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Digital Stress, Moral Disengagement, and Emotional Vulnerability: The Role of Tri-Sikkhā in Restoring Inner Balance

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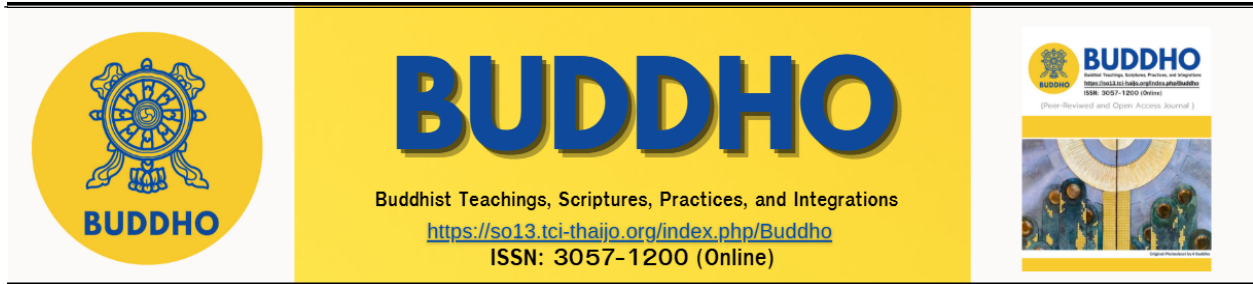
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Digital Stress, Moral Disengagement, and Emotional Vulnerability: The Role of Tri-Sikkhā in Restoring Inner Balance

Somsack Phetsamai¹, & Santoshkumar S. K.^{2*}

Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technology has fundamentally transformed communication, education, work, and social participation. While digital platforms provide substantial benefits, persistent connectivity may also expose individuals to information overload, social comparison, approval-seeking behaviors, and emotionally provocative content. These conditions can generate digital stress, increase emotional vulnerability, and foster moral disengagement, thereby facilitating the justification or normalization of harmful online behaviors. Despite growing concerns regarding digital well-being, there remains a need for integrative frameworks that address the ethical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of digital engagement. This conceptual article proposes the Buddhist Threefold Training (Tri-Sikkhā) comprising Sīla (ethical conduct), Samādhi (mental concentration), and Paññā (wisdom) as a holistic framework for mitigating the adverse psychological and behavioral consequences of digital environments. The analysis suggests that Sīla strengthens moral responsibility and ethical decision-making, Samādhi enhances attentional stability and emotional regulation, and Paññā promotes critical reflection and reduces attachment to external validation. Collectively, these dimensions offer a mechanism for disrupting the cycle linking digital stress, emotional vulnerability, moral disengagement, and harmful online conduct.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge by extending Buddhist psychological principles into the field of digital well-being and by providing an interdisciplinary conceptual model that integrates ethical, emotional, and cognitive development. Rather than advocating the rejection of technology, the proposed framework supports mindful, responsible, and wisdom-based digital engagement. The article highlights that sustainable digital well-being depends not

only on technological solutions but also on the cultivation of moral agency, emotional resilience, reflective communication, and critical wisdom.

Keywords: Digital Stress, Moral Disengagement, Emotional Vulnerability, Tri-Sikkhā, Inner Balance, Digital Well-Being

Introduction

Digital technology has become embedded in nearly every aspect of contemporary life. Social networking platforms, instant messaging systems, online learning environments, mobile applications, and artificial intelligence have expanded access to knowledge and created unprecedented opportunities for communication, creativity, employment, and social participation. Individuals can now maintain relationships across geographic distance, obtain information instantaneously, and engage in educational and professional activities without physical co-presence. However, these affordances are accompanied by increasingly complex psychological and ethical challenges. Digital environments are defined by immediacy, visibility, repetition, and continuous interaction. Notifications compete persistently for attention, social feedback renders approval publicly quantifiable, and algorithmic systems repeatedly expose users to content designed to maximize engagement. Under these conditions, individuals may experience an implicit pressure to remain continuously available, socially responsive, and informationally up to date. Digital stress, therefore, cannot be reduced to screen time or frequency of use. It should instead be understood as a multidimensional psychological condition arising from digitally mediated expectations, social evaluation processes, communication overload, and perceived loss of behavioral control. Steele et al. (2020) identify availability stress, approval anxiety, fear of missing out, and communication overload as key components of this phenomenon. Similarly, Nick et al. (2022) report associations between adolescent digital stress and depressive symptoms, although the directionality and magnitude of these effects vary across individuals and contexts. Importantly, digital engagement is not inherently detrimental. Digital platforms also provide social support, educational access, opportunities for creative expression, professional networking, and participation in otherwise inaccessible communities. The impact of digital technology is therefore contingent upon user characteristics, contextual conditions, platform design, and broader ecological supports such as family, educational, and institutional environments. Accordingly, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (2025) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2025) emphasize that digital ecosystems simultaneously generate risks and opportunities.

