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Digital Burnout among Adolescents: The Darker Side of Technology

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ABSTRACT

An individual's mental health and well-being are interlinked with all aspects of health — physical, social, and emotional and any compromise in one aspect necessarily has an impact on all others and could act as a barrier to learning and even impact academic performance. However, in the past decade, technology had a huge impact on our overall well-being. Though the benefits offered by the technology could not be ignored, it does have a 'dark side' including digital stress- a stress elicited by the confrontation or interaction with, use of, or cognitive orientation toward digital informationi. It has contributed to a large burden of mental health diseases among adolescents entangled with technology, and undergoing digital burnout. As per the studies, this could affect their mental health impacting the rest of their lifetime due to increased anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, poor academic performance, and decreased self-esteem, and may contribute to a diminished ability to concentrate, reduced face-to-face social interactions, and impaired overall cognitive functioning.

Based on this pressing need to address digital stress, this research paper aims to understand the impact of digital stress on the middle adolescent population, considering its implications for their overall well-being and mental health. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, this research paper will examine the various sources and manifestations of digital stress experienced by adolescents. The study will also explore the psychological, emotional, and behavioural consequences of digital stress. In the long run, this research aims to develop interventions needed to ensure the long-term psychological and emotional well-being of this middle adolescent population in the digital era.

Keywords: *Burnout, Digital Burnout, Adolescents, Mental Health, Digital Technologies*

1. INTRODUCTION

As defined by WHO, adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health (Adolescent Health, 2019) as they go through drastic physical, cognitive, and psychological growth affecting their feelings, their thinking, decision making capabilities and their interaction with the world for the rest of their life. Among them, teenagers in the age of 15 and 17 are considered middle adolescents, a crucial stage when they begin to leave childhood behind and prepare for young adulthood (Chown, n.d.). This stage witnesses a large number of changes happening to middle adolescents as they reach the developmental stages of adolescence during high school, begin to explore intimate relationships and spend less time at home with their families. As per a survey conducted across 10 countries, nearly one -quarter of youngsters were found to be suffering from mental disorders. (Sick on the Job? 2012). In these times of exploration and growing intimacy with the external world, parents, and teachers also need to pay attention to warning signs of mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, self-harming behaviours, and eating disorders which could result in multiple factors like peer pressure, physical development, new relationships and now even due to the increased usage of digital technologies as well.

Associations do exist between the usage of digital technologies and mental well-being. As per the studies, internet is detrimental for children and young people's well-being, however at the same time, excessive usage of digital technology and not using them at all, both could be deleterious for mental well-being in today's technology-dependent lifestyle (The Future

of Health Systems, n.d.). Off late the availability of digital devices to the young population has increased drastically, further aggravating the problem. According to a 2018 Pew Research Centre survey, "95% of teens were found to have a smartphone. The connectivity enabled by these mobiles further leads to increase in the online activities among this young population. As per the studies, this over-reliance on technology can damage self-esteem, slow relationship development, create a lack of empathy, and hinder emotional development. Besides immoderate usage of digital technologies, prolonged usage of social media is also associated with mental illness (McCrae et al., 2017), sleep disorders (Vannucci et al., 2017), concerns about physical appearance (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016) and disordered eating, and lack of proper sleeping hours (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). Often, the digital platforms are also used for cyber-bullying as shown the rising cases of cyber-bullying in some countries (Livingstone et al., 2016).

The technology compulsions and adaptations in our daily lives have proven to be adversely affecting the mental and physical well-being of an individual. The move from burnout to digital burnout has been very drastic in the recent past, and with no specific measures to assess and address the gravity of the situation. The concept of digital burnout has been identified as a syndrome in which individuals may experience physical, psychological, and social problems due to their excessive use of digital sources, including low levels of productivity, fatigue, an incapacity to control their emotions, and an inability to cope with their routine (Erten and Özdemir, 2020). Though the benefits offered by the technology could not be ignored, it does have a 'dark side' which could be termed as Digital Burnout- the digital variant of burnout syndrome. The increased dependence and addiction to digital technology has fuelled digital burnout (could also be caused by adverse interactions in social media, Texts, Chat rooms, or forums) among children and has become a serious concern among parents, teachers, governments, and young people as it is enhancing the anxiety and depression, disturbing sleep patterns among these adolescents, leading to anger issues and decline in academic grades, feeling of isolation, episodes of panic attacks, cyber-bullying, distorting body image and other issues. At this juncture, it is important to educate the children, adolescents, teachers, and their families on the risks and uses of the digital technologies to make them self-responsible and sensitive towards the rational use of digital technologies.

