



# Information, Organizational Norms and Salience in the Use of Workplace Grievance Procedures: A Bangladesh Field Experiment

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## **ABSTRACT**

Grievance procedures should allow workers to voice dissatisfaction and report abusive or unsafe conditions. Yet in practice, these procedures can be ineffective or underutilized. A randomized controlled trial of an intervention intended to promote the use of grievance procedures is conducted with Bangladeshi apparel workers. Half of participants are randomly selected to complete a task to promote salience of workplace communications. Half of the participants in each task condition are then randomly selected to receive four educational messages concerning the presence of a worker committee, the ability to make a complaint, organizational norms concerning verbal abuse and a statement by HR that grievances are taken seriously. Participants are then surveyed on their knowledge, perception and use of grievance procedures.

Educational messages increase the perception that grievance procedures are fair, the probability of making a complaint, awareness of the worker committee and comfort seeking help from the worker committee. Message content matters. Instructing workers that they can make a complaint to HR, that verbal abuse is not condoned and that management will act on their complaint increase awareness of the existence of the worker committee and comfort bringing a concern to the worker committee. Salience of workplace communications increases awareness of the existence of and comfort bringing a concern to the worker committee.

Female participants are less likely to know of grievance procedures, to know of the worker committee or to have ever made a complaint. Treatment does not reduce the gender disparity and, for some metrics, increases the gender differential.

*Keywords: grievance procedures, human resource management, salience, apparel industry*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Over the past six decades, human resource management approaches emphasizing individual direct voice have been displacing the expression of collective voice as facilitated by unions (Bryson, et al., 2017; Doucouliagos, et al., 2017; Colvin, 2003). Workplace grievance procedures have been shown to reduce workforce turnover and improve firm outcomes (Bemmel and Foley, 1996; Klass, Olson-Buchanan and Ward, 2012; Choi and Chung, 2016; Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2008). Yet, firms commonly fail to establish effective grievance systems. Even when procedures exist, they may not be used because they are not effective or are not trusted by employees (Barbash, 1987; Meltz, 1989; Weil, 2007). The lack of an effective system to voice workplace concerns can, in some cases, have extreme adverse consequences such as the tragic building collapse at Rana Plaza, Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2017) or supervisors' sexual exploitation of subordinates (Fitzgerald, et al., 1997; Powell, et al., 2008; Schneider, et al., 1997).

Factors that may affect whether a grievance procedure is effective are whether an employee is aware of its existence, knows how to access the grievance system, believes that the system is effective and is comfortable using it (Edmondson, 1999; Lee, et al., 2004; Casul and Bogui, 2008; Miceli and Near, 1989; Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008). Factors that may affect awareness and perceptions of a grievance procedure include being directly informed of its existence, organizational norms concerning issues that might form the basis of a grievance and being told that management takes grievances seriously and will act upon them (Betert and Burris, 2007; Detert and Trevion, 2010; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009; Lee, et al., 2004). Salience may also be a factor. Workers who are reminded of the grievance process may be more receptive to learning about grievance procedures.

Existing empirical evidence indicates that the decision to bring a grievance is determined by individual and organizational characteristics, management factors, unions and market conditions (Bemmels and Foley, 1996; Klass, Olson-Buchanan and Ward, 2012). In early studies, young, male employees with a low level of education were found to be more likely than average to act on a perception of unfair treatment (Lewin and Peterson, 1988). The decision to file a grievance may also be affected by perceptions of the workplace such as job, supervisor, pay and union dissatisfaction and beliefs related to worker participation in organizational decision-making (Allen and Keaveny, 1985), loyalty to the employer and perceived effectiveness of the grievance procedure (Lewin and Borroff, 1994; Mellahi, et al., 2010), self-esteem and competence (Harlos, 2010) and self-efficacy (Frese, et al., 1999).

Managerial context plays a significant role in whether an individual experiencing unfair treatment files a grievance. Accountability such as strict performance and disciplinary standards and a written grievance policy are associated with increased grievance rates (Labig and Helburn, 1986; Lewin and Peterson, 1988). Workers are less likely to report a grievance when supervisors are more considerate of workers or have more knowledge of the collective bargaining agreement (Bemmels, Reshef and Stratton-Devine, 1991; Bemmels 1994).

Publicity campaigns intended to promote the use of grievance procedures have been effective when the focus is on the contribution employees can make to improve organizational processes. Nonmonetary rewards and recognition also promote the use of a formal suggestion system (Leach et al., 2006; Rapp & Eklund, 2007). Reporting negative behavior, as would be the case with whistleblowing, is more likely to occur when there is an organizational requirement to protect subordinates (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007).

Experimental evidence on perceptions and use of grievance procedures is limited. Gordon and Bowleby (1989), conducting a disciplinary vignette study, find that individuals were more likely to want to file a grievance in response to a disciplinary action when the action represented a greater threat to their freedom, or when the action was seen as motivated by personal interest (rather than as a result of company policy). That is, intent to file a grievance is influenced by both the perceived consequences of the triggering event and the perceived unfairness of the event. Another vignette study found an interaction between gender and power. Women were more likely than men to go to a mediator in response to workplace verbal abuse, but only when the abuse came from a coworker, not a supervisor. There was also an interaction between worker self-esteem and power. Those with high self-esteem were more likely to voice when the abuser was a supervisor and those with low self-esteem were more likely to voice when the abuser was a coworker (Harlos, 2010). High job satisfaction predicts the use of informal mechanisms while low job satisfaction and negative views of supervisors predict use of formal mechanisms (Gordon and Bowlby, 1989; Olson-Buchanan, 1997).

