

## Exploring The Perspectives of Higher Education Administrators on Technology Addiction Yükseköğretimde Görev Yapan Yöneticilerin Teknoloji Bağımlılığına İlişkin Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi

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**Abstract:** The rapid advancement of digitalization today has made the intensive use of technology a factor that could have profound effects on individuals' lifestyles and professional approaches. In this context, the technology habits of higher education administrators and the potential of these habits to reach addiction levels have emerged as a significant subject of study. The main aim of the research is to determine the administrators' awareness of technology addiction, the effects of this situation on their work performance, and to propose potential solutions. The study utilized a qualitative method, conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 26 administrators. Participants were selected from different management levels, and the data obtained were analyzed through descriptive analysis to create themes. The results indicate that administrators could not fully clarify the concept of technology addiction but indicated that excessive use. Particularly, the lack of control in mobile phone and social media use stands out, while some administrators stated that technology facilitates work processes, others expressed that constant connectivity disrupts work-life balance. In this direction, the importance of awareness training, digital detox practices, and effective technology management strategies has been emphasized.

**Keywords:** Technology Addiction, Higher Education Administrators, Digitalization, Work-Life Balance, Awareness

**Öz:** Günümüzde dijitalleşmenin hızla ilerlemesi, teknolojinin yoğun kullanımını bireylerin yaşam tarzları ve profesyonel yöntemleri üzerinde derin etkiler yaratabilecek bir faktör haline getirmiştir. Bu kapsamda, yükseköğretim yöneticilerinin teknoloji alışkanlıkları ve bu alışkanlıkların bağımlılık seviyelerine ulaşma potansiyeli önemli bir inceleme konusu olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Araştırmanın temel amacı; yükseköğretimde görev yapan yöneticilerin teknoloji bağımlılığına ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesidir. Nitel yöntemin kullanıldığı çalışmada, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla 26 yöneticiyle derinlemesine görüşülmüştür. Katılımcılar, farklı yönetim kademelerinden seçilmiş ve elde edilen veriler betimsel analiz ile değerlendirilerek temalar oluşturulmuştur. Sonuçlar, yöneticilerin teknoloji bağımlılığı kavramını tam olarak netleştiremediklerini ancak aşırı kullanımın hem kişisel hem de iş yaşamlarında olumsuz etkiler yarattığını göstermektedir. Özellikle cep telefonu ve sosyal medya kullanımında kontrol eksikliği dikkat çekerken, bazı yöneticiler teknolojinin iş süreçlerini kolaylaştırdığını, diğerleri ise sürekli bağlantının iş-yaşam dengesini bozduğunu ifade etmiştir. Bu doğrultuda farkındalık eğitimleri, dijital detoks uygulamaları ve etkin teknoloji yönetimi stratejilerinin önemi vurgulanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Teknoloji Bağımlılığı, Yükseköğretim Yöneticileri, Dijitalleşme, İş-yaşam Dengesi, Farkındalık

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### Introduction

The concept of "Technology Addiction" is described as a problem of the modern age. The rapid development of technology, including innovations such as three-dimensional televisions and digital glasses, has led to near-ubiquitous ownership of devices like mobile phones and laptops; this pervasive relationship can be explained by the concept of "technology addiction" (Young, 2009). Technology addiction is a broad term that generally refers to the uncontrollable urge to use technological devices such as computers, smartphones, and gaming systems (Millicent, 2018). At the same time, it is defined as a serious problem characterized by the inability to control the use of the internet, smartphones, tablets and various types of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Technology Addiction, 2020). Technology addiction is defined characterized by an individual's excessive use of a technological product, suffering withdrawal symptoms when access is restricted, and grappling with the resulting negative consequences (Karayel, 2019). Griffiths (2000) considers these addictions as a subtype of behavioral addiction that is unrelated to chemical use and arises from human-computer interaction.

Griffiths (1995, 2000) saw technology addiction as a term that includes this form of addiction, and in 2005, he offered six

criteria to delineate its symptoms. The criteria encompass the predominance of technology in influencing the user's cognition and behavior (Attention-Seeking/Saliency), the user's adverse emotional responses when deprived of technology (Withdrawal), the internal strife concerning the user's daily life and obligations as a result of technology engagement (Conflict), and the user's incapacity to voluntarily diminish their technology usage (Relapse and Regression).

Other criteria include the user's desire to gain more excitement than previous uses with increased technology use (Tolerance) and the user's feeling relaxed, excited, or experiencing mood changes while using technology (Mood Swing).

Young (1997) suggested that the main reasons that lead individuals to technology addiction include lack of social support, adverse living conditions, sexuality, recognition and power needs. Young (1996) accepted internet addiction as a psychiatric disorder and defined "problematic internet use" (PIC) by measuring the "pathological gambling" criteria in DSM-IV; Accordingly, if the user meets five of the eight criteria, addiction occurs. These criteria include too much mental preoccupation with the internet, the need to constantly increase it, unsuccessful attempts to avoid using the internet, and withdrawal symptoms (irritability, restlessness, anger) when use is reduced. According to the classification made on

the basis of usage periods in the Technology Addiction Process, the use of digital technology up to 4 hours is considered potential addicted, the use between 4-8 hours is addicted, and the use between 8-16 hours is considered risky addicted. This situation is seen as an inevitable result of the increase in the level of internet addiction as the duration of use increases (Şahin, 2019).

The main factor in the development and advancement of technology is education. Increasing the quality and quality of education, using technology to develop and support people's interests and abilities in line with their wishes has a facilitating effect on the achievement of these works. The effective use of technology in educational activities and studies facilitates learning and teaching, as well as accessing and using information (Elvan & Mutlubaş, 2010). However, when the literature is examined, it is seen that many studies have been conducted on technology addiction in the world and in Türkiye. These studies have tried to examine technology addiction in people of different age groups based on many different variables. These researches on social network addiction, instant messaging addiction, online game addiction and website addiction in different educational organizations in our country and around the world are examined separately below.

In website addiction research; Kubey, Lavin and Barrows (2001), in their study on 572 university students; They found that too much recreational use of the internet was effective in reducing academic performance. While it was explained that it was caused by loneliness, loss of time, fatigue and internet use, it was determined that the use of all tools on the internet and especially the environment as a discussion forum had a negative effect on academic performance. From research on online game addiction; Hauge and Gentile (2003) had 607 students participate in a study they conducted to examine how playing too many video games affects adolescents' success and behavior at school. This study found that students who are addicted to video games spend a lot of time playing these games. It was also determined that addicted students did not do well at school. In their social network addiction research, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) investigated the relationship between Facebook and academic performance on 219 university students and it was determined that 74% of the participants had a negative effect. In the instant messaging addiction study, Huang and Leung (2010) found that the level of chat and the level of instant messaging addiction were positively associated with a decrease in academic performance. It was determined that as the duration of use increased, the consumption levels of the students increased and their academic performance decreased. Junco and Cotten (2011) also found that participants who used messaging programs intensively did less homework and therefore their academic performance was negatively affected. On the other hand, Chen and Peng (2008) found in their research that people who use the internet often show symptoms of depression.

