

Physical Harassment and Worker's Alienation in Public Agencies in Rivers State

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Abstract

Original Research Article

This study examined the relationship between physical harassment and worker's alienation in public agencies in Rivers State. Specifically, the study investigated how physical intimidation, workplace assault, and coercion/forceful interactions influence social isolation among employees in public sector organizations. The study was anchored on Alienation Theory and the Workplace Aggression Theory, as both theories provide relevant explanations for the relationship between physical harassment and worker's alienation in public agencies. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 1,280 employees drawn from selected public agencies in Rivers State, while a sample size of 304 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed a moderate positive relationship between physical intimidation and social isolation ($r = 0.574$, $p < 0.05$). The study also found a strong positive relationship between workplace assault and social isolation ($r = 0.618$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, coercion/forceful interactions showed a strong positive relationship with social isolation ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that physical harassment significantly contributes to worker's alienation in public agencies by creating fear, emotional withdrawal, and reduced workplace interaction among employees. The study recommended the implementation of strict anti-harassment policies, effective reporting mechanisms, and employee support programmes to promote safer and more inclusive work environments in public agencies.

Keywords: Coercion, Physical harassment, physical intimidation, worker's alienation, workplace assault.

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Introduction

Physical harassment in the workplace has become a growing concern globally, particularly within public sector institutions where hierarchical structures and power imbalances may create environments conducive to abuse. In Rivers State, Nigeria, public agencies are expected to uphold professionalism, ethical conduct, and employee welfare; however,

reports of workplace harassment continue to challenge these ideals. Physical harassment refers to any unwelcome physical conduct or behavior directed at an employee that creates a hostile, intimidating, or unsafe working environment. This may include physical intimidation, assault, unwanted touching, or coercive actions that violate personal boundaries (Einarsen et al., 2020). Such experiences

not only affect the physical well-being of employees but also have profound psychological and organizational implications.

Worker alienation, on the other hand, is a psychological condition in which employees feel disconnected from their work, colleagues, and organization. Rooted in classical sociological theory, alienation reflects a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and self-estrangement within the workplace (Seeman, 1959). In modern organizational contexts, alienation manifests as reduced job satisfaction, low commitment, decreased productivity, and withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover intentions (Robbins & Judge, 2019). When employees experience physical harassment, they are more likely to develop feelings of alienation due to diminished trust, fear, and a lack of psychological safety.

Public agencies in Rivers State operate within a complex administrative framework characterized by bureaucratic procedures, authority gradients, and diverse workforce interactions. While these institutions play a critical role in governance and service delivery, they are not immune to workplace challenges, including harassment and employee disengagement. Studies have shown that public sector employees often face unique stressors such as rigid hierarchies, limited autonomy, and inadequate grievance mechanisms, which may exacerbate the impact of harassment (Adebayo & Ogunsina, 2021). In such environments, victims of physical harassment may feel powerless to report incidents due to fear of retaliation or lack of institutional support.

Recent literature highlights that workplace harassment is strongly associated with negative organizational outcomes. According to Nielsen and Einarsen (2018), exposure to workplace harassment significantly increases psychological distress, reduces job performance, and contributes to long-term disengagement. Similarly, Hogh et al. (2021) found that employees who experience physical or psychological harassment are more likely to develop symptoms of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, all of which are key predictors of worker alienation. These findings suggest that harassment is

not only a personal issue but also an organizational problem that undermines productivity and effectiveness.

Furthermore, the link between physical harassment and worker alienation is particularly critical in the public sector, where employee morale directly influences service delivery and public trust. When workers feel alienated, they are less likely to be motivated, innovative, or committed to organizational goals (Kanungo, 1982). This can result in poor service quality, inefficiency, and reduced organizational performance. In the context of Rivers State, where public agencies are central to socio-economic development, addressing workplace harassment is essential for enhancing employee well-being and institutional effectiveness.

Despite increasing awareness of workplace harassment globally, there remains limited empirical research focusing specifically on physical harassment and its impact on worker alienation within public agencies in Nigeria. Most existing studies have concentrated on general workplace stress or psychological harassment, leaving a gap in understanding the specific effects of physical harassment in public sector settings. This gap underscores the need for focused research to explore how physical harassment influences employee attitudes and behaviors in Rivers State.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between physical harassment and worker alienation in public agencies in Rivers State. By providing empirical insights into this relationship, the study aims to contribute to the development of effective policies and interventions that promote safe work environments, enhance employee engagement, and improve organizational performance.

