

## INFORMATION OVERLOAD AND WORK LIFE BALANCE IN TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The research was designed to examine the relationship between information overload and work life balance in telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The study adopted the survey design to collect primary data and three hypotheses were formulated. The sample size of 215 was drawn, from a population of 215, using purposive sampling technique. The major instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire administered to the respondents using simple random sampling technique. Data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for the social sciences (SPSS 23.0), descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages; inferential statistics of Spearman Rank Order Correlation for univariate and bivariate analysis for testing of the hypothesis. From the analysis, the result revealed that information overload has significant effect on leave policy, and also, information overload has positive and significant relationship with leave policy, and also, information overload has positive and significant relationship with flexible working arrangement of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it is concluded that information overload has positive and significant relationship with work life balance of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Hence, it was recommended that managers of mobile telecommunication firms should offer training programs and workshops before the implementation of new technology or software packages at the workplace. Mobile telecommunication firms should implement the “right to disconnect” policies at the workplace to overcome technology overload and organizations should ensure that they effect useful policies that allows a worker to have a flexible work life balance.

**Keywords:** Information overhead, information technology, work life balance, leave policy and flexible working arrangement

### INTRODUCTION

Previous researchers have shown that people are more attached to organizations that offer family-friendly policies, regardless to the extent to which they might personally benefit from such policies (Grover and Karen, 1995). In organizational terms, this translates into better talent attraction, enhanced productivity, better talent management, reduced work stress, reduced absenteeism, better motivation, employer branding and efficient work practices (Byrne, 2005). A mismatch between work and non-work roles can be dysfunctional and disadvantageous for both the employees and the employers. It is because of this reason

that many organizations are increasingly adopting work-life policies such as introducing greater work flexibility, providing child-care facilities and offering emotional support (Lapierre and Allen, 2006).

The concept of work-life balance not only includes the family-friendly perspectives of earlier HR policies, but is also much wider in the sense that it seeks to help all employed people, irrespective of marital or parental status so that employees can experience a better fit between their professional and private lives (White et al., 2003). Orogbu, Onyeizugbe and Chukwuemeke (2015) opined that, discovering an appropriate balance between work and life has become a challenge for both employer and employees in an organization. One of the major reasons for this increasing concern of work-life balance is due to technological advancement which has morphed the work and personal lives of working professionals into a single whole. Lester (1999) argued that technology can help and hinder work-life balance by making work more accessible at all times of the day and night, and also in terms of enabling a more flexible approach to when and where to work.

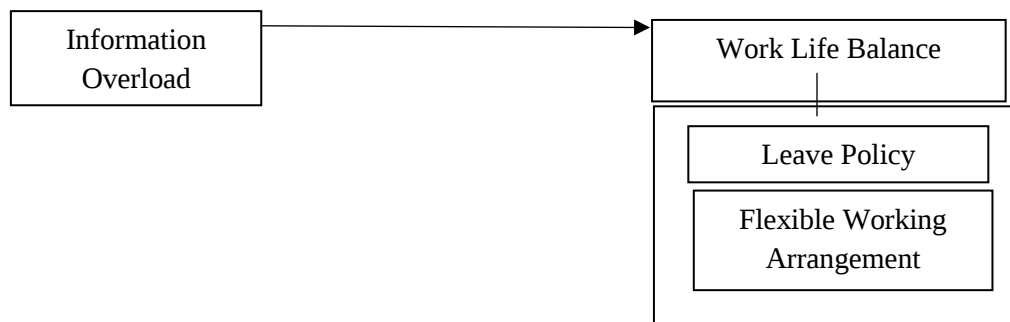
We cannot deny that we depend on technology in the workplace more now than we ever have before. In a sense, technology itself has become an “organizational actor,” not just a resource, for whom knowledge workers rely to achieve goals, perform tasks, and ultimately transform work patterns. This “Actor Dependency” on technology has a consequence: “A dependency extends an actor’s capabilities, but it also makes the actor vulnerable” (Yu and Mylopoulos, 1993). Technologies frequently create interruptions that reduced workers’ productivity and decreased the use of technology (Tams, Ahuja, Thatcher, and Grover., 2020). Devices and tools that are designed to decrease the burden on human cognition are inadequate; in fact, they have truly added overload on human cognition (Grandhi, Jones, &Hiltz., 2005).

