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DIGITAL WELL-BEING AS A STRATEGIC ASSET: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PARADOXICAL EFFECTS OF CONNECTIVITY ON EUDEMONIC CONSUMER OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to conduct a systematic review of the literature on digital well-being, focusing on the paradigm shift from merely reducing screen time to achieving profound eudaimonic consumer outcomes. This study investigates how the paradoxical effects of digital connectivity can be managed and transformed into a strategic asset for organizations in building brand equity and long-term loyalty.

Research Design & Methods: Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) protocol guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, an analysis was conducted on 84 scientific publications from Q1-ranked journals from 2018 to 2026. The selection process included identifying central themes, conducting qualitative content analysis, and synthesizing data on digital well-being interventions, consumer behavior, and transformative marketing strategies.

Findings: The research findings reveal the existence of a “Technology and Consumer Well-being Paradox Model,” in which connectivity acts as a double-edged sword: it facilitates autonomy and personal growth while simultaneously triggering technostress and cognitive load. It was found that the current market is dominated by strategies of “individual responsabilization” through digital self-control tools; however, there are strategic opportunities for brands to integrate digital well-being into their value propositions to enhance trust and meaningful engagement, particularly through “eudaimonic entertainment” and corporate digital responsibility.

Implications & Recommendations: Organizations are advised to adopt empathetic digital designs that prioritize the quality of interactions over the quantity of attention. Recommendations include aligning communication strategies with “right to disconnect” regulations and leveraging AI for personalization that supports users’ mental health.

Contribution & Value Added: This study makes a theoretical contribution by conceptualizing digital well-being as a strategic asset within the Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) framework, offering a new perspective that holistically aligns business profitability with human well-being.

Keywords: Digital Well-being, Eudemonic Outcomes, Connectivity Paradox.

JEL codes: M31, O33, I31.

Article type: research paper

INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technology into every aspect of human life has reached an unprecedented level, creating an environment where the line between the physical and virtual

worlds is becoming increasingly blurred. As digitalization expands, growing concerns have emerged regarding the impact of technology on human well-being, sparking the emergence of digital well-being as an urgent issue for consumers, marketing practitioners, health professionals, and policymakers (Burr et al., 2020). Digital well-being, in a broad sense, refers to the impact of digital technology on what it means to lead a good life for humans in the information society (Burr et al., 2020). However, in the literature on marketing and consumer behavior, research often focuses narrowly on reducing excessive social media use or screen time, without addressing deeper aspects of personal growth and human autonomy. The current phenomenon of connectivity is characterized by a fundamental paradox. On one hand, mobile media supports individual autonomy by providing instant access to information, services, and social connections without spatial or temporal constraints (Burr et al., 2020; Johnson, 2020). On the other hand, this same technology challenges that autonomy through constant pressure to stay connected and responsive, which often leads to stress, cognitive fatigue, and disruptions in real-world social relationships. Smartphones, which are touched and tapped thousands of times daily, have become tools that both facilitate and hinder “human flourishing” (Stankov & Gretzel, 2021). In the contexts of tourism, education, and healthcare, technology is often promoted as a tool for innovation, yet consumers frequently find themselves caught in a dilemma between feeling inspired and feeling inadequate.

The market has responded to these concerns by giving rise to a rapidly growing digital well-being intervention industry. This industry encompasses digital self-control tools (DSCTs), self-help literature, and digital detox programs aimed at helping users “reclaim control” over their lives (Abeele, 2021). However, critical analysis suggests that the current market framing tends to emphasize individual responsibility (responsibilization), which risks creating consumer vulnerability rather than genuine empowerment (McLean et al., 2025). There is a clear shift in which digital well-being is now viewed not only as a public health issue but also as a significant market trend where brands compete to offer solutions to consumers’ digital stress. In the age of the attention economy, traditional marketing strategies focused on maximizing usage duration are beginning to lose their effectiveness as consumers increasingly seek intentional disconnections. The emergence of the concept of Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) provides a foundation for marketing to function as a force for good, explicitly promoting solutions for societal well-being (Hutton et al., 2025). Here, digital well-being is positioned as a strategic asset; companies that proactively integrate well-being values into their product design and communications have proven capable of building deeper trust and loyalty (Paul & Spais, 2026). For example, in the financial industry, leveraging customer intelligence as a strategic asset enables institutions to provide more empathetic and responsive engagement, which is essential for building long-term relationships amid market volatility (Aung et al., 2024; Rani et al., 2026).

