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THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOURS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY WITHIN THE MOROCCAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between human resource management (HRM) practices and counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs) within Moroccan private-sector firms. While HRM practices are generally designed to enhance employee performance and well-being, they are also expected to reduce deviant organisational behaviours when perceived as fair and strategically implemented. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), the research investigates the impact of four key HRM practices, recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal, on the prevalence of CWBs, including disengagement, negativity, the spread of dissatisfaction, and interpersonal aggression. The study adopts a quantitative methodology, based on data collected from employees across various Moroccan private-sector companies. Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modelling (SEM) via AMOS 24 software. Contrary to expectations and the findings commonly reported in the literature, the results reveal statistically non-significant relationships between the examined HRM practices and CWBs. These findings suggest that the expected effects of HRM practices on deviant behaviours may be influenced by other contextual or cultural factors specific to the Moroccan setting. This research contributes to the literature by highlighting the need to adapt HR policies to local contexts. It offers valuable insights for practitioners aiming to reduce deviant behaviours in the workplace.

KEYWORDS: Human Resource Management, Counterproductive Work Behaviours, Recruitment, Training, Compensation, Performance Appraisal, Social Exchange Theory, Morocco, Private Sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices play a pivotal role in shaping an organisational environment conducive to employee performance. Strategically aligned with corporate objectives, implemented fairly, and perceived as just by employees, these practices enhance job satisfaction, engagement, and individual productivity (Turek, 2019; Mirhaj, 2020). Core HRM levers, recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal, not only contribute to employee autonomy and loyalty, but also support organisational effectiveness and well-being (Edgar & Geare, 2005).

However, this virtuous dynamic can be undermined by the emergence of counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs), defined as intentional acts that violate organisational norms and harm the organisation, its members, or its assets (Kelloway et al., 2010). These behaviours, ranging from absenteeism and incivility to sabotage and harassment, pose a growing challenge due to their considerable economic, social, and human costs. While CWBs are often studied through the lens of individual personality traits, mounting evidence suggests that organisational factors, notably HRM practices, play a significant role in either encouraging or deterring such behaviours.

Exploring the potential of HRM practices to mitigate CWBs is particularly relevant in the Moroccan context. The private sector dominates national employment yet faces a number of structural vulnerabilities. According to the Moroccan Observatory of SMEs, over 75% of private sector employees earn less than 4,000 MAD per month, reflecting widespread wage insecurity. Additionally, youth unemployment remains high (36.7% among 15–24-year-olds) (Lopez-Acevedo et al., 2024), exacerbating competition and job instability. These economic pressures contribute to employee vulnerability and negatively affect perceptions of organisational justice, which has been shown to influence deviant behaviours in the workplace.

Beyond these socioeconomic challenges, Morocco's cultural and institutional specificities are essential to understanding the effectiveness of HRM in this setting. The labour law provides robust protections for employees, including strict dismissal procedures that require substantial justification by employers, potentially enhancing employee leverage and affecting engagement (Gervais, 2010, as cited in Aljayi et al., 2016). Religion also plays a central role; Islam regards work as a moral responsibility, promoting values of diligence and loyalty that can influence workplace behaviours.

Culturally, Morocco is characterised by high power distance, respect for hierarchy, and collectivist values that prioritise group harmony and conformity over individualism (Hofstede et al., 2010; Oumlil & Balloun, 2009 as cited in Aljayi et al., 2016). These features affect workplace dynamics, including conflict resolution, leadership perceptions, and employee commitment. Moreover, the strong uncertainty avoidance that typifies Moroccan culture encourages employees to seek stability, structure, and consistency in HR practices. Interestingly, this national culture is not homogeneous: regional subcultures, particularly in the North and Northwest, show variations such as lower power distance and greater openness to ambiguity, which can mediate how HRM practices are perceived and implemented (Louahabi et al., 2020). These variations highlight the necessity for context-specific HRM strategies, particularly as multinational firms expand their presence in Morocco.

Despite the importance of this topic, existing academic literature on the link between HRM practices and CWBs in Morocco remains limited. Most studies focus on public institutions, with little research dedicated to the private sector, and very few offering theoretically grounded, empirically tested insights. This lack of scholarly work restricts international comparison and impedes the development of contextually relevant HR policies.

