

Does Human Relation Management Practices Reduce Workplace Harassment in Manufacturing Organisations in Nigeria?

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Abstract

Although harassment in the workplace is common in industrial economies, the effectiveness of certain human resource management (HRM) mechanisms in reducing its incidence is not well understood in the sub-Saharan African manufacturing environment. The study examined the differential and combined predictive effect of three dimensions of HRM namely HR Policy Framework, Training and Awareness and Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism on the perceived reductions of workplace harassment among employees of selected manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The positivist, quantitative and cross-sectional survey design was used and was anchored on Organisational Justice Theory and Social Learning Theory. An instrument with 20 items based on the 5-point Likert scale was used to collect data from 495 workers of manufacturing companies in three States namely Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States. Results showed that the Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism is the biggest individual predictor of perceived harassment reduction (Std. $\beta = 0.341$, $R^2 = 0.116$, medium effect) and that the HR Policy Framework has a smaller but significant effect (Std. $\beta = 0.172$, $f^2 = 0.031$, small effect). The regression analysis of training and awareness with perceived harassment reduction ($p < .939$, Std. $\beta = -0.003$) indicates that training and awareness alone are not sufficient to predict perceived harassment reduction. Results confirm that beyond awareness-raising and policy documentation, credible, accessible, and fair complaint and discipline structures are far more significant for the reduction of perceived harassment than such measures alone, with direct implications for HRM investment priorities within Nigerian manufacturing and similar industrial settings in Africa.

Keywords: HRM practices; workplace harassment; complaint mechanism; organisational justice; manufacturing

INTRODUCTION

Workplace harassment, which includes sexual harassment, bullying, incivility, verbal abuse, and discriminatory treatment, is one of the most pervasive and expensive workplace issues faced by

today's organisations (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Einarsen *et al.*, 2011). The effects of this can range from psychological harm to employees to corporate issues such as higher employee turnover, absenteeism, reduced productivity, and liability for criminal prosecution (Willness *et al.*, 2007; Neall & Tuckey, 2014). Research into this phenomenon has increased in the last few decades, but the body of work is still largely focused on the north American and European contexts, with little research on HRM systems in the sub-Saharan industrial setting (Willness *et al.*, 2007; Otterbach *et al.*, 2021).

The Nigerian manufacturing industry is a case of particular interest and under-researched. Nigeria has the largest manufacturing economy in Africa in terms of output, and is marked by hierarchical organisational structures, gender-segregated workforces and a developing legislative framework to protect employees such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act and Labour Act, which are poorly applied in many industrial establishments (Agbaje *et al.*, 2021; Odiri, 2024). The sector is structurally vulnerable and institutionally underdeveloped, making it an interesting empirical site for study and analysis.

It is generally accepted that human resource management (HRM) is the key institutional means by which organisations respond to the issue of workplace harassment. Three main dimensions of HRM have been identified in the literature: (1) formal frameworks of HR policies and norms governing acceptable behaviour and reporting requirements (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997; Catley *et al.*, 2017); (2) training and awareness programmes to spread knowledge of acceptable behaviour and reporting obligations (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003; Perry *et al.*, 2004); and (3) complaint and disciplinary processes to operationalise the means of allegations being made, investigated and addressed (Lim & Cortina, 2005; Salin, 2008). These dimensions are both theoretically based on Organisational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2001) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986) producing different predictions for the effectiveness of each dimension.

Notwithstanding this theoretical framework, there are fewer empirical comparisons in the literature on the relative effectiveness of the three HRM dimensions especially in non-Western industrial settings. The question of which mechanism works best in relation to perceived reduction in harassment has not been directly and simultaneously tested in the Nigerian manufacturing context. This study seeks to fill that void. The following hypotheses are tested: (H1) the HR Policy Framework significantly predicts the perceived harassment reduction; (H2) Training and

Awareness significantly predicts perceived harassment reduction; (H3) the Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism significantly predicts perceived harassment reduction; and (H4) the three HRM dimensions together explain a significant proportion of variance in perceived harassment reduction. This study makes three contributions; firstly, it is one of the first multi-mechanism empirical studies of anti-harassment HRM in the context of Nigerian manufacturing; secondly, it provides an empirical ranking of HRM effectiveness in this context, and thirdly, it provides a theoretical integration of Organisational Justice Theory and Social Learning Theory as a predictive framework in distinguishing between the policy, training and enforcement effects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualisation and Consequences of Workplace Harassment

Workplace harassment is defined by unwanted behaviour that infringes on the dignity of other people, that creates a hostile working environment or that has a negative impact on work results (Einarsen *et al.*, 2011; Hershcovis, 2011). The construct includes sexual harassment, status based discrimination, personal harassment, workplace bullying and incivility, which often overlap and reinforce each other in both the physical and virtual environment (Piotrowski, 2012; Holm *et al.*, 2022). Multiple, cumulative forms of harassment (from supervisors, colleagues and from outside) have been found to create negative wellbeing impacts to an individual beyond impacts of any harassment alone (Bowling & Beehr, 2006).