The present article explicitly rejects a technologically deterministic perspective. Instead of attributing emotional instability or moral decline directly to technology, it conceptualizes digital outcomes as emerging from dynamic interactions among environmental conditions, cognitive interpretations, emotional responses, ethical reasoning, social norms, and habitual behavioral patterns. Digital stress becomes particularly consequential when it heightens emotional vulnerability. Individuals experiencing anxiety, rejection sensitivity, fatigue, or dependence on social validation may become more reactive and less reflective in their digital interactions. Under

such conditions, disagreement may be interpreted as personal hostility, criticism may trigger impulsive responses, and communication may be used as an immediate outlet for affective discharge.

This dynamic extends beyond emotional regulation into the domain of moral cognition. Under heightened emotional arousal, individuals may justify aggressive communication, disseminate unverified information, violate privacy norms, participate in online shaming, or displace responsibility for collective harm. These processes align with the theoretical framework of moral disengagement. Bandura et al. (1996) describe moral disengagement as a set of cognitive mechanisms through which individuals selectively suspend self-regulatory moral standards, enabling behavior that would otherwise be self-sanctioned. In digital contexts, such disengagement may be amplified by anonymity, psychological distance, and diffusion of responsibility within large-scale online networks. Empirical research on cyberbullying further indicates that moral disengagement is a significant predictor of harmful online behavior (Lazuras et al., 2019). More recent findings suggest that digital technostress is positively associated with cyber moral disengagement, while self-regulatory capacities such as resilience, self-efficacy, and online self-control moderate these effects (Hu et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings suggest a reinforcing feedback loop between digital stress, emotional dysregulation, and ethically problematic behavior (see Figure 1).

