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Assessing the Prevalence of Digital Stress among University Students

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Abstract

Digital stress, the strain attached to notifications, availability expectations, social evaluation, and overload, has an unknown prevalence among South Asian university students, and no validated clinical cut-offs exist. This descriptive cross-sectional study determined its level, distribution, and prevalence among university students in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. A purposive sample of 700 students from 15 public and private universities completed the 24-item Digital Stress Scale online in September–October 2026 (α = .887; one factor supported by exploratory factor analysis). Prevalence was estimated with percentile-based levels and scale-anchored thresholds (item means of 3.0, 3.5, and 4.0). Digital stress was moderate (M = 72.54, SD = 12.70; item mean = 3.02, 95% CI [2.98, 3.06]); 51.7% of students (95% CI [48.0, 55.4]) scored at or above the scale midpoint, 21.0% at or above 3.5, and 4.1% at or above 4.0, and by sample percentiles 26.9%, 46.1%, and 27.0% were at low, average, and high levels. Digital stress rose steeply with daily screen time (item means of 2.38 for under 2 hr and 3.75 for over 10 hr; $\eta^2 = .590$) and was similar across all other subgroups after Holm correction. The findings support universal digital well-being measures but do not represent national prevalence.

Keywords: Digital Stress, Prevalence, University Students, Screen Time, Pakistan, Descriptive Study

Introduction

Learning management systems, messaging applications, and social media carry university students' academic, peer, and social demands, often on the same device (Haleem et al., 2022; Sanabria-Mazo et al., 2026), and more than six billion people, approximately 73.2% of the global population, use the internet (Kemp, 2025). Research on the resulting strain, studied as technostress, digital fatigue, and problematic use, expanded sharply after the shift to online learning (Almakrob & Alduais, 2026; Lin & Yu, 2025; Nastjuk et al., 2024).

Steele et al. (2020) shifted attention from time online to the psychological demands of digital communication, which Hall et al. (2021) operationalised as digital stress. Digital stress is associated with psychosocial distress at a medium level (r = .26–.34; Khetawat & Steele, 2023), poorer sleep, burnout, and loneliness (Tafesse et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2026), and lower well-being (Acaray, 2026; Aslam et al., 2026; Umar et al., 2026), and greater screen time with poorer physical and mental health, although inconsistent screen-time measures limit causal conclusions (Wu et al., 2026).

Knowing how common digital stress is, and how it is distributed, is a precondition for planning support, yet because the Digital Stress Scale yields a continuous score without validated clinical cut-offs, most studies report means rather than proportions. A meta-analysis of ten studies (8,572 participants) found a pooled mean of 2.45 on the five-point scale (95% CI [2.12, 2.78]) with very high heterogeneity (I^2 = 99.7%; Almakrob & Alduais, 2026). Related constructs show high exposure, including technostress (3.12 among 1,356 Indonesian students; Hapsari et al., 2024), videoconferencing fatigue (2.8 among 329 students; Salim et al., 2022), social media addiction (pooled prevalence 18.4%; Salari et al., 2023), and problematic smartphone use (more than half of Chinese college students across three waves; Wang et al., 2022), but these cannot stand in for digital stress. Validation studies of the scale's cross-cultural and short forms (Funke et al., 2026; C. Zhang et al., 2023) focused on measurement rather than on proportions at thresholds, and means from different versions are not directly comparable.

Recent Pakistani Literature

In Pakistan, studies have linked technostress, digital fatigue, and phubbing among university students with learning, sleep, mental health, and well-being (Amjad et al., 2026; Arshad et al., 2024; Asad et al., 2023; Aslam et al., 2026; Saleem et al., 2024; Umar et al., 2026; Xu et al., 2026) and have examined digital learning outcomes in Islamabad and Rawalpindi (Imran et al., 2025; Khaliq & Noor, 2026), psychological distress among students, including those facing unemployment (Ghilzai et al., 2025), academic stress and AI dependency (Habiba et al., 2025), and social media and interpersonal relationships (Rafique et al., 2025). None reported the prevalence, level, or distribution of digital stress as defined by Hall et al. (2021).