Statement of the Problem

Public agencies in Rivers State are established to provide efficient services to the public and contribute to the socio-economic development of the state. However, the effectiveness of these agencies largely depends on the commitment, motivation, and well-being of their workforce. In recent years, concerns

have emerged regarding the alienation of employees within some public agencies, this alienation was traceable to physical harassment by supervisors, colleagues, or other workplace actors. These experiences have created an unhealthy work environment that undermines employees' morale and job satisfaction.

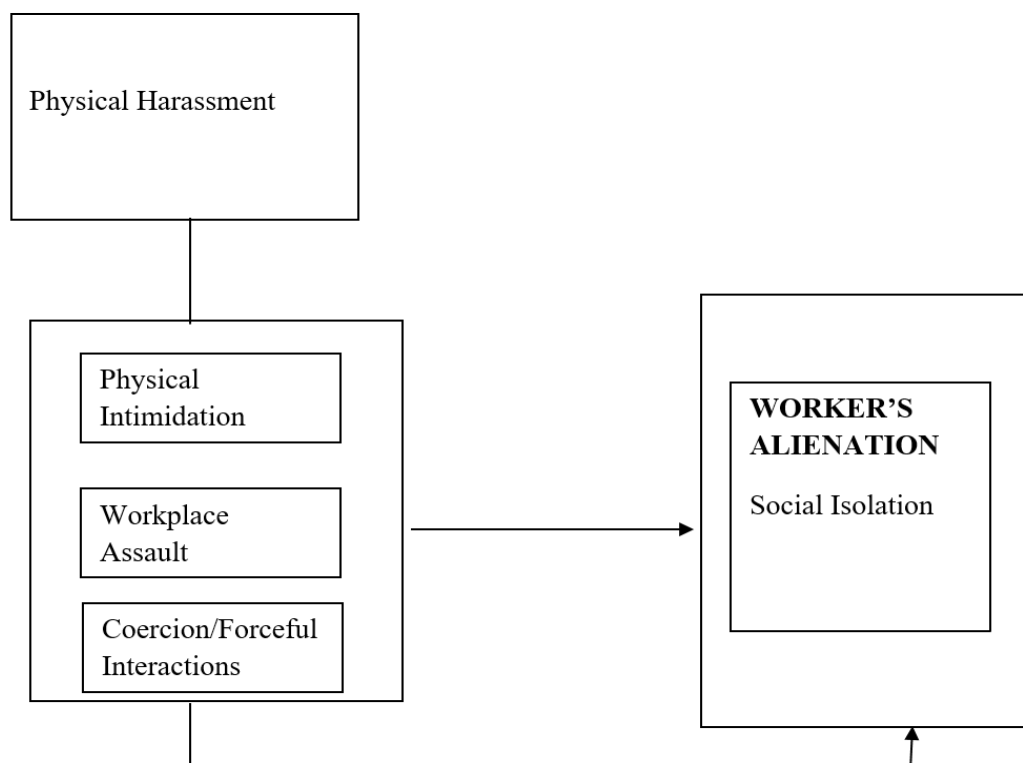
Physical harassment in the workplace often exposes workers to fear, intimidation, humiliation, and psychological distress. As a result, affected employees may develop feelings of powerlessness, isolation, and detachment from their work roles and organizational objectives. This condition, commonly referred to as worker alienation, can manifest in reduced commitment, low productivity, absenteeism, poor interpersonal relationships, and a decline in the quality of service delivery. Consequently, the overall performance of public agencies may be adversely affected.

Despite the importance of maintaining a conducive

work environment, evidence suggests that workplace harassment remains a challenge in many organizations, including public institutions. While several studies have focused on workplace harassment and employee performance, limited attention has been given to the specific relationship between physical harassment and worker alienation within public agencies in Rivers State. This creates a gap in understanding the extent to which physical harassment contributes to employees' feelings of alienation and the implications for organizational effectiveness.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine worker alienation as masterminded by physical harassment in public agencies in Rivers State. The study aims to provide empirical evidence on the nature of this relationship and offer recommendations for creating a safer and more inclusive work environment that promotes employee well-being and organizational efficiency.

