

Digital Overload and Employee Well-being: Proposing the Right to Disconnect in India

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Abstract: The fast rate of development of digital technology and the increase in the practice of remote working in India have changed the traditional work environments. Although the change is accompanied by flexibility and connectivity, they have also led to higher rates of stress, sleep loss, and work-life imbalance. Employees are frequently under pressure to be available outside official working hours, resulting in mental fatigue, decreased productivity, and declining well-being. This research delves into the attitudes of employees towards these challenges, its effects on job satisfaction, mental well-being, and work efficiency. By reviewing global best practices and through employee feedback, this study aims to quantify the significance of implementing a Right to Disconnect policy in India. This policy would establish a neat separation between work and personal lives, prioritizing employees' welfare without an impact on organizational productivity. The study recommends a disciplined model of implementation of the Right to Disconnect, merging corporate discretion and workers' rights for a healthier, more sustainable working culture in India.

Keywords: employee well-being; digital overload; stress level; right to disconnect; remote work environment.

Subject classification codes: J28, J81, O33, I31

Graphical abstract



1. Introduction:

The accelerated evolution of digital technology has revolutionized contemporary work cultures, profoundly eroding professional and personal life. The growing trend of hybrid and remote work culture in India, driven by digitalization and the COVID-19 pandemic, has provided employees with more flexibility and connectivity. Yet, these benefits come at a cost—employees often are expected to stay available outside regular working hours, resulting in digital overload (Derks et al., 2016; Gadeyne et al., 2018). It is a situation where digital communication tools are overused, resulting in work-life imbalance, increased stress, and a reduction in mental health (Alkhayyal & Bajaba, 2024; Eurofound, 2022; Fortunisa, 2022; Jawahar & Sivasankari, 2020).

As India further digitizes, expectations of always being available at work have resulted in burnout, sleep loss, and decreased productivity among workers (B. Chen et al., 2022). Research in Europe and North America has identified these issues and reacted with legislative action, including the Right to Disconnect legislation in France (2017), Spain (2018), and Ireland (2021) (Eurofound, 2022). Such policies legally establish workers' right to disconnect from employment-related communication after working hours, thereby protecting their mental well-being and private life. Though a lot of talks have been underway on this concern, India is still devoid of an official legislation to tackle overwork through the digital platform and its impact on workers' mental well-being.

The objective of this research is to analyze the effect of digital overload on Indian workers and assess the viability of introducing a Right to Disconnect policy. Based on an analysis of employee sentiment, workplace stress issues, and best international practices, the research attempts to put a number to the importance of introducing such a policy in India. The research also envisions a model of systematic implementation that addresses corporate flexibility and workers' rights to introduce a worker-friendly and sustainable workplace.

Problem Statement

The advent of communication technologies and remote work has fundamentally changed the dynamics of the workplace, allowing for constant connectivity and flexibility. Nevertheless, this revolution has created digital overload, with employees facing undue exposure to work-related communication beyond regular working hours. In India, the increasing pressure to be on call outside contractual working hours has generated work-life imbalance, mental fatigue, and deteriorating well-being (Rizwan et al., 2022; Yadav, 2024). Employees typically find it hard to switch off from work, leading to burnout, sleeplessness, and reduced productivity (Dr. Zoe Wyatt, 2024).

Despite the negative consequences of digital overwork, India still lacks a legal principle to regulate employees' right to disconnect. As opposed to countries that have implemented policies to reduce work-related communications at workplaces outside of official hours, India's corporate culture is still dominated by long working hours and round-the-clock availability (Tiwari et al., 2024). As a result, employees experience more stress, job dissatisfaction, and poor mental well-being, questioning the sustainability of existing workplace practices.

This research fills the gap by examining employee attitudes, causes of work stress, and international best practices to evaluate the necessity of a Right to Disconnect policy in India. This research also suggests a formal implementation model with a balance between business flexibility and employees' right to sustainable work-life balance.

Objectives of this study:

- To study the impact of digital overload on employee well-being
- To measure work-life balance issues in virtual workplaces
- To reflect on the impact of being constantly digitally connected on work efficiency and job satisfaction
- To analyze the role of work culture and organizational policy in digital overwork

Scope of the Study

This research is based on issues that employees suffer from due to over digital connectedness in Indian digital offices based on mental well-being, work-life balance, and organizational needs. It explores the effects of a lack of Right to Disconnect policies leading to stress, burnout, and lower job satisfaction. It reflects on best international practices in France, Spain, and Ireland and diagnoses loopholes in Indian rules. Coursing through sectors such as IT, finance, and consultancy, it formulates an elaborate Right to Disconnect framework for India. Mainly focused on white-collar employees, the report formulates policy suggestions for imposing healthier, improved-balanced workplace culture.

Significance of the right to disconnect

Right to Disconnect has become prominent during the era of connected work life, particularly with remote work technology. It provides employees with the liberty of being disconnected from the work matrix during off-duty hours being invested, which is important in helping maintain mental well-being, avoiding burnout, and rejuvenating work-life balance. Constant digital presence creates stress and fatigue and affects one's well-being and work quality. By permitting employees to set constructive boundaries, this right not only promotes employee health but also ensures a healthier and more productive workforce. In India's rapidly modernizing work culture, such a policy would be a long-term employer and employee gain.