International findings may not describe Pakistani students. Close family and peer networks may expect prompt replies, shaping availability stress and approval anxiety differently from the samples in which the construct was developed (Hall et al., 2021; Steele et al., 2020); universities use learning management systems and messaging platforms differently; and access to devices, data, and connectivity is uneven. Psychometric evidence comes mainly from Chinese college students (Gao et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2023; C. Zhang et al., 2023) and employees in three countries (Funke et al., 2026), and the closest Pakistani work concerns a different instrument, the Urdu Multidimensional Digital Stressor Scale (Khan & Ilyas, 2025).

Research Gap

To our knowledge, no study has determined the prevalence, level, and distribution of digital stress, as defined by Hall et al. (2021), in a Pakistani student sample; evidence is needed to calibrate expectations, compare countries, and identify students with the highest burden.

Purpose of the Study

This study therefore aimed to determine the

prevalence, level, and distribution of digital stress in a large sample of university students in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Because the study was descriptive, no hypotheses were tested.

Research Objectives

The study had three objectives:

1. To determine the level and distribution of digital stress among university students in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.
2. To determine the prevalence of digital stress among university students, using percentile-based levels and scale-anchored thresholds.
3. To describe the distribution of digital stress across demographic and academic subgroups of students.

Research Questions

Three descriptive questions guided the study.

RQ1: What are the level and distribution of digital stress among university students?

RQ2: What is the prevalence of digital stress among university students, and what proportion of students fall at each level?

RQ3: How is digital stress distributed across demographic and academic subgroups of students?

Theoretical Framework

The study follows the conceptualisation of Steele et al. (2020) and Hall et al. (2021), in which digital stress is the stress and anxiety that accompany notifications from, and the use of, communication technologies delivered through mobile and social media. Its five dimensions are availability stress, approval anxiety, fear of missing out, connection overload, and online vigilance. It is distinct from workplace technostress (Funke et al., 2026) and from problematic use, which describes behaviour rather than appraised stress (Salari et al., 2023), and in university life arises from learning management systems, class messaging groups, and social media. The Digital Stress Scale (Hall et al., 2021), used in ten samples (Almakrob & Alduais, 2026), yields dimension and total scores; this study used the total score.

Methods

Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive survey design was used to determine the prevalence and level of digital stress at one time point; it does not examine change, causes, or relationships with other variables.

Participants and Sampling

The population comprised BS, MS/MPhil, and PhD students at public and private universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Students at 15 universities (eight public, seven private; Table 1, Annexure A) were recruited purposively through lecture announcements and learning management system notices between 17 September and 30 October 2026. Inclusion criteria were age 18 years or older, current enrolment, regular academic use of digital technologies, and ability to read English; non-consenting students and duplicate, incomplete, or invalid questionnaires were excluded. The final sample comprised 700 students from public (n = 375, 53.6%) and private (n = 325, 46.4%) universities.

Sample Size Determination

The minimum sample size, from $n = Z^2p\,(1 - p)/d^2$ (Cochran, 1977) with the conservative p = .50 (no earlier Pakistani estimate), Z = 1.96, and d = .05, was $(1.96^2 \times .50 \times .50)/.05^2 = 384.16$, rounded up to 385; no finite population correction was applied. To allow for nonresponse, exclusions, and subgroup description, 922 questionnaires were collected and 700 retained (Table 3, Annexure A), 82% above the minimum, giving a maximum margin of error of ±3.7 percentage points at 95% confidence (planned ±5).

Participant Characteristics

Participants were 337 men (48.1%) and 363 women (51.9%); 63.4% were undergraduates, 29.3% MS/MPhil, and 7.3% PhD students, and 60.3% were aged 18–23. Social sciences (27.7%) and business and management (18.4%) were the largest of six faculty groups, and 33.0% reported 8 hr or more of daily screen time (Table 2, Annexure A).