Conceptual Framework of the study



Objectives of the Study

This study examines the relationship between physical harassment and workers' alienation in public agencies in Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. examine the relationship between physical intimidation and workers' alienation in public agencies in Rivers State.
- ii. investigate the relationship between workplace assault and workers' alienation in public agencies in Rivers State.
- iii. ascertain the relationship between coercion/forceful interactions and workers' alienation in public agencies in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

- i. What is the relationship between physical intimidation and workers' alienation in public agencies in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between workplace assault and workers' alienation in public agencies in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between coercion/forceful interactions and workers' alienation in public agencies in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

- H01. There is no significant relationship between physical intimidation and social isolation in public agencies in Rivers State.
- H02. There is no significant relationship between workplace assault and social isolation in public agencies in Rivers State.
- H03. There is no significant relationship between coercion/forceful interactions and social isolation in public agencies in Rivers State.

Review of related literature

Conceptual Review

Concept of Physical Harassment

Physical harassment refers to any form of unwanted physical contact, intimidation, or aggressive behaviour directed at an individual within the workplace, which creates a hostile, unsafe, or threatening work environment. It includes actions such as pushing, hitting, blocking movement, or any physical conduct intended to harm, intimidate, or coerce another employee (Einarsen et al., 2020). In organizational settings, physical harassment is considered a serious form of workplace misconduct that violates employee rights and undermines workplace dignity and safety.

Unlike verbal or psychological harassment, physical harassment involves direct bodily interaction or threats of such interaction, making its impact more immediate and often more severe. It not only causes physical harm but also leads to psychological distress, fear, anxiety, and reduced job satisfaction among employees. According to Herscovis (2011), workplace aggression, including physical harassment, significantly affects employee well-being and organizational outcomes such as productivity and turnover intentions.

In public sector organizations, physical harassment may arise from power imbalances, hierarchical structures, and weak enforcement of organizational policies. Employees in lower ranks may be more vulnerable to harassment due to limited authority and fear of retaliation. Studies indicate that ineffective grievance procedures and lack of accountability often allow such behaviours to persist (Salin & Hoel, 2020). This creates an environment where victims may feel unsafe or unwilling to report incidents.

Furthermore, physical harassment has broader organizational implications. It disrupts teamwork, reduces employee morale, and damages institutional reputation. According to the International Labour Organization (2022), workplace violence and harassment, including physical forms, are major barriers to decent work and sustainable organizational development. Organizations that fail

to address these issues often experience increased absenteeism, reduced performance, and high employee turnover.

In contemporary research, physical harassment is increasingly examined within the broader framework of workplace violence and occupational health. It is recognized as a critical factor influencing employee engagement, psychological safety, and overall organizational effectiveness. Addressing physical harassment requires strong institutional policies, effective reporting systems, and a culture of respect and accountability.

In summary, physical harassment is a harmful workplace behaviour that negatively affects employees' physical and psychological well-being, disrupts organizational functioning, and contributes significantly to worker alienation.

Dimension of Physical Harassment

Physical Intimidation

Physical intimidation is a key dimension of physical harassment that involves the use of threatening gestures, aggressive body language, or actions intended to instill fear in employees without necessarily causing direct physical harm. Examples include standing too close in a threatening manner, blocking movement, or using physical presence to dominate or control others. According to Salin and Hoel (2020), intimidation is often used as a tool of power and control in hierarchical workplaces, particularly where there is weak enforcement of organizational policies.

Workplace Assault

Workplace assault refers to deliberate physical attacks or harmful actions directed at an employee within the work environment. This includes behaviours such as hitting, pushing, slapping, or any form of physical violence that causes injury or threatens the safety of workers. Workplace assault is considered a severe form of organizational misconduct with both physical and psychological consequences. According to the International Labour

Organization (2022), workplace violence, including assault, significantly undermines employee well-being, reduces productivity, and creates unsafe work environments. Victims of workplace assault often experience fear, anxiety, and trauma, which can lead to reduced job satisfaction and increased absenteeism (Hershcovis, 2011).

Coercion/Forceful Interaction

Coercion or forceful interaction involves the use of physical force or threats to compel an employee to act against their will within the workplace. This may include forceful grabbing, restricting movement, or physically pressuring employees to comply with instructions or demands. Such behaviours are often associated with power imbalance and abuse of authority in organizational settings. According to Salin and Hoel (2020), coercive behaviours are used as control mechanisms that undermine employee autonomy and dignity. These actions can lead to psychological distress, fear, and feelings of helplessness among employees, which are key indicators of alienation. Furthermore, coercion erodes trust between employees and management, weakening organizational commitment and engagement. Hershcovis and Barling (2010) emphasize that even subtle forms of physical coercion can have long-term negative effects on employee morale and workplace relationships.

