



The Impact of Job Well-Being on Burnout among Knowledge Economy Workers: The Mediating Role of Digital Disconnection and the Influence of Techno strain

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ARTICLE INFO

KEYWORDS

Burnout; Job Well-Being; Techno strain; Digital Disconnection; Knowledge Economy; Digital Work Environment; Employee Well-Being.

HOW TO CITE

Tolba, B. R. S. (2026). The Impact of Job Well-Being on Burnout among Knowledge Economy Workers: The Mediating Role of Digital Disconnection and the Influence of Techno strain. Emirati Journal of Applied Psychology, 2(2), 45-57.

<https://doi.org/10.54878/afez7v10>

ABSTRACT

The rapid digital transformation of modern workplaces has fundamentally changed the nature of work, creating new opportunities for flexibility, collaboration, and productivity. However, continuous connectivity, frequent digital interruptions, and increased reliance on technology have also introduced significant psychological challenges, particularly burnout among knowledge economy workers. This study examines the relationships among job well-being, techno strain, digital disconnection, and burnout within technology-intensive work environments. A quantitative descriptive-analytical research design was adopted to investigate these relationships among employees working in knowledge-based sectors, including information technology, digital marketing, e-learning, financial services, and remote administrative work. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed through statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, mediation analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The study proposes that job well-being negatively influences burnout, while techno strain positively contributes to burnout levels. Furthermore, digital disconnection is expected to play a mediating role by enabling employees to recover psychologically from work-related demands and reducing the negative effects of continuous digital connectivity. The research also explores demographic and occupational differences in burnout levels among employees. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on occupational well-being in the digital age by providing an integrated framework that combines job well-being, techno strain, digital disconnection, and burnout within a single model. The study offers practical implications for organizations seeking to improve employee well-being, reduce digital stress, and promote sustainable work practices in increasingly technology-driven environments. Ultimately, the research highlights the importance of balancing digital engagement with psychological recovery to maintain employee performance, mental health, and long-term organizational effectiveness in the knowledge economy.



Double-blind peer review by independent reviewers.

Received: 05 Jul 2026, Accepted: 14 Nov 2026, Published: 08 Dec 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In recent decades, the nature of human work has undergone a radical transformation due to the rapid acceleration of digitalization and the integration of technology into all aspects of professional life. Work is no longer an activity tied to a specific place or time; rather, it has become a continuous state of digital connectivity through smartphones, laptops, and online platforms. This reality has produced what is known as “continuous digital presence,” which, despite its efficiency and flexibility, has led to increasing psychological and occupational challenges, most notably burnout, as a direct result of constant digital pressure and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2019).

1.2 Burnout in the Digital Age

Burnout is one of the most widespread phenomena in modern workplaces, characterized by emotional and physical exhaustion, loss of motivation, and reduced sense of accomplishment. Although it is not a new concept in psychological research, the emergence of the digital and knowledge economy has reshaped it in a more complex way, especially in sectors that rely heavily on knowledge and modern technologies such as information technology, e-learning, digital marketing, and financial services (Schaufeli, 2021).

1.3 Digital Stressors and Work Disruption

The key difference in contemporary burnout lies in the nature of stressors, which are no longer limited to traditional working hours, but instead arise from a constant flow of digital interruptions such as notifications, emails, and frequent virtual meetings. These interruptions continuously distract attention and reduce the ability to focus deeply. Recent studies indicate that such interruptions can consume a significant portion of effective working time, thereby increasing stress and mental fatigue (Mark, Czerwinski, & Iqbal, 2022).

1.4 Emerging Digital Stress Concepts

In this context, traditional models of occupational stress are no longer sufficient to explain this new form of exhaustion. New concepts more aligned with the digital environment have emerged, such as technostress, which reflects stress resulting from continuous interaction with complex and rapidly changing technologies (Tarafdar, Pirkkalainen, & Salo, 2020), as well as digital disconnection, which refers to an individual’s ability to establish clear boundaries between work and personal life (Derks & Bakker, 2020).

1.5 Research Gap and Problem Statement

Despite the importance of these concepts, previous studies have mostly addressed them separately rather than integrating them into a comprehensive analytical framework that explains their interaction within the knowledge economy, particularly in the Arab context, which still lacks integrated research models in this area. This represents the research gap that this study aims to address.