Organisational impacts of workplace harassment have been documented as being: higher absenteeism, greater intentions to leave and reduced task performance (Willness *et al.*, 2007; Neall & Tuckey, 2014). Individual-level experiences of harassment relate to psychological distress, burnout, and post-traumatic stress (Gerhardt *et al.*, 2021; Rhead *et al.*, 2021). Gender based violence and incivility at job and workplace in governmental organisations have both been empirically documented as significant issues affecting productivity in the Nigerian context (Agbaje *et al.*, 2021; Odiri, 2024). One important aspect of harassment in organisations is systematic underreporting; the target does not report because they are unaware of the reporting structures, they do not report because they do not trust how the reporting structures work in practice (Carter *et al.*, 2013; Hodgins *et al.*, 2020). This is a governance factor that has been a key component of the current study's complaint mechanisms focus.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

HR Policy Framework and Harassment Prevention

It is usually seen that the main part of the organisational prevention architecture is the formal anti-harassment policy. Fitzgerald *et al.* (1997) found that low rates of harassment were correlated with the presence of a formal policy, which indicates that the presence of a policy suggests the organisations tolerance. Salin (2008) distinguished between symbolic and substantive policy responses, and showed that policies that are not enforced have little deterrent effect. This is particularly important in the context of Nigeria where even the presence of formal grievance mechanisms is not enough to guarantee that employee trust in the HR system is high, as Catley *et al.* (2017) found that complaint-handling quality is a better predictor of employee trust in HR systems. Based on this evidence, HR Policy Framework is likely to have a positive, albeit weak, predictive relationship with perceived harassment reduction (H1) because policy creates conditions for harassment reduction, but only necessary and not sufficient.

Training and Awareness and Harassment Prevention

The most frequently used HRM intervention to prevent harassment is training and awareness programmes. Social Learning Theory maintains that such programmes will reinforce the importance of reporting and self-efficacy with regard to such reporting, decreasing the incidence of harassment (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003; Perry *et al.*, 2004). The empirical evidence is however, always ambiguous. In the US federal sector, no significant difference in self-reported harassment was found after required training, with some sub-group reactance effects found by Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003). According to Willness *et al.* (2007), organisational climate was the better predictor of harassment outcomes than was the provision of training. Perry *et al.* (2004) found programme design quality and post-training reinforcement to be key moderators of the effect of training. This consistency in the literature is that an intervention that is not accompanied by enforcement will have little impact on its own (H2).

Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism and Harassment Prevention

Today, the complaint and disciplinary process is acknowledged as the central aspect of HRM for harassment management. According to Lim and Cortina (2005), two most consistent predictors of employees' reporting intentions are perceived complaint accessibility and procedural fairness. Salin (2008) found that organisations that take harassment seriously differ from those who appear

to be complying in the clarity, speed and fairness of the disciplinary process. Hodgins *et al.* (2020) found that formal complaint systems are poorly functioning in practice due to organisational power imbalances; they are either structurally biased, or the procedural aspects are opaque, or they are used against complainants as a retaliatory measure. Carter *et al* (2013) discovered that when they studied UK NHS workers, there was a lack of trust in the outcomes of complaints, not a lack of awareness of complaint reporting. Notelaers *et al* (2019) discovered that the more frequently and severely bullying incidents occurred, the less credible the organisational responses were. Based on this convergent evidence, the Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism is hypothesized to be the most powerful individual predictor of H3.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Organisational Justice Theory