With the rapidly increased adoption of digital technologies and growing compulsion to be present in social media by adolescents continues, it is vital to find a viable solution which while reducing the risks posed by the digital technologies does not restrict the opportunities and benefits offered by that digital technologies and social media.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The phenomenon of burnout has been continuously discussed in the literature since the early 1970s (Freudenberger, 1974), typically characterized by persistent emotional exhaustion, dehumanization of others, diminished job accomplishments, decreased job engagement, and ongoing physical fatigue. Subsequent researchers, hailing from the field of industrial-organizational psychology, brought a focus on work attitudes and behaviours to the study of burnout. It was in these times that burnout began to be conceptualized as a form of job stress, with an emphasis on the organizational context rather than solely on the physical aspects of stress experienced.

Over the years, there have been various notions put forth to this multidimensional phenomenon. Many burnout inventories offering alternative conceptualizations of burnout have been developed which provide researchers with a range of options for measuring burnout-related constructs. Few of the examples worth exploring includes the Maslach and Jackson's Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), Bergen Burnout Inventory and Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM). Maslach and Jackson's Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) emerged as the most commonly used tool for measuring burnout, offering meaningful insights into the prevalence, severity, and correlates of burnout, enabling researchers, practitioners, and organizations to identify individuals at risk, evaluate intervention effectiveness, and implement targeted strategies to mitigate burnout and promote employee well-being. Developed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson in the 1970s, the MBI has become the gold standard for measuring burnout due to its reliability, validity, and comprehensive assessment of burnout dimensions. As per Maslach et .al, burnout is a syndrome which includes emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalisation, along with lowered personal accomplishment. Emotional Exhaustion accesses the level to which someone feel emotionally drained and depleted due to work-related stressors, often manifesting as feelings of overwhelm, fatigue, and detachment from their job. Depersonalization assesses the emergence of negative, cynical attitudes and impersonal responses towards others, particularly clients or colleagues, indicative of a sense of detachment and indifference in interpersonal interactions, marked by sarcasm, irritability, and withdrawal. Meanwhile, Personal Accomplishment measures an individual's perception of their competence and achievement in their professional role, reflecting feelings of efficacy, fulfillment, and satisfaction derived from work.

Even though the bulk of the research has been done on adult populations, multiple studies have shown that extrapolating the findings to the young teenage population may not be accurate.

Academic burnout, primarily involving the student population, is a category of career burnout. It is often interpreted as a learning-related syndrome characterized by maladaptive emotional and physiological responses to a long-term exposure to stressful events. The consequences of academic burnout are far-reaching, encompassing academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. Students experiencing burnout are more likely to exhibit academic disengagement, lower

levels of motivation, and reduced satisfaction with their educational experiences. Building upon Maslach and Jackson's three-dimensional model of burnout, researchers have adapted this framework to the academic context, identifying emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced academic efficacy as key components of academic burnout. This conceptualization highlights the emotional, interpersonal, and motivational aspects of burnout in the academic domain, emphasizing its distinct features and implications for individuals' academic experiences.

While the academic burnout has been a major cause of concern, the digital technologies have added significantly to the it. The digital variant of burnout syndrome is an impactful emergent problem that gained prominence and rapidly intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the world witnessed an overwhelming use of internet consumption as people turned to digital platforms to enable work, leisure, and social activities, while companies, businesses, and schools had to close their doors (Sharma et al., 2020).

The concept of digital burnout, identified as a syndrome in which individuals may experience physical, psychological, and social problems due to their excessive use of digital sources, including low levels of productivity, fatigue, an incapacity to control their emotions, and an inability to cope with their routine (Erten and Özdemir, 2020). As a result, the digital world has taken on a dual role, enabling connectivity, productivity, interactions, and access to information, goods, and services, while simultaneously contributing to digital exhaustion and stress. Consequently, the concept of digital burnout has emerged to represent an individual's burnout caused by the compulsive and overuse of technology in the times of lockdown (Sharma et al., 2020).