While the literature on the determinants of worker voice is well developed, less is known about the contributions of organizational practices and policies that promote the use of grievance procedures, particularly for low-wage female employees with limited work alternatives. Nor is there experimental evidence that identifies the causal relationship between organizational practices and reports of grievances.

Below we present findings from a randomized controlled trial of a grievance procedure intervention introduced in Bangladesh apparel factories. In order to test the proposition that comfort with and use of grievance procedures can be affected by information on grievance procedures and organizational norms concerning grievances, participants are randomly assigned to one of two

treatment groups. Half of the participants receive a set of recorded phone messages about grievance procedures and organizational norms concerning grievances. The other half of participants receive no messages. Two weeks after the educational messages are transmitted, participants are asked a set of questions about knowledge, beliefs, comfort with and use of grievance procedures.

The role of grievance procedure salience is tested by randomly subdividing the treatment and control groups. Two weeks prior to receiving messages, half of the participants in the treatment group and half in the control group are surveyed on their experience with workplace communication systems, including grievance procedures. The other half of each group is surveyed on a specific workplace concern (safety issues). Given the tragedy at Rana Plaza in 2013, occupational safety and health was selected as a workplace concern likely to be of importance to most or all workers. The experimental design then tests for the role of salience, information, articulated organizational norms and their interaction to determine awareness, perceptions and use of grievance procedures.

Participants were recruited to the study from six factories in Dhaka, Bangladesh. After enrolling in the study, participants received the surveys and messages on their cell phones through Laborlink, a communications platform developed by Good World Solutions.

Significant self-selection into treatment occurred. Some participants randomly assigned to receive informational messages did not listen to those messages. Selection was unrelated to gender, job satisfaction or work experience. However, of those who listened to messages and recalled hearing them, a significant positive treatment effect on awareness, comfort and use of grievance procedures is detected. Salience is also important. Findings indicate that asking workers about grievance procedures and providing information concerning factory norms related to grievances generally and verbal abuse specifically increase awareness of and comfort with grievance procedures.

The data and experimental design are discussed in Section II. Findings are reported in Section III and conclusions follow.

## **II. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND DATA**

### **Recruitment**

Six factories in and around Dhaka Bangladesh agreed to participate in the research and have their employees recruited to the study. Factories selected for the study supply reputation-sensitive international buyers. Factory managers and their largest international buyers reviewed the study materials prior to the beginning of the research and agreed that the informational messages were accurate for their factory. In each factory, all employees received information that a study would be conducted in their factory. The recruitment script included an invitation to participate in an information session detailing the study. During the information session, prospective participants were told the purpose of the research and provided detailed information for participation.

### **Assignment to Treatment**

Participants who elected to enroll were randomly assigned to receive one of two surveys. Group 1 received a survey about communications systems within the factory (Appendix A, Communications Survey). Group 2 received a survey about perceptions of safety and factory safety systems and procedures (Appendix B, Safety Survey).

Groups 1 and 2 were then randomly subdivided into Groups 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B. Groups 1A and 2A were sent four educational messages over a two week period (Appendix C, Educational Messages). Message 1 instructs workers that a worker committee has been created, message 2 instructs workers that workplace complaints can be directed to the human resources department, message 3 informs

workers that abusive language is not condoned and message 4 informs workers that management will act on their complaints.

After half of participants received the instructional messages, all participants were surveyed on their understanding and use of communications systems. The follow-up survey (Appendix D) also asked whether the participant had received educational messages from Laborlink.

### **Treatment Variables**

We consider four treatment configurations, as shown in Figure 1. Treatment variables are defined in Figure 2. The salience treatment is defined by assignment to the communications or safety survey, indicated by the variable *Comm*.  $Comm = 1$  for participants randomly assigned to complete the communications survey, which should make grievance procedures salient (Group 1).  $Comm = 0$  for participants randomly assigned to complete the safety survey (Group 2).

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Insert Figures 1 & 2 about here

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Treatment concerning educational messages is coded using two different procedures. Assignment is first defined by whether an individual was randomly assigned to Group A (educational messages) or Group B (no educational messages), as depicted in Figure 2. The random assignment variable is defined as  $Push = 1$  for participants randomly assigned to receive (or be “pushed”) educational messages (Group A).  $Push = 0$  otherwise (Group B). Exposure to the educational messages is then coded based on whether the participant listened to any portion of each of the four educational messages. Variables *treated1*, *treated2*, *treated3* and *treated4* take on the value of 1 for participants in Group A who listened to any portion of each of the four associated educational messages, and 0 otherwise.

Alternatively, exposure to treatment can be identified by specific content. An introduction to Laborlink is included in the first 13 seconds of each message. Each message also makes reference to the human resources department. The central focus of message 1 is the existence of a worker committee. Message 2 encourages the use of complaint mechanisms and message 3 concerns the inappropriateness of verbal abuse. Message 4 informs workers that HR takes their concerns seriously and that complaints to HR will result in a review. The seconds associated with each component of content are reported in Appendix C.

Each of the message content variables reported in Figure 2 is binary, taking on the value of 1 if the participant actually heard specific message content and 0 otherwise. The content variables are *treatintro* (heard the introduction to any of the 4 messages), *treatHR* (concerns can be discussed with HR), *treat1WC* (the factory has a worker committee), *treat2Complaint* (workers are encouraged to make a complaint), *treat3verbalabuse* (verbal abuse is not condoned), *treat4HRSerious* (management takes complaints seriously) and *treat4HRReview* (complaints are regularly reviewed).

