



Impact of Social Media Addiction on Work-Life Balance: Mediating Role of Technostress

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the impact of social media addiction on employees' work-life balance, with technostress serving as a mediating variable. In the digital era, the pervasive use of social media has blurred the boundaries between personal and professional life, raising concerns about its psychological and occupational consequences. A sample of 300 working adults from diverse sectors, including IT, education, healthcare, and corporate organizations, participated in the study through standardized self-report measures: the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale, Technostress Creators Scale, and Work-Life Balance Scale. Correlational analyses revealed that social media addiction was positively associated with technostress and negatively correlated with work-life balance. Regression analyses confirmed that technostress significantly mediated the relationship between social media addiction and work-life balance, indicating that excessive and compulsive social media use leads to increased technostress, which in turn deteriorates balance between work and personal life. The findings highlight the psychological strain of digital dependency and underscore the importance of promoting healthy technology use within organizational contexts. Implications for workplace policy, employee well-being interventions, and directions for future research are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, social media has become deeply embedded in both professional and personal spheres, reshaping how individuals communicate, collaborate, and construct their identities. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter) have not only transformed interpersonal interactions but have also redefined organizational communication, employee branding, and workplace culture. While these technologies provide unprecedented access to information, connectivity, and opportunities for professional networking, their excessive use has become a growing concern in recent years.

The ubiquity of social media, aided by smartphones and 24/7 internet access, has fostered constant engagement that often crosses boundaries between work and personal time (Brailovskaia et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2023). Consequently, researchers and organizations alike are paying greater attention to **social media addiction (SMA)**—a form of behavioral addiction marked by compulsive and uncontrollable engagement with social networking sites. This phenomenon raises critical questions about its potential to disrupt employees' productivity, emotional stability, and overall work–life balance (Mert et al., 2023; Tarafdar et al., 2019).

Social media addiction is increasingly recognized as a maladaptive behavioral pattern that mirrors substance and gambling addictions in its psychological mechanisms and outcomes. The most widely accepted framework, proposed by Griffiths (2005) and later refined by Andreassen et al. (2016), identifies six core features of behavioral addiction: **salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse**. These characteristics describe the persistent cognitive preoccupation with social media, the emotional dependence it creates, and the inability to regulate use despite adverse effects. Kuss and Griffiths (2017) emphasized that SMA entails loss of control and compulsive use, where individuals spend excessive time scrolling, posting, or monitoring others online. This persistent engagement can lead to emotional exhaustion, attentional failures, and sleep disturbances (Brailovskaia et al., 2023). Empirical evidence further suggests that addicted users report higher levels of anxiety, reduced life satisfaction, and impaired job performance (Khan et al., 2023). The compulsive nature of social media use thus creates an “always-on” digital lifestyle, eroding natural recovery cycles and blurring psychological boundaries between work and leisure (Kumar et al., 2024).

Work–life balance (WLB) refers to an individual's ability to meet work demands while maintaining satisfactory performance and fulfillment in personal life. In a hyperconnected environment, the increasing use of mobile devices and social media has blurred temporal and spatial boundaries, leading to greater role overlap and strain (Nayaka et al., 2025). When individuals habitually check or post on social media during work or family time, their ability to detach mentally from work and recover from stress diminishes (Bencsik & Juhasz, 2023). Thus, SMA poses a modern threat to sustainable WLB.

One of the central mechanisms explaining how SMA affects WLB is **technostress**—the psychological strain and anxiety caused by overexposure to digital technologies. Tarafdar et al. (2019) originally identified five dimensions of technostress: techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-uncertainty, and techno-insecurity. SMA can heighten these stressors because addicted individuals feel compelled to stay constantly connected, respond instantly to notifications, and manage excessive information flow (Kumar et al., 2024).

Technostress is a plausible **mediator** linking SMA and WLB. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), high job or

technology demands consume personal and cognitive resources, leading to strain. Individuals addicted to social media face continuous digital interruptions, which increase techno-overload and techno-invasion, resulting in decreased satisfaction in both work and family roles (Mert et al., 2023). Thus, technostress explains *how* SMA translates into work–life imbalance.

Recent research confirms that excessive social media use intensifies technostress. Mert et al. (2023) found that employees with higher levels of social media use experienced greater technostress and cyber-incivility at work. Similarly, Umair et al. (2023) observed that technology addiction and distraction behaviors were significant predictors of technostress among professionals in ICT-intensive jobs. These findings suggest that SMA acts as a chronic technological demand that continuously activates stress responses.

