Leader Demographics, Perceptions of HRM Practices, and Employee Job Performance: A Conceptual Model Examining the Moderating Role of Work Interruption

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Abstract

This paper aims to propose a conceptual framework that examines the relationships among leader demographics (gender, age, and tenure), perceived human resource management (HRM) practices (ability, motivation, and opportunity), and job performance, with work interruptions (self-interruption and external interruption) acting as a moderating factor. Leader demographics are considered important because they can influence employees' efficiency and effectiveness at work, especially when combined with the impact of perceived HRM practices. At the same time, employees frequently face interruptions that affect their job performance. This study seeks to provide new insights by exploring work interruption as a moderator between perceived HRM practices and job performance. In particular, this study posits that work interruptions condition the strength of the relationship between perceived HRM practices and job performance, such that high levels of interruptions both self-initiated and externally imposed are likely to weaken this relationship by disrupting employees' focus and continuity of task execution, whereas lower levels of interruptions are expected to strengthen the positive effect of HRM practices on job performance. The literature review highlights two areas that have been underexplored: the influence of leader demographics on perceived HRM practices, and the role of work interruptions in moderating the relationship between HRM practices and job performance. These topics are particularly important for leaders responsible for managing organizational performance and outcomes. Finally, the study presents discussions and conclusions that offer guidance for future research on perceived HRM practices and the impact of work interruptions.

Keywords: Leader Demographics, Perceived Human Resource Management Practices, Work Interruption, Employee Job Performance

1. Introduction

Recent research has increasingly highlighted an unplanned yet observable connection between firm-level outcomes and certain HRM practices, such as organizational effectiveness and financial performance (Khan et al., 2020b; Kokkaew et al., 2022; Thaweepaiboonwong & Thinnam, 2025). However, the mechanisms through which HRM practices influence performance remain unclear, often described as a "black box." In prior research, this "black box" has been primarily addressed through mediation perspectives that explain the underlying mechanisms linking HRM practices to performance outcomes, such as employee attitudes, behaviors, and psychological states (Roodbari et al., 2025). However, a complementary yet less developed line of inquiry concerns contextual conditions under which these relationships become stronger or weaker (Connolly & Goossen, 2025). Distinguishing between these perspectives is critical, as the present study does not seek to uncover additional mediating mechanisms, but rather to examine how contextual factors shape the effectiveness of HRM practices (Naeem et al., 2025). Accordingly, this study adopts a moderating perspective by focusing on work interruption as a contextual boundary condition that influences the strength of the relationship between perceived HRM practices and job performance. This ambiguity has prompted numerous studies to examine the mediating role of employee behaviors, including job commitment and satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), task performance, or experienced organizational processes such as job design, perceived organizational support, or organizational justice (Vincent et al., 2020).

Most contemporary studies frame their analyses using trait leadership theory and social identity theory, arguing that HRM practices convey implicit and explicit signals to employees regarding how trusted and valued they are. These signals, in turn, foster a sense of responsibility that motivates employees to perform at higher levels (Arokiasamy et al., 2024). Unlike prior studies that primarily focused on employee demographics or traits, this study emphasizes leader demographics in combination with perceived HRM practices, grounded in the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework (Alkhalaf & Al-Tabbaa, 2024). The AMO theory has been widely applied in HRM performance research (Kellner et al., 2019) and informs the selection of HRM practices. Specifically, HRM practices can enhance motivation (e.g., through performance-related pay), ability (e.g., via training, hiring, and selection processes), and opportunity (e.g., through teamwork or suggestion systems) to contribute to firm performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023).

Previous studies using the AMO framework have often focused on employee outcomes rather than the performance of HRM itself (Al-Tit, 2020). This perspective suggests that leaders' abilities, motivation, and opportunities can predict the effectiveness of HRM practices. Therefore, this study operationalizes the AMO theory to examine how leaders' actions shape HRM success. Moreover, many studies assess HRM practices in terms of their presence rather than the quality of their implementation (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Alsakarneh et al., 2024). Yet, research shows that the context and manner in which HRM practices are applied are critical; even well-designed practices fail if not properly implemented (Carballo-Penela et al., 2023).

