Digital Detox: Understanding Knowledge Workers' Motivators and Requirements for Technostress Relief

Research Paper

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Abstract. The indispensability of ICT for the digital workplace calls for strategies to mitigate the detrimental effects of technostress on knowledge workers and organisations. Digital detox in the professional domain is receiving increasing attention, but research lacks an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, including its motivators, requirements, and its role in preventing digital workplace stressors. Drawing on 16 semi-structured interviews, this paper identifies six motivators, demonstrating the link between digital detox and technostress creators and outcomes. Both individuals and organisations are required to facilitate the practice of digital detox without limiting flexibility and availability. Hence, digital detox is understood as a reactive and proactive coping behaviour for technostress that enables psychological detachment. However, its effect on stressors depends strongly on knowledge workers' social and organisational adjustments. This paper contributes to IS research by exploring digital detox in-depth in the organisational context.

Keywords: Digital Detox, Technostress, Knowledge Worker, ICT.

1 Introduction

The digital transformation has led to a shift in the way organisations work (Wang et al., 2020). Especially the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) change how organisations work. The digital workplace is the result of the reorganisation of physical, cultural, and digital working conditions in response to digital change (Mirbabaie et al., 2022b). ICT facilitates the exchange of information across functional silos, which accelerates business processes and fosters innovation and organisational performance (Chesley, 2014). This allows flexible working schedules and locations (e.g., remote or home office) (Pflügner et al., 2021a).

Adverse effects of digital transformation are constant connectivity, increased workload, interruptions, and technical difficulties due to ICT's complexity, ubiquity, and pervasiveness (Tarafdar et al., 2010). Using ICT can cause technostress, defined as "any

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negative impact on attitudes, thoughts, behaviours, or body physiology that is caused either directly or indirectly by technology" (Weil & Rosen, 1997, p.5). This can result in cognitive overload (Karr-Wisniewski & Lu, 2010), exhaustion and burnout (Maier et al., 2015), job dissatisfaction (Tarafdar et al., 2010), poor performance and turnover intentions (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). Moreover, increasing remote work arrangements risk blurring lines between work and private domains (Camacho & Barrios, 2022).

Since ICT is indispensable for the digital workplace, there is a need for strategies to mitigate its negative consequences on the individual (e.g., technostress and well-being) and organisational level (Rohwer et al., 2022). Particularly due to the increasing digital transformation in the workplace, where new technologies, tools, and platforms are constantly being introduced, workers are exposed to increasing technostress. Previous research has already studied the technostress process (incl. stressors and outcomes), and identified digital detox as a possible intervention. Digital detox can be defined as "timeouts from using electronic devices (e.g., smartphones), either completely or for specific subsets of smartphone use" (Radtke et al., 2022, p.190). While digital detox leads knowledge workers to view ICT availability demands less negatively on an individual level (Mirbabaie et al., 2022a), research on technostress prevention strategies at the organisational level remains crucial (Mirbabaie et al., 2022b). There is a lack of organisational-level strategies to promote work environments that support employees in avoiding or recovering from technostress. Therefore, effectively answering how to manage technostress in organisations through appropriate coping behaviours is crucial to preventing suffering during digital transformation. Here, we focus on digital detox, a specific coping strategy that helps cope with digital overload (Mirbabaie et al., 2022b). Hence, this paper aims to determine to what extent digital detox is viable for managing and preventing technostress at work. Thus, we derived the following research question (RQ):

RQ: *What are the motivators and requirements of knowledge workers for conducting digital detox at the digital workplace?*

To answer this RQ, we conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with knowledge workers. This qualitative approach allowed an in-depth understanding of individuals' motivators and requirements of digital detox related to work-related ICT, based on personal experiences. We followed a qualitative content analysis approach using Kuckartz's (2019) seven-phase model and two-tier system of categories and subcategories to analyse the interviews. We contribute to IS research threefold. First, we offer an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of digital detox in the context of the digital workplace. Second, considering organisations and individuals, we conceptualise the relationship between digital detox and technostress. Third, since the newly derived model draws on the stressor-detachment model (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015), we identified the role of digital detox strategies in work-related technostress.