Concept of Worker's Alienation

Worker's alienation refers to a psychological and social condition in which employees feel disconnected, estranged, or detached from their work, workplace, and fellow workers. It is a concept rooted in classical sociology and organizational theory, used to describe the breakdown of meaningful engagement between workers and the organization they serve. According to Seaman (1959), alienation manifests in five key dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. These dimensions explain how employees may lose a sense of control, purpose, and belonging in their work environment.

In modern organizational settings, worker's alienation is often associated with poor working conditions, lack of participation in decision-making, repetitive job roles, and weak organizational support systems. Blauner (1964) further explains that alienation is more common in bureaucratic and highly structured organizations where employees have limited autonomy and minimal influence over work processes. In such environments, workers tend to feel like mere instruments of production rather than valued contributors to organizational success.

Contemporary studies also link worker's alienation to negative workplace experiences such as harassment, job stress, and poor leadership practices. According to Chiaburu et al. (2014), alienated employees are more likely to experience low job satisfaction, reduced commitment, and higher turnover intentions. This is because alienation weakens emotional attachment to the organization and reduces motivation to perform effectively.

In public sector organizations, worker's alienation is often intensified by rigid administrative structures and limited opportunities for employee voice. Nair and Vohra (2010) note that knowledge workers who experience alienation tend to withdraw psychologically from their duties, leading to reduced productivity and engagement.

Overall, worker's alienation is a critical organizational behaviour concept that highlights the disconnect between employees and their work environment. It has significant implications for productivity, employee well-being, and organizational effectiveness, making it an important area of study in human resource and management research.

Measure of Worker's Alienation

Social Isolation

Social isolation refers to a condition where employees feel disconnected from their colleagues, supervisors, and the broader workplace community. It is a key measure of worker's alienation because it reflects the breakdown of social relationships and communication within the organization. Employees

experiencing social isolation often feel excluded, unsupported, and emotionally detached from workplace interactions. According to Seeman (1959), isolation is a core dimension of alienation that weakens employees' sense of belonging. Similarly, O'Reilly, Robinson, Berdahl, and Banki (2015) note that workplace exclusion significantly reduces employee engagement and increases withdrawal behaviours. In public agencies, poor communication and weak teamwork structures often intensify feelings of isolation, leading to reduced collaboration and productivity.

Relationship between Physical Harassment and Worker's Alienation

The relationship between physical harassment and worker's alienation in organizational settings has been widely discussed in contemporary workplace behaviour literature. Physical harassment refers to unwanted aggressive physical contact, threats, intimidation, or coercive acts directed at employees within the workplace, often creating a hostile work environment (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2020). Such behaviours violate employees' psychological safety and undermine their sense of belonging within the organization. Worker's alienation, on the other hand, describes a condition in which employees feel disconnected from their work, colleagues, and the organization due to negative work experiences, lack of control, or perceived exploitation (Seeman, 1959; Marx, 1844).

Empirical studies have consistently shown that exposure to physical harassment significantly increases feelings of alienation among workers. When employees are subjected to intimidation or physical aggression, they tend to withdraw psychologically and emotionally from their work environment as a coping mechanism (Herscovis & Barling, 2010). This withdrawal often manifests as reduced engagement, low morale, and diminished commitment to organizational goals. In public sector institutions, where hierarchical structures may limit employee voice, the effects of harassment can be even more pronounced (Zapf & Einarsen, 2021).

Furthermore, physical harassment disrupts

interpersonal trust and weakens workplace relationships, which are essential for collaboration and productivity. According to Baillien et al. (2017), sustained exposure to workplace aggression leads to emotional exhaustion and detachment, both key indicators of alienation. Employees who feel unsafe are less likely to participate actively in decision-making processes or contribute innovative ideas, thereby reducing organizational effectiveness.

Physical harassment serves as a significant predictor of worker alienation by creating hostile conditions that erode psychological well-being, reduce job satisfaction, and weaken organizational attachment. Addressing physical harassment is therefore essential for promoting employee well-being and reducing alienation in public agencies.

Theoretical Framework of the study

This study is anchored on the **Alienation Theory and the Workplace Aggression Theory**, as both theories provide relevant explanations for the relationship between physical harassment and worker's alienation in public agencies in Rivers State.

Alienation Theory was originally developed by Karl Marx and later expanded by Melvin Seeman. The theory explains how employees become psychologically and socially detached from their work, colleagues, and organization due to unfavorable workplace conditions. According to Seeman (1959), alienation is characterized by powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. In organizational settings, workers who experience hostile treatment, intimidation, or workplace violence often feel disconnected from their jobs and excluded from meaningful organizational participation. In the context of this study, physical harassment such as intimidation, assault, and coercive interactions may create fear, anxiety, and emotional withdrawal among employees, thereby increasing social isolation and worker alienation. Public agencies with rigid bureaucratic structures may further intensify these feelings when employees perceive that management fails to protect their dignity and well-

being.