Information overload (IO) refers to the situation where information exceeds the ability of a user to process and utilize it, resulting in negative feelings of failure. IO is a function of information quality and quantity—specifically, excessive quantity and poor quality (Rong, 2010; Cheng et al., 2014). Excess information is usually a result of redundancy, and users can reduce this factor with various digital technologies that

continuously compare the effectiveness of information among users and increase the possibility of disagreements among users. The decrease in information quality makes users doubt the truth of the information presented and have to take time to determine its veracity. When users have to spend too much time in an attempt to obtain effective information, negative emotions will occur (Asif Naveed and Anwar, 2020). The research of Congard and Carole (2020) on IO in the international network environment also showed that too much information will generate negative emotions among users. Information overload is defined as “the condition by which a person cannot process all communication and informational inputs, which results in ineffectiveness or terminated information processing” (Beaudoin, 2008, Rogers and Agarwala-Rogers, 1975).

Despite a significant and intensive studies by scholars on the background effect of information overload, it is imperative to note that something remains elusive; A comprehensive study of the relationship between information overload and work life balance in telecommunication firms. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the relationship between information overload and work life balance in telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** Information Overload and Work Life Balance

**Source:** Conceptualized by the Researcher (2023), with dimensions of Technology Overload from the work of Karr-Wisniewski and Lu (2010) and Measures of Work Life Balance from the work of Mulwa (2017).

Furthermore, to guide this study, the following research questions were raised:

- i. What is the relationship between system information overload and leave policy of telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?

- ii. What is the relationship between information overload and flexible working arrangement of telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Research scholars have advanced several theories to bring to fore major issues related to information overload and how this issues develops and can be tackled to enhance an effective and efficient work life balance for their employees. As a result, the underpinning theory for this study will anchor on Cognitive load theory and The Spill over theory.

### **Cognitive Load Theory**

To understand cognitive load theory, we need to understand how memory functions. The learner uses multiple senses to input and process information through attention and pattern recognition the input is processes in working or short term memory. Working memory concerns the amount of information the brain can hold and manipulate at once. Without an organizational method, the learner will not be able to process data. The organization method, or schema, used to manipulate the data would be stored in long term memory. Schema determines how new information is processed and stored. For learners, to “know” something it must be stored and retrieved from the long term memory (Paas&Sweller, 2004). Cognitive load refers to the total amount of mental effort being used in the working memory (Chandler &Sweller, 1991). The amount of information that the brain can process is limited, as a result, being continuously bombarded with different source of communication channel becomes a source of concern and deep reflection. In order to effectively manipulate information, the cognitive load must be less than the cognitive limit of the working memory (Paas&Sweller, 2004). In essence this means that a worker is not supposed to be overloaded with streams of communication outlets, because, the cognitive working memory is limited. Schema acquisition is the ultimate goal of cognitive load theory

### **The Spillover Theory**

The proponents of the spill over theory are Aldous, 1969; Piotrkowski, 1979; Staines 1980; and Crouter, 1984; Guest, 2002). This theory had its origins in 1890, and was developed by Alfred Marshall. The theory looks at two job related factors and work-related factors whose link is established like the influence of spillover theory over job context more for women than for men, whereas theory converse would be true for job related factors. The spill over theory suggests that there is similarity between what occurs in the work environment and what occurs in the family environment. The theory emphasized on the tendency of the worker to carry their emotions attitudes, skills and behaviors that they establish at work in their family life and vice versa. The spillover process can either be positive or negative. The negative spillover induces stress in individuals and the positive spillover can lead to high levels of satisfaction and performance. From organization point of view positive spill over theory can have a direct influence on the financial wellbeing organization. A satisfied employee will have spillover effect to their customer as well, hence increased performance of an organization and vice versa. The spillover theory is based on asymmetric permeable boundaries between the family and work. It is concerned with work-related factors and family related factors (Piotrkowski, 1979).

The most admired view of relationship between work and family was put forth by Spillover theory. Several researchers suggested that workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills and behaviors that they establish at work into their family life (Belsky *et al.*, 1985; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985; Piotrkowski, 1979; Piotrkowski & Crits- Christoph, 1981) and vice-versa (Belsky *et al.*, 1985; Crouter, 1984). Spillover can be positive or negative. Positive spillover refers to fact that satisfaction and achievement in one domain may bring along satisfaction and achievement in another domain. Negative spillover refers to the fact that difficulties and depression in one domain may bring along the same emotion in another domain (Xu, 2009). Guest (2002) opined that what determines the work- life- balance is in both work and home contexts. Contextual determinants include the culture of work, demands of home, the culture of home, and demands of work. On the other hand, Individual determinants work orientation or the extent to which home or work is an epicenter

of life interest, coping energy, personality, and personal control, age, career stage, and gender. The nature of the balance between work and life may be both subjectively and objectively.

