

## Exploring the Impact of Social Media Engagement on Work–Life Balance and Employee Well-Being

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### Abstract

The objective of this research is to study the usefulness of social media in personal life and its impact on users' work-life balance and their well-being. This study investigates how excessive social media use affects the boundaries connecting the work and individual life, which can negatively impact stress, burnout, and job satisfaction. It is also believed that its balanced and purposeful use can promote social connection, collaboration, and psychological support among employees. In this research study, we will adopt a mixed-method style, using both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

The research findings indicate that the impact of social media is two-pronged—on the one hand, it promotes employee well-being and work flexibility, while on the other, its dependence can lead to work-life imbalance and psychological exhaustion. Consequently, organizations need to consider this dual impact when formulating social media policies. This research provides useful insights for organizations, managers, and human resources specialists, helping them understand employees' digital behaviour and develop a healthy, balanced, and productive work culture.

**Key words:** Social media usage, work-life balance, employee well-being, digital technology, technological impact, remote work

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of human life. It's not only a medium for personal communication and entertainment, but also a key tool for professional interaction, knowledge sharing, and networking. In modern workplaces, employees are connected to social media throughout the day—sometimes for work-related reasons and sometimes for personal enjoyment. This constant connection has significantly disoriented the boundaries between work and personal life. As a result, new questions have arisen about its impact on employees' work-life balance and well-being.

While social media helps employees access work-related information, motivation, and social support, excessive or inappropriate use can lead to fatigue, stress, and time management difficulties. Active use on social media after work hours, especially late at night, can disrupt psychological detachment and recovery. This not only impacts sleep quality but also negatively impacts work performance and personal satisfaction.

The idea that people should retain a well balance between their personal demands and work obligations is the foundation of the work-life balance concept. This equilibrium may be upset when social media boundaries from work intrude into personal time. On the other hand, if social media use is managed in a controlled and purposeful manner, it can also become an important source of information, support, and motivation for employees.

Against this backdrop, the present paper aims to explore how employees' engagement on social media affects their work-life balance and overall well-being. The study also analyses how different types of social media use—such as work-related and personal use, active and passive participation, and timing (work time, leisure time, and night-time use)—affect these outcomes.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement examines to the participation, amount of activity, and time a person spends on social media platforms (such as Twitter/X, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.). It's not simply "social media use," but rather reflects how often, for how long, and for what purpose a person uses these platforms, and how emotionally engaged they are with this use. Social media engagement is a behavioral, cognitive, and emotional activity—that is, it reflects not only what a person does on social media, but also what they think and feel about it.

#### Key Dimensions of Social Media Engagement

Active Use: Posting, commenting, or participating in professional discussions.

Passive Use: Simply scrolling, viewing, or reading others' posts.

Work-Related Use: Using social media for work purposes.

Personal Use: Using it for entertainment or personal relationships.

Temporal Use: Using it during work, after work, or at night.

#### Social media engagement and employee well being

Numerous studies on social media engagement demonstrate multidimensional impacts on employee work behaviour, mental health, and work-life balance. Some studies highlight its positive aspects—such as networking, learning, and social support—while others point to its negative consequences—such as stress, fatigue, and sleep deprivation

Kuss & Griffiths (2017): These researchers presented a comprehensive review on "Social Media Addiction." They observed that excessive social media use is also linked with mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. They also suggested that being constantly active on digital platforms contributes to emotional exhaustion and poor sleep quality.

Brooks (2015): is expressed in their study, individuals' use of social media at work increased social support and information sharing, but "digital fatigue" and "always-on pressure" reduced an employee's job satisfaction.

Chen & Karahanna (2018): Their study focused on the concept of "social media fatigue." They demonstrated that constant notifications, information overload, and social comparisons cause mental fatigue in employees. This fatigue impacts both their work performance and personal satisfaction.

Lin, Lee & Chen (2016): These researchers found that balanced social media use can be a source of emotional support for employees. Especially when employees use professional networking platforms (such as LinkedIn), it enhances their career development, self-confidence, and work motivation.

In the Indian Context, according to Gupta & Sharma (2020), Indian urban employees spend an average of 2–3 hours daily on social media, with 40% of this time devoted to work-related use and 60% to personal use. They observed that employees who used social media late at night reported higher levels of sleep deprivation and mental fatigue. Singh & Verma (2021) found that Indian IT sector employees who were professionally active on platforms like LinkedIn or Slack had higher work engagement, but excessive personal activity on WhatsApp and Instagram increased work-life imbalance.