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) adds a new layer of complexity to these dynamics. AI has great potential to enhance well-being through personalization that supports users’ life goals, yet it also carries risks of bias and manipulation that can undermine individual autonomy (Joel et al., 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how technology can be designed with empathy, where every feature supports psychological well-being and personal empowerment rather than merely chasing superficial engagement metrics (Gaggioli et al., 2017). Across the globe, this paradigm shift is also being reinforced by public policies, such as “right to disconnect” regulations aimed at protecting workers’ mental health from the damaging “always-on” culture (Gutsu & Shyroka, 2025). Although there is a growing body of literature on the negative impacts of technology, there remains a gap in understanding how eudaimonic well-being outcomes—related to life meaning, self-actualization, and mastery of the environment—can be achieved through intentional digital interactions (Kolhe & Naik, 2025; Ryff, 2017). Most previous research continues to pathologize digital use or employs subjective well-being frameworks that fail to capture the dynamic nature of human-technology relationships (Chen et al., 2025). Furthermore, there is an urgent need to view digital well-being as a strategic asset in marketing, where business success is no longer measured solely by transaction volume, but by its contribution to “human flourishing” (McLean et al., 2025). This study claims novelty by conducting a critical evaluation of the digital well-being literature through the lens of eudaimonic outcomes, moving beyond reductionist approaches that focus solely on reducing screen time. Unlike previous studies that view digital well-

being as a constraint on marketing, this article proposes the thesis that digital well-being is a catalyst for sustainable brand equity and affective loyalty. By integrating perspectives from Transformative Consumer Research, AI ethics, and the latest public policy, this research offers an integrative framework that explains how organizations can navigate the connectivity paradox to create truly meaningful value for consumers in the 2024–2026 digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Dichotomy of Well-being: Hedonism vs. Eudaimonia in the Digital Context

Well-being, both philosophically and psychologically, has long been debated through two main approaches: hedonism and eudaimonia. The hedonistic approach is rooted in the thought of Aristippus, who viewed well-being as the pursuit of pleasure and the minimization of pain, often measured through momentary happiness and the satisfaction of desires (Zheng et al., 2016). In the context of digital consumption, hedonistic motivation is reflected in the use of technology for light entertainment, instant gratification through social media, and pleasurable sensory experiences (Riskos et al., 2025). Conversely, the eudaimonic approach, inspired by Aristotle, defines well-being as a state of “functioning well,” in which individuals move toward the realization of their full potential in alignment with personal values and meaningful life goals (Kolhe & Naik, 2025). Recent research in marketing has begun shifting its focus from purely hedonistic consumption toward eudaimonic consumption. Today’s consumers no longer seek merely superficial pleasure but also pursue intellectually, emotionally, or morally challenging activities that contribute to self-realization (Riskos et al., 2025). Eudaimonic well-being in the digital environment involves a sense of autonomy, competence, and deep connectedness (Sharma et al., 2017). Unlike hedonistic satisfaction, which is often passive in nature, eudaimonic experiences are typically effort-driven; that is, the greater the effort invested in an activity (such as in the process of co-creation or online learning), the greater the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction derived (Zheng et al., 2016).

