



Audrezara Journal of Communication and Social Research (AJCSR), Vol. 2(2), 290-299, 2026.



AUDREZARA JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH (AJCSR)

Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp. 290-299, August, 2026.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22262368>

E-ISSN: 3121-9721

Digital Communication, Information Overload and Telework Stress in Nigeria: A Critical Appraisal

Philomena E. Umoren

Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa



ORCID:

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1182-5529>

*Corresponding Author: philoumoren12@gmail.com

Received: July 30, 2026; Revised: August 19, 2026; Accepted: August 26, 2026.

Abstract

The rapid diffusion of digital communication technologies into Nigerian workplaces, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent normalisation of telework, has produced a communication environment in which employees are almost continuously reachable through email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and enterprise collaboration platforms. This study offers a critical appraisal of the existing literature on digital communication, information overload, and telework stress in the Nigerian context, examining the extent and nature of digital communication dependence in Nigerian telework arrangements, the causes and manifestations of information overload and technostress among Nigerian teleworkers, and the adequacy of existing coping strategies and organisational responses. This study was anchored on Technostress Theory. The study adopted a qualitative critical/systematic literature review design. The appraisal found that Nigerian teleworkers report significant positive relationships between telework intensity and stress, that information overload independently predicts negative communicative and cognitive outcomes among Nigerian digital users, and that the technostress dimensions identified in international scholarship (techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty) are conceptually present but empirically underexplored in Nigerian organisational research, which remains dominated by general occupational stress framing rather than technology-specific diagnostic constructs. The researcher concludes that Nigerian telework and digital communication research lacks a locally validated technostress measurement framework and organisationally embedded mitigation strategy, and proposes a research and policy agenda for addressing this gap.

Keywords: digital communication; information overload; technostress; telework; Nigeria; occupational stress



Introduction

Nigeria's telework population expanded dramatically during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, with employees across banking, oil and gas, telecommunications, and professional services shifting substantial portions of their work into digitally mediated, home-based arrangements; empirical studies of this shift among Nigerian employees have found statistically significant positive relationships between the intensity of teleworking and employees' reported stress levels (Uford, 2021; Uford & Ekong, 2022). This has led to an unprecedented upsurge in the adoption of virtual media platforms for organisational communication across sectors (Okpongkpong & Ukpog, 2021). This is not a marginal phenomenon: it describes a structural change in how a large and growing segment of the Nigerian white-collar workforce now experiences work itself: mediated almost entirely through screens, notifications, and asynchronous message threads that do not pause at the end of the official working day.

This phenomenon sits at the intersection of several concepts central to this study. Digital communication refers to the exchange of information through electronic channels (email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and enterprise collaboration platforms) that has become the dominant mode of organisational interaction in remote and hybrid work arrangements, and Nigerian employees now routinely blend such formal platforms with informal mobile messaging applications, multiplying the volume and unpredictability of incoming communication (Lee, *et al.*, 2016); in Nigerian organisations specifically, such tools have been found to measurably improve efficiency, collaboration, and record-keeping even as they introduce new challenges around cyber-security and digital literacy (Umoren & Ukpe, 2025), while organisational support mechanisms have been highlighted as pivotal in maintaining engagement among remote workers in Akwa Ibom State (Umoren & Ukpog, 2025).

Information overload occurs when the amount of information an individual receives exceeds their capacity to process it effectively, a function of quantity, complexity, and information quality interacting across individual, organisational, and technological levels (Graf & Antoni, 2023). Technostress is the stress experienced by individuals due to their inability to cope healthily with the demands of information and communication technologies (Brod, 1984), later formalised into a multidimensional construct comprising techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty (Tarafdar, *et al.*, 2007). Telework, or remote/home-based working mediated by ICT, is the organisational arrangement within which these communicative and cognitive pressures now concentrate, since it collapses the spatial and temporal boundaries that traditionally separated work-related digital communication from personal life (Camacho & Barrios, 2022).