2 Related Work

2.1 Technostress in Organisations

The relevance of technostress remains high since ICT no longer merely assists the completion of tasks but also fosters communication and collaboration among knowledge workers (Baptista et al., 2020). As a result, the amount of available information has increased, access to information has improved, and the boundaries between private and professional spheres have blurred. Thus, using ICT can lead to decreased satisfaction (Tarafdar et al., 2010), exhaustion (Maier et al., 2015), cognitive overload (Karr-Wisniewski & Lu, 2010), and burnout (Srivastava et al., 2015). This changes individuals' actions, like poor performance, decreased organisational commitment, turnover intention, and disengagement from ICT (Tarafdar et al., 2010). Strains experienced by knowledge workers reflect on the organisation, especially when stressors translate into chronic stress (Galluch et al., 2015) or loss of individual productivity. While ICT was introduced to increase organisational productivity, it decreases individual productivity due to its detrimental effects (Karlsen & Ytre-Arne, 2021). Technostress research still lacks conscious ICT use patterns that enable ICT potential without harming knowledge workers' well-being and organisational performance. The demand for proper capabilities underscores the limited ability to adapt ICT functions to prevent harmful consequences. Thus, conducive solutions are linked to a certain degree of self-regulation (Franks et al., 2023).

2.2 Digital Detox to Overcome Technostress

The intention to continue using digital technology after a period distinguishes digital detox (i.e., temporary approach) from other coping phenomena, like general digital disconnection, rejection, quitting, or digital resistance (Franks et al., 2023). To date, multiple definitions of digital detox exist (Jiang & Balaji, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022), focusing on periodic abstinence from technology. Those definitions share commonalities regarding the concepts of temporariness and well-being-related goal setting. Temporariness refers to limited abstinence from ICT and emphasises the importance of reuse. The well-being-related component of digital detox highlights that it is intentional and thus represents a coping behaviour. This reveals the link between digital detox and technostress and its detrimental outcomes. When individuals voluntarily conduct digital detox, it can be interpreted as a form of self-regulation or -optimisation. Mirbabaie et al. (2022b) further add the concept of an integrated approach, which implies that digital detox takes place within a specific context. This suggests a connection between individual practices and their environment, linking to the transactional model of stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

The potential of digital detox for the digital workplace lies in providing knowledge workers with a strategy for controlling and influencing their perceptions of ICT availability demands without altering them (Mirbabaie et al., 2020). Organisations, in contrast, are provided with an opportunity to assist knowledge workers' self-regulation at-

tempts (Tarafdar et al., 2020). Therefore, knowledge workers can choose between different work-related digital detox strategies, such as ICT timeouts after work, usage of ICT-free solutions for specific tasks, disabling notifications, restricting certain programmes, and leveraging applications to monitor, control, limit, and incentivise ICT usage (Schmitt et al., 2021). The variety of strategies emphasises the difficulty in providing consistent empirical results about their efficacy (Radtke et al., 2022). Those ambiguous results can be attributed to multiple strategies that differ in duration and the affected technology (Radtke et al., 2022). Syvertsen & Enli (2020) emphasise that the efficacy of digital detox depends on individuals' motivations aligning with their values and goals. Research highlights various motivators for digital detox from leisure ICT, like concerns about overuse, privacy, and social influences (Nguyen, 2023), as well as the pursuit of mindfulness and self-optimisation (Jiang & Balaji, 2022). While knowledge workers require autonomy to integrate digital detox into their routines (Tarafdar et al., 2020), organisations play a crucial role by shaping workplace norms and reducing technostress (Franks et al., 2023). However, restrictive top-down policies may negatively impact flexibility and productivity (Pflügner et al., 2020).