In response, this study investigates the relationship between key HRM practices, recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal, and CWBs in Moroccan private-sector firms. By adopting a quantitative approach, the research aims to identify organisational levers that can reduce deviant behaviours and to generate practical, evidence-based recommendations adapted to the Moroccan environment. The article is structured as follows: a literature review and theoretical framework; a detailed methodology; the empirical results; followed by a discussion of managerial implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours

Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) refers to a range of deliberate actions by employees that violate fundamental organisational norms and cause harm to the organisation, its members, or both (Chen et al., 2020; Kundi & Badar, 2021). This concept has been widely studied under various labels, such as antisocial behaviour (Robinson & Bennett, 1995),

organisational misconduct (Vardi & Weiner, 1996, as cited in Tuzun & Kalemci, 2017), non-compliant behaviour (Puffer, 1987, as cited in Tagliabue *et al.*, 2020), or dysfunctional behaviour (Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly & Collins, 1998, as cited in Sypniewska, 2020). It encompasses a diverse array of manifestations, including theft, sabotage, absenteeism, lateness, harassment, fraud, and intimidation (Hadlington *et al.*, 2021).

Robinson & Bennett (1995) proposed a typology of deviant workplace behaviour (DWB) based on two dimensions: the target (organisational or interpersonal) and the severity (minor or severe). This framework identifies four categories of deviance: production deviance, political deviance, property deviance, and personal aggression. Their approach has been further elaborated by Verma *et al.* (2019) and García-Contreras *et al.* (2022), who emphasise the potential for such behaviours to cause significant organisational harm depending on their intensity and focus.

Counterproductive behaviours are shaped by the interaction between individual factors, such as personality traits, attitudes, and beliefs, and contextual or situational elements, including management practices, organisational climate, and team dynamics (Hasinat *et al.*, 2024). These behaviours present a critical challenge for organisations due to their prevalence, economic impact, and detrimental effects on employee attitude and well-being (Sypniewska, 2020; Nzimakwe, 2025).

2.2. HRM Practices

This study focuses on four fundamental human resource management (HRM) practices recognised for their critical role in managing and developing human capital: recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal. These practices, often regarded as the pillars of HRM, are central to organisational processes aimed at attracting, developing, motivating, and supervising employees. The design, implementation, and perception of these practices directly influence workplace behaviours, whether productive or counterproductive. By analysing them collectively, this research seeks to better understand their potential impact on counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) within the context of Moroccan enterprises.

2.3. Recruitment

Recruitment constitutes a strategic and essential function of human resource management, as it enables organisations to acquire key competencies necessary for achieving their objectives (Karim *et al.*,

2021). It goes beyond merely filling vacant positions and aims to identify, attract, and select individuals who are best suited to contribute to organisational performance by ensuring an optimal alignment between the expectations of the candidates and those of the organisation (Chungyalpa W, 2016). This process represents the starting point of human capital management and influences the entire employee lifecycle within the organisation.

2.4. Training

Continuous training is established as a key strategic lever in human resource management, reflecting the importance that the organisation places on the development of its employees (Richman, 2015). It is defined as a structured approach aimed at improving individual performance by transmitting knowledge, skills, and behaviours suited to the requirements of the position and the evolving work environment (Joel Rodriguez & Kelley Walters, 2017; Urbancová *et al.*, 2021). It also represents a coherent set of planned initiatives designed to enhance employee engagement, employability, and productivity (Abogsesa & Kaushik, 2017; El Ainin *et al.*, 2020). As such, continuous training lies at the heart of human capital development strategies, contributing to organisational agility and the sustainability of performance.

2.5. Compensation

Compensation constitutes a fundamental and multidimensional component of human resource management, encompassing both monetary elements (such as salaries, bonuses, and commissions) and non-monetary elements (such as benefits and recognition) offered in exchange for work performed (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2014; Yanuar, 2017). It may take direct or indirect forms (Akter *et al.*, 2016), and includes both intrinsic rewards, such as personal fulfilment, and extrinsic rewards, such as financial incentives (Gottman *et al.*, 2009; Yoon *et al.*, 2015). Its significance is recognised at multiple levels: for employees, it serves as a source of motivation and security; for managers, it acts as lever for behavioural influence; and for the organisation, it functions as a strategic tool for attracting, retaining, and enhancing performance (Martono *et al.*, 2018; Koziol & Mikos, 2020). In sum, a fair, coherent, and strategically aligned compensation policy is essential to foster engagement, reduce turnover, and strengthen overall competitiveness.