Conceptualizing Digital Well-being and the Connectivity Paradox

Digital well-being has emerged as a new concept that seeks to define the balance between the benefits and burdens of digital connectivity. It is often defined as a transient state of optimal balance between connection and disconnection, which depends on personal, device, and contextual factors (Abeele, 2021). Theoretically, digital well-being is not merely about the absence of digital “ill-being” (such as addiction or tech-related stress), but also about the presence of positive psychological functions within the digital ecosystem. The connectivity paradox lies at the heart of the digital well-being discourse (Chen et al., 2025). Modern communication technologies provide freedom and autonomy through unlimited accessibility, yet simultaneously create “Availability Creep”—the erosion of boundaries between work and personal time as well as between public and private spaces (Abeele, 2021). This tension creates a dissonance in which consumers feel the need to stay constantly connected for the sake of efficiency and social relationships, yet at the same time long for peace of mind and control over their attention (Verhoef et al., 2017). The “Technology and Consumer Well-being Paradox” model explains that technology tends to simultaneously enhance, diminish, and dynamically manage consumer well-being (McLean et al., 2025).

Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) and Marketing as a Force for Good

Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) is a subfield of marketing focused on creating positive societal impact through research addressing complex and urgent social issues (Hutton et al., 2025; Ozanne et al., 2024). TCR encourages researchers and practitioners to move beyond traditional profit-centric models toward the integration of social responsibility, inclusivity, and planetary sustainability (Paul & Spais, 2026). Within this framework, digital well-being is viewed as a sustainability issue, where “Sustainable Consumer Well-being” (sCWB) is defined as a dynamic balance between individual, social, and environmental interactions in the marketplace (Machin et al., 2025). Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR) emerges as a strategic manifestation of TCR principles. CDR encompasses four main dimensions: responsible data handling, fair automated systems, protection of digital well-being, and technological sustainability (Dörr & Lautermann,

2024; Joel et al., 2024). Companies that effectively implement CDR send a strong signal of virtue and integrity to consumers, which in turn strengthens brand legitimacy and fosters long-term, mutually beneficial customer relationships. Amid growing skepticism toward manipulative algorithmic practices, transparency and digital ethics have become strategic assets that differentiate brands in the market (Paul & Spais, 2026).

Digital Self-Control Tools (DSCTs) and Attention Management

As awareness of the negative impacts of technology grows, consumers are turning to Digital Self-Control Tools (DSCTs) as a defense mechanism. These tools, such as app timers, focus modes, and notification blockers, aim to help users regulate their digital behavior to align with their conscious intentions (McLean et al., 2025). Research indicates that structured reflection on digital behavior through mild interventions can enhance users' self-awareness and positive emotions (Roffarello & Russis, 2023). However, the literature also notes that reliance on these self-control tools reflects the "technology paradox," in which technology is used to address problems created by technology itself. Furthermore, an excessive focus on individual-level interventions may divert attention from the need for more ethical platform design and stronger policy regulations that protect collective mental well-being (Silchenko, 2025). The emergence of AI assistants for digital well-being offers a future in which technology proactively detects deviations in user behavior from their goals and provides "gentle nudges" to help them stay focused (Roffarello & Russis, 2023).

METHODS

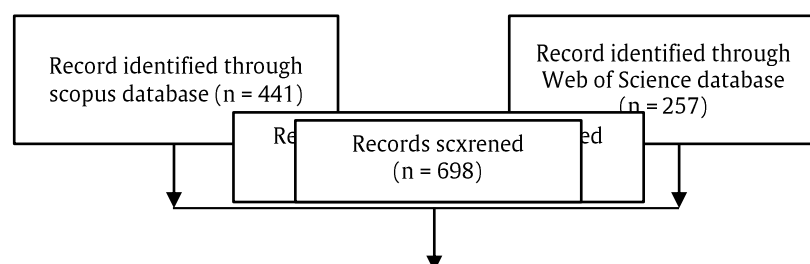
Research Design and Search Protocol

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) protocol to ensure the transparency and validity of the findings (Rosário & Dias, 2025). The use of an SLR is considered most appropriate as it allows for a critical synthesis of the scattered literature on digital well-being and eudaimonic outcomes, while also identifying existing theoretical gaps. The primary focus of this methodology is to move beyond simple bibliometric descriptions toward an in-depth content analysis of how digital connectivity operates as a double-edged sword in consumers' lives.