Previous research examined the interplay of concepts associated with technostress and digital detox. For example, Mirbabaie et al. (2020) investigated the effects of digital detox on ICT availability demands, showing that digital detox helps manage the "always on" mentality and continuous interruptions and facilitates knowledge workers' psychological detachment. Hence, digital detox is an intervention to alter the perception of ICT availability demands and prevent associated distress (Mirbabaie et al., 2020). However, there remains a lack of research on preventive measures against workplace-related technostress at the structural or individual level (Rohwer et al., 2022). This aligns with Mirbabaie et al. (2022b), who support the call for exploring digital detox potential to serve as a preventive coping behaviour of technostress.

3 Theoretical Background

3.1 Model of Technostress in Organisations

To further understand technostress in organisations theoretically, we draw on the transactional model of stress by Lazarus & Folkman (1984), which was adapted by Adam et al. (2017) to better capture ICT-caused technostress in the digital workplace, thereby, providing a framework for investigating digital detox in this context (Adam et al., 2017). Lazarus & Folkman (1984) describe stress as a physiological reaction to an interplay between individuals' resources, stimuli, and demands in their environment. The model divides stimuli into two stages. During the ***primary appraisal***, individuals evaluate the stimulus's relevance for their personal goals, values, and the extent of related implications (Biggs et al., 2017). A stimulus is appraised as stressful if individuals regard the associated changes as either a loss (i.e., from the past), a threat (i.e., for the future), or a challenge (i.e., in the present). If stimuli are categorised as stressful, they are regarded as stressors. This is followed by the second appraisal, which assesses the

resources and coping capabilities available to manage stressors. The resources and stressors can be personal, organisational, social, or technological. First, **job characteristics** are linked to stressors related to knowledge workers' position and tasks and their perceived degree of control (Fischer & Riedl, 2015). Task monotony or complexity also has an impact since it determines the general stress level (Adam et al., 2017). Second, the **technological environment** draws on extensive empirical research about technostress creators, so-called stressors. These refer to stimuli faced by individuals that induce technostress (Maier et al., 2019) and are initially contingent on the misfit between the individuals' characteristics and resources and the environment demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Previous research identified six techno-stressors: (1) techno-overload, (2) techno-invasion, (3) techno-complexity, (4) techno-insecurity, (5) techno-uncertainty, and (6) techno-unreliability (Fischer & Riedl, 2015; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). Techno-overload and -invasion are crucial for work-related technostress since they subsume individual stressors and are highly contingent on knowledge workers' tasks and organisational processes (Pflügner et al., 2020). Techno-overload refers to ICT that increases the pace and amount of work (e.g., through notification functions) (Büchi et al., 2019) and challenges norms of responsiveness (Chesley, 2014). Techno-invasion results from ICT enabling work irrespective of space and time, blurring boundaries between their professional and private life (Pflügner et al., 2021a). Third, the **organisational environment** is related to role characteristics, physical environment, organisational support resources, and corporate culture, which shape knowledge workers' stress appraisal and coping behaviours (Fischer & Riedl, 2015). Lastly, the **social environment** considers technostress to have cognitive and social dimensions. Social stressors are strongly tied to ICT-related expectations (Park et al., 2011) and social norms on responding and being available (Kao et al., 2020). If knowledge workers' ***secondary appraisal*** reveals that the available resources are insufficient to cope with the perceived significant stressors, they experience stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Physiological, emotional, cognitive, or behavioural stress reactions, referred to as strains, are elicited. Based on this, well-being and health, performance and productivity, and user satisfaction represent the different technostress consequences. Appraisals influence both the stress reactions and coping behaviours of knowledge workers. Problem-focused coping aims to eliminate stressors or enhance resources, whereas emotion-focused coping seeks to reduce negative emotions when control is perceived as low (Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Additionally, reactive coping responds instinctively to past or present stressors, while proactive and preventive coping focus on long-term resource development. Proactive coping is driven by challenge appraisal, seeing stressors as opportunities for growth. In contrast, preventive coping stems from threat appraisal (Reuter & Schwarzer, 2012).