According to Organisational Justice Theory (OJT, Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2001), employees assess the fairness of their organisation's decisions and practices on three scales: distributive justice (the proportionality of outcomes), procedural justice (the fairness of the process through which decisions are made), and interactional justice (the fairness of interpersonal treatment in the decision-making process). Every dimension is related to a specific dimension of anti-harassment HRM. The proportionality of the punishment given to the one who wrongs, is concerned with distributive justice. The dimension of harassment that has been the most widely theorised is procedural justice, which refers to how easily complaints are submitted, how they are handled, how they are communicated, and how they are adjudicated (Colquitt, 2001; Hulin *et al.*, 1996). Interactional justice has to do with how complainants are treated by HR staff and line managers during an investigation. If complaint systems are seen to be fair in outcome, fair in process, and respectful in interpersonal treatment, then the three dimensions predict that the likelihood of reducing harassment will be greatest.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1977, 1986) Social Learning Theory suggests there are three processes involved in changing behaviour in organisations: observational learning (when employees learn from the consequences that follow others' behaviours); self-efficacy (when employees only act when they see a consequence that would lead to the desired outcome); and reinforcement (when a consequence is observed in others that influences other employees' behaviours). On the workplace

harassment, the framework provides differentiated predictions for the three HRM dimensions. HR policies are norms that are formal. The knowledge and self-efficacy are disseminated through training and awareness programmes. The most effective mechanism of behavioural change is direct enforcement – that is, when employees witness clear, consistent and appropriate sanctions for those who harass them, they learn behavioural cues to deter others from harassing them, and they develop a sense of self-efficacy when they see others speak out against harassment, they are empowered to do the same. Previous empirical research (Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2003; Willness *et al.*, 2007) verified that training without formal mechanisms of enforcement would not have the reinforcement signal needed to induce observational learning.

Hypotheses of the Study

Drawing on the foregoing theoretical and empirical review, the following hypotheses are formally advanced:

H1: The HR Policy Framework has a significant positive effect on perceived workplace harassment reduction in Nigerian manufacturing companies.

H2: Training and Awareness has a significant positive effect on perceived workplace harassment reduction in Nigerian manufacturing companies.

H3: The Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism has a significant positive effect on perceived workplace harassment reduction in Nigerian manufacturing companies.

H4: The three HRM dimensions jointly explain a significant proportion of the variance in perceived workplace harassment reduction.

METHODOLOGY

The design used in this study is positivist with a quantitative approach and a cross sectional survey design which was developed based on the conventions of Bryman (2016) and Creswell (2014). The positivist paradigm is based on hypothesis testing based on previously formulated theories through systematic measurement and statistical inference. The study's main research question is correlational in nature ("What are the relationships between the HRM dimensions and perceived harassment reduction at one time?") and is suitable for the cross-sectional design.

The population under study were the workers in manufacturing companies in Nigeria. Fieldwork took place across Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States, the three most industrially developed states in

Nigeria where consumer goods manufacturing is predominant (Lagos), food production is dominant (Ogun), and pharmaceutical production is dominant (Oyo), and building materials and cement making are also a major industry in Ogun State. The organisations were purposively selected to achieve meaningful exposure to formal HRM systems among the respondents, and were selected based on size, with large organisations being included. Using a purposive stratified sampling method, questionnaires were administered across departmental and hierarchical levels, as well as across sub-sectors and states to address intra-sectorial heterogeneity. Questionnaires were distributed and 495 (91.7%) were usable. This is larger than the minimum sample size of 384 cases required for large-population surveys with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) and the 200 cases suggested by Hair *et al.* (2019) for PLS-SEM analysis.

A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) for four constructs was used to collect data. Items adopted from validated questionnaires include the HR Policy Framework items developed by Fitzgerald *et al.* (1997); the Training and Awareness items developed by Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003) and Perry *et al.* (2004); the Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism items developed by Lim and Cortina (2005) and Salin (2008); and the Workplace Outcome and Climate items developed by Hulin *et al.* (1996). The face and content validation was done by two HRM academics and two HR practitioners from manufacturing sector of Nigeria. The clarity of the items was confirmed with a pilot test of 30 employees not part of the main study.

Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.331 to 0.602 for four constructs, which are below the conventional level ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). This is a well-known and theoretically explained phenomenon for short, heterogeneous scales (Sijtsma, 2009; McNeish, 2018). McDonald's (ω) is the prime reliability estimator, computed from each form of the questionnaire using the SmartPLS 3 software, and substantively consistent with composite reliability (CR) ranging from 0.668 to 0.758. Transparency and comparability are reasons for reporting alpha. All four constructs are indicated by a reflective specification, which allows for theoretical appropriateness and methodological defensibility because each is a disposition toward the theoretical constructs that are observable as item responses (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

The dependent variable (perceived reduction in workplace harassment) was measured with a single item, Q17: 'The level of workplace harassment has decreased in my organisation', on the scale. It

satisfies the methodological requirements outlined by Diamantopoulos *et al.* (2012): the construct domain is clearly and unambiguously bounded ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.87$, with 49.1% of the responses concentrated in the lower part of the scale); Q17 completely operationalizes the construct domain; and sufficient response variance is observed ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.87$, with the 49.1% of the responses below the maximum). A tendency towards the ceiling is recognized and the implication, that the effect sizes reported are likely to be underestimated, is stated explicitly. The positive factor loading of the item on the Workplace Outcome construct (0.423) and the significant inter-construct correlation ($r = 0.384$, $p < .001$) supports convergent validity.

The data was collected through trained research assistants during an eight week fieldwork period, after visiting the participating organisations by appointment with HR managers. All respondents were given a set of questions to answer and were promised anonymity and confidentiality. On-site over 20% of questionnaires were incomplete.

The statistical analysis was performed in five steps in IBM SPSS Statistics v26 and SmartPLS 3. Means, standard deviations and frequencies were calculated for all items and constructs in order to obtain descriptive statistics. Secondly, according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and HTMT ratio (Henseler *et al.*, 2015), CFA was conducted to assess factor loadings, CR and AVE. Third, common method bias was assessed by Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). In order to test H1–H4, individual simple regressions and a joint multiple regression were performed, and Cohen's (1988) f^2 effect sizes were reported (small: $f^2 \geq 0.02$; medium: $f^2 \geq 0.15$; large: $f^2 \geq 0.35$). Before interpreting the results of the regression, all the regression assumptions were checked. There was no multicollinearity, all VIF values < 3.0 .

Ethical Considerations

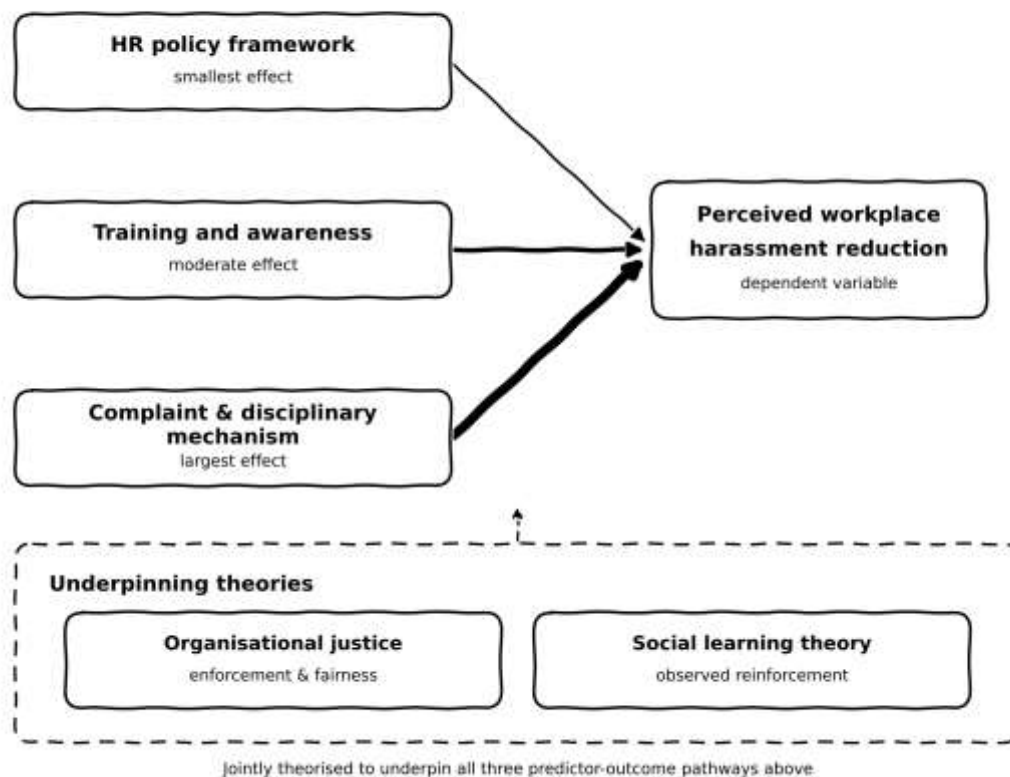
The study received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Joseph Ayo Babalola University (Approval No.: JABU/REC/2025/BUS/107). All participants gave written informed consent.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions the three HRM dimensions — HR Policy Framework, Training and Awareness, and Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism — as independent predictors of perceived workplace harassment reduction (the dependent variable). The

hypothesised relationships are dual-theorised through Organisational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2001) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986). The framework assumes differential effect sizes across the three predictors, with the Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism expected to carry the largest effect, consistent with both theories' emphasis on observable enforcement and reinforcement as the primary drivers of behavioural norm change.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's Conceptual Framework, (2026)

