



Semarak Advanced Research in Organizational Behaviour

Journal homepage:
<https://semarakilmu.myindex.php/sarob/index>
ISSN: 3030-6264



Digital Burnout and Work-Life Balance: Examining the Impact of Technology on Millennial Employees in the Klang Valley

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 12 May 2025

Received in revised form 18 June 2025

Accepted 25 June 2025

Available online 30 June 2025

Keywords:

Technology usage; digital burnout; work-life balance

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of digital technology has reshaped modern workplaces, providing flexibility and efficiency but also contributing to digital burnout. For Millennials technology is integral to work and personal life, particularly in urban centers like the Klang Valley, Malaysia. This study investigates the relationship between technology usage, digital burnout, and work-life balance among Millennial employees in the region. Using a quantitative approach, survey data were collected from 150 respondents across industries such as technology, finance, healthcare, and education. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 was used to analyze the data and evaluate the respondents. Findings revealed that respondents reported high reliance on technology for productivity and digital comfort but also indicated that technology extended work boundaries and created pressure for constant availability. Recommendations include limiting after-hours digital communication, promoting digital literacy, and providing employee wellness initiatives to enhance both productivity and well-being. This study provides insights for organizations seeking to support Millennial employees in urban Malaysian workplaces.

1. Introduction

Digital technology has become central to the professional lives of Millennials, who are often characterized as technologically adept, career-driven, and seeking work-life integration. Among Millennials, who are often described as “digital natives,” technology is both a tool for efficiency and a source of work-related stress. In urban centers like the Klang Valley, the fast-paced work environment, high cost of living, and increasing reliance on digital tools create unique challenges for this cohort. Research by Tri *et al.*, [1] examined work engagement among millennials and Gen Z in terms of work-life balance. The study found that employee engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between work-life balance and job burnout among millennials working remotely.

While technology facilitates remote work, collaboration, and flexibility, it also blurs boundaries between work and personal life, increasing the risk of digital burnout, especially mental and

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emotional fatigue caused by excessive digital engagement. Digital burnout can negatively affect productivity, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Poor work-life balance has been associated with stress, burnout, lower job satisfaction, absenteeism, and even health issues. According to HR Hub [2] 67 percent of the workforce reports feel burnt out in 2024, up from 58 percent in 2022. The rise in employee burnout emphasizes the urgent need for enhanced mental health support and workplace wellness initiatives.

Previous studies that specifically examine Millennial employees remain scarce in the Malaysian setting. Understanding how technology impacts Millennial employees in the Klang Valley is critical for designing workplace policies that maintain work-life balance and mitigate burnout risks. This study is significant by focusing on Millennials, which are a generation that constitutes a large portion of the current workforce. Therefore, this study explores the influence of technology usage, the prevalence of digital burnout, and the work-life balance in addressing these challenges.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Technology Usage

Technology usage in organizational research typically refers to the extent, manner, and context in which employees engage with digital tools to perform work tasks [3]. Core facets include frequency/intensity (how often/how long), breadth (number of tools used), purpose (task vs. communication/collaboration), and temporal/locational spillover (after-hours or mobile use). For Millennials, usage patterns are generally high-intensity and mobile-first, reflecting digital fluency and expectations for responsiveness. According to American Psychological Association [4], 32 percent of millennials reported the highest stress level related to technology. Excessive digital engagement is strongly correlated with increased stress, anxiety, and sleep deprivation, as demonstrated by multiple studies on Malaysian Millennials [5]. As Millennials employees continue to influence the future of work, their impact on technology is unmistakable.

2.2 Digital Burnout in the Workplace

Digital burnout occurs because of spending excessive amounts of time on digital devices. For example, excessive digital tool usage, including emails, instant messaging, video calls, and collaborative platforms [6]. A study by Nazri *et al.*, [7] identified four primary technostress creators: techno-overload, techno-complexity, techno-uncertainty, and techno-insecurity. Among these, techno-uncertainty was found to have the most significant influence on employees' well-being in Malaysia. The technology-related stress at work appears to be detrimental to employee well-being [8]. Employees who constantly respond to digital notifications often experience emotional exhaustion, cognitive overload, and reduced productivity. A study by Microsoft [9] found that the average number of meetings per week had increased by over 150% leading to time spent responding to digital communications. Millennials, having adopted digital tools early in their careers, are particularly vulnerable to these effects.

2.3 Work-Life Balance among Millennials

Work-life balance refers to the ability to manage work and personal responsibilities effectively. The millennial generation considers work-life balance as motivation, excitement, and encouragement to engage in extracurricular activities that are connected to the goal to be reached aside from his current job [10]. Previous research indicates that poor balance leads to stress, reduced job

satisfaction, and burnout. In urban settings like the Klang Valley, Millennials often face high-pressure work environments, long commuting hours, and demanding workloads. Research by Bencsik *et al.*, [11] emphasized that technostress negatively affects work-life balance, organizational performance, and employee well-being. The study identified three key factors namely risk, well-being, and work performance that are most impacted by technostress. Coupled with digital connectivity, these factors exacerbate challenges in maintaining boundaries between work and personal life. Research suggests that employees with better work-life balance demonstrate higher engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment [12]. Millennials often value flexibility and autonomy in their roles but struggle with digital expectations and constant connectivity.