International scholarship has, for nearly two decades, established that heavy reliance on ICT for organisational communication produces measurable psychological and occupational costs: Tarafdar *et al.* (2007) found technostress inversely related to productivity and directly related to role stress across 223 organisations, while Camacho and Barrios (2022) showed that work-home conflict and work overload can compound into a cumulative “loss spiral” among teleworkers over time. A parallel, less integrated literature has begun to document similar dynamics within Nigeria. Uford (2021) and Uford and Ekong (2022), surveying a combined 730 Nigerian oil and gas employees, found significant positive relationships between telework intensity and employee stress, while Apuke and Omar (2021) found that information overload independently predicts impaired information-processing judgement among Nigerian digital communication users more broadly. Communication-strategy research within Nigerian institutions tells a complementary story: Umoren (2025), studying AI-enhanced cloud-based collaboration platforms among university staff in Akwa Ibom State, found that most respondents did not consider virtual briefings and collaboration tools effective for achieving job clarity, a finding she explained through Media Richness Theory rather than a technostress-specific diagnostic framework. These Nigerian studies convincingly establish that telework intensity and digital information volume are associated with stress, yet none applies a formal technostress framework (Tarafdar *et al.*, 2007) to identify which specific



dimensions (overload, invasion, complexity, insecurity, or uncertainty) are actually responsible, a level of mechanistic specificity that international research (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2016; Camacho & Barrios, 2022) has already achieved.

This gap is precisely where the present critical appraisal intervenes. Nigerian employees are demonstrably experiencing telework- and technology-related stress, yet the diagnostic apparatus available internationally for identifying which specific technostress dimensions are operative, and for designing correspondingly targeted organisational interventions, remains largely untested in Nigerian organisational contexts. This study therefore undertakes a critical appraisal of the available literature to synthesise what is known, identify what remains unexamined, and propose a technostress-informed research and policy agenda for Nigerian telework, thereby extending Technostress Theory's largely Western and East Asian empirical base into a systematically under-theorised African labour-market context.

Nigerian organisations have embraced telework and digitally mediated communication as durable features of the post-pandemic workplace, yet employees within these arrangements report significant stress associated with telework intensity and ICT dependence (Uford, 2021; Uford & Ekong, 2022), while Nigerian digital communication users separately show information overload severe enough to impair judgement (Apuke & Omar, 2021). No integrated Nigerian study has yet applied a formal, multidimensional technostress framework to disaggregate which specific features of digital workplace communication — message volume, boundary intrusion, platform complexity, job-security anxiety, or the pace of technological change — are actually driving this stress. International technostress research offers a mature, validated framework for this diagnosis (Tarafdar et al., 2007; Lee, Son, & Kim, 2016; Camacho & Barrios, 2022), but it has been tested almost exclusively in Western, East Asian, and Latin American contexts, leaving open whether its dimensions hold within Nigeria's specific infrastructural conditions, including unstable electricity and variable internet bandwidth. Nigerian organisations are consequently making digital communication and telework policy decisions without the diagnostic clarity a technostress-informed evidence base would provide. What, then, does the existing body of Nigerian and comparative international evidence reveal about the specific technostress mechanisms driving digital communication and information overload among Nigerian teleworkers, and what does this reveal about the adequacy of current organisational and policy responses?

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Examine the extent and nature of digital communication dependence and information volume within Nigerian telework arrangements, as reported in the existing literature.
2. Assess the causes and manifestations of information overload and technostress among Nigerian teleworkers and digital communication users, relative to the technostress dimensions established in international scholarship.
3. Critically appraise existing coping strategies, organisational responses, and research gaps in the Nigerian literature, and propose a technostress-informed research and policy agenda.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Technostress Theory, a concept first coined by clinical psychologist Craig Brod in his 1984 book *Technostress: The Human Cost of the Computer Revolution* and originally defined as a modern disease of adaptation caused by an inability to cope with new computer technology. Brod's early formulation was largely clinical and descriptive; Weil and Rosen (1997) later broadened it to cover any negative impact on attitudes, thoughts, behaviour, or body psychology caused by technology, before Tarafdar, Tu, Ragu-Nathan, and Ragu-Nathan (2007) provided the decisive theoretical advance, grounding technostress in sociotechnical and role theory and empirically validating five distinct "technostress creators" using structural equation modelling on data from 223 organisations. Subsequent