Accordingly, the main research question is: To what extent does job well-being reduce burnout among knowledge economy workers, and what role do techno strain and digital disconnection play in this relationship?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to measure levels of burnout and job well-being, analyse relationships between variables, test the mediating roles of techno strain and digital disconnection, and explore demographic and occupational differences in burnout levels.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Thus, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of burnout in the digital age and provides a scientific framework that can be used to improve work environments and enhance quality of working life amid rapid digital transformation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 Burnout

Burnout is considered one of the most significant psychological and occupational challenges in modern work environments. It refers to a state of emotional exhaustion, mental fatigue, reduced professional efficiency, and loss of motivation resulting from prolonged exposure to work-related stress (Schaufeli, 2021). Traditionally, burnout was associated with physically demanding occupations; however, digital transformation has expanded its presence into knowledge-based sectors where cognitive overload and continuous connectivity dominate daily work routines.

Researchers classify burnout into three primary dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In the digital age, these dimensions are intensified by permanent online availability, multitasking requirements, and excessive digital communication channels.

2.1.2 Job Well-Being

Job well-being refers to the employee's overall sense of satisfaction, psychological stability, engagement, and meaning at work. It reflects the extent to which the work environment supports employees' emotional, social, and professional needs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). High levels of job well-being are associated with improved productivity, creativity, organizational commitment, and lower burnout rates.

Modern organizations increasingly recognize that employee well-being is not limited to financial compensation, but also includes work-life balance, psychological safety, flexible work systems, and supportive leadership.

2.1.3 Technostrain

Technostrain is a modern form of occupational stress resulting from excessive interaction with digital technologies and information systems. It emerges when employees struggle to adapt to rapidly changing technologies, continuous software updates, information overload, and constant digital interruptions (Tarafdar, Pirkkalainen, & Salo, 2020).

The rapid growth of remote work and digital collaboration tools has intensified technostrain, particularly among knowledge workers who rely heavily on digital platforms for communication and task management.

2.1.4 Digital Disconnection

Digital disconnection refers to the ability of individuals to psychologically and physically disconnect from work-related digital devices outside official working hours (Derks & Bakker, 2020). It is considered a critical factor in psychological recovery and stress reduction.

The absence of clear boundaries between work and personal life contributes significantly to burnout and emotional exhaustion. Therefore, organizations have recently started adopting policies supporting employees' "right to disconnect" to improve mental health and maintain sustainable productivity.

2.1.5 Knowledge Economy

The knowledge economy is an economic system primarily based on information, innovation, creativity, and intellectual capital rather than traditional industrial resources. In this economy, digital skills, communication technologies, and knowledge production represent the core drivers of productivity and competitiveness (Powell & Snellman, 2004).

Although the knowledge economy offers flexibility and innovation opportunities, it also creates new

psychological pressures due to continuous connectivity, high performance expectations, and rapid technological changes.

2.2 Previous Studies

2.2.1 Studies on Burnout

Several studies have examined burnout in digital work environments. Schaufeli (2021) found that digital work overload and continuous connectivity significantly increase emotional exhaustion among knowledge workers. Similarly, Mark et al. (2022) demonstrated that repeated digital interruptions negatively affect concentration, productivity, and psychological well-being.

2.2.2 Studies on Job Well-Being

Research by Bakker and Demerouti (2017) emphasized that supportive organizational environments and work-life balance contribute significantly to enhancing job well-being and reducing occupational stress. Employees with higher well-being levels tend to demonstrate greater resilience against burnout symptoms.

2.2.3 Studies on Technostrain

Tarafdar et al. (2020) explored the "dark side" of digitalization and concluded that excessive dependence on digital systems increases employee anxiety, fatigue, and technological stress, especially in rapidly changing work environments.

2.2.4 Studies on Digital Disconnection

Derks and Bakker (2020) highlighted the importance of digital disconnection in improving mental recovery after work. Their findings indicated that employees who maintain boundaries between work and personal life experience lower stress and higher psychological stability.

2.2.5 Integrated Studies

Although previous studies addressed burnout, technostrain, and digital disconnection separately, limited research has integrated these variables into one analytical framework, particularly within Arab knowledge economy sectors. This gap justifies the need for the present study.

