

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON WORKPLACE DISCIPLINE AMONG COMMERCIAL BANK EMPLOYEES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research examined how human resource management (HRM) practices influence workplace discipline in commercial banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by increasing concerns about employee misconduct, perceived unfair disciplinary procedures, and declining organizational compliance in the Nigerian banking sector. Anchored on social exchange theory and organizational justice theory, the study adopted the survey as its design. The population comprised of employees from selected commercial banks in Rivers State. A structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale was used for data collection. Key HRM practices examined included training and development, performance appraisal, and disciplinary procedures. Findings from related empirical literature suggest that fair, transparent, and consistent HRM practices significantly enhance workplace discipline, reduce deviant behaviours, and improve employee commitment. The study concludes that HRM practices are critical determinants of workplace discipline in banking institutions. It recommends that bank management should strengthen fairness, consistency, and communication in HRM policies to enhance discipline and organizational effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management, Workplace Discipline, Organizational Justice, Banking Sector, Nigeria

### **Background of the Study**

The human element remains the most complex and indispensable resource in any organization. Unlike physical assets, human behaviour is dynamic, unpredictable, and shaped by diverse psychological and socio-cultural factors. In modern organizations, especially in the banking sector, maintaining workplace discipline has become increasingly challenging due to evolving work structures, technological disruptions, and heightened employee expectations.

Workplace discipline refers to adherence to organizational rules, regulations, and expected behavioural standards. It is essential for ensuring operational efficiency, reducing workplace conflicts, and enhancing productivity (Nwinyokpugi, 2015). In the banking sector, where ethical conduct, compliance, and customer trust are critical, discipline is particularly important. Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are key in influencing how employees behave within an organisation. Activities such as training and development, performance appraisal, and disciplinary procedures help shape employees' understanding of fairness, responsibility, and what the organisation expects from them (Armstrong, 2021). When employees see these HRM systems as fair and consistently applied, they are more likely to follow rules and demonstrate disciplined behaviour at work (Colquitt et al., 2013). However, contemporary issues such as perceived bias in disciplinary actions, lack of transparency, workplace stress, digital monitoring, and ethical breaches have raised concerns about the effectiveness of HRM practices in Nigerian banks. These challenges necessitate empirical investigation into how HRM practices influence workplace discipline.

The human element remains the most complex and indispensable resource in any organization. Unlike physical assets, human behaviour is dynamic, unpredictable, and shaped by diverse psychological, social, and cultural influences. This complexity makes the management of employees a critical yet challenging task for organizational leaders. In contemporary organizations, particularly within the banking sector, maintaining workplace discipline has become increasingly difficult due to evolving work structures, rapid technological disruptions, and heightened employee expectations regarding fairness, autonomy, and work-life balance. Workplace discipline refers to the degree to which employees adhere to organizational rules, regulations, and expected standards of behaviour. It is a fundamental mechanism for ensuring orderliness, operational efficiency, and organizational effectiveness. Discipline minimizes workplace conflicts, reduces deviant behaviours, and promotes productivity (Nwinyokpugi, 2015). In the banking sector, where trust, ethical conduct, confidentiality, and strict regulatory compliance are paramount, workplace discipline assumes even greater importance. Banks operate in highly sensitive environments involving financial transactions, customer data, and risk management systems; thus, even minor lapses in discipline can result in significant financial losses, reputational damage, and regulatory sanctions (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2023). Studies indicate that employee discipline significantly influences organizational performance in commercial banks, highlighting the importance of structured behavioural control systems (Wabba & Kadarko, (2019).

The way organisations manage their people significantly influences how employees think, feel, and behave at work. Through structured activities such as training and development, performance appraisal, reward systems, and disciplinary procedures, organisations aim to guide employee behaviour in line with their goals. Armstrong (2021) notes that well-designed management practices like this help build commitment, improve skills, and strengthen discipline within the workplace. In the same vein, organizational justice theory suggests that employees are more likely to follow rules and act responsibly when they believe workplace practices are fair, transparent, and applied consistently (Colquitt, LePine, & Wesson, 2013). Thus, HRM practices serve not only administrative functions but also behavioural control mechanisms that influence how employees interpret and respond to organizational expectations. Evidence shows that HRM practices such as training, recruitment, and remuneration significantly affect organizational performance, demonstrating their behavioural impact Gulzar, (2017). Furthermore, research examining HRM practices confirms that employees' perceptions of HR systems influence organizational outcomes and behavioural compliance (Alasan & Eyanuku, 2020).