2.6. Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a strategic and

structured process through which the organisation measures and analyses the output, competencies, and behaviours of its employees, to support their professional development and align their actions with the organisation's overall objectives (Rozario et al., 2019). It is based on the collection of both objective and subjective information to formulate evaluative judgements about individual performance.

Armstrong & Taylor (2014) emphasise that appraisal seeks to clarify performance expectations and to anticipate the contributions required for effective job execution. In this regard, it serves as a lever for continuous improvement for both employees and the organisation. Daoanis (2012), for his part, highlights the role of appraisal in recognising competencies and technologies, thereby contributing to the joint development of organisational and individual capabilities.

2.7. Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Counterproductive Work Behaviours

Social Exchange Theory (SET), developed by Blau (1964), is based on the premise that interpersonal relationships, including those between employees and the organisation, operate within a framework of reciprocal exchange. Within this framework, individuals are motivated to maintain relationships when they perceive a balance between what they contribute (time, effort, loyalty, skills) and what they receive in return (remuneration, recognition, support, development opportunities). SET posits that both positive and negative organisational behaviours result from subjective perceptions regarding the quality of this exchange.

When an organisation implements HR practices perceived as fair, supportive, and rewarding, for example, training opportunities, fair performance appraisals, deserved compensation, or transparent recruitment processes, employees are more likely to reciprocate with prosocial behaviours such as increased engagement, high performance, loyalty, and organisational citizenship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Conversely, when these practices are perceived as unjust, opaque, arbitrary, or manipulative, employees may experience a sense of imbalance in the exchange relationship, leading to feelings of frustration, injustice, or disengagement.

This perceived imbalance is often interpreted by employees as a violation of the psychological contract, that is, the implicit but deeply rooted expectations regarding how they should be treated by the organisation (Rousseau, 1995). In response to such a breach, individuals may engage in negative reciprocity, manifested as counterproductive work

behaviours (CWB). These behaviours, including absenteeism, deliberate reduction of performance, sabotage, interpersonal conflict, passive resistance, or the manipulation of information, often serve as a means to compensate for perceived injustice or to symbolically express dissatisfaction (Bennett & Robinson, 2000, as cited in Berry et al., 2007). SET, therefore, provides a valuable framework for understanding how HR practices, as signals of the quality of the exchange relationship, influence employee behaviour. For instance, a performance appraisal system perceived as biased or subjective may be interpreted as a withdrawal of recognition or fairness, thus disrupting the logic of positive reciprocity. Similarly, a lack of career advancement opportunities or managerial communication perceived as distant may be experienced as a lack of respect or consideration, prompting some employees to respond with deviant conduct.

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated this dynamic. For example, Kura et al. (2019) and Gebretsadik Estifo et al. (2019) found that perceptions of genuine organisational support, conveyed through appropriate HR practices, significantly reduce deviant behaviours by fostering positive reciprocity. In contrast, Turek (2019) highlights that when HR practices are seen as instrumental or disengaging, they can foster a hostile climate conducive to CWB.

In summary, Social Exchange Theory provides a robust theoretical framework for analysing the relationship between perceived HR practices and counterproductive work behaviours. It underscores the importance of perceived fairness, recognition, and support in preventing deviant behaviours by focusing on the relational dynamics and subjectivity inherent in exchanges between the organisation and its members.

2.8. HRM Practices and Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWB)

The perception of human resource management (HRM) practices varies among individuals, significantly influencing their organisational attitudes and behaviours. When these practices are perceived as unfair, inefficient, or driven by political motives, they may provoke negative employee reactions, including the adoption of counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) (Malik & Lenka, 2020; Turek, 2019). Consequently, the implementation of HRM systems perceived as fair, coherent, and supportive constitutes a strategic lever for preventing such deviant behaviours.

Numerous studies have investigated the impact of

HRM practices on CWB, primarily drawing on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). This theory posits that when employees perceive genuine organisational support, they are more likely to reciprocate with positive behaviours and refrain from harmful actions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). For instance, the study by Kura et al. (2019), conducted among 271 employees in Nigeria, demonstrated that perceived supportive human resource development practices significantly reduce CWB.