The objective indicators include time of uncommitted or free time outside and hours of work. On the other hand, Subjective Indicators is the states of balance or imbalance. Guest also argued that balance may occur when gives equal weights to both home and work or either of the two dominates by choice. Spillover happens when one sphere of life interferes with the other. Moreover, results of work life balance include well-being in life as a whole, personal satisfaction, impact on others at work as well as friends and families, and productivity at work and home, (Guest, 2002). This theory explains the condition under which there is conflict between work and life responsibilities as a result of spillover effect. It is, therefore, relevant to this study as it shed lights on factors that cause work life conflicts.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Information overload**

Wilson (2001) best defined information overload by covering the different main elements, especially a perception on the part of the individual that the flow of information associated with work tasks is greater than can be managed effectively and a perception that overload in this sense creates a degree of stress for which his or her coping strategies are ineffective. Information overload is defined as receiving too much information for the user to handle. This results in information becoming a hindrance instead of a benefit (Bawden *et al.*, 2000). Information overload is experienced when the amount of information supply exceeds the limit of human information processing capacity. The usual effects are stress or confusion, which occur when the supply exceeds the capacity (Eppler & Mengis, 2003). Information overload impairs the decision-making process thus confusing the user, and affecting overall work quality (Chewning & Harrell, 1990). This leaves the person feeling confused and overwhelmed (Rudd & McKenry, 1986).

Based on previous research, it has been established that due to the increasing access, convenience, and acceptance of technology within the workplace employees are experiencing an influx of information into our daily lives, especially our work lives. These influxes or excessive exchanges of messages can often bombard individuals and cause “employee stress due to what many refer to as email overload” (Thomas et al., 2006). Cho *et al.*, (2011), concluded that receiving large amounts of information can actually benefit employees in particular ways, for example, these authors found a link between the amount of information an employee receives and their rate of identification with their organization (2011). Rate of identification refers to an individual’s sense of inclusion within the organization or their sense of belonging (Cho *et al.*, 2011). Identifying with one’s organizations can also contribute to more effective internal communication among employees allowing for a more effective work environment (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Subsequently, Cho *et al.*, (2011) also discovered a link between organizational identification and job satisfaction.

As Eppler and Mengis (2003) observed, information overload is approached in two different ways: conceptualise and measure, and as a subjective concept. The conceptualisation and measurement approach define information overload as “when the information processing requirements are bigger than the information processing capacities”. The term “capacities” refers to the available time and ability. The term “requirement” in the preceding definition refers to the amount of processed information in a specific period of time. If the user capacity allows smaller amounts of information to be processed in the available time, the result will be information overload. In contrast, the subjective view of information overload states that the user’s feelings of stress, doubt, low motivation or anxiety are the most important factors that indicate the occurrence of information overload. The everyday use of the term “information overload” by the research community has led to various constructs, synonyms and related terms. Examples include: cognitive overload, sensory overload, communication overload, knowledge overload, or information fatigue syndrome (Eppler & Mengis, 2003), infobesity, information avoidance, and information anxiety (Bawden & Robinson, 2009).

### Concept of Work Life Balance

The concept of work-life balance was based on the employees who tried to balance work and family life so that the life of employees was perfect. The organizations had to facilitate the work-life balance in order to raise positive impact on employee, such as increase the motivation, reducing job stress, creating higher productivity, and minimizing turnover rates (Johari *et al.*, 2017). Work-life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of participation or fit between the numerous roles in a person's life (Hudson, 2005). It is about the interaction between paid work and other activities, including unpaid work in families and community, leisure and personal development. Greenhaus and Allen (2006) defined work-family balance as the degree to which an individual's effectiveness and satisfaction in the roles of work and family domain are well-matched with the individual's life priorities. Greenhaus *et al* (2006) prefer to use work-life balance (WLB) interchangeably to work-family balance. To this end, work-family balance is the extent to which an individual is equally self-engaged and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role. Work-life balance was defined as an employee effort to balance their work and family life (Daipuria & Kakar, 2013).