2.3 Research Gap

Despite the growing academic interest in burnout and digital stress, existing studies still suffer from several limitations. First, most studies focused on Western work environments, while Arab knowledge economy sectors remain underexplored. Second, previous research often examined technostrain and digital disconnection independently without analysing their combined impact

on burnout. Third, few studies investigated the mediating role of job well-being within digitally stressful environments.

Accordingly, this study seeks to fill this gap by developing an integrated analytical model that examines the relationships among job well-being, burnout, technostress, and digital disconnection in knowledge economy workplaces.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study assumes that job well-being negatively affects burnout, while technostress positively influences burnout levels. Additionally, digital disconnection is expected to mediate the relationship between job well-being and burnout by helping employees recover psychologically from work-related stress.

2.5 Research Hypotheses

The study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a negative relationship between job well-being and burnout.

H2: Technostress positively affects burnout levels.

H3: Digital disconnection negatively affects burnout.

H4: Digital disconnection mediates the relationship between job well-being and burnout.

H5: There are statistically significant differences in burnout levels according to demographic and occupational variables.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive-analytical research design to examine the relationships among job well-being, technostress, digital disconnection, and burnout among knowledge economy workers. The quantitative approach is considered appropriate because it allows for statistical testing of relationships between variables and provides measurable empirical evidence regarding burnout in digital work environments (Creswell, 2014).

The descriptive approach is used to identify the levels of burnout and job well-being among employees, while the analytical approach is employed to test the proposed hypotheses and examine the mediating role of digital disconnection.

Figure 3.1 Research Design Process

Identification of Research Problem

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Review of Literature

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Development of Conceptual Framework

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Formulation of Research Hypotheses

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Questionnaire Design

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Data Collection

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Statistical Analysis (SPSS / AMOS)

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Results and Discussion

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Conclusions and Recommendations



3.2 Population and Sample

The target population of this study consists of employees working in knowledge economy sectors that heavily depend on digital technologies and online communication systems. These sectors include Information Technology (IT), digital marketing, e-learning, financial services, and remote administrative work.

A purposive sampling technique will be used to select participants who regularly engage with digital technologies in their daily professional activities. According to Hair et al. (2019), a sample size ranging between 250 and 400 respondents is considered appropriate for multivariate statistical analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Table 3. 1 Target Population Sectors

Sector	Nature of Digital Work
Information Technology	Software systems and digital platforms
Digital Marketing	Online campaigns and analytics
E-learning	Virtual teaching and learning systems
Financial Services	Digital financial transactions
Remote Administrative Work	Online communication and coordination

3.3 Data Collection Method

Primary data will be collected using a structured online questionnaire distributed electronically through Google Forms, email invitations, and professional networking platforms. Online questionnaires are considered effective tools for collecting data from digitally connected employees because they provide flexibility and accessibility (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Participation in the study will be voluntary, and respondents will be informed that all collected data will

remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

3.4 Measurement Instruments

The study employs previously validated measurement scales adapted from earlier research studies to ensure reliability and validity.

A five-point Likert scale will be used for all questionnaire items:

Scale	Interpretation
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

3.4.1 Burnout Scale

Burnout will be measured using adapted items from the Maslach Burnout framework (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Sample Items:

- I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work.
- I feel mentally drained after digital work tasks.
- I feel less motivated toward my job.

3.4.2 Job Well-Being Scale

Job well-being will be measured using items adapted from Bakker and Demerouti (2017).

Sample Items:

- I feel psychologically comfortable in my workplace.
- My work environment supports my well-being.
- I feel satisfied with my professional life

3.4.3 Techno strain Scale

Techno strain will be assessed using adapted items from Tarafdar et al. (2020).

Sample Items:

- Continuous notifications increase my stress levels.
- I feel overwhelmed by digital communication systems.
- Frequent technological changes create work pressure.

3.4.4 Digital Disconnection Scale

Digital disconnection will be measured using items adapted from Derks and Bakker (2020).

Sample Items:

- I can disconnect from work-related technologies after work hours.
- I avoid checking work messages during personal time.
- I maintain boundaries between work and private life.