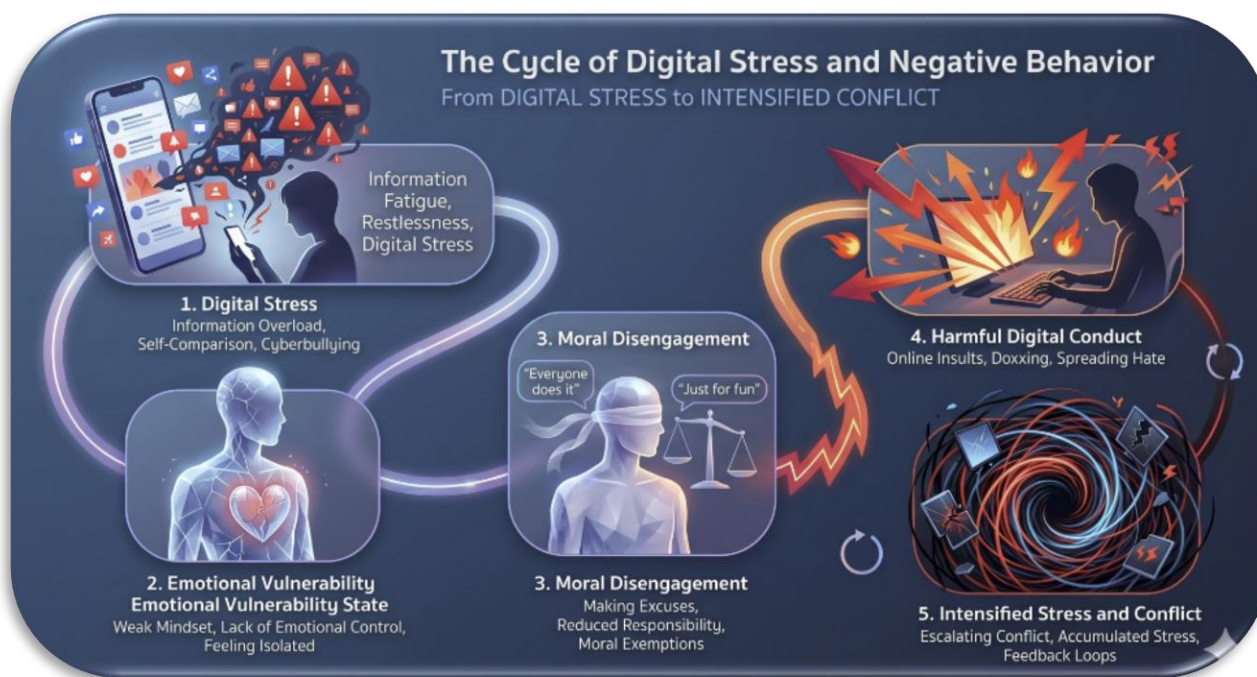


Figure 1 The Cycle of Digital Stress and Negative Behavior

Despite growing recognition of these interconnections, existing research remains fragmented. Studies have tended to examine digital stress, emotional regulation, attentional control, and moral behavior in isolation, without fully articulating how these domains interact within an integrated explanatory framework. Consequently, there is limited theoretical synthesis explaining how cognitive–affective vulnerability translates into moral disengagement in digital environments, or how internal regulatory capacities may simultaneously stabilize attention, regulate emotion, and support ethical judgment. Although previous studies have examined digital stress, emotional regulation, and digital well-being independently, limited attention has been given to how ethical conduct, attentional stability, and wisdom-based cognition may jointly function as an integrated regulatory system to address the psychological and moral consequences of digital life. In particular, the role of attentional training and wisdom-oriented cognition as mediating mechanisms between emotional reactivity and moral behavior remains under-theorized. To address this gap, the Buddhist Threefold Training (Tri-Sikkhā) offers a potentially integrative conceptual framework. Tri-Sikkhā comprises Sīla (ethical conduct), Samādhi (mental concentration and attentional stability), and Paññā (wisdom and discernment). Rather than treating emotional regulation and moral responsibility as separate domains, this framework conceptualizes them as mutually reinforcing dimensions of human development. Contemporary Buddhist-oriented scholarship has increasingly explored the application of these principles in areas such as emotional well-being, mindfulness-based growth, leadership development, and the integration of wisdom and virtue (Bodhisatirawaranggoora et al., 2025; Promchin & Bodhisatirawaranggoora, 2025; Promchin et al., 2026; Ruksat et al., 2026). These studies collectively suggest that ethical behavior in digital environments may depend on the co-development of attentional discipline, emotional balance, and reflective wisdom.

This article therefore advances four objectives. First, it analyzes the nature of digital stress and emotional vulnerability in contemporary digital environments. Second, it explains how stressful digital experiences may facilitate moral disengagement. Third, it examines the functional relevance of Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā in addressing digital psychological and ethical challenges. Fourth, it proposes the Tri-Sikkhā Inner Balance Framework as a conceptual foundation for future research and applied interventions in education, digital citizenship, family systems, workplaces, and digital well-being policy.

Conceptual Approach

This article adopts an integrative conceptual approach grounded in interdisciplinary scholarship at the intersection of digital psychology, moral psychology, affective science, Buddhist psychology, and contemporary Buddhist educational studies. The study is not designed to test causal relationships among variables; rather, it seeks to synthesize existing theoretical perspectives in order to construct a coherent Buddhist-informed framework for understanding digital well-being in contemporary socio-digital environments. In doing so, it aligns with prior conceptual synthesis approaches in contemplative studies and integrative psychology research (e.g., Davidson & Goleman, 2017; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Shapiro et al., 2006).

Within this framework, four central constructs organize the analysis

First, digital stress is defined as a form of psychological strain emerging from sustained exposure to digitally mediated demands, including attentional fragmentation, continuous connectivity, algorithmic information overload, and socially evaluative interactions within online environments. This conceptualization builds on contemporary research on technostress, information fatigue, and attention economy literature (e.g., Tarafdar et al., 2007; Mark et al., 2018).

Second, emotional vulnerability refers to an increased susceptibility to affective disturbance under conditions such as social rejection, upward social comparison, uncertainty, interpersonal conflict, and perceived social threat. This construct is informed by contemporary affect regulation theories and social neuroscience findings on emotional reactivity and sensitivity to social evaluation (Gross, 2015; Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2004).

Third, moral disengagement denotes the set of cognitive mechanisms through which individuals justify, rationalize, or psychologically distance themselves from behaviors that contradict internalized ethical standards. This concept is grounded in Bandura's social cognitive theory, which identifies mechanisms such as moral justification, euphemistic labeling, diffusion of responsibility, and dehumanization as central processes in ethical disengagement (Bandura, 1999, 2016).

Fourth, inner balance is conceptualized as a dynamic and integrative state characterized by the coordinated development of ethical conduct, emotional awareness and regulation, attentional stability, and discernment. Rather than a static psychological condition, inner balance is understood as an ongoing process of self-regulation and cognitive-affective integration, consistent with both contemplative psychological models and modern well-being frameworks (e.g., Ryff, 2014; Lomas et al., 2015).