3.2 Stressor-Detachment Model

Besides coping behaviour, knowledge workers need to invest personal resources to deal with technostress caused by work-related ICT. Psychological detachment is a core recovery experience that refers to ceasing workplace-related activities, thereby seeking

to mentally disengage from workplace (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Informally, psychological detachment can be understood as mentally switching off from work or pausing from demands leading to stress (Mattern & Klein, 2022). Hence, psychological detachment is central to the stressor-detachment model (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). By drawing on the effort-recovery model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) and the transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), it states that "job stressors predict poor psychological detachment, which in turn predicts strain and poor well-being" (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015, p. 93). The stressor-detachment model explains how **job stressors** affect **strain and impaired well-being**, while **psychological detachment** is a moderator and mediator between job stressors, which can be either task-, role-, or social-related, and strain and impaired well-being. This detachment deficit explains technostress spillover from the digital workplace to private life, heightening techno-invasion risk, where stress persists in subsequent periods (Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013). Digital detox offers a coping strategy for ICT-caused technostress in digital workplace. By taking a transactional perspective (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the authors expanded the mediator approach by adding moderators (e.g., job involvement, effective self-regulation, work-home segregation), that influence psychological detachment by improving **attentional processes** and **resource availability**, thereby mitigating stressor effects (Park et al., 2011). Even if psychological detachment is inhibited due to job stressors, Sonnentag & Fritz (2015) suggest that the harmful impact on well-being depends on the **content of job-related thoughts**. The detailed model is available on the Open Science Framework[1] (OSF).

4 Research Design

Qualitative research was chosen to answer the research question. Thus, we conducted phenomenological interviews to capture the interplay of technostress and digital detox in the digital workspace. This approach allows us to explore the topic in-depth and generate new insights and knowledge (Myers, 2020). Phenomenological research seeks to capture the individual perceptions of people experiencing the phenomenon (Bevan, 2014), which matches the variety of strategies for understanding and performing digital detox. To adapt spontaneously to the interviewees' responses, we chose semi-structured interviews. The interview guideline (see OSF[1]) was developed based on the phenomenological method by Bevan (2014) and its concepts: "contextualization (natural attitude and lifeworld), apprehending the phenomenon (mode of appearing, natural attitude), and clarifying the phenomenon (imaginative variation and meaning)" (p. 138). An iterative data collection and analysis process was chosen, which allows for refining the guideline based on a gradually growing understanding of the phenomenon (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005). To ensure the data quality, we applied the following inclusion criteria: knowledge worker, at least six months of work experience, and digital detox experience. The interviews were conducted between February and April 2023 and had an average duration of 41.25 minutes. 43.75 % of the interviewees were female, and 56.25

[1] https://osf.io/pt8w9/?view_only=5faf662834a5439086c060385fedc470

% male. On average, interviewees were 35.56 years old. Further information regarding interview sample is available on the OSF[1]. Upon consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed. To analyse the interviews, we followed a qualitative content analysis approach according to Kuckartz (2019) since it provides a pragmatic strategy for processing the data and the inductive creation of a category system. Therefore, we followed Kuckartz's (2019) seven-phase model and used his two-tier system of categories and subcategories to analyse our data. The coding system was developed inductively, beginning with a subset of interviews and refined throughout the dataset in line with Kuckartz's iterative model.

5 Results

Our results revealed that our interviewees conducted two types of digital detox: *partial* and *complete*. The former involves creating conditions to minimise techno-overload and -invasion through partial abstinence from work-related ICT (e.g., focus times). The latter focuses on establishing periods without using work-related ICT (e.g., by turning off notifications outside working hours).

