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**A STUDY ON IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA DETOXIFICATION ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN MUMBAI****<sup>1</sup>Farooqi Samira Iqbal, <sup>2</sup>Satyendra Pal and <sup>3</sup>Shaikh Ahtesham**<sup>1</sup>Navneet College of Arts, Science and Commerce, University of Mumbai<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Navneet College of Arts, Science and Commerce, University of Mumbai<sup>3</sup>HOD B.sc.IT, Akbar Peerbhoy College of Commerce and Economics**ABSTRACT**

*We live in an era where Internet has become an integral part of our lives. The use of Internet without social media may be considered implausible. As the proverb says 'Excess of everything is bad', same applies to use of social media. Life is about balance, but disconnecting totally from it isn't a feasible solution as we are living in a digital age. Hence, there is a balance needed between the use of social media and its abstinence. Social Media detoxification is a process that helps achieve this goal. In today's fast paced world work-life balance has turned into an ongoing test for all. Although work-life balance has been talked about for many years and estimated with various aspects, its high time to understand it with respect to current culture. This research is carried out to find whether there is an impact of social media detoxification on an individual's professional and personal life who reside in Mumbai. The point is to investigate whether planned disruption of constant utilization of social media can benefit a working individual and how 'detoxing' impacts the concept of time and social bonds.*

*Keywords: Social Media Detox, social media addiction, family relations, professional productivity, work-life balance.*

**1. INTRODUCTION:****1.1 Emergence of social media**

Internet revolution has taken the world by storm. The way we communicate has transformed drastically. Hand written letters changed to instant messaging; landlines have been replaced by smartphones. The initial idea for the emergence of social media was to connect people especially those who were staying at a distance. It is one of the forms of internet communication.

**1.2 Need for social media and benefits of it:**

Social media refers to "the websites and online tools that facilitate interactions between users by providing them opportunities to share information, opinions, and interest" (Swar & Hameed, 2017)

Social networking in social media is done by allowing its users to create and share content or to participate in the same. Entertainment, communication, and searching for information are causes of using of social media. Right from Playing e-games, texting, sharing pictures, videos to writing comments, liking posts and interactive communication using emoticons all fall under use of social media.

Through social media we can express our ideas, feelings, opinions, experiences with one another. Due to its easy use, social media is also widely adopted for e-commerce activities such as selling of products, shopping, online gaming and dating. Online learning for distance education is one of the benefits of it as it is a faster, easier and convenient way of interacting with any person, any time from any part of the world.

Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn are some of the examples of social media applications. Each of these applications are built for various purposes. For instance, WhatsApp is for instant messaging while LinkedIn is an employment oriented online service. These applications help individuals to freely express anything and also carry out social interactions without being present physically at the same place. It plays a huge role in long-distance relationships where couples or family members can have a video conversation at any time of the day. Social media keeps a person updated with the latest trends.

**1.3 Increase in social media platforms and its addiction:**

The usage of social media has grown considerably in these years. With the advent of new applications, screen time use has taken a surge. As there are two sides of a coin, the same goes for social media. Usage of social media results in both productive and unproductive behaviour (Kumar & Priyadarshini, 2018)

Time is an asset which is precious and should be utilized in an efficient manner. A balanced life is essential in which there is enough time for dear ones. Having a conversation with family members, fun activities, planning vacations all require a person not only to be physically present but also mentally and emotionally. Similarly valuable time during office time can be utilized for professional learning rather than scrolling up and down scrutinizing each and every push notification thinking that it might be an important one

**1.4 Social Media Detoxification:**

The ubiquitous nature of social media gives rise to new challenges for its users, not only regarding utilizing the new media effectively, but also concerning organization of daily life. Individuals may spend the required family time doing office related tasks through mobiles such as discussing with colleagues about schedule of the following day. Similarly, they may also get distracted during their work time by the use of social media such as pop-up messages of friends who tagged them in a post or picture. That being the case, social media may be a boon or bane for working professionals. Hence, they should try to track down measures and foster methods that upgrades the positive effects and decrease the adverse consequences by organizing their regular routines. Here is when Social Media Detox comes into picture.