Toraman (2013) determined that as the level of social media use of high school students increased, their internet addiction levels also increased. According to studies in the field of educational sciences, the rate of internet addiction increases as the level of education increases. In addition, according to other studies, it has been determined that the number of addictive male students is higher than female students. It is among the results that these young people, who exhibit behaviors that cause internet addiction, also show substance addiction characteristics due to the use of substances

such as cigarettes, alcohol, etc. According to studies conducted mainly with adolescents, the role of perceived social support from family, friends and teachers is seen among the factors affecting internet addiction in young people. Therefore, as the family support of adolescents increases, their internet addiction levels decrease. Studies have observed that young people cannot spend enough time with their family and friends due to social media use, and that social media use restricts the time spent on activities such as studying and participating in social activities. In addition, an association has been found between internet addiction and loneliness and social loneliness. It was determined that peer pressure on students increased, and as the addiction and support of their friends increased, their internet addiction levels also increased.

Junco and Cotten (2011); The study, in which 100 students between the ages of 18 and 26 participated, revealed that university students use instant messaging applications at a high rate, and at the same time, they perform versatile tasks while using instant messaging programs. They found that as the level of instant messaging addiction increased, the participants did less homework and therefore negatively affected the academic performance of the participants who used messaging programs intensively.

Berigel, Kokoc and Karal (2012) investigated the relationship between students' scores on social networking sites and their addiction tendencies. It was determined that there was a significant difference between the education levels of the students and the time they spent on the internet. In the studies of Leung, Louis and Lee (2012); It has been revealed that children from low-income families mostly use social media for entertainment purposes and are more interested in playing online games. According to the results of this study; It was found that male participants had a strong tendency to become addicted to the internet and contrary to expectations, the ability to use the internet increased the risk of becoming addicted to the internet in the field of technology and publishing.

Toraman (2013), in his research to examine the effect of internet addiction and social media levels on the academic success of high school students; determined that as the level of social media use of the students increased, their internet addiction levels also increased. It was determined that there was a significant difference between network levels and that the level of usage increased as time increased.

According to these studies, which were mainly conducted with adolescents, the role of perceived social support from family, friends and teachers is seen among the factors affecting internet addiction in young people. Therefore, as the family support of adolescents increases, their internet addiction levels decrease (Kıran Esen, 2009). In addition, it is stated that adolescents' frequent and long-term use of the internet causes problems in the family and weakens social interaction with family members (Arslan Cansever, 2010; Bayhan, 2011) and it has been revealed that young people cannot spend enough time with their family and friends due to the use of social media on the internet (Korkut, 2016). A relationship has also been found between internet addiction and loneliness and social loneliness.

According to the results of Dhir et al., the rate of internet addiction is high in young people with low educational performance, internet connection at home, and family pressure (Dhir et al. 2015). In addition, it has been determined that as the social support they receive from their teachers increases, their internet addiction levels decrease, peer pressure on

students increases, and as the addiction and support of their friends increase, their internet addiction levels increase (Kıran, 2009).

According to studies conducted in the field of educational sciences, the rate of internet addiction increases as the level of education increases (Sargın, 2012; Ayaş and Horzum, 2013). According to other studies, it has been determined that the number of addicted male students is higher than female students (Doğan, 2013; Kır and Sulak, 2014; Zorbaz and Tuzgöl Dost, 2014; Dhir et al. 2015). It is among the results that these young people, who exhibit behaviors that cause internet addiction, also show substance addiction characteristics due to the use of substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, etc. (Bayhan, 2011; Doğan, 2013).

As can be seen, technology addiction in educational organizations has been increasing in recent years. It is seen that this situation can also affect students' study habits, social relations and lifestyles in general. Technology addiction can negatively impact students' education and threaten their academic, mental, and physical health. Therefore, education administrators should monitor the use of technology in their organizations and take the necessary measures. The views of education administrators on technology addiction are quite diverse. Some education administrators emphasize the importance of technology in education and argue that students' effective use of technology can improve the quality of education. According to this view, the ability to use technology effectively is important, not technology addiction (Bülbül, T. & Çuhadar, C. 2012). Another group of education administrators draws attention to the negative effects of technology addiction in education. These education administrators advocate that technology addiction, which distracts students, negatively affects their social relations and threatens their physical health, should be prevented. According to this view, the use of technology in education should be in balance (Alpar et al., 2007).

When the literature is examined, it is seen that studies on technology addiction are carried out intensively at the secondary and secondary education levels in schools in various provinces or districts of Türkiye. Studies show that with the increase in the time students use technology, their academic success may decrease, family and friend relationships may weaken, and anxiety levels increase. However, although there have been many studies on technology addiction at primary, secondary and high school levels in the field of education, there are not many studies on technology addiction at the higher education level.

In addition, since the majority of studies on technology addiction have been statistically comparative, it is important to focus on qualitative studies to investigate the issue in depth and to share suggestions or intervention methods with stakeholders.

This study was carried out to emphasize the importance of the technology addiction problem in Türkiye and in the world, and to enable higher education administrators to realize their addiction situations and the approaches in their organizations regarding the use of technology. The main purpose of the research is to explore administrators' awareness of technology addiction and to identify the strategies they believe can be developed and implemented, based on this awareness, to address and resolve the issue. It is expected that the results obtained will contribute to providing more realistic information about the current competencies of Administrators in the process of combating technology addiction and to realize

the efforts in their organizations more effectively; In addition, it is thought that it will raise awareness of Administrators about the consequences of technology addiction and solution suggestions. At the institutional level, it is predicted that thanks to the data obtained from the research, higher education administrators will have the opportunity to identify the technology addiction problem according to their own organizations and implement appropriate activities and will help the organizational Administrators to achieve the educational and Administratorial visions of the higher education level. For the academic and professional field, the findings can give ideas to psychologists, psychological counselors and academicians who are experts in this field, as well as provide a framework for higher education administrators to shed light on the programs of preventing technology addiction and finding solutions within the scope of in-service training programs; In this way, it is hoped that it will create opportunities for Administrators to think, discuss and new research on the issue of technology addiction, and the research will be able to guide similar research.

The main problem of the research conducted in this direction was determined as "What are the views of administrators working in higher education on technology addiction in the context of themselves, their students and the employees of the organization?". With this research, it was aimed to get the opinions of the administrators working in higher education about the use of technology and technology addiction of themselves, their students and the employees of the organization.