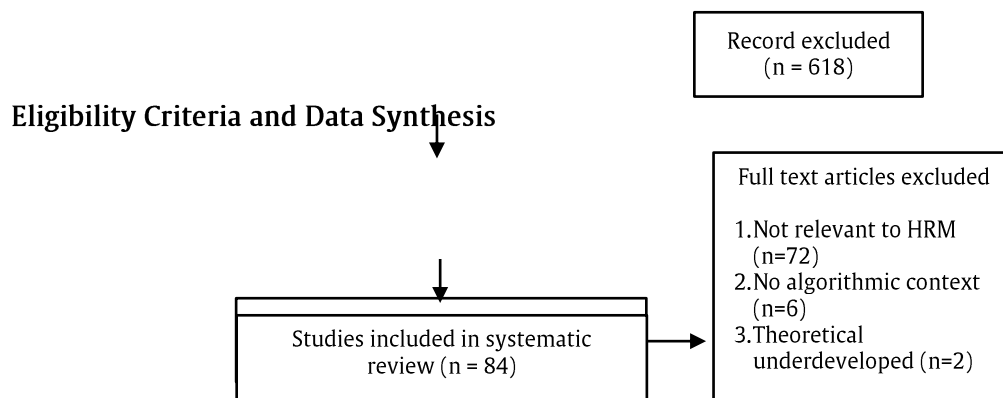
The literature search strategy was conducted comprehensively across high-reputation databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The selection of these databases was based on their extensive coverage of Q1-ranked journals in the fields of marketing and management. The search utilized a combination of Boolean terms designed to capture both the technical and psychological dimensions of the research topic: ("digital well-being" OR "digital wellness") AND ("eudemonic outcomes" OR "human flourishing" OR "self-actualization") AND ("connectivity paradox" OR 'technostress') AND ("marketing strategy").

The timeframe is set from 2018 to 2026. The selection of 2018 as the starting point is based on the emergence of a global shift in focus from "internet addiction" toward a more holistic "digital well-being" following the implementation of the GDPR and increased awareness of digital privacy. Meanwhile, extending the forecast to 2026 is necessary to capture future trends in the integration of generative AI, which is beginning to dominate current discourse on transformative marketing. The initial identification process yielded a total of 698 records from the selected databases (441 from Scopus and 257 from Web of Science). This stage aimed to capture as much relevant literature as possible before conducting a rigorous screening based on predefined eligibility criteria (Page et al., 2021).

Figure 1 Protokol Seleksi Literatur Berdasarkan Standar PRISMA 2020



Source: created by author (2026)



Following the identification and deduplication stages, a screening process was conducted on 698 articles based on their titles and abstracts to ensure alignment with the research focus. Inclusion criteria were strictly defined: (1) only Q1-ranked peer-reviewed journal articles to ensure theoretical and methodological quality; (2) studies that explicitly address the relationship between digital technology and consumer well-being from a marketing or positive psychology perspective; and (3) articles published in English or Indonesian. Conversely, exclusion criteria included conference papers, theses, editorials, and purely medical clinical studies that lacked relevance to market contexts or consumer behavior.

A total of 618 articles were excluded during the initial screening stage for failing to meet thematic criteria or publication quality standards. The remaining articles then underwent a full-text assessment. In this phase, the researchers conducted a critical evaluation of 80 primary articles, focusing on the depth of analysis regarding eudaimonic outcomes (such as life meaning and autonomy) rather than merely fleeting hedonistic satisfaction. Reasons for exclusion at this stage included a lack of algorithmic context in discussions of well-being or a failure to link findings to strategic marketing strategies. Through this iterative process, 84 high-quality academic publications were ultimately selected as the final sample for in-depth analysis.