Detoxification or Detox is generally defined as the process of removing toxic substances. Detox is a generalized term and is not restricted to a physical body only as misunderstood by some people. Digital detox or tech-detox is a concept in the field of behavioural science. It is a relatively new concept, which started taking shape in 2011. The concept got included in the Oxford dictionary in 2013: A period of time during which a person refrains from using electronic devices such as smartphones or computers, regarded as an opportunity to reduce stress or focus on social interaction in the physical world. (Oxford Dictionary, 2013) Social Media Detoxification falls under the umbrella of Digital Detox. It means intentional efforts to lessen or halt social media use to improve welfare.

The notion of social media detox is indefinite; sometimes it is used to define a certain amount of time for social media abstention and sometimes a more deliberate process of limiting and reorganizing. For example, there can be a fixed time daily where all gadgets are turned off, not taking part in any official work such as email beyond working hours or it can be to take oneself off to a long-term holiday. One of the strategies is to reconnect with nature rather than living in artificial environments like a walk in the park or go hiking in the forest. The media perspective is likewise differing; while social media detox definitely involves abstaining from using social media for example, checking Facebook and online news sources, playing internet games, whereas a digital detox might suggest shunning different media like TV, as well including business related tasks and projects. Hence, what precisely to do and the amount to do relies upon an individual's dependence on social media with respect to work constraint. For example, if a person is an online trainer, he has to use social media for inviting and adding students for his course. Quitting social media completely can affect his work as it is the main medium of communication to stay connected with people.

**1.5 Current Global Scenario:**

Certain measures have been adopted all around the world as the negative effects of social media addiction have come into picture. One of the steps taken by the tourism department is coming up with digital detox destinations. This concept is based on a tech-free wellness retreat where vacationers give up their gadgets in exchange for a truly offline experience. Camping is one of those concepts where campers can get completely immersed in the nature while taking a break from using tech gadgets. Other successful attempts of social media detox include awareness by enormous non-governmental organizations to follow digital diet chat sheet that helps make a pavement for adopting healthy social media habits. Academic institutes also conduct programs to keep their students cognizant

**1.6 Current Scenario in India:**

Being a developing country, India still consists of several rural areas which are devoid of digital devices and internet connection. People residing in urban areas use social media on a larger scale comparatively. But internet users in India increased between 2020 and 2022 as the lockdown pushed people into internet adoption. Thus, as telecommuting or online education has become a norm, there is immense headroom for growth of social media usage over the next few years. With data packs getting cheaper and internet becoming more accessible, Smartphones have increasingly become the primary screen for Indian customers.

There is a paucity of information related to social media addiction and the need of its detoxification in India as the technology usage has just taken a surge. The problems related to it would eventually reveal in the following years. While the world is adopting digital detox holidays, India is still convincing tourists with the "free internet" facilities. Fortunately, there are many destinations which are popular among tourists - obviously not by design, but by default.

Hence, the awareness of social media detoxification in India is still in infancy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Table 1: Summary of Literature review