5.1 Motivators

Moreover, we identified different motivators for conducting work-related digital detox. The first motivator is the associated improvement of **performance**. Thereby, digital detox strategies enhance efficiency, timely completion of work, and increased productivity by eliminating disruptive factors (I11). This helps to prioritise tasks effectively and improve overall performance: "*I already notice that due to distractions like pop-up messages, things are left undone that would actually only take 10 minutes and then take half an hour to an hour*" (I5). It is especially relevant for highly strategic-relevant tasks requiring concentration and depth (I1, I10)**.** Knowledge workers in management positions, whose behaviour affects their employees, need to use work-related ICT professionally to set a good example: "*But I am also aware that […] others follow my example and think that they have to do the same*" (I9). In addition, knowledge workers use digital detox strategies to improve their **well-being** and maintain their quality of life. The aim is to enable psychological detachment and mental health by refraining from work-related thoughts and increasing mental distance by recovering from work-related demands outside working hours (I4). Since psychological detachment is linked to mental health, using ICT in an unhealthy way can be harmful. This is evidenced by our interviewees' experienced strains, like work thoughts interrupting sleep, and feeling overburdened (I9, I10). Some interviewees reported that work-related thoughts are considered benign (e.g., discussing issues with family): "*I spent about 10-15 minutes thinking about it [work-related task] and then I laid back on the couch and watched something and then it was gone again*" (I13). Another motivator is related to knowledge workers' attempts to cope with the increased pace and workload caused by work-related ICT by undertaking digital detox. It arises from **techno-overload**, subdivided into two types: Focused single-tasking (1) and perceived time connected to work-related ICT

(2). First, to overcome techno-overload, interviewees focus on single tasks without being interrupted or distracted (I11). During focus times, they refrain from using ICT programmes that are associated with distractions, thus avoiding incoming communication that hinders them in completing tasks: "*For example, when an e-mail pops up with an important, urgent appointment, my head starts rattling, 'What does he want? What's he doing?' and I'm out of the flow"* (I8). Second, to reduce the duration of ICT, they try diversifying their routine by switching to analogue methods or taking calls while walking (I8, I14). One reason for high ICT duration time could be the feeling of FOMO (=fear of missing out) or an almost compulsive relationship with organisational devices or professional social media (e.g., LinkedIn) (I1, I9). Dealing with digital detox driven by the goal of coping with ICT intrusion into knowledge workers' private lives arises from **techno-invasion**. Two types can be distinguished, i.e., ICT availability demands and boundary management. Our results disclosed knowledge workers' habit of constantly checking company ICT, even after regular working hours (I15). This is driven by the perceived expectation to be available (I6, I12), which can also lead to tensions in the private context: "*My wife always rolls her eyes when I have my mobile phone in my hand. That stresses me out, and it's something I'd like to improve for my private life*" (I9).

5.2 Requirements

During work-related digital detox, knowledge workers have individual and organisational requirements. First, ***individual*** **responsibility** must be taken to hold them accountable for digital detox. It includes monitoring and controlling ICT-related behaviour, protecting one's well-being, and identifying and correcting ICT-related shortcomings (I10). This requires discipline and self-control. However, there is some ambivalence about the feasibility of self-initiated digital detox. While some interviewees equate self-control with self-initiated interventions, others express concern about causing tensions within the team or the organisation: "*When I put myself on "do not disturb", it's a very conscious decision and then I have to be aware that hopefully nothing is coming up during that moment*" (I10). Additionally, communicating their availability to the organisation or external stakeholders (i.e., customers) can be assigned to **transparency**. This is crucial to maintain a productive relationship with co-workers and inform about longer response times or unavailability (I1). Here, they tend to "*inform people, so they know what to expect so they don't […] disturb*" (I16). Absence notes or calendar entries are used to make digital detox transparent. Another requirement for conducting digital detox is **flexibility**. It describes knowledge workers' desire for autonomy in choosing and adapting a digital detox strategy (I6). In addition to those individual requirements, interviewees also mentioned ***organisational*** **responsibility**. It encompasses holding the organisation accountable for creating conditions conducive to work-related digital detox. Knowledge workers must be sensitised to ICT-related technostress by providing information and support (including training in digital detox strategies) (I5). Rather than banning ICT use, organisations should develop policies to support digital detox and take action when shortcomings are identified. These include organisation-wide measures, such as meeting-free days, or encouraging teams to discuss