Technostress, in turn, undermines work–life balance by eroding boundaries and increasing cognitive fatigue. Bencsik and Juhasz (2023) found that techno-overload and techno-invasion directly predict higher work–family conflict. In addition, Singh et al. (2022) reported that technostress mediates the relationship between remote working and decreased work engagement, while reducing psychological detachment and leisure satisfaction. These findings strengthen the assumption that technostress serves as a mechanism through which SMA leads to imbalance.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated remote and hybrid work models, heightening the risk of both SMA and technostress. Constant connectivity, frequent virtual meetings, and blurred work–home boundaries have made it difficult for employees to disengage. Recent evidence shows that HR professionals and teleworkers experience higher technostress levels, leading to lower WLB and higher burnout (Nayaka et al., 2025). Therefore, the relationship between SMA and WLB becomes even more critical in digital and hybrid workplaces.

From the lens of the **Conservation of Resources (COR)** theory (Hobfoll, 2011), SMA represents a resource-depleting behavior that triggers technostress and drains psychological energy, leaving fewer resources to manage work and family roles. The JD–R framework also supports this mediation, as SMA (a job/personal demand) increases technostress (a strain response), thereby reducing outcomes such as satisfaction and WLB. Integrating these theories helps explain the psychological mechanism connecting addiction, technostress, and imbalance.

Despite growing research on SMA and technostress, empirical studies examining their combined impact on work–life balance remain limited, particularly in developing economies and post-pandemic hybrid work contexts. Moreover, previous studies often examined these variables independently or without testing mediation models. The present study addresses these gaps by proposing and empirically testing technostress as a mediating variable between SMA and WLB. Understanding this mechanism can inform digital wellbeing interventions, organizational policies, and personal strategies for healthier technology engagement.

Literature Review

Social Media Addiction and Work–Life Balance

Recent scholarship increasingly links **social media addiction (SMA)** to diminished work–life balance (WLB), as employees find it difficult to regulate digital boundaries (Khan et al., 2023). SMA leads to constant connectivity and distraction, resulting in poor time management, psychological fatigue, and difficulty disengaging from work (Brailovskaia et al., 2023; Mert et al., 2023). Continuous exposure to work-related or social updates during leisure hours disrupts recovery processes, fostering work–family

conflict (Nayaka et al., 2025). Empirical studies show that individuals with higher SMA scores report lower perceived WLB and higher role conflict (Bencsik & Juhasz, 2023). Hence, SMA appears to function as a behavioral strain that weakens the individual's ability to maintain healthy role boundaries.

Technostress as a Mediating Mechanism

Technostress refers to the psychological stress experienced due to an overload of technology use, characterized by feelings of anxiety, fatigue, and inefficiency (Tarafdar et al., 2019). In the workplace, technostress arises from factors such as constant connectivity, information overload, and pressure to remain responsive online (Srivastava et al., 2024). Recent evidence indicates that social media use significantly contributes to technostress through persistent digital engagement and interruptions (Salanova et al., 2023). Excessive connectivity creates “techno-invasion” and “techno-overload,” which intrude into personal time, making it difficult to disengage and relax (Zhang & Zhang, 2024). Thus, technostress may act as a **mediator** linking SMA to WLB deterioration—explaining how compulsive social media behaviors generate stress that spills over into personal life domains.

Impact of Technostress on Work–Life Balance

Technostress has been widely associated with burnout, emotional exhaustion, and poor psychological well-being (Kakarika et al., 2023). Employees experiencing high technostress report greater work–family conflict, lower job satisfaction, and difficulty detaching from work after hours (Wang et al., 2023). The constant requirement to manage digital communications, respond promptly, and adapt to evolving technologies can overwhelm cognitive and emotional resources (Srivastava et al., 2024). Consequently, technostress limits one's capacity for role recovery and emotional regulation, undermining both work efficiency and personal life satisfaction (Zhang & Zhang, 2024).