Importantly, this article does not assume ontological equivalence between Buddhist constructs and contemporary psychological categories. For instance, *sīla* extends beyond behavioral inhibition or moral compliance, encompassing a holistic orientation toward ethical relationality; *samādhi* exceeds clinical models of emotion regulation by integrating attentional unification and deep meditative stability; and *paññā* cannot be reduced to cognitive reappraisal alone, as it involves penetrative insight into impermanence, conditionality, and the nature of experience.

Nevertheless, these traditions may be placed in productive dialogue insofar as they address overlapping dimensions of human conduct, cognition, and affect regulation. The framework of the *Tri-Sikkhā* (threefold training) is therefore interpreted here as a recursive developmental system rather than a linear progression. Ethical conduct (*sīla*) reduces behavioral conflict and psychological remorse, thereby creating favorable conditions for attentional stability. Stabilized attention (*samādhi*) in turn supports reduced cognitive-emotional fragmentation, enabling clearer and more sustained insight. Insight (*paññā*) further strengthens ethical orientation by reducing self-centered cognitive distortions and enhancing moral discernment. In this way, the three domains operate as mutually reinforcing processes within an iterative cycle of psychological and ethical development, rather than as isolated or sequential practices.

Conclusion

This article contributes to the interdisciplinary literature on digital well-being by integrating insights from digital psychology, moral psychology, affective science, and Buddhist educational studies. Rather than equating Buddhist and psychological constructs, it identifies areas of conceptual convergence that offer complementary perspectives on human functioning in digital environments. The proposed framework conceptualizes the Tri-Sikkhā (sīla, samādhi, and paññā) as a dynamic and recursive system in which ethical conduct, attentional stability, and wisdom mutually reinforce one another. By linking these dimensions to digital stress, emotional vulnerability, moral disengagement, and inner balance, the framework provides a holistic lens for understanding the psychological and ethical challenges of contemporary digital life. As a conceptual model, it offers a foundation for future empirical research and advances ongoing discussions on the role of contemplative and ethical development in promoting digital well-being.

Digital Stress in Contemporary Life

Digital stress develops when digitally mediated demands exceed an individual's perceived capacity to manage attention, emotion, communication, or social identity. It may arise from technological features, social expectations, platform design, or the individual's interpretation of online experience.

1. **Permanent Availability** One significant source of digital stress is the expectation of continuous availability. Messaging applications and online workplace systems may create an implicit belief that responsible individuals should respond immediately, regardless of the time or context. This expectation weakens the boundary between work and rest. Individuals may check messages during meals, family interaction, study, meditation, or sleep preparation. Even when a device is not actively being used, the possibility of receiving a new message may remain mentally present. Availability stress is not merely a matter of technology use. It is also produced by social expectations. A delayed response may be interpreted as rejection, irresponsibility, avoidance, or disrespect. As a result, individuals may respond before they have sufficient time to understand a message or regulate their emotional state.

2. **Approval Anxiety** Digital platforms translate social evaluation into visible indicators such as likes, comments, shares, follower counts, and viewing statistics. These indicators can make social approval appear measurable and comparable. When users attach their self-worth to digital approval, limited engagement or negative feedback may be interpreted as evidence of personal inadequacy. Approval anxiety can encourage repeated checking, excessive self-presentation, emotional dependence on external feedback, and fear of social exclusion. The psychological problem does not arise merely from receiving approval. It emerges when approval becomes the primary basis for evaluating personal value. Under such conditions, changing online reactions can produce unstable self-esteem and increased emotional reactivity.

3. **Social Comparison** Digital media frequently present selected images of success, beauty, wealth, productivity, happiness, and social belonging. Users encounter visible outcomes while rarely seeing the difficulties, failures, or ordinary experiences behind those representations.

Comparing everyday life with idealized digital images can create a sense of inadequacy. Individuals may conclude that others are more successful, attractive, socially connected, or emotionally fulfilled. Such comparison can reduce self-acceptance and appreciation of one's own circumstances. Social comparison becomes particularly harmful when online representations are treated as complete realities. Critical understanding is therefore necessary to recognize that digital identities are edited, partial, changing, and shaped by social incentives.

4. **Information and Communication Overload** Digital users are exposed to large quantities of information from multiple sources. Academic work, workplace communication, news, entertainment, public controversies, and personal messages may all demand attention within a short period. Information overload can reduce concentration and increase cognitive fatigue. Communication overload occurs when individuals feel responsible for more conversations and messages than they can manage meaningfully. Continuous switching between tasks also weakens sustained attention. The mind becomes accustomed to interruption, making it increasingly difficult to remain with complex learning, reflective dialogue, or emotionally demanding responsibilities.