Author and year	Area of study	Gap
Pathak (K, 2016)	Digital Detox in India	Lack of Statistical analysis
(Lepik & Mengel, 2019)	Students on a social media 'Detox': Disrupting the Everyday Practices of Social Media Use	The Samples of each and every participant isn't presented in the paper
(El-Khoury, Haider, R, Bou Ali, & Majari, 2021)(2021)	Characteristics of social media 'detoxification' in university students	use of a non-standardized measure to explore social media detoxification.
(Kumar & Priyadarshini, 2018)	Study to measure the impact of social media usage on work-life balance	Based on secondary data analysis
(Mengel & Siibak, 2019)	Compelled to be an outsider: How students on a social media detox self-construct their generation.	analysis was carried out on limited material, and in a specific cultural context,
(Varma, 2019)	Digital Detox: The art of switching off	Absence of details regarding data collection and analysis.
(Syvertsen & Enli, 2020)	Digital detox: Media resistance and the promise of authenticity.	Data collection, sampling and visual analysis are not clearly defined
(D, et al., 2021)	Effects of Social Media Use on Psychological Well-Being: A Mediated Model	Based on convenience sampling and research restricted to Mexico
(Jong, Chen, Ruangkanjanase, & Chang, 2021)	The Impact of Social Media Usage on Work Efficiency: The Perspectives of Media Synchronicity and Gratifications	Did not explain the process between independent variables and outcome variables.
(Han, Xu, Ge, & Qin, 2020)	The Impact of Social Media Use on Job Burnout: The Role of Social Comparison	Specifically focused on job burnout
(Sitepu & Harahap, 2019)	Social Media Usage and Digital Detoxification on Teenagers in Medan	Study conducted for teenagers in Medan
(Basu, 2019)	Impact of digital detox on individual performance of the employees.	Highlights Work life only
(Przybylski, Nguyen, Law, & Weinstein)	Does Taking a Short Break from social media Have a Positive Effect on Well-being? Evidence from Three Preregistered Field Experiments	The short-term effects observed in our studies might not generalize to longer period of social media abstinence.
(Brailovskaia, Frahsek, & Margraf, 2022)	Work Overload and Addictive Social Media Use: A Relationship with Depression Symptoms and Life Satisfaction	Study focuses only on making employees aware of negative effects of excessive social media usage
(Mujeri, 2021)	Social Media Activeness and Work-Life Balance in the Bangladesh Context: A Descriptive Study	Secondary data is used for analysis.



(Mirbabaie, Marx, Braun, & Stieglitz, 2020)	Digital Detox – Mitigating Digital Overuse in Times of Remote Work and Social Isolation	Emphasizes mainly on impact of digital overuse when working remotely in social isolation.
(Taboroši, et al., 2021)	Impact of Using Social Media Networks on Individual Work-Related Outcomes	Explains only the impact of social media usage on working individual’s life
(Maharani, 2021)	The influence of excessive use of social media	Focuses on how excessive use of social media affects adolescents.

According to Pathak (K, 2016) Digital detoxing is no longer an idea but a reality as people and organizations have begun adopting it in order to achieve a balance in the digital age.

(Lepik & Mengel, 2019) mentioned that the absence from social media had very different impacts on sustaining various social relationships: some of the research participants happily sought new possibilities to communicate to their companions, while some were struggling to find any other options.

(Kumar & Priyadarshini, 2018) stated that social media usage in professional life has more impact on work-life balance which is caused due to pre-occupation (unproductive behaviour) with social media in workplace when compared to other productive variables like task-oriented social media behaviour or relationship building social media behaviour.

According to (Mengel & Siibak, 2019) many of the participants were awash with generational guilt when they reflected upon how central a role social media played in their media diets and how dependent they had therefore become on all its communicative affordances.

(Varma, 2019) suggested that digital detox gives an opportunity to get back in touch with our real world and taking a break from constantly staying active and available to the technologically driven virtual world.

Eventually digital detox reflects the cultural tendency to idealize and cherish ‘authentic life’. (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020)

As per study of (D, et al., 2021) the social and psychological impacts of social media use among university students is becoming more complex as there is continuing advancement in technology, offering a range of affordable interaction.

(Sitepu & Harahap, 2019) touched upon the fact that most of respondents realize that their attention easily distracted by notifications from social media and hence they are willing to reduce their social media use. For example, to broaden their no phone zone at home and set one day in the weekends as a no phone day.

After examining the participants (Basu, 2019) came to the conclusion that digital detox has helped employees to perform in a better way than their previous state.

As mentioned by (Brailovskaia, Frahsek, & Margraf, 2022) It was found that measures such as temporary “social media detox” and enhanced physical activity has been previously shown to reduce addictive social media usage and to improve mental health.