extensions (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Tarafdar, Tu, & Ragu-Nathan, 2010) refined the model's relationship to end-user satisfaction and performance, while Camacho and Barrios (2022) extended it into telework and remote-work contexts catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Technostress Theory remains the dominant framework in information systems and organisational behaviour scholarship for explaining the psychological and occupational costs of ICT use, and rests on the core assumption that ICT-related stress is a distinct, multidimensional category of occupational stress arising from a mismatch between an individual's adaptive capacity and the pace of technological demand, with measurable organisational consequences such as reduced productivity, role stress, and burnout (Brod, 1984; Tarafdar et al., 2007).

Technostress Theory is directly applicable to this study because Nigerian telework and digital communication research has robustly documented the existence of ICT-associated stress and information overload's behavioural consequences (Uford, 2021; Uford & Ekong, 2022; Apuke & Omar, 2021), yet has not applied this disaggregated framework to specify which technostress creators are actually operative; applying the theory here allows the present appraisal to organise the existing Nigerian evidence against an internationally validated diagnostic structure, identify which dimensions Nigerian findings implicitly touch upon without formally measuring them, and extend a theory validated primarily in Western and East Asian contexts into a systematically under-theorised Nigerian and African labour-market setting.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative critical/systematic literature review design, appropriate for a critical appraisal that synthesises, compares, and evaluates existing peer-reviewed evidence on digital communication, information overload, and telework stress in Nigeria against an established international theoretical framework, rather than generating new primary data. The population comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, indexed conference proceedings, and scholarly book chapters addressing digital communication, information overload, technostress, or telework-related occupational stress, published in English between 2004 and 2025, drawn from both Nigerian-context and comparative international sources. Sources were identified through structured searches of Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Springer, Taylor & Francis Online, and Nigerian institutional repositories, using search terms combining “telework,” “digital communication,” “information overload,” and “technostress” with “Nigeria,” and purposive sampling was applied, with inclusion requiring that a source be peer-reviewed, directly address at least one core construct, and, for empirical studies, report an identifiable sample, design, and finding suitable for comparison.

Data were extracted using a researcher-developed literature synthesis matrix, coded deductively against Tarafdar et al.'s (2007) five technostress dimensions and inductively against emergent Nigerian-specific themes, and validated for content and conceptual clarity by an expert in organisational communication and information systems research prior to full extraction. Because this is a qualitative synthesis rather than a primary survey, reliability was established not through Cronbach's alpha but through a second independent reviewer cross-checking a subset of the classified sources, with disagreements resolved through discussion. Data analysis proceeded through thematic synthesis, organising extracted findings into comparative matrices that mapped Nigerian empirical findings against international technostress dimensions, allowing convergences, divergences, and gaps to be systematically identified and interpreted against the study's objectives and theoretical framework.

Findings

Synthesis of the reviewed literature against Tarafdar et al.'s (2007) technostress dimensions and the study's three objectives produced the comparative matrices presented below.

