The Human Cost of Hyperconnectivity: Reviewing the Link between Digital Communication and Employee Mental Wellbeing

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100300080

Received: 09 March 2026; Accepted: 14 March 2026; Published: 26 March 2026

ABSTRACT

In today's hyperconnected workplace, digital communication has become essential for collaboration and productivity but also a major source of psychological strain. Employees' continuous exposure to digital platforms often leads to technostress, information overload, and blurred work–life boundaries, affecting their overall mental wellbeing. This study aims to review and analyse how digital communication influences employee mental wellbeing using Scopus AI as an analytical tool. The study identifies key research areas, constructs a concept map to visualise thematic relationships, and highlights topic experts and emerging trends in the field. Findings reveal that digital communication can both enhance and impair wellbeing, while it promotes flexibility, autonomy, and collaboration, it simultaneously contributes to digital fatigue and stress when mismanaged. Organisational support, digital literacy, and mindfulness are found to mitigate negative outcomes by fostering resilience and trust. Theoretically, the study extends the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model and technostress theory to explain how digital demands and resources shape mental health. Practically, it recommends that organisations develop structured digital communication policies, promote digital disconnection, and strengthen leadership empathy to maintain a healthy digital culture. Overall, the study underscores the need for human-centred digital practices to balance connectivity with mental wellbeing.

Keywords: Digital Communication, Employee Mental Wellbeing, Technostress, Hyperconnectivity, Digital Fatigue.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital communication technologies has redefined how employees connect, collaborate, and perform at work. In today's hyperconnected workplace, tools such as instant messaging, video conferencing, and collaborative platforms have enhanced flexibility and responsiveness, allowing employees to work seamlessly across boundaries (Bordi et al., 2018). However, this digital transformation has raised serious concerns about employee mental wellbeing, as constant connectivity often leads to stress, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion (Supriyadi et al., 2025; Raj & Goute, 2025).

While digital communication offers autonomy and flexibility, it also creates the "always-on" culture, blurring the boundaries between work and personal life (Verlinden et al., 2025). Excessive online engagement contributes to technostress, digital fatigue, and information overload, which are linked to anxiety, burnout, and diminished wellbeing (Argyriadi et al., 2025; Marsh et al., 2024). Conversely, when managed effectively, supportive internal communication can foster organisational trust and enhance psychological wellbeing (Qin & Men, 2023). Despite growing research, studies remain fragmented, often focusing on isolated issues such as digital disconnection or information overload rather than offering an integrated organisational behaviour perspective.

This gap underscores the need for a comprehensive review that maps how digital communication affects employee mental health within modern organisations. Therefore, this paper aims to analyse the research landscape on digital communication and employee mental wellbeing using Scopus AI. The objectives are to

identify major research areas, construct a concept map to visualise interconnections, highlight topic experts, and uncover emerging themes.

The study contributes by offering a data-driven synthesis that integrates insights from organisational communication, psychology, and digital behaviour. By leveraging Scopus AI's analytical features, this paper provides a holistic understanding of how hyperconnectivity shapes mental wellbeing, guiding both academic inquiry and managerial practices.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 explains the Scopus AI-based methodology. Section 3 presents findings on concept maps, topic experts, and emerging themes. Section 4 discusses implications for organisational behaviour, and Section 5 concludes with recommendations for promoting healthier digital communication cultures.

METHODOLOGY

This review employed Scopus AI (accessed on 19 October 2025) to explore the research landscape on digital communication and employee mental wellbeing. The study aimed to analyze the intellectual structure and evolution of research in this field by achieving four primary objectives: (1) identifying major research areas, (2) constructing a concept map to visualize interconnections, (3) highlighting key topic experts, and (4) uncovering emerging themes. To ensure methodological rigor, a search strategy was executed using a comprehensive string: ("digital communication" OR "online communication" OR "virtual communication" OR "remote communication") AND ("employee" OR "worker" OR "staff" OR "personnel") AND ("mental wellbeing" OR "mental health" OR "psychological wellbeing" OR "emotional health") AND ("engagement" OR "satisfaction" OR "productivity" OR "wellbeing") AND ("stress" OR "anxiety" OR "burnout" OR "resilience").