### **Dependent Variables**

Five outcome variables are considered. In the follow-up survey participants are asked whether they are aware that there is a complaint procedure in the factory, whether they think the complaint procedure is fair and whether they have ever submitted a complaint. There are then two questions concerning a worker committee: whether they are aware of the existence of a worker committee and whether they would be comfortable approaching the worker committee with a problem. Dependent variables are defined in Figure 3.

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Insert Figure 3 about here

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## Empirical Specification

Five main specifications are employed. Specifications 1 to 3 focus on the educational messages. Specification 4 focuses on salience, whether being asked about grievance procedures affects the awareness, use and evaluation of grievance procedures. Specification 5 then explores whether salience and gender are mediators for educational messages.

*Specification 1 (Push Messages)* tests for the impact of random assignment to educational messages on each of the outcome variables. Equation (1)

$$Y_{iF} = \alpha + \sigma * X_i + \gamma * Y_{iB} + \beta * Push + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

is estimated where the dependent variables,  $Y_{iF}$ , are defined in Figure 3.  $X_i$  is a vector of demographic characteristics and  $\varepsilon_i$  is the error term. The treatment variable  $Push$ , as defined in Figure 2, identifies participants randomly assigned to hear educational messages.

*Specification 2 (Individual Messages)*, equation 2, tests for the impact of being randomly assigned to receive educational messages plus the impact of listening to any part of each particular message.

$$Y_{iF} = \alpha + \sigma * X_i + \gamma * Y_{iB} + \beta * Push + \beta_1 * treated1 + \beta_2 * treated2 + \beta_3 * treated3 + \beta_4 * treated4 + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

*Specification 3 (Message Content)*, equation 3, tests for the impact of listening to specific parts of each educational message.

$$Y_{iF} = \alpha + \sigma * X_i + \gamma * Y_{iB} + \beta * Push + \beta_1 * treatintro + \beta_2 * treatHR + \beta_3 * treat1C + \beta_4 * treat2Complaint + \beta_5 * treat3VerbalAbuse + \beta_6 * treat4HRSerious + \beta_7 * treat4HRReview + \varepsilon_i \quad (3)$$

*Specification 4 (Communications Survey)* turns attention to the contribution of salience. The treatment variable is whether the participant was randomly assigned to the communications or safety survey and is given in equation (4).

$$Y_{iF} = \alpha + \sigma * X_i + \gamma * Comm + \varepsilon_i \quad (4)$$

Specification 5 (*Communications Survey & Push Messages*) Message variables are also interacted with the survey identifier to analyze the relative contribution of the safety and communications surveys on the receptivity and effectiveness of educational messages. For example, Specification 1 can be augmented to identify the contribution of salience by estimating equation (5)

$$Y_{iF} = \alpha + \sigma * X_i + \gamma * Comm + \beta * Push + \varphi * Push * Comm \quad (5)$$

where  $Push * Comm$  is the interaction of  $Push$  and  $Comm$ . A similar approach is taken to estimating Specifications 2 and 3 to analyze the interaction between salience and individual message content.

**Mediators.** As will be seen below, female participants are less likely to engage with grievance procedures. It is interesting, then, to explore whether female participants exhibit a differential treatment effect. Gender interactions with the treatment variables are introduced for all specifications.

### Summary Statistics and Selection to Treatment

During recruitment 13,842 participants enrolled. However, 3,064 of those did not complete the initial baseline survey, 191 took both the communications and safety survey, 2,226 had an incorrect factory ID, and 5,068 did not take the follow-up survey, leaving a sample of 4,273. There is evidence that in some cases, the individual who completed the initial survey and the individual who completed the final survey were not the same. Records for which there was a mismatch on gender or more than a small difference in work experience between the initial survey and follow-up survey were excluded from analysis. A second mismatch occurred between random assignment to educational messages and self-reports of having heard messages. Participants who were randomly assigned to hear push messages but reported not having heard messages, participants who were

randomly assigned to not hear messages but reported hearing messages, and participants who did not report whether they heard messages were also excluded. The final sample was 1,646 participants. Summary statistics of variables for analysis for each subset of participants are presented in Table 1. Column 1 summarizes all complete records. Summary statistics for the final sample employed in the analysis are presented in column 2. A correlation matrix is reported in Table 2.

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Insert Tables 1 & 2 about here

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A test for sample selection bias was conducted. Gender, work experience and job satisfaction were not significant determinants of a participant's decision to listen to educational messages.

## EMPIRICAL RESULTS

### Base Specifications

The five specifications are estimated using probit with clustered standard errors by factory for each of the five outcome indicators. Results from specifications not presented below are available from the authors upon request.

**Complaint procedure.** Consider first the impact of treatment on whether participants knew of the existence of a complaint procedure. Results are reported in Table 3, columns 1 and 2.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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Note first, that female participants are less likely to be aware of the existence of a complaint procedure. The estimated coefficient on FemaleP (-0.2) is statistically significant at the 1% level in both specifications.

When considering just the impact of random assignment to messages or the communications survey, neither the push messages nor the initial survey significantly affect awareness of grievance procedures. However, the isolated effect of the communications survey can be seen in column 1. Participants who completed the communications survey but then did not hear educational messages are less likely to report being aware of a grievance procedure at the endline (-0.15) when compared to those participants who completed the safety survey and did not hear educational messages.

The impact of the surveys alone on awareness of a grievance procedure suggests roles for salience and information. Participants who are asked about grievance procedures in their factory but are then not subsequently provided information about grievance procedures through educational messages have become aware of the concept of a grievance procedure but not of its existence. Such participants are more likely to report that their factory does not have a grievance procedure.

