed a slight tendency to report higher levels of life satisfaction, but the association was not strong enough to reach the statistical significance. This confirms that factors such as individual differences in digital habits, coping mechanisms, or lifestyle contexts may influence the extent to which digital detox contributes to life satisfaction and well-being. The results are supported by Coyne and Woodruff (2023), who found that a two week social media detox improved life satisfaction and reduced the social media use which was problematic among young adults. This aligns with the current study, emphasizing the positive impact of digital detox on overall well-being and life satisfaction. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) stating that 'There will be a significant relationship between digital detox and life satisfaction' has been retained.

H2: There will be significant difference in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across both genders.

Independent sample t test was used to assess whether there is any difference in digital detox and life satisfaction level across genders.

Table 4.3: Independent sample t-test comparing life satisfaction and digital detox across genders among young adults.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error mean	t-value	Significance	
Life satisfaction	Male	58	180.72	28.816	3.784	1.054	0.539	Non-significant
	Female	143	176.20	27.025	2.260			
Digital detox	Male	58	44.62	7.130	0.936	2.945	0.400	Significant
	female	143	41.60	6.355	0.531			

Table 4.3 shows the independent sample t-test to assess whether there are any significant differences in the life satisfaction and digital detox level among young adults across genders. The results shows that there is no statistically significant difference between males and females in life satisfaction ($t = 1.054$, $p = 0.539$). It also says that, there is statistically significant difference in digital detox levels among the participants ($t = 2.945$, $p = 0.400$). Males reported slightly higher mean scores in both life satisfaction and digital detox, which says that gender did play a significant role in shaping digital detox but did not play any significant role in the life satisfaction levels among the young adults. These findings are supported by Cauberghe et al. (2021) who found no significant differences in the life satisfaction levels between male and female students during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that gender does not play a major role in shaping overall life satisfaction. Similarly, Aljomaa et al. (2016) found that males reported higher levels of smartphone addiction than females, which could indicate a greater need or effort among males to engage in digital detox behaviours. Thus, the second hypothesis (H2) stating that ‘There will be significant difference in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across both genders’ is partially retained.

H3: There will be significant differences in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across different age ranges.

ANOVA test was used to evaluate whether there is any difference in the life satisfaction level and digital detox levels among young adults across different age groups.

Table 4.4: ANOVA test comparing the life satisfaction and digital detox levels across different age range among young adults.

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f-value
Life Satisfaction	Between Groups	4059.44	2	2029.724	2.719
	Within Groups	147824.791	198	746.590	
	Total	151884.239	200		
Digital Detox	Between Groups	396.076	2	198.038	4.553
	Within Groups	8612.024	198	43.495	
	Total	9008.100	200		

Table 4.4 shows the ANOVA test to evaluate whether there is any significant difference between life satisfaction and digital detox level among young adults across different age groups. The results show that for life satisfaction, the f-value is 2.791, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the life satisfaction level between the different

age groups which says that the participants reported similar levels of life satisfaction regardless of their age groups. In contrast, Digital Detox, the f -value is 4.553, which indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the Digital Detox levels between the different age groups, which says that the participants engagement in digital detox strategies varied significantly across different age groups.

Table 4.5: Post hoc tests for both Life satisfaction and Digital Detox across different age ranges:

Dependent variable	(l)Age Range	(j)Age Range	Mean Difference(l-j)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Life Satisfaction	18-22	23-25	-4.087	4.326	0.346	-12.62	4.44
		26-29	-15.877	6.810	0.021	-29.31	-2.45
	23-25	18-22	4.087	4.326	0.346	-4.44	12.62
		26-29	-11.790	6.341	0.064	-24.30	0.71
	26-29	18-22	15.877	6.810	0.021	2.45	29.31
		23-25	11.790	6.341	0.064	-0.71	24.30
Digital Detox	18-22	23-25	-0.774	1.044	0.477	-2.80	1.32
		26-29	-4.864	1.644	0.003	-8.11	-1.62
	23-25	18-22	0.744	1.044	0.477	-1.32	2.80
		26-29	-4.120	1.531	0.008	-7.14	-1.10
	26-29	18-22	4.864	1.644	0.003	1.62	8.11
		23-25	4.120	1.531	0.008	1.10	7.14

Table 4.5 shows the post hoc test results to examine whether there are any significant differences in life satisfaction and digital detox levels among young adults across different age groups. The results indicate that for life satisfaction, there is a significant difference between the age groups 18–22 and 26–29 ($p = 0.021$), where participants in the 26–29 age group reported higher levels of life satisfaction. However, other age comparisons did not show statistically significant differences.