Duxbury (2004) had defined work life balance as a combination of role overload, work to family interference and family to work interference. Hill, *et al.* (2001) defined, work-life balance as the extent to which a person can concurrently balance the emotional, behavioral and time demands of both paid work, personal and family responsibilities. In their study Bailyn *et al.*, (2001) defined work -life balance as harmonious and holistic integration of work and non-work, so that men and women can achieve their potential across the domains in which they play out their life roles. Manfredi & Holliday (2004) describes Work Life Balance is based on the notion that paid work and personal life should be seen less as competing priorities than as complementary elements of a full life.

**Achieving Work-Life Balance Practices**

A good balance in work and life can play a phenomenal role in the attainment of personal and professional goals (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). In an attempt to achieve Work-Life balance practices, scholars in the field of WLB and HR strategists are constantly developing 'appropriate' policies and initiatives to try balance the two spheres. Persuaded by the different findings employers continue to offer a range of initiatives and programmes aimed at achieving WLB practices, these include flexible working arrangements like working part-time, from home, casual labour and telecommuting. Compulsory leaves, recreational spaces within workplaces and strict maximum hours are also some of the strategies in place by employers to discourage employees from working beyond regulated times. Effective management of employees' work and personal life calls for organizations to recognize and account for the array of non-work roles that impact on employee working-lives. It is thus very important for each organization to adopt correct policies and initiatives flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the employees and the organizations at all instances. Additionally, these policies and initiatives should be widely communicated to all employees conveniently to enlighten them on what is available and what is accessible.

**Challenges of Achieving Work-Life Balance Practices**

Achieving appropriate work-life balance in today's global business environment has increasingly become a challenge to organization and its employees. Economic conditions continually to act as a lead indicator for investments in talent and employee engagement (AoN, 2015). As organizations and investors aim to reduce costs, it is the responsibility of HR professionals and HR departments to understand the critical issues of work-life balance practices that affect business outcomes and effectively champion work-life programmes to counter any negative trends. Furthermore, the increasing numbers of organizations embracing cost cutting measures to withstand the current economic downtime have forced HR departments to restrict and cut-down on work-life balance facilities and budgets.

Employers faced with rising operating costs, economic uncertainty, structural changes and global competition; boundaries between work and life are consistently blurred and demands on employees and organizations have never been high. Work target demands, family pressure and the pressure to balance the two spheres of life have taken a toll on most of the employees' health and well-being (Parus, 2010). Structural changes in the workplace such as working in shifts add to the challenges of achieving WLB practices. Shift work, especially rotating shifts, can disrupt workers' circadian rhythms, resulting in sleep disturbances, accidents, and illnesses. Shift workers may also experience psychological issues related to isolation from family and friends who aren't on the same schedule (Schluter *et al.*, 2011). Rapid technological advances coupled with globalization have further escalated the problem of managing time constraints and the pressing issues of work-life. This has resulted in increased challenge for workers to successfully reconcile their personal lives and the conflicting roles of paid work. The advent of web based companies; organizations have adopted different modes of operations including working from home, telecommuting, introducing flexible work schedules further blurring the line between work and personal life. Comparable to employees' benefits in such a set-up, organizations' are also able to positively reap in through increased productivity, low operation costs and limited employee absences thus maximizing on their profits.

## Measures of Work Life Balance

### Leave policy

Leave policy is used to describe the procedures and guidelines established by organizations in accordance with the Labor Law, an intervening variable, to govern the process, timeframe and reporting procedures for taking personal time off work. Sufficient rest-time off work activities is believed to improve employee attitude and attendance eventually enhancing employee commitment. Leave is the amount of hours/days employees of an organization are permitted to be away from their employment position within a period of time without consequences (Obiageli, et. al., 2015). This time off is paid by the company and employees are allowed to request the time for any reason they wish to be off work. It also gives the ability for employee to release themselves from work stress and create a balance between work and their family activities. This type of work life balances helps employees to perform other duties outside work, which creates a balancing effect between work activities and life activities.

There are different types of leave policy which are:

- i. **Annual leave:** Annual leave can defined as paid leave for the purpose of recreation to which employees become entitled after a period of qualifying service or employment with a particular employer (Obiageli, et al., 2015).
- ii. **Career's leave:** Career's leave is an official permission for an employee to take time off to take care for an immediate family or household member who is sick or injured or help during a family emergence. But it comes out of the employee personal leave balance (Obiageli *et al.*, 2015).
- iii. **Paid Family and Medical leave:** Paid Family and Medical leave relates with an officially granted leave of absence from work to attend to dependent care challenges or personal health concerns of the employee (Obiageli *et al.*, 2015).