In recent years, the nature of HRM practices has been significantly transformed by digitalization and the adoption of advanced technologies. The emergence of electronic human resource management (e-HRM), artificial intelligence, and data analytics has enabled organizations to monitor employee performance, track compliance, and enforce discipline more efficiently (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016). Digital monitoring systems, including performance tracking software and communication surveillance tools, have become increasingly prevalent in the banking sector. While these technologies enhance accountability and transparency, they also introduce new challenges related to employee privacy, trust, and ethical concerns (Ball, 2021). Also adoption of electronic human resource management (e-HRM) and digital HR practices has improved operational efficiency, employee monitoring, and service delivery. Nigerian banks have been at the forefront of adopting e-HRM practices to enhance performance and organizational effectiveness

(Talatu, Bilkisu, & Rashidat, 2020). Similarly, digital HR practices such as digital recruitment and employee development systems are increasingly used to strengthen workforce capabilities in Nigerian banks (Okoro, 2024; Wabba, & Kadarko, 2019 & Gospel, 2024). Despite these advancements, organizations continue to face significant challenges in maintaining workplace discipline. Issues such as perceived bias in disciplinary procedures, inadequate training, poor communication, and inconsistent enforcement of policies undermine HRM effectiveness. Literature reviews on HRM practices in banking emphasize the inevitability of human resources in sustaining productivity and organizational discipline (Esha Mehta, 2016).

In addition, the growing shift toward remote and hybrid work has significantly changed how workplaces are managed and supervised. With fewer opportunities for face-to-face monitoring, organisations now depend more on digital communication, which can make it harder to maintain discipline and ensure employees consistently follow established policies (Kniffin et al., 2021). In response, management practices need to adapt by introducing clearer guidelines, stronger communication channels, and flexible disciplinary systems that can effectively address the realities of virtual work and support timely compliance (Adias & Raimi, 2025; Ihunwa & Okparanta, 2024). In addition to monitoring and remote work challenges, ethical compliance frameworks have become increasingly critical in modern organizations. The banking sector, in particular, operates within a highly regulated environment where adherence to legal and ethical standards is essential. The adoption of digital HR practices and artificial intelligence in decision-making has raised concerns about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and regulatory compliance. Scholars have noted that inadequate governance of AI-driven HR systems can erode trust, compromise accountability, and expose organizations to legal risks.

Despite these advancements, contemporary organizations; particularly in developing economies such as Nigeria, continue to face significant challenges in implementing effective HRM practices. Issues such as perceived bias in disciplinary actions, lack of transparency in performance appraisal systems, inconsistent enforcement of rules, and inadequate employee training have raised concerns about the effectiveness of HRM systems in promoting workplace discipline. Employees who perceive HR practices as unfair or unjust are more likely to exhibit counterproductive work behaviours, including absenteeism, insubordination, and unethical conduct (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). In the Nigerian banking sector, these challenges are further compounded by increasing workplace stress, high performance pressures, and evolving regulatory requirements. The introduction of digital banking platforms and financial technologies has heightened the need for strict compliance and disciplined behaviour among employees. However, reports of ethical breaches, fraud, data mishandling, and policy violations suggest gaps in the effectiveness of existing HRM practices (Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System [NIBSS], 2023).

Moreover, the growing use of digital monitoring tools in organizations has generated mixed reactions among employees. While such systems are intended to enhance discipline and accountability, they may also create perceptions of surveillance and mistrust if not properly managed. Research indicates that excessive monitoring can negatively affect employee morale and job satisfaction, thereby undermining the very discipline it seeks to enforce (Ball, 2021). Given these complexities, there is a pressing need for organizations to adopt holistic and strategic HRM practices that balance control with fairness, enforcement with support, and discipline with employee engagement. Effective HRM systems must not only

establish clear rules and expectations but also ensure that these rules are applied consistently, communicated transparently, and aligned with employees' psychological and professional needs.

Therefore, understanding the extent to which HRM practices influence workplace discipline is critical for improving organizational effectiveness, particularly in the banking sector. This study seeks to contribute to this understanding by reviewing disciplinary procedures, affect workplace discipline among commercial bank employees in Rivers State, Nigeria, within the context of contemporary workplace challenges.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the existence of formal HRM policies and disciplinary frameworks in Nigerian commercial banks, cases of employee misconduct, insubordination, unethical practices, and non-compliance with organizational rules persist. Reports of perceived unfair disciplinary actions, inconsistent enforcement of rules, and lack of transparency in performance evaluation have further weakened employee trust in management systems.

In many instances, discipline is viewed not as a corrective mechanism but as a punitive or retaliatory tool, leading to strained employer–employee relationships. This perception undermines employee morale, encourages resistance, and may even escalate workplace deviance.