Turning to the impact of message content on awareness of a grievance procedure reported in column 2, analysis of individual messages and their content do not affect the conclusions concerning educational messages with the exception of message 2. There is a treatment effect for message 2 that informs workers that complaints can be directed to the human resources department—and the effect is negative (-0.27). Participants directed to HR may interpret this message to mean that the factory does not have an independent grievance procedure.

**Complaint fair.** In contrast, perceptions that the grievance procedure is fair are significantly and positively affected by the educational messages, as can be seen in column 3 of Table 3. The main treatment effect for the educational messages (0.25) is significant at the 1% level. There is no gender difference in perceptions of fairness. Female participants are not significantly more or less likely to perceive the grievance procedure as fair. Nor does salience appear to play a role.

Participants who complete the communications survey are not statistically different than participants who complete the safety survey.

**Ever complained.** The effects of treatment on whether a person has ever made a complaint are reported in column 4 of Table 3. Note first that women are less likely to have made a complaint than men (-0.15). Educational messages also have a positive impact on whether the participant has ever made a complaint (0.16), significant at the 5% level. In contrast, salience is not important. Whether the individual completed the communications or safety survey does not affect the probability of having made a complaint.

One group that reacted adversely to the educational messages and communications survey is those who listened to message 2 and but did not hear other messages. Participants who completed the communications survey and heard message 2 were less likely to have ever made a complaint than other participants. The marginal effect for this group is -0.872. Similarly, all participants who specifically listened to the portion of message 2 concerning the HR department were less likely to have ever made a complaint.

It is important to note, though, that the direction of causality is not identified. The question asks whether the participant has ever made a complaint. Therefore, it is possible that participants who have made a complaint in the past were less likely to listen to message 2, particularly after completing the communications survey.

**Worker committee.** Treatment has its most pronounced effect on awareness of the existence of a worker committee. Both salience and educational messages increase knowledge of the existence of the worker committee, as shown in Table 4. As can be seen in column (1), both the educational messages (0.49) and the communications survey (0.28) increase the probability of being aware of the existence of the worker committee. Coefficients on the two main treatment effects are stable when

both treatments are included as regressors and the interaction term is not statistically significant, as reported in column (2), indicating that the effects of the two treatments are additive.

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Insert Table 4 about here

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Further, specific message content matters. As can be seen in columns (3), message 2 (0.34), which directs complaints to HR, and message 3 (0.36), which articulates norms related to verbal abuse, have a significant and positive impact on knowledge of the worker committee.

**Comfort seeking help.** Both salience and educational messages also increase comfort with seeking help from the worker committee, as reported in Table 5. The treatment effect of the educational messages (0.15) is reported in column (1) and the effect of the communications survey (0.18) is in column (2). The estimated coefficients for the individual treatment effects are not altered when both are included as regressors in column (3), indicating no treatment interactions on the main effects (i.e., the effect of the survey does not depend on whether participants received educational messages, and vice versa).

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Insert Table 5 about here

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Content of the messages is again important. As can be seen from column (4), the content of message 4, informing workers that HR will act on the complaint (0.39), increases the level of comfort seeking help from the worker committee. In contrast, directing workers to make their complaint to HR reduces comfort seeking help from the worker committee (-0.29), as can be seen in column (5).

## **Gender as a Mediator**

Estimates of each specification including gender interactions are available from the authors upon request. Generally, gender does not play a significant role. Neither the initial surveys nor the push messages reduce the gender differential.

The notable exception is the impact that treatment has on comfort approaching the worker committee with a complaint. In nearly all specifications, the educational messages increase comfort approaching the worker committee for men.

In contrast, female participants appear to react very strongly—both positively and negatively—to certain messages. For example, in comfort seeking help, the estimated treatment effect of educational messages for males is 0.806 and significant at the 5% level. For women, the treatment effect is -0.865 and also significant at the 5% level. That is, women who were randomly assigned to hear educational messages were less likely to feel comfortable seeking help from the worker committee than other women.

However, it should be noted that message content matters for women. Women who heard the message concerning organizational norms related to verbal abuse reacted less negatively than other women. The marginal effect of being a women and hearing message 3 is 0.782. It should be noted that the total effect of message 3 for women is still negative, though not statistically significantly different from zero.

## **III. CONCLUSIONS**

The success of workplace grievance procedures depends both on the effectiveness of the procedures and on worker knowledge and perceptions. Two mechanisms for altering worker perceptions of grievance procedures are analyzed employing a randomized controlled trial. At the

beginning of the study, participants are randomly assigned to complete a survey that focuses on workplace communications or a survey on safety procedures and concerns. A random selection in each group is then provided educational messages concerning grievance procedures. Five treatment outcomes are considered: (1) is the participant aware of the existence of a complaint procedure in their factory, (2) does the participant believe a complaint would be resolved fairly, (3) has the participant ever made a complaint, (4) is the participant aware of the existence of a worker committee in the factory and (5) would the participant be comfortable seeking help from the worker committee?

Although participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups, there is evidence that in some cases, the person who completed the initial survey may not have been the same as the person who later heard the educational messages, or completed the follow-up survey. In particular, the gender and experience in the first survey did not always match the entries in the follow-up survey and participants' reports of whether they heard educational messages did not always match whether they were actually sent educational messages. Those whose gender was a mismatch were also more likely to have a message mismatch, lending support to the possibility that the baseline and endline respondents were different people.