(Mujeri, 2021) concluded that organizations and managers must re-assess their policies regarding social media use so the positive influences are re-enforced and the negative influences are lessened thereby effecting an optimal level of work-life balance in the lives of their employees.

According to (Mirbabaie, Marx, Braun, & Stieglitz, 2020) enterprises might profit from the deeper understanding of digital detox especially when employees work from home virtually.

According to (Maharani, 2021) To diminish the impact of overuse of social media, users need to increase their optimism with gratitude or do other constructive things to reduce the use of social media in everyday life. That will provide a balance in the lifestyle of adolescents so that they are not prone to depression due to overuse of social media.

Contradictorily, (Przybylski, Nguyen, Law, & Weinstein) did not find any evidence that abstaining from social media for one day had significant positive impacts on psychological well-being. Refraining from social media for a single day did not have a measurable impact on positive affect, negative affect, self-esteem, or participants’ satisfaction according to the analyses.

On the other hand, (Jong, Chen, Ruangkanjanase, & Chang, 2021) suggests that practitioner’s work efficiency can be improved when using social media as a workplace tool

As per the study of (El-Khoury, Haider, R, Bou Ali, & Majari, 2021) It is unclear whether perceived short-term benefits of social media detox persisted beyond the immediate aftermath.

As per previous studies it is evident that social media detoxification has various benefits; even though few of them stated that performing it for a short duration doesn’t have notable positive impact on psychological well-being.

**3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Every aspect of our daily lives is profoundly impacted by social media. It makes living more convenient, but it also causes us a lot of difficulty.

For example, social media provides with abundant of professional information and network connections, but it also consumes huge amount of user’s time and energy, which may interfere with life order and disrupt psychological balance. Smartphones are mainly the reason of distracting users from physical social interaction. In fact, some authors have suggested that social media has altered the forms of group interaction and collective behaviour around the world. Therefore, a solution should be in place to solve the problem of social media addiction.

**4. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY**

Going through a social media detox is the act of desisting use of electronic gadgets for a specific timeframe, determined to keep away from the interruptions that come from continuously being associated. We can say that the main objective of social media detox is actively engaging more in conversations and interactions in the “physical” world and less in the “digital” world and most importantly to spend some quality time with the person himself so that he can rejoice again. (Basu, 2019).

Various similar concepts are used these days such as digital fasting. Hence, a digital detox can be a metaphorical ‘cure’ for the damage done by cumulative waves of media and online services. (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020)

In this paper, we will attempt to see whether the process of social media detoxification affects a working individual in any way.

**5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

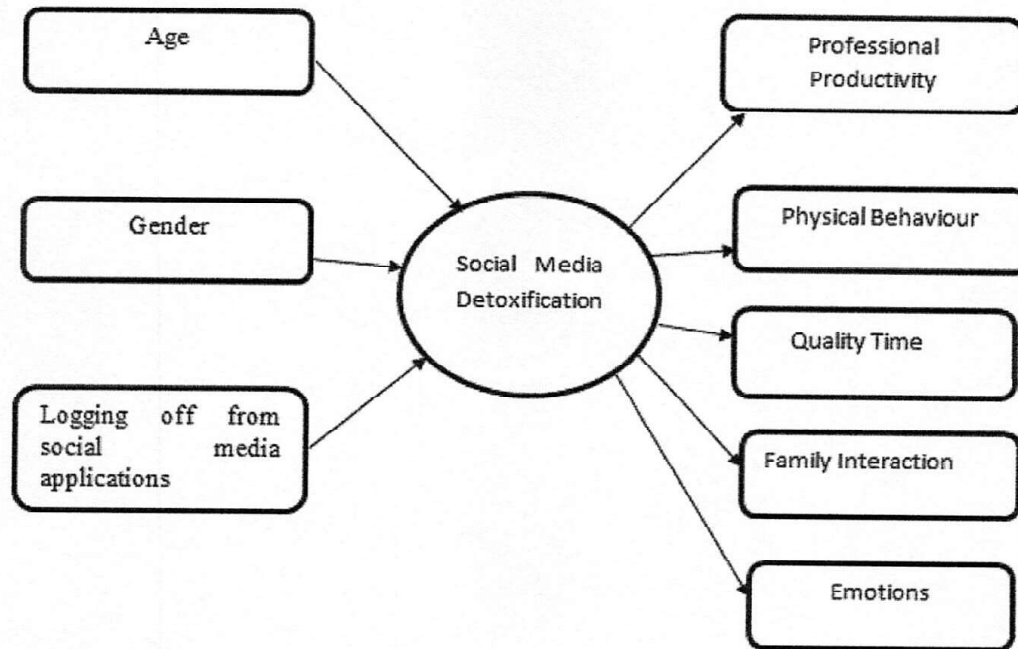
Although the concept of internet addiction and how to overcome it is not completely new but the term Social Media Detoxification is something which is unheard by many people. Other similar researches have been done on different regions around the globe but this study is specifically related to Mumbai region which is one of the metropolitan cities in India. The language used in this research paper has been purposely kept as simple and lucid as possible to make it understandable by everyone so further study can be conducted easily.