communication processes and availability schedules internally (I8, I10): "*The company should create the framework […] to allow for times when [workers] create some distance from [work]*" (I10). Lastly, organisational corporate culture must ensure compliance with established digital detox policies (i.e., not contacting someone during a digital detox intervention) (I2, I7).

5.3 Contributing Factors

Beyond motivators and requirements, additional factors impact digital detox attempts. First, **personal characteristics**, like information on knowledge workers' traits, individual circumstances, and coping behaviours, impact the digital detox execution. While some interviewees reported that they focused on private life (e.g., activities, family) (I6, I13), others reported that they focused on their career and professional roles (I4, I9). Moreover, **job characteristics**, e.g., their position, team, and daily tasks, also contribute to the execution of digital detox. Our results indicate that self-employed workers and those in leading positions are especially faced with high demands for ICT availability since their work usually involves high levels of responsibility, communication, and coordination (I1, I10). Additionally, working globally distributed imposes time constraints, complicating fixed working hours (I11). Further, the team plays a crucial role in determining the feasibility of a standby service (I6). Moreover, **organisational characteristics** are crucial for digital detox, e.g., working time arrangements, relevant legislation, organisational ICT infrastructure, and business processes (I2, I14). Remote working requires separating work and private life since collaboration relies heavily on ICT (I12). Lastly, the **social environment** entails other stakeholders' social norms, expectations, and usage behaviours concerning ICT. Our results indicate a strong influence on how colleagues use ICT: "*There will be colleagues who will simply do not reply if you write to them at the weekend. And there are also colleagues who contact you at the weekend*" (I4).

6 Discussion

6.1 Model of Digital Detox and Technostress at the Digital Workplace

Within our analysis, we uncovered motivators and requirements, which help to evaluate the role of digital detox in coping with techno-stressors and to assess whether and how it may prevent their development. Based on our analysis, we developed a theoretical model that builds on previously presented theoretical models. Hence, we have incorporated the identified moderators into the model of technostress in organisations (Adam et al., 2017), along with digital detox strategies. The role of digital detox in coping with and preventing stressors was derived based on the stressor-detachment model (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015), which proposed various functions of psychological detachment for managing technostress. The resulting transactional model helps to conceptualise the relationship and the role of digital detox for technostress and the associated requirements at the digital workplace (cf. Figure 1).