This relationship is mediated by employee engagement, confirming that perceived support fosters organisational involvement, which in turn diminishes the likelihood of deviant behaviours. Similarly, Gebretsadik Estifo et al. (2019) examined the effect of employee-oriented HRM (EOHRM) practices on CWB among 555 employees and 150 supervisors in an Ethiopian context. Drawing on both Social Exchange Theory and Perceived Organisational Support Theory, their findings highlight the mediating role of perceived organisational support. Employees who feel supported through HR practices focused on their wellbeing are less inclined to engage in behaviours that are harmful to the organisation. In another study conducted in Iran with flight attendants, De Clercq et al. (2021) employed signaling theory to explore the relationship between high-performance HR practices (empowerment, reward, promotion) and CWB.

Their results revealed significant negative associations, mediated by perceived organisational support. This support partially mediated the effects of empowerment and reward, and fully mediated the effect of promotion, emphasising its central role in interpreting the signals conveyed by HR practices.

Furthermore, research by Reio & Ghosh (2009), as well as MacKenzie et al. (2011), has shown that practices such as training, mentoring, and career development significantly reduce CWB. These findings support the notion that visible organisational investment in employee development promotes positive reciprocity, thereby reducing deviant behaviours. In the Malaysian context, a study by Shamsudin et al. (2011), involving 372 employees in the manufacturing sector, found a negative relationship between HR practices, such as clarity in job descriptions, job security, internal career opportunities, and results-based appraisal, and deviant behaviours. The authors explain that perceived fair practices alleviate stress, insecurity, and negative emotions such as frustration or anger, which are often the root causes of CWB.

Although human resource management (HRM) is increasingly recognised as a strategic lever for

organisational performance in Morocco, empirical research examining its actual impact on employee behaviour remains limited. Most studies conducted within the Moroccan context have primarily focused on the effects of HR practices on positive organisational behaviours, such as engagement, job satisfaction, loyalty, or motivation (Aljayi et al., 2016; Mahboub et al., 2023; Azizi & Zahidi, 2025). However, very few have investigated the potential influence of these practices on counterproductive work behaviours (CWB), which can significantly undermine both individual and collective performance.

To our knowledge, no study to date has empirically and contextually explored the relationship between perceived HRM practices and the emergence of deviant behaviours within Moroccan companies. Our research, therefore, seeks to address this gap and contribute to the national literature on the role of HR systems in managing workplace behaviour.

In this regard, the issue of counterproductive behaviours is particularly important. Practices such as fair recruitment, tailored continuous training, equitable remuneration, and transparent evaluation systems play a crucial role in preventing such behaviours. Consistent with prior studies (Kura et al., 2019; Gebretsadik Estifo et al., 2019; Teimouri et al., 2019; Li & Cao, 2019), when these practices are perceived as coherent and supportive, they foster organisational trust, reciprocity, and engagement, thereby reducing the likelihood of harmful behaviours.

Based on this theoretical and empirical framework, we propose the following hypotheses, along with the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1:

H1: Recruitment practices are negatively related to counterproductive work behaviours (CWB).

H2: Training practices are negatively related to counterproductive work behaviours (CWB).

H3: Compensation practices are negatively related to counterproductive work behaviours (CWB).

H4: Performance appraisal practices are negatively related to counterproductive work behaviours (CWB).

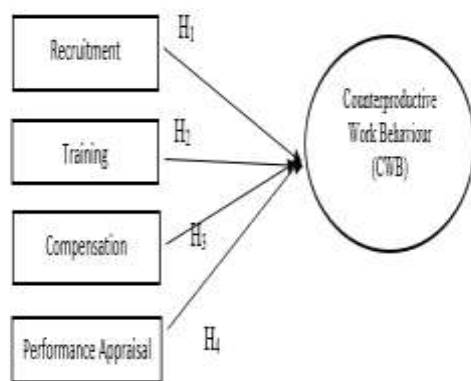


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Testing Variables.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample and Procedure

This study adopted a quantitative research approach to empirically examine the hypothesised relationships between human resource management (HRM) practices and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) in the Moroccan private sector. Data were collected via a structured online questionnaire distributed through professional networks such as LinkedIn and targeted email invitations. The instrument comprised sections on demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, education, and years of service) and items measuring four core HRM practices: recruitment, training, compensation, and performance Appraisal. The target population included employees from various private-sector organisations across Morocco who were not involved in HR policy development or implementation. Using a convenience sampling method, a total of 209 valid responses were obtained, providing sufficient data for robust statistical analyses, in line with established recommendations.