**6. IDENTIFICATION OF VARIABLES:**

**6.1. Table of identification of variables:**

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Proposed statistical tool
Age Group	Digital Detoxification	Chi square test
Gender	Digital Detoxification	Chi square test

6.2. Theoretical Framework: diagram



7. HYPOTHESIS

H<sub>01</sub> – Digital detoxification is equal among males and females.

H<sub>02</sub> - Digital detoxification is equal among all age groups.

8. DATA COLLECTION

This is preliminary research carried out between September 2022 and November 2022 and is conducted after studying 52 papers from referred journals.

This study is quantitative in nature. Snowball sampling has been used to gather the data.

The survey was conducted in Mumbai and the samples were working professionals from various sectors like nursing, teaching, tourism, IT, media etc.

The respondent’s profile has been classified based on Gender, Age and occupation. We appealed them to undergo Social Media Detox and hence refrain from using all social media apps for 3 consecutive days. A total of 46 employees agreed and underwent for Social Media Detox activity.

On completion of Social Media Detox, the participants were immediately provided with a google form to fill up a questionnaire comprising of 22 questions. There was no restriction of time limit to answer the questions.

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

9.1 Demographic information of respondents:

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	27	57.44
	Female	20	42.55
	Total	47	100
Age	10-19	04	8.51
	20-29	22	46.80
	30-39	17	36.17
	40-49	03	6.38
	50-59	01	2.12
	Total	47	100

9.2 Chi – square test on digital detoxification among males and females:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference about undergoing digital detoxification among males and females.

Sr no	Gender	No. of respondents	Frequency (O <sub>i</sub> )	E <sub>i</sub>	(O <sub>i</sub> -E <sub>i</sub> ) <sup>2</sup> E <sub>i</sub>
1	Male	27	57.44	50	1.10
2	Female	20	42.55	50	0.26
3	Total	47	100	100	1.11

Table value of chi square test for degree of freedom 1 with significant value 0.05 is 3.841.

The calculated value for chi square test is 1.11 and is less than 3.841 and therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hence, there is no significant difference about Digital detoxification among different genders.

**9.3. Chi – square test on digital detoxification among different age groups:**

H02: There is no significant difference about undergoing Digital detoxification among different age groups.

Sr. No.	Age Group	No of respondents	Frequency (O <sub>i</sub> )	E <sub>i</sub>	(O <sub>i</sub> -E <sub>i</sub> ) <sup>2</sup> E <sub>i</sub>
1	10-19	04	8.51	20	6.60
2	20-29	22	46.80	20	35.91
3	30-39	17	36.17	20	13.07
4	40-49d	03	6.38	20	9.27
5	50-59	01	2.12	20	15.98
	Total	47	100	100	80.83

Table value of chi square test for degree of freedom 4 with significant value 0.05 is 9.488.