RESULTS

Common Method Bias Assessment

Harman's single-factor test was conducted on all 20 items prior to model evaluation. A single-factor solution explained 28.4% of total variance — substantially below the 50% threshold established by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) — indicating that common method variance does not

dominate the data. This finding is treated as indicative rather than definitive, and the limitations of single-source self-report design are discussed in Section 6.3.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Factor Loadings and Indicator Reliability

Table 1 presents factor loadings for all four constructs. Loadings for the three HRM predictor constructs range from 0.553 to 0.760 (HR Policy Framework), 0.521 to 0.624 (Training and Awareness), and 0.543 to 0.713 (Complaint Mechanism). The highest-loading items are policy enforcement (Q3 = 0.760) and perceived safety in reporting (Q9 = 0.713), consistent with the theoretical emphasis on enforcement and procedural safety. The dependent variable item Q17 loads at 0.423 on the Workplace Outcome construct, satisfying the convergent validity criterion for single-item measures (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2012).

Table 1: Measurement Model — Factor Loadings and Indicator Reliability

Item	Statement	Loading	R ²	Construct
Q1	Clear policies against workplace harassment exist	0.553	0.305	HRP
Q2	Employees are aware of anti-harassment policies	0.646	0.418	HRP
Q3	HR policies are effectively enforced	0.760	0.577	HRP
Q4	Violations of HR policies are punished appropriately	0.625	0.391	HRP
Q5	Employees receive training on workplace behaviour	0.605	0.366	TRN
Q6	HR organises awareness programmes on harassment prevention	0.521	0.271	TRN
Q7	Training helps reduce workplace harassment	0.624	0.389	TRN
Q8	Employees understand acceptable workplace conduct	0.563	0.317	TRN
Q9	Employees feel safe reporting harassment cases	0.713	0.509	CDM
Q10	There are proper channels for reporting harassment	0.617	0.381	CDM
Q11	HR responds promptly to complaints	0.584	0.341	CDM
Q12	Reported cases are handled fairly	0.639	0.408	CDM
Q13	Offenders are disciplined appropriately	0.543	0.295	CDM
Q17 [DV]	Workplace harassment has reduced in my organisation	0.423	0.179	WOC

Note. HRP = HR Policy Framework; TRN = Training and Awareness; CDM = Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism; WOC = Workplace Outcome/Climate. [DV] = single-item dependent variable. Standardised factor loadings reported. Source: Field Survey (2026).

Construct Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity

Table 2a presents construct reliability and validity indices. CR values range from 0.668 (Training and Awareness) to 0.758 (Complaint Mechanism), with HR Policy Framework (CR = 0.743) and Complaint Mechanism (CR = 0.758) exceeding the 0.70 threshold (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Training and Awareness (CR = 0.668) falls marginally below, reflecting its theoretically heterogeneous nature.

AVE values range from 0.269 to 0.423, all below the 0.50 benchmark (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This is a recognised limitation, mitigated by three considerations: CR values are adequate; all HTMT ratios (Table 2b) fall below the 0.85 threshold, confirming discriminant validity (Henseler *et al.*, 2015); and the Fornell-Larcker criterion is partially satisfied, with AVE square roots exceeding inter-construct correlations in all cases.

Table 2a: Construct Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)

Construct	CR	AVE	MSV	A	1	2	3	4
1. HR Policy Framework	0.743	0.423	0.086	0.543	0.651			
2. Training and Awareness	0.668	0.336	0.222	0.331	0.264	0.580		
3. Complaint Mechanism	0.758	0.387	0.222	0.602	0.252	0.471	0.622	
4. Workplace Outcome/Climate	0.716	0.269	0.148	0.536	0.294	0.289	0.384	0.519

Note. CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; α = Cronbach's alpha. Bold diagonal = square root of AVE. All inter-construct correlations significant at $p < .001$. Source: Field Survey (2026).

