

**WORKPLACE BULLYING AND OFFICE MANAGER'S JOB PRODUCTIVITY OF  
MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS.**

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**Abstract**

The study examined the relationship between workplace bullying and office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria. The objective of the study is to examine the relationship between workplace bullying like verbal bullying, psychological bullying and work-related bullying and office manager's job productivity. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design with a population of 100 Office Managers from selected manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The entire population was used for this study hence a census study was adopted. Out of 100 copies of the questionnaire, a total of 90 copies were retrieved. The findings revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between workplace bullying and office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria. The study concluded that addressing workplace bullying is crucial for improving overall work performance and creating a positive work environment in manufacturing firms. The researchers therefore recommends that organizations should provide training and education on recognizing and addressing workplace bullying for both employees and managers.

***Keywords: workplace bullying, verbal bullying, psychological bullying, work related bullying, office manager's job productivity.***

**Introduction**

Workplace bullying can have devastating consequences for workers' well-being. Over the past ten years, meta-analyses have emerged, which lay bare the impact that bullying can have on those targeted (Nielsen et al., 2020; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Verkuil et al., 2015). This body of evidence, covering both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, shows that exposure to workplace bullying is associated with poorer well-being, with effect sizes in the medium to strong range (Mikkelsen et al., 2020). These findings also appear consistent across different occupational contexts (Hogh et al., 2021). To better understand the nature of the relationship between workplace bullying and office manager's well-being, researchers have turned to moderation studies, which examine variables that affect the strength of a relationship between predictor and outcome (Dawson, 2014). As knowledge develops in a research area, moderation studies can be helpful for identifying boundary conditions (Gardner et al., 2021); in the case of the workplace bullying and well-being relationship, they provide insight into the conditions under which employees are more at risk from, or are more protected against, developing well-being issues following exposure to workplace bullying. Accordingly, researchers have called for greater focus on the factors that moderate the impact of workplace bullying (Mikkelsen et al., 2020; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2018). However, as the volume of moderation studies increases, further advancement of the research area is dependent on reviews that synthesise

the evidence to draw conclusions about the nature of the relationship between a construct and its outcomes (Parker et al., 2019).

Workplace bullying is a pervasive issue that can have serious consequences on both the individual being bullied and the overall productivity of an organization. According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, workplace bullying is defined as "repeated mistreatment of an employee by one or more employees; abusive conduct that is threatening, humiliating, or intimidating; work sabotage; or verbal abuse." (Namie, 2021) This mistreatment can take many forms, including but not limited to verbal abuse, exclusion from social activities, and sabotage of work tasks. Research has shown that workplace bullying can have a significant impact on the productivity of both the individual being bullied and their colleagues. A study conducted by Mayhew et al. (2017) found that workplace bullying was significantly associated with decreased job satisfaction, increased levels of stress, and decreased productivity among the victims of bullying. Additionally, being exposed to workplace bullying can create a toxic work environment that can negatively impact the morale and productivity of all employees, not just those directly affected.

One key player in addressing and preventing workplace bullying is the office manager. The office manager plays a crucial role in fostering a positive work environment and addressing any issues of workplace bullying that may arise. It is essential for office managers to be aware of the signs of workplace bullying and to take proactive measures to prevent it. This may include implementing policies and procedures to address workplace bullying, providing training on respectful and appropriate workplace behavior, and creating a culture of open communication where employees feel comfortable reporting any instances of bullying. Overall, workplace bullying can have a detrimental impact on the productivity of an organization and the well-being of its employees. By taking proactive measures to prevent workplace bullying and creating a culture of respect and communication, office managers can help to create a positive and productive work environment for all employees.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Workplace bullying is a pervasive issue that poses a significant threat to the productivity and well-being of individuals in various industries, including manufacturing firms. In the context of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria, workplace bullying can manifest in the form of verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, and undermining behaviors that create a hostile and toxic work environment (Rathert et al., 2019). This type of behavior can have detrimental effects on employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and performance, ultimately impacting the overall productivity of the organization (Olafsen et al., 2019).

The presence of workplace bullying can result in increased levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout among employees, leading to decreased motivation, engagement, and commitment to their work (Einarsen et al., 2018). Moreover, victims of workplace bullying may experience feelings of helplessness, isolation, and low self-esteem, which can further impair their ability to perform their duties effectively. This negative impact on employee well-being and job performance can create a ripple effect throughout the organization, contributing to higher levels of absenteeism, turnover, and reduced productivity (Nielsen et al., 2017).