Data from the 84 selected articles were systematically extracted using a standardized form covering publication details, the theoretical models employed (such as Self-Determination Theory or the PERMA model), the original research methodology, and key findings regarding the paradoxical effects of connectivity. Data synthesis was conducted using qualitative content analysis and thematic clustering techniques. The findings were categorized into three major themes that consistently emerged in the literature: (1) the dialectic between autonomy and digital control; (2) the role of artificial intelligence in facilitating or hindering self-development; and (3) the influence of public policies (such as the “right to disconnect”) on brand engagement strategies. This approach ensures that this review not only summarizes the existing literature but also offers an integrative framework that positions digital well-being as a strategic asset for organizations in the future.

RESULT

Digital Well-being Market Analysis

The digital well-being market has evolved into a substantial category of products and services in response to criticism of excessive technology consumption. Based on an analysis of 371 digital well-being products—including apps, devices, information products, and services—it was

found that the market frames well-being as a eudaimonic goal that can be achieved through the mindful management of digital interactions.

Table 1 Taxonomy of Digital Well-being Interventions and Their Welfare Objectives.

Product Categories	Description	Well-being Goals	Reference
Apps	Screen time tracker, distraction blocker, focus mode.	Self-control, productivity, reduction of cognitive stress.	Abeele (2021)
Gadgets	Basic cell phones, Faraday cages, fitness trackers.	Physical disconnection, reduced exposure to radiation/signals, biometric monitoring.	Silchenko (2025)
Information Products	Self-help books, digital detox guides, ethics curriculum.	Digital literacy, mental awareness, behavioral change.	Silchenko (2025)
Services	Digital detox retreats, mental health training, digital risk insurance.	Emotional restoration, community support, psychological safety.	Silchenko (2025)

Source: Created by author (2025)

Although the market offers solutions, there is criticism that these strategies tend to shift systemic problems onto individuals. However, from a marketing perspective, the availability of these products indicates the existence of a significant consumer segment that values meaning and balance in their digital lives ([Silchenko, 2025](#)).

The Technology Paradox Model and Its Impact on Eudaimonia

The literature confirms that digital technology has a dual function that simultaneously works against consumers' eudaimonic well-being. This model divides the function of technology into three dynamic roles: enhancing, diminishing, and managing well-being ([McLean et al., 2025](#)).

$$\text{Total Digital Well-being} = \int (f_{\text{Enhancing}}(t) - f_{\text{Diminishing}}(t) + f_{\text{Managing}}(t)) dt$$

Enhancing functions include providing tools for personal growth, access to global education, and real-time health monitoring that boost self-efficacy and autonomy ([Farley, 2020](#); [McLean et al., 2025](#)). Conversely, the reductive functions manifest as identity dissonance, information fatigue, and a loss of autonomy resulting from reliance on AI decision algorithms ([Han et al., 2026](#); [McLean et al., 2025](#)). The role of management emerges as a "paradox within a paradox," where new technologies are created to mitigate the harm caused by previous technologies. Another key finding indicates that eudaimonic entertainment (such as thought-provoking film content or documentaries that prompt introspection) on OTT platforms like Netflix has a stronger impact on brand engagement compared to purely hedonistic entertainment ([Riskos et al., 2025](#)). Consumers engaged in eudaimonic entertainment tend to exhibit more focused attention and more stable loyalty toward platforms that facilitate their cognitive needs.

AI as a Strategic Asset and Ethical Risk

The digital transformation driven by AI has shifted the marketing landscape from mass communication to deep, personalized dialogue. AI is no longer viewed merely as a tool for operational efficiency but as a strategic asset capable of understanding and predicting customer well-being needs in real-time ([Aung et al., 2024](#); [Ibrampur et al., 2026](#)).

The use of AI as a strategic asset encompasses seven key areas:

1. Improved Customer Service: Chatbots that are available 24/7 reduce customer anxiety and provide instant support ([Jayawardhena et al., 2026](#)).
2. Security and Fraud Management: AI algorithms protect sensitive data, building the fundamental trust necessary for digital well-being ([Saura et al., 2024](#)).