Table 2b: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio Matrix

Construct	1. HR Policy	2. Training	3. Complaint	4. Outcome
1. HR Policy Framework	—			
2. Training and Awareness	0.439	—		
3. Complaint Mechanism	0.408	0.757	—	
4. Workplace Outcome/Climate	0.489	0.503	0.617	—

Note. CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; α = Cronbach's alpha. Bold diagonal = square root of AVE. All inter-construct correlations significant at $p < .001$. Source: Field Survey (2026).

Hypothesis Testing

H1: HR Policy Framework and Perceived Harassment Reduction

The HR Policy Framework exerts a statistically significant positive effect on perceived harassment reduction ($B = 0.219$, Std. $\beta = 0.172$, $SE = 0.056$, $t = 3.879$, $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [0.108, 0.330]; R^2

= 0.030; $f^2 = 0.031$, small effect). H1 is supported. The low effect size is consistent with the theoretical position that policy is not sufficient to deter harassment (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997; Salin, 2008), as is the policy-enforcement gap shown in the descriptive data (Q1, policy existence: M = 4.29 vs. Q3, policy enforcement: M = 3.81).

Table 3: H1 — HR Policy Framework → Perceived Harassment Reduction

Path	B	Std. β	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Harassment Reduction ← HR Policy	0.219	0.172	0.056	3.879	.000	0.108	0.330

Note. $R^2 = 0.030$; Cohen's $f^2 = 0.031$ (small effect). DV = Q17. $p < .001$. Source: Field Survey (2026).

H2: Training and Awareness → Perceived Harassment Reduction

Training and Awareness does not significantly predict perceived harassment reduction in isolation ($B = -0.005$, Std. $\beta = -0.003$, SE = 0.062, $t = -0.076$, $p = .939$; 95% CI [-0.126, 0.117]; $R^2 = 0.000$; $f^2 = 0.000$). Note that H2 is not supported. This null result can be theoretically explained using Social Learning Theory: norms are disseminated through training programmes and self-efficacy is increased, but when there is no obvious deterrent consequence as a result of this, the signal for learning through observation is missing (Bandura, 1977). The study results align with those of Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003) and Willness *et al.* (2007), who found that provision of training is not a significant factor in perception of harassment, but rather enforcement infrastructure is.

Table 4: H2 — Training and Awareness → Perceived Harassment Reduction

Path	B	Std. β	SE	T	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Harassment Reduction ← Training	-0.005	-0.003	0.062	-0.076	.939	-0.126	0.117

Note. $R^2 = 0.000$; $f^2 = 0.000$. DV = Q17. n.s. = not significant. Source: Field Survey (2026).

H3: Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism → Perceived Harassment Reduction

The Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism is the strongest individual predictor of perceived harassment reduction ($B = 0.466$, Std. $\beta = 0.341$, SE = 0.058, $t = 8.057$, $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [0.353, 0.580]; $R^2 = 0.116$; $f^2 = 0.131$, medium effect). The support for the statement H3 is very strong. Enforcement infrastructure, as previously highlighted by Lim and Cortina (2005) and Hodgins *et*

al. (2020), is also determined to have the most effective HRM lever in this context, with a medium effect size. The descriptive data shows some elements of the system of complaints as a whole are less developed than others, including the procedural fairness gap: Q12 (case handling fairness: $M = 3.78$) was rated lower than all other complaint items (Q10: $M = 4.23$; Q11: $M = 4.22$; Q13: $M = 4.27$).

Table 5: H3 — Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism → Perceived Harassment Reduction

Path	B	Std. β	SE	T	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Harassment Reduction ← Complaint	0.466	0.341	0.058	8.057	.000	0.353	0.580

Note. $R^2 = 0.116$; Cohen's $f^2 = 0.131$ (medium effect). DV = Q17. $p < .001$. Source: Field Survey (2026).