The pandemic caused a significant change in communication from in-person to online interactions. Meetings in business, academia, education, and government management had to change to meet the dangers and problems presented by COVID-19. Communication through FaceTime, Zoom, Skype, and Cisco Webex was essential to the survival of the health, education, and economic sectors during the outbreak. The ongoing tussle between online and offline has reached the tipping point and the results are not impressing. While swapping between the different apps and responding to online call and webinars people are now feeling the heat of Digital Burnout. Earlier, a common phenomenon among corporate employees with long screen times, this is now being felt by masses. Characterised by symptoms of constant tiredness, a lack of concentration, low productivity, and an inability to cope with routine, this phenomenon has now attracted much attention. The Digital Burnout is now overriding the COVID-19 pandemic. Riding to its tune are school kids, teens, adults and senior citizens with a feeling of exhaustion and overwhelm that comes with being connected and online all the time.

Despite the undeniable benefits and innovations brought about by the Internet, the researched has already highlighted that the effects of excessive or problematic use of the Internet can be fairly harmful to individuals' well-being (e.g., Caplan, 2002; Kim et al., 2009; Mota et al., 2021), and that it can lead to the development of symptoms suggestive of addiction (Marzilli et al., 2022). However, studies on the problematic use of digital media began much earlier than the COVID -19 pandemic.

Young (1998) addressed Internet Addiction (IA) in the 1990s, defining it as a behavioural disorder, namely, an uncontrollable and obsessive–compulsive use of the Internet, with no toxic substances present. Kardefelt-Winther (2014) added that when individuals lose control of the time spent on digital media, they may experience negative effects in their lives with regard to their emotional, behavioural, and social functioning, just as it occurs in situations of any kind of addition (Kurniasanti et al., 2019; Kuss and Griffiths, 2011). Digital burnout has become a significant concern among adolescents in today's technologically advanced society. With the increasing use of digital technologies, adolescents are exposed to various stress factors leading to profound implications for their overall well-being and mental health (Fischer et al., 2021)

Evidence from the literature illustrates that Digital burnout is the next emerging variant of mental health issues across the globe. Mental health has been the key focus of most of the research conducted previously while digital burnout has been less explored, especially among the young adolescent. Considering the gravity of the situation, it is essential to ensure a mechanism of providing early help to the children and adolescents displaying signs of mental illness. Developing a good emotional well-being could help them to deal with the challenges of adolescence and ease the transition from childhood to adolescence and adulthood surrounded by the digital technologies.

Since the widespread availability and usage of digital technologies is a relatively new phenomenon, there is currently little concrete evidence to support the claim that social media and other digital technologies contribute to mental health issues in teenagers, particularly middle teens. The situation becomes grimmer in a country like India where 41% of India’s population is under the age of 18 years having limited access to psychiatrists and psychologists. Due to this, the treatment gap for mental disorders remains very high. Considering the criticality, it important to explore the the impact of digital burnout on adolescents, including the sources and manifestations of digital burnout, its psychological and emotional consequences, and potential protective factors and coping strategies.

3. METHODOLOGY

The secondary sources of data were obtained from online public access catalogues and database J Store, Google Scholar, ProQuest and PubMed. Review includes research papers, online articles, and student thesis. The search covered articles published between 1974- 2024. Majority of the studies included were empirical studies from 2016-2020, a period marked by

rapid digital adoption and increased screen time among adolescents, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, offering a data-driven understanding of the problem.

Keywords related to the objective like burnout, digital burnout, stress, anxiety, mental health, well-being, adolescents, youth, Adolescent behaviour, stressors, stress coping mechanism, were included to find out various kinds of literature. In addition, the reference lists of key studies were manually scanned to identify relevant articles not captured through database searches. To ensure the relevance and quality, paper published in peer-reviewed journal were preferred, title and abstracts were independently screened to assess relevance. After duly reading the articles on the related subject, the matter related to the mentioned objective of this review article is divided into the following headings and will be discussed in detail on three major aspects- 1. Burnout Vs Digital burnout, 2. Precursors and Impact of Digital Burnout on Adolescents, 3. Protective Factors and Coping Strategies.