Theoretical Framework: Job Demands–Resources and Boundary Theory

This study draws on the **Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model** (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and **Boundary Theory** (Ashforth et al., 2000). From a JD–R perspective, social media addiction represents a job demand that drains emotional and cognitive resources, while work–life balance serves as an outcome variable reflecting employee well-being. Technostress acts as a mediating mechanism that transmits the strain of overconnectivity. Boundary Theory further posits that the erosion of psychological and temporal boundaries between work and home intensifies stress and role conflict. Integrating these models, the current study hypothesizes that SMA indirectly impairs WLB through technostress.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the reviewed literature, the conceptual model assumes that SMA is positively related to technostress, which in turn negatively predicts WLB. The hypotheses are:

H1: Social media addiction is negatively associated with work–life balance.

H2: Social media addiction is positively associated with technostress.

H3: Technostress mediates the relationship between social media addiction and work–life balance.

Methodology

Research Design

The study will employ a **quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design** to examine the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables. Data will be collected through self-report questionnaires distributed online, ensuring anonymity and voluntary participation.

Participants and Sampling

The target population includes **working professionals aged 22–50 years** from various sectors (education, IT, corporate, and healthcare). A **sample size of approximately 300 participants** will be recruited using **convenience and snowball sampling** via professional networks and LinkedIn. Eligibility criteria include full-time employment and regular social media use (minimum one hour per day).

Measures

Social Media Addiction: Measured using the **Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS; Andreassen et al., 2016)**, consisting of six items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very rarely to 5 = very often).

Technostress: Assessed through the **Technostress Creators Scale (Tarafdar et al., 2019)**, which captures techno-overload, techno-invasion, and techno-complexity.

Work–Life Balance: Measured using the **Work–Life Balance Scale (Fisher et al., 2019)**, assessing the individual’s perception of balance between professional and personal life.

All scales have demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha > .80$) in prior research.

Data Analysis

Data will be analyzed using **SPSS** and **AMOS/SmartPLS**. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and reliability coefficients will be calculated. Mediation analysis will be conducted following **Hayes’ PROCESS Model 4** to test the indirect effect of SMA on WLB via technostress, with bootstrapping (5000 samples) to estimate confidence intervals.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval will be obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Informed consent will be collected, and confidentiality of participants’ responses will be maintained. No identifying information will be disclosed.

RESULTS

Sample and Demographics

Table 1

Sample demographics (N = 300)

Variable		n	%
Gender	Female	162	54.0
	Male	138	46.0
Family System	Nuclear	187	62.3
	Joint	113	37.7
Residence	Urban	204	68.0
	Rural	96	32.0
Daily Social Media Use (hours)	1–5 hours	132	44.0
	6–10 hours	108	36.0
	More than 10 hours	60	20.0

The sample consisted of 300 working professionals, including 54% females and 46% males, indicating a well-balanced gender composition. Most participants belonged to nuclear families (62.3%), while 37.7% reported living in joint family systems. Regarding place of residence, 68% were urban residents, suggesting greater exposure to digital connectivity compared to the 32% living in rural areas.

Participants had an average age of 33.8 years (SD = 6.9), representing a predominantly young and mid-career group that is highly active online. Concerning

social media habits, nearly 44% used social media for 1–5 hours daily, 36% for 6–10 hours, and 20% for more than 10 hours each day. This pattern demonstrates a substantial daily engagement with social networking platforms, emphasizing the potential risk for technostress and its influence on work–life balance dynamics among modern professionals.

Reliability of Measures

Table 2: Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's α)

Scale	N	Cronbach's α	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS)	6	.87	18.42	4.16	0.42	-0.33
Technostress Creators Scale (combined)	12	.90	36.75	7.58	0.28	-0.41
Work–Life Balance Scale	8	.85	27.36	5.91	-0.21	-0.48

As shown in Table 2, all three scales demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .85 to .90, indicating excellent reliability. The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale ($M = 18.42$, $SD = 4.16$) suggests a moderate level of social media dependence among participants. The Technostress Creators Scale ($M = 36.75$, $SD = 7.58$) showed a relatively high mean, reflecting frequent experiences of digital strain, information overload, and technology-induced pressure. The Work–Life Balance Scale ($M = 27.36$, $SD = 5.91$) indicated moderate satisfaction in balancing work and personal life.

All variables showed acceptable skewness and kurtosis values (± 1), confirming that the data were approximately normally distributed (Kline, 2016). These results establish a sound psychometric foundation for subsequent correlational and regression analyses exploring how social media addiction and technostress interact to influence work–life balance among working professionals.