This query identified a total of 8,342 documents within the Scopus database, with the inclusion criteria strictly limited to peer-reviewed journal articles and review papers published in English. While no lower limit was set on the publication year to allow for a comprehensive trend analysis, the data reveals a significant surge in scholarly interest, with approximately 60% of the total literature in this domain published between 2020 and 2025, largely driven by the global shift toward remote and hybrid work models.

The Scopus AI analytical modules—Summary, Expanded Summary, Concept Map, Topic Experts, and Emerging Themes—were systematically employed to synthesize this large dataset using natural language processing (NLP) and co-occurrence algorithms. These modules provided detailed insights into the theoretical foundations of the literature and visually illustrated the interconnections among themes such as remote work communication, digital stress, employee engagement, and resilience. Furthermore, this systematic application allowed for the identification of prolific authors and influential institutions driving scholarship in this rapidly evolving field

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion derived from the Scopus AI analysis conducted on 19 October 2025. Drawing upon insights from the Summary, Expanded Summary, Concept Map, Topic Experts, and Emerging Themes, the findings reveal key patterns and relationships between digital communication and employee mental wellbeing.

Summary and Expanded Summary

The findings from the Scopus AI Summary and Expanded Summary (19 October 2025) reveal that digital communication plays a dual role in shaping employee mental wellbeing; offering both opportunities for flexibility and collaboration while simultaneously contributing to psychological strain and stress. Excessive reliance on digital tools has been linked to digital fatigue and technostress, leading to mental exhaustion, decreased job performance, and heightened anxiety (Supriyadi et al., 2025; Raj & Goute, 2025). The sense of being "always connected" has also been found to blur work-life boundaries, creating an "always-on" culture that disrupts recovery time and fosters burnout (Verlinden et al., 2025; Mdhluli, 2025). Moreover, information

overload and fear of missing out (FoMO) exacerbate stress and emotional depletion, especially when employees are inundated with continuous notifications and communication demands (Marsh et al., 2024; Reimann et al., 2024).

Despite these challenges, digital communication also supports wellbeing when managed effectively. Studies indicate that flexibility and autonomy afforded by digital tools can enhance work satisfaction by giving employees more control over their schedules (Bordi et al., 2018; Potter et al., 2022). Supportive internal communication and digital collaboration platforms have also been shown to strengthen psychological wellbeing through enhanced trust and connectedness within organisations (Qin & Men, 2023). Furthermore, effective internal branding and structured communication strategies can mitigate technostress and promote positive employee experiences (Raj & Goute, 2025).

The Expanded Summary further suggests that the impact of digital communication on mental wellbeing depends on communication frequency, message quality, and perceived organisational support. Employees experiencing high digital workloads without adequate support report increased burnout and emotional fatigue (Rezki Amelia et al., 2024). Conversely, those in organisations promoting digital wellness practices such as hybrid communication models, mindfulness initiatives, and policies supporting digital disconnection—tend to report better psychological outcomes (Verlinden et al., 2025; Marsh et al., 2024). Thus, while digital connectivity remains essential for organisational functioning, fostering a balanced digital culture is critical to sustaining employee mental wellbeing in today's hyperconnected workplaces.

Concept Map

The concept map generated by Scopus AI on 19 October 2025 illustrates the intricate connections between digital communication and employee mental wellbeing. Centred on the theme of "Digital Communication Impact," the map reveals three dominant research clusters: workplace dynamics, technostress, and employee wellbeing. These clusters demonstrate how digital communication influences organisational practices, contributes to psychological strain through technostress, and affects overall mental health and resilience.