4. BURNOUT VS DIGITAL BURNOUT:

Digital Technology has become a fulcrum of modern life. The use of digital technology is "a general term that covers various devices, services and types of use" (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020). Even though digital tools have an effect that relaxes, entertains or helps people to spend their free time, excessive use of these tools is harmful. The increased use of internet and smartphones for using social media, online gaming, viewing streaming web-series, watching movies over smartphone, and the perceived pressure to respond to incoming information has led more and more people to spend nearly all waking hours online during COVID-19 lockdown. Thee phenomena of being permanently online also has contributed to digital stress which is being understood in terms of environmental demands which strains the coping mechanism of digital users in terms of communication overload through digital media, news, and social media, etc., and internet multitasking. This kind of stress is being related to negative psychological outcomes such as lack of satisfaction, decrease in productivity, exhaustion, and burn out. (Reinecke et al., 2014)

Burnout has been considered in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon rather than as a medical condition (World Health Organization. Burn-out an "Occupational Phenomenon). Burn out can also be understood in terms of being always hyper connected through smartphones, laptops, and tablets, which leaves us susceptible to burnout that is exacerbated by digital overuse (Sharma et al., 2020). Burnout can affect anyone—irrespective of the involvement of digital technology in the work. In fact, people can burn out by doing anything too often or for too long, like taking care of elderly parents, raising children, even exercising too much. However, the problem of digital burnout, however, specifically refers to feelings of exhaustion, anxiety, depression, or diminished interest in a job stemming from too much time on digital devices. Hence, Digital burnout describes the negative impact of technology on our mental and physical health, along with symptoms such as restlessness, cognitive problems, emotional fatigue, and anxiety or stress.

The demands (subjective or environmental) for permanently being online are being associated with the high levels of physiological activation, feelings of tension, perceived expectations, discomfort, and anxiety. It was being reported that even delays on phone or online meetings, shape our views of others negatively. If a delay of 1.2 s happens to the response being received over the digital meeting platforms, it makes people perceive the responder as less friendly or less focused. Even online meetings require more attention in comparison to face-to-face meetings as one needs to be attentive and focused throughout the meeting for verbal and non-verbal components from all individuals participating at the meeting (Schoenenberg et al., 2014). All these factors contribute to the feelings of exhaustion manifesting as digital burn out.

5. PRECURSORS AND IMPACT OF DIGITAL BURNOUT ON ADOLESCENTS:

5.1 Increased consumption of Technology:

According to research, technology has been found to play a significant role in burnout (Schoenenberg et al., 2014). Though, digital tools can help an individual to relax, entertain or helps people to spend their free time, excessive use of these tools brings digital burnout. It occurs when we fail to turn electronics off and instead allow them to take over our lives; as a result, it affects our relationships, work performance and social activity (Grossman et al., 2021).

Though, the interaction of humans and technology has been benefitting mankind since a long time, in today's scenario, using the technologies has become compulsive especially after the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the whole world. Post pandemic, people have started to use these technologies more frequently to do their work from home and receive their education remotely.

It' is interesting to note that with the onset of COVID-19, the world has witnessed a substantial rise in internet consumption and the time people spend on digital devices. The time spent has amplified by 76% for smartphone use, 45% for laptops, 32% for desktops, 22% for tablet devices, 34% for smart TV or streaming devices, 17% for gaming consoles, 11% for smart speakers, and 6.3% on smart watches (Kemp, S. (2020) Digital 2020 the Philippines. - References - Scientific Research Publishing, n.d.). The community is now hooked to video conferencing, online concerts, social meeting, gaming, videos, webinars besides receiving the background information in the form of news, chats and conversation (Crawford, 2009), often termed as background listening further adding to the psychological distress (Misra, & Stokols,2012) and reduction in the

sleep hours. The cause of digital burnout can now be better attributed to the hyper-connectivity, prolonged and compulsive usage enabled by the internet enabled devices like smartphones, tablets, and laptops.

As per an observational study, use of electronic media exceeding few hours per week could lead to the negative impact on self-happiness, reduced satisfaction level from life, self-esteem. In contrast, spending time on non-screen activities like socialising, playing games, exercising, reading books, doing homework, participating in religious activities have a positive effect on the psychological well-being, among adolescents (Twenge et al., 2018).Other observational studies related spending of additional 2 hours per day on the social media, social networking sites and electronic devices with elevated risk of attempted suicides and symptoms of depressions among adolescent girls, while youth who maintained high levels of in-person socializing were comparatively shielded against the adverse effects of spending excessive time online. (Krasnova et al., 2015)