5. **Emotionally Provocative Content** Many digital platforms reward content that produces rapid emotional engagement. Anger, fear, conflict, outrage, and humiliation often attract attention and generate interaction. Users may therefore encounter repeated exposure to accusations, polarized debates, violence, unrealistic standards of appearance, or hostile social commentary. Emotional activation may continue even after the device has been put aside. A provocative post can shape later thinking, interfere with sleep, or influence face-to-face relationships. Digital stress is therefore not limited to the moment of direct exposure.

6. **The Digital Stress Cycle** Digital stress may become self-reinforcing. A person who feels anxious, lonely, or exhausted may turn to digital platforms for reassurance, distraction, or emotional relief. Although this may provide temporary comfort, continued use can lead to further comparison, information overload, and approval anxiety. Zhan et al. (2025) found that digital stress was associated with problematic social media use among university students and that anxiety and depressive symptoms formed important emotional pathways. Cognitive reappraisal weakened some of these associations, suggesting that the interpretation of digital experiences affects their emotional consequences.

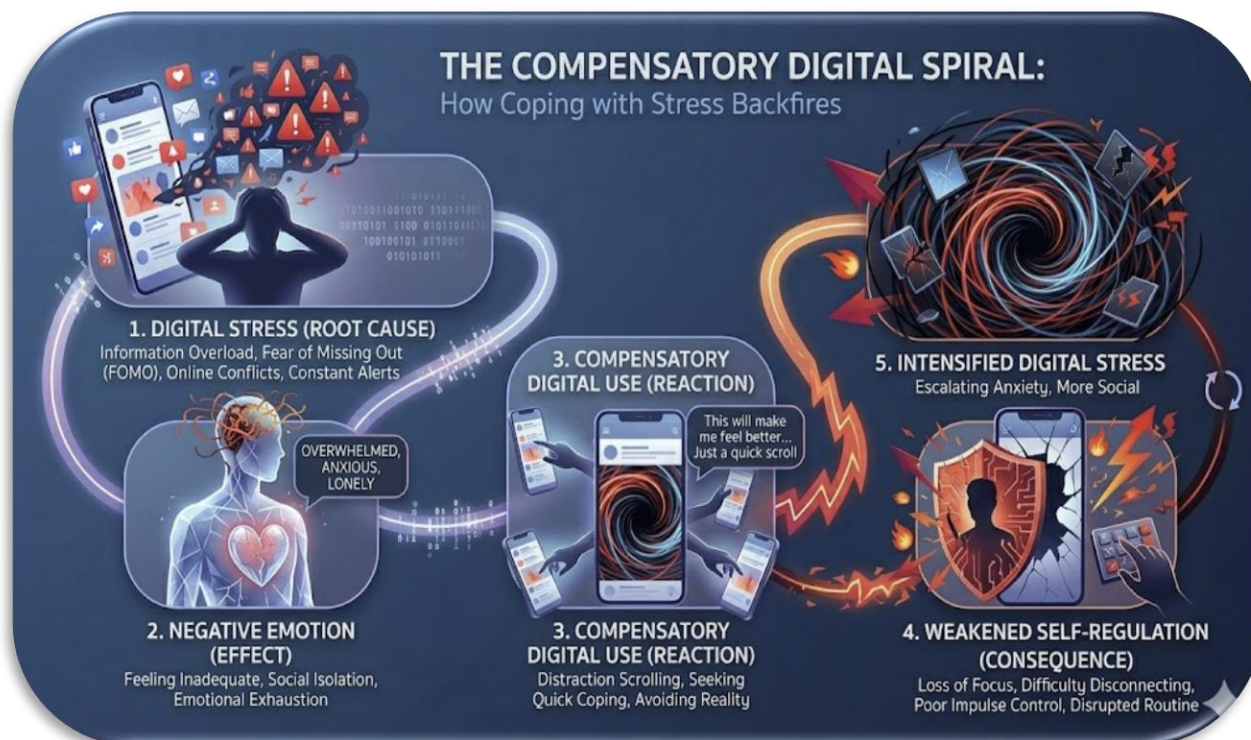


Figure 2 The compensatory Digital Spiral

Conclusion

Digital stress arises when digital demands exceed an individual's capacity to manage attention, emotions, communication, and social identity. It is driven by factors such as constant availability expectations, approval-seeking behaviors, social comparison, information overload, and exposure to emotionally provocative content. These factors often interact to create a self-reinforcing cycle in which individuals seek relief through digital engagement while simultaneously increasing their psychological burden. As a result, digital stress can undermine well-being, emotional regulation, and sustained attention. Overall, digital stress is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by technological, social, and cognitive influences. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering healthier, more balanced, and sustainable engagement with digital environments.