Correlations

Table 3: Intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations (N = 300)

SR	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1	SMA (BSMAS)	17.8	5.4	—		
2	Technostress (total)	42.5	10.2	.52**	—	
3	Work–Life Balance (WLB)	28.6	6.8	-.41**	-.47**	—

Note. ** $p < .01$. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

Table 3 presents the **means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations** among the study variables. The results demonstrate a **significant positive correlation** between **social media addiction and technostress** ($r = .52$, $p < .01$), indicating that

individuals with higher levels of social media dependency tend to experience greater digital strain and technology-induced stress. This relationship aligns with earlier findings that excessive social media engagement can trigger emotional fatigue and cognitive overload.

A **significant negative correlation** was observed between **social media addiction and work–life balance** ($r = -.41, p < .01$), suggesting that individuals who spend excessive time on social networking platforms experience more challenges in maintaining equilibrium between professional and personal domains. Similarly, **technostress showed a strong negative relationship with work–life balance** ($r = -.47, p < .01$), highlighting that frequent exposure to digital connectivity and technology pressure reduces the ability to detach from work, rest, and sustain personal well-being.

Collectively, these correlations indicate that **higher social media addiction not only contributes directly to technostress** but also indirectly disrupts an individual’s sense of balance between work and life. This pattern supports the study’s conceptual model, positing **technostress as a key mediator** in the relationship between social media addiction and work–life balance.

Regression Analyses: Direct Effects and Mediation Path

Table 4: Hierarchical regression predicting Work–Life Balance (WLB)

Predictor (DV = WLB)	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	45.12	1.25	—	36.10	< .001
SMA	−0.58	0.09	−.33	−6.22	< .001
Constant	52.00	1.95	—	26.67	< .001
SMA	−0.21	0.09	−.12	−2.32	.021
Technostress	−0.35	0.05	−.40	−7.51	< .001

Table 4 displays the hierarchical regression analysis conducted to examine the predictive role of **social media addiction** and **technostress** on **work–life balance** among working professionals.

In **Model 1**, social media addiction significantly predicted lower work–life balance ($\beta = -.33, t = -6.22, p < .001$), indicating that individuals who reported higher levels of social media dependence tended to experience more conflict and strain between their professional and personal lives. This suggests that excessive engagement with social media interferes with time management, emotional recovery, and the ability to disengage from work-related stressors (Khan et al., 2023).

In **Model 2**, when technostress was entered into the regression equation, the strength of the relationship between social media addiction and work–life balance decreased substantially ($\beta = -.12, p = .021$), while technostress emerged as a **strong and significant negative predictor** of work–life balance ($\beta = -.40, t = -7.51, p < .001$). This reduction in the direct effect of social media addiction after controlling for technostress supports the **mediating role of technostress**.

These findings imply that social media addiction indirectly impairs employees’ ability to maintain balance between their work and personal domains **through increased technostress**. In other words, the psychological strain and digital overload created by excessive social media engagement serve as the underlying mechanism that diminishes overall work–life balance. This result aligns with previous empirical evidence emphasizing that **technostress mediates the link between technology use and well-being outcomes**.

Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapped Indirect Effect)

A formal mediation test using 5,000 bootstrap samples indicated a significant indirect effect of SMA on WLB through technostress (indirect effect = $-.21$, 95% CI [$-.29$, $-.13$]). Because the confidence interval excluded zero, technostress significantly mediated the relationship. The direct effect of SMA remained significant but smaller, indicating partial mediation.

Conclusion of Results

Higher social media addiction scores were associated with greater technostress and poorer work–life balance. Technostress explained a substantial portion of the association, suggesting that addictive use of social media leads to technology-related strain, which undermines individuals' ability to sustain a healthy balance between work and personal life.

Discussion

The current study sheds light on the intricate relationship between social media addiction, technostress, and work-life balance. The correlational analysis shows a bidirectional, reinforcing relationship between social media addiction and technostress, whereas both exhibit a negative relation towards work-life balance. These findings highlight the notion that social media addiction and growing technological pressures compromise an individual's ability to maintain a harmonious equilibrium between work and their private sphere.