## Method

This research was carried out using the qualitative research method, which allows the examination of events in their natural environments and the in-depth understanding of individuals' subjective perceptions, in accordance with the aim of examining the views of administrators working in higher education on technology addiction. The main reason for this preference is that the study was carried out with an anti-positivist approach; This approach argues that different people may express different opinions about the same situations and that social reality is structured by the interpretations of individuals (Sönmez and Alacapınar, 2018). The qualitative approach has been preferred because it is focused on discovery and aims to explain "how" and "why" a particular phenomenon or behavior works in a particular context (Saltürk and Güngör, 2021). Since the research did not pursue specific purposes such as studying a specific culture or creating a theory, it was conducted with a basic qualitative research design (Merriam, 2013) that allowed researchers to be interested in how participants interpreted their lives.

The study group of the research consists of 26 administrators working at a state university in the 2023-2024 academic year. The selection of the participants was made using maximum variation sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods. The main reason for choosing this method is that it aims to offer a broad perspective by covering Administrators with different management levels (academic and administrative staff such as rector, dean, head of department), gender, management unit and working time as a Administrator. Maximum diversity sampling (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz ve Demirel, 2018) aims to reveal differences or similarities between the situations determined in accordance with the goal of the research, to create patterns and thus to explain the research problem more

comprehensively. This diversity has broadened the scope of research and allowed for more in-depth analyses.

In the data collection process, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 20 items was used in order to obtain first-hand the thoughts and experiences of the individuals participating in the research on the research subject. The interviews lasted an average of 25 minutes in the participants' offices from March to May 2024 and were audio-recorded. Descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze the data obtained. Descriptive analysis was preferred because it is a type of data analysis that requires the interpretation of the data obtained by summarizing them according to predetermined themes. In this process, codes and themes were obtained from the opinions obtained from the participants and the descriptions were interpreted by deductive method. In order to reveal the participant opinions in a striking way, quotations

representing different opinions, explanatory, diversity and extreme examples were shared.

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the criteria (credibility, transferability, reliability and verifiability) determined by Guba and Lincoln (1982) for qualitative research were taken as basis. Expert opinions were used for credibility and the findings were compared with the literature. Within the framework of the transferability criterion, maximum diversity sampling was used in particular, and the data collection process and sample selection were explained in detail. The principle of confirmability was followed and direct quotations were included in the research to ensure impartiality. In addition, the procedure process such as method, sample selection and characteristics of the participants are presented in detail to support the external validity (adaptability) of the study.

**Table 1.** Technology usage and addiction in higher education: Administrator perspectives

Main Theme	Category	Subcategory
Administrators' Approaches to the Use of Technology	Administrators' Purposes of Using Technological Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the Quality of Education</li> <li>• Providing Accessibility</li> <li>• Data Analysis</li> <li>• Communication and Collaboration</li> <li>• Distance Education Opportunities</li> <li>• Resource Management</li> </ul>
	Administrators' Usage Periods of Technological Tools	
Beneficial and Harmful Features of Technology Use	Beneficial Features of Technology Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalized Learning</li> <li>• Advanced Research Opportunities</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Sharing of Resources</li> <li>• Time Management</li> </ul>
	Harmful Features of Technology Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addiction</li> <li>• Spread of Misinformation</li> <li>• Social Isolation</li> <li>• Stress and Anxiety</li> <li>• Decrease in the quality of education</li> </ul>
Definitions of Technology Addiction	Excessive Use of Technological Devices Not being able to stay apart from technological devices. Excessive pleasure from the use of technological devices Isolation from Real Life Illness	
Use of Technology by Higher Education Employees and Students	Technology Use by Higher Education Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Activities</li> <li>• Leisure Time Evaluation</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>
	Technology Use by Higher Education Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Socializing</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>
The Effects of Technology Addiction on Higher Education Institutions	Effects on Higher Education Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Isolation</li> <li>• Decrease in Creativity and Innovation</li> <li>• Decline in Job Performance</li> </ul>
	Effects on Higher Education Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention Deficit and Inability to Focus</li> <li>• Low Academic Achievement</li> <li>• Irresponsibility</li> </ul>
	Effects on Education in Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Processes</li> <li>• Social Interactions</li> <li>• Use of Educational Technologies</li> <li>• The Role of Educators</li> </ul>
	Effects on Service Quality and Productivity of Employees in Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Motivation</li> <li>• Stress and Anxiety</li> <li>• Communication Problems</li> </ul>
Activities of Higher Education Administrators Against Technology Addiction	Academic Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elective Courses</li> <li>• Seminar</li> <li>• Digital Transformation Office</li> </ul>
	Individual Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal warning</li> <li>• Support Services</li> </ul>
Activities Planned by Higher Education Administrators Against Technology Addiction	Social and Cultural Activities Integration into the Course Curriculum Technology Usage Policies Digital Detox Days	

## Findings

In this section, the analyzes of the interviews with 26 administrators working in higher education are included. The basic statements obtained as a result of the interviews with the Administrators are included in this section. The main themes created are as follows:

- Approaches of Administrators Working in Higher Education to the Use of Technology
- Beneficial and Harmful Features of Technology Use According to Administrators Working in Higher Education
- Definitions of Administrators Working in Higher Education Regarding Technology Addiction
- Technology Use of Higher Education Employees and Students According to Administrators Working in Higher Education
- The Effects of Technology Addiction in Higher Education Institutions According to Administrators Working in Higher Education
- Activities of Higher Education Administrators Against Technology Addiction
- Activities Planned by Higher Education Administrators Against Technology Addiction

The comprehensive findings obtained from the interviews, including all main themes, categories, and sub-categories regarding administrators' perspectives on technology usage and addiction, are summarized in Table 1.

Detailed explanations and participant quotations regarding the findings presented generally in Table 1 are discussed under the headings below.

### Findings on the Approaches of Administrators Working in Higher Education to the Use of Technology

Under the main theme of administrators' approaches to the use of technology, there are categories of "Administrators' Purposes of Using Technological Tools" and "Administrators' Usage Time of Technological Tools".

Administrators' technology usage purposes were examined within the scope of "Improving the Quality of Education", "Providing Accessibility", "Data Analysis", "Communication and Collaboration", "Distance Education Opportunities", "Resource Management" sub-categories. The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of administrators' technology usage purposes are listed as follows:

*"By using technological tools, we can also achieve our goal of expanding the scope of education. As administrators in higher education, our duty is to provide a continuous and good learning experience, and technological tools can help us fulfill this task." (Y10)*

*"So, for me, ensuring accessibility is not just a task; it's an opportunity to change people's lives for the better. Thus, technology is no longer just a tool but begins to serve people in the real sense." (Y22)*

*"Data analysis is becoming more effective thanks to technology. Technological tools help us process and make sense of data quickly. This way, we can communicate accurate information in our decision-making processes. Without technology, it's pretty hard to fully harness the power of data. So, data analytics and technology have to go hand in hand." (Y8)*

*"Communication and cooperation are further strengthened by technological opportunities. For example, thanks to instant communication applications, we can stay with team groups all the time. Thus, both our communication and cooperation become more efficient." (Y12)*

*"In the past, we used to travel to continue working, but now we can access whatever we want from anywhere in the world in front of the screen. Thanks to platforms such as Zoom and Teams, live lessons are held and we organize online group studies with groups." (Y19)*