Additionally, the practice of digital multitasking, such as simultaneously using multiple devices or engaging in various online activities, can lead to cognitive overload and increased stress levels among the adolescents (Shanmugasundaram & Tamilarasu, 2023)

5.2 Smartphone usage on the rise:

A growing body of evidence has also demonstrated a correlation between excessive smartphone usage and psychopathological behaviour like depression, internet addiction, depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep quality (Stanković et al.,2021). A study was conducted on 92 students at University of Serbia on university students to examine the association of extensive smartphone use with depression, anxiety, stress, sleep quality and internet addiction using multiple regression and path analysis (PROCESS macro). The study used Depression, anxiety, and stress scales -DASS-21 (Lovibond &Lovibond, 1995) to examine depression, anxiety and stress and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (Buysse et al., 1989) to measure sleep quality index while monitoring with the smartphone activity of participants by an Android application QT (www.qualitytimeapp.com) as done in some other similar studies as well (Randjelović et al., 2018). The extensive smartphone usage was found to increase depression levels and depression leading to increased usage of smartphone, this depicting a to bi-directional relation between smartphone usage and depression which could lead to digital burnout.

Youth do increasingly interact online rather than in person, and smartphones can interfere even with face-to-face interactions via what has been termed “phubbing”: attending to one’s phone when in the presence of others (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). A recent empirical field study using experience sampling in 304 participants showed that even the mere presence of phones on a table caused participants who were randomly assigned to that condition to feel more distracted and have lower enjoyment during social interactions compared with those who were randomized to putting their phone away (Dwyer et al., 2018) Phone use was also found to predict distraction, which in turn predicted greater boredom and worse overall mood.

5.3 Digital Teaching and Learning – a new normal:

In the post COVID-19 era, as the world entered a “new normal” of digital teaching and learning—a combination of online and offline teaching was used to ensure that students can attend classes either in the classroom or isolated at home and has gradually been adopted as a normal practice. With multiple learning systems and faculty management systems guiding the entire process, the college students’ entire academic careers are being digitized. This “digital overload” potentially negatively impacts the mental health of college students. “Smartphone dependence” during study inhibits college students’ motivation to learn and makes them indifferent to and detached from learning. The current generation of young people, sometimes called “digital natives”, have built their social identities in the real and cyber worlds constituted by digital devices and the Internet since childhood. In contrast to digital immigrants, digital natives use cell phones as an essential “e-organ”, are accustomed to receiving information rapidly, prefer multitasking and random access, prefer instant feedback and reinforcement, and prefer visual to auditory or textual information. They lack patience for monotonous classroom lectures and are unable to focus on learning for long periods of time, so they often use their phones in class.

5.4 Internet Addiction:

Few studies have corelated the association between burnout and internet addiction (Bianchi & Brisson, 2017; Koutsimani et al., 2019; Rabadi et al., 2017), a mental disorder characterized by lack of patience, distancing or isolation, emotional turbulence and disturbed relationship with other people. School burnout feeds substance abuse or addictive behaviour such as internet addiction (Toth et al., 2021; Imani et al., 2018) and in turn, excessive internet use contributes to the development of school burnout (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013). Burnout again may result into substance abuse or Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD), defined as “a pathology, a disorder, an overuse of this technology, including a wide range of behaviours and impulse controls (Goldberg, 1995). A recent large prospective study of senior high school adolescent students in Taiwan found that youth classified as experiencing Internet addiction had a significantly increased risk of having newly emerged self-harm or suicidal behaviour or both when re-evaluated 1 year later (Pan & Yeh, 2018)

Corelating the subcategories of burnout viz. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Busireddy et al., 2017) with symptoms of Internet addiction, an association could be established. Further, Emotional

exhaustion may lead to higher anxiety levels and reduced communication skills, subsequently leading to social isolation and can be associated with internet addiction and depersonalization resulting in reduced communication skills and social skills (Iwaibara et al., 2019).

5.5 Excessive use of Social Media:

Besides this, there are numerous other sources contribute to digital burnout among the adolescents . Excessive social media use has been identified as a prominent source, with adolescents feeling pressured to maintain a carefully curated online presence and constantly compare themselves to their peers. The uninterrupted access to digital technologies is keeping the young generations in continuous connection with the outside world, their friends, peers, and relatives. There is a growing compulsive dependency on the digital technologies affecting the mental and social environment of the young and adolescent across the globe. The influx of digital technologies in the early years of life has both the brighter and darker side and could bear severe consequences like loss of control over behaviour, internal and interpersonal conflict, withdrawal symptoms, dependency on internet for mood elevation, since the darker side being more prominent (Salmela-Aro et al., 2016). Besides this, engagement with multiple social and digital activities like games, social media, coding and media creation has also led to development of compulsive and addictive behavioural patterns.