4. Emotional Vulnerability and the Loss of Inner Balance

Emotional vulnerability should not be interpreted as personal weakness. All individuals are vulnerable under particular conditions. In this article, emotional vulnerability refers to heightened susceptibility to emotional disturbance when a person encounters stress, rejection, uncertainty, social comparison, or interpersonal conflict. Digital environments can intensify

vulnerability because they combine immediacy with public visibility. A private disagreement can become a public conflict. A humiliating image can be distributed repeatedly. A critical comment may remain accessible long after the original event. The absence of nonverbal information also increases the likelihood of misunderstanding. Written messages may fail to communicate tone, intention, or emotional context. Users may fill these gaps with assumptions shaped by anxiety, anger, insecurity, or previous experience. Inner balance does not mean that a person never experiences anger, sadness, fear, or disappointment. These emotions are natural aspects of human life. Inner balance refers instead to the ability to recognize emotional experience without being completely governed by it. A person with inner balance can receive criticism without immediately attacking the critic, recognize anxiety without compulsively seeking reassurance, and encounter disagreement without abandoning ethical responsibility. Promchin et al. (2026) present Tri-Sikkhā as an integrated Buddhopsychological approach to emotional wellness. Their findings suggest that Sīla provides behavioral and relational stability, Samādhi supports attentional and emotional regulation, and Paññā contributes to acceptance, resilience, and cognitive transformation. Although their study is not limited to digital environments, its developmental interpretation of Tri-Sikkhā is directly relevant to digital stress. The relationship between mindfulness and a growth-oriented interpretation of difficulty is also significant. Bodhisatirawaranggoora et al. (2025) connect mindfulness with growth mindset, psychological flexibility, and sustainable happiness. Applied to digital life, this perspective can help individuals avoid treating criticism, exclusion, limited approval, or online failure as permanent definitions of personal identity. An online mistake or disagreement can instead be understood as a temporary experience requiring reflection, learning, and possibly correction. Mindfulness makes the emotional reaction visible, while a growth-oriented interpretation prevents the reaction from becoming a permanent negative judgment about the self.

When inner balance is lost, several processes may occur:

- Attention becomes fragmented.
- Emotional reactions become rapid and disproportionate.
- Self-worth becomes dependent on external feedback.
- Harmful intentions are more easily justified.
- Ethical consequences receive less consideration.
- Impulsive conduct produces further conflict and distress.

These processes demonstrate why emotional wellness and moral development should not be separated. Emotional dysregulation can weaken ethical judgment, while unethical conduct can produce additional emotional disturbance.

Tri-Sikkhā for Restoring Inner Balance in Digital Life

The Buddhist Threefold Training, or Tri-Sikkhā, provides an integrated response to the cycle connecting digital stress, emotional vulnerability, moral disengagement, and harmful online conduct. It consists of Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā, which respectively develop ethical conduct, mental stability, and wisdom. These dimensions should not be understood as separate

interventions. Ethical conduct reduces conflict and remorse, mental stability supports reflective judgment, and wisdom strengthens commitment to responsible behavior (Payutto, 2021).

1. *Sīla*: Ethical Responsibility in Digital Conduct *Sīla* establishes ethical boundaries between emotional impulses and digital actions. It requires users to consider not only whether an action is technically possible or legally permissible but also whether it is truthful, beneficial, respectful, and unlikely to cause avoidable harm. In digital environments, *Sīla* includes verifying information before sharing it, protecting privacy, acknowledging intellectual sources, avoiding cyberbullying, communicating respectfully, and using artificial intelligence responsibly. These practices counter moral disengagement by restoring personal accountability. Users can no longer justify harmful behavior simply because others are participating, the communication is anonymous, or the consequences are not immediately visible. Before posting or forwarding content, individuals may reflect on whether the information is accurate, what emotion motivates the action, who may be affected, and whether they are prepared to accept responsibility for the outcome. Such reflection transforms *Sīla* from external rule-following into moral self-regulation. The formative role of language is especially important. Ruksat et al. (2026) argue that Buddhist discourse can cultivate wisdom and virtue through communication that is truthful, beneficial, compassionate, and appropriate to its context. This approach is consistent with Phra Sriratchamongkolbandit et al. (2022), who emphasize that sustainable moral development among young people requires cooperation among families, educational institutions, communities, temples, media organizations, and young people themselves. Applied to digital life, this perspective suggests that ethical communication should not merely avoid abusive speech; it should actively promote understanding, dignity, and constructive relationships.