*"In the past, we were drowning in piles of paper, now everything is digital. Employees manage with computer programs, their salaries are paid automatically, and leaves are tracked online. But most importantly, things are faster, more efficient and more transparent thanks to technology." (Y4)*

The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of the usage periods of technological tools by the administrators are listed as follows:

*"On average, I'm in front of the computer for 6-8 hours during work hours. In addition, I spend time on platforms such as social media and communication applications. However, I take care to regulate this time effectively." (Y1)*

*"The duration of use of technology often varies depending on daily life and business conditions." (Y15)*

*"I allocate an average of 4-5 hours a day of work-related technological tools. Of course, there are also uses for social media and entertainment purposes. In such activities, the agenda takes place for about 1-2 hours. Of course, I take care to maintain a healthy balance in my relationship with technology." (Y18)*

The answers given by higher education administrators emphasize the importance of integrating technology into educational processes and the advantages of this integration. In addition, the duration for which Administrators use technological tools is also discussed, and it is stated that these periods vary according to working hours and daily life conditions. The relationship that Administrators establish with technology reveals that it requires creating an effective balance in both their professional and personal lives.

### Findings on the Beneficial and Harmful Features of Technology Use According to Administrators Working in Higher Education

According to the administrators working in higher education, the categories of "Beneficial Features of Technology Use" and "Harmful Features of Technology Use" are included under the main theme of beneficial and harmful features of technology. The beneficial features of the use of technology were examined under the sub-categories of "Personalized Learning", "Advanced Research Opportunities", "Innovation", "Sharing of Resources" and "Time Management". The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the beneficial features of technology use category are listed as follows:

*"The role of technology in personalized learning is truly fascinating. Many people think that standard methods are not enough. This is where technology comes into play." (Y2)*

*"Technology has revolutionized many areas of our lives, and one of the most important benefits of this is that it offers advanced research opportunities. When we touch on this topic, it is important that we first highlight how it facilitates our technological opportunities. Now, reaching*

*the potential is just a few clicks away. This allows us to further liberate our research." (Y13)*

*"Now we can set up the remote control even with teams at long distances. Sometimes even a small chat before a video conference increases our team spirit. Innovation is not only about the creation of new products or services, but also about transforming our business and team dynamics." (Y24)*

*"Access has become much easier thanks to technological features. We can access many resources, from educational materials to expert opinions, with a few clicks." (Y11)*

*"The role of technology in our lives is indisputable. Especially time management gives me a great advantage by using the right technological tools. For example, I use apps that regularly keep my work calendar and task list up to date." (Y20)*

The harmful features of technology use were examined under the subcategories of "Addiction", "Spread of Misinformation", "Social Isolation", "Stress and Anxiety" and "Decrease in the quality of education". The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of harmful characteristics of technology use are listed as follows:

*"Technology is an important part of our lives, but we should not forget its bad sides. Addiction can be one of the tedious effects of these technological tools. For example, how productive are the hours we spend on social media for us?" (Y26)*

*"While the possibilities offered by technology are great, we sometimes encounter harmful features such as the spread of misinformation. Most of the information on social media is superficial and I think you should not believe it right away." (Y14)*

*"Today, emotional bonds can weaken as people turn to screens instead of face-to-face interaction. To see this change, I try to establish a healthy balance with technology. Spending time in front of the screen all the time can make people lonely." (Y6)*

*"I am also becoming addicted to technology in my busy work schedule; When I say e-mails and social media notifications, I get confused. This can be a source of stress for me. However, I have found ways to get around it. First of all, I stay away from technology at certain times." (Y25)*

*"The decrease in education rates is one of the clear examples of these damages. Often, young people dive into digital diffusion so that their interest in traditional learning methods is becoming less and less. I think technology is a tool and we can direct it correctly and create great opportunities in education." (Y3)*

The statements of higher education administrators point to the importance of addressing the potential advantages of technology in education and the risks it brings with it in a balanced way. The beneficial features of technology—such as personalized learning, advanced research opportunities, innovation, sharing of resources, and time management—facilitate the implementation of novel methodologies in education. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that its harmful aspects—including addiction, the spread of misinformation, social isolation, stress and anxiety, and a decrease in the quality of education—are among the principal consequences of its unintentional use. Effective and balanced use of technology in education will maximize opportunities in this field while minimizing potential harms. In this context, the

importance of developing a critical approach to technology is emphasized.

### **Findings on Technology Addiction Definitions of Higher Education Administrators**

According to the administrators working in higher education, the categories of "Excessive Use of Technological Devices", "Inability to Stay Separate from Technological Devices", "Excessive Pleasure from the Use of Technological Devices", "Isolation from Real Life" and "Illness" are included under The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the main theme of definitions of technology addiction are listed as follows:

*"Technology addiction is a condition that expresses our excess in having technology in our daily lives. For many people, smartphones, tablets and have become indispensable." (Y21)*

*"It refers to our excessive consumption of technological devices, which often become an inevitable part of our daily lives. While the features of these devices provide quick access, they can sometimes cause us to disconnect from real life." (Y3)*

*"In fact, this is a state of addiction that arises as a result of the excessive engagement with technological systems. For example, likes or messages on a post on social media provide short-term happiness. However, this feeling of happiness soon disappears and the person seeks more communication." (Y16)*

*"I think people spend most of their lives with technology and as a result, they move away from real life. It's easy to say, but it actually leaves a deep impression on many people." (Y5)*

*"Technology addiction can actually be considered as a disease because this addiction can threaten social life, business life and even physical health. If our social relationships deteriorate or our mood is negatively affected as a result of the use of technology, there is a problem here." (Y6)*

The definitions made by higher education administrators on this subject reveal the different dimensions of addiction. First of all, excessive use of technological devices and the inability to stay away from these devices emphasize the physical and psychological dimensions of addiction.

### **Findings on the Use of Technology by Higher Education Employees and Students According to Higher Education Administrators**

According to the administrators working in higher education, under the main theme of technology use by higher education employees and students, there are the categories of "Technology Use by Higher Education Employees" and "Technology Use by Higher Education Students".

The use of technology by higher education employees was examined within the scope of the sub-categories of "Professional Activities", "Leisure Time Evaluation" and "Communication". The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of technology use by higher education employees are listed as follows:

*"The advantages offered by technology enable employees to make their activities more efficient. Apart from this, the growth of distance education platforms allows academic members to increase both knowledge sharing and student interaction." (Y7)*

*"For leisure purposes, technology plays a very important role here as well. Our employees benefit from mobile applications and social media platforms while thinking about how to spend their free time." (Y17)*

*"I see technology as a tool, as a tool that paves the way for communication in higher education institutions. We take care of everything with a message, an email. But I think it can never replace human communication." (Y9)*

According to the opinions of administrators working in higher education, technology helps employees optimize their professional activities, the role of social media and mobile applications in leisure time evaluations is increasing, and communication processes are accelerated thanks to digital tools. However, there is also an emphasis that technology cannot fully replace human communication.