In terms of digital detox, significant differences were found between the age groups 18–22 and 26–29 ($p = 0.003$), and 23–25 and 26–29 ($p = 0.008$), with individuals in the 26–29 age group engaging more in digital detox practices. No significant difference was observed between the 18–22 and 23–25 age groups for either variable. These findings suggest that older young adults (aged 26–29) tend to have higher life satisfaction and greater digital detox involvement compared to the younger adults. This supports the findings of Beyens et al. (2020) that older adults are more likely to take intentional breaks from the devices, often to manage stress or the help themselves focus better. Thus, the third hypothesis (H3) stating that ‘There will be significant differences in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across different age ranges’ is partially retained.

H4: There will be significant differences in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across different educational qualification.

ANOVA test was used to evaluate whether there are any differences in the life satisfaction and digital detox levels among adults across different educational qualifications.

Table 4.6: ANOVA test comparing the life satisfaction and digital detox levels across different educational qualifications among young adults.

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f-Value
Life satisfaction	Between Groups	981.964	2	490.982	0.644
	Within Groups	150902.275	198	762.133	
	Total	151884.239	200		
Digital Detox	Between Groups	18.641	2	9.321	0.205
	Within Groups	8989.458	198	45.401	
	Total	9008.100	200		

Table 4.6 shows the ANOVA test to evaluate whether there is any significant difference between life satisfaction and digital detox level among young adults across different educational qualifications. The result show that the f-value for life satisfaction is 0.644 and the f-value for digital detox is 0.205 which indicates that there is no significant difference between participant of different educational qualification in terms of life satisfaction and digital detox. Thus, the fourth hypothesis (H4) stating that ‘There will be significant differences in life satisfaction and digital detox practices among young adults across different educational qualification’ has been rejected.

DISCUSSION

These findings support the hypothesis that digital detox behaviour is positively associated with life satisfaction among young adults. This suggests that engaging in digital detox practices contributes to an enhanced sense of well-being, it is not the only factor influencing life satisfaction. Other personal, psychological, and environmental factors may influence this relationship which shows the complexity of digital behaviours and well-being.

The descriptive statistics reveal a moderate level of digital detox behaviour and relatively high levels of life satisfaction among participants. This reflects a growing awareness among young adults about the importance of managing the consumption of digital technology. This could be due to, the mental health impacts of technology overuse. This proves that even though digital detox interventions can be helpful, their impact may vary depending on personal habits, motivations, and circumstances.

Life satisfaction did not differ significantly by gender whereas Digital detox levels did differ significantly by gender, indicating that both men and women can practice digital detox and have similar levels of life satisfaction. Since digital engagement are universal, interventions promoting digital well-being should be universal and non-gender-specific.

Older participants showed higher levels of digital detox, which is consistent with previous research suggesting that self-regulation and awareness of technology increase with age. Older young adults are more likely to use detoxifying techniques because they may be more experienced at managing their time and aware of the psychological effects of excessive use of digital technology.

Digital detox and life satisfaction levels were not affected by educational level, suggesting that education level alone is not likely to influence digital behaviour and life satisfaction. These results says that treatments aimed at digital detoxification techniques can be created consistently across educational levels.

The study's overall findings support the multidimensional connection between life satisfaction and digital behaviour. Although a digital detox may improve life satisfaction, its effectiveness depends on a number of personal and demographic factors. This suggests the necessity of a multimodal strategy in digital well-being interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between digital detox behaviour and life satisfaction among young adults. Although there was a slight positive correlation, it indicates that digital detoxification is not a major factor in determining wellbeing on its own. Older participants exhibited higher levels of digital detox behaviour, suggesting the role of age-related self-regulation, but no significant differences were found based on gender or educational attainment. These results highlight the need for inclusive, holistic approaches to digital well-being and encourage the inclusion of digital detox into a broader framework for mental health and lifestyle. Future research should investigate the long-term psychological effects of detox practices and their cross-cultural applicability.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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