3. Content Personalization: AI curates experiences relevant to users’ life goals, avoiding the cognitive burden of irrelevant information (Aung et al., 2024; Ibrampur et al., 2026).
4. Supply Chain Optimization: Ensuring product availability when needed, reducing stress caused by uncertainty (Hwang et al., 2026).
5. Financial Decision Analysis: Helping users manage risk and plan for the future, supporting a sense of environmental mastery (environmental mastery) (Aung et al., 2024; Ibrampur et al., 2026).
6. Recruitment and Talent Management: Reducing bias in employee selection and supporting career growth (Joel et al., 2024).
7. Cybersecurity: Fortifying corporate data defenses, which directly impact consumer privacy and psychological stability (Joel et al., 2024).

However, the literature also warns of the “Privacy Paradox,” in which the effectiveness of AI-based marketing often conflicts with privacy standards.¹⁹ The success of future AI strategies hinges heavily on “Data Dignity”—treating user data as an extension of personal identity that demands strict ethical handling (Joel et al., 2024).

Public Policy and the Right to Disconnect

One of the most crucial developments in the digital well-being domain for the 2024–2026 period is the introduction of legislation granting workers the right to disconnect from work-related communications outside of working hours. This policy represents a systemic response to the “always-on” phenomenon driven by technology.

Country/Jurisdiction	Key Policies	Impact Goals	Reference
Australia	The right to refuse work-related contact outside of contracted hours, effective 2025.	Reduction in burnout; 31% increase in productivity while working.	Gutsu & Shyroka (2025)
Spain	Strengthening regulations on digital disconnection and self-regulation training.	Protection of mental health; reduction in cognitive stress.	Bondanini et al. (2025)
European Union/Federal	A framework for psychosocial safety and protection from digital surveillance.	Improvement in social well-being and reduction in the risk of domestic violence caused by work-related stress.	Fenwick et al. (2019)

Source: created by author (2025)

The implementation of this policy has significant implications for brand marketing strategies. Companies that adopt a “Mindful Marketing” culture—one that respects the time limits of both consumers and employees—have seen an 18% increase in customer satisfaction and a strengthened brand reputation as responsible leaders (Gaggioli et al., 2017).

DISCUSSION

Reconceptualizing Digital Well-being: From Ethical Compliance to a Signaling-Based Strategic Asset

The paradigm shift identified in this review confirms that digital well-being has evolved from merely a moral responsibility or ethical compliance into a strategic asset that determines a brand’s competitiveness in the era of an attention-saturated economy (Kalogeras & Mejri, 2025; Silchenko, 2025). In an information environment often deemed “toxic” due to cognitive overload and algorithmic manipulation, brands that position themselves as guardians of consumer autonomy will gain a significant competitive edge. Literature analysis indicates that contemporary consumer loyalty is no longer driven solely by functional product satisfaction, but rather by a holistic

perception of how a brand contributes to their eudaimonic quality of life. Through the lens of Signaling Theory, proactive Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR) practices—such as algorithmic transparency, robust privacy protections, and self-control features—serve as credible signals regarding an organization's competence, benevolence, and integrity (Kunz & Wirtz, 2026). In a market characterized by sharp information asymmetry between platforms and users, these signals are a crucial prerequisite for building trust. The CDR dimension, which encompasses responsible data handling and fair automated systems, serves as evidence of a company's long-term commitment to consumer well-being, which in turn strengthens brand legitimacy in the eyes of an increasingly skeptical audience (Joel et al., 2024).

This phenomenon is particularly relevant for the Generation Z segment, which actively seeks out brands that align their business practices with values of sustainability and personal growth (Kokkinopoulou et al., 2025). Research shows that when young consumers experience digital interactions that prioritize transparency and value, they develop a deeper emotional connection and a willingness to pay a premium price. Furthermore, in high-engagement sectors such as the financial industry, the use of customer intelligence as a strategic asset enables institutions to move beyond impersonal transactions toward more empathetic and responsive dialogue (Marti et al., 2024). This transforms the role of marketing from a mere promotional tool into a trust-building engine that supports customer retention amid global market volatility. Thus, digital well-being is no longer an additional “cost,” but rather a strategic investment that strengthens brand equity by reducing perceived risk and reinforcing emotional commitment.