2. Literature survey

The growing integration of digital technologies in modern work environments has reframed people with work engagement, which gives efficiency and productivity, but also with new challenges. With the increasing use of digital communication and collaborations, the mental health of employees, creativity, and well-being are more of a concern in organizations. A growing body of research investigates the implications of pervasive connectivity and saturation on stress levels, work-life boundary, and extended job satisfaction (Mumu et al., 2021; Nassani et al., 2024; Udin, 2023). The following is a literature review of leading research studies that look at the psychological impact of the use of technology within virtual working environments with particular focus on cognitive overload, conflict between participation and burnout, and the roles digital communication tools play.

Digital Overload and Technostress

The rapid development of digital technologies has recast work, but it has also given rise to new problems such as digital overload and technostress. Digital overload is the feelings of being overwhelmed caused by constant connectivity, excess digital engagement, and the need to respond instantaneously to messages even after work time (A. Chen & Casterella, 2019). With more remote and hybrid work, workers are struggling to "turn off" and are experiencing mental strain and emotional burnout.

Technostress, as defined to apply to technology-induced stress, has been very widely studied in the field of organizational behavior research. It happens when people are unable to manage changing technology or are subjected to unrealistic expectations about their availability and ability through technology (Y. Yang et al., 2025). Studies have found that technostress can have negative effects on job satisfaction, performance, and mental health (Le et al., 2024).

Current research further sharpens our picture of the impact of digital settings on employees' mental health. (Li et al., 2025) demonstrate that in highly digitalized sectors like shipping logistics, digital culture, and knowledge-management systems possess the lowest levels of positive correlation with technostress; if technostress does occur, burnout completely mediates its effect on mental well-being.

Employee Well-being and Work-life Balance

While certain research highlights the productivity benefit of technology saturation, others refer to its unexpected consequences, such as increased levels of stress, burnout, and breakdown of work-life balance. Interestingly, the review also presents relatively lesser-researched areas such as digital stress in the long term, differences in the impact of diverse tools, and policy measures like the "Right to Disconnect." Building on a body of evidence from a wide range of studies, the review sets the basis for richer understanding of the complexities of digital work and makes the case for research into more sustainable, human-centered digital practices (Borges, 2023; Chopra & Sharma, 2020; Secunda, 2019; Weber et al., 2021).

(Bunjak et al., 2021) examines the relationship between technology overload, cognitive absorption in technology, and creativity among gig workers. Although deep engagement with technology (cognitive absorption) enhances creative performance, excessive reliance on digital tools leads to burnout and reduces creativity. Based on data from 263 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers, the study reveals that cognitive absorption positively influences creativity, while excessive technology overload has a negative impact on it and induces stress, decreasing workers' ability to innovate. The study reveals the negative impacts of digitalization, highlighting the need for enhancing design elements in digital workplaces to ensure engagement and well-being as complementary factors.

(Schmitt et al., 2021) research investigates the effects of augmented use of digital tools on cognitive overload, well-being, and work performance during the COVID-19 lockdown in Germany. From an online survey of 403 participants, it is indicated that overuse of text-based communication tools (e.g., Slack, Trello, email) causes cognitive overload, which adversely impacts well-being but does not significantly influence work performance. Conversely, videoconferencing tools (e.g., Skype, Zoom) did not show similar effects. In addition,

digital detox measures were found to moderate cognitive overload and minimize its negative effects. The research emphasizes controlling the use of digital tools in order to relieve stress.

(Derks & Bakker, 2014) investigated how overuse of smartphones for work is harmful to psychological detachment, resulting in stress and burnout. (Mazmanian et al., 2013) analyzed how continuous connectivity with digital technology adds pressure and anxiety at the workplace. (Ragsdale & Hoover, 2016) concluded that workers regularly checking work emails during non-work hours have increased stress and sleep disruptions. (Berkowsky, 2013) wrote about "technostress," wherein employees are unable to cope with excessive digital communication, resulting in cognitive exhaustion. (Sonnentag et al., 2017) highlighted that switching off from work-related digital communications enhances emotional well-being and task performance.

(Allen et al., 2014) depicted how workers who respond to work emails outside of office hours show lower job satisfaction and increased family conflict. (Diaz et al., 2012) hypothesized that telework raises work-life conflict due to boundary blurring between the personal and work life. (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015) coined the term "workplace telepressure," whereby employees are telepressured to respond instantaneously to messages, which leads to burnout. (Nöhammer & Stichlberger, 2019) established that employer demands for digital availability result in extended working hours, frequently without pay. (Liu et al., 2024) recognized that employees who work online during non-work hours indicate declining motivation and job satisfaction. (Golden & Wiens-Tuers, 2006) elaborated on how digital labor transcends formal working hours without protection by the law, which impacts employee morale.