Figure 3. 2 Variables of the Study

Independent Variable:

Job Well-Being

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Mediating Variable:

Digital Disconnection

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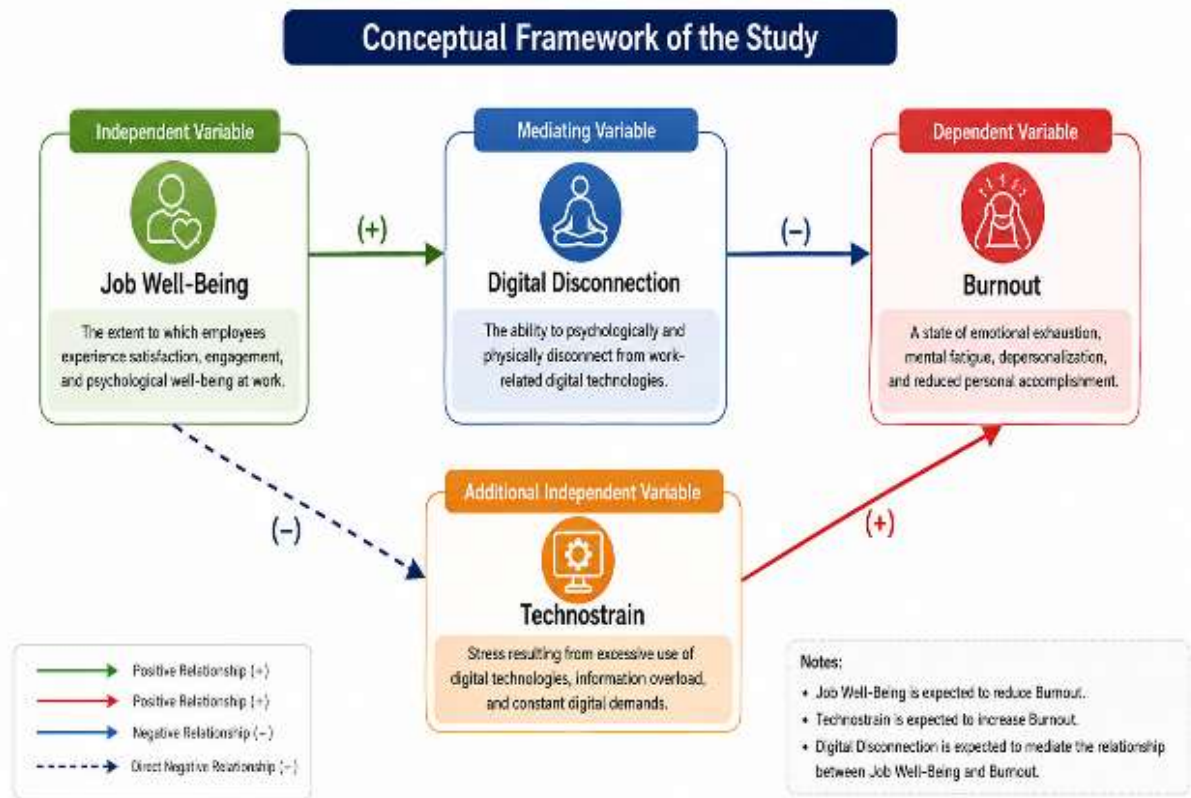
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Dependent Variable:

Burnout

Additional Independent Variable:

Techno strain



3.5 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the quality of the research instrument, both validity and reliability tests will be conducted.

Content validity will be evaluated through expert review by academic specialists in organizational psychology and digital work environments.

Construct validity will be tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Reliability will be assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. 2 Reliability Criteria

Cronbach's Alpha Value	Reliability Level
Above 0.90	Excellent
0.80 – 0.89	Good
0.70 – 0.79	Acceptable
Below 0.70	Weak

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis will be conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS.

The following statistical methods will be used:

- Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations)
- Pearson correlation analysis
- Multiple regression analysis
- Mediation analysis
- Independent sample t-test

- One-way ANOVA
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

These techniques are appropriate for testing the proposed hypotheses and analysing relationships among variables (Field, 2018).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study follows ethical research standards to protect participants' rights and privacy. Respondents will participate voluntarily, and informed consent will be obtained before data collection. In addition, anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed, and collected

information will be used exclusively for academic research purposes (Creswell, 2014).