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Digital stress was operationalised as the total score on the 24-item Digital Stress Scale (range 24–120); the item mean (range 1–5) is the total

divided by 24.

Because no validated clinical cut-offs exist, two classifications were used. Percentile-based levels were low (≤ 25th percentile, ≤ 64), average (65–80), and high (≥ 75th percentile, ≥ 81); they describe relative standing and are not diagnostic. Prevalence used scale-anchored thresholds: item means of at least 3.0 (total ≥ 72, the midpoint, "sometimes" on average), 3.5 (≥ 84), and 4.0 (≥ 96, "often" on average). The midpoint was the primary threshold because it marks digital stress demands experienced more than occasionally.

Data Collection

The scale (Hall et al., 2021) covers the five dimensions above; items (e.g., "My friends expect me to be constantly available online") are rated from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Screen time, CGPA, gender, age group, degree program, faculty, year of study, and sector were self-reported.

Participants completed an anonymous Google Forms survey after informed consent; other scales from a wider project are not reported here.

Data Screening and Preparation

Data were screened in four steps (Table 3, Annexure A). All items were required, so there were no missing responses or imputation. Records identical to an earlier submission in timestamps, demographic profile, and all 24 responses were treated as duplicates, and the first was retained (37 removed). Records without consent, from respondents under 18, or with invariant responses were excluded (n = 185); out-of-range responses were impossible. No case exceeded the Mahalanobis distance criterion across the four wider-survey scale totals (critical χ^2 (4) = 18.47, $p < .001$). Of 922 questionnaires, 222 (24.1%) were excluded, leaving 700 (75.9%). Because recruitment used open announcements, a response rate could not be calculated.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics. Scores were summarised with the mean, SD, 95% CI, median, interquartile range, range, skewness, and kurtosis, and the mean was compared with the midpoint (72) by a one-sample t-test. Prevalence was the observed proportion at or above each threshold, with 95% Wilson score intervals (Brown et al., 2001; Wilson, 1927). Subgroups were compared with Welch's t tests or one-way ANOVA, with Hedges' g or η^2 (Cohen, 1988) and Holm (1979)-adjusted p values across eight comparisons. No correlation, regression, mediation, or moderation analyses were conducted; tests were two-tailed ($\alpha = .05$).

Ethical Considerations

The Departmental Ethical Review Committee approved the study (DAPERC-001, 18 June 2026). Participation was voluntary and anonymous, consent was given online; withdrawal was possible before submission; and counselling services were listed.

Reliability and Validity

The five-factor structure of the scale has been supported in Chinese students (Gao et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2023; C. Zhang et al., 2023) and in employees in three countries (Funke et al., 2026). In the present sample, internal consistency was good (Cronbach's $\alpha = .887$; McDonald's $\omega = .887$).

Exploratory factor analysis of the 24 items (N = 700) showed excellent sampling adequacy (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin = .96), a significant Bartlett's test, χ^2 (276) = 3,430.59, $p < .001$, and no multicollinearity (determinant = .007 > .00001). Parallel analysis (1,000 random data sets, 95th percentile), preferred to the eigenvalue-greater-than-one rule (Hayton et al., 2004), supported one factor: the first eigenvalue (6.67) exceeded its criterion (1.40), but the second (1.00) did not (1.33). With principal axis factoring, all items loaded above .40 (.42–.54; Hair et al., 2019), so none was removed; communalities were .18–.30, and the factor explained 24.7% of the item variance (Table 4, Annexure A).

The five dimensions defined item content, while the total score, supported by the one-factor solution, served the prevalence objective; this is not evidence against the multidimensional structure reported elsewhere.