To analyse the data, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were conducted using AMOS version 24. CFA was first employed to validate the measurement model by assessing the alignment between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs, using key fit indices such as chi-square (χ^2), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). A good model fit is indicated by a non-significant χ^2 (although this index is sensitive to sample size), $GFI \geq 0.90$ (Hair et al., 2017), $RMSEA \leq 0.05$ for excellent fit or ≤ 0.08 for acceptable fit, and $CFI \geq 0.95$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Upon validation, SEM was applied to test the proposed structural

relationships between HRM practices and counterproductive work behavior (CWB), estimating regression coefficients and their statistical significance using the critical ratio (CR), equivalent to a t-test (Hair et al., 2017; Kline, 2018). This methodology enables an in-depth understanding of how HRM practices influence undesirable workplace behaviours, contributing to the broader literature on employee performance and organisational dynamics.

3.2. Measuring Instruments

The present study investigates the influence of human resource (HR) practices on counterproductive work behaviour (CWB), with a particular focus on four key explanatory variables: recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal. Both the independent variables and the dependent variable (CWB) were measured using specific items tailored to each domain, measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

Recruitment was evaluated using eight items adapted from Njoroge (2021). These items examine the extent to which recruitment processes ensure person-job fit, transparency, fairness, and the effective utilisation of employees' skills. Sample statements include: "Recruitment ensures that the right person is placed in the right position," and "After recruitment, I was placed in a role where I could utilise my skills." The items also reflect employee perceptions of organisational support and satisfaction with the quality of recruitment procedures. Training was measured through six items derived from Marwat et al. (2006), assessing the organisation's commitment to employee development.

The items capture perceptions of the comprehensiveness and regularity of training programmes, the alignment between training and strategic objectives, and the extent to which training needs are identified and addressed. Illustrative items include: "Our Company conducts comprehensive training programmes for employees," and "There are formal training programmes to teach new employees the necessary skills to perform their job." Compensation was assessed using five items inspired by Akbar (2021). These items evaluate the perceived impact of compensation on employee motivation, productivity, and work quality. Examples include: "The compensation I receive increases my motivation at work," and "The compensation I receive improves the quality of my work." Performance appraisal was examined using

five items, also adapted from Marwat et al. (2006), which measure perceptions of the objectivity and transparency of performance appraisal processes. The indicators assess whether performance is evaluated based on quantifiable results, the quality of feedback received, employee trust in the appraisal system, and the extent to which evaluation outcomes are used for professional development and organisational decision-making.

The dependent variable, Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB), is measured using five items based on Koopmans et al. (2014) and additional items developed for this study. These items capture behaviours that may adversely affect the work environment, team cohesion, and organisational productivity. Example items include: "I complained about trivial things at work," "I exaggerated problems at work," and "I discussed negative aspects of my job with colleagues or people outside the organisation." Such behaviours indicate disengagement, a focus on negativity, and the dissemination of dissatisfaction, which may undermine both individual and collective performance.

3.3. Data Analysis

Table 1: Internal Reliability of HRM Practices Dimensions (Joreskog's Rho).

HRM Practices	Joreskog's Rho
Recruitment	0.874
Training	0.912
Compensation	0.846
Performance Appraisal	0.846

The measurement scales employed in this study demonstrate strong statistical reliability. Jöreskog's Rhô is an advanced composite reliability coefficient regarded as more accurate than Cronbach's alpha in confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Hair et al., 2019). The internal reliability coefficients for each HRM practice dimension are presented in Table I. All HRM dimensions surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency among their respective items. Notably, the training dimension exhibits the highest reliability (Rhô = 0.912), reflecting a particularly robust coherence in measuring the underlying latent construct.