Table 3.3 Summary of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Description
H ₁	Job well-being negatively affects burnout
H ₂	Techno strain positively affects burnout
H ₃	Digital disconnection negatively affects burnout
H ₄	Digital disconnection mediates the relationship between job well-being and burnout
H ₅	Burnout differs according to demographic and occupational variables

4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the collected data and discusses the findings in relation to the study objectives and hypotheses. The analysis aims to examine the relationships among job well-being, techno strain, digital disconnection, and burnout among knowledge economy workers. The results are interpreted in light of existing theoretical and empirical literature to

determine whether the proposed hypotheses are supported.

4.2 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

This section presents the demographic and occupational characteristics of the participants, including gender, age, educational level, years of experience, and employment sector. Descriptive statistics are used to provide a comprehensive overview of the sample.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	—	—
Gender	Female	—	—
Age	Less than 25 years	—	—
Age	25–34 years	—	—
Age	35–44 years	—	—
Age	45 years and above	—	—
Experience	Less than 5 years	—	—
Experience	5–10 years	—	—
Experience	More than 10 years	—	—

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, are calculated to assess the levels of job well-being, techno strain, digital disconnection, and burnout

among participants. According to Field (2018), descriptive analysis provides an initial understanding of the distribution and central tendencies of the study variables.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Job Well-Being	—	—	—
Techno strain	—	—	—
Digital Disconnection	—	—	—

Burnout	—	—	—
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4.4 Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the measurement scales is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A coefficient value of

0.70 or higher indicates acceptable internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4. 3 Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Well-Being	—	—
Techno strain	—	—
Digital Disconnection	—	—
Burnout	—	—

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis is conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables. Correlation

coefficients indicate both the direction and strength of relationships between variables (Field, 2018).

Table 4. 4 Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Job Well-Being	1			
2. Techno strain		1		
3. Digital Disconnection			1	
4. Burnout				1

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

Multiple regression analysis is used to test the direct effects proposed in the research hypotheses.

H₁: Job Well-Being and Burnout

The first hypothesis examines whether job well-being significantly reduces burnout levels. Previous studies have reported a negative association between employee well-being and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

H₂: Techno strain and Burnout

The second hypothesis investigates the effect of techno strain on burnout. Research suggests that excessive exposure to digital stressors contributes to emotional exhaustion and occupational fatigue (Tarafdar et al., 2020).