Results

Level and Distribution of Digital Stress (RQ1)

Digital stress was moderate (M = 72.54, SD = 12.70, 95% CI [71.60, 73.48]; item mean = 3.02, 95% CI [2.98, 3.06], item SD = 0.53; Table 5, Annexure A), with a median of 72.00 (IQR 64.00–81.00), observed scores of 36–108, and a near-symmetric distribution (skewness = 0.08, excess kurtosis = −0.19). The mean did not differ from the midpoint of 72, t (699) = 1.13, p = .260, d = 0.04, so the typical student experienced digital stress demands about "sometimes", and it lay above the 95% CI of the pooled mean of ten earlier samples (2.45, 95% CI [2.12, 2.78]; Almakrob & Alduais, 2026).

Prevalence and Levels of Digital Stress (RQ2)

By sample percentiles (Table 6, Annexure A), 188 students (26.9%, 95% CI [23.7, 30.3]) were low (≤ 64), 323 (46.1%, 95% CI [42.5, 49.8]) average (65–80), and 189 (27.0%, 95% CI [23.8, 30.4]) high (≥ 81). At the scale-anchored thresholds (Table 7 and Figure 1, Annexure A), 362 students (51.7%, 95% CI [48.0, 55.4]) scored at or above the midpoint, 147 (21.0%, 95% CI [18.1, 24.2]) at or above 3.5, and 29 (4.1%, 95% CI [2.9, 5.9]) at or above 4.0 ("often" or more). Prevalence at the primary threshold was thus 51.7%, an observed proportion rather than a national estimate.

Distribution of Digital Stress across Subgroups (RQ3)

Daily screen time showed a very large difference in digital stress (Table 8 and Figure 2, Annexure A), F (4, 695) = 250.04, Holm p < .001, η^2 = .590: mean scores rose from 57.0 (item mean 2.38) under 2 hr to 90.1 (item mean 3.75) over 10 hr, about 33 scale points, or 2.6 standard deviations. No other subgroup differed after correction. Differences by age group (p = .014, Holm p = .098, η^2 = .015) and CGPA band (p = .044, Holm p = .263, η^2 = .014) were small, and those by gender (g = −0.02), university sector (g = 0.04), year of study (η^2 = .009), faculty (η^2 = .012), and degree level (η^2 = .007) were negligible.

Discussion

Digital stress among these students was moderate; about half met the primary prevalence threshold, and only screen time was associated with meaningful differences.

Digital stress therefore appears common rather than exceptional, favouring universal prevention supplemented by targeted support. The item mean exceeded the pooled mean of earlier samples (2.45; Almakrob & Alduais, 2026) and was slightly below the Indonesian technostress mean (3.12; Hapsari et al., 2024), consistent with high exposure to related strain elsewhere (Salari et al., 2023; Salim et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022), although constructs and populations differ. Prevalence should be compared only across studies using the same scale and thresholds, and whether students above them face poorer outcomes is an empirical question.

The higher level may reflect context: academic communication in Pakistani universities often passes through learning management systems and class messaging groups on personal phones, blurring study and personal time, and close networks may expect prompt replies that uneven connectivity makes harder to meet. Links of digital fatigue, academic stress, and loneliness with Pakistani students' post-COVID mental health (Amjad et al., 2026) underline these demands. These explanations were not tested.

The screen-time gradient (η^2 = .590) is the clearest finding on variation. It agrees with evidence linking longer screen time to greater technostress (Hapsari et al., 2024) and suggests that time online marks exposure to the demands measured, but not causation: heavy use may increase overload and vigilance, or students facing these demands may spend more time online. Screen time has also been linked with poorer health, although heterogeneous measures limit causal inference (Wu et al., 2026); longitudinal research has examined technostress effects on later bedtime procrastination and sleep quality (Xu et al., 2026); and how communication is distributed across media, not only time online, is associated with digital stress (C. X. Zhang et al., 2026). Because screen time

was self-reported in broad categories, the effect size should be read cautiously. The absence of a gender difference (g = −0.02) contrasts with higher levels of related constructs among women (Bajwa et al., 2023; Salim et al., 2022; Thomas & George, 2025) but agrees with null Pakistani findings (Arshad et al., 2024) and with meta-analytic evidence that sex did not moderate most associations of digital stress components with distress (Khetawat & Steele, 2023); comparisons with research on gender perceptions of technology use (Batool et al., 2024) should consider differences in constructs.