Office managers play a crucial role in addressing workplace bullying and promoting a positive work environment within manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis. By establishing clear policies and procedures for addressing workplace bullying, office managers can create a safe and supportive environment where employees feel empowered to report instances of misconduct and seek help when needed (Einarsen et al., 2018). Additionally, office managers can provide training and education on the topic of workplace bullying to raise awareness and promote a zero-tolerance approach to such behavior (Olafsen et al., 2019). Workplace bullying is a serious issue that can have profound effects on the productivity and well-being of employees in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis. By recognizing the detrimental impact of workplace bullying, office managers can take proactive steps to prevent and address this behavior, thereby creating a positive work

environment that fosters employee engagement, retention, and productivity. There have been little or no empirical evidence of workplace bullying relating to office manager's job productivity in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis. That's the gap this study tends to fill.

### Conceptual Framework

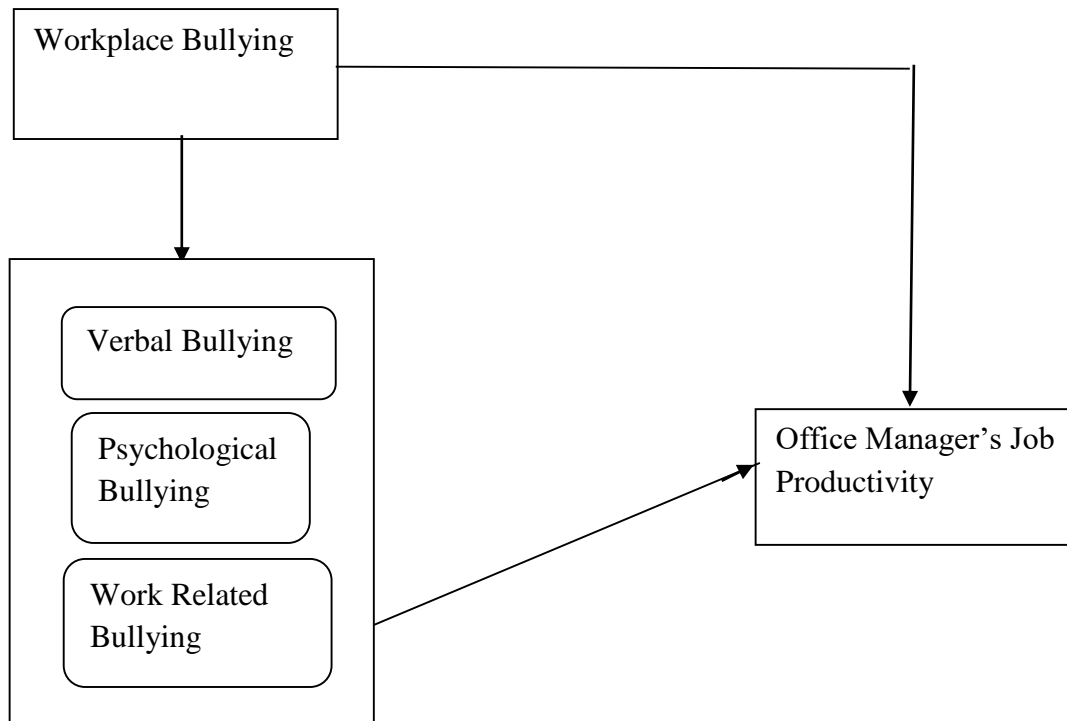


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between Workplace Bullying and Office Manager's Job Productivity.

Source: Researchers' Conceptualization (2026).

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between Workplace bullying and Office Manager's Job Productivity in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The specific objective includes:

1. To examine the impact of Verbal bullying on Office Manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria.
2. To examine the impact of psychological bullying on office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria.
3. To examine the impact of work- related bullying on office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria.

### Research Question

The following research questions were posed in guiding the study

1. To what extent does Verbal bullying influence Office Manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does psychological bullying influence office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria?
3. To what extent does work- related bullying influence office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria?

## **Hypotheses**

To achieve the target of this study, the following null hypotheses were adopted

**H<sub>01</sub>** There is no significant relationship between Verbal bullying and Office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**H<sub>02</sub>** There is no significant relationship between psychological bullying and office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**H<sub>03</sub>** There is no significant relationship between work- related bullying and office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Concept of Workplace Bullying**

Workplace bullying is a serious issue that can have detrimental effects on both individual employees and the overall functioning of an organization. Research has defined workplace bullying as a persistent pattern of mistreatment or abusive behavior towards an individual or group of individuals in the workplace, which can include verbal abuse, threats, humiliation, and sabotage (Hoel et al., 2010).