3. Methodology

This is a cross-sectional study that uses quantitative methods to gather data by distributing questionnaires. The population in this study referred to millennials employees who are working in various industries in the Klang Valley. A total of 150 respondents were collected through the purposive sampling method. This sampling method is utilized in this study since the samples were chosen based on criteria. The researcher distributed online questionnaires through email as the medium for data collection. The survey package may take around 10-15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: Section A (demographic profile), Section B (Technology Usage), Section C (Digital Burnout Level), and Section D (Work-life Balance Satisfaction). Only 4 questions concerned the respondents' gender, age, industry, and weekly working hours. The Technology Usage Scale adapted from [1]. Digital Burnout Level adapted from [13] and Work-life Balance Satisfaction scale from [14]. All section items consist of 5 items. The score of answers was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science version 28 (SPSS 28.0) software.

4. Findings

The descriptive analysis was utilized to calculate the frequency, percentage, and mean score to examine the impact of technology on millennial employees in the Klang Valley. Table 1 shows that 89 female respondents dominated the majority of respondents (59.3%), while 61 male respondents made up the minority (40.7%) in this research. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were 48 (32.0%) aged 26 and 30 years old. The industry, 27 (18%) of the respondents were retail, making up the majority of the group. Moreover, most of the respondents, 60 of them (40%) worked for 35-40 hours.

Table 1
Demographic profile of respondents (N = 150)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	22–25	28	18.7%
	26–30	48	32.0%
	31–35	44	29.3%
	36–40	30	20.0%
Gender	Female	89	59.3%
	Male	61	40.7%
Industry	Retail	27	18.0%
	Finance	25	16.7%
	Healthcare	25	16.7%
	Marketing	21	14.0%

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Technology	18	12.0%
	Education	14	9.3%
	Other	20	13.3%
Weekly Working Hours	< 35 hours	19	12.7%
	35–40 hours	60	40.0%
	41–45 hours	38	25.3%
	46–50 hours	14	9.3%
	> 50 hours	19	12.7%

Table 2

Descriptive analysis of section B – technology usage

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
Q6	Daily use of digital tools	4.01	0.87
Q7	Work tasks outside hours	3.75	0.91
Q8	Technology increases productivity	4.17	0.82
Q9	Pressure to respond immediately	3.94	0.95
Q10	Comfort with digital platforms	4.03	0.89

Table 3

Descriptive analysis of section C – digital burnout

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
Q11	Mental exhaustion	3.59	0.94
Q12	Emotional fatigue	3.56	0.96
Q13	Negative well-being impact	3.85	0.88
Q14	Struggle to disconnect	3.51	0.92
Q15	Stress if not checking messages	3.67	0.90

Table 4

Descriptive analysis of section D – work-life balance satisfaction

Item	Statement	Mean	SD
Q16	Satisfaction with work-life balance	3.34	0.97
Q17	Managing responsibilities	3.54	0.89
Q18	Technology makes WLB difficult	3.48	0.93
Q19	Enough time for leisure	3.38	0.95
Q20	Importance of work-life balance	4.17	0.80

Using statistical software SPSS version 28, the mean, standard deviation (SD) value of each indicator was examined. Outcomes of the study were offered as frequencies, mean, percentage, and the relevant statistical test. Table 2, 3 and 4 outlines the descriptive statistics for all indicators.

Next, the study looks at the reliability of the scale. This is an important analysis to ensure that the scale used for this research is both reliable and able to explain the phenomena. The study employs Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to track the internal consistency of the scale. Table 5 below demonstrates the results of overall reliability on each construct including the number of items kept under each construct.

Table 5	
Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)	
Section	Cronbach's Alpha
Technology Usage	0.82
Digital Burnout	0.79
Work-Life Balance	0.84
Satisfaction	

5. Discussions

The descriptive analysis provides important insights into how Millennials in the Klang Valley perceive technology usage, digital burnout, and work-life balance.

5.1 Demographic Insights

Demographic findings suggest that slightly more female participants reported higher burnout, consistent with studies indicating that women often experience greater work–family conflict due to overlapping domestic and professional roles. Additionally, respondents who worked longer hours showed more pronounced signs of burnout and lower work-life balance satisfaction, supporting the argument that workload intensity exacerbates digital fatigue [15]. Industry variations also emerged, with employees in retail sectors tending to report higher levels of burnout, possibly due to higher performance such as constant pressure to meet sales targets, demanding customer interactions, long and unpredictable shifts.