Two cross-sectional surveys of American and German university students, respectively, found that students who spent more time on the social media platform Facebook were more likely to endorse feeling envy or sensing that others in their social network were better off than they were (Chou & Edge, 2012).Fear of missing out (FOMO) defined as "a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent (Przybylski et al., 2013) is another manifestation of digital burnout, where adolescents experience anxiety and distress due to the fear of being left out of social media or not being up-to-date with the latest trends.

Caused by such requirements, digital burnout or feelings of anxiety, exhaustion and apathy caused by spending too much time on digital devices have been a growing problem. As technology makes us more dependent on each other and outbreaks us to bring in computers to work, pushing for tablets and smartphones to trust, the risk of extinction increases (Göldağ, 2022). Digital burnout can be difficult to diagnose, because the problem develops slowly and people may not know they run up too late (McLean, 2020). While some signs and symptoms of digital-induced burnout are similar to general burnout, the main difference between the two is that the primary source – prolonged use of digital devices – is known (Marius & Marius, 2021).

6. PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND COPING STRATEGIES:

Developing Digital Resilience among adolescents:

As the use of technology has become unavoidable and all pervasive, it's nearly impossible to completely shield adolescents from technology, despite the potential risks they will experience due to the use the technology. Improving adolescent digital resilience in the digital era, hell adolescents to develop self-control and an ability to recognise what is harmful, and respond appropriately, are key aspects of digital resilience. Guiding adolescents to correctly face and adapt to the pressures, challenges, or adversities brought on by technology, and assisting adolescents in better adapting to digital life is the need of an hour under the new normal of education and information technology changes. At this point, there is a need for more specialized studies on teenagers' digital resilience and technology stress, which makes understanding the link and current state of adolescents' digital resilience and technological stress challenging.

Strengthening Parental and Social support system:

Research has identified potential protective factors that can mitigate the impact of digital burnout on adolescents. Parental involvement, such as setting reasonable limits on digital device usage and promoting open communication, has shown to be beneficial in reducing digital device usage. Social support, both online and offline, plays a crucial role in buffering the negative effects of digital burnout. Developing digital literacy skills, including critical thinking, media literacy, and responsible online behaviour, can empower adolescents to navigate digital spaces more effectively and minimize the burnout. Coping strategies such as seeking social support, engaging in offline activities, practicing mindfulness, and establishing healthy digital boundaries have been found to be effective in managing and reducing digital stress (Qi & Yang, 2024).

Enhancing Digital Privacy:

Cyberbullying (Livingstone et al., 2016)., another significant source, involves the use of digital platforms to harass, intimidate, or exclude individuals, leading to heightened stress levels. Online privacy concerns, such as the fear of personal information being misused or hacked, can also contribute to digital burnout. It

7. CONCLUSION

The growing integration of digital technologies into adolescents' daily lives has brought not only opportunities for learning, social connection, and self-expression but also significant psychological and behavioral challenges. This review highlights digital burnout as an emerging yet underrecognized consequence of sustained and often excessive digital engagement among adolescents. Thematic synthesis of the literature reveals that digital burnout is driven by factors such as academic digital

overload, social media pressure, and lack of screen-life balance, all of which contribute to symptoms including fatigue, anxiety, decreased motivation, and emotional exhaustion.

Despite increasing scholarly attention, the conceptualization of digital burnout remains fragmented, with varying definitions and limited longitudinal evidence. Furthermore, there is a noticeable lack of research on culturally diverse populations, gender-specific experiences, and effective preventive strategies tailored to adolescents. This points to an urgent need for interdisciplinary, longitudinal, and intervention-based studies that not only deepen our understanding of digital burnout but also inform policy and educational frameworks aimed at digital well-being.

As technology continues to evolve, so too must our understanding of its psychosocial impact. Educators, parents, policymakers, and mental health professionals must collaborate to foster digital resilience, promote healthy digital habits, and ensure that adolescents are empowered to engage with technology in ways that support, rather than hinder, their overall development and well-being.

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