- iv. **Sick leave:** Sick leave is time off from work that an employee can use to address their health and safety needs without losing pay (Obiageli, et al., 2015)
- v. **Study leave:** Study leave is given to any staff member who is undertaking an approved study course. Training leave is given to an employee for self-development and organization development (Obiageli *et al.*, 2015).
- vi. **Paternity Leave:** Leave usually made available to fathers when his wife gives birth to a new born baby in order to spend time with his household members' i.e. new baby, older children and his wife (Blum & Moss, 2017).
- vii. **Maternity leave:** this is made available to pregnant women before, during and after child birth for the protection of mother and her delivered child (Blum & Moss, 2017).
- viii. **Parental leave:** this leave is for both fathers and mothers where they have the same amount of leave. In some advanced nations of the world the leave may be transferred to the other parent or share among the parents or nontransferable to the other beneficiary.

The essence of the leave is to give same opportunity to both parents to take care of the new born baby after the end of maternity leave (Blum & Moss, 2017). Women are entitled to twelve weeks' maternity leave with at least half pay but usually the customary benefits are more generous with maternity leave fully paid. The female employees often times are the greater beneficiaries of this leave in Nigeria where maternity leave allows a nursing mother to be away from work for 3 months (Obiageli *et al.*, 2015).

Leave programme is a technique that allows workers to look after legal or informal family members. Family obligations, whether or not such tasks include caring for a kid or other dependent family members, interfere with the function of the person. Family is an important aspect of life for most individuals throughout their lives (Mungania, 2017). Individuals may owe duties to people other than their immediate relatives, such as

their parents, grandparents, sibling, spouse, or other significant people in their lives, as well as their in-laws. It is thus essential to not overlook the variety of family duties. There is evidence that taking care of different types of family employees affects family and well-being (Mungania, 2017). Workers may better satisfy their fundamental requirements by using compassion and emergency leave to care for other family members, such as their health or children's education. As a result, morale and work satisfaction among employees will rise going forward. (Okumbe, 2010).

### **Flexible work arrangement**

Flexible work schedules (FWS), often referred to as flex-time, are the most common form of flexible work arrangements (Hashim, Azman, Ghani & Sabri, 2016). Flexible working schedules are defined as in which workforce are given larger arrangement freedom in how they carry out the responsibility of their positions (Hafeez & Akbar, 2015; Tamunomiebi, 2018).

Flexible working arrangements are usually made between employer and employee in which they agree to schedule the work flexibly, aiming to gain benefits to both parties as evidenced from findings, employees with access to services including flexible schedules, childcare, parental leave, and support from supervisor appear to be more likely have less conflicting work-life, greater job satisfaction, less stress, and are less inclined to want to quit (Helmle *et al.*, 2014).

Flexible working options, in which employees choose their start/finish time while still completing the required number of hours, and compressed work weeks, in which employees condense work that would normally be completed in one week to a few days a week, are examples of work life balance techniques; staggered working hours and telework (Wynes, 2016); leave programmes for example emergency, compassionate, adoption and parental leave;) welfare programmes such as childcare services, financial support and having supportive managers (Kar & Misra, 2017). Recreational services incorporate other WLB practices (Oludayo, 2015). Flexible working practices, according to Armstrong (2014), are those that

deviate from the norm. This includes rethinking old modes of employment, such as the usage of flexible schedules, job sharing, and working from home. Practices like this allow for more flexibility, which in turn increases production and reduces the expenses involved with hiring new employees (Armstrong, 2014).

## **Empirical Review**

### **Information overload and Work life balance**

Without question, it is apparent that organizations are predominantly dependent on the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to conduct their daily operations. As a result, information is rapidly flowing throughout the workplace and being exchanged at a rate unlike ever before. Unfortunately, this rapid flow of information has increased the potential for information overload to occur among employees. Through a phenomenological based approach, Christina Watts, (2016), conducted a study which explored the experiences of information overload that occur as a result of CMC use in the workplace, from the subjective point of view of ten participants. Findings indicated that the experiences described among these participants can be understood through the examination of four descriptive themes: Constant Communication, Unpredictability, Miscommunication, and lastly Increased Workload and Responsibilities. Carlo and Sara (2017) investigated the Relationship between Information Systems and Information Overload.