According to administrators, technology not only increases employees' professional productivity but also strengthens knowledge sharing and student interaction through distance learning platforms. Additionally, employees utilize this time in their spare time by utilizing technological tools such as mobile applications and social media platforms. In the communication dimension, technology stands out as a fast and effective communication tool through messages and emails. However, some executives state that technology cannot completely replace human communication.

Higher education students' use of technology was examined under the sub-categories of "Education", "Socializing" and "Communication". The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of technology use by higher education students are listed as follows:

*"In my eyes, technology is a tool that enriches, supports and facilitates students' learning processes. For example, students use the internet comfortably to find lecture notes, do research or prepare projects." (Y23)*

*"By using technology, students not only acquire knowledge, but also develop their social skills and emotional intelligence. This makes them more effective and adaptable individuals in their future careers. In other words, using technology correctly makes a big difference in both the academic and social lives of students." (Y9)*

*"First of all, this generation grew up with technology. Smartphones, social media, online classes. This situation has also radically changed the way they communicate. Therefore, it is important for university students to develop both digital and face-to-face communication skills in a balanced way." (Y16)*

Evaluations of higher education students' use of technology comprehensively address the effects of technology on education, socialization, and communication. Students' aptitude for technology enriches and supports their learning processes. In particular, the convenience provided by the internet in academic activities such as accessing lecture notes, conducting research, and preparing projects positively affects students' educational experiences.

It is emphasized that technology plays an active role not only as a means of acquiring knowledge but also in the development of social skills and emotional intelligence. This contributes to students becoming more effective and harmonious individuals in their future careers. Therefore, the correct and conscious use of technology makes a significant difference in both the academic and social lives of students.

### **Findings on the Effects of Technology Addiction in Higher Education Institutions According to Administrators Working in Higher Education**

According to the administrators working in higher education, the main theme of the effects of technology addiction in higher education institutions includes the categories of "Effects on Higher Education Employees", "Effects on Higher Education Students", "Effects on Education in Higher Education" and "Effects on Service Quality and Productivity of Employees in Higher Education".

The effects on higher education employees were examined under the sub-categories of "Social Isolation", "Decrease in Creativity and Innovation" and "Decline in Job Performance". The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of effects on higher education employees are listed as follows:

*"From my own experience, I can say how important it is to balance my relationship with technology in a healthy way. For example, while I was constantly struggling with emails and notifications at work, I realized that I was not spending enough time on social life and personal relationships." (Y3)*

*"Especially social media and constant notifications can make our minds cluttered. Compared to previous years, I think our dependency on technology has also reduced the creative thinking abilities of employees. (Y21)*

*"Being constantly busy with our phones or computers at work can also negatively affect our focus. This is exactly where the decline in business performance begins. If this distraction becomes continuous, we will not be able to complete our tasks on time and our communication with team members will weaken." (Y26)*

Statements of administrators highlight that technology can disrupt the balance between social and work life, and that constant notifications and social media can lead to mental clutter. It has also been stated that this situation can weaken the ability to think creatively and negatively affect job performance. It was also stated that addiction on technology may result in the inability to complete tasks on time and weakening communication within the team.

Its effects on higher education students were examined within the scope of "Attention Deficit and Inability to Focus", "Low Academic Achievement" and "Irresponsibility". The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of effects on higher education students are listed as follows:

*"My observation is that technology addiction makes students "disconnected from the world". They move away from social interactions and lose themselves to the virtual world. We should first review students' technological usage skills in order to prevent attention deficit and lack of focus." (Y12)*

*"Many of our students have difficulty studying because of social media or video games. When I observed this situation, I realized a fact that everyone knows very well; Technology can make our lives easier, but it also causes a great distraction when it is taken to the extreme." (Y24)*

*"First of all, students are often under intense academic load and social pressure in higher education. For students in this situation, technology offers a means of escape. However, this escape can sometimes end in irresponsibility." (Y8)*

Administrators' observations reveal how the virtual world offered by technology affects their social interactions and reduces their academic success. In particular, attention deficit and focus problems are directly related to the time students spend with technological devices. Although the escape point provided by technology is sometimes seen as a means of relaxation for students, overdoing it can have negative consequences such as irresponsibility. It is important for educational organizations to develop strategies for the use of technology under academic burden and social pressure.

Its effects on education in higher education were examined under the sub-categories of "Learning Processes", "Social Interactions", "Use of Educational Technologies" and "Role of Educators". The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of effects on education in higher education are listed as follows:

*"Our educators should be balanced so that students do not become addicted to technology while encouraging technological activity in their lesson communications. For example, if the use of technology is restricted in the classroom, they can focus on the lesson." (Y1)*

*"For example, if a student is constantly interested in social media in their applications, this not only distracts attention during the lesson, but also negatively affects their face-to-face communication with them. This may also lead to the student experiencing feelings of loneliness and weakening their social skills." (Y18)*

*"Educational technologies are great tools to improve learning processes, enable communication and enrich development experiences. However, excessive use of technology can distract their focus. In my own department, I noticed that the life of the screen increased during the periods when I attended online classes. This experience showed me how important it is to find a balance." (Y23)*

*"Technology addiction has become a very important issue, especially in higher education. I think educators have a big role at this point. As educators, they need to guide students to use technology as a tool and manage this process before it becomes addictive." (Y14)*

The effects of technology on educational processes in higher education, especially in terms of the role of educators, social interactions, and learning processes, constitute an important area of study. It is emphasized that educators should maintain a balance while encouraging the use of technology so that students do not become addicted to technology. In this context, it is recommended that the use of technology in the classroom be regulated with certain limits.

Additionally, excessive use of digital platforms such as social media distracts students from classes and can negatively affect their face-to-face communication abilities. Despite the potential of educational technologies to enrich learning processes, excessive use carries the risk of distraction. Educators should guide students to use technology efficiently as a tool and manage the process before it turns into addiction. In this context, educators have a responsibility to integrate technology in a balanced way.

The effects of service quality in higher education and on the productivity of employees were examined within the scope of "Low Motivation", "Stress and Anxiety" and "Communication Problems" subcategories. The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of its effects on the quality of service in higher education and the productivity of employees are listed as follows:

*"Besides that, technological developments not only affect but also affect the motivation of people in academia. Today, many employees are constantly working with technology. For example, e-mails, messaging applications and constant notifications distract people. This reduces the motivation of employees and affects the maintenance of service in the workplace." (Y4)*

*"As a result of the use of technology, stress can indeed arise. For example, constantly receiving notifications and waiting for feedback on social media can occupy a person's mind and cause anxiety. This can also make it difficult to focus at work." (Y16)*

*"People prefer to communicate on screens rather than face-to-face from time to time. This can lead to weakening of emotional bonds. Unfortunately, there are disconnections between us because we do not choose to communicate face-to-face at work, with colleagues or students." (Y25)*

The effects of technology on service quality and employee productivity in higher education are an important topic of discussion. Based on the statements of the participants, it is seen that technology reduces employee motivation, increases stress and anxiety, and also causes communication breakdowns. Constant notifications and communication, especially through digital platforms, make it difficult for employees to focus and increase mental load. This can negatively affect both individual performance and corporate service quality. Additionally, the preference for digital channels over face-to-face communication can lead to a weakening of emotional bonds in the workplace, causing problems in communication within the team.