Educational messages providing information about the existence of a worker committee, encouraging workers to bring workplace complaints to HR, informing workers that verbal abuse is not condoned, and that their complaints will be taken seriously and acted upon, significantly promote the effectiveness of grievance procedures. Workers receiving educational messages were more likely to believe that the grievance procedure is fair, to know of the existence of the worker committee and to feel comfortable bringing a workplace concern to the worker committee.

The content of the educational messages affected worker reactions. Informing workers that their concerns are important and can be brought to HR and articulating norms concerning the inappropriateness of verbal abuse increased knowledge of the worker committee. Content indicating that HR will act on a complaint increased the level of comfort seeking help from the worker committee.

Making workplace communications salient also affected perceptions of grievance procedures, particularly as they relate to the worker committee. However, there was little interaction between salience and educational messages.

There is some risk of confusing workers with educational messages. Making workplace communications salient without following up with educational messages about grievance procedures may leave the impression that the factory does not have a grievance procedure. Directing workers to make a complaint to HR may reduce comfort seeking help from the worker committee.

Female participants are less likely to be aware of a grievance procedure, less likely to know of the existence of the worker committee and less likely to ever have made a complaint. Treatment does not reduce the gender differential. In fact, female participants who heard educational messages were less likely to feel comfortable bringing a concern to the worker committee than male participants. Female participants are also more sensitive to the message content than male participants. Articulating organizational norms related to verbal abuse appears to mitigate some of the negative reaction women have to educational messages.

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Table 1  
Summary Statistics

VARIABLES	(1)					(2)				
	All complete records					Final sample				
	N	mean	sd	min	max	N	mean	sd	min	max
FemaleP	4,273	0.28	0.45	0	1	1,646	0.24	0.43	0	1
WorkExp1	4,273	0.26	0.44	0	1	1,646	0.26	0.44	0	1
Workexp2	4,273	0.46	0.5	0	1	1,646	0.49	0.5	0	1
Workexp3	4,273	0.18	0.38	0	1	1,646	0.18	0.38	0	1
Workexp4	4,273	0.1	0.3	0	1	1,646	0.07	0.26	0	1
JobSatisfied	4,273	0.9	0.3	0	1	1,646	0.9	0.3	0	1
JobUnSat	4,273	0.06	0.24	0	1	1,646	0.07	0.25	0	1
JobNeutral	4,273	0.03	0.18	0	1	1,646	0.03	0.17	0	1
Complaint_Procedure_P	4,273	0.61	0.49	0	1	1,646	0.65	0.48	0	1
Ever_Complained_P	4,115	0.26	0.44	0	1	1,646	0.24	0.43	0	1
Complaint_Fair_P	4,177	0.83	0.38	0	1	1,646	0.85	0.36	0	1
Worker_Committee_P	4,081	0.82	0.39	0	1	1,646	0.82	0.38	0	1
Complaint_Comfortable_P	3,290	0.72	0.45	0	1	1,357	0.73	0.44	0	1

Table 2  
Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
FemaleP	1.00												
Workexp2	0.02	1.00											
Workexp3	-0.01	-0.45**	1.00										
Workexp4	0.00	-0.28**	-0.13**	1.00									
JobSatisfied	-0.01	0.02	-0.02	0.06*	1.00								
JobUnSat	0.04	-0.01	0.01	-0.07**	-0.81**	1.00							
push	0.00	0.05*	-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00						
Comm	0.01	-0.08**	0.03	0.03	0.05*	-0.04	-0.01	1.00					
Complaint_Procedure_P	-0.07**	-0.02	0.02	-0.04	0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.04	1.00				
Ever_Complained_P	-0.04	0.02	0.02	-0.00	-0.00	0.03	0.06*	-0.01*	0.02	1.00			
1Complaint_Fair_P	0.02	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	0.15**	-0.14**	0.07**	0.01	0.19**	-0.06*	1.00		
Worker_Committee_P	-0.05*	0.03	0.01	0.06*	0.12**	-0.09**	0.14**	0.09**	0.13**	0.02	0.20**	1.00	
Complaint_Comfortable_P	-0.02	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.06*	-0.04	0.05	0.06*	0.11**	0.06*	0.15**	.	1.00

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 3  
 Aware of Grievance Procedure, Belief that Grievance Procedure is Fair and Ever Made a Complaint

VARIABLES	(1) Aware of complaint procedure: Survey assignment & message assignment interaction			(2) Aware of complaint procedure: Survey assignment & which msgs heard			(3) Complaint procedure is fair: Survey assignment & message assignment			(4) Ever complained: Survey assignment & message assignment		
	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval
FemaleP	-0.21	0.07	0.005	-0.20	0.07	0.007	0.10	0.09	0.273	-0.15	0.08	0.059
Workexp2	-0.11	0.08	0.152	-0.12	0.08	0.141	-0.08	0.09	0.389	0.11	0.08	0.174
Workexp3	-0.02	0.10	0.813	-0.02	0.10	0.832	-0.08	0.12	0.489	0.15	0.11	0.158
Workexp4	-0.24	0.13	0.076	-0.24	0.13	0.076	0.10	0.17	0.557	0.09	0.14	0.518
JobSatisfied	0.15	0.18	0.400	0.16	0.18	0.371	0.45	0.19	0.020	0.50	0.23	0.033
JobUnSat	0.19	0.22	0.386	0.19	0.22	0.379	-0.23	0.23	0.307	0.68	0.26	0.010
push	-0.11	0.12	0.387	-0.21	0.24	0.388	0.25	0.08	0.003	0.16	0.07	0.021
Comm	-0.15	0.09	0.086	-0.13	0.07	0.065	0.03	0.08	0.688	-0.03	0.07	0.643
treated1				0.01	0.13	0.936						
treated2				-0.27	0.17	0.100						
treated3				0.19	0.14	0.178						
treated4				0.28	0.20	0.166						
push_Comm	0.12	0.15	0.437									
Constant	0.48	0.20	0.015	0.46	0.19	0.017	0.58	0.21	0.005	-1.29	0.24	0.000
Observations	1,646			1,646			1,646			1,646		