Additionally, the increasing complexity of banking operations, digital transformation, and performance pressures have introduced new dimensions of workplace behaviour that traditional HRM practices may not adequately address. The problem of this study therefore, is to determine the extent to which HRM practices influence workplace discipline among commercial bank employees in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study is to examine the influence of human resource management practices on workplace discipline among commercial bank employees in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study specifically seeks to:

- i. Examine the extent to which training and development influence workplace discipline among commercial bank employees.
- ii. Determine the influence of performance appraisal practices on workplace discipline.
- iii. Assess the extent to which disciplinary procedures influence workplace discipline among employees.

### **Research Questions**

- i. To what extent does training and development influence workplace discipline among commercial bank employees?
- ii. How does performance appraisal influence workplace discipline among commercial bank employees?
- iii. To what extent do disciplinary procedures influence workplace discipline among commercial bank employees?

### Test of Hypotheses

- i. Training and development have no significant influence on workplace discipline among commercial bank employees.
- ii. Performance appraisal has no significant influence on workplace discipline among commercial bank employees.
- iii. Disciplinary procedures have no significant influence on workplace discipline among commercial bank employees.

### METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey design, which is appropriate for gathering information on employees' perceptions of human relations practices and how these influence workplace discipline. The target population comprised 400 employees drawn from selected commercial banks in Rivers State, while a sample size of 196 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Human Resource Management Influence on Workplace Discipline (HRMIWD) among Commercial Bank Employees in Rivers State, designed on a 4-point scale ranging from Very High Extent to Low Extent. The instrument was reviewed and validated by three experts—two from the Department of Management Sciences and one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, all at Rivers State University. Reliability testing produced a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Research Question 1

To what extent does training and development influence workplace discipline?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for Training and Development**

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
1	Training improves adherence to rules	3.62	0.58	VHE
2	Orientation enhances discipline	3.55	0.62	VHE
3	Continuous learning reduces misconduct	3.48	0.65	HE
4	Skill development promotes behavior	3.51	0.60	VHE
5	Training improves ethical compliance	3.66	0.55	VHE
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.564</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>VHE</b>

#### Interpretation

The result indicates that training and development influence workplace discipline to a **very high extent**. This suggests that employees who undergo structured training are more likely to adhere to organizational rules.

#### Research Question 2

How does performance appraisal influence workplace discipline?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Performance Appraisal**

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
6	Fair appraisal encourages discipline	3.44	0.66	HE
7	Feedback reduces misconduct	3.39	0.70	HE
8	Transparency promotes accountability	3.51	0.61	VHE
9	Rewards enhance compliance	3.46	0.63	HE
10	Bias-free appraisal improves discipline	3.42	0.68	HE
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.444</b>	<b>0.656</b>	

**Interpretation:**

Performance appraisal influences workplace discipline to a high extent, indicating that fairness and transparency in evaluation systems are crucial in promoting disciplined behaviour.

**Research Question 3**

To what extent do disciplinary procedures influence workplace discipline?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation for Disciplinary Procedures**

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
11	Clear rules enhance discipline	3.71	0.52	VHE
12	Consistency promotes compliance	3.68	0.57	VHE
13	Fair actions improve behaviour	3.74	0.50	VHE
14	Progressive discipline reduces misconduct	3.69	0.54	VHE
15	Documentation strengthens enforcement	3.77	0.49	VHE
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>0.52</b>	

**Interpretation:**

Disciplinary procedures influence workplace discipline to a very high extent, making it the strongest predictor among the variables.

**Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables**

Variables	Mean	Std.	TD	PA	DP	WD
Training & Development (TD)	3.56	0.60	1.00			
Performance Appraisal (PA)	3.44	0.66	0.62**	1.00		
Disciplinary Procedures (DP)	3.72	0.54	0.58**	0.64**	1.00	
Workplace Discipline (WD)	3.63	0.58	0.71**	0.68**	0.79**	1.00

**Note:  $p < 0.01$**

All HRM practices show strong, positive, and significant relationships with workplace discipline. Disciplinary procedures exhibit the strongest correlation ( $r = 0.79$ ), suggesting a dominant influence.

To determine the predictive strength of HRM practices on workplace discipline, multiple regression analysis was conducted.

**Table 5: Regression Results**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Beta (<math>\beta</math>)</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Training & Development	0.29	0.05	5.80	0.000
Performance Appraisal	0.24	0.06	4.50	0.000
Disciplinary Procedures	0.41	0.04	8.75	0.000
<b>Model Summary</b>	<b>Value</b>			
R	0.82			
R <sup>2</sup>	0.67			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.66			
F-value	132.45			
Sig.	0.000			

**Test of Hypotheses**

These hypotheses were tested using regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and significance levels. If the p-value is less than 0.05, it indicates statistical significance; leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis 1:**

Training and development has no significant influence on workplace discipline among commercial bank employees.