The **Workplace Aggression Theory** also provides a useful framework for understanding the study. The theory explains that aggressive workplace behaviours, including physical harassment, emerge from organizational stressors, power imbalances, and negative interpersonal relationships. According to Hershcovis and Barling (2010), workplace aggression includes behaviours intended to harm employees physically, psychologically, or emotionally. These behaviours disrupt workplace harmony and reduce employees' sense of safety and belonging. Workplace aggression theory suggests that repeated exposure to harassment contributes to emotional exhaustion, reduced morale, withdrawal behaviour, and poor interpersonal relationships among employees. In public agencies where authority structures are highly centralized, employees may experience intimidation and coercion from supervisors or colleagues, resulting in fear-based interactions and social withdrawal.

The integration of **Alienation Theory and Workplace Aggression Theory** provides a comprehensive explanation of how physical harassment contributes to worker alienation in public agencies. While Alienation Theory explains the psychological detachment and social isolation experienced by employees, Workplace Aggression Theory explains the organizational and interpersonal factors that produce hostile workplace behaviours. Together, the theories highlight that persistent physical harassment undermines employee well-being, weakens workplace relationships, and reduces organizational effectiveness.

Empirical Review

Eze and Nwosu (2023) examined digital entrepreneurship and youth behaviour in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and sampled 360 youths engaged in online businesses using structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and regression analysis. Findings revealed that digital entrepreneurship significantly enhances income generation and skill acquisition among youths.

However, it also increases exposure to online harassment and risky digital behaviour, especially among inexperienced users. The study concluded that while digital entrepreneurship improves economic inclusion, it requires regulatory and educational support to reduce associated social risks.

Agyapong and Boateng (2024) investigated social media entrepreneurship and psychological well-being among youths in Kumasi, Ghana. The study used a mixed-method design involving 290 respondents and 15 in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Results showed that social media entrepreneurship promotes creativity, financial independence, and networking opportunities. However, it also contributes to social isolation, anxiety, and reduced face-to-face interaction due to excessive online engagement. The study recommended the need for digital literacy programs and mental health support for young entrepreneurs.

Okafor, Uche, and Nnaji (2025) studied digital entrepreneurship and online risk behaviour among university students in South-East Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with a sample of 320 respondents engaged in e-commerce and content creation. Data were analyzed using multiple regression techniques. Findings indicated a significant relationship between digital entrepreneurship and risky online behaviour such as oversharing personal data, exposure to scams, and participation in unsafe online trends. The study concluded that digital entrepreneurship, while economically beneficial, can expose youths to behavioural risks if not properly guided.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to examine the relationship between physical harassment and worker's alienation in public agencies in Rivers State. The design was considered appropriate because it allows data to be collected from respondents at a single point in time and facilitates the examination of relationships among

variables within the study.

The population of the study comprised 1,280 employees drawn from 10 selected public agencies in Rivers State. The population figure was obtained from staff records of selected ministries, parastatals, and government agencies within Rivers State Public Service Commission reports (2025). The selected agencies included employees from administrative, technical, and operational units.

A sample size of 304 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula to ensure adequate representation of the study population. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique, which provided all employees within the selected public agencies equal opportunity to participate in the study. This sampling technique was used to reduce bias and enhance the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Primary data were collected through the use of a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire contained sections on demographic information, dimensions of physical harassment (workplace assault and coercion/forceful interaction), and measures of worker's alienation (social isolation, powerlessness, and work disengagement). Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity through expert review by specialists in management and organizational behaviour. Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ensure internal consistency of the measurement items.

Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, mean scores, and standard deviation were used to summarize the data, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

Results and Discussion

Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

A total of 304 questionnaires were distributed to employees of selected public agencies in Rivers

State. Out of these, 289 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 95.1%. After careful screening, 276 questionnaires were found usable, while 13 were discarded due to incomplete responses.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires Distributed	304	100
Questionnaires Returned	289	95.1
Valid Questionnaires Used	276	90.8
Invalid Questionnaires	13	4.3

The high response rate enhances the reliability and validity of the study, making the data suitable for statistical analysis.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 276)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	126	45.7
	Female	150	54.3
Age	21–30 years	104	37.7
	31–40 years	112	40.6
	41 years and above	60	21.7
Educational Qualification	SSCE	58	21.0
	OND/NCE	96	34.8
	HND/B.Sc	92	33.3
	Postgraduate	30	10.9
Work Experience	1–5 years	118	42.8