Null differences by faculty, sector, degree level, and achievement, despite expectations that computing or private-university students would be more digitally embedded, may arise because screen time indexes exposure directly whereas these characteristics act indirectly, the largely social demands measured are shared across institutions, broad groupings mask within-group variation, and shared self-report may have accentuated the screen-time difference. These explanations were not tested.

Implications

As hypotheses for local pilots, the results favour universal over demographically targeted measures and routine attention to digital well-being. Universities could set course communication norms, such as expected response times and consolidated announcements, because availability stress and connection overload arise partly from institutional practice, and instructor and university support can attenuate technostress effects among Pakistani students (Saleem et al., 2024). Students with very heavy screen time, a third of the sample, could be offered brief screening and digital-wellness resources, and percentile-based levels could guide local, non-diagnostic interpretation. For researchers, the study provides reference values and psychometric support for using the scale with Pakistani university students.

Conclusion

Among 700 students from 15 universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, digital stress was moderate (item mean 3.02); 51.7% were at or above the scale midpoint, and digital stress rose steeply with daily screen time but was similar across other subgroups. These descriptive reference data from a purposive two-city sample, rather than national estimates, support universal approaches to digital well-being in Pakistani universities.

Limitations

The sample was purposive, from two cities, English-medium, and 52% female, so proportions cannot be generalised; a probability sample is needed to estimate population prevalence. Without clinical cut-offs, the levels and thresholds are conventions, and proportions depend on the threshold chosen. Single-time self-report cannot show change, causes, or consequences. Only the total score was analysed; screen time was measured in broad categories, and results are specific to the scale's five-point Likert-type format, whose performance against visual analogue scales has been examined in student stress research (Alam et al., 2023).

Future Research Recommendations

Future work should use national probability samples, report observed proportions at pre-specified thresholds with dimension-level results, link scores to distress, sleep, and functioning to establish thresholds, test measurement invariance across languages and groups in Pakistan (Funke et al., 2026; Khan & Ilyas, 2025), examine students' digital media configurations (C. X. Zhang et al., 2026), and follow students over time to determine whether elevated digital stress persists.

Innovation/Cutting Edge Research

To our knowledge, this is the first study to determine the prevalence, level, and distribution of digital stress, as defined by Hall et al. (2021), in Pakistani university students. Whereas validation studies focused on measurement (Funke et al., 2026; Gao et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2023; C. Zhang et al., 2023), this study adds preliminary reference values, threshold-based prevalence with 95% confidence intervals, percentile levels, and identification of heavy

screen users as a higher-stress subgroup, without establishing national prevalence or clinical thresholds.

Research Location

The study was conducted at 15 public and private universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

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Annexure (A)

Table 1

List of Universities Included in the Study

S. No.	University name	Place/campus location	Sector
1	Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU)	Islamabad	Public
2	National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST)	Islamabad	Public
3	COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI)	Islamabad	Public
4	International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI)	Islamabad	Public
5	Pir Mehr Ali Shah (PMAS) Arid Agriculture University	Rawalpindi	Public
6	Bahria University	Islamabad	Public
7	Air University	Islamabad	Public
8	National University of Modern Languages (NUML)	Islamabad / Rawalpindi	Public
9	FAST – National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences	Islamabad	Private
10	Riphah International University	Islamabad / Rawalpindi	Private
11	Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (STMU)	Islamabad	Private
12	Foundation University Islamabad (FUI)	Rawalpindi / Islamabad	Private
13	Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST)	Islamabad	Private
14	Sir Syed CASE Institute of Technology	Islamabad	Private
15	Muslim Youth University	Islamabad	Private

Note: 8 public and 7 private universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Table 2