Research Gap:

Despite large-scale research on digital work and cognitive overload, some significant gaps remain. A lot of research is focused on short-term effects without information on long-term influence on well-being and productivity. The unique effect of different digital tools is not yet sufficiently researched, nor are differences between industries in media overload. While digital detox is viewed as a solution, empirical studies of its effects are few. Moreover, there are few studies available on the enactment of the Right to Disconnect in new markets such as India. This study addresses these knowledge lacunae through carrying out research on digital work stress, industry-related issues, and policy interventions for improving employees' well-being.

3. Theoretical Framework

Work-Life Boundary Theory

The Work-Life Boundary Theory examines how individuals control the line between work and nonwork life. With boundaries crumbling due to technology, particularly telework, the theory is more pertinent than ever. The theory posits that individuals establish mental and physical boundaries—blending or separating work and nonwork roles—to balance. However, with work spilling over into personal time with constant connectivity and the sense of being available, these boundaries erode. This invasion can result in stress, reduce personal time, and affect overall well-being. Understanding how employees cross these lines helps shape policies, like the Right to Disconnect, that protect mental health and improve work-life balance.

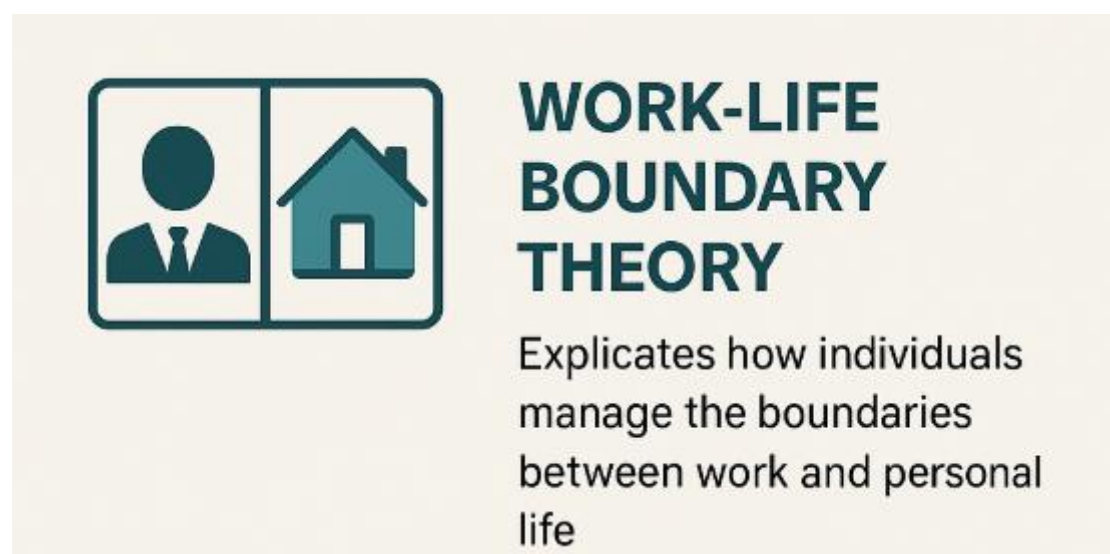


Figure 1: Work-life boundary theory

Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) Model

The JD-R Model helps to explain the conditions of work influence employee stress and well being. It divides the job characteristics into two: one is demands like frequent digital communication, heavy workload, and long working hours, and the second one is resources like supportive supervision, autonomy, and digital technologies. The workers suffering from burnout and low motivation due to less resources than demands. Technostress is an emerging requirement in the modern digital era, which is an excess stress of digital technology usage. Yet, if the right resources such as digital literacy skills and well-defined work boundaries are given to it, its adverse effects can be kept under control. JD-R model assists organizations in achieving a balance to maximize productivity and worker satisfaction.