5.2 Digital Burnout

The findings show that Millennials reported a high reliance on technology ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.89$), with particularly strong agreement on technology's role in improving productivity (Q8, $M = 4.17$). Respondents also expressed comfort with digital platforms (Q10, $M = 4.03$), suggesting that technology is embedded into their daily work practices. However, moderate scores on after-hours work engagement (Q7, $M = 3.75$) and pressure to respond immediately (Q9, $M = 3.94$) indicate that technology extends the workday and blurs work–life boundaries. This aligns with [8], who argue that digital tools often foster a "24/7 availability" culture, placing employees at risk of overcommitment.

This situation reflects the broader concept of digital presenteeism, where constant connectivity creates subtle pressure to demonstrate ongoing visibility and responsiveness in the workplace. While such behaviors may enhance perceptions of dedication in the short term, they are associated with long-term risks such as work intensification, technostress, and burnout. The blurring of boundaries is also consistent with Work/Family Border Theory [16], which posits that unclear role distinctions increase conflict between work and nonwork domains, thereby diminishing well-being. In the context of Millennials, who often value flexibility and autonomy in their careers, the findings underscore a

paradox: technology provides flexibility but simultaneously reduces control over time. What initially appears as empowerment through productivity gains ultimately transforms into overcommitment and strain, leaving employees vulnerable to burnout and dissatisfaction with work–life balance.

5.3 Work-Life Balance Satisfaction

Work-life balance satisfaction was relatively low compared to technology usage and burnout ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.91$). Respondents acknowledged the importance of work-life balance (Q20, $M = 4.17$), but reported low satisfaction with actual balance (Q16, $M = 3.34$) and insufficient leisure time (Q19, $M = 3.38$). This indicates a gap between expectations and lived experiences. Technology itself was identified as a barrier (Q18, $M = 3.48$), echoing [17] that technology can simultaneously enable flexibility and create interference in personal life.

The results highlight the dual role of technology in enhancing productivity while simultaneously contributing to work-related stress and blurred boundaries between professional and personal life. Although participants emphasized the importance of work-life balance for job satisfaction, their reported levels of satisfaction were relatively low. Respondents expressed difficulty in achieving adequate leisure time and balance between personal and professional roles. These disconnects between the value placed on work-life balance and the actual experience indicate a gap that organizations need to address. Marsh *et al.*, [15] similarly reported that technology can function as both an enabler and a barrier, depending on how organizational policies regulate after-hours communication.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study highlights that digital burnout is a significant concern for Millennial employees in the Klang Valley. While technology enhances efficiency, excessive use can compromise work-life balance and well-being. The findings suggest that Millennials in the Klang Valley are productive yet overextended in digital environments. The challenge for organizations lies in harnessing the benefits of technology while mitigating its costs. Bridging the gap between the high value placed on work-life balance and its low attainment requires deliberate organizational strategies, supportive leadership, and awareness of the psychological risks associated with technology-driven Millennials value work-life balance highly, yet their lived experiences reveal a value experience gap, where the importance of balance does not translate into actual fulfilment. Moderate levels of digital burnout further suggest that continuous connectivity has become a source of psychological strain, challenging both well-being and boundary management.

Hence, the findings of this study suggest several important recommendations for organizations, employees, and policymakers. For organizations, it is crucial to establish clearer digital boundaries to prevent the spillover of work into personal life. Policies that discourage unnecessary after-hours communication and encourage employees to disconnect can help reduce the pressure of constant availability. In addition, companies should actively promote digital well-being programs, such as training sessions on technostress management, digital detox practices, and mindfulness strategies. Providing access to counselling and wellness support may also mitigate the psychological strain associated with continuous connectivity. Furthermore, adopting flexible and hybrid work practices can give employees greater autonomy in managing their roles, thereby reducing conflict between work and personal responsibilities. It is equally important for managers to lead by example, when leaders model healthy digital behaviors such as respecting offline hours and valuing outcomes over online presence.

Employees themselves also play a role in maintaining balance. Millennials need to practice self-regulation by setting personal digital boundaries, such as scheduling offline periods or silencing notifications outside work hours. Incorporating wellness routines including exercise, hobbies, and time with family can restore energy and improve resilience against burnout. Mindfulness practices may further help in managing stress and maintaining focus amidst digital demands. At a broader level, policymakers and institutions should also recognize the implications of digital work environments for mental health. Encouraging frameworks such as the right to disconnect can provide employees with legal and organizational support to maintain healthier boundaries. Educational institutions can also contribute by embedding digital well-being awareness into training programs, ensuring that future employees enter the workforce equipped with strategies to manage digital workloads effectively. Overall, these recommendations emphasize a shared responsibility across organizational leaders, employees, and policymakers to ensure that technology functions as an enabler of productivity without undermining well-being.

Acknowledgement

This research was not funded by any grant from governmental or non-governmental organizations for the research, authorship, or publication of this article. The author would also like to thank the respondents for their invaluable time and insights.

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