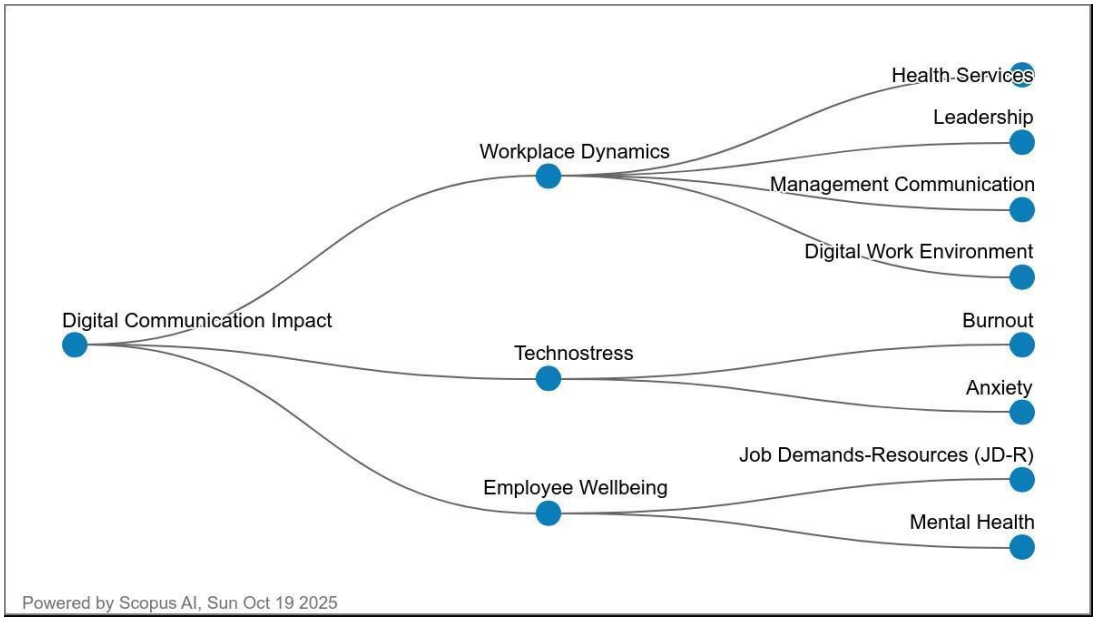

Figure 1: Concept Map of Digital Communication and Employee Mental Wellbeing

1. The Impact of Digital Communication on Workplace Dynamics

Digital communication has emerged as a pivotal force shaping workplace dynamics, and the evidence indicates its effects are profoundly multifaceted. One dominant trend revealed in the literature is digital fatigue, the phenomenon of prolonged engagement with digital tools leading to mental exhaustion, reduced job performance, and elevated stress. For instance, a scoping review of digital fatigue found that high levels of digital engagement are associated with cognitive overload and mental exhaustion, which in turn impair performance and wellbeing

(Supriyadi, Sulistiasih, Rahmi, Pramono, & Fahrudin, 2025; also see Marsh, Perez Vallejos, & Spence, 2024). This underscores how frequent use of digital communication channels not only facilitates connectivity but can also burden employees, thereby altering the dynamics of the work environment by increasing demands on attention and capacity.

Another critical dimension pertains to the shifting boundaries between work and personal life, and the implications for organizational structure, autonomy, and monitoring. Digital tools enable employees to remain connected beyond traditional work hours, often creating an "always-on" culture that blurs the demarcation between work and home life (Kim & Chon, 2022). The literature elucidates that this boundary blurring contributes to cognitive overload and stress because employees are unable to disengage effectively (Kossek, 2016; Steffens et al., 2023). At the same time, studies on information and communication technologies (ICTs) show paradoxical effects on workplace organisation: while ICT use can increase worker autonomy, it concurrently enables heightened monitoring and centralisation of control, especially among higher hierarchical levels (Gerten, Beckmann, & Bellmann, 2019). Thus, digital communication influences workplace dynamics by both empowering and surveilling employees, reshaping how work is organised, how decisions are made, and how workers regulate their availability and boundaries.

Despite these challenges, digital communication also offers notable positive opportunities that alter workplace dynamics in meaningful ways. It can enhance autonomy and flexibility, thereby increasing employees' perceived control and well-being. Research indicates that when digital communication is utilised thoughtfully, it supports remote interaction, collaboration, and work flexibility, which employees value (Boccoli, 2024; Potter, Zadow, Dollard, & Lushington, 2022). However, the literature also cautions that the benefits are not uniformly realised, differences in cognitive load and engagement vary across virtual environments and tasks (Marsh et al., 2024). Ultimately, the interplay between positive and negative effects reveals that digital communication is neither inherently beneficial nor harmful; rather, its impact on workplace dynamics is contingent upon how organisations manage connectivity, autonomy, monitoring, and boundary settings. Consequently, the literature points to the need for further investigation of moderation and context effects, such as organisational culture, task type, and hierarchical level, to fully understand how digital communication reshapes workplace dynamics and influences employee wellbeing.