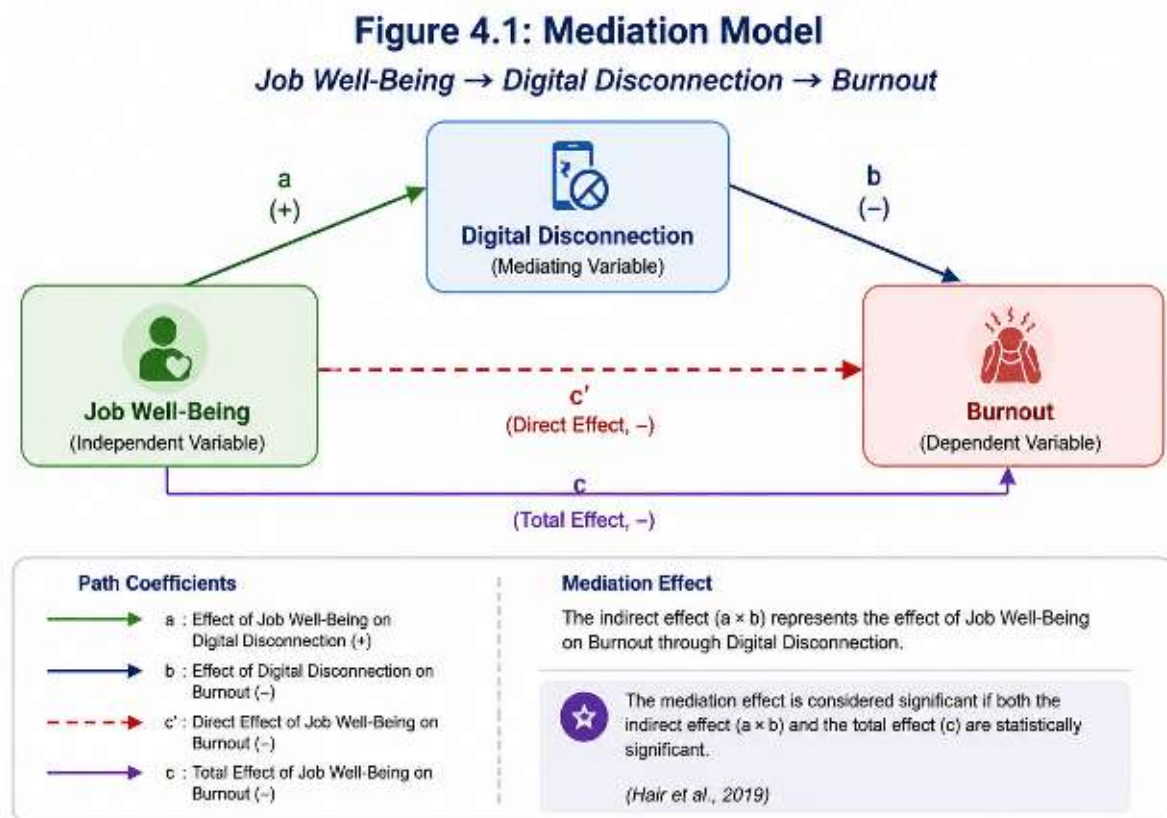
H₃: Digital Disconnection and Burnout

The third hypothesis examines whether digital disconnection contributes to lower burnout levels. Employees who can disconnect from work-related technologies tend to experience better psychological recovery and reduced stress (Derks & Bakker, 2020).

4.7 Mediation Analysis

To test H₄, mediation analysis is performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The analysis evaluates whether digital disconnection mediates the relationship between job well-being and burnout.

Figure 4. 1 Mediation Model



The mediation effect is considered significant if both the indirect and total effects reach statistical significance (Hair et al., 2019).

4.8 Analysis of Demographic Differences

To test H₅, Independent Sample t-tests and One-Way ANOVA are conducted to determine whether burnout levels differ according to demographic and occupational characteristics such as gender, age, experience, and sector of employment.

4.9 Discussion of Findings

The findings are discussed in relation to the theoretical framework and previous studies. Particular attention is given to the role of digital disconnection as a protective mechanism against burnout and the influence of techno strain within knowledge economy workplaces.

The discussion also highlights practical implications for organizations seeking to improve employee well-being and reduce digital stress in increasingly technology-driven work environments.

5: Conclusion, Recommendations, Limitations, and Future Research

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions derived from the study findings and discusses their implications for knowledge economy workplaces. It also provides

practical recommendations for organizations and employees, identifies the limitations of the study, and proposes directions for future research.

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among job well-being, techno strain, digital disconnection, and burnout within knowledge economy workplaces. The study was developed in response to the growing challenges associated with digital transformation, continuous connectivity, and technology-intensive work environments.

The findings support the argument that burnout is no longer solely the result of traditional occupational stressors but is increasingly influenced by digital work conditions and technology-related pressures. This conclusion is consistent with the work of Schaufeli (2021), who emphasized the growing impact of digital work demands on employee well-being.

The study further highlights the importance of job well-being as a protective factor against burnout. Employees who experience higher levels of satisfaction, engagement, and psychological support are more likely to maintain positive mental health outcomes and lower levels of emotional exhaustion, supporting the findings of Bakker and Demerouti (2017).

In addition, the study confirms the negative consequences of techno strain, which emerges from

excessive exposure to digital technologies, information overload, and continuous connectivity. These findings align with Tarafdar et al. (2020), who identified techno strain as one of the major psychological challenges of the digital workplace.

Furthermore, digital disconnection was found to be a crucial mechanism for psychological recovery and stress reduction. Employees who establish clear boundaries between work and personal life are more capable of recovering from work demands and maintaining long-term well-being, consistent with the findings of Derks and Bakker (2020).

Finally, this study contributes to the literature by integrating job well-being, techno strain, digital disconnection, and burnout within a single analytical framework, thereby extending existing research on occupational well-being in the knowledge economy.

5.3 Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Organizations

Develop organizational policies that support employee well-being and psychological safety.

Establish clear digital communication guidelines outside official working hours.

Introduce digital wellness programs aimed at reducing techno strain and improving work-life balance.

Limit unnecessary virtual meetings and reduce excessive digital notifications.

Provide regular training on digital stress management and technology adaptation.

For Employees

Practice structured digital disconnection during non-working hours.