**A Preliminary Analysis.** The aim of the research was to investigate the role of information system in supporting companies to face with information overload. Specifically, the study provides an empirical analysis aimed to examine whether the quality of information systems is able to abate the negative effects of information overload/underload inside a company. Through a survey, the study assesses the managerial feelings about the information overload (and underload) and the managerial assessment of the Information System (IS) quality. Preliminary empirical findings of our survey confirm, by performing a factor analysis, previous literature and suggest the items to be monitored for assessing the information underload and information overload phenomena and the dimensions to take into account for evaluating the IS quality,

namely, information processing capacity, technical equipment and communication. Furthermore, results showed that when the information underload increases, the information processing capacity of IS decreases and vice versa. This relation suggests that the IS quality could affect the information overload/underload phenomena.

In a study conducted by Anis *et al.*, (2020), the purpose of their research which was to investigate the impact of Information Overload and Communication Overload on Social Media Exhaustion and Job Performance on marketing department employees of Bukalapak Company. The respondents are 70 staffs in the marketing division. The research used a quantitative approach with a path analysis methodology with data processing based on the SmartPLS program and the findings supported the hypothesis. The results of the study stated that Information Overload as well as Communication Overload has a positive and significant effect on Social Media Exhaustion, furthermore Social Media exhaustion, Information Overload and Communication Overload have negative and significant effects on Job Performance. In an always connected communication environment, users of social networking services (SNSs) need to pay continuous attention to the overwhelming volume of social demands from SNSs.

According to Ae, Soo-Min and Kyung, (2015) in their evaluation of a study on Information and communication technology overload and social networking service fatigue: A stress perspective. They argued that increased energy requirements may cause SNS fatigue, which can lead to physical and psychological strain. Using the transactional theory of stress and coping as the overarching theory, this study regards overload (i.e., stressors) as a core determinant of SNS fatigue (i.e., strain) and identifies three dimensions of overload: information overload, communication overload, and system feature overload. It also includes SNS characteristics as the antecedents of overload. The data used in this study were collected from 201 individuals through online and offline surveys. Our results show that all three dimensions of overload were significant stressors that influence SNS fatigue. Regarding the predictors of overload, the characteristics of the SNS system significantly influenced the features of system overload, while information equivocality positively influences information overload. However, information relevance was

not a significant predictor of information overload and information equivocality was not a significant predictor of communication overload.

Bassam and Rasha, (2022) investigated The Effect of Information Overload, and Social Media Fatigue on Online Consumers Purchasing Decisions: The Mediating Role of Technostress and Information Anxiety. This study aimed to test the effect of information overload, information anxiety, and social media on online purchasing decisions. To achieve this goal, the deductive method was used by a means of the quantitative approach, and the data were collected using an electronic questionnaire consisting of a set of ready-made scales used in previous studies. The number of participants was 326 online shoppers. A structural equation modeling was used to test the study hypotheses using Amos 26 software. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which is that the availability of excessive product information negatively affects information anxiety, and social media stress effects on online purchasing decisions as well as to its impact on the occurrence of information concern. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between information overloads and leave policy.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between information overload and flexible working arrangement.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher adopted a survey research design. This choice of research design was informed by the submission of (Eze, 2008), who notes that survey research method enhances the study of both small and large number of people that derived from the entire population and share basic characteristics of the elements that make facts, attitudes, practices and opinions of the respondents on the issues surrounding the up that subject matter. The population of this study is all the major telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The four (4) dominant telecommunication firms in Rivers State are MTN, AIRTEL, GLOBACOM and 9MOBILE. Since the study unit of analysis is the individual i.e micro-level of analysis, therefore, a total of 215 employees constituted the target population from the four major telecommunication operators in Port

Harcourt, Rivers State, which formed the total population for the study. While the sample method adopted in this study was the random sampling techniques. In this study the sampling frames are staffs of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The sample size of 215 was adopted for the study using purposive sampling techniques.