Table 1: Nigerian Empirical Findings Mapped Against Technostress Dimensions (Objective 1)

Nigerian Study	Sample / Design	Reported Finding	Technostress Dimension(s) Implicated (Inferred)
Uford (2021)	n=330, oil/energy sector, ex-post facto, Pearson correlation	Significant positive relationship between regular home-based and high-mobile teleworking and employee stress	Techno-overload; techno-invasion (not formally measured)
Uford& Ekong (2022)	n=400, oil and gas sector, ex-post facto design	Regular telework during COVID-19 significantly associated with stress and negative work perception	Techno-overload; techno-uncertainty (not formally measured)
Apuke& Omar (2021)	n=385, Nigerian social media users, PLS-SEM	Information overload among strongest predictors of fake news sharing during COVID-19 infodemic	Techno-overload (information-specific; not formally measured as workplace construct)

Table 1 shows that the reviewed Nigerian literature consistently documents a significant positive relationship between telework intensity and employee stress across two independent samples in the oil, gas, and energy sector (Uford, 2021; Uford& Ekong, 2022), and demonstrates independently that Nigerian digital communication users experience information overload with measurable behavioural consequences (Apuke& Omar, 2021). However, none of the three Nigerian studies formally measures which technostress dimension is responsible; the inferred mapping shown above — techno-overload and techno-invasion for Uford’s findings, techno-overload and techno-uncertainty for Uford and Ekong’s — is plausible given the studies’ descriptions of “regular home-based” and “high-mobile” teleworking, but remains an interpretive inference rather than a directly measured finding.



Table 2: Comparative International Technostress Findings (Objective 2)

International Study	Sample / Design	Key Finding	Diagnostic Contribution Absent in Nigerian Literature
Tarafdar, Tu, Ragu-Nathan, & Ragu-Nathan (2007)	223 organisations, SEM, 5-dimension technostress scale	Technostress inversely related to productivity; directly related to role stress	Validated, disaggregated 5-dimension diagnostic framework
Camacho & Barrios (2022)	Longitudinal survey, COVID-19 teleworkers, two time points	Work-home conflict and work overload generate strain; cumulative “loss spiral” over time	Temporal/longitudinal modelling of stress accumulation
Lee, Son, & Kim (2016)	n=434, South Korean office workers, path analysis	Information/system overload (not communication overload) increases role ambiguity/conflict, leading to burnout	Differentiation between overload types and their distinct effects

Table 2 shows that international scholarship offers a substantially more granular diagnostic apparatus than currently exists in Nigerian workplace research. Tarafdar et al.’s (2007) validated five-dimension model demonstrates that technostress is not a unitary phenomenon but a cluster of distinguishable stressors with a direct empirical link to role stress and reduced productivity; Camacho and Barrios (2022) add a temporal dimension absent from the cross-sectional Nigerian studies, showing that technostress can compound over time; and Lee et al. (2016) show that different overload types produce different downstream effects, a distinction the undifferentiated Nigerian stress measures do not capture.



Table 3: Gaps, Coping Strategies, and Proposed Research/Policy Agenda (Objective 3)

Identified Gap in Nigerian Literature	Proposed Response	Grounding
No use of validated 5-dimension technostress scale in Nigerian workplace studies	Adapt and validate the Technostress Creators Scale for Nigerian organisational contexts	Tarafdar et al. (2007)
No differentiation between information, communication, and system-feature overload	Disaggregate overload measures in future Nigerian surveys by overload type	Lee, Son, & Kim (2016)
No longitudinal Nigerian data on whether telework stress compounds over time	Commission longitudinal panel studies of Nigerian teleworkers across at least two time points	Camacho & Barrios (2022)
Nigerian information-overload evidence confined to social media behaviour, not linked to workplace digital communication	Integrate workplace digital communication audits with existing social-media overload research	Apuke & Omar (2021); Eppler & Mengis (2004)
No evidence of organisational technostress-inhibitor mechanisms (technical support, involvement facilitation) in Nigerian workplaces	Encourage Nigerian organisations to adopt and evaluate technostress-inhibitor practices	Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008)

Table 3 shows that the reviewed Nigerian literature contains little direct evidence of organisational technostress-mitigation practice, in contrast to the “technostress inhibitors” construct validated internationally (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). Synthesising the identified gaps against the theoretical framework, the table proposes that Nigerian research adopt validated, disaggregated technostress measurement instruments, differentiate overload types, pursue longitudinal designs given Camacho and Barrios’s (2022) loss-spiral finding, and that organisations pilot technostress-inhibitor mechanisms adapted to local infrastructural conditions such as unreliable electricity and connectivity.