Navigating the Connectivity Paradox Through the Lens of Empathic Design and CLV

The tension between the promise of digital autonomy and the reality of “availability creep” creates what is known as the Technology and Consumer Well-being Paradox. On the one hand, mobile technology offers unlimited freedom of access; on the other hand, it challenges autonomy through constant pressure to remain permanently online and permanently connected. This discussion proposes that marketing strategies must deconstruct traditional engagement models focused on attention duration or interaction quantity (e.g., clicks and view time) (Oh et al., 2018). Instead, organizations need to adopt the Empathic Digital Design paradigm, which prioritizes mindful engagement and the quality of experience over mere exposure volume (Gaggioli et al., 2017). Empathic design functions not only as a stress-mitigation tool but also as a driver of customer value growth. Data shows that integrating empathetic design elements—such as emotional regulation features and AI transparency—can reduce user anxiety levels by up to 54% and increase app retention by up to 76% (Fang et al., 2026). From a Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) perspective, this approach is crucial because it shifts the foundation of the customer relationship from transient hedonistic gratification (such as dopamine spikes from notifications) toward eudaimonic satisfaction rooted in the achievement of life goals and self-realization (Ali & Shabn, 2024). Consumers who feel empowered by technology to “function well” will exhibit significantly more stable brand loyalty and be more resistant to competitors' offers (Kumar et al., 2026).

The implementation of empathetic design also includes the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI), where AI is not used to manipulate behavior, but rather to provide personalized health and productivity recommendations (Kankanhalli et al., 2021). When technology is used to manage the negative impacts of technology itself—such as through digital self-control tools or AI assistants that provide “gentle nudges”—a partial resolution to the connectivity paradox occurs. This strategy creates a value cycle in which consumers feel empowered, not controlled, which ultimately strengthens perceptions of brand quality and reduces the psychological distance between consumers and digital service providers (Kumar et al., 2026; Verma & Arora, 2025). Thus, human-centered design serves as a catalyst for loyalty that is not merely behavioral (behavioral stickiness) but also involves deep affective commitment (Gaggioli et al., 2017).

Macro-Marketing Implications: Responses to Regulation and the Role of TCR

On a macro level, the emergence of “Right to Disconnect” regulations in various jurisdictions such as Spain and Australia during the 2024–2025 period marks a shift from individual responsibility toward systemic accountability. This policy is not merely a labor law issue but has

profound macro-marketing implications for how brands interact with their audiences. Organizations that proactively align their external communication strategies with the principles of digital disconnection will strengthen their Employer Value Proposition (EVP) and build a reputation as responsible market leaders. Conversely, companies that continue to enforce an “always-on” culture risk experiencing the phenomenon of Citizenship Fatigue, where collective consumer mental exhaustion leads to rejection of marketing messages and a decline in overall engagement performance (Gutsu & Shyroka, 2025).

This development reinforces the role of Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) in guiding marketing practices toward becoming a “Force for Good” (Kipnis et al., 2025; Ozanne et al., 2024). TCR emphasizes the importance of orienting research and marketing practices toward tangible social impact and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Digital well-being is now positioned as a sustainability issue on par with environmental conservation, where “Sustainable Consumer Well-being” (sCWB) is defined as a dynamic balance between individual, social, and environmental interactions (Machin et al., 2025). Successful macro-marketing strategies in the future (2025–2026) will depend on organizations’ ability to engage in cross-sector collaboration to address complex issues such as information overload and digital isolation. This evolution also demands a transformation in business education and marketing curricula, where digital literacy and ethical creativity must be integrated as core competencies for future leaders (Paul & Spais, 2026). By viewing marketing through a systemic lens, organizations can recognize that consumer mental health is a macro-level resource that must be safeguarded for long-term economic stability (Collins, 2025). Exploitative marketing practices that prey on human attention will only yield short-term profits but undermine the carrying capacity of the market ecosystem in the future (Samara et al., 2025). Therefore, the strategic alignment of business profitability and eudaimonic societal well-being is the only path to sustainable market resilience in the post-digital era.