Table 2: Convergent Validity of HRM Practices Dimensions

HRM Practices	Items	Standardised Loadings	T-values	P-values	AVE
Recruitment	8	0.578-0.720	>8.0	0.000	0.537
Training	6	0.670-0.846	>7.4	0.000	0.666
Compensation	5	0.863-0.947	>6.8	0.000	0.860
Performance Appraisal	5	0.546-0.784	>7.2	0.000	0.601

All standardised factor loadings are statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.001$), confirming strong associations between the observed indicators and their respective latent constructs. The results of the convergent validity assessment are presented in Table II. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, thereby affirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Compensation exhibits the strongest item-to-construct relationships among the assessed dimensions, with loadings as high as 0.947 and an exceptionally high AVE of 0.860, indicating robust measurement quality. Although recruitment and performance appraisal dimensions contain some items with relatively lower loadings (approximately 0.55), the constructs still meet the minimum criteria for convergent validity, ensuring the adequacy of the measurement model.

Table 3: Model Fit Indices for Each HRM Practice Dimension.

HRM Practices	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	NFI	CFI
Recruitment	45.321	18	2.518	0.920	0.940	0.075	0.973	0.988
Training	35.123	15	2.342	0.940	0.930	0.065	0.965	0.992
Compensation	60.952	20	3.048	0.934	0.981	0.099	0.952	0.993
Performance Appraisal	7.501	5	1.500	0.985	0.956	0.049	0.980	0.993

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results indicate that the measurement models for each HRM dimension exhibit an acceptable to excellent level of fit. The model fit indices for each dimension are summarized in Table III. Specifically, the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratios (χ^2/df) fall below the commonly accepted threshold of 3, and key fit indices such as GFI, AGFI, NFI, and CFI all exceed 0.90, consistent with standards for good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Moreover, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) values remain within acceptable boundaries (< 0.08) for all dimensions, except for the compensation construct, which slightly exceeds this threshold (RMSEA = 0.099) but remains within marginal acceptability. Notably, the performance appraisal dimension demonstrates the best fit (RMSEA = 0.049), suggesting minimal divergence between the hypothesised model and the empirical data. These results collectively affirm the structural validity of the measurement models employed.

Table 4: Summary of CFA Results for the Latent Variable "Counterproductive Work Behaviour."

Analysis Aspect	Results	Interpretation/ Comment
Composite Reliability (Rhô de Jöreskog)	1.079	Exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency of the measurement scale.
Number of Items	5	The variable is measured through five well-performing indicators identified through exploratory factor analysis.
Factor Loadings (Standardized Gamma)	0.797 to 0.917	All factor loadings are well above the recommended threshold of 0.70, supporting strong item reliability and construct representation.
Critical Ratios (CR)	6.394 to 8.972	All CRs exceed 1.96 and are significant at $p < 0.001$, confirming that each item significantly contributes to the latent construct.
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.744	Exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.50, confirming good convergent validity.
Model Fit - Chi-square (χ^2)	19.430	Acceptable chi-square value for the model size; used in conjunction with other indices to evaluate fit.
Degrees of Freedom (df)	5	Required to calculate the χ^2/df ratio.
χ^2/df Ratio	3.886	Below 5, indicating a reasonable model fit.
GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index)	0.934	Above 0.90, indicating good absolute fit.
AGFI (Adjusted GFI)	0.900	Meets the threshold for good model adjustment.
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.068	Below the acceptable upper limit of 0.08, showing a low approximation error.
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	0.958	Above 0.90, indicating strong incremental fit relative to the null model.
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.964	Demonstrates excellent model fit compared to the independent model.

The measurement model demonstrates strong psychometric properties, supporting the validity and reliability of the construct. A summary of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results for the latent variable "Counterproductive Work Behaviour" is provided in Table IV. The composite reliability (Rhô de Jöreskog = 1.079) greatly exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). The construct is measured through five robust indicators, all of which display strong standardised factor loadings ranging from 0.797 to 0.917, well above the recommended threshold of 0.70, thereby ensuring item reliability and accurate construct representation (Hair et al., 2019). Critical ratios (CR) between 6.394 and 8.972 confirm the statistical significance of each item at the 0.001 level (Kline, 2016). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.744 further substantiates convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Regarding model fit, the chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 19.430$) relative to its degrees of freedom ($df = 5$) results in a χ^2/df ratio of 3.886, indicating an acceptable model fit. Absolute and incremental fit indices, including GFI (0.934), AGFI (0.900), NFI (0.958), and CFI (0.964), all surpass the 0.90 benchmark, suggesting a well-fitting model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, the RMSEA value of

0.068 falls within the acceptable range (< 0.08), reflecting a low level of approximation error and further supporting the adequacy of model fit. Collectively, these results confirm the robustness and appropriateness of the measurement model for subsequent structural analysis.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Estimation of Causal Effects

Table 5: Standardised Regression Coefficients were Estimated Using AMOS Software, as Shown in the Table.