### **Findings on the Activities of Higher Education Administrators Against Technology Addiction**

There are "Academic Activities" and "Individual Activities" categories under the main theme of the activities carried out by the administrators working in higher education against technology addiction. Academic activities carried out by administrators working in higher education were examined within the scope of "Elective Courses", "Seminar" and "Digital Transformation Office" sub-categories.

The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of academic activities carried out by the administrators working in higher education are listed as follows:

*"For example, in some of our departments, our students are generally informed about the use of technology and the fight against addiction through elective courses. Through these courses, students are helped to set their own limits and stay abreast of healthy technological developments. In addition, discussions are held on technology transitions and returns, allowing everyone to share their own experiences." (Y9)*

*"At our university, we are trying to offer them alternative activities by organizing seminars on healthy technology use. The seminars focus on issues that students, lecturers and families should think about together. Through collaboration, ways to deal with these relationships co-exist, and the contributions of individuals are provided." (Y17)*

*"We know that we are more loaded on technology under stress. The existence of the Digital Transformation Office is very important in order to provide communication between students and administrators in higher education*

*and to solve a complex problem such as technological transfer. Through the events it organizes, we can come together with both administrators and presenters to listen to the details of these features and guide them to develop healthier technological competencies." (Y23)*

Individual activities carried out by administrators working in higher education were examined within the scope of "Verbal Warning" and "Support Services" subcategories. The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the category of individual activities carried out by administrators working in higher education are listed as follows:

*"For example, by empathizing with students, I can better understand the seriousness of the problem. Verbal warning is something I often do for technology addiction. I ask students questions about how addicted they are on technology in their daily lives. Such questions make students question their own behavior and they are more engaged." (Y2)*

*"In ERDAM, that is, in our guidance and psychological counseling center affiliated to our university, support is provided to university students in difficult times. With this service, psychological support is provided to our students and they are helped to cope with their technological problems. I try to direct our students or staff who have problems to this support unit as much as I can." (Y15)*

In higher education, the participation of administrators in academic activities plays an important role in raising awareness about technology use and developing healthy technological habits. Elective courses encourage students to use technology more consciously and teach ways to cope with negative effects such as addiction.

Seminars provide the opportunity to discuss the effects of technology on individuals by establishing cooperation and communication between students and lecturers. Such events not only transfer knowledge but also allow participants to develop common solutions by sharing their experiences.

The activities of the Digital Transformation Office are of critical importance in increasing technological competencies for both administrators and students. Events organized through this office facilitate understanding the complex aspects of technology and support the widespread use of healthier and more conscious technology.

Individual activities of higher education administrators are important in terms of developing solution-oriented approaches to the problems faced by students and staff. It is noteworthy that within the scope of the "Verbal Warning" subcategory, administrators empathize with students and encourage them to question their behavior.

On the other hand, the statements of the participants under the "Support Services" subcategory emphasize the importance of guidance and psychological counseling units in higher education institutions. The existence of structures such as ERDAM allows students and staff to cope with their problems by receiving psychological support.

### **Findings on the Activities Planned by Higher Education Administrators Against Technology Addiction**

Under the main theme of the activities planned by the administrators working in higher education against technology addiction, there are the categories of "Social and Cultural Activities" and "Integration into the Course Curriculum", "Technology Usage Policies" and "Digital Detox Days".

The answers given by some of the higher education administrators regarding the main theme of the activities planned by the administrators working in higher education against technology addiction are listed as follows:

*"In addition, social and cultural campaigns can be launched to encourage them to stay away from technology for a certain period of time. In addition, we can aim to create moments where they get away from technology through social activities such as game days or nature walks. When organizing these events, everyone can be motivated with various prizes to keep them participating." (Y6)*

*"Another way to prevent technology consumption is to support their hobbies. By introducing alternative activities such as sports or nature walks in our classes, crafts, we can help them reach pursuits they can enjoy outside of technology. I think this will also contribute positively to the emotional health of addicted people." (Y19)*

*"First, we can organize digital detox camps for both our students and staff to help them build a technologically healthy relationship. During a digital detox, they can find the opportunity to take time for themselves and observe their emotional state. In these camps, they can spend time in touch with nature, read books and discover new hobbies, away from phone authorities and computers. I think such days are beneficial not only physically, but also emotionally." (Y7)*

The strategies developed by administrators working in higher education against technology addiction include important steps towards individuals moving away from the digital world and living a more socially, culturally and emotionally balanced life. In particular, themes such as "Social and Cultural Events" and "Digital Detox Days" stand out as effective tools in reducing individuals' technology addiction.

### **Discussion**

The results that the administrators aim to use technological tools (Improving Education Quality, Providing Accessibility, Data Analysis, Communication and Collaboration, Distance Education Opportunities and Resource Management) emphasize the importance of the strategic and administrative roles of technology in the education system. These findings are in line with the findings of Turan (2011), who summarizes the importance of educational administrators' competencies such as developing a vision for technology and understanding basic technology concepts. In addition, the views of administrators on the critical role of technology in increasing the effectiveness of educational processes support the argument of Bülbül and Çuhadar (2012) that students' ability to use technology effectively can improve the quality of education. Golden (2004) also stated that technology empowers educational leaders at all levels and can be used to improve management/operating systems.

The conclusion that the time administrators use technological tools varies depending on individual work conditions and daily life, and that there is an effort to establish a healthy balance, indicates an awareness of the need to avoid excessive use. These results are also related to the views of Durnalı (2018) and Rickover (19) that administrators use technology to plan, set goals and achieve these goals effectively.

The fact that administrators identify the beneficial features of technology use as personalized learning, advanced research opportunities, innovation and time management is in line with

the results of the research conducted by Mims and Holmes (2006) on university students; in this study, it was stated that mobile technologies positively affect academic performance in terms of accessing course content, managing time and accessing library resources. On the other hand, the harmful characteristics that administrators point out (Addiction, Spread of Misinformation, Social Isolation and Stress/Anxiety) confirm the serious risks arising from the unconscious use of technology. These harms are compatible with the criteria of withdrawal, mental preoccupation (Arısoy, 2009) and conflict, tolerance and mood change (Griffiths, 2005), which are accepted as the main symptoms of addiction in the literature; these symptoms were also supported by Turel, Serenko and Giles (2011). Tarhan and Nurmedov (2011) also stated that behavioral addictions (activities such as gambling, sexuality, sports) occur with the contribution of technology and exhibit symptoms of physical and psychological addiction. This supports the need for administrators to develop a critical approach to addiction.