Studies have shown that active, work-related use can enhance a person's professional development, confidence, and engagement (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015), while passive or late-night use is associated with fatigue, stress, and sleep deprivation (Sonnetag & Fritz, 2014). Thus, the impact of social media depends on the pattern and purpose of use.

### **Work-Life Balance and Employee Well-Being**

Work-life balance means that individuals maintain a balanced balance between their professional responsibilities and particular life needs. When work demands interfere with personal time due to social media, individuals experience increased role stress and psychological fatigue.

Employee well-being refers to the overall state of being physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially healthy and satisfied. It encompasses not only the absence of illness but also enjoyment at work, mental stability, and a positive outlook on life.

Employee well-being can generally be divided into three major dimensions:

Physical well-being: adequate rest, sleep, and a healthy lifestyle.

Psychological well-being: stress management, self-satisfaction, and positive emotions.

Social well-being: supportive relationships, social support, and family connection.

In the modern digital age, work-life balance and employee well-being are two interconnected elements that determine the characteristic of an employee's personal and professional life.

### **Social Media and Work Life Balance**

Today, the widespread use of social media has given this conflict a new dimension – as the boundaries between work and personal life have now become “digitally” blurred.

Researchers such as Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) found that an imbalance between work and family roles leads to dissatisfaction, anxiety, and burnout. Conversely, when employees are able to mentally detach themselves from work through their personal time, both happiness and productivity increase.

A study on boundary theory (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000) suggests that “individuals establish psychological and temporal boundaries between their work and personal lives to maintain balance in both spheres”. Social media shapes these boundaries because it is not bound to a specific time or place. Work-related messages, emails, or online group discussions intrude into personal time, creating role conflict. For example, an employee who wants to spend time with family in the evening receives constant messages or notifications from the office group. This situation interferes with their mental relaxation and impacts the process of psychological detachment. Research has found that employees with more permeable work-life boundaries are more likely to experience stress and burnout.

Derks, van Mierlo & Schmitz (2014): This study found that mobile social media use blurs the boundaries between work and personal life. This can lead to work-life imbalance and stress, especially when organizations expect employees to be responsive outside of work hours.

Wajcman et al. (2018): These researchers studied "digital connectivity" and "time stress." They showed that constant connectivity through smartphones and social media increases time pressure for employees, negatively impacting personal and family life.

Schlachter et al. (2018): This study found that "online work pressure" increases role conflict and stress for employees. However, employees with high self-regulation and clear organizational policies are better able to manage this pressure.

Ali-Hassan, Nevo & Wade (2015): Their study showed that work-related social media use can enhance employees' innovative capabilities and team collaboration. However, they also found that if used excessively or indiscriminately, it can disrupt work-life boundaries.

Despite these findings, the question of how different types of social media use (work-related versus personal, active versus passive, time-related use) affect employees' work-life balance and well-being remains relevant. Furthermore, there is limited research available on how factors such as individual self-regulation, organizational policy, and job autonomy moderate these effects.

### **III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. The purposes of this analysis are to analyse the various uses of social media and their extent.
2. To assess the impact on work-life balance and its relationship to well-being.
3. To analyse how social media consumption affects employees' lives.
4. To explore the link between work-life balance and employee well-being.
5. To investigate the positive and negative aspects of social media consumption.
6. To determine whether the influence of social media use varies across different age groups, genders, or occupational categories (e.g., IT, education, corporate).

### **IV. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

1. A substantial connection exists between social media engagement and work-life balance.
2. A significant complex relationship occurs between social media engagement and employee well-being.
3. A significant positive relationship exists between work-life balance and employee well-being through social media.
4. Social media acts as an intervening variable between work-life balance and employee well-being.

5. Statistically substantial differences are found in the effects of social media engagement based on gender, age, and occupation.

## V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

i. **Research Approach:** The research utilized a mixed method approach—Data was collected through a survey from a quantitative perspective. Interviews were conducted with some participants from a qualitative perspective to understand their personal perceptions.

ii. **Population and Sample:** Employees from the IT, education, banking, and corporate sectors.

Sample Size: 250 respondents.

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling was used.