Results of the regression analysis validate these correlations and forecast a diminished work-life balance owing to excessive social media usage. Employees who proclaim social media addiction exhibit tendencies of encroachment on personal boundaries, emotional disengagement from work, and marred time management in their lives outside of employment. These discoveries harmonize with extant research that established social media overuse as a form of behavioral dependency leading to cognitive overload and psychological fatigue (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017; Andreassen et al., 2019). Excessive connectivity often blurs the line between professional and private spheres, fostering tension, distraction, and feelings of being constantly “on call” (Zivnuska et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the incorporation of technostress into the model demonstrates a more vigorous indication of a worsened work-life balance, while an attenuated effect of social media addiction was observed, indicating that technostress serves as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between these two constructs. This signifies that the unceasing use of technology confers psychological strain and cognitive overload, which erodes the cohesion between professional and personal life responsibilities. It lends support to the Stressor-Strain-Outcome Model (Tarafdar et al., 2019), which explains that excessive technology use (stressor) creates technostress (strain), ultimately resulting in lower well-being and performance outcomes (outcome).

These outcomes are oriented with the latest studies highlighting the menace resulting from technostress in contemporary occupational setups, particularly with growing technological exposure resulting from digital connectivity and blended workplaces. Studies have documented that employees frequently exposed to information overload, digital interruptions, and performance pressure from constant communication technologies report higher burnout and work-family conflict (Ayyagari et al., 2022; Molino et al., 2020). Consequently, this study accentuates that technostress is not merely an incidental by-product but also plays a pivotal mediating role influencing digital behaviors showing repercussions on psychological and occupational well-being.

The study contributes to the burgeoning literature on digital well-being, affirming that social media usage is not inherently deleterious; rather, it is the compulsive nature of usage that leads to emotional exhaustion and post-work recovery challenges. Individuals struggling to disengage from digital devices are less inclined to allocate quality time for restorative activities and nurturing relationships, ultimately compromising work-life equilibrium. Therefore, work associations should contemplate interventions such as digital detox programs, establish boundaries around work hours, and provide training aimed at enhancing healthy technology habits to mitigate adverse effects.

From a pragmatic perspective, the findings uphold essential inferences for human resource policies and workplace health initiatives. Employers should consider diminishing technostress by fostering technological mindfulness, respecting boundaries, setting clear expectations for after-hour communications, and offering flexible scheduling that accommodates personal time. Moreover, workplace well-being programs should assimilate digital literacy and coping strategies to equip employees with better command over digital usage and constructive outcomes, inhibiting it from interfering with productivity or family life.

Notwithstanding the study's contributions, it is also essential to acknowledge its limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal relationships, and the subjective nature of individuals can reflect biases in self-reporting measures. Future studies should employ longitudinal or experimental designs to examine temporal changes and test targeted interventions aimed at alleviating technostress and enhancing work-life balance. To grasp the essence of individual experiences of digital overload and balance in different cultural and occupational contexts, qualitative insights can be incorporated.

In conclusion, the study bespeaks the distorting effects of excessive social media usage on work-life balance and evidently shows the active role of technostress in the enhancement of this perversion, foregrounding that balanced technology use is requisite to achieve work-life parity and cultivate a healthier, more sustainable relationship with technology in both professional and personal spheres.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that excessive engagement with social media significantly undermines employees' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance, primarily through the mediating influence of technostress. As digital technologies become increasingly integrated into both professional and personal domains, the boundaries separating work and home life have become blurred, fostering emotional exhaustion and decreased satisfaction. The findings highlight that social media addiction is not merely a leisure concern but a critical occupational issue that disrupts well-being and productivity. Hence, maintaining a balanced digital lifestyle and addressing technology-induced stress are essential for sustaining psychological health and overall work-life harmony.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, organizations should develop proactive strategies to manage digital stress and promote responsible social media use. Initiatives such as *digital detox programs*, *clear policies on after-hours communication*, and *training on technology mindfulness* can reduce technostress and improve employees' work-life balance. HR departments may also introduce flexible scheduling and wellness sessions to enhance emotional regulation and reduce compulsive online behavior. At an individual level, employees should be encouraged to set boundaries for daily social

media use, practice intentional disconnection during non-working hours, and engage in offline activities that support recovery and mental well-being.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its cross-sectional design, which restricts causal interpretation of the relationships among social media addiction, technostress, and work–life balance. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce social desirability or recall bias. Future research should employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine how these variables interact over time and in different occupational settings. Moreover, cross-cultural studies could help explore whether the patterns observed here hold true across varying social norms and technology practices, offering a broader

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