The increasing devolution of HRM responsibilities to leaders means that they play a central role in implementing HRM practices in daily operations (Hassan et al., 2024). Leaders can significantly impact employees' motivation and job performance (Arifuddin et al., 2023; Srimongkolkul et al., 2025). This study explores how perceived HRM practices, guided by AMO theory, influence job performance, with work interruptions acting as a moderating factor. Leader demographics, including gender, age, and tenure, are considered important contextual variables because they shape supervisory behavior and interactions with subordinates (Mäkelä et al., 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that leaders' characteristics positively affect task performance and OCB through mechanisms such as job embeddedness, trust in supervisors, and feedback avoidance behavior (Peltokorpi & Allen, 2024). However, existing research

rarely examines whether such effects are influenced by moderators like work interruptions, whether positive or negative.

Work interruptions are increasingly recognized as an important factor affecting job performance. From a theoretical standpoint, work interruptions are expected to alter the effectiveness of HRM practices by disrupting or facilitating employees' ability to translate organizational support into actual performance outcomes (Paauwe & Van De Voorde, 2025). When interruptions are frequent and cognitively demanding, they fragment attention, reduce task continuity, and limit employees' capacity to fully utilize the abilities, motivation, and opportunities provided through HRM practices (Zhou et al., 2025). In such conditions, the positive effect of HRM practices on job performance is likely to be weakened (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). In contrast, when interruptions are minimal or well-regulated, employees are better able to concentrate, apply acquired skills, and sustain motivation, thereby strengthening the positive relationship between HRM practices and performance (Pradhan et al., 2024). This perspective highlights work interruption as a critical contextual factor that conditions the effectiveness of HRM systems in real work environments (Nurjaman, 2025). Managing interruptions is not only about control but also understanding their types, meanings, and functions, which can produce both positive and negative effects (Rick et al., 2024). Prior studies show that interrupted tasks are often recalled more easily, yet research on interruptions remains limited, and no systematic body of literature examines their impact on workplace dynamics (Hirsch et al., 2025). This argument is also consistent with emerging evidence from Thai organizational contexts, where workplace conditions, including interruptions and task disruptions, have been shown to significantly influence employee productivity and the effectiveness of HRM practices (e.g., Kokkaew et al., 2022).

In this context, this study investigates the relationships between leader demographics, perceived HRM practices, work interruptions, and job performance. Specifically, it addresses how leader demographics influence perceived HRM practices and, in turn, job performance, under conditions of both positive and negative work interruptions. The study extends theory by examining how different types of interruptions self-initiated or externally caused affect these relationships. The effectiveness of HRM practices is understood in terms of motivation, opportunity, and ability (Ujma & Ingram, 2019).

Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research objectives. First, to examine how leader demographics (age, gender, and tenure) shape employees' perceptions of HRM practices, thereby extending demographic research into the domain of HRM implementation. Second, to explain how perceived HRM practices, grounded in the AMO framework, influence employee job performance, offering a refined perspective that emphasizes implementation quality rather than mere presence of practices. Third, to investigate the moderating role of work interruption distinguishing between self-initiated and externally induced interruptions in conditioning the effectiveness of HRM practices, thereby introducing a contextual boundary to the HRM–performance linkage. It is important to note that this study is conceptual in nature and does not involve empirical testing. Instead, it aims to develop and propose a theoretically grounded framework that integrates leader demographics, perceived HRM practices, work interruptions, and job performance, while offering directions for future empirical validation.

2. Theoretical Background

This section is structured to reflect the sequence of relationships proposed in the conceptual model, consistent with the order presented in the abstract. It begins with leader demographics (gender, age, and tenure) as the primary independent variables, followed by perceived HRM practices operationalized through the Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) framework as the central explanatory construct. The discussion then turns to job performance as the dependent variable, before introducing work interruption (self-interruption

and external interruption) as a moderating contextual factor that conditions the strength of the relationship between perceived HRM practices and job performance.

Trait Leadership and Demographic Differences

Trait leadership refers to a combination of individual characteristics that reflect personal differences and contribute to consistent leadership effectiveness across various organizational and group contexts (Dåderman, 2023). Recent leadership research has focused on identifying a set of inherent traits that distinguish leaders from non-leaders. Leader effectiveness is typically measured by the leader's impact on group or individual performance, overall organizational outcomes, and follower satisfaction (Liden et al., 2025). Many scholars argue that effective leadership is limited to individuals who possess certain innate characteristics that cannot easily be developed (Duarte et al., 2021). Although this perspective has faced criticism over the past century, research continues to explore how personality traits influence leadership success. Evidence suggests that successful leaders share specific core traits that significantly contribute to their effectiveness. Understanding these traits is important for organizations, particularly in designing perceived HRM practices such as recruitment, selection, training, and development (Liden et al., 2025). In essence, the theory proposes that individual differences in leaders are meaningful to the extent that they enable followers to achieve organizational goals, which in turn improves overall performance outcomes.