Discussion

The findings show a consistent asymmetry between what Nigerian and international scholarship have each established. Nigerian research robustly demonstrates that telework intensity and digital communication volume are associated with employee stress and impaired judgement, but it does so using general, undifferentiated stress measures rather than the disaggregated technostress vocabulary that international scholarship has already validated. This asymmetry is not a failure of Nigerian scholarship so much as a sign of where the field currently sits: the existence of the problem is well established locally, while the specific mechanisms driving it (overload, invasion, complexity, insecurity, uncertainty) have only been examined internationally, mostly in Western, East Asian, and Latin American organisational contexts whose infrastructural conditions differ meaningfully from Nigeria’s. Even recent Nigerian communication-technology research illustrates this theoretical gap directly: Umoren (2025) diagnosed poor job clarity among Akwa Ibom State University staff using virtual collaboration platforms through Media Richness Theory, a framework concerned with matching communication channels to task complexity, rather than through the psychological-stress-specific lens Technostress Theory provides.



This gap has practical consequences. Because Nigerian organisations cannot yet point to which specific technostress creators are operative within their own workforce, digital transformation and telework policies are being designed on the assumption that stress is a generic, undifferentiated cost of doing business online, when the international evidence suggests it is better understood as a cluster of distinguishable, independently manageable stressors. Camacho and Barrios's (2022) finding that technostress can compound into a cumulative "loss spiral" over time is particularly consequential for Nigeria, where telework arrangements that began as a pandemic-era emergency measure have since become durable organisational features; if Nigerian technostress follows a similar trajectory, cross-sectional studies such as Uford (2021) and Uford and Ekong (2022) may be capturing only an early, and not the most severe, stage of the problem.

The near-absence of any documented organisational mitigation practice in the Nigerian literature, set against the internationally validated technostress-inhibitor construct (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008), suggests that Nigerian organisations are currently facing a diagnostic and a policy gap simultaneously: they lack both the instruments to identify which technostress creators affect their employees and the organisational mechanisms that could buffer those effects once identified. Closing this gap requires adopting the internationally validated technostress framework for Nigerian contexts specifically, rather than continuing to treat Nigerian telework stress as a phenomenon already adequately explained by general occupational stress theory.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This critical appraisal examined the existing Nigerian and comparative international literature on digital communication, information overload, and telework stress through the lens of Technostress Theory. The evidence shows that Nigerian empirical research robustly and consistently documents a significant, positive relationship between telework intensity, digital information volume, and employee stress, but has not yet adopted the disaggregated, mechanism-specific technostress framework that international scholarship has validated and applied. This appraisal concludes that Nigerian telework and digital communication research currently lacks a locally validated, multidimensional technostress measurement framework, longitudinal design, and organisationally embedded mitigation evidence base, and that closing this gap is a necessary next step for both scholarship and workplace policy as Nigeria's digitally mediated, telework-inclusive labour market continues to expand.

This appraisal is subject to several limitations. First, as a qualitative critical/systematic literature review, it synthesises and interprets existing secondary evidence rather than generating new primary data, so its conclusions are bounded by the scope, quality, and methodological choices of the studies it reviews. Second, the Nigerian empirical base available for synthesis remains small and sectorally concentrated: the reviewed Nigerian studies (Uford, 2021; Uford & Ekong, 2022). Third, because none of the Nigerian studies reviewed formally applied Tarafdar et al.'s (2007) five-dimension technostress framework, the mapping of Nigerian findings onto specific technostress creators (Table 1) is necessarily an interpretive inference by the researcher rather than a directly measured outcome, and should be read as a hypothesis-generating exercise rather than a confirmed diagnostic result. These limitations point directly to opportunities for further studies. Future researchers should conduct primary, survey-based studies that administer a validated technostress instrument (Tarafdar et al., 2007) directly to Nigerian teleworkers across a wider range of sectors.