Figure 2: JD-R model

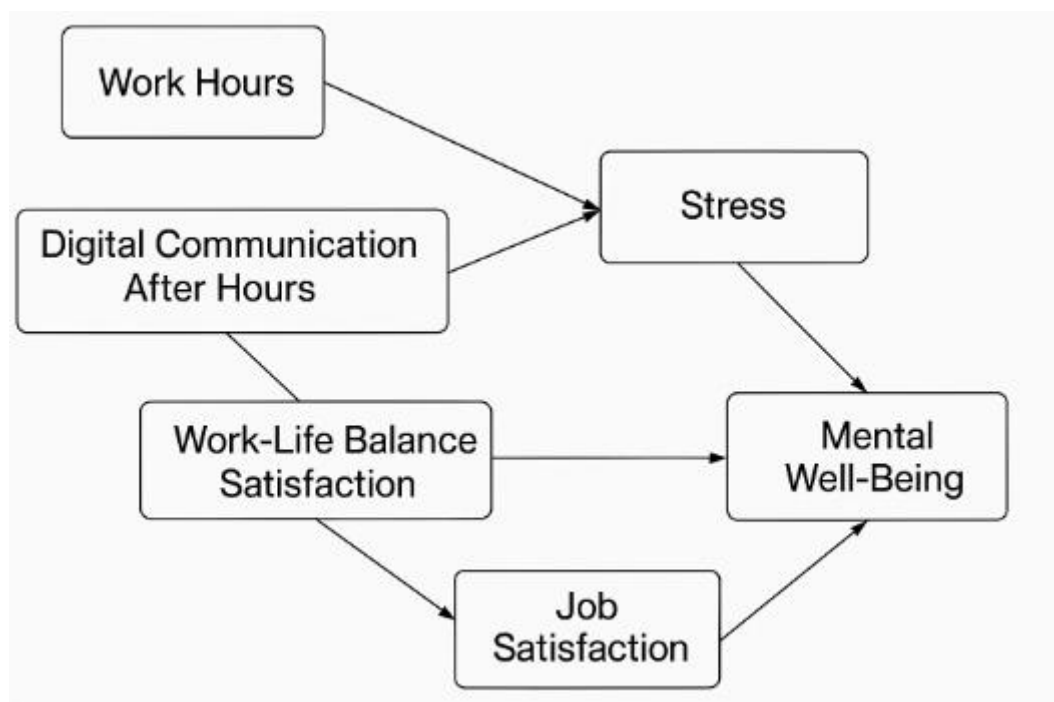


Figure 3: Conceptual model

Table 1: Hypothesis and its related Job Demand–Resources (JD-R) Model and Work-Life Boundary Theory

#	Hypothesis	JD-R / Boundary Logic
H1	After-hours digital communication (Va4) is positively associated with perceived stress levels (Va5).	Excessive after-hours messaging functions as an additional <i>demand</i> that heightens strain.
H2	Average weekly work hours (Va2) are positively associated with perceived stress levels (Va5).	Longer hours increase overall workload demand.
H3	Perceived stress level (Va5) is negatively associated with mental well-being (Va10).	Stress represents a strain that directly erodes well-being.
H4	Work-life balance satisfaction (Va6) is negatively associated with perceived stress levels (Va5).	Stronger boundaries act as a <i>resource</i> that buffers job demands.
H5	Work-life balance satisfaction (Va6) is positively associated with mental well-being (Va10).	Satisfied boundaries enhance psychological health.
H6	Job satisfaction (Va8) is positively associated with mental well-being (Va10).	Positive work attitudes operate as personal resources that lift well-being.
H7	Stress level (Va5) mediates the relationship between after-hours digital communication (Va4) and mental well-being (Va10).	Digital demands raise stress, which in turn lowers well-being (Stimulus → Strain → Outcome).
H8	Burnout symptoms (Va9) mediate the relationship between perceived stress (Va5) and mental well-being (Va10).	Prolonged strain precipitates burnout, further suppressing well-being.

Figure 3 theoretical model reveals how work-related issues influence employees' mental well-being. Excessive digital communication after working hours and extended working hours heighten tension and lower work-life balance, thus negatively impacting mental well-being. Stress is the strongest adverse predictor and decreases well-being significantly. The positive impact of Work-life balance and job satisfaction is very low. Poor mental health due to long connectivity, stress, and excess working hours. To enhance employee well-being and prevent burnout in digital work environments, Organizational interventions focus on limiting after-work hours, reducing stress, and encouraging work-life balance.

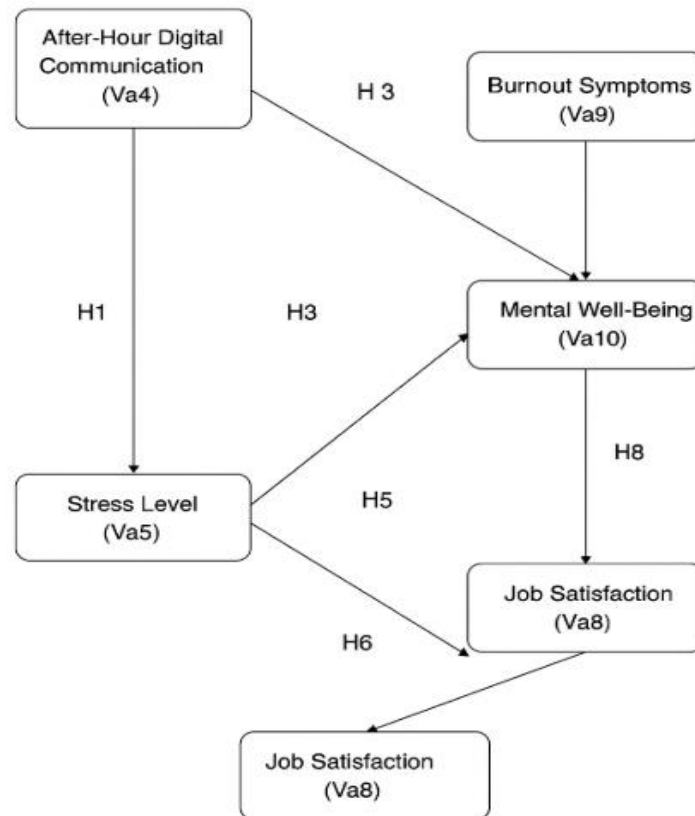


Figure 4: Model with Hypothesis

Figure 4 shows a conceptual model speculating about the inter-relationships between after-hour digital communication (Va4), stress (Va5), burnout symptoms (Va9), mental well-being (Va10), and job satisfaction (Va8). The model suggests that after-hour communication directly adds to stress (H1) and indirectly impacts mental well-being (H3) via burnout and stress mechanisms. Stress (Va5) is hypothesized to negatively affect both well-being (Va10) and job satisfaction (Va8) (H5, H6). Moreover, burnout symptomatology (Va9) is anticipated to decrease psychological well-being (Va10), which conversely affects job satisfaction (Va8) (H8). The model proposes direct and mediated effects on employee well-being and satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

This research utilizes a mixed-methods study, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative part is through the assessment of employees' attitudes toward digital overload and work-life balance, while the quantitative part is through the determination of levels of stress, job satisfaction, and work efficiency by carrying out surveys and statistical analysis. The research is cross-sectional, collecting data at one point in time to ascertain the implications of digital overload on Indian workers.