Social Identity Theory: Demographic Differences in Leadership

Social Identity Theory (SIT) explains how individuals define themselves based on their group memberships (Mader & Mußotter, 2025). According to Tajfel and Turner (1985), people categorize themselves and others into social groups such as organizational units, gender, age groups, or religious affiliations. Individuals are often assigned the prototypical characteristics of the groups they belong to, although these assignments are not always accurate (Rhodes & Baron, 2019). Social categorization serves two primary functions: first, it organizes the social environment, helping individuals understand and evaluate others; second, it allows individuals to situate themselves within the social context. SIT suggests that self-concept consists of a personal identity, encompassing individual traits and abilities, and a social identity, reflecting group affiliations.

Researchers have applied SIT to understand workplace diversity and its impact on leadership (Epstein & Duval-Couetil, 2023). Specifically, the theory helps explain how age and gender diversity influence leaders' attitudes and behaviors (Ferrari, 2025). Leaders' visible and relatively stable traits, such as age and gender, affect how they are perceived and recognized by their teams (Tremmel & Wahl, 2023). For instance, gender can shape the extent to which a leader is accepted or supported by a group, influencing interpersonal interactions and overall organizational effectiveness (Khan et al., 2020a). During self-categorization, leaders classify themselves and others based on attributes such as age and gender, leading to in-group and out-group distinctions (Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Ramdass, 2024). Individuals also strive to maintain a positive self-identity and high self-esteem, which may result in viewing members of other groups as less trustworthy or cooperative than members of their own group (Tajfel, 1981; Brown, 2020). Following the identification of leader demographics as key antecedents, the next step is to examine how these characteristics shape employees' perceptions of HRM practices.

Leader Demographics and Perceived HRM Practice

Leader demographics refer to the study of social characteristics of supervisors, including age, gender, tenure, occupation, experience, race, seniority, salary, and marital status (Pfeffer, 1983). These characteristics are often considered in both conceptual and empirical research due to their illustrative significance. Empirical studies have examined how

demographic factors influence HRM outcomes (Thaweepaiboonwong et al., 2026). For example, research has explored the relationship between motivation-enhancing HRM practices and employee demographics on affective commitment, as well as how demographic shifts affect HRM policies and leadership characteristics such as gender, age, and tenure (Sala et al., 2024). Other studies have examined demographic influences in specific contexts, such as technology adoption, organizational effectiveness, and leadership effectiveness (Alharthi, 2024).

Prior research has also investigated individual demographic variables in relation to leadership, including age, gender, education, and cultural differences (Liden et al., 2025; Correa et al., 2025). These studies have analyzed how demographic factors influence leadership style, strategic decisions, perceptions, and subordinates' outcomes, such as turnover (Subedi & Bhandari, 2024). However, findings remain mixed, and the effect of leader demographics on HRM practices, especially in an inclusive and systematic manner, has received limited attention (Gierke et al., 2025). Many organizations have yet to recognize that demographic variations among leaders can necessitate adjustments in HRM strategies. In summary, the literature reveals a gap in understanding the relationship between leader demographics and perceived HRM practices.

This study proposes that leader demographics specifically age, gender, and tenure are positively associated with perceived HRM practices and align with HRM strategy. The following propositions are developed:

Proposition 1a: Leader age will be positively related to perceived HRM practices.

Proposition 1b: Leader gender will be positively related to perceived HRM practices.

Proposition 1c: Leader tenure will be positively related to perceived HRM practices.

Building on this, perceived HRM practices are further examined in relation to job performance, which represents the primary outcome variable in this study.

Perceived human resource management practice and job performance in AMO theory

Today, leaders are recognized as central to the effective implementation of HRM practices (Yang & Lew, 2020). One of the most widely used frameworks for examining HRM performance is the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory (Kellner et al., 2019; Ujma & Ingram, 2019; Benítez-Núñez et al., 2024). According to AMO theory, high-quality HRM practices should enhance employees' abilities, motivation, and opportunities to contribute to organizational performance (Gerhart, 2005). Specifically, perceived HRM practices can provide opportunities (e.g., through teamwork or suggestion systems), improve abilities (e.g., through selection, recruitment, and training), and increase motivation (e.g., via performance-related incentives), all of which support organizational effectiveness. Beyond focusing solely on employee behavior and attitudes as outcomes of HRM practices (Alqudah et al., 2022), AMO theory can also be applied to leaders. This perspective suggests that a leader's ability, motivation, and access to opportunities can predict the effectiveness of HRM implementation. Table 1 presents definitions of AMO theory from key scholars in the field. By applying AMO theory in this way, it becomes possible to evaluate how efficiently leaders implement HRM practices in real organizational settings.