2. *Samādhi*: Attention and Emotional Regulation *Samādhi* develops attentional stability and awareness of emotional experience. Digital platforms frequently interrupt attention and encourage rapid reactions through notifications, continuous updates, and provocative content. Without sufficient awareness, anger, anxiety, envy, or approval-seeking may immediately become digital behavior. Mindful attention creates a pause between stimulus and response. Individuals learn to observe emotional activation without automatically acting upon it. Practical applications include taking several conscious breaths before responding, postponing communication when emotions are intense, disabling unnecessary notifications, practicing single-task attention, and establishing periods of intentional disconnection. *Samādhi* does not suppress emotion. Instead, it enables individuals to recognize emotional states clearly and respond deliberately. This function is relevant to the role of online self-control identified by Hu et al. (2025). From a Buddhist perspective, self-regulation begins with awareness because an impulse must first be recognized before it can be regulated wisely.

3. *Paññā*: Wise and Critical Digital Engagement *Paññā* enables individuals to examine the assumptions and attachments underlying digital stress. Users may believe that online popularity determines personal value, criticism permanently defines identity, or every digital demand requires an immediate response. Such interpretations can intensify anxiety and emotional dependence. Wisdom helps users recognize that digital approval, criticism, trends, and emotional reactions are temporary. It also reveals that digital experience is conditioned by algorithms, commercial interests, group norms, prior beliefs, and current emotional states. This awareness

supports critical digital literacy by encouraging users to question why content appears, what evidence supports it, what emotional response it seeks to generate, and what consequences may follow from sharing it. Paññā is related to cognitive reappraisal, which may reduce the emotional effects of digital stress (Zhan et al., 2025), but it extends beyond reinterpretation. It also involves understanding impermanence, conditionality, attachment, identity, and ethical consequence. Ruksat et al. (2026) similarly emphasize that wisdom should be cultivated together with virtue. Critical literacy is therefore incomplete when users identify false information but disregard the harm caused by producing or circulating it. The proposed Tri-Sikkhā Inner Balance Framework can be summarized as Figure 3