Table 4  
Aware of the Worker Committee

VARIABLES	(1) Survey assignment & message assignment			(2) Survey assignment & message assignment interaction			(3) Survey assignment & which msgs heard		
	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval
FemaleP	-0.20	0.09	0.021	-0.20	0.09	0.022	-0.18	0.09	0.033
Workexp2	0.22	0.09	0.015	0.22	0.09	0.014	0.22	0.09	0.013
Workexp3	0.21	0.11	0.058	0.22	0.11	0.056	0.23	0.11	0.046
Workexp4	0.50	0.18	0.004	0.50	0.18	0.004	0.49	0.18	0.005
JobSatisfied	0.62	0.19	0.001	0.62	0.19	0.001	0.59	0.19	0.002
JobUnSat	0.20	0.22	0.371	0.20	0.22	0.367	0.17	0.22	0.440
push	0.49	0.09	0.000	0.44	0.14	0.002	-0.03	0.30	0.926
Comm	0.28	0.08	0.000	0.26	0.09	0.005	0.25	0.08	0.002
push_Comm				0.08	0.18	0.666			
treated1							-0.09	0.19	0.645
treated2							0.34	0.20	0.079
treated3							0.36	0.17	0.040
treated4							0.03	0.27	0.899
Constant	-0.08	0.20	0.685	-0.07	0.20	0.743	-0.04	0.20	0.825
Observations	1,646			1,646			1,646		

Table 5  
Comfortable Making Seeking Help from the Worker Committee

VARIABLES	(1) Message assignment			(2) Survey assignment			(3) Survey assignment & message assignment			(4) Survey assignment & which msgs heard			(5) Survey assignment & which parts of msgs heard		
	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval	beta	se	pval
FemaleP	-0.05	0.09	0.580	-0.05	0.09	0.530	-0.06	0.09	0.528	-0.05	0.09	0.549	-0.06	0.09	0.483
Workexp2	0.10	0.09	0.268	0.12	0.09	0.184	0.11	0.09	0.211	0.11	0.09	0.204	0.12	0.09	0.181
Workexp3	0.11	0.11	0.320	0.12	0.11	0.300	0.11	0.11	0.314	0.11	0.11	0.342	0.12	0.11	0.291
Workexp4	0.30	0.16	0.056	0.30	0.16	0.055	0.30	0.16	0.054	0.30	0.16	0.053	0.30	0.16	0.058
JobSatisfied	0.38	0.23	0.090	0.37	0.23	0.097	0.37	0.23	0.098	0.39	0.23	0.083	0.39	0.23	0.088
JobUnSat	0.15	0.27	0.578	0.17	0.27	0.532	0.16	0.27	0.555	0.17	0.27	0.533	0.18	0.27	0.508
push	0.15	0.08	0.048				0.15	0.08	0.045	0.24	0.29	0.414	0.44	0.21	0.041
Comm				0.18	0.08	0.024	0.19	0.08	0.022	0.19	0.08	0.026	0.19	0.08	0.021
treat1WC													-0.05	0.14	0.715
treat2Complaint													-0.29	0.16	0.063
treat3VerbalAbuse													-0.16	0.14	0.271
treat4HRSerious													0.33	0.37	0.382
treat4HRReview													-0.22	0.36	0.549
treated1										-0.10	0.15	0.524			
treated2										-0.30	0.20	0.134			
treated3										-0.11	0.17	0.508			
treated4										0.39	0.22	0.084			
Constant	0.13	0.23	0.569	0.05	0.24	0.819	0.00	0.24	0.996	-0.02	0.24	0.939	-0.02	0.24	0.938
Observations	1357			1357			1357			1357			1357		

Figure 1  
Treatment Groups

		<i>Educational Messages</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Survey</i>	<i>Communications Survey</i>	<i>Group 1A</i>	<i>Group 1B</i>
	<i>Safety Survey</i>	<i>Group 2A</i>	<i>Group 2B</i>

Figure 2  
Definition of Treatment Variables

<i>Comm</i>	<i>Comm</i> = 1 if assigned to communications survey <i>Comm</i> = 0 if assigned to safety survey
<i>Push</i>	<i>Push</i> = 1 if assigned to Group 1A or 2A <i>Push</i> = 0 if assigned to Group 1B or 2B
<i>treated1</i>	<i>treated1</i> = 1 if assigned to Group 1A or 2A and heard any portion of educational message 1 <i>treated1</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treated2</i>	<i>treated2</i> = 1 if assigned to Group 1A or 2A and heard any portion of educational message 2 <i>treated2</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treated3</i>	<i>treated3</i> = 1 if assigned to Group 1A or 2A and heard any portion of educational message 3 <i>treated3</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treated4</i>	<i>treated4</i> = 1 if assigned to Group 1A or 2A and heard any portion of educational message 4 <i>treated4</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treatintro</i>	<i>treatintro</i> = 1 if the participant heard “This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important” in any message <i>treatintro</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treatHR</i>	<i>treatHR</i> = 1 if the participant heard the part of any message encouraging workers to take concerns to the HR department. <i>treatHR</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treatIWC</i>	<i>treatIWC</i> = 1 if the participant heard “A worker committee has been created at your factory to hear you and your colleagues' issues and concerns” in message 1. <i>treatIWC</i> = 0 otherwise