Variable	Gamma (γ)	T	p-value	Significance
Recruitment	-0.547	0.417	0.259	Not significant
Training	-0.538	0.805	0.260	Not significant
Compensation	0.629	1.129	0.250	Not significant
Performance Appraisal	0.126	0.028	0.563	Not significant

None of the evaluated HRM practices demonstrated a statistically significant impact on counterproductive work behaviour ($p > 0.05$). The standardised regression coefficients estimated using AMOS are summarised in Table 5. Consequently, all

hypotheses (H1 to H4) are rejected. While the path coefficients for recruitment and training were negative, and that for compensation was positive, these relationships were not statistically substantiated. These findings indicate that, within

4.2. Structural Model Analysis of Counterproductive Behaviour

Table 6: Standardised Regression Coefficients were Estimated Using AMOS Software, as Shown in the Table.

Index	Value	Recommended thresholds	Interpretation
χ^2	561.00	—	Raw chi-square statistic
Degrees of freedom	58	—	—
χ^2/df	9.68	< 5 (acceptable)	Poor fit
GFI	0.776	> 0.90	Weak fit
AGFI	-0.002	> 0.90	Unacceptable (negative value)
RMSEA	0.160	< 0.08 (good)	Very poor fit
NFI	1.000	> 0.90	Excellent (relative to null model)
CFI	1.000	> 0.90	Excellent (relative to null model)

Despite excellent incremental fit indices (NFI and CFI = 1.000), other indicators, particularly the high χ^2/df ratio, the negative AGFI, and the RMSEA far above the acceptable threshold, indicate poor overall model fit. The full set of model fit indices is presented in Table 6, and the structural model is illustrated in Figure 2. This limits the robustness of conclusions regarding the relationship between HRM practices and counterproductive behaviour, despite a good fit relative to the null model. The findings do not support the main hypothesis (H4) or its sub-hypotheses. The HRM practices examined (recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal) do not exhibit a significant impact on employees' counterproductive behaviour within the studied sample. Moreover, the model's fit indices call for caution in interpretation, highlighting possible methodological or contextual limitations that warrant further investigation. To sum up, the non-significant results obtained in our study can be explained by several contextual specificities unique to Morocco. Firstly, the local organisational culture often favours informal interpersonal relationships and group dynamics, which may take precedence over formal human resource management practices. This predominance of personal ties thus limits the direct impact that practices such as recruitment, training, compensation, or appraisal can have on employee behaviours. Secondly, Moroccan organisational structures remain largely hierarchical and centralised, which may reduce employee autonomy and engagement with HR initiatives, consequently diminishing their influence on counterproductive behaviours. Thirdly, employee perceptions of these HR practices play a crucial role. If the practices are not perceived as fair, consistent, or adapted to on-the-ground realities, their effect on

the studied context, the HRM practices under consideration do not appear to function as effective mechanisms for mitigating counterproductive behaviours.

behaviours is limited or even non-existent. Finally, it is likely that other psychosocial factors, such as workplace climate, stress, or job insecurity, strongly influence counterproductive behaviours and are not captured by our current model. These observations suggest that, in this context, a mixed-methods approach incorporating qualitative methods would better elucidate the underlying mechanisms and employee perceptions, thereby enriching and refining explanatory models.

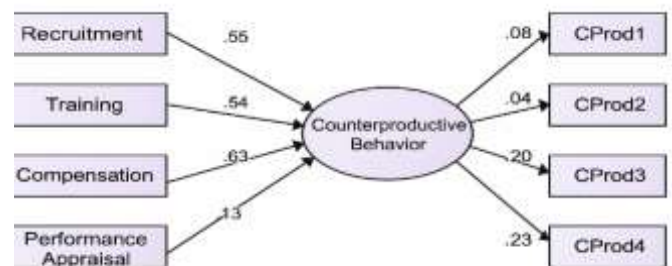


Figure 2: Structural Model Showing the Influence of HR Practices (Recruitment, Training, Compensation, and Performance Appraisal) On Counterproductive Work Behaviour.