Develop healthy technology-use habits to prevent information overload.

Engage in activities that promote psychological recovery and emotional well-being.

Maintain clear boundaries between professional and personal life.

Table 5.1 Summary of Recommendations

Stakeholder	Recommendation	Expected Outcome
Organizations	Digital well-being policies	Reduced burnout
Organizations	Flexible work arrangements	Improved job well-being
Organizations	Techno strain management training	Lower technology stress
Employees	Digital disconnection practices	Better recovery
Employees	Work-life boundary management	Improved mental health

5.4 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the existing literature in several ways.

First, it develops an integrated framework that combines job well-being, techno strain, digital disconnection, and burnout within a single model.

Second, it extends burnout research into the context of knowledge economy workplaces, where digital technologies play a central role in daily work activities.

Third, it provides empirical support for the mediating role of digital disconnection, a concept that has received increasing attention in contemporary occupational psychology research (Derks & Bakker, 2020).

5.5 Study Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations.

The study focuses primarily on knowledge economy sectors and therefore may not be fully generalizable to traditional industries.

Data collection relies on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may introduce response bias.

The cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to establish causal relationships among variables.

Cultural and organizational differences across workplaces may influence the observed relationships.

5.6 Future Research Directions

Future studies may consider the following research directions:

Conduct longitudinal studies to examine changes in burnout over time.

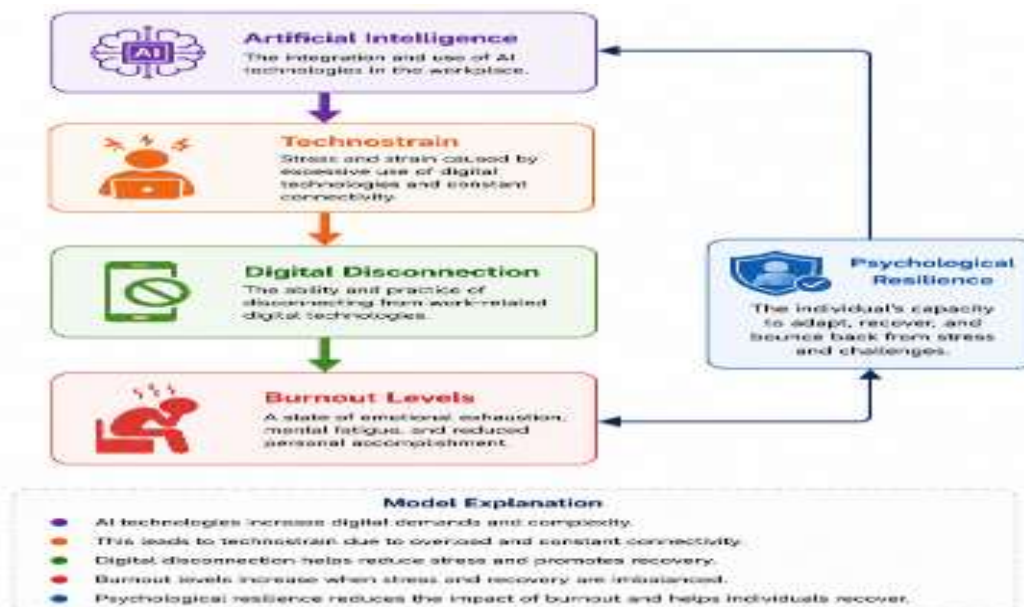
Investigate additional mediating and moderating variables such as organizational support, leadership style, and psychological resilience.

Compare burnout patterns across different countries and cultural contexts.

Examine the effectiveness of digital well-being interventions in reducing techno strain.

Explore the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence on employee well-being and burnout.

Figure 5.1 Proposed Future Research Framework



Artificial Intelligence

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Techno strain

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Digital Disconnection

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Burnout Levels

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Psychological

Resilience

5.7 Final Statement

In conclusion, the digital transformation of work has created unprecedented opportunities for flexibility, productivity, and innovation. However, it has also generated new forms of occupational stress that require careful management. By enhancing job well-being, reducing techno strain, and promoting digital disconnection, organizations can create healthier and

more sustainable work environments capable of supporting employee performance and psychological well-being in the evolving knowledge economy (Schaufeli, 2021; Tarafdar et al., 2020; Derks & Bakker, 2020).

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