Table 1: The definitions of AMO theory

Author (s)	Definition
Kremmydas & Austen (2020).	Uses the AMO taxonomy to classify high-performance HR practices into those enhancing ability, motivation, and opportunity, and discusses multilevel effects on performance.

Obaid et al., (2022)	AMO framework is described as a strategic HR model grouping HR practices into ability-enhancing, motivation-enhancing, and opportunity-enhancing categories that jointly explain performance.
Bos-Nehles et al., (2023)	The AMO framework posits that employee performance (and HRM effects on performance) arises from the combined influence of employees' Ability (skills/capacity), Motivation (willingness / discretionary effort), and Opportunity (conditions to apply skills and participate)
Chin et al., (2023)	AMO-enhancing HRM practices (ability, motivation, opportunity) are essential for implementing corporate environmental citizenship ability (training), motivation (rewards), opportunity (participation).
Tay & Fee Yean (2023)	Measurement and validation studies treat AMO as three measurable dimensions (Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity) that operationalize how HRM influences outcomes.
Alkhalaf & Al-Tabbaa (2024)	AMO suggests discretionary employee efforts (and innovation outcomes) can be increased by HR practices that enhance Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity to perform and innovate.
Benítez-Núñez et al., (2024)	The AMO model is presented as a perspective to study researcher (employee) behavior, focusing on how abilities and motivation, combined with enabling opportunities, explain performance differences.
Kaur & Malik (2025)	The paper frames AMO-enhancing HR practices as a way to raise discretionary effort and well-being by targeting Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity dimensions.
San Román-Niaves et al., (2025)	The AMO framework is used to group GHRM practices into those that build Ability, increase Motivation, and expand Opportunity thereby shaping green behavior/climate and outcomes.

Based on the AMO framework, this paper applies the theory to examine the role of leaders in HRM functions and their performance in implementing HRM practices on the work floor. The next section operationalizes the AMO factors Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity while reviewing prior literature on how HRM practices relate to organizational performance and outcomes.

Ability

Ability refers to the necessary competencies leaders need to successfully implement HRM practices in organizations (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023). The HRM literature highlights many cases where leaders lack sufficient HRM skills, which can lead to negative outcomes (Babu & Sahayam, 2024). For example, Kim and Cho (2024) note the risks of assigning HR responsibilities to leaders who are unfamiliar with relevant regulations, pay insufficient attention to managing labor relations, or address issues in unnecessarily costly ways. Scholars argue that inadequate HRM skills, coupled with insufficient training, significantly reduce leader effectiveness (Malik et al., 2024).

Leaders often lack the knowledge and experience needed for HRM tasks, have only partial people management skills, and may lack practical HRM expertise (Bauwens & Cortellazzo, 2025). As a result, HRM practices are often applied based on "common sense" rather than structured understanding (Tommasi et al., 2023) and are sometimes handled superficially due to time constraints (Siraj et al., 2022). Training is widely recognized as a key method for improving HRM capabilities. Continuous and systematic training programs have

been recommended by multiple scholars (Apascaritei & Elvira, 2022; Pandya, 2024; Savanevičienė et al., 2025). Yet, issues such as the "leave well alone" mindset (Siraj et al., 2022) and the limited availability of adequate HRM training courses (Alam et al., 2024; Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2025) remain obstacles.

Motivation

Motivation reflects a leader's willingness and commitment to engage in HRM practices (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023). While some leaders are eager to take on HRM responsibilities, many perceive these duties as imposed upon them and are therefore reluctant to participate (Siraj et al., 2022). Motivation can be fostered through institutional incentives (Arokiasamy et al., 2024) or personal incentives (Savanevičienė et al., 2025). However, many leaders show little interest in HRM, remain skeptical of its importance, and often prioritize operational or financial objectives over people management (Abdulfatai, 2021).

HRM responsibilities are frequently excluded from performance evaluations, which typically focus on metrics such as sales or profit rather than employee management (Savanevičienė et al., 2025). Consequently, a lack of extrinsic motivation can reduce leaders' intrinsic interest in HRM, causing them to prioritize other urgent tasks (Pandya, 2024). Arokiasamy et al. (2024) note that leaders often focus more on production or service outcomes than on managing and developing their people, which helps explain poor HRM implementation despite the presence of HR practices.