H4: Joint Effect of All Three HRM Dimensions

The joint model accounted for 16.6% of the variance in the perceived reduction in harassment ($R^2 = 0.166$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.161$) $R^2 = 0.161$; $F(3, 491) = 32.53$, $p < 0.001$; $f^2 = 0.199$, medium effect). H4 is supported. Within the joint model, the Complaint Mechanism dominates (Std. $\beta = 0.574$, $p < .001$). HR Policy Framework is near conventional significance but not Conventionally Significant (Std. $\beta = 0.164$, $p = .055$), indicating that there is a significant amount of overlap between HR Policy Framework and the Complaint Mechanism. In the joint model, training and Awareness has a negative coefficient (Std. $\beta = -0.324$, $p = .001$). This is a suppressor effect, as described in the literature, which is a well-known statistical artifact that occurs when moderately intercorrelated predictors (Training and Complaint Mechanism: $r = 0.471$) are entered simultaneously (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2000; Paulhus *et al.*, 2004). The correct interpretation is that, in general, organisations that have a comparatively weaker training investment but a strong enforcement infrastructure have higher perceived reduction in harassment than the ones that have a comparatively weaker enforcement infrastructure and a strong training investment, not that training is bad. The VIF values for all the variables are below 3.0, indicating that there is no problematic multicollinearity.

Table 6: H4 — Joint Multiple Regression: Combined Effect on Perceived Harassment Reduction

Predictor	B	Std. β	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
HR Policy Framework	0.143	0.164	0.074	1.927	.055	-0.003	0.289
Training and Awareness	-0.278	-0.324	0.083	-3.345	.001	-0.441	-0.115
Complaint Mechanism	0.744	0.574	0.094	7.896	.000	0.559	0.929

Note. $R^2 = 0.166$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.161$; $F(3, 491) = 32.53$, $p < .001$; $f^2 = 0.199$ (medium effect). VIF: HR Policy = 1.09, Training = 1.29, Complaint = 1.28 (all < 3.0). The negative Std. β for Training reflects a suppressor effect — a statistical artefact of shared variance with the Complaint Mechanism; it should not be causally interpreted. Source: Field Survey (2026).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Primacy of Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanisms

The principal finding of this study, finding the Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism as the dominant predictor of perceived harassment reduction (Std. $\beta = 0.341$; $f^2 = 0.131$), is coherent in terms of theory and practice. The Organisational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2001) suggests that the complaint mechanism is the only HRM dimension that triggers all three dimensions of justice: the complaint investigation process (procedural justice); the proportionality of sanctions (distributive justice); and treatment of complainants during the complaint process (interactional justice). This is supported by the descriptive data: structural complaint features are valued ($M = 4.23$ on Q10, $M = 4.22$ on Q11, $M = 4.27$ on Q13), but case-handling fairness (Q12: $M = 3.78$) shows that there is a persistent lack of interactional justice in otherwise effective systems.

A Social Learning Theory perspective (Bandura, 1977, 1986) has a similar rationale: visible, proportional, and credible disciplinary consequences are signals to potential offenders that they will likely be caught, and signals to potential victims that they will not be held accountable. This is something that can only be achieved through the application of complaint and disciplinary power, not policy documents or training programmes. This result directly corroborates Salin (2008) in his findings of the difference between substantive and symbolic organisational reactions, the findings of Lim and Cortina (2005) that the complaint accessibility is a key determinant of non-reporting intentions, and the findings of Carter *et al.* (2013) that the centrality of outcome trust and not channel awareness is the key factor in non-reporting behaviour.

The Role of HR Policy Framework

The HR Policy Framework exerts a statistically significant but small independent effect (Std. $\beta = 0.172$; $f^2 = 0.031$), confirming that formal policy articulation contributes modestly to employees' confidence that harassment is being addressed. This finding backs Fitzgerald *et al.*'s (1997) argument that a policy absence is a signal of an organisation's tolerance of certain issues while a policy presence is an initial institutional commitment to the issue. In the joint model, though, the policy effect is not significant (Std. $\beta = 0.164$, $p = .055$), consistent with the very high shared variance between the policy and complaint systems found by Catley *et al.* (2017). The policy-enforcement gap in the descriptive data (Q1 existence: $M = 4.29$ vs. Q3 enforcement: $M = 3.81$) mirrors Salin's (2008) result that employees differentiate between documentation and enforcement, and that it is the quality of enforcement, rather than the elaboration of the policy, that creates an employee perception of institutional commitment.

The Training Paradox

The results of the null correlation between Training and Awareness and the independent predictor (Std. $\beta = -0.003$, $p = .939$) are the most theoretically interesting. While training provision is far more prevalent than it is in the sample (Q5: $M = 4.14$; Q6: $M = 3.98$), the endorsement is completely independent of perceived harassment reduction. This finding aligns with the vast empirical literature: Antecol and Cobb-Clark (2003) reported no effect on harassment after the training mandated by this policy; and Willness *et al.*'s (2007) meta-analysis revealed that enforcement infrastructure, not training, is the most important factor affecting harassment outcomes. The Social Learning Theory explanation is straightforward: training spreads norms and creates self-efficacy but no visible signal for the behaviour deterrence is provided, meaning reinforcement for behaviour is not present. The consequences of this are evident: organisations training and under training the complaint mechanism are training the weaker.