One key aspect of workplace bullying is the power dynamic between the bully and the victim. Bullies often have a perceived or actual power advantage over their targets, such as being in a position of authority or having control over valuable resources, which allows them to exert control and domination over the victim (Nielsen et al., 2010). This power differential makes it difficult for victims to defend themselves or seek help, as they may fear negative repercussions or further harm. The impact of workplace bullying on individuals can be substantial. Research has shown that victims of bullying may experience a range of negative consequences, including physical health issues (e.g., headaches, stomach problems), psychological health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression), and decreased job satisfaction and performance (Nielsen et al., 2010). These effects can extend beyond the workplace and impact other areas of the victim's life, leading to a decline in overall well-being. In addition to the effects on individual employees, workplace bullying can also have detrimental consequences for organizations. A workplace culture that tolerates or ignores bullying behavior can result in decreased employee morale, trust, and teamwork, as well as increased absenteeism, turnover, and costs associated with turnover and litigation (Nielsen et al., 2010). Furthermore, workplace bullying can damage the reputation of the organization and hinder its ability to attract and retain top talent.

### **Dimensions of Workplace Bullying**

#### **Verbal Bullying**

Verbal bullying is characterized by the use of language to humiliate, insult, or intimidate colleagues, often through yelling, sarcastic remarks, or repeated criticism. This form of bullying can lead to emotional distress, reduced self-esteem, and a hostile work environment, making employees feel unsafe and unwelcome (Suskind, 2023).

#### **Psychological Bullying**

Psychological bullying, sometimes referred to as emotional or relational bullying, is more subtle and involves manipulation, exclusion, rumor-spreading, or gaslighting. Unlike verbal bullying, which is overt, psychological bullying erodes an individual's mental health over time, often resulting in depression, anxiety, and even post-traumatic stress symptoms because the abuse is difficult to prove and frequently dismissed by others (Workplace Mental Health, n.d.).

#### **Work-related Bullying**

Work-related bullying, on the other hand, is tied directly to professional responsibilities and tasks. It includes actions such as deliberately sabotaging a colleague's work, excluding them from meetings or projects, assigning excessive workloads, or suggesting resignation to marginalize them. This type

of bullying has been linked to insomnia, gastrointestinal distress, high blood pressure, and absenteeism, while also reducing productivity and increasing turnover rates (Calm Blog, 2024).

**Concept of Office Manager's Job productivity**

Office managers play a critical role in ensuring organizational productivity by overseeing administrative operations, coordinating workflows, and supporting both staff and executives. Their effectiveness directly impacts efficiency, employee morale, and overall job performance, with research showing that skills such as communication, problem-solving, and technological proficiency significantly enhance productivity (Ojo, 2023; MyJobMag, 2026). Office managers are responsible for managing day-to-day office activities, including supervising administrative staff, coordinating schedules, maintaining records, and ensuring smooth communication across departments. By establishing clear workflows and enforcing office policies, they create an environment that fosters efficiency and reduces operational bottlenecks. Productivity in this role is closely tied to the ability to multitask, prioritize responsibilities, and maintain organizational systems that support both short-term tasks and long-term goals (Indeed, 2026). For example, effective scheduling and resource allocation prevent delays and ensure that employees have the tools they need to succeed, thereby improving overall office output.

**Theoretical Review**

This study was anchored on **Social Learning Theory**. Social Learning Theory, propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977, suggests that individuals can learn behaviors through observation and imitation of others, as well as through direct instruction and reinforcement. According to this theory, people learn by observing the behavior of others and the consequences of such behavior.

In the context of workplace bullying, Social Learning Theory can be applied to understand how employees may observe and learn bullying behaviors from their colleagues or superiors. For example, if a manager consistently bullies and belittles their subordinates, other employees may observe this behavior and learn that it is acceptable or even expected in the workplace. As a result, they may begin to engage in similar bullying behaviors themselves.

The impact of workplace bullying on office manager's job productivity can be significant. When bullying behaviors are prevalent in the workplace, it can create a toxic and hostile work environment. Employees who are victims of bullying may experience stress, anxiety, and low morale, leading to decreased job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, bullying can damage relationships between employees, erode trust, and create a culture of fear and resentment.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive Survey research design was adopted with data collected via questionnaire and using such data to test the hypotheses; hence, it's descriptive in nature because it explains the relationship between workplace bullying and office Manager's Job Productivity. The study is a micro study that focuses on a particular set of staff. Therefore, the population of this research covers nine (9) selected manufacturing firms, with the total of one hundred (100) office mangers which includes: Operation manager, Human resource manager, admin staff, storekeepers, confidential secretaries, staff supervisors, accounting officer, front desk officers, and customer care officer

Table 3.1: Population Distribution Based on manufacturing firms.

