

EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL DETOX TO THE MENTAL WELL-BEING AMONG SELECTED STUDENTS OF BESTLINK COLLEGE OF THE PHILIPPINES

ABSTRACT

AUTHORS

Jullien Ann Mae Alegro
Rouela Mae Laroa
Janna Rose Olandria
Mackenzie Glowhien Jean
Pajarillaga
Raven Xyrill Tobias

RESEARCH ADVISER

Michael Bersamin, LPT

AFFILIATION

Bestlink College of the
Philippines

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The widespread reliance on digital devices and social media has raised growing concerns about its adverse effects on students' mental well-being. This study aims to evaluate the impact of a structured digital detox intervention among psychology students by measuring changes in social media usage and key mental health indicators, including stress levels, sleep quality, and emotional stability. By examining participants across various age groups, the research seeks to identify patterns of digital dependence and assess the effectiveness of the intervention in promoting psychological well-being and healthier digital habits. A quasi-experimental research design was utilized to assess the effects of a structured digital detox intervention on students' screen time and mental well-being. Pre-test and post-test evaluations were conducted to compare participants' conditions before and after the intervention. A total of 75 respondents were selected from the Psychology Department of Bestlink College of the Philippines through cluster sampling. The intervention spanned one week, during which participants were instructed to disconnect from social media platforms and instead engage in offline activities that promote mental wellness, such as reading, journaling, and physical exercise. To measure screen time, the standardized Social Media Engagement Questionnaire (SMEQ) was employed. Additionally, a researcher-made questionnaire was developed to assess mental health indicators, including stress levels, sleep quality, and emotional regulation. The research team closely monitored participant progress, documented their experiences, and encouraged compliance throughout the intervention period. At the end of the study, participants submitted their weekly screen time logs, providing meaningful data on digital usage patterns and the psychological impact of temporary disconnection. The findings underscore the positive impact of structured digital detox programs on students' mental well-being. A significant decline in social media engagement was recorded, with the mean score decreasing from 3.08 in the pre-test to 2.66 in the post-test. Participants reported marked improvements in focus, reduced anxiety, better time management, improved sleep quality, and enhanced emotional stability. Statistical analysis confirmed the effectiveness of the intervention, yielding a p-value of 0.00, which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These results indicate that temporary disconnection from digital platforms, coupled with purposeful offline activities, can significantly improve psychological health and digital self-regulation among students. In light of the study's findings, it is recommended that educational institutions incorporate structured digital detox initiatives into their mental health and wellness programs. Implementing guided workshops focused on digital mindfulness, responsible screen time management, and stress reduction can help students develop healthier digital habits. To increase motivation and participation, schools may offer incentives such as certifications or academic recognition upon successful completion of digital wellness programs. Furthermore, future research should examine the long-term effects of digital detox interventions and explore strategies to enhance participant engagement and retention. By fostering a balanced and intentional approach to technology use, institutions can play a pivotal role in cultivating sustainable digital wellness practices among students.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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