Sample Characteristics (N = 700)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Men	337	48.1
Women	363	51.9
Age group (years)		
18–23	422	60.3
24–28	191	27.3
29–33	61	8.7
34–38	26	3.7
Degree program		
BS/Undergraduate	444	63.4
MS/MPhil	205	29.3
PhD	51	7.3
University sector		
Public	375	53.6
Private	325	46.4
Faculty		
Social Sciences	194	27.7
Business and Management	129	18.4
Computing/Cyber Security/IT/AI	115	16.4
Engineering and Technology	114	16.3
Medical and Health Sciences	90	12.9
Natural Sciences	58	8.3
CGPA		
Below 2.00	21	3.0
2.00–2.49	56	8.0
2.50–2.99	154	22.0
3.00–3.49	266	38.0
3.50–4.00	203	29.0
Daily screen time		

< 2 hr	42	6.0
2–4 hr	168	24.0
5–7 hr	259	37.0
8–10 hr	161	23.0
> 10 hr	70	10.0

Table 3

Data Screening and Final Analytical Sample

Stage	n	Criterion
Questionnaires received	922	Submitted online forms
Excluded: confirmed duplicates	37	Identical demographic profile and item responses
Excluded: incomplete or invalid records	185	Missing consent, age < 18, or invariant responding
Excluded: multivariate outliers	0	Mahalanobis distance, $p < .001$
Final analytical sample	700	Included in all analyses

Note. Questionnaires received minus all exclusions equals 700. No missing values, duplicates, or invariant responders remained, and no case exceeded the Mahalanobis criterion (critical $\chi^2(4) = 18.47$, $p < .001$).

Table 4

Factor Loadings and Communalities for the Digital Stress Scale (N = 700)

Item	Loading (λ)	Communality (h^2)
DS1	.50	.25
DS2	.47	.22
DS3	.54	.29
DS4	.51	.26
DS5	.49	.24
DS6	.48	.23
DS7	.54	.30
DS8	.53	.28
DS9	.51	.26
DS10	.44	.19
DS11	.48	.23
DS12	.46	.21
DS13	.54	.29
DS14	.51	.26
DS15	.50	.25
DS16	.45	.20
DS17	.45	.21
DS18	.54	.29
DS19	.52	.27
DS20	.42	.18
DS21	.50	.25
DS22	.49	.24
DS23	.51	.26
DS24	.51	.26

Note. Principal axis factoring; one factor retained by parallel analysis. Loadings ≥ .40 are meaningful (Hair et al., 2019). KMO = .96. Variance explained = 24.7%.

Table 5

Distribution of Digital Stress

Statistic	Total score (24–120)	Item mean (1–5)
M (95% CI)	72.54 [71.60, 73.48]	3.02 [2.98, 3.06]
SD	12.70	0.53
Median [IQR]	72.00 [64.00, 81.00]	3.00 [2.67, 3.38]
Observed range	36–108	1.50–4.50
25th / 75th percentile	64 / 81	2.67 / 3.38
Skewness	0.08	0.08
Excess kurtosis	−0.19	−0.19
Scale midpoint	72	3.00
Difference from midpoint	t(699) = 1.13, p = .260, d = 0.04	
Reliability	α = .887, ω = .887	

Note. N = 700. Item mean = total score divided by 24. IQR = interquartile range. Skewness and excess kurtosis are SPSS bias-adjusted estimates. The midpoint test is a one-sample t test against 72. ω is from a one-factor model.

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Digital Stress Levels

Level	Cut-off (total/item mean)	n	% [95% CI]	Basis
Low (≤ 25th percentile)	≤ 64 / ≤ 2.67	188	26.9 [23.7, 30.3]	Observed
Average (between 25th and 75th percentiles)	65–80 / 2.71–3.33	323	46.1 [42.5, 49.8]	Observed
High (≥ 75th percentile)	≥ 81 / ≥ 3.38	189	27.0 [23.8, 30.4]	Observed

Note. N = 700. Levels are defined by sample percentiles because no validated clinical cut-offs exist; they describe relative standing and are not diagnostic. Whole-number scores prevent exact 25%, 50%, and 25% groups. CIs are 95% Wilson score intervals.