<i>treat2Complaint</i>	<i>treat2Complaint</i> = 1 if the participant heard “Workers at your factory are encouraged to submit any issues or complaints they have about their workplace, supervisors or co-workers to human resources” in message 2. <i>treat2Complaint</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treat3VerbalAbuse</i>	<i>treat3VerbalAbuse</i> = 1 if the participant heard “The use of abusive language is not condoned at this factory” in message 3. <i>treat3VerbalAbuse</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>treat4HRSerious</i>	<i>treat4HRSerious</i> = 1 if the participant heard “Management at your factory takes seriously those issues and concerns reported to human resources by workers” in message 4. <i>treat4HRSerious</i> = 0 otherwise
<i>4HRReview</i>	<i>4HRReview</i> = 1 if the participant heard “These concerns are regularly reviewed and impact decisions to make your factory a better workplace” in Message 4. <i>4HRReview</i> = 0 otherwise

Figure 3  
Dependent Variables

<i>Complaint_Procedure</i>	1 = yes, there is a procedure to make a formal complaint 0 = otherwise
<i>Complaint_Fair</i>	1 = yes, a complaint would be resolved fairly 0 = otherwise
<i>Ever_Complained</i>	1 = yes, ever filed a complaint 0 = otherwise
<i>Worker_Committee</i>	1 = yes, there is a worker committee 0 = otherwise
<i>Complaint_Comfortable</i>	1 = yes, would feel comfortable approaching the worker committee with a problem 0 = otherwise

## APPENDIX A COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

<b>Q1</b>	<p>Are you a man or a woman?</p> <p>If man, press 1</p> <p>If woman, press 2</p>
<b>Q2</b>	<p>How long have you been working at your current factory?</p> <p>If less than 1 year, press 1</p> <p>If 1-3 years, press 2</p> <p>If 4-6 years, press 3</p> <p>If 7 or more years, press 4</p>
<b>Q3</b>	<p>How do you feel about your job at this factory?</p> <p>If satisfied, press 1</p> <p>If unsatisfied, press 2</p> <p>If neutral, press 3</p>
<b>Q4</b>	<p>(If "unsatisfied" or "neutral" to Q3) What is the main reason you feel unsatisfied with your job?</p> <p>If safety conditions, press 1</p> <p>If working hours, press 2</p> <p>If relationships with supervisors or management, press 3</p> <p>If wages, press 4</p> <p>If something else, press 5</p>
<b>Q5</b>	<p>(If "satisfied" to Q3) What is the main reason you feel satisfied with your job?</p> <p>If safety conditions, press 1</p> <p>If working hours, press 2</p> <p>If relationships with supervisors or management, press 3</p> <p>If wages, press 4</p> <p>If something else, press 5</p>
<b>Q6</b>	<p>How do you feel about your relationship with your direct supervisor at this factory?</p> <p>If satisfied, press 1</p> <p>If unsatisfied, press 2</p> <p>If neutral, press 3</p>
<b>Q7</b>	<p>Has your direct supervisor ever threatened to dismiss you?</p> <p>If yes, press 1</p> <p>If no, press 2</p>
<b>Q8</b>	<p>Does your direct supervisor use abusive language with you or your coworkers? For example, yelling or using vulgar language.</p> <p>Yes, very often, press 1</p> <p>Yes, sometimes, press 2</p> <p>No, never, press 3</p>

<b>Q9</b>	At your factory, is there a way workers can make a formal complaint when they have a work related-problem? For example, when they feel unsafe or are mistreated at work. If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3
<b>Q10</b>	If someone filed a complaint, do you think management would resolve it fairly? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3
<b>Q11</b>	Is there a worker committee at your factory? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3
<b>Q12</b>	(If "Yes" to Q10) Would you feel comfortable approaching the worker committee if you had a problem at work? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3
<b>Q13</b>	When you ask for a leave day, how often is it approved? For example, when you are sick, have a family emergency, or have earned leave. If you've never asked for leave, press 1 If leave is approved very often, press 2 If leave is sometimes approved, press 3 If leave is rarely or never approved, press 4
<b>Q14</b>	Does your factory provide paid maternity leave? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3

#### **APPENDIX B SAFETY SURVEY**

<b>Q1</b>	Are you a man or a woman? If man, press 1 If woman, press 2
<b>Q2</b>	How long have you been working at your current factory? If less than 1 year, press 1 If 1-3 years, press 2 If 4-6 years, press 3 If 7 or more years, press 4

<p><b>Q3</b></p>	<p>How do you feel about your job at this factory?          If satisfied, press 1          If unsatisfied, press 2          If neutral, press 3</p>
<p><b>Q4</b></p>	<p>Do you feel safe working at this factory?          If always, press 1          If sometimes, press 2          If never, press 3</p>
<p><b>Q5</b></p>	<p>In your opinion, is worker safety taken seriously by factory management?          If yes, very seriously, press 1          If yes, somewhat seriously, press 2          If no, not at all, press 3</p>
<p><b>Q6</b></p>	<p>Do you ever feel exhausted at work?          If always, press 1          If sometimes, press 2          If never, press 3</p>
<p><b>Q7</b></p>	<p>(If "often" or "sometimes" to Q3) What is the main reason you feel unsatisfied with your job?          If long working hours, press 1          If high production quotas, press 2          If your job is physically demanding, press 3          If something else, press 4</p>
<p><b>Q8</b></p>	<p>Does your factory provide sufficient safety equipment?          If yes, press 1          If no, press 2          If you don't know, press 3</p>
<p><b>Q9</b></p>	<p>Have you ever participated in a fire drill at this factory?          If yes, press 1          If no, press 2          If you don't remember, press 3</p>
<p><b>Q10</b></p>	<p>(If yes to Q9) When did you last participate in a fire drill at your factory?          If less than 1 month ago, press 1          If 1-2 months ago, press 2          If more than 2 months ago, press 3</p>