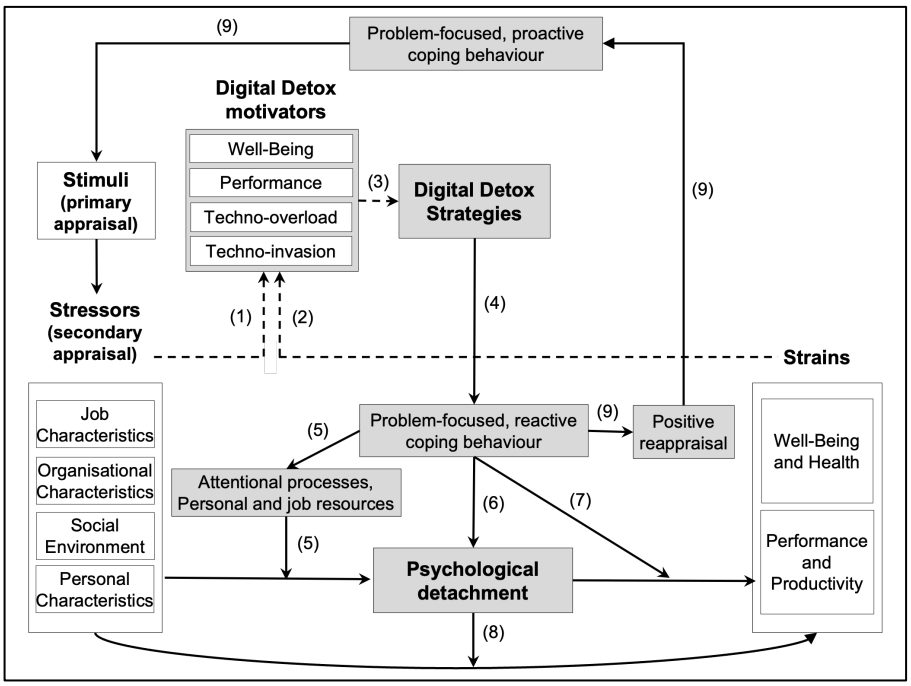

Figure 1. Model of digital detox and technostress at the digital workplace

The motivators for digital detox underline the link between digital detox and technostress, thus highlighting knowledge workers' awareness of the "inability to cope with the new computer technology in a healthy manner" (Brod, 1984, p. 16). The identified stressors represent antecedents of digital detox motivators: Techno-overload and techno-invasion, which are related to the techno-stressors by Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008), indicated by (1). Following Adam et al. (2017), we propose that job characteristics, personal characteristics, social environment, and organisational characteristics are stressors that determine the secondary appraisal of technostress, which contributes to the motivators. This is consistent with Srivastava et al. (2015) and Pflügner et al. (2021b). The strains well-being and performance, and productivity trigger the motivation for digital detox, illustrated by (2), since they demonstrate the harmful outcomes of suboptimal ICT usage at the digital workplace. This aligns with Salo et al. (2017), who argue that ICT's potential can only be leveraged if the adaptation risks are managed successfully. Hence, the findings provide evidence for the overall motivation of establishing a healthy and productive approach to ICT usage. As Mirbabaie et al. (2022b) indicated, it is crucial to include well-being in the definition of digital detox and therefore consider it to improve well-being. Since psychological detachment is subject to job stressors, it leads to negative activation and causes knowledge workers to invest more time in their work. This explains why workers generally do not perceive the presence of work-related content in leisure time as detrimental to their well-being

(Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). In contrast, spillover effects and resulting work-home conflicts trigger digital detox motivation (Benlian, 2020; Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013). Lastly, our results suggested that digital detox is motivated by performance (e.g., evaluated by productivity perceptions, quality of work). Hence, the motivation for digital detox is driven by the "productivity paradox", where a lack of productivity is attributed to many ICT interruptions (Galluch et al., 2015). Digital detox is understood as an antecedent of psychological detachment. Therefore, two digital detox strategies (3) and functions of digital detox in the coping process are distinguished, illustrated by (4), (5), and (6) in Figure 1. Since technostress causes negative effects (e.g., sleep problems, productivity decline) (Karabinski et al., 2021), knowledge workers engage in problem-focused coping behaviours (4). Thus, they disconnect from work-related ICT outside working hours to improve well-being and cope with techno-invasion, and, thus, regain control over work-related ICT usage in leisure time. This reduces the risk of negative activation (Franks et al., 2023) since they can enforce the work-home boundaries (Park et al., 2011). These attentional processes are part of the moderator of job-related thoughts and express which domain an individual focuses on, illustrated by (5) (cf. Figure 1). Furthermore, as indicated by (6), psychological detachment is a central recovery experience, allowing knowledge workers to recharge and re-establish emotional states while reducing techno-invasion and spillover effects that lead to technostress strains (Derks et al., 2014). However, following Sonnentag & Fritz (2015), this does not necessarily mediate into strain since problem-focused coping behaviours (i.e., digital detox) moderate the missing effect of psychological detachment on strains, visualised by (7) in Figure 1. Lastly, psychological detachment moderates the effect of stressors on causing strains by acting as a buffer (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Even though stressors remain, the psychological detachment by partial digital detox allows the effect of the stressors to be mitigated, as indicated by (8) (cf. Figure 1).