Table 7

Prevalence of Digital Stress at Scale-Anchored Thresholds

Threshold	Cut-off (total/item mean)	n	% [95% CI]	Basis
At or above scale midpoint ("sometimes" on average)	≥ 72 / ≥ 3.0	362	51.7 [48.0, 55.4]	Observed
At or above 3.5	≥ 84 / ≥ 3.5	147	21.0 [18.1, 24.2]	Observed
At or above 4.0 ("often" on average)	≥ 96 / ≥ 4.0	29	4.1 [2.9, 5.9]	Observed

Note. N = 700. Thresholds are cumulative, scale-anchored descriptive cut-offs, not clinical criteria; the midpoint is the primary threshold. CIs are 95% Wilson score intervals.

Table 8

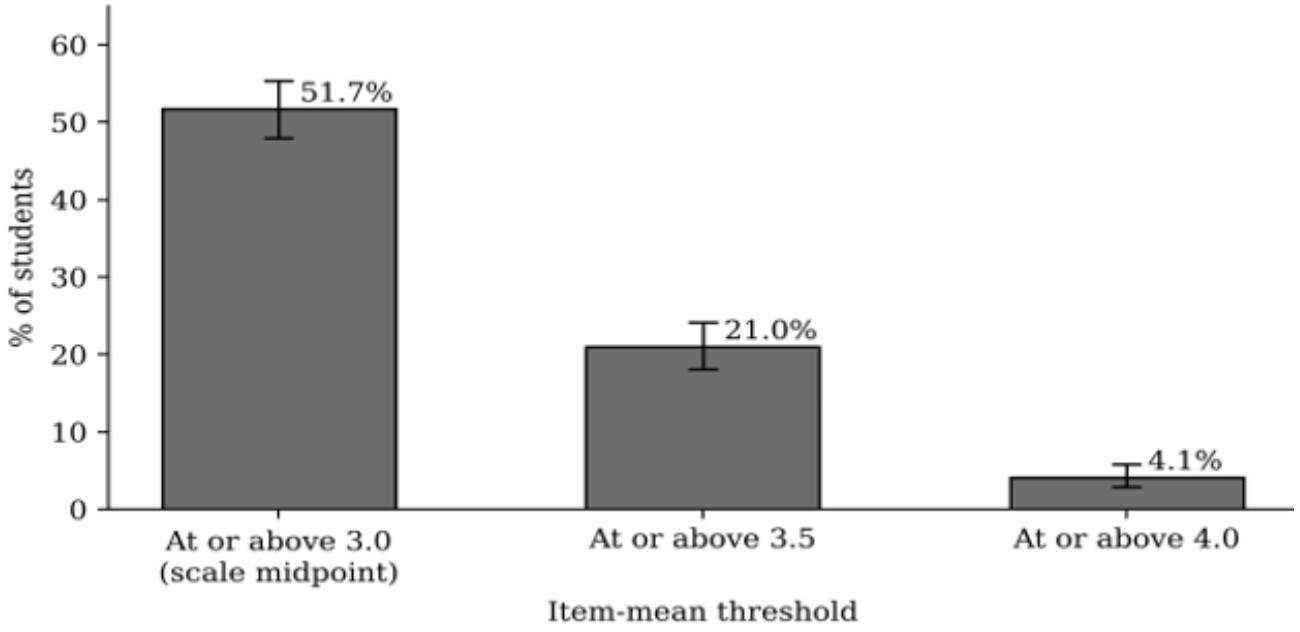
Distribution of Digital Stress across Demographic and Academic Subgroups