Geographical Scope: Delhi-NCR region.

iii. **Data Collection Methods**

(a) Primary Data: A structured questionnaire was developed using a 5-point Likert scale—

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Key Dimensions:

Social Media Engagement (10 statements)

Work-Life Balance (8 statements)

Employee Well-Being (8 statements)

(b) Secondary Data:

Previous research articles, reports, and references were collected from online databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR).

iv. **Methods of Data Analysis:** Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD)

Correlation Analysis: To evaluate the strength of the relationship between variables

Regression Analysis: To predict impact

Content Analysis: To analyse qualitative responses

## VI. RESULTS

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the respondents**

| S.no. | Demographic variable | Category   | frequency | percentage |
|-------|----------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Gender               | Male       | 140       | 56         |
|       |                      | female     | 110       | 44         |
| 2     | Age Group            | 20-30      | 85        | 34         |
|       |                      | 31-40      | 105       | 42         |
|       |                      | Above 41   | 60        | 24         |
| 3     | Sector               | IT         | 80        | 32         |
|       |                      | Education  | 70        | 28         |
|       |                      | Banking    | 50        | 20         |
|       |                      | Corporate  | 50        | 20         |
| 4     | Work experience      | 0-5 years  | 95        | 38         |
|       |                      | 6-10 years | 85        | 34         |

|  |  |                    |    |    |
|--|--|--------------------|----|----|
|  |  | More than 10 years | 70 | 28 |
|--|--|--------------------|----|----|

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Social Media Engagement Statements**

| S. No. | Statements                                         | Mean        | Standard Deviation (SD) |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1      | I use social media several times a day             | 4.15        | 0.89                    |
| 2      | I get distracted by social media during work hours | 3.95        | 1.02                    |
| 3      | Social media helps me build professional networks  | 3.45        | .98                     |
| 4      | Spending time on social media affects my work      | 4.10        | .93                     |
| 5      | I use social media to reduce personal stress       | 3.75        | 1.01                    |
| 6      | <b>Overall Mean</b>                                | <b>3.88</b> | <b>.97</b>              |

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Work-Life Balance Statements**

| S. No | Statements                                             | Mean        | Standard Deviation (SD) |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1     | I maintain a balance between my work and personal life | 3.25        | 1.10                    |
| 2     | Work pressure affects my family relationships          | 3.90        | 0.95                    |
| 3     | I am able to regularly take time away from work        | 3.10        | 1.08                    |
| 4     | Social media use reduces my family time                | 3.80        | 1.00                    |
| 5     | I have enough leisure time                             | 3.00        | 0.98                    |
|       | <b>Overall Mean</b>                                    | <b>3.66</b> | <b>0.91</b>             |

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Employee Well-Being Statements**

| S. No | Statements                                | Mean        | Standard Deviation (SD) |
|-------|-------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1     | I am satisfied with my work life          | 3.65        | 0.85                    |
| 2     | I experience mental fatigue               | 3.80        | 1.00                    |
| 3     | Social media use affects my mental health | 3.95        | 0.92                    |
| 4     | I am happy with my work-life balance.     | 3.30        | 0.888                   |
| 5     | I feel motivated at work.                 | 3.60        | 0.90                    |
|       | <b>Overall Mean</b>                       | <b>3.41</b> | <b>1.02</b>             |

**Table 5: Correlation Analysis**

| <b>Variables:</b>       | <b>Social Media Engagement</b> | <b>Work-Life Balance</b> | <b>Employee Well-Being</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Social Media Engagement | 1                              | -0.46**                  | -0.38**                    |
| Work-Life Balance       |                                | 1                        | +0.52**                    |
| Employee Well-Being     |                                |                          | 1                          |

Note:  $p < 0.01$  = statistically significant correlation\*\*

**Table 6: Regression Analysis: Dependent Variable: Employee Well-Being**

| <b>Independent variables</b> | <b>Beta Coefficient (<math>\beta</math>)</b> | <b>t-Value</b> | <b>Significance Level (p-Value)</b> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Social Media Engagement      | -0.39                                        | -3.43          | 0.001                               |
| Work-Life Balance            | .48                                          | 4.11           | 0.000                               |
| Model Summary                | : $R^2 = 0.42$                               | $F = 16.58$    | $p < 0.001$                         |

**Table 7: Mediation Analysis**

| <b>Effect Relationship</b>                                        | <b>Direct Effect</b> | <b>Indirect Effect</b> | <b>Total effect</b> | <b>Total Effect Results</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Social Media Engagement → Employee Well-Being                     | -0.25                | -0.13                  | -0.38               | Partial Mediation           |
| Social Media Engagement → Work-Life Balance → Employee Well-Being |                      |                        |                     |                             |

**Table 8: Overall Summary of Findings**

| S.no. | Study Findings                                                        | Direction/Nature                     |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1     | Social media engagement and work-life balance                         | negative relationship                |
| 2     | Social media engagement and employee well-being                       | negative relationship                |
| 3     | Work-Life Balance and Employee Well-Being                             | positive relationship                |
| 4     | Work-Life Balance                                                     | acts as a partial mediating variable |
| 5     | The Influence of Social Media Use on Work Performance and Family Life | Adverse                              |

## VII. FINDINGS

This research is established on a sample of 250 employees, including professionals from the IT, education, banking, and corporate sectors. Based on the survey and statistical analysis, the following key findings were obtained:

### 1. Analysis of Demographic Variations:

Gender: Women were found to experience higher levels of stress on family life due to social media use than men.