7 Conclusion

7.1 Implications for Research and Practice

This paper contributes to IS research threefold. First, this paper enhances understanding of work-related digital detox as a dual-purpose strategy, since it is not solely driven by promoting well-being but also by improving ICT usage performance. While previous research has focused on digital detox for leisure (e.g., smartphones), this paper focuses on the temporary disconnection from work-related ICT. We confirmed previous results from the leisure domain in the work context (i.e., perceived techno-overload, well-being) and derived an additional motivator for the work domain (i.e., performance). Thus, work-related digital detox must be considered from both technological and organisational perspectives. Second, this paper's results clarify the relationship between digital detox and technostress, considering organisations and individuals. Building on the model of technostress in organisations (Adam et al., 2017), we derived the model of digital detox and technostress at the digital workplace. Rather than a lack of technology skills, our data suggest that knowledge workers are dissatisfied with their behaviour

regarding work-related ICT and the detrimental effects of constant interruptions and lack of concentration. This result underscores the importance of digital detox as a regulatory practice that addresses dissatisfaction in the digital work environment. Moreover, our results show that the effectiveness of such strategies is not solely determined by individual effort but also by organisational conditions, including communication norms, recovery opportunities, and leadership support for disconnection. Third, since the newly derived model draws on the stressor-detachment model (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015), we were able to conclude the role of digital detox strategies for work-related technostress. Since digital detox is a problem-focused coping behaviour that enables workers to refrain from ICT temporarily, our results contribute to prior knowledge on coping behaviours for technostress. We determined how digital detox can reduce stressors by focusing on reappraisal and the roles of psychological detachment in the interplay of stressors and strains. However, digital detox cannot completely prevent stressors since technostress is also shaped by knowledge workers' personal and environmental characteristics.

This paper also provides valuable implications for practice. First, organisations should educate and raise awareness among knowledge workers about the risk of technostress, unregulated ICT use, and the importance of focused work. Teams should be encouraged to discuss their purpose for using ICT, related expectations, and team norms, since technostress is mainly a result of expectations reflected in organisational norms and corporate culture. Developing frameworks and policies is preferred as they allow for better articulation of expectations and understanding, but still allow for flexible use of ICT according to needs. Moreover, teams could synchronise their digital detox times to facilitate their availability. Second, this paper draws attention to the role of ICT providers in managing technostress and conducting digital detox. On the one hand, ICT design and availability settings determine ICT use in the digital workplace. Technostress caused by large amounts of transmitted information and related notifications is strong. It is worth reconsidering the default configuration of settings, for example, in ICT programmes, which include a high number of notifications.

7.2 Limitations and Further Research

This study comes with limitations. The proposed relationships presented in the model of digital detox and technostress at the digital workplace were derived from the interview data and prior theoretical knowledge from the literature. Since qualitative research does not allow for their validation, we argue for conducting quantitative studies. We cannot provide statistical generalisation regarding the sample, but we can generalise to theory within our sample (Lee & Baskerville, 2003). Moreover, this paper does not research the effects of digital detox on technostress outcomes. Therefore, a longitudinal study should be conducted to compare the digital detox strategies of knowledge workers that differ in timing, duration, and target. At the same time, a longitudinal approach allows for exploring the prevention of stressors and the role of reappraisal in this process. Further, it can incorporate contextual information (e.g., type of ICT use, industry, size and location of the organisation, remote or hybrid work). Finally, this paper does not consider barriers to digital detox, which should also be included in future research.

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