	If you don't remember, press 4
<b>Q11</b>	In case of an emergency evaluation, do you know where you are supposed to gather after exiting the factory? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2
<b>Q12</b>	Have you ever needed to evacuate your current factory because of an emergency? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't remember, press 3
<b>Q13</b>	(If 'yes' to Q12) Did you evacuate the factory? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't remember, press 3
<b>Q14</b>	(If 'no' to Q13) Why didn't you evacuate the factory? If the exit door was locked, press 1 If the exit door was blocked, press 2 If the management discouraged you from evacuating, press 3 If other workers discouraged you from evacuating, press 4 If something else, press 5
<b>Q15</b>	Does your factory provide clean drinking water for workers? If yes, always, press 1 If yes, sometimes, press 2 If no, never, press 3

### APPENDIX C EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES

Message Number	Message Content	Message Components
1	This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important. A worker committee has been created at your factory to hear you and your colleagues' issues and concerns. This committee is dedicated to serving workers and available to all workers during	This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important. <b>(0-13 seconds)</b> A worker committee has been created at your factory to hear you and your colleagues' issues and concerns. <b>(14-25 seconds)</b> This committee is dedicated to serving workers and available to all workers during business hours, every business day.

	business hours, every business day. For more information on your factory's worker committee please speak to your Human Resources Department. Thank you and goodbye.	<p><b>(26-38 seconds)</b> For more information on your factory's worker committee please speak to your Human Resources Department.</p> <p><b>(39-49 seconds)</b> Thank you and goodbye.</p> <p><b>(50-52 seconds)</b></p>
2	This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important. Workers at your factory are encouraged to submit any issues or complaints they have about their workplace, supervisors or co-workers to human resources. Please speak with your factory's Human Resources Department for additional information. Thank you and goodbye.	<p>This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important.</p> <p><b>(0-11 seconds)</b> Workers at your factory are encouraged to submit any issues or complaints they have about their workplace, supervisors or co-workers to human resources.</p> <p><b>(12-27 seconds)</b> Please speak with your factory's Human Resources Department for additional information.</p> <p><b>(28-36 seconds)</b> Thank you and goodbye.</p> <p><b>(37-39 seconds)</b></p>
3	This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important. The use of abusive language is not condoned at this factory. If you or one of your colleagues has been the victim of verbal abuse, please see your Human Resources Department to submit a complaint. Thank you and goodbye.	<p>This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important.</p> <p><b>(0-12 seconds)</b> The use of abusive language is not condoned at this factory.</p> <p><b>(13-18 seconds)</b> If you or one of your colleagues has been the victim of verbal abuse, please see your Human Resources Department to submit a complaint.</p> <p><b>(19-34 seconds)</b> Thank you and goodbye.</p> <p><b>(35-38 seconds)</b></p>
4	This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important. Management at your factory	<p>This message is brought to you by Laborlink and factory management. Your thoughts and opinions are important.</p> <p><b>(0-11 seconds)</b></p>

	<p>takes seriously those issues and concerns reported to human resources by workers. These concerns are regularly reviewed and impact decisions to make your factory a better workplace. Please speak with your factory's Human Resources Department for additional information. Thank you and goodbye.</p>	<p>Management at your factory takes seriously those issues and concerns reported to human resources by workers.  <b>(12-24 seconds)</b>  These concerns are regularly reviewed and impact decisions to make your factory a better workplace.  <b>(25-37 seconds)</b>  Please speak with your factory's Human Resources Department for additional information.  <b>(38-45 seconds)</b>  Thank you and goodbye.  <b>(46-49 seconds)</b></p>
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**APPENDIX D FOLLOWUP SURVEY**

<b>Q1</b>	<p>Are you a man or a woman?  If man, press 1  If woman, press 2</p>
<b>Q2</b>	<p>How long have you been working at your current factory?  If less than 1 year, press 1  If 1-3 years, press 2  If 4-6 years, press 3  If 7 or more years, press 4</p>
<b>Q3</b>	<p>At your factory, is there a way workers can make a formal complaint when they have a work related-problem? For example, when they feel unsafe or are mistreated at work.  If yes, press 1  If no, press 2  If you don't know, press 3</p>
<b>Q4</b>	<p>If someone filed a complaint, do you think management would resolve it fairly?  If yes, press 1  If no, press 2  If you don't know, press 3</p>
<b>Q5</b>	<p>Have you ever filed a complaint?  If yes, press 1  If no, press 2  If you don't know, press 3</p>
<b>Q6</b>	<p>Is there a worker committee at your factory?</p>

	If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3
<b>Q7</b>	(If "Yes" to Q6) Would you feel comfortable approaching the worker committee if you had a problem at work? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3
<b>Q8</b>	Did your receive any educational messages to your phone from Laborlink during the past 2 weeks? If yes, press 1 If no, press 2 If you don't know, press 3