Age: Younger employees (20–30 years old) were found to have higher engagement levels and poorer work-life balance.

Sector: The impact of social media use was most pronounced in the IT sector, as this profession relies on digital interfaces.

2. Level of Social Media Engagement: Approximately 68% of respondents use social media three or more times a day. 45% of respondents use social media for work-related purposes, while 55% use it for personal entertainment and communication. Approximately 60% of respondents reported that social media interferes with their work schedule and makes them less focused. This suggests that excessive social media use can weaken employees' work commitment.

3. Impact on Work-Life Balance: A important negative correlation ( $r = -0.46$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was observed between social media engagement and work–life balance. Employees with higher levels of social media use reported reduced time for family and personal activities. Many participants reported that "social media updates are constantly on their minds even after work," preventing mental relaxation. This clearly indicates that social media use blurs the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to a "Work-Life Spillover Effect."

4. Impact on Employee Well-Being: Regression analysis revealed that social media engagement has a significant negative impact ( $\beta = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) on employee well-being. Employees with excessive social media engagement were found to have higher levels of mental fatigue, sleep disturbance, and anxiety. In contrast, employees who used social media in a limited and controlled manner expressed greater

satisfaction with their work and life. This indicates that digital over connectivity is a key psychosocial factor affecting employee well-being.

5. The role of work-life balance: Mediation analysis conducted in this study revealed that social media use partially mediated the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being. The study revealed that the direct effect of social media engagement on well-being was -0.25, while the indirect effect, mediated through work-life balance, was -0.13. This suggests that social media also partially influences employees' well-being through work-life balance. If employees set clear limitations between work and personal life, the negative impact of social media can be significantly reduced.

### VIII. DISCUSSION

This study confirmed that social media is not only a source of information for employees, but also a means of emotional and social connection. However, this constant connection causes "digital fatigue," depleting employees' mental energy. Many respondents also stated that "work-related social media discussions continue even after office hours, "which increases the pressure to be mentally "always on."

Social media has broken the traditional boundaries between work and personal life. Employees now view work-related information during personal time and have personal conversations during work time. This creates "role conflict"—where individuals try to play two roles (employee and family member) at the same time, leading to increased stress.

In the context of employee well-being and organisational support, if organizations implement digital policies, such as— "No Social Media Hour," "Digital Detox Day," and "Boundaries for Work-from-Home"—employees can remain more balanced and energetic. Counseling, mindfulness sessions, and work-life balance training are essential to enhance employees' mental health and emotional well-being.

This study aligns with the findings of Kaur & Sandhu (2021), Li et al. (2022), and Ahmad & Amin (2023), who found that excessive social media use negatively impacts employee well-being and work productivity. However, the study also shows that if social media is used in a limited and purposeful manner, it can be a medium for professional networking, learning, and emotional support.

### IX. CONCLUSION

Social media engagement has a significant and negative impact on employees' work-life balance and overall well-being. Excessive social media use increases stress, fatigue, and family imbalances. But if it is used in a controlled manner, it can be a medium for knowledge sharing and strengthening peer connectivity.

Work-life balance plays a partial mediator role between social media use and employee well-being. This means that when employees effectively manage their time and roles, the adverse effects of social media are mitigated.

Organizations should introduce "Digital Balance Training" for employees. HR policies should clearly define digital usage limits and vacation periods. Employees should be trained in self-regulation and digital mindfulness.

## X. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Comparative studies could be conducted across different industries (e.g., healthcare, service sector, start-ups). Also, in-depth analysis of gender and cultural factors would be useful for the future. Long-term studies could help understand how the impacts of social media use change over time.

It is suggested that the organizations need to implement digital discipline and a social media policy and employees should also develop self-control and set clear boundaries between work and personal time.

The research was limited to a limited geographic area (Delhi-NCR). Only a few select sectors (IT, education, banking) were included. Future research could include different industries and cultural contexts.

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