In industries where human capital is highly valued, organizations often implement more complex incentive systems to strengthen leaders' commitment to HRM (Alsakarneh et al., 2024). In such contexts, leaders are closely monitored for how they evaluate and manage staff (Abdulfatai, 2021). Effective incentives encourage leaders to perform HRM duties well, which in turn enhances the efficiency and impact of HRM practices.

Opportunity

Opportunity refers to the contextual and environmental factors that allow individuals to take action (Alkhalaf & Al-Tabbaa, 2024), providing the necessary support and avenues for expressing their skills and capabilities (Benítez-Núñez et al., 2024). Even when leaders have the ability and motivation to implement HRM practices effectively, organizations must provide appropriate opportunities for them to apply these skills (Nor & Abdullah, 2020). In previous studies, opportunity has been operationalized in terms of an individual's work environment, including job design, leadership processes, situational constraints, and person–system fit (Popaitoon et al., 2025). For employees, it has also been reflected in participation in broader problem-solving or decision-making schemes (Obiekwe et al., 2019).

For leaders, opportunity is often understood in terms of operational or situational constraints. It includes organizational policies and procedures, access to resources, task preparation, time availability, and support from others. In the context of HRM, opportunities for leaders can be defined as threefold: first, strong support from HR professionals; second, sufficient time to engage in HRM implementation; and third, clear role allocation and unambiguous policies and procedures that reduce uncertainty.

However, opportunity and motivation alone cannot directly influence HRM performance without the necessary knowledge and skills to perform HRM practices effectively. Ability is therefore a prerequisite for performance. Once ability is established, opportunity and motivation can further enhance or reduce the effectiveness of HRM implementation (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023).

Prior research demonstrates that effective HRM practices contribute to organizational performance in multiple ways. For instance, Arokiasamy et al. (2024) found positive links between HRM practices such as selective staffing and training and perceived

firm performance. The strength of HRM systems can explain how individual employee attributes accumulate to influence organizational effectiveness (Presbitero et al., 2022), and leaders play a key role in linking HRM practices to individual performance outcomes (Alsakarneh et al., 2024). Perceived HRM practices also affect employee performance and well-being, particularly when trust in the leader is present (Diep & Horváthová, 2024). Workplace-level HRM practices influence employee behaviors and attitudes, and leadership quality shapes employee commitment and satisfaction with HR practices (Obiekwe et al., 2019). In service contexts, HRM practices indirectly affect customer perceptions of service quality through employees' behaviors (Mardiyana et al., 2025).

At the organizational level, studies have shown that high-performance work systems, trust mechanisms, and HRM practices collectively mediate organizational performance (Parayitam et al., 2025). Empirical evidence also demonstrates that HRM outcomes, such as employee retention, can mediate the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance (Stor & Haromszeki, 2025).

Multi-level analyses further highlight that HRM practices operate through complex mechanisms, with factors often overlooked in empirical research affecting outcomes at different levels (Papa et al., 2020). Despite this, empirical studies focusing on perceived HRM practices within the AMO framework and their mediating effects on job performance remain limited.

This study proposes that effective leaders, by applying perceived HRM practices, can enhance employee job performance, leading to the following propositions:

Proposition 2a: Ability in perceived HRM practices mediates the positive relationship between leader demographics and job performance.

Proposition 2b: Motivation in perceived HRM practices mediates the positive relationship between leader demographics and job performance.

Proposition 2c: Opportunity in perceived HRM practices mediates the positive relationship between leader demographics and job performance.

While the relationship between perceived HRM practices and job performance has been widely examined, it is unlikely to be uniform across all work contexts. Therefore, this study introduces work interruption as a moderating factor that may strengthen or weaken this relationship depending on its nature and intensity.

Work Interruption in the Context of Perceived HRM Practice and Job Performance

This study introduces a different perspective from prior research in HRM, focusing on the role of work interruptions as a moderating factor. Drawing on Wilkes et al. (2018), work interruptions are conceptualized into four sub-dimensions: intrusions, breaks, distractions, and discrepancies. Each type of interruption has distinct causes and consequences, which may produce either positive or negative outcomes for the person affected.

Generally, interruptions are defined as incidents that impede or delay organizational members as they work on tasks. They are often perceived as disruptive. For instance, Mustajab (2024) describes the frequent, unexpected visits managers experience in the workplace as a source of annoyance. Similarly, Perlow (1999) observed that software engineers frequently face interruptions from coworkers, creating a "time famine," where they feel that their responsibilities exceed the available time. In organizational contexts, interruptions are commonly associated with negative effects because they break the continuity of work.