S/N	Manufacturing firms and their location	Office Manager
1	Indorama Eleme Petrochemicals, East-West Expressway, Port Harcourt.	13
2	Cometstar Cable and Wire, 278 Aba Express Way, Port Harcourt.	9
3.	ALO Aluminium Manufacturing Co, East/West Road, Rumuokoro. Port- Harcourt.	12

4.	Chuzeke Nigeria Limited, KM 17 Port Harcourt-Aba Expressway, Elelenwo. Port- Harcourt.	7
5.	Africa Oilfield Services (AOS), 272 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt.	10
6.	HITA Dredgers International, Elelenwo, off Port Harcourt-Aba Expressway. Port Harcourt Metropolis.	8
7.	BG Technical, 149 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt.	16
8.	Negris Group, 36 Trans Amadi Industrial Estate, Port -Harcourt.	11
9.	Zinox Technologies, 22b Old Aba Road, Port Harcourt.	14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Inquiry data (2026).

The study was a census study, which entails using the entire population without sampling. For the instrument to ascertain it required reliability, a test and retest approach was adopted and the pretest was done using questionnaire administered to the respondents in a selected area. After two months, the relationship between the two result was determined Using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The reliability was found to be high  $r = 0.96$  showing that there is consistency in the items of survey. A Total of one hundred (100) copies of Questionnaire were distributed to the respondent. The researchers were able to retrieve ninety (90) copies from these nine selected manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, while the total sum of ten (10) copies were not retrieved.

## RESULTS

**H<sub>01</sub>** There is no significant relationship between Verbal bullying and Office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Table 1: Correlations Matrix of Verbal Bullying and Office Manager's Productivity.**

		Office Manager's Productivity	Verbal Bullying
Spearman's Rho	Correlation Coefficient	<b>1.000</b>	<b>.768**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	90	90

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: SPSS Output, (2026).**

Table 1 above shows the correlation result on verbal bullying and office manager's job productivity. The table revealed the existence of a positive and significant relationship between verbal bullying and office Manager's Job Productivity with a group probability value of (0.768), which is less than Alpha Level 0.05, therefore we reject the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant relationship between verbal bullying and Office Manager's job productivity. Hence conclude that there is a significant relationship between verbal bullying and Office Manager's job Productivity.

**H<sub>02</sub>** There is no significant relationship between psychological bullying and office manager's job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Psychological bullying and Office Manager's Job Productivity.**

		Office Manager's Job Productivity	Psychological Bullying
Spearman's Rho	Correlation Coefficient	<b>1.000</b>	<b>.577**</b>

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	90	90

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: SPSS Output, (2026)**

Table 2 above shows the correlation result on psychological bullying and office manager’s job productivity. The table revealed the existence of a positive and significant relationship between psychological bullying and office Manager's job commitment with a group probability value of (0.577), which is less than Alpha Level 0.05, therefore we reject the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant relationship between psychological bullying and office manager’s job productivity and accept the alternate hypothesis. Hence conclude that there is a significant relationship between psychological bullying and office manager’s job productivity.

**H<sub>03</sub>** There is no significant relationship between work- related bullying and office manager’s job productivity of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Table 3: Correlations Matrix of Work-related Bullying and Office Manager's job productivity.**

		<b>Office manager's job productivity</b>	<b>Work related bullying</b>
Spearman's Rho	Correlation	<b>1.000</b>	<b>.715**</b>
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	90	90

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: SPSS Output**

Table 3 above shows the correlation result on work-related bullying and office manager’s Job productivity. The table revealed the existence of a positive and significant relationship between work-related bullying and Office manager’s job productivity with a group probability value of (0.715), which is less than the alpha level 0.05, therefore we reject the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant relationship between work-related bullying and office manager’s job productivity and accept the alternate hypothesis. Hence, conclude that there is a significant relationship between work-related bullying and office manager’s job productivity.

**Conclusions**

Workplace bullying has a significant negative impact on office managers' job productivity in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Workplace bullying can lead to increased stress, decreased job satisfaction, and reduced motivation among office managers. Addressing workplace bullying is crucial for improving overall work performance and creating a positive work environment in manufacturing firms.

**Recommendations**

1. Establish and enforce clear policies on workplace behavior and conduct, including zero-tolerance for bullying and harassment.
2. Provide training and education on recognizing and addressing workplace bullying for both employees and managers.
3. Encourage open communication and provide channels for reporting and addressing bullying incidents.

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