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	6–10 years	94	34.1
	Above 10 years	64	23.1

The demographic profile shows that female respondents (54.3%) slightly outnumbered male respondents (45.7%), indicating considerable female participation in public sector employment. Most respondents fall within the 31–40 years age bracket, suggesting that the workforce is predominantly composed of active middle-aged employees. Educationally, the majority possessed OND/NCE and HND/B.Sc qualifications, reflecting a moderately educated workforce within public agencies. Additionally, most respondents had

between 1–10 years of work experience, indicating that many employees are relatively experienced in public sector operations.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at a 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant relationship between physical intimidation and social isolation in public agencies in Rivers State.

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	Decision
Physical Intimidation & Social Isolation	276	0.574	0.000	Reject H01

The result shows a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.574$) between physical intimidation and social isolation. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Two

H02: There is no significant relationship between workplace assault and social isolation in public agencies in Rivers State.

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	Decision
Workplace Assault & Social Isolation	276	0.618	0.000	Reject H02

The findings indicate a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.618$) between workplace assault and social isolation. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Three

H03: There is no significant relationship between coercion/forceful interactions and social isolation in public agencies in Rivers State.

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	Decision
Coercion/Forceful Interactions & Social Isolation	276	0.592	0.000	Reject H03

The result reveals a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.592$) between coercion/forceful interactions and social isolation. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Physical Intimidation and Social Isolation

The findings revealed a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.574$, $p < 0.05$) between physical intimidation and social isolation among employees

in public agencies. This suggests that employees who experience intimidation in the workplace are more likely to withdraw socially and emotionally from colleagues and organizational activities. The finding is consistent with the study of Einarsen et al. (2020), who reported that workplace intimidation contributes

significantly to employee withdrawal behaviour and reduced interpersonal interaction. Similarly, Hershcovis and Barling (2010) observed that exposure to aggressive workplace behaviour often results in emotional distress, fear, and isolation among employees. In public agencies where hierarchical authority structures are prominent, physical intimidation may create hostile environments that discourage communication and teamwork, thereby increasing feelings of alienation and loneliness among workers.

Workplace Assault and Social Isolation

The study found a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.618$, $p < 0.05$) between workplace assault and social isolation. This implies that employees who experience physical assault or aggressive workplace encounters are more likely to disengage socially from organizational activities and workplace relationships. This finding aligns with Baillien, De Cuyper, and De Witte (2017), who found that workplace aggression contributes to emotional exhaustion and social withdrawal. Likewise, Zapf and Einarsen (2021) argued that physically hostile work environments negatively affect employees' psychological well-being and sense of belonging. Employees exposed to workplace assault often avoid social interactions and participation in group activities due to fear, anxiety, and mistrust, thereby increasing workplace alienation and reducing organizational cohesion.

Coercion/Forceful Interactions and Social Isolation

The findings also showed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.05$) between coercion/forceful interactions and social isolation. This indicates that employees subjected to forceful directives, threats, or coercive supervision tend to become socially withdrawn and disconnected from the organization. This result supports the work of Tepper et al. (2018), who found that coercive managerial behaviour increases employee stress and interpersonal detachment. Similarly, Robinson and Bennett (2019) noted that coercive workplace

environments reduce trust, communication, and employee participation in organizational activities. In public agencies, forceful interactions may create fear-based work cultures that discourage collaboration and healthy social relationships, ultimately leading to social isolation and worker alienation.

Summary of Findings

1. Physical intimidation has a significant positive relationship with social isolation in public agencies in Rivers State.
2. Workplace assault significantly influences social isolation among employees in public agencies.
3. Coercion/forceful interactions positively relate to social isolation among workers.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that physical intimidation, workplace assault, and coercion/forceful interactions significantly contribute to social isolation among employees. The study concludes that physical harassment is a strong predictor of employee alienation in workplace.

Recommendations

1. **Implementation of Anti-Harassment Policies:** Public agencies should establish and enforce strict workplace anti-harassment policies to prevent physical intimidation and assault among employees.
2. **Promotion of Supportive Work Environments:** Management should encourage respectful communication, teamwork, and employee support systems to reduce social isolation and improve workplace relationships.
3. **Training and Conflict Management Programs:** Regular training on workplace ethics, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence should be organized to minimize

coercive interactions and foster a healthy organizational climate.

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