



DIGITAL DETOX AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: AWARENESS, PERCEPTIONS, AND PRACTICES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital technology has transformed the academic and social lives of college students. While digital devices provide numerous educational benefits, excessive screen time and continuous digital engagement have raised concerns regarding concentration, productivity, stress, and academic performance. This study examines students' awareness of digital detox, their perceptions toward digital detox practices, and the perceived impact of such practices on academic performance. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 105 college students using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using simple percentage analysis. The findings reveal that although awareness of the term digital detox remains moderate, students generally acknowledge the adverse effects of excessive screen time and recognize the importance of reducing digital distractions. Avoiding mobile phone usage during study hours emerged as the most common digital detox practice. Most respondents believed that digital detox enhances concentration, improves productivity, and contributes positively to academic performance. The study highlights the importance of promoting healthy digital habits among students through educational initiatives and institutional support. The findings contribute to the growing discourse on digital well-being and provide practical insights for educators, students, and policymakers seeking to foster a balanced relationship between technology use and academic success.

KEYWORDS: Digital Detox, Academic Performance, Digital Well-being, Screen Time, College Students, Social Media Usage

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has become an indispensable part of students' daily lives. Smartphones, laptops, tablets, and social networking platforms facilitate communication, learning, entertainment, and access to information. The widespread availability of digital resources has significantly enhanced educational opportunities and transformed traditional learning environments.

Despite these benefits, excessive use of digital devices has become a growing concern among educators, parents, and researchers. Students frequently spend substantial amounts of time on social media, online gaming, streaming platforms, and instant messaging applications. Continuous exposure to digital content often results in distractions, reduced concentration, procrastination, sleep disturbances, and increased stress levels.

In response to these challenges, the concept of digital detox has gained increasing attention. Digital detox refers to the conscious reduction or temporary avoidance of digital devices to improve well-being, enhance focus, and promote healthier technology usage habits. Rather than eliminating technology entirely, digital detox encourages individuals to use digital tools more mindfully and purposefully.

For college students, who are among the most active users of digital technology, digital detox may serve as an effective strategy for improving academic engagement and overall well-being. Understanding students' awareness and perceptions of digital detox is therefore important for developing interventions that support responsible technology use and academic success.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing integration of digital technologies into everyday life has created both opportunities and challenges for

students. Several studies have reported that excessive digital engagement can negatively influence academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being.

According to Ugur and Koc (2015), uncontrolled smartphone usage often leads to distractions that interfere with students' ability to focus on academic tasks. Similarly, Setia et al. (2025) observed that prolonged digital exposure contributes to reduced concentration, increased stress, and declining academic productivity.

Research on digital detox has generally highlighted its positive effects. Radtke et al. (2022) found that temporary disengagement from digital devices helps individuals reduce smartphone dependency and improve self-regulation. Likewise, Belva Afsyari and Hastuti (2025) reported that digital detox practices contribute to improved psychological well-being and lower stress levels among students.

Studies have also emphasized the relationship between digital self-control and academic achievement. Amadi et al. (2024) found that students who consciously managed their digital consumption demonstrated better study habits, improved time management, and stronger academic engagement.

However, the literature also suggests that complete disconnection from digital technologies may not be practical in contemporary educational settings. Modern academic activities increasingly rely on digital platforms for learning, communication, and information access. Consequently, many researchers advocate balanced and mindful technology usage rather than complete digital avoidance.

Overall, previous studies indicate that digital detox can enhance concentration, reduce distractions, and support academic performance. Nevertheless, limited empirical evidence exists regarding students' awareness and perceptions of digital detox in the Indian higher education context.



3. RESEARCH GAP

Although previous research has extensively examined digital addiction, social media usage, and psychological well-being, relatively few studies have focused specifically on students' awareness and perceptions of digital detox and its perceived influence on academic performance. Furthermore, empirical studies conducted among college students in India remain limited. This study addresses this gap by examining awareness, perceptions, and digital detox practices among college students and exploring their relationship with academic performance.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the level of awareness of digital detox among college students.
- To identify digital detox practices adopted by students.

- To examine students' perceptions regarding digital detox.
- To analyze the perceived impact of digital detox on academic performance.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to college students. Convenience sampling was employed to select respondents.

A total of 105 valid responses were obtained. The sample comprised students from different courses, years of study, and institutional backgrounds. The collected data were analyzed using simple percentage analysis to understand patterns relating to awareness, perceptions, and digital detox practices. The study primarily relied on descriptive statistics to interpret findings and draw conclusions.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 105)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 18 years	7	7
	19–20 years	74	70
	21–22 years	20	19
	Above 22 years	4	4
Gender	Male	18	17
	Female	87	83
Programme	B.Com	68	65
	BBA	17	16
	BCA	10	10
	Others	10	9
Year of Study	First Year	10	10
	Second Year	14	13
	Third Year	81	77
Institution Type	Government	60	57
	Private	45	43

Interpretation

The demographic profile reveals that the majority of respondents belonged to the 19–20 years age group (70%). Female students constituted a significant proportion of the sample (83%). Most respondents were pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce programme (65%) and were in the third year of

study (77%). In terms of institutional affiliation, 57% of the respondents were from government colleges, while 43% were from private colleges. The profile indicates that the study predominantly represents undergraduate commerce students in the later stages of their academic programme.

Table 2. Awareness of Digital Detox Among Students

Awareness of Digital Detox	Percentage (%)
Aware	48
Unaware	52

Interpretation

The findings indicate that awareness of digital detox among students remains moderate, with slightly more than half of the

respondents (52%) unfamiliar with the concept. This highlights the need for greater awareness regarding digital well-being and responsible technology use.

Table 3. Digital Detox Practices Adopted by Students

Digital Detox Practice	Percentage (%)
Avoid phone during study hours	33.88
Limit screen time	24.04
Turn off notifications	19.13



Interpretation

Among the various digital detox strategies, avoiding mobile phone usage during study hours emerged as the most commonly

adopted practice. Students also reported limiting screen time and disabling notifications as methods to reduce digital distractions and improve focus.

Table 4: Students' Perceptions Regarding Digital Detox

Perception Statement	Positive Responses
Excessive screen time negatively affects students	90
Digital detox is important for students	83
Reducing social media use increases productivity	81
Digital detox improves concentration	71

Interpretation

The results reveal a positive perception of digital detox among students. Most respondents believed that excessive screen time adversely affects students and recognized the benefits of digital detox in enhancing concentration and productivity.

6. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The findings indicate that students recognize the importance of managing digital engagement despite moderate awareness of the concept of digital detox. Many respondents reported adopting practices that help reduce digital distractions and support academic activities.

Students generally perceived digital detox as beneficial for improving concentration, productivity, and overall academic performance. The findings suggest that students increasingly value balanced technology use and acknowledge the need to regulate digital consumption to maintain academic focus.

Overall, the findings suggest that balanced technology use is increasingly viewed by students as essential for maintaining academic focus and effectiveness.

7. REFERENCES

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