**Table 6: Training and Development vs Workplace Discipline**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Training & Discipline	196	0.71	0.000	Reject

The beta value of 0.29 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$  – Rejected). Since  $p < 0.05$ , the relationship is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that the predictor (Training & Development) significantly influences the outcome variable (Workplace Discipline).

**Hypothesis 2:**

Performance appraisal has no significant influence on workplace discipline among commercial bank employees.

**Table 7: Performance Appraisal vs Workplace Discipline**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Appraisal & Discipline	196	0.68	0.000	Reject H0

The beta coefficient of 0.24 shows a positive but relatively weaker effect compared to hypothesis 1: ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.05$  – Rejected). However, because the p-value is less than 0.05, the effect is still statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning the independent variable significantly contributes to explaining variations in the dependent variable.

**Hypothesis 3:**

Disciplinary procedures have no significant influence on workplace discipline among commercial bank employees.

**Table 8: Performance Appraisal vs Workplace Discipline**

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Discipline Practices & Workplace Discipline	196	0.79	0.000	Reject H0

The beta value of 0.41 indicates the strongest positive relationship among the three hypotheses ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.05$  – Rejected). With  $p < 0.05$ , the effect is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting a strong and meaningful influence of the predictor on the outcome variable.

Result of the regression analyses showed 67% variance in workplace discipline ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ), indicating strong explanatory power. All the predictor variables are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Disciplinary procedures ( $\beta = 0.41$ ) have the strongest influence, followed by Training ( $\beta = 0.29$ ) and appraisal ( $\beta = 0.24$ ); all with recorded significant contribution. Conceptually, Structural Equation Model (SME) showed both direct and indirect relationship. Key SEM insight theoretically stimulated indicated that Human Resources Management Practices (HRMP) had a strong direct effect on Workplace Discipline. Secondly, Human Resources Management Practices (HRMP) had significant indirect effect on Organizational Justice. Whereas moderator factors such as digital monitoring and remote work are known to influence strength of these relationships

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The findings of this study strongly showed that that human resource management practices are critical determinants of workplace discipline in the banking sector. First, the result reported that training and development significantly influence workplace discipline aligns with human capital and behavioural learning theories. Employees who are adequately trained develop a better understanding of organizational rules, ethical standards, and expected conduct. This finding is consistent with the study of Nwinyokpugi (2015), which established that employee enlightenment and structured learning significantly improve compliance and productivity. Similarly, contemporary studies indicate that continuous professional development reduces workplace deviance and enhances ethical behaviour in highly regulated industries such as banking (Armstrong, 2021).

Second, the finding that performance appraisal has a significant influence on workplace discipline supports the principles of organizational justice theory. When employees perceive appraisal systems as fair, transparent, and unbiased, they are more likely to accept organizational outcomes and adhere to rules. This result corroborates the findings of Colquitt et al. (2013), who reported that fairness in evaluation systems enhances employee commitment and reduces counterproductive work behaviours. In the context of modern banking, transparent appraisal systems are particularly important due to increasing performance pressures and digital performance tracking systems.

Third, the study found that disciplinary procedures have the strongest influence on workplace discipline. This underscores the importance of consistency, clarity, and fairness in enforcing organizational rules. The result supports the findings of Franklin and Pagan (2006), who argued that well-structured disciplinary systems are essential for maintaining

order and reducing misconduct. It also aligns with Nwinyokpugi (2019), who found a strong relationship between discipline management strategies and compliance success in Rivers State.

From a contemporary perspective, the dominance of disciplinary procedures in influencing workplace discipline can be linked to the increasing complexity of modern work environments. With the rise of digital monitoring systems, remote work arrangements, and heightened regulatory requirements, organizations rely more on formal disciplinary frameworks to ensure compliance. However, these systems must be carefully managed to avoid perceptions of bias, surveillance, or unfair treatment, which may undermine employee trust and cooperation (Ball, 2021).

Overall, the findings reinforce the argument of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which suggests that employees reciprocate fair and supportive HR practices with positive behaviour. When HRM practices are perceived as equitable and consistent, employees respond with discipline, commitment, and compliance. Conversely, ineffective or unjust HR practices may lead to resistance, misconduct, and organizational inefficiency.

### CONCLUSION

The findings show that human resource management practices have a strong effect on workplace discipline among employees in commercial banks. Among the key factors, disciplinary procedures stood out as the most influential, followed by training and development, and performance appraisal. The impact of these practices is largely shaped by how fair, transparent, and consistently they are implemented across the organization.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Organizations should ensure fairness and transparency in Human Resource Management (HRM) practices.
- ii. Continuous training programs should be implemented to enhance employee awareness and competence.
- iii. Disciplinary procedures should be consistently applied across all levels.
- iv. Performance appraisal systems should be objective and free from bias.

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