Future Projections: The Dialectic of AI and Eudaimonic Well-being (2025–2026)

As we enter the 2025–2026 horizon, artificial intelligence (AI) will become the primary dialectical force redefining the boundaries of digital well-being (Mazzi & Floridi, 2023). AI no longer functions as a static automation tool but transforms into a highly personalized “Adaptive Conversation” capable of understanding the nuances of consumers’ emotional needs and eudaimonic aspirations in real time (Rapp et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2021). However, these advancements bring increasingly sophisticated ethical risks, including a new Privacy Paradox where the effectiveness of personalization often demands significant sacrifices of privacy. A brand’s future success will hinge heavily on the implementation of the “Data Dignity” concept, where user data is treated as an extension of sacred personal identity and managed with unprecedented standards of transparency.

The future of digital well-being will be determined by AI’s ability to transition from a monitoring role to a scaffolding role for human growth (Alfonso, 2020). Next-generation AI assistants are expected to be able to detect deviations in user behavior from their conscious intentions and provide gentle nudges to maintain focus and mental balance. On the other hand, the digital entertainment industry will increasingly shift toward “Eudemonic Entertainment,” where AI-driven content is designed not only for momentary pleasure but also to spark self-reflection, meaning, and transformative learning. This strategy enables media brands like Netflix or social media platforms to build deeper, higher-quality engagement, moving beyond superficial engagement metrics (Kross et al., 2021). Integrating AI into business strategies must address the challenges of algorithmic bias and the risk of misinformation, which can erode public trust (Hobson et al., 2023). The brands that will dominate the 2026 market are those capable of navigating this technological ambivalence by creating truly meaningful value without infringing on individual autonomy. As AI increasingly takes over routine cognitive tasks, strategic value will shift toward “High-Value Consulting” and interactions that enrich the human spirit. In this landscape, digital well-being is no longer merely an add-on but the core of a brand’s value proposition, one that seeks to facilitate human flourishing amidst the ever-evolving complexities of the digital world.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review provides conclusive evidence that digital well-being has evolved from merely a discourse on individual mental health into a fundamental strategic asset within the architecture of modern marketing. Through a critical synthesis of the literature from 2018 to 2026, this study concludes that failure to navigate the connectivity paradox—which simultaneously offers empowerment and psychosocial burdens—constitutes a systemic risk that could degrade brand equity in the future. The primary theoretical contribution of this article lies in conceptualizing digital well-being as a dynamic equilibrium condition within the framework of Transformative Consumer Research (TCR), where the achievement of consumers' eudaimonic outcomes (autonomy, mastery, and purpose) serves as the primary determinant of long-term market stability. From a managerial perspective, this study recommends a radical shift from attention economy strategies toward a mindful engagement model. Organizations must proactively conduct digital well-being audits across all customer touchpoints, integrate AI as a tool for personal growth rather than a means of behavioral manipulation, and adopt a "right to disconnect" policy as a tangible manifestation of corporate digital responsibility (CDR). These steps not only mitigate citizenship fatigue among consumers but also strengthen affective loyalty that is more resilient to price fluctuations and market competition. This study is limited by its focus on Q1 journal literature, which may not fully capture the market dynamics in developing countries specifically. Therefore, future research is encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of digital well-being interventions in cross-cultural contexts and to explore the role of generative AI in facilitating "human flourishing" at a more granular level. In conclusion, marketing success in the post-digital era of 2026 will be largely determined by a brand's ability to not only provide functional value but also act as a catalyst for holistic and meaningful human development.

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