Grouping variable	Test	p	Holm p	Effect size
Daily screen time	F(4, 695) = 250.04	< .001	< .001	η^2 = .590
CGPA band	F(4, 695) = 2.47	.044	.263	η^2 = .014
Gender	t(665.9) = −0.32	.747	1.000	g = −0.02
Year of study	F(5, 694) = 1.31	.257	.771	η^2 = .009
Faculty	F(5, 694) = 1.71	.130	.519	η^2 = .012
University sector	t(677.2) = 0.51	.609	1.000	g = 0.04
Age group	F(3, 696) = 3.57	.014	.098	η^2 = .015
Degree level	F(2, 697) = 2.48	.085	.424	η^2 = .007

Note. N = 700. Holm p is adjusted across eight comparisons. ANOVA was used for three or more groups and Welch's t test for two. g = Hedges' g (men minus women; public minus private); η^2: .01 small, .06 medium, .14 large.

Figure 1

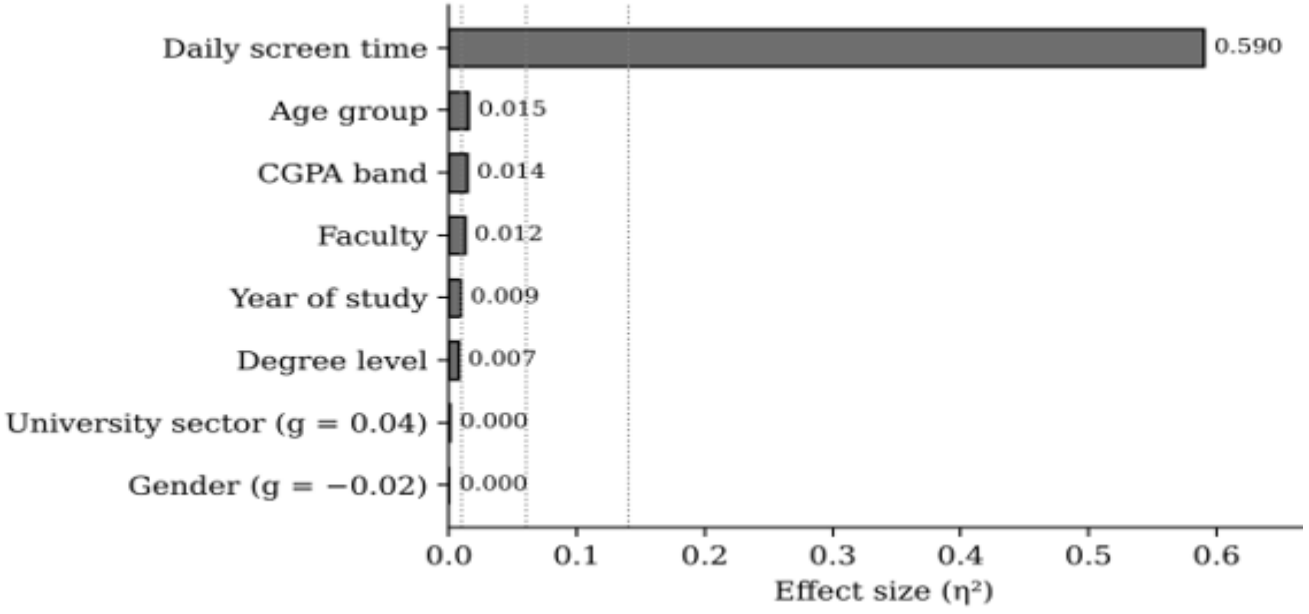
Prevalence of Digital Stress at Scale-Anchored Thresholds



Note. N = 700. Bars show observed percentages at or above each cumulative threshold; error bars show 95% Wilson confidence intervals.

Figure 2

Effect Sizes for Differences in Digital Stress by Background Characteristic



Note. N = 700. Dotted lines mark η^2 thresholds (.01, .06, .14); Hedges' g is shown as approximate η^2 ($\eta^2 \approx g^2/(g^2 + 4)$). Only daily screen time was significant after Holm correction.