Administrators' descriptions of addiction as "Overusing Technological Devices", "Isolation from Real Life" and even as a "Disease" indicate a high awareness of the psychosocial and physical dimensions of addiction. These definitions coincide with the Green Crescent's (2020) definition of addiction as a condition that involves the continuation of behavior despite negative consequences. Notably, executives' observations of addiction's inability to stay away from devices and the unsustainability of short-term happiness gained through social media interactions reflect the cyclical and unsatisfying nature of the addiction cycle. These results support the research by Öztürk et al. (2007) and Horzum (2008); In these studies, it was explained that the symptoms of addiction were similar to the symptoms of other types of addiction (withdrawal symptoms, excessive effort, preference for virtual communication instead of face-to-face communication). According to Griffiths (2000), the loss of control over the use of technology by individuals forms the basis of this behavioral addiction.

The fact that administrators state that employees use technology for professional productivity, communication and leisure purposes, while students use it for academic activities (research, projects) and socialization is parallel to the motivations for use in the literature. The report of the Turkish Statistical Institute (2017) reveals that the highest purpose of use among individuals is to create profiles and send messages on social media, supporting the high inclination of both employees and students towards technology in their free time. In the study conducted by Balcı and Ayhan (2007) on university students, it was determined that social interaction and the desire to spend free time were effective in their orientation to the internet. In the study, the increase in the level of internet addiction with the increase in daily internet use is seen as an inevitable result. The studies of Kırık (2013) and İnce and Koçak (2017) also support the intensive use of social networks for the purpose of conveying thoughts and feelings and socializing.

Administrators' views on the institutional effects of addiction completely coincide with the studies in the literature (Turel, Serenko and Giles (2011), Makas (2008), and Arısoy (2009)) While the effects of decrease in job performance, social isolation and decrease in creativity on employees are emphasized, the main effects on students are listed as attention deficit, low academic achievement and irresponsibility. These results are reinforced by the study of Kubey, Lavin and

Barrows (2001), who stated that too much recreational use of the internet reduces academic performance in university students, and the findings of Huang and Leung (2010), who found that the level of instant messaging addiction was positively associated with a decrease in academic performance. Kirschner and Karpinski's (2010) study also showed that 74% of college students stated that Facebook negatively affected their academic performance.

In the context of psychosocial effects, the observations that students are detached from the real world and caught up in the virtual world support Caplan's (2003) determination that lonely and introverted individuals create different identities in the virtual environment. In addition, the findings of Hauge and Gentile (2003), who stated that video game addiction in young people increases the likelihood of resorting to violence and arguing with friends/teachers, also support the negative effects of this addiction on social interactions. The psychological consequences of addiction (depression, suicidality) are also prominent findings in the studies of Lam, Peng, and Mai (2009) and Yang and Tung (2007).

The Activities Carried Out by Administrators Against Technology Addiction (Elective Courses, Seminars, Digital Transformation Office, Verbal Warning and Support Services) show that a systematic and individual approach is taken in the fight against technology addiction. This systematic approach is in harmony with the programs (psycho-education programs, integrated trainings into education and training processes) proposed in the systematic review study of Bağatarhan and Siyez (2017) to prevent addiction. The referral of those who have problems to psychological counseling centers, especially through Support Services (such as ERDAM), is in parallel with the discussion of psychiatric comorbidities underlying technology addiction and the findings of Koroğlu et al. (2006) on the importance of clinical approaches. These efforts show that institutions are taking a proactive role against addiction.

Administrators' Plans Against Technology Addiction (Social and Cultural Activities, Digital Detox Days, Technology Use Policies and Integration into the Curriculum) focus on helping individuals find social and emotional balance by moving away from the digital world. These plans coincide with the views of academics involved in the development of sustainable higher education strategy by Visvizi, Lytras and Daniela (2018), who stated that technology should be seen not only as an obstacle but also as a supporting element in education and training processes. In addition, Bates' (2000) determination that any change in education and training processes depends on the support of the teaching staff and their openness to innovations in order to be successfully implemented is of critical importance for the planned curriculum integration and the implementation of institutional policies. Aligned with the philosophy of Digital Minimalism (Newport, 2019), Digital Detox Days and Social Events aim to help individuals limit the time spent online, strengthen social bonds, and reduce the tendency to become lonely. These strategies reveal the necessity of higher education institutions to develop multidimensional and sustainable struggle policies.

This study, albeit offering comprehensive insights, has significant limitations due to its qualitative design and contextual constraints. The study was restricted to the 2023–2024 academic year and to administrators at a state university in Türkiye, hence constraining the generalizability of the results. The study utilized the phrase "technology addiction" to particularly characterize administrators' attitudes and methods about technology use, which may not encompass the entire

breadth of the condition. Considering these limitations, subsequent research should broaden the sample population and utilize quantitative or mixed-method approaches, integrating various forms of addiction and diverse demographics within educational institutions, including faculty and students.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Evaluations on the purposes and duration of higher education administrators' use of technological tools reveal the critical role that technology plays in increasing the effectiveness of educational processes. The use of technology for purposes such as improving education quality, providing accessibility, data analysis, communication and collaboration, distance education opportunities, and resource management makes significant contributions to administrators' strategic decision-making processes. Administrators' approaches to technology show that it allows the education system to operate more efficiently and transparently. The administrators' responses demonstrate that the integration of technological tools into educational processes is not just a necessity but an opportunity. Different approaches are observed among administrators regarding usage periods; Some engage in intensive business use during business hours, while others choose to balance this time with social media and entertainment-oriented activities. This reveals that individual work conditions and daily life habits are decisive in the use of technology. However, the need to create a healthy balance alongside the effective use of technology has been emphasized, as excessive use can lead to negative personal and professional impacts. Consequently, specialized training programs should be established to enable higher education administrators to enhance their technological techniques more efficiently and sustainably. These initiatives should incorporate comprehensive data analysis, the optimized use of distance education platforms, and the strategic coordination and management of communication tools to enhance institutional effectiveness. Comprehensive guidelines should be developed to assist administrators in the utilization of technology. To enhance the efficacy of data analytics in decision-making, individuals should be granted access to essential software and tools, along with help to develop proficiency in this area. Cooperative networks must be formed among administrators to promote the exchange of advantageous practices. Consistent evaluation of technology utilization and delivering feedback to administrators might facilitate their personal growth. This procedure will serve as a crucial instrument in attaining business objectives.

The beneficial features of technology (personalized learning, advanced research opportunities, innovation, sharing of resources and time management) allow innovative approaches to be adopted in education. On the other hand, the negative aspects are also an important issue to consider; Problems such as addiction, spread of misinformation, social isolation, stress and anxiety are among the main effects arising from the unconscious use of technology. Addiction and social isolation, in particular, weaken individuals' social relationships and can negatively affect their psychological health. In conclusion, it is clear that technology should be used with a balanced and critical approach in education. Therefore, frequent training programs should be established for both students and academic staff to raise awareness about the beneficial and harmful aspects of technology. Courses aimed at enhancing digital literacy abilities should be incorporated into the curriculum of higher education institutions. In order to lessen the social isolation effect of technology, social and

cultural events that foster face-to-face connection should be increased at colleges. Innovative platforms and solutions should be developed to utilize the resource sharing and time management advantages given by technology in education. Effectively regulating technology utilization in higher education will enhance academic achievement and protect psychosocial well-being of individuals.