2. Technostress in Digital Communication

The growing dependence on digital communication technologies has fundamentally transformed how employees interact, collaborate, and manage work demands. However, this shift has also intensified technostress, a psychological strain arising from prolonged exposure to information and communication technologies (ICTs). Evidence shows that continuous engagement with digital tools increases cognitive load, disrupts focus, and diminishes job satisfaction (Broadbent et al., 2023). Employees working in remote or hybrid settings report higher levels of fatigue and pressure due to the constant influx of messages and notifications (Tarafdar et al., 2007). Similarly, research in academia and education contexts highlights techno-invasion, where technology intrudes into personal life, leading to work-life imbalance and reduced psychological well-being (Yao, 2025). Collectively, these findings underscore the dual-edged nature of digital communication enhancing connectivity while simultaneously generating new sources of stress.

The factors contributing to technostress are deeply embedded in the structure and culture of digital workplaces. Information overload, excessive message traffic, and perceived digital surveillance have emerged as primary stressors (Effiyanti & Sagala, 2018). The expectation of constant availability creates "digital presenteeism," where employees feel pressured to remain responsive beyond working hours. This pressure is particularly evident in hierarchical organisations, where mid-level employees manage both supervisory and operational digital responsibilities (Tarafdar et al., 2007). In healthcare settings, continuous interaction with digital systems has been associated with mental fatigue and burnout (Muhamad et al., 2025). These findings collectively demonstrate that while ICTs enhance operational efficiency, unmanaged digital communication practices can erode employee well-being and organisational cohesion.

Despite its adverse implications, technostress can be mitigated through proactive strategies. Job crafting, where employees reshape their tasks and communication routines helps reduce digital strain and improve engagement

(Noor-ul-Amin et al., 2022). Similarly, fostering digital literacy and self-efficacy enables employees to navigate technological demands more confidently and independently (Yao, 2025). Organisational interventions, such as digital wellness programmes, clear communication protocols, and policies supporting digital disconnection, can further safeguard employee well-being. Nevertheless, much of the current literature remains concentrated in education and healthcare sectors, suggesting the need for broader, cross-industry research to understand how digital communication practices shape technostress in diverse occupational contexts.

3. Digital Communication and Employee Wellbeing

The literature indicates that extensive digital communication such as emails, instant-messaging and smartphone-driven connectivity exerts both detrimental and beneficial effects on employee wellbeing. On the negative side, constant interruptions to personal life from digital work communication foster what is often termed "digital presenteeism," thereby contributing to technostress, mental fatigue and impaired job performance (Singh et al., 2022; Wells et al., 2023). For instance, remote workers report that the blurring of boundaries between work and home, combined with high message volumes, leads to elevated stress and decreased psychological resources (Ribeiro, 2024). These findings align with broader evidence that heightened digital engagement imposes cognitive load and emotional strain, undermining wellbeing in the modern workplace.

Conversely, digital communication also harbours positive potential: by granting employees greater flexibility and autonomy, these technologies can enhance perceptions of control and thus promote wellbeing (Farmanesh et al., 2025). The use of digital onboarding tools, remote collaboration platforms and flexible scheduling enabled by digital connectivity are associated with increased job satisfaction and work-life balance under favourable conditions (Wells et al., 2023). That said, studies also reveal that digital onboarding may inadvertently reduce social connectedness and support, particularly for new employees, which can in turn impair wellbeing (Yu et al., 2023). This duality underlines that digital communication's effect is complex as its value depends on how it's used, managed and experienced in organisational contexts.

Crucially, empirical research points toward mitigating factors that influence the relationship between digital communication and employee wellbeing. For example, technostress from digital communication technologies has been shown to negatively affect wellbeing, but the presence of strong digital leadership, supportive organisational culture, work-based learning and digital literacy moderate this relationship (Alkhayyal et al., 2024; Farmanesh et al., 2025). Moreover, risks such as information overload and the "fear of missing out" (FoMO) on digital platforms emerge as key antecedents of reduced mental wellbeing in the digital workplace (Sharma, 2024). Taken together, these insights suggest that organisations need to treat digital communication not solely as a tool of productivity, but as a domain requiring thoughtful design and policy for protecting employee wellbeing.