Primary data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that featured closed- ended questions on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The research questionnaire was validated using the content validity technique while reliability was tested with the use of Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficient with coefficients of all the study variables greater than 70%, as the threshold. The study applied both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis; the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient with aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Data Presentation

#### Presentation of Questionnaire Distribution

**Table 1: Distributed and Retrieved Questionnaire.**

| Questionnaire      | Frequency | Percent % |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Distributed        | 215       | 100.00    |
| Not Distributed    | -         | 00.00     |
| Not retrieved      | 18        | 8.37      |
| Retrieved          | 180       | 83.72     |
| Discarded Response | 27        | 12.56     |
| Useful Response    | 153       | 71.16     |

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2023

Table 1 above shows the copies of questionnaire distributed, retrieved, discarded and +useful response of the studied Mobile Telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. 215 (100.00%) copies of questionnaire were administered and 180(83.72%) copies of the questionnaire distributed were retrieved

while 18(8.37%) copies were not retrieved. However, out of the retrieved questionnaire, 27(12.567%) copies were discarded because it was not fill properly while 153(71.16%) copies were correctly filled and thus were suitable for data analysis.

### Univariate Analysis

This section of the study descriptively assessed the variables of the study drawing from the indices of their dimensions and pointers. These variables are descriptively analyzed in this section using the mean and standard deviation statistical techniques.

### Analyses of Information Overload

**Table 2: Results of Descriptive Statistics on Information Overload**

|                           | N          | Mean      |            | Std.      |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|                           | Statistic  | Statistic | Std. Error | Deviation |
|                           |            |           |            | Statistic |
| 1 Information Overload 1. | 153        | 3.77      | .078       | .862      |
| 2 Information Overload 2. | 153        | 4.35      | .105       | .773      |
| 3 Information Overload 3. | 153        | 3.49      | .051       | 1.353     |
| 4 Information Overload 4. | 153        | 4.05      | .076       | .934      |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b> | <b>153</b> |           |            |           |

**Source:** SPSS Output, Version 21.0 2023

Table 2 indicates the response rate of respondents for Information Overload as a dimension of Technology Overload, measured on a 4-item scale. The result indicated a mean score of ( $\bar{x}=4.05$  and Std. = .076); this indicates that the response rate for this item is high. The above results show that respondents were on the agree range of the manifestation and considered that Information Overload is a very strong variable in studying Technology Overload.

### Analyses of Work Life Balance

The frequencies and mean score and standard deviation for the second study variable addressed is the criterion variable: Work Life Balance, and its measures: Leave Policy, and Flexible Working Arrangements and

#### Leave Policy

Table 3 indicates the response rate on Leave Policy as a measure of Work Life Balance and measured with four item scale with mean score and standard deviation.

**Table 3 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Leave Policy**

|                           | N          | Mean      | Std. Error | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
|                           | Statistic  | Statistic | Statistic  | Statistic      |
| 1. Leave Policy1          | 153        | 4.64      | .039       | .481           |
| 2. Leave Policy2.         | 153        | 3.82      | .070       | .867           |
| 3. Leave Policy3.         | 153        | 4.18      | .065       | .804           |
| 4. Leave Policy4          | 153        | 4.31      | .055       | .681           |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b> | <b>153</b> |           |            |                |

**Source:** SPSS Output, Version 21.0 2023

Table 3 above indicates the response rate of respondents for Leave Policy1 as a measure of Work Life Balance, measured on a 4-item scale. The result indicated a mean score of ( $\bar{x}=4.31$  and Std. = .681); this indicates that the response rate for this item is high. The above results show that respondents were on the agree range of the manifestation and considered that Leave Policy is a very strong variable in studying Work Life Balance.

#### Flexible Working Arrangements

Table 4 indicates the responses rate on Flexible Working Arrangements as a measure of Work Life Balance, measured in four item scale with mean score and standard deviation.

**Table 4: Results of Descriptive Statistics on Flexible Working Arrangements**

|                                     | N<br>Statistic | Mean<br>Statistic | Std. Error | Std.<br>Deviation<br>Statistic |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Flexible Working Arrangements.1  | 153            | 4.63              | .039       | .485                           |
| 2. Flexible Working Arrangements. 2 | 153            | 4.06              | .041       | .503                           |
| 3. Flexible Working Arrangements.3  | 153            | 3.47              | .098       | 1.209                          |
| 4. Flexible Working Arrangements 4  | 153            | 3.57              | .103       | 1.276                          |
| <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>           | <b>153</b>     |                   |            |                                |

**Source:** SPSS Output, Version 21.0 2023

Table 4 indicates the response rate of respondents for Flexible Working Arrangements as a measure of Work Life Balance, measured on a 4-item scale. The result indicated a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =3.57 and Std. = .103); this indicates that the response rate for this item is high. The above results show that respondents were on the agree range of the manifestation and considered that Flexible Working Arrangements is a very strong variable in studying Work Life Balance.