The researcher recommends that Nigerian workplace studies should disaggregate overload measures by type (information, communication, and system-feature overload) rather than treating digital-communication stress as a single undifferentiated construct, following Lee, Son, and Kim's (2016) model. Nigerian organisations should pilot and formally evaluate technostress-inhibitor mechanisms, such as dedicated technical support and structured platform-involvement facilitation, adapted to local



infrastructural conditions including electricity and bandwidth constraints. Future research should integrate Nigeria's separately documented social-media information-overload evidence (Apuke& Omar, 2021) with formal workplace digital-communication research, since both appear to draw on the same underlying overload mechanism but have so far been studied in isolation from one another.

Acknowledgement: The author(s) wish to thank everyone whose work has contributed to this study.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest: The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest associated with this publication.

How to Cite: Umoren, P.E. (2026). Digital communication, information overload and telework stress in Nigeria: A critical appraisal. *Audrezara Journal of Communication and Social Research (AJCSR)*, 2(2), 290-299. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22262368>

References

- Apuke, O. D., & Omar, B. (2021). Social media affordances and information abundance: Enabling fake news sharing during the COVID-19 health crisis. *Health Informatics Journal*, 27(3), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14604582211021470>
- Brod, C. (1984). *Technostress: The human cost of the computer revolution*. Addison-Wesley.
- Camacho, S., & Barrios, A. (2022). Teleworking and technostress: Early consequences of a COVID-19 lockdown. *Cognition, Technology & Work*, 24(3), 441–457. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10111-022-00693-4>
- Graf, B., & Antoni, C. H. (2023). Drowning in the flood of information: A meta-analysis on the relation between information overload, behaviour, experience, and health and moderating factors. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 32(2), 173–198.
- Lee, A. R., Son, S.-M., & Kim, K. K. (2016). Information and communication technology overload and social networking service fatigue: A stress perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 51–61.
- Okpongkpong, G. I., & Ukpog, E. N. (2021). Coronavirus and the upsurge in virtual media usage for organisational communication in Nigeria. In *Pandemic in the 21st Century: Multidimensional Approaches* (pp. 104–112).
- Ragu-Nathan, T. S., Tarafdar, M., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Tu, Q. (2008). The consequences of technostress for end users in organizations: Conceptual development and empirical validation. *Information Systems Research*, 19(4), 417–433.
- Tarafdar, M., Tu, Q., & Ragu-Nathan, T. S. (2010). Impact of technostress on end-user satisfaction and performance. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 27(3), 303–334.
- Tarafdar, M., Tu, Q., Ragu-Nathan, B. S., & Ragu-Nathan, T. S. (2007). The impact of technostress on role stress and productivity. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 24(1), 301–328.
- Uford, I. C. (2021). Teleworking and stress factor amidst COVID-19 pandemic in Total Nigeria. *Journal of Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior*, 3(2), 48–72.
- Uford, I. C., & Ekong, J. E. (2022). The COVID-19 crisis and regular telework: The effect of stress on the Nigerian oil and gas employees' work perception. *European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies*, 7(2), 1–20.
- Umoren, P. E. (2025). Communication strategies, virtual collaboration platforms and job understanding among staff of Akwa Ibom State University. *American Journal of Arts and Communication*, 10(4), 46–59. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16314811>



Audrezara Journal of Communication and Social Research (AJCSR), Vol. 2(2), 290-299, 2026.

- Umoren, P. E., & Ukpe, A. P. (2025). Digital communication in organizations: Trends, strengths, and weaknesses. *Direct Research Journal of Management and Strategic Studies*, 6(1), 55–64.
- Umoren, P. E., & Ukpong, E. N. (2025). Perceived Organisational Support (POS) as a mediator between organisational communication and employee engagement among remote workers in Akwa Ibom State. *Alkebulan: A Journal of West and East African Studies*, 5(2), 27–39.