However, carefully distinguishing between different types of interruptions and their potential outcomes can provide greater clarity in understanding how employees structure and manage their work time. This perspective is relevant to areas such as work–life boundaries (Rick et al., 2024), time management (Sykes, 2011), and the study of complex, multi-task roles

performed under time pressure and with autonomy. By identifying the specific types of interruptions and their possible positive or negative effects, researchers can better understand factors influencing organizational and individual productivity, including work quality and task completion time. In modern workplaces where employees have greater autonomy over their schedules due to technologies and flexible work arrangements (Emmanuel, 2021), understanding the impact of different types of interruptions becomes even more critical.

Intrusions

Intrusions are unexpected events initiated by others that disrupt the flow of work and temporarily halt progress. Examples include unplanned phone calls or visits that demand immediate attention and divert focus from the primary task (Jett & George, 2003). Consider a faculty member attempting to complete a manuscript for a journal submission. Frequent interruptions from colleagues, students, or family members can reduce the time available to work, making it harder to meet deadlines. From a time management perspective, intrusions are considered problematic when they occur frequently, are unplanned, or consume significant amounts of time. Time management literature recommends strategies to make intrusions more predictable and less frequent, and to limit the amount of time they consume (Sykes, 2011).

Standard responses to common intrusions such as preparing documents or information in advance can help reduce their impact (Mustajab, 2024). Time management approaches suggest scheduling or controlling intrusions to minimize disruption during critical work periods. While intrusions are often seen negatively, their effects can be positive or negative depending on factors such as who initiates the interruption, the content of the interaction, and the context. For example, a manager conducting spontaneous meetings to gather information that might otherwise be missed can improve task outcomes and strengthen communication and relationships with employees (Rogers & Barber, 2019). Employees who initially resist interruptions may still find some intrusions beneficial for completing their work (Stocker et al., 2019).

Thus, intrusions can have both positive and negative consequences, which need to be carefully considered when evaluating their impact on job performance and perceived HRM practices.

Breaks

Breaks refer to spontaneous or planned pauses from work that temporarily interrupt the flow and continuity of a task. Unlike intrusions, which are imposed externally, breaks are typically self-initiated or anticipated periods away from work, allowing individuals to address personal needs or regulate their daily rhythm. Breaks recognize that organizational members cannot maintain continuous work throughout the day without rest. Work pauses may occur naturally within the progression of tasks, at predetermined times, or spontaneously as individuals see fit. From the perspective of task performance, breaks provide short periods of idle time that allow employees to recover energy and maintain effectiveness throughout the day. Research indicates that people benefit from occasional changes in work pace, alternating between periods of effort and rest (Batista-Ferreira et al., 2024). Breaks often occur spontaneously when individuals feel bored, fatigued, or frustrated, prompting activities such as browsing the web, making personal calls, or visiting the water cooler. They may also be formally integrated into the workday, such as scheduled coffee or lunch breaks, or informally taken at the employee's discretion (Jett & George, 2003). The timing and length of breaks vary depending on individual work preferences. Some employees follow structured breaks to maintain steady productivity, while others take breaks irregularly, following cycles of high and low output. Unlike intrusions, breaks generally carry a positive connotation because they offer opportunities for rest, recreation, and rejuvenation, helping employees recover from fatigue or

monotony. However, breaks can also disrupt work and task completion, potentially leading to delays or procrastination.

Distractions

Distractions are external stimuli or secondary activities that interfere with an individual's focus on a primary task. They divert attention away from the task at hand, affecting cognitive processing and performance. Distractions can arise from competing tasks or environmental stimuli that are irrelevant to the current work but nonetheless capture attention. Research on cognitive interference provides insight into how and when distractions affect concentration and memory during task performance. One important factor is whether the primary task involves information stored in long-term memory (Tomporowski & Qazi, 2020). Tasks that rely on well-practiced knowledge in long-term memory allow individuals to allocate more working memory resources to respond to potential distractions. In contrast, unfamiliar or novel tasks depend heavily on working memory, making individuals more vulnerable to interruptions. For example, tasks involving unrehearsed verbal recall are particularly sensitive to distractions from similar verbal stimuli (Zickerick et al., 2020). The impact of a distraction can therefore varies depending on the individual's skill, experience, and the nature of the task being performed. Scholars have examined how external circumstances contribute to cognitive interference and the potential consequences of distractions in the workplace. This study incorporates these considerations to better understand how distractions influence perceived HRM practices and employee job performance.