Data Collection Methods

Initial Data

Initial data are collected by way of formal questionnaires and informal interviews:

Surveys: Staff representing various industries, e.g., IT, finance, and consultancy, will be issued a questionnaire to assess their experiences with digital overload and its impact on their well-being.

Interviews: HR professionals and policymakers will be interviewed in depth to provide feedback on workplace policies and their practicality in having a Right to Disconnect system in place.

Sampling Strategy

Stratified random sampling is applied to have representation from various sectors and positions. The target population is as follows:

White-collar workers (IT, finance, consultancy, and corporate sectors). HR professionals and policymakers (to know the policy and corporate view on digital work culture). Freelancers and remote workers (to assess differences in experience between corporate and non-conventional work settings). The data is gathered from 421 respondents from different groups.

Table 2: The study variables and its description

Variable	Description
Va1	Industry
Va2	Work_Hours_Per_Week
Va3	After_Hours_Work_Frequency
Va4	Digital_Communication_After_Hours
Va5	Stress_Level
Va6	Work_Life_Balance_Satisfaction
Va7	Sleep_Hours_Per_Night
Va8	Job_Satisfaction
Va9	Burnout_Symptoms
Va10	Mental_Wellbeing_Score

Table 2 presents the most important variables applied to the study, with emphasis on workplace, stress, and overall well-being. Industry (Va1) signifies the type of industry that respondents belong to. Work Hours Per Week (Va2) and After-Hours Work Frequency (Va3) gauge workload intensity. Digital Communication After Hours (Va4) measures technology use in work-life balance. Stress Level (Va5) and Work-Life Balance Satisfaction (Va6) reflect emotional and professional well-being. Va7, Sleep Hours Per Night, has an impact on health, while Va8, Job Satisfaction, and Va9, Burnout Symptoms, indicate impact in the workplace. Va10, Mental Well-being Score, encapsulates psychological health.

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive Statistics: To provide summaries of responses to the work-life balance survey, job satisfaction, and digital overload.

Inferential Statistics: Regression analysis and correlation tests for examining the association between digital overload and well-being measures (stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction).

Limitations of the Study

Industry Bias: The existence of white-collar workers may not be representative of what blue-collar workers or gig economy workers might experience.

Self-Reported Data: Answers are based on individual perception and bias and not necessarily facts.

Time Constraints: The survey captures snapshots of data at one point in time and does not track long-term trends.

This study methodology provides a comprehensive framework to examine digital overload and the feasibility of a Right to Disconnect policy in India, utilizing only primary data collected through surveys and interviews to provide actionable recommendations.

4. Data Analysis

This section ensures the overall determinants of work and well-being outcomes relations. The qualitative aspect is observation of the views of workers concerning digital overload and work-life balance, while the quantitative aspect is measuring stress, job satisfaction, and work productivity by means of questionnaires and statistical analysis. The study analyzes the descriptive statistics for reporting outstanding variables, correlation analysis to discuss interdependencies, and regression analysis for examining the effect of work stressors on mental well-being. The findings provide substantial evidence of the effect of digital communication, working time, stress, and job satisfaction on well-being. The analysis is used as the foundation for examining study the employee perception on digital communication.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of work-life balance variables

	Va1	Va2	Va3	Va4	Va5	Va6	Va7	Va8	Va9	Va10
Mean	3.10	52.38	2.98	6.62	5.55	5.47	6.47	5.62	0.41	5.72
Median	3.00	53.00	3.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.40	6.00	0.00	6.00
Maximum	5.00	69.00	6.00	14.00	10.00	10.00	9.00	10.00	1.00	10.00
Minimum	1.00	35.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Std. Dev.	1.43	10.21	2.00	4.24	2.98	2.78	1.45	2.77	0.49	2.95
Skewness	-0.09	-0.03	-0.03	0.11	-0.01	-0.06	0.04	-0.07	0.38	-0.03
Kurtosis	1.67	1.84	1.75	1.85	1.72	1.86	1.80	1.88	1.15	1.75
Jarque-Bera	31.41	23.73	27.25	24.07	28.57	23.13	25.17	22.20	70.54	27.68
Probability	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sum	1306.00	22050.00	1256.00	2788.00	2335.00	2302.00	2723.40	2367.00	171.00	2410.00
Sum Sq. Dev.	864.61	43792.70	1680.88	7534.95	3738.35	3256.82	878.02	3228.95	101.54	3658.04
Observations	421	421	421	421	421	421	421	421	421	421

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of work-life balance variables. The descriptive statistics also indicate the most significant work hours, stress, job satisfaction, and well-being trends. Employees work a mean of 52.38 hours a week, and typical after-hour electronic communication (mean: 6.62), which may be the cause of moderately high levels of stress (5.55) and work-life balance problems (5.47). Sleep duration (6.47 hours) is slightly below the recommended level, which may impact mental health (5.72). Burnout symptomatology is primarily low but varied from individual to individual. Jarque-Bera test of non-normality confirms the requirement for proper statistical modeling. The findings highlight the necessity of work policies related to stress, work-life balance, and overall well-being.