### Bivariate Analysis

#### Relationship between Information Overload and Work Life Balance

The relationship between Information Overload and Work life balance in Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State is analyzed below:

**Table 5 Information Overload and Leave Policy**

|                |                      |                         | Information<br>Overload | Leave Policy |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Spearman's rho | Information Overload | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                   | .964**       |
|                |                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                       | .000         |
|                |                      | N                       | 153                     | 153          |
|                | Leave Policy         | Correlation Coefficient | .964**                  | 1.000        |
|                |                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .000                    | .            |
|                |                      | N                       | 153                     | 153          |

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2023

### Test of Hypothesis 1

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between information overloads and leave policy of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.**

From the results in table 5 the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between information overloads and leave policy. The correlation coefficient of 0.964 confirms the magnitude and strength of the relationship and it is statistically significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ , which confirms the relationship that exists between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between information overloads and leave policy of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

**Table 6: Information Overload and Flexible Working Arrangements**

|                |                               | Information Overload    |        | Flexible Working Arrangements |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Information Overload          | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000  | .982**                        |
|                |                               | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .      | .000                          |
|                |                               | N                       | 153    | 153                           |
|                | Flexible Working Arrangements | Correlation Coefficient | .982** | 1.000                         |
|                |                               | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .000   | .                             |
|                |                               | N                       | 153    | 153                           |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey Data, 2023

### Test of Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between information overload and flexible working arrangement of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.**

From the results in table 6 the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between information overloads and flexible working arrangement. The correlation coefficient of 0.982 confirms the

magnitude and strength of the relationship and it is statistically significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ , which confirms the relationship that exists between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between information overloads and flexible working arrangement of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the results in table 5 the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between information overloads and leave policy. The correlation coefficient of 0.964 confirms the magnitude and strength of the relationship and it is statistically significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ , which confirms that there is a significant relationship between information overloads and leave policy of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State. And also, from the results in table 6 the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between information overloads and flexible working arrangement. The correlation coefficient of 0.982 confirms the magnitude and strength of the relationship and it is statistically significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ , which confirms that there is a significant relationship between information overloads and flexible working arrangement of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

The result of the findings confirmed the empirical work of Anis *et al.*, (2020), investigated the impact of Information Overload and Communication Overload on Social Media Exhaustion and Job Performance on marketing department employees of Bukalapak Company. The respondents are 70 staffs in the marketing division. The results of their study stated that Information Overload as well as Communication Overload has a positive and significant effect on Social Media Exhaustion, furthermore Social Media exhaustion, Information Overload and Communication Overload have negative and significant effects on Job Performance. In an always connected communication environment, users of social networking services (SNSs) need to pay continuous attention to the overwhelming volume of social demands from SNSs. Similarly, Ae, Soo-Min and Kyung, (2015) in their evaluation of a study on Information and communication

technology overload and social networking service fatigue: A stress perspective. They argued that increased energy requirements may cause SNS fatigue, which can lead to physical and psychological strain. Using the transactional theory of stress and coping as the overarching theory, and the results show that all three dimensions of overload were significant stressors that influence SNS fatigue. Regarding the predictors of overload, the characteristics of the SNS system significantly influenced the features of system overload, while information equivocality positively influences information overload. However, information relevance was not a significant predictor of information overload and information equivocality was not a significant predictor of communication overload.

Furthermore, Bassam and Rasha, (2022) investigated The Effect of Information Overload, and Social Media Fatigue on Online Consumers Purchasing Decisions: The Mediating Role of Technostress and Information Anxiety. This study aimed to test the effect of information overload, information anxiety, and social media on online purchasing decisions. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which is that the availability of excessive product information negatively affects information anxiety, and social media stress effects on online purchasing decisions as well as to its impact on the occurrence of relationship that exists between the variables.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The primary motive of this study was to carry out empirical findings on the relationship between information overload and work life balance of telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. From the findings, it was concluded that there is a positive significant relationship between information overhead and work life balance of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State, and that an increase in the information overhead will result to a corresponding increase in work life balance, and that information overhead also impact positively on leave policy and flexible working arrangement of Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State. Based on the conclssion, it was therefore, recommended that: Telecommunication companies should improve on the work life balance of their employees by increasing

their information overhead. And also, conscious effort should be made by managers to increase their information overhead and technology, as to ease employee's work stress and improve on their leave policy and flexible working arrangement.

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