Discrepancies

Discrepancies arise when there is a mismatch between an individual's expectations and the actual opportunities or conditions they encounter, particularly those relevant to their tasks and personal well-being. Essentially, discrepancies occur when people perceive significant differences between what they expect and what is actually happening in their environment. These inconsistencies interrupt the automatic processing of task-related information and redirect attention toward the source of the mismatch. As Mandler (1990) notes, discrepancies are caused by "situations and demands which are different from what the individual expects." While triggered by the environment, discrepancies are interpreted through the individual's own experiences, and their unexpected nature combined with personal relevance produces arousal and emotional reactions (Rick et al., 2024). Depending on the implications for personal well-being, these reactions can be either positive or negative (Mandler, 1990).

Discrepancies highlight moments when individuals encounter information that contradicts their beliefs or expectations, prompting them to actively process and reconsider the meaning of these events. This shift from automatic, routine processing to more mindful and deliberate thinking is a key feature of how discrepancies influence work behavior. According to Jett and George (2003), work interruptions can be broadly categorized into two types: self-interruptions (breaks) and external interruptions (intrusions, distractions, and discrepancies). This classification aligns with other scholars (Yu & Lee, 2022; Wang, 2025). Understanding the causes and consequences of these interruptions both positive and negative is crucial for employees, as the meaning and impact of interruptions can influence task performance. In this study, work interruptions are proposed as an important factor that may mediate the relationship between perceived HRM practices and job performance.

Proposition 3a: Self-interruptions moderate the relationship between HRM practices and job performance, such that the relationship is positive for individuals with low self-interruption but not significant for those with high self-interruption.

Proposition 3b: External interruptions moderate the relationship between HRM practices and job performance, such that the relationship is positive for individuals with low external interruption but not significant for those with high external interruption.

3. Conceptual Framework

In this study, the conceptual framework is built upon insights from prior research and identifies areas for future investigation. Figure 1 illustrates the framework, which integrates the dimensions of leader demographics, perceived HRM practices, and job performance. This framework reflects the relationships and evidence discussed in the literature review, providing a structured understanding of how these elements interact.

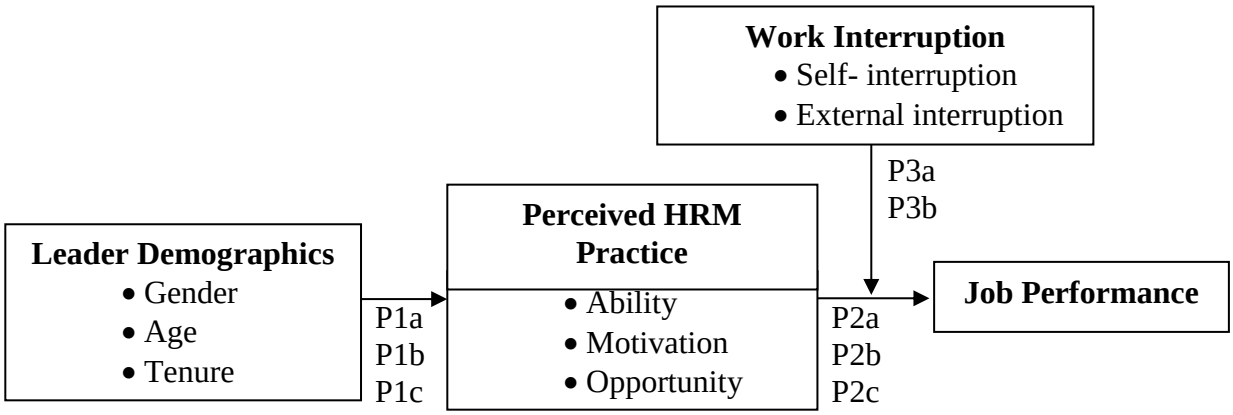


Figure 1 Conceptual model

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a conceptual research design aimed at developing a theoretically grounded framework rather than empirically testing relationships. The purpose of this approach is to synthesize existing knowledge and offer a structured explanation of how leader demographics, perceived HRM practices, work interruptions, and job performance are interrelated.

The development of the proposed framework is based on a systematic review and integration of prior literature in the fields of human resource management, leadership, and organizational behavior. Relevant theories, including Trait Leadership Theory, Social Identity Theory, and the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework, were critically examined to identify key constructs and establish theoretical linkages among variables.

Based on this integrative process, the study formulates a set of theoretically derived propositions that reflect the expected relationships among variables. These propositions are not intended to be tested within this paper but are designed to guide future empirical investigations.