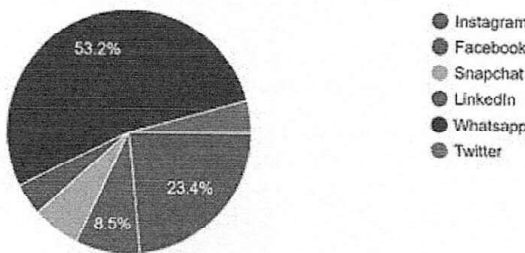
The calculated value for chi square test is 80.83 and is greater than 9.488 and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence, there is a significant difference about undergoing Digital detoxification among different age groups.

**9.4. FINDINGS**

**1. Platform Usage:**

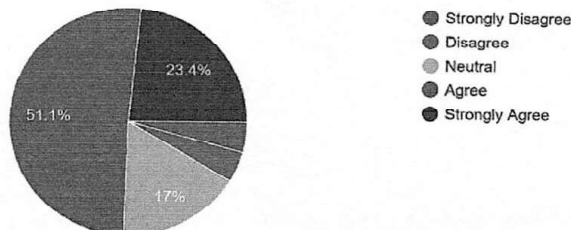
Q3. Which social media platform did you find most difficult to stop using?  
47 responses



2. As per the analysis, majority of the respondents (53.2%) named WhatsApp the most difficult platform to discontinue using. Next in line was Instagram (23.4%) and Facebook (8.5%). All of these are Instant Messaging or social apps.

**3. Increase in concentration levels:**

Q5. Do you feel that staying away from social media apps helped in increasing your concentration level while doing your job at workplace?  
47 responses



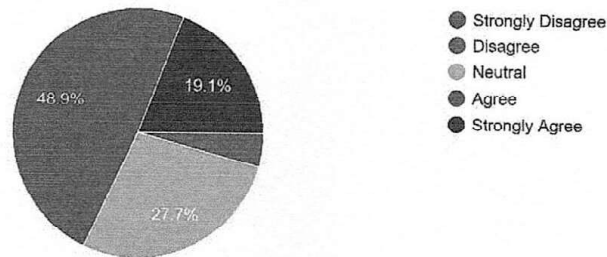


Turning off superfluous notifications wouldn't distract the employees during work. 51% of them agreed and 23% strongly agreed that avoiding social media apps at workplace helped them in concentrating better on office related work while 17% were neutral about it.

**4. Experiencing more time for learning:**

Q6. Did you find that you gained a lot of free time to explore new online or offline learning activities which you couldn't think of when you were preoccupied with social media apps?

47 responses

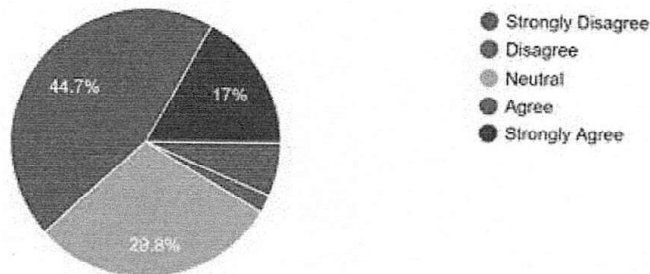


48% agreed and 19% strongly agreed that they experienced spare time for learning new activities while 27% remained neutral.

**5. Increased facial and verbal communication:**

Q8. Did Social Media Detox help you reconnect with the real world such as increased face-to-face communications or phone calls with your relatives and friends?

47 responses



Most of them i.e., 44% agreed and 17% strongly agreed that the detox helped reconnecting them with their companions physically rather than digitally developing a sense of empathy between them.

**6. Contentment and gratitude:**

Q10. During these days did you experience happiness, contentment, gratitude and satisfaction ?