Administrators' definitions of addiction emphasize themes such as 'Excessive Use of Technological Devices' and 'Inability to Stay Away from Technological Devices', indicating the risk of individuals being isolated from real life. These designations underscore the growing concern that technology has become an indispensable part of life, potentially leading to a disconnection from reality. Another noteworthy point is that technology addiction provides short-term happiness to individuals, but this happiness is not sustainable. The fleeting pleasures derived through social media interactions fuel the cycle of addiction. Because it negatively affects social life, decreases productivity in professional life, and threatens physical health. Administrators' observations require understanding the multidimensional nature of technology addiction and developing solution-oriented strategies. The definitions and observations of higher education administrators concerning technology addiction indicate that this issue must be handled at both individual and societal levels. Strategic policies must be formulated for the implementation of technology in higher education institutions. These regulations must encompass directives to mitigate technological addiction and the dissemination of misinformation. Awareness initiatives must be implemented for administrators, and work-life balance measures should be provided to mitigate the adverse consequences that may result from excessive or imbalanced technology usage. Interdisciplinary research has to be promoted to enhance comprehension of the impacts of technology addiction on individuals. Universities should facilitate alternative activities that enable students and staff to enhance their social connections without reliance on technology. In this sense, activities such as sports, art and nature activities may be regarded. To combat technology addiction effectively, comprehensive techniques must be created to assist individuals in balancing their interactions with technology. Higher education institutions must assume a pivotal role in promoting societal understanding and disseminating safe technology usage practices.

In the context of employees, technology stands out as a tool that enhances the efficiency of professional activities, is instrumental in utilizing leisure time, and accelerates communication processes. However, the opinions that technology cannot fully replace human communication are noteworthy. For students, technology is considered as an element that enriches and supports educational processes. Students use the internet effectively in academic activities such as accessing lecture notes, conducting research and preparing projects. It is emphasized that technology also plays a role in the development of social skills and emotional intelligence. Consequently, higher education institutions must prioritize the selection of technical tools that facilitate educational activities. The functionality, usability, and alignment of the technologies with instructional objectives should be major requirements. Employees and students should receive guidance services regarding the utilization of social media. Events that promote direct connection and collaboration should be arranged. Continuous research should

be conducted to establish strategies that correspond with evolving requirements. Technology in higher education should be regarded solely as a tool, complemented by human-centric methodologies.

Administrators have highlighted the detrimental effects of constant notifications on mental focus and creativity, as well as the fact that technology addiction disrupts the balance between social life and work. It has been highlighted that addiction can impair creative thinking abilities, negatively impact work performance, lead to difficulties in completing tasks on time, and weaken team communication. The effects on students are evident in the form of attention deficits, decreased academic achievement and irresponsibility. Addiction disconnects students from real-world interactions, hindering academic focus. Administrators stated that it is their responsibility to guide students in using technology as a tool without succumbing to addiction and that educational organizations have a responsibility to integrate technology in a balanced way, taking into account the emotional needs of staff. Consequently, university officials and educators ought to direct students to utilize technology consciously and judiciously. Seminars and training programs must be conducted to enhance awareness regarding the harmful effects of technology addiction and the significance of balanced usage. Specific regulations must be created to equilibrate the utilization of technology within the educational setting. Events promoting direct communication among university staff should be planned, and a balance must be attained in the utilization of digital means. Psychological and emotional support services must be offered to both students and university staff. Higher education institutions must implement strategic measures to mitigate the adverse impacts of technology addiction and enhance the efficient integration of technology. A balanced strategy must be implemented, taking into account the emotional and social requirements of both students and staff.

Administrators carry out activities against technology addiction at both academic and individual levels. Academic activities (Elective Courses, Seminar, Digital Transformation Office) show that a systematic approach is displayed. Elective courses and seminars teach students about conscious technology use and ways to cope with addiction. The Digital Transformation Office plays a critical role in increasing technological competencies and promoting healthy use. Within the scope of individual activities (Verbal Warning and Support Services), administrators empathize with students, encourage them to question their behavior, and direct those who have problems to guidance and psychological counseling centers (such as ERDAM). These efforts contribute not only to the fight against technology addiction but also to the dissemination of healthy technology usage habits. Despite the existing efforts, the number of elective courses should be increased, and their content should be expanded and enriched to enhance the effectiveness and scalability of initiatives aimed at combating technology addiction within higher education institutions. Regularly scheduled seminars and workshops should facilitate discussions about the impact of technology on individuals. The functions of Digital Transformation Offices must be broadened, and training programs along with guidance documents should be developed to enhance awareness of technology addiction. The capabilities of guidance and psychological counseling centers should be enhanced, and individuals with expertise in technology addiction should be recruited at these facilities. Implementing these ideas will

enable higher education institutions to have a more proactive role in combating digital addiction.

Administrators' strategies for the future are aimed at helping individuals move away from the digital world and lead a more socially, culturally, and emotionally balanced life. Planned themes include "Social and Cultural Activities", "Integration into the Curriculum", "Technology Use Policies" and "Digital Detox Days". Encouraging activities such as nature walks, handicrafts, and sports allows individuals to explore different interests, strengthen social bonds, and promote emotional balance. Applications such as digital detox camps allow individuals to spend more time on themselves and their surroundings by moving away from technology. As a result, it is seen that social, cultural and educational approaches should be handled in an integrated manner in the fight against technology addiction. Consequently, activities such as nature walks, handicraft workshops, sporting events, and social solidarity initiatives should be arranged to motivate students to pursue interests beyond technology. Curricular content designed to enhance awareness of technology addiction should be incorporated into educational programs, accompanied by training to foster mindful usage practices in the digital world. Digital detox camps and designated days can facilitate individuals in disconnecting from technology, allowing them to focus on self-reflection and their environment. Comprehensive initiatives must be executed to address technology addiction in collaboration with local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. Such programs are believed to not only govern individuals' technology usage patterns but also facilitate the adoption of a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

#### **Author Contributions**

The authors contributed equally to the preparation of this manuscript. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript. This study was produced from the first author's master's thesis, conducted under the supervision of the second author.

#### **Ethical Declaration**

This study was conducted with the approval of the Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee, as granted at the meeting held on March 29, 2024 (Protocol No. 06/14).

#### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

#### **Declaration of Generative AI Use**

During the English language editing stage of this study, the Microsoft 365 Word translation tool was used to a limited extent and exclusively for language translation purposes. The translated text was carefully reviewed for accuracy by the authors, and all necessary revisions made. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

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