Table 4: Multicollinearity test

Variable	VIF (Variance Inflation Factor)	Tolerance (1/VIF)
Va4 (Digital Communication After Hours)	1.89	0.529
Va2 (Work Hours Per Week)	1.12	0.893
Va5 (Stress Level)	4.76	0.21
Va6 (Work-Life Balance Satisfaction)	3.98	0.251
Va8 (Job Satisfaction)	2.15	0.465

Table 4 shows the result of Multicollinearity test. Multicollinearity test helps in determining if the independent variables in the study are too closely related, thus sacrificing the validity of the regression model. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) measures indicate that most of the variables show low to moderate collinearity and therefore do not affect the reliability of the model significantly. Low VIF values observed on Work Hours Per Week (Va2)- 1.12 and Digital Communication After Hours (Va4) - 1.89. the next small VIF observed on Job Satisfaction (Va8) (2.15). Stress Level (Va5) and Work-Life Balance Satisfaction (Va6) have moderate multicollinearity with VIF values of 4.76 and 3.98, respectively. Even this reveals some level of correlation but remains within the acceptable range and is not a significant issue to the analysis. Generally, as none of the variables reach the critical VIF value of 10, multicollinearity is not a significant problem in this research. The results imply that all the variables can be kept in the regression model without impacting the validity of the findings to a large extent.

Table 5: Correlation coefficient of Work and well-being factors

Variable	Va10	Va4	Va2	Va5	Va6	Va8
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Va10	1.00					
Va4	-0.46*	1.00				
Va2	-0.04	-0.01	1.00			
Va5	-0.90*	0.53*	-0.01	1.00		
Va6	0.82*	-0.47*	0.04	-0.89*	1.00	
Va8	0.53*	-0.25*	0.00	-0.58*	0.50*	1.00

Note: *- 1% significance level, ** - 5% significance level, ***- 10% significance level

Table 5 shows the correlation coefficients for work-related variables and well-being indicators. Mental Well-being (Va10) is strongly negatively correlated with Stress Level (Va5) (-0.90, $p < 0.01$), which means that increased stress lowers well-being considerably. Work-Life Balance Satisfaction (Va6) is positively correlated with Mental Well-being (0.82, $p < 0.01$) but negatively correlated with Stress (-0.89, $p < 0.01$) and Digital Communication After Hours (Va4) (-0.47, $p < 0.01$), which means that work-life balance decreases with more digital communication. Job Satisfaction (Va8) is positively correlated with Well-being (0.53, $p < 0.01$) and Work-Life Balance (0.50, $p < 0.01$) and negatively with Stress (-0.58, $p < 0.01$) and Digital Communication (-0.25, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the negative effect of overwork communication on satisfaction and well-being.

Table 6: Regression analysis of work related factors on well-being

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	8.763305	0.547943	15.99311	0.0000
Va4	0.018553	0.016170	1.147415	0.2519
Va2	-0.009796	0.004262	-2.298245	0.0220
Va5	-0.843883	0.051587	-16.35841	0.0000
Va6	0.071604	0.052169	1.372533	0.1706
Va8	0.013358	0.028830	0.463319	0.6434
R-squared	0.818041	Mean dependent var		2.527906
Adjusted R-squared	0.815849	S.D. dependent var		2.155267
S.E. of regression	0.924887	Akaike info criterion		2.695859
Sum squared resid	354.9976	Schwarz criterion		2.753474
Log likelihood	-561.4783	Hannan-Quinn criter.		2.718629
F-statistic	373.1464	Durbin-Watson stat		2.080472
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Table 6 shows the regression analysis testing the effect of occupational factors on well-being (Va10). The model explains a large proportion of the variation in well-being ($R^2 = 0.818$), and thus 81.8% of the variance in well-being is explained by the independent variables. Among the predictors, Stress Level (Va5) exerts a strong negative and statistically significant effect ($\beta = -0.8439$, $p < 0.01$), which shows that stress lowers well-being significantly. Work Hours per Week (Va2) is also found to have a negative effect on well-being ($\beta = -0.0098$, $p < 0.05$), implying that more work hours lead to less well-being.

After-Hours Digital Communication (Va4), Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance (Va6), and Satisfaction With Job (Va8) also do not manifest statistically significant effects, indicating less immediate influence over well-being through this model. The model as a whole has its significance provided by the F-statistic (373.15, $p < 0.01$), while no significant autocorrelation issue is indicated in the Durbin-Watson statistic (2.08).