47 responses

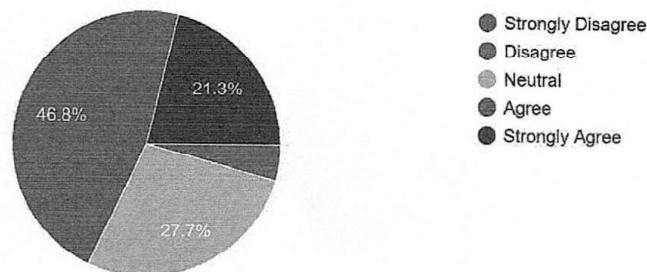


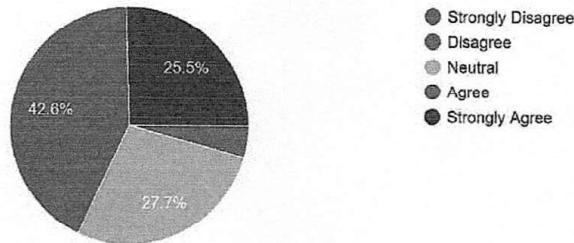
Diagram shows that most of the respondents (46% and 21%) confirmed that they experienced certain positive emotions like happiness, contentment, gratitude and satisfaction as staying away from the digital world keeps an individual far away from looking into other people's achievements in personal as well as professional life. 27% of them were neutral about the statement.



**7. Quality time:**

Q14. Do you think social media detox helped you in engaging and spending better quality time with your spouse or parents?

47 responses

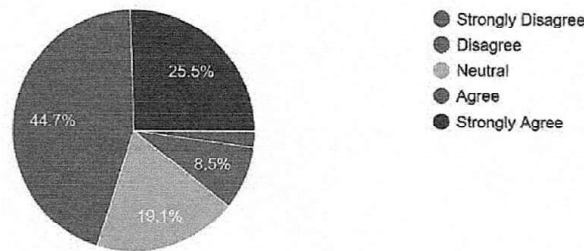


It is evident from the above diagram that social media detox results in ample amount of quality time available for spouse and parents. 25% strongly agreed and 42% agreed with this fact. 27% were neutral.

**8. Sleep Quality:**

Q16. Do you think Social Media Detox has improved sleep quality?

47 responses



During the detox phase, there was an experience of improvement in sleep quality as per maximum respondents (44% and 25%). 19% were neutral about this while 8% of them disagreed. If devices are kept away during night time, it would result in adopting a good sleep schedule.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON STUDY**

After conducting the research, it is noted that including social media detoxification as a routine in our lives can benefit us tremendously. Keeping away from unnecessary conversations can give solace and peace. Abundant time becomes available for parents, children and spouse. Employees can concentrate well on work as there is no distraction due to non-essential notifications. They can even invest their saved valuable time on new learning activities. Initially keeping away from social media will definitely be a challenge like controlling the craving of binge scrolling of using Reels, TikTok, Shorts etc. but would increase a person’s attention span. Feeling of contentment and gratitude achieved after the social media detox can solve the constant social comparison cycle problem which is caused by viewing other people’s achievements especially among teenagers who look at posts of people who they idealize. Less disturbance improves sleep quality making a person hale and hearty. Better sleep can rejuvenate an employee and uplift his performance. Social media detoxification is an experience that enlightens us with a matured way of using social media. It makes us realize that work-life balance becomes much more relaxed if we give up using social media for a few days.

As there are countless advantages of social media detoxification it should become a part of our daily life. The duration of days and the amount of strictness of using apps can vary from person to person but the essence is to do it in some way or the other.

**11. CONCLUSION**

According to our findings social media detoxification is performed nearly equally by males and females. Many people are already familiar with the concept of social media detoxification as it has become need of the hour.

WhatsApp application was the most difficult to stop using as compared to other applications followed by Instagram and Facebook.

Majority of the respondents disagreed that time without the use of social media made them feel purposeless and they were able to utilize the saved time for constructive purpose. Staying away from social media apps resulted