In particular, the inclusion of work interruption as a moderating factor is conceptually justified by examining prior studies on task disruption, cognitive load, and work context. This allows the study to position work interruption as a boundary condition that influences the strength of the relationship between perceived HRM practices and job performance.

Through this approach, the study contributes by offering a coherent conceptual model and a theoretically informed foundation for future empirical research, particularly in contexts where work conditions may vary significantly.

To enhance transparency, the literature review process followed a structured approach. Relevant academic articles were identified through major scholarly databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords such as “HRM practices,” “AMO framework,” “leader demographics,” and “work interruption” were systematically applied.

Articles were selected based on relevance, recency, and theoretical contribution. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal publications to ensure academic rigor. The selected studies were then critically synthesized to identify gaps, establish conceptual linkages, and support the development of propositions.

5. Conclusions

In line with the research objectives, this study set out to develop a conceptual framework that explains (1) how leader demographics shape perceived HRM practices, (2) how these practices relate to job performance through the AMO dimensions, and (3) how work interruptions act as a contextual factor that conditions this relationship. As a conceptual study, the findings are presented in the form of theoretically derived propositions rather than empirical test results, offering a structured explanation of these relationships.

This paper proposes a conceptual framework that integrates leader demographics (gender, age, and tenure), perceived human resource management (HRM) practices (ability, motivation, and opportunity), and job performance, with work interruption (self-interruption and external interruption) serving as a moderating factor. The framework is derived from an extensive review of the literature on leader demographics, perceived HRM practices, work interruptions, and job performance, aiming to guide future research. Each variable leader demographics, perceived HRM practices, work interruptions, and job performance, including both employee performance and organizational outcomes is clearly defined and discussed in the study. Instead of reporting statistical results, the study advances a set of conceptual insights that clarify the direction and nature of these relationships. Specifically, the framework suggests that leader demographics are likely to influence how HRM practices are perceived and enacted, while the effectiveness of these practices in enhancing job performance depends on the level and type of work interruptions present in the work environment.

The literature review revealed a gap in research examining the direct effect of leader demographics on perceived HRM practices. While prior studies have explored leader demographics in other HRM contexts and performance outcomes (e.g., Alam et al., 2024; Keltu, 2024; Zu'bi et al., 2024; Liden et al., 2025), few have focused specifically on their influence on perceived HRM practices. This study highlights the need for future research to investigate the relationship between leader demographics and perceived HRM practices to provide empirical evidence and test the general hypotheses proposed here.

Employee satisfaction and performance are closely linked to effective work conditions with minimal interruptions (Mustajab, 2024; Zacher & Baumeister, 2025). Most research suggests that work interruptions tend to have negative effects (Körner et al., 2025), though some studies acknowledge potential positive outcomes (Galliker et al., 2024). Within the conceptual framework, leader demographics, perceived HRM practices, and work interruptions can all influence job performance either positively or negatively. For example, employees are likely to perform poorly when frequent interruptions occur from colleagues or supervisors (Rick et al., 2024). Conversely, performance improves when employees can work without interruptions, and in certain cases, some interruptions may even benefit highly engaged employees.

From a practical perspective, the proposed framework provides guidance for tailoring managerial interventions across different organizational contexts and employee groups. For instance, organizations may need to adapt HRM practices based on leader characteristics such as age, tenure, or gender, as these factors can shape how policies are implemented and perceived. At the same time, interventions aimed at improving job performance should account for varying levels of work interruptions. In high-interruption environments, managers may need to prioritize strategies that protect employees' focus and reduce task fragmentation, whereas in low-interruption settings, greater emphasis can be placed on enhancing employees'

ability, motivation, and opportunity to perform. This differentiated approach allows organizations to more effectively align HRM practices with real work conditions and diverse workforce needs.

Therefore, work interruptions play a critical role in shaping employee job performance. Higher job performance can reduce the frequency of interruptions for both employees and supervisors. As noted, previous research demonstrates that work interruptions are generally negatively associated with job satisfaction, but effective leadership can help manage these interruptions and mitigate their consequences. While future research may face challenges in collecting reliable data on interruptions experienced by employees, these dimensions remain important to study. Scholars should explore appropriate methods to examine work interruptions and validate empirical findings to enhance practical strategies for managing interruptions in the workplace. Future research is encouraged to empirically validate the proposed relationships and examine how these dynamics operate across different industries and cultural contexts, particularly in emerging economies where work conditions and HRM practices may vary significantly.

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