5. Findings & Discussion

This research examines the interconnection between work-related issues and employee well-being, probing basic gaps in the existing literature on post-work hour digital communication, work-life integration, and stress management. The findings indicate that stress levels significantly negatively impact mental well-being and job satisfaction, affirming existing research on workplace stress. Yet, this research offers further empirical insights into how out-of-work digital communication affects stress and general well-being, a topic that is still under

researched in existing literature (Aizawa et al., 2024; Mubashira & Kumar, 2024; Raj & Goute, 2025; X. Yang & Jo, 2022).

One of the major contributions of this research is measuring the interrelation between work hours, stress, and burnout. This research examines the interconnection between work-related issues and employee well-being, probing basic gaps in the existing literature on post-work hour digital communication, work-life integration, and stress management. The findings indicate that stress levels significantly negatively impact mental well-being and job satisfaction, affirming existing research on workplace stress (Brough & O'Driscoll, 2010; Chandra, 2021; Fatima Riyaz, n.d.; Lee & Sirgy, 2024; McCloskey, 2018).

Analysis helps to shed considerable light on the impact of digital overload and overtime work hours on employee psychological well-being and job performance outcomes. The results indicate that prolonged work hours per week have a significant but modest correlation with well-being, and that long work hours are contributing to workplace stress and fatigue. It is also demonstrated that there is a negative correlation between stress levels and well-being, reinforcing that stress is the strongest predictor in diminishing employee psychological well-being.

Surprisingly, although the after-work digital communication was predicted to have a more negative effect, its impact on well-being was not statistically different in the regression analysis. However, its association with stress and work-life balance satisfaction shows that it indirectly contributes to lower well-being. This means that out-of-work hour electronic communication, although not directly responsible for mental health, leads to stress and reduced work-life balance satisfaction—both being primary routes to overall well-being.

Job satisfaction was positively correlated with well-being but could not predict it in the regression model. What this implies is that job satisfaction is perhaps more of an effect variable than an aetiological variable in well-being, perhaps experiencing influences from levels of stress and balance. The hypothesized model graphically depicts these interactions and supports the need for organizational policy interventions. Multicollinearity is absent, which ensures that the regression output is reliable. The value of R^2 (81.8%) suggests that the included variables explain a majority of the variance in mental well-being, supporting the robustness of the model.

In summary, the research highlights that stress management in work and out-of-work electronic communication is central to protecting workers' mental well-being. It also requires more research in organizational coping and policy-level intervention, such as the Right to Disconnect, in averting digital overwhelm in today's workplace culture.

Policy Recommendations

- **Enact Clear Boundaries for Off-Hours Online Communication:** Organizations need to enact a "Right to Disconnect" policy to restrict non-essential communication during non-working hours. This avoids digital overload and safeguards employee work-life balance and mental health.
- **Stress Management Programs:** Due to the substantial adverse impact of stress on wellbeing, companies need to invest in interventions to mitigate stress such as regular check-ins on wellbeing, employee assistance programs (EAPs), mindfulness training, and access to mental health services.
- **Promote Work-Life Balance Culture:** Promoting good supporting culture for oneself during one's own time and life balance will reduce the stigma of turning off after work. Managers need to set an example themselves in order to support the message.
- **Monitor and Monitor Job Satisfaction on a Regular Basis:** While job satisfaction was not a strong predictor of well-being in regression analysis, it was positively related. The feedback from regular employees is useful to detect early warning of dissatisfaction.
- **Educate Managers in Digital Manners and Awareness of Well-being:** Provide supervisors with training on how their communication style and expectations influence levels of stress. Promote empathy-based leadership that is sensitive to employee mental well-being.
- **Adapt Well-being Interventions by Role and Department:** Acknowledge that stressors and communication burdens differ by function. Departmental data used to tailor interventions can enhance effectiveness.

Through the implementation of these policies, organizations can actively counteract the identified stressors from the study and create a healthier, more sustainable work culture.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of work-related factors on employees' well-being, specifically examining post-work hours digital communication, levels of stress, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. The results show that

stress has the greatest adverse effect on mental well-being, and hence stress management practices are necessary within organizations. Work-life balance satisfaction also appeared to play a vital role in managing stress and enhancing employee well-being. Although communication via the internet after work was predicted to be strongly negatively associated, the findings indicated a moderate relationship, and it is possible that other organizational policies and coping strategies may be involved. Additionally, long working hours were seen to lead to stress but had a comparatively weaker direct association with well-being. The research identifies the need to establish boundaries in online work culture to safeguard employees from burnout and mental exhaustion. Organizations must consider adopting policies that restrict post-work communication and encourage work-life balance. Future research could examine the roles played by organizational support systems and psychological resilience in preventing these deleterious consequences. In general, this current study contributes to emergent debates of staff well-being within the work environments by providing empirical findings concerning the effects of work stressors. The need for employee well-being versus work is exemplified here, both becoming preferable.

Future research will be required to assess the long-term impact of post-work electronic communication on mental health, with industry variables controlled. Other studies can further examine organizational policy roles, work-at-home phenomena, and employees' coping strategies. Cross-cultural and longitudinal studies can shed further light on stable work-life balance routines.

7. Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Table 1: Hypothesis and its related Job Demand–Resources (JD-R) Model and Work-Life Boundary Theory

#	Hypothesis	JD-R / Boundary Logic
H1	After-hours digital communication (Va4) is positively associated with perceived stress levels (Va5).	Excessive after-hours messaging functions as an additional <i>demand</i> that heightens strain.
H2	Average weekly work hours (Va2) are positively associated with perceived stress levels (Va5).	Longer hours increase overall workload demand.
H3	Perceived stress level (Va5) is negatively associated with mental well-being (Va10).	Stress represents a strain that directly erodes well-being.
H4	Work-life balance satisfaction (Va6) is negatively associated with perceived stress levels (Va5).	Stronger boundaries act as a <i>resource</i> that buffers job demands.
H5	Work-life balance satisfaction (Va6) is positively associated with mental well-being (Va10).	Satisfied boundaries enhance psychological health.
H6	Job satisfaction (Va8) is positively associated with mental well-being (Va10).	Positive work attitudes operate as personal resources that lift well-being.
H7	Stress level (Va5) mediates the relationship between after-hours digital communication (Va4) and mental well-being (Va10).	Digital demands raise stress, which in turn lowers well-being (Stimulus → Strain → Outcome).
H8	Burnout symptoms (Va9) mediate the relationship between perceived stress (Va5) and mental well-being (Va10).	Prolonged strain precipitates burnout, further suppressing well-being.

Table 2. The study variables and its description

Variable	Description
Va1	Industry

Va2	Work_Hours_Per_Week
Va3	After_Hours_Work_Frequency
Va4	Digital_Communication_After_Hours
Va5	Stress_Level
Va6	Work_Life_Balance_Satisfaction
Va7	Sleep_Hours_Per_Night
Va8	Job_Satisfaction
Va9	BurOut_Symptoms
Va10	Mental_Wellbeing_Score

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of work-life balance variables

	Va1	Va2	Va3	Va4	Va5	Va6	Va7	Va8	Va9	Va10
Mean	3.10	52.38	2.98	6.62	5.55	5.47	6.47	5.62	0.41	5.72
Median	3.00	53.00	3.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.40	6.00	0.00	6.00
Maximum	5.00	69.00	6.00	14.00	10.00	10.00	9.00	10.00	1.00	10.00
Minimum	1.00	35.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Std. Dev.	1.43	10.21	2.00	4.24	2.98	2.78	1.45	2.77	0.49	2.95
Skewness	-0.09	-0.03	-0.03	0.11	-0.01	-0.06	0.04	-0.07	0.38	-0.03
Kurtosis	1.67	1.84	1.75	1.85	1.72	1.86	1.80	1.88	1.15	1.75
Jarque-Bera	31.41	23.73	27.25	24.07	28.57	23.13	25.17	22.20	70.54	27.68
Probability	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sum	1306.00	22050.00	1256.00	2788.00	2335.00	2302.00	2723.40	2367.00	171.00	2410.00
Sum Sq. Dev.	864.61	43792.70	1680.88	7534.95	3738.35	3256.82	878.02	3228.95	101.54	3658.04
Observations	421	421	421	421	421	421	421	421	421	421

Table 4. Multicollinearity test

Variable	VIF (Variance Inflation Factor)	Tolerance (1/VIF)
Va4 (Digital Communication After Hours)	1.89	0.529
Va2 (Work Hours Per Week)	1.12	0.893
Va5 (Stress Level)	4.76	0.21
Va6 (Work-Life Balance Satisfaction)	3.98	0.251
Va8 (Job Satisfaction)	2.15	0.465

Table 5. Correlation coefficient of Work and well-being factors

Variable	Va10	Va4	Va2	Va5	Va6	Va8
Va10	1.00					
Va4	-0.46*	1.00				
Va2	-0.04	-0.01	1.00			

Va5	-0.90*	0.53*	-0.01	1.00		
Va6	0.82*	-0.47*	0.04	-0.89*	1.00	
Va8	0.53*	-0.25*	0.00	-0.58*	0.50*	1.00

Note: *- 1% significance level, **- 5% significance level, ***- 10% significance level

Table 6. Regression analysis of work related factors on well-being

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	8.763305	0.547943	15.99311	0.0000
Va4	0.018553	0.016170	1.147415	0.2519
Va2	-0.009796	0.004262	-2.298245	0.0220
Va5	-0.843883	0.051587	-16.35841	0.0000
Va6	0.071604	0.052169	1.372533	0.1706
Va8	0.013358	0.028830	0.463319	0.6434
R-squared	0.818041	Mean dependent var		2.527906
Adjusted R-squared	0.815849	S.D. dependent var		2.155267
S.E. of regression	0.924887	Akaike info criterion		2.695859
Sum squared resid	354.9976	Schwarz criterion		2.753474
Log likelihood	-561.4783	Hannan-Quinn criter.		2.718629
F-statistic	373.1464	Durbin-Watson stat		2.080472
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

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Figure 1: Work-life boundary theory

Figure 2: JD-R model

Figure 3: Conceptual model

Figure 4: Model with Hypothesis

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