The negative suppressor coefficient of training in the joint model (Std. $\beta = -0.324$) should be regarded with caution. This is a non-causal discovery finding. This is a well-documented statistical artifact that occurs when a set of moderately correlated predictors (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2000; Paulhus *et al.*, 2004) are entered simultaneously. Shared variance is subtracted and the unique variance of Training is negative. The actual reading is that investment in enforcement is more

strongly correlated with the perception of harassment reduction than is investment in training — not that training is bad.

Theoretical Contributions

Three theoretical contributions to this study are made. Second, it is one of the first empirical studies of an anti-harassment model which is multi-mechanistic (HRM); by bringing this context beyond North American/European boundaries, the authors have extended the scope of Organisational Justice Theory and Social Learning Theory. First, it creates an empirical ranking of HRM anti-harassment mechanisms: complaint infrastructure, then the policy framework, then training, which goes against the practice norm of using training as the first-line response. Third, it illustrates the predictions of OJT and SLT in relation to the three dimensions of HRM, which neither theory by itself would predict: OJT predicts the importance of procedural fairness in a complaint system; SLT predicts the need for visible reinforcement of behaviour for deterrence; and their combination demonstrates the need for training plus reinforcement; training alone satisfies the conditions of self-efficacy, but not of observational reinforcement.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this study, the three HRM dimensions were explored in terms of both their differential and joint effects on employees' perceived HR reduction in the workplace within a sample of 495 employees in manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The Complaint and Disciplinary Mechanism is the most powerful predictor (Std. $\beta = 0.341$; $f^2 = 0.131$, medium effect). The HR Policy Framework shows a significant (Std. $\beta = 0.172$; $f^2 = 0.031$; small effect) independent contribution. There is no relationship between Training and Awareness and perceived harassment reduction (Std. $\beta = -0.003$, $p = .939$). The three dimensions together account for 16.6% of variance ($f^2 = 0.199$, medium effect). A suppressor effect in the joint model is found to be a statistical artefact, rather than a causal effect.

Practical and Policy Implications

The big take away for HR managers and executives in Nigerian manufacturing organisations is that investing in complaint infrastructure provides a measurable return in reduced perceived harassment, beyond training or documentation of policies. Priority actions should include measures to set up accessible and confidential reporting procedures; to ensure that investigation

processes are impartial and clearly address the procedural fairness gap identified at Q12; to ensure that outcomes of investigations are communicated promptly and transparently; and to apply visible and proportionate sanctions against perpetrators. A credible context for enforcement is essential for training programmes to have discernible effects, but training programmes are still relevant for establishing norms and empowering bystanders. In the regulatory sphere, the National Industrial Court and Federal Ministry of Labour & Employment should make the quality of the enforcement infrastructure rather than documenting compliance with anti-harassment policies the priority to consider in carrying out anti-harassment compliance audits of manufacturing companies in Nigeria.

Limitations and Future Research

A few points to note are that this is the case. First, the single-source self-report design can be influenced by common method variance. Harman's single factor test offers some assurance but has relatively low statistical power for detecting CMV (Richardson *et al.*, 2009) and the unmeasured latent factor method or the marker-variable technique should be used in future studies. This is the second point, that the cross sectional design is not suitable for making causal statements, which requires longitudinal designs. Third, the single item dependent variable, although defensible in the method, is methodologically problematic in terms of a ceiling tendency ($M = 4.33$; 50.9% maximum response) that will likely result in a dampening of effect sizes. Fourth, all AVE values are below 0.50, indicating that this is a limitation of convergent validity which should be addressed by future research through item pool refinement. Fifth, the findings are confined to the South-Western Nigeria manufacturing sector because of geographical concentration, with 67.5% of the respondents having 1-5 years of experience; it may not be applicable to Northern Nigerian manufacturing sector or more experienced workforce. Sixth, the interactions between the three HRM dimensions (for instance, whether the quality of the complaint mechanism also influences the effectiveness of the training) were not modelled and warrant further investigation.

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