Topic Experts

The insights derived from topic experts highlight the evolving relationship between digital communication and employee wellbeing, particularly in the high-stress sectors. Quantitative bibliometric data from the Scopus dataset reveals a rapidly maturing research landscape, with approximately 60% of the total literature in this domain published between 2020 and 2025. This surge is primarily concentrated in high-impact journals, most notably Acta Psychologica, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, and Computers & Education.

According to Riches (2023), a central figure in this field with a strong citation record, digital communication platforms have become essential tools for maintaining connection and psychological support. His research demonstrates that videoconference-based creativity workshops can serve as innovative interventions to reduce occupational stress. Similarly, Fialho (2023) extends this discussion by examining how digital platforms foster creativity and emotional connection among mental health professionals, providing evidence that such tools reduce professional isolation.

Complementing these perspectives, Vasile (2023) emphasizes the role of digital communication in sustaining professional development through structured online engagement. Her research shows that videoconferencing

enables continuous learning and access to emotional resources for professionals managing high workloads. Together, the works of these experts—supported by high citation impact within the dataset—underscore that the impact of digital communication is not solely technological but is deeply social and psychological.

Emerging Themes

The emerging themes identified from the Scopus AI analysis highlight the evolving relationship between digital communication and mental wellbeing, particularly within educational and organisational contexts. The rising theme, Digital Wellbeing and Mental Health in Higher Education, emphasises growing awareness of how technology-enhanced learning environments affect student wellbeing. Research underscores the importance of integrating digital wellbeing education into curricula to reduce stress and cognitive overload while promoting positive engagement and mindfulness (Ng, 2022; García-González et al., 2023). Co-designed digital tools have also been shown to strengthen self-efficacy and emotional resilience (Hernández-García & Fernández, 2023).

Among the consistent themes, two stand out: Digital Mental Health Interventions for Youth and Adolescents and Digital Transformation of Mental Health Services. Studies reveal that gamified interventions, digital storytelling, and mindfulness apps improve engagement and reduce stress among young users (Hollis et al., 2022; Seko et al., 2023). Simultaneously, mental health services are being transformed through virtual reality and digital phenotyping, enhancing diagnosis and treatment, though ethical concerns around privacy and data use persist (Naslund et al., 2023; Torous & Bucci, 2023).

A novel theme, Psychological Safety and Well-being in Multicultural Digital Education, highlights the role of digital communication tools in promoting inclusion, intercultural competence, and emotional wellbeing in diverse online classrooms (Kim et al., 2023; Rienties & Rivers, 2022). This theme suggests a shift toward designing empathetic, inclusive, and human-centred digital environments. Collectively, these themes illustrate a broader movement toward using digital communication not merely as a tool for connectivity but as a strategic means of fostering wellbeing, resilience, and social cohesion in an increasingly hyperconnected world.

CONCLUSION

This review confirms that digital communication in the modern workplace represents a double-edged sword for employee mental wellbeing. While digital tools have enhanced flexibility and autonomy, they have simultaneously contributed to technostress, digital fatigue, and blurred work–life boundaries. Findings derived from Scopus AI indicate that the "always-on" culture, information overload, and fear of missing out (FoMO) are central stressors that compromise psychological health. Conversely, well-structured communication practices and digital leadership can transform these platforms into sources of trust and emotional support.

Theoretically, this study enriches organizational behavior literature by situating these findings within the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model.

By applying this framework, digital connectivity is shown to function as a Resource when it enhances autonomy and social support, but it transforms into a Demand when it leads to overload and burnout. This study extends existing frameworks by demonstrating how digital trust and leadership empathy moderate the effects of hyperconnectivity on mental health.

Practically, the findings underscore an urgent need for organizations to establish digital wellbeing strategies, including policies on digital disconnection and hybrid communication models that balance efficiency with mental health protection. While this review is limited by its reliance on secondary bibliometric data, it affirms that sustainable digital cultures anchored in empathy and psychological safety are essential to mitigating the human cost of hyperconnectivity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah for excellent efforts in facilitating publication training and for generous dissemination of information on numerous publication

opportunities. This initiative has been immensely valuable in advancing our research endeavors and enhancing our academic capabilities.

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