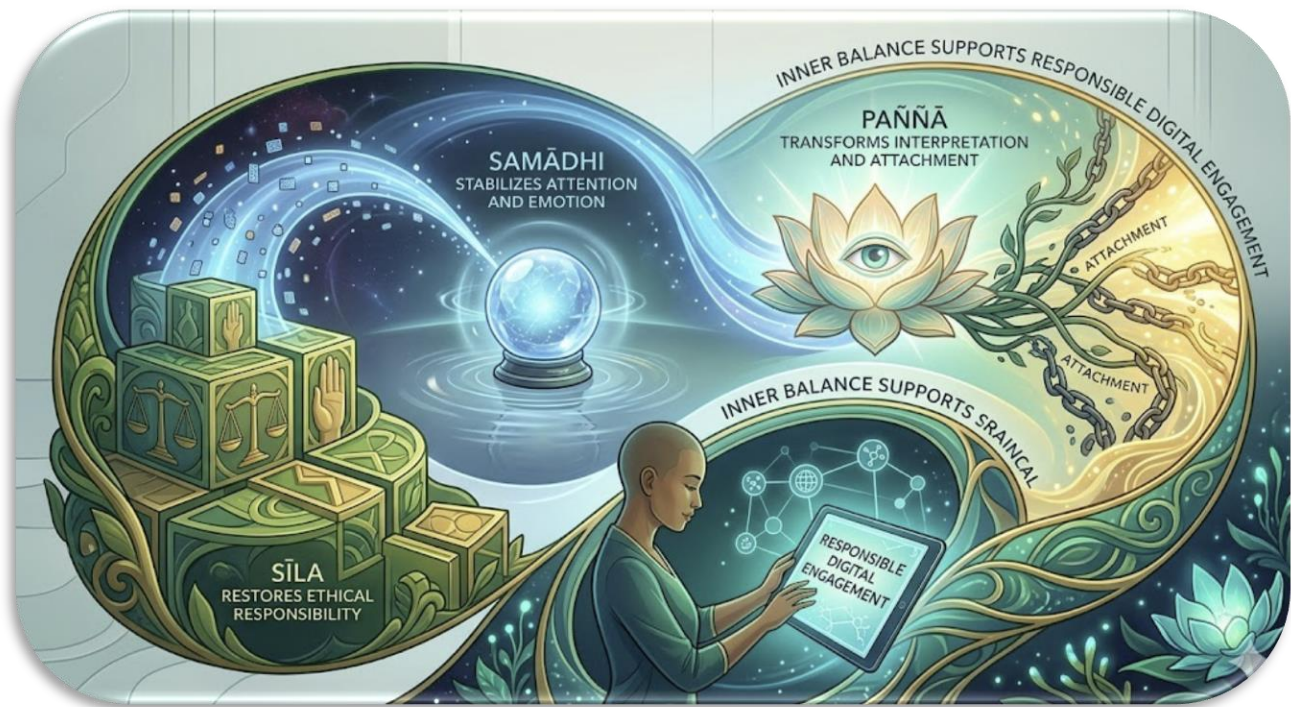


Figure 3 Tri-Sikkhā Inner Balance Framework

The framework does not call for withdrawal from technology. It promotes participation that is mindful, ethical, critical, and compassionate. In educational settings, it can be applied through ethical case analysis, mindful pauses before online interaction, reflection on emotional triggers, media-literacy activities, and responsible use of artificial intelligence. Families and workplaces can support the framework by setting clear expectations regarding availability, privacy, respectful communication, and periods of digital rest. Nevertheless, individual practice should complement rather than replace institutional responsibility. Technology companies, educational institutions, workplaces, and governments must also address harmful platform design, excessive monitoring, privacy violations, and algorithmic amplification. Inner development and structural reform are therefore mutually necessary for sustainable digital well-being.

Conclusion

The Buddhist Threefold Training (Tri-Sikkhā)—Sīla (ethical conduct), Samādhi (mental stability), and Paññā (wisdom)—provides an integrated framework for addressing digital stress, emotional vulnerability, and harmful online behavior. Together, these dimensions promote ethical responsibility, emotional regulation, and critical digital engagement.

Rather than encouraging withdrawal from technology, the Tri-Sikkhā Inner Balance Framework supports mindful, ethical, and compassionate participation in digital life. Its application across educational, family, and workplace contexts can foster digital well-being, while sustainable outcomes also require institutional efforts to address harmful platform design and other structural challenges. Thus, both inner development and systemic reform are essential for restoring balance in the digital age.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that digital stress becomes particularly detrimental when it amplifies emotional vulnerability and weakens moral responsibility. Under such conditions, individuals are more likely to respond impulsively, rationalize harmful forms of communication, and become entrenched in cycles of interpersonal conflict and psychological distress. The framework of Tri-Sikkhā offers an integrative response to these challenges. Sīla (ethical conduct) functions to counter moral disengagement and reinforce principled behavior in digital environments. Samādhi (concentration) enhances attentional control and emotional regulation, thereby reducing reactivity to online stressors. Paññā (wisdom) facilitates critical interpretation, enabling individuals to recognize and correct distorted cognitions shaped by digital interactions. Collectively, these three dimensions of training restore psychological equilibrium by harmonizing conduct, affective regulation, attentional stability, and cognitive insight.

Importantly, the application of Tri-Sikkhā in digital contexts extends beyond the reduction of technology use. Its primary aim is the cultivation of individuals capable of engaging with digital environments while maintaining ethical accountability, emotional resilience, critical discernment, and respect for human dignity. Future empirical research is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of Tri-Sikkhā-based interventions in reducing digital stress, enhancing emotional regulation, and fostering responsible digital citizenship across diverse age groups and cultural settings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for both research and practice. First, digital well-being interventions should move beyond surface-level strategies focused solely on reducing screen time and instead incorporate holistic developmental frameworks such as Tri-Sikkhā. Integrating Sīla (ethical conduct), Samādhi (attention and emotional regulation), and Paññā (critical understanding) can provide a more comprehensive approach to addressing the psychological and moral dimensions of digital stress.

Second, educational institutions and digital literacy programs should embed ethical reflection, mindfulness-based attention training, and critical media literacy into their curricula. Such integration may strengthen students' capacity to regulate emotional responses, reduce impulsive online behavior, and promote responsible digital communication.

Third, policymakers and digital platform designers are encouraged to consider value-based design approaches that support user well-being, such as features that encourage mindful usage, reduce cognitive overload, and discourage toxic interaction patterns. These structural interventions can complement individual-level psychological training.

Finally, future research should empirically validate Tri-Sikkhā-based interventions using mixed-method and longitudinal designs. Comparative studies across cultural contexts and age groups are particularly needed to assess the adaptability and effectiveness of this framework in diverse digital environments. Further investigation may also explore how each component of Tri-Sikkhā differentially contributes to reducing digital stress and enhancing ethical digital engagement.

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