5. DISCUSSION

This study offers a nuanced contribution to the growing literature on human resource management (HRM) and organisational behaviour by examining the relationship between HR practices and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) in the Moroccan private sector. Contrary to numerous previous empirical findings (e.g., Kura et al., 2019; Gebretsadik Estifo et al., 2019; Teimouri et al., 2019), our results do not support the hypothesis of a significant negative relationship between the examined HR practices, recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal, and

CWB. This unexpected outcome challenges traditional assumptions regarding the universal effectiveness of HR systems in curbing deviant behaviours. One possible explanation lies in the implementation gap. While HR policies may be formally established and theoretically sound, their practical application may lack consistency, regularity, or transparency. This disconnect may lead employees to perceive HR efforts as symbolic rather than substantive, diminishing their motivational impact and behavioural influence. This issue is particularly salient in organisational contexts marked by top-down management approaches and a lack of feedback mechanisms, both commonly observed in Moroccan firms. Furthermore, our results suggest that the relationship between HR practices and counterproductive behaviours may be mediated or moderated by psychosocial variables not included in the model, such as perceptions of organisational justice, leadership style, psychological contract fulfilment, or the overall work climate (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). The absence of such dimensions may partially explain the divergence between our findings and those reported in other settings. The broader socio-cultural and institutional context of Morocco further complicates the interpretation of results. A high power distance within organisations, combined with job insecurity and limited employee voice, suggests that deviant behaviours may arise more from structural frustrations and systemic perceptions of injustice than from deficiencies in HR practices alone. These cultural and economic realities may act as a buffer, weakening or even neutralising the expected impact of HR systems, regardless of their formal content.

These findings underscore that the effectiveness of HR practices cannot be divorced from a contextual and systemic perspective. Beyond the formal design of HR policies, their real impact depends heavily on the organisational climate, managerial credibility, and employees' perceptions of managerial intent. Our conclusions align with recent HRM literature advocating a contingent approach, where the influence of HR practices is shaped by both internal and external organisational variables. Theoretically, our study contributes to ongoing debates by questioning the presumed universality of HRM effects and inviting a re-examination of the mechanisms through which these practices may, or may not, translate into behavioural outcomes. Practically, our results urge HR professionals to move beyond mere formalisation, focusing instead on the credibility, perceived fairness, and cultural alignment of HR initiatives. Key priorities include

fostering trust, ensuring managerial consistency, and promoting open dialogue, all essential to enhancing the legitimacy of HR efforts and reducing counterproductive behaviour. Future research would benefit from adopting longitudinal and mixed-method approaches, incorporating both psychological variables (e.g., trust, engagement, perceived justice) and structural factors (e.g., job design, leadership styles). Comparative studies across sectors and countries would also help identify the boundary conditions under which HR practices are most effective, thereby deepening the contextual understanding necessary for their success in specific environments such as Morocco. Rather than viewing the absence of statistically significant relationships as a limitation, we interpret our findings as a timely opportunity to challenge deterministic assumptions about the universal efficacy of HR practices. In contexts such as Morocco, where formal HRM policies often coexist with informal norms and inconsistent implementation, the lack of statistical association highlights the complex organisational dynamics at play. These findings call for more context-sensitive and multi-level research frameworks that integrate psychological, cultural, and structural dimensions to better capture the real functioning of HRM systems.

5.1. Implications of the Study

The findings of this study invite a critical re-evaluation of how human resource management (HRM) practices are conceived and implemented within the Moroccan private sector. As the results indicate, current HRM practices do not function as effective mechanisms for curbing counterproductive work behaviours (CWB), highlighting a gap between formal HR systems and their perceived utility by employees. This suggests the need for a more integrated and context-sensitive approach to HRM. First, organisations should prioritise the strategic alignment of HRM with broader corporate objectives, ensuring that HR practices are not treated as isolated procedures but as integral components of organisational functioning. Second, the regular assessment of employees' perceptions and experiences of HR practices is essential, as their subjective interpretations significantly influence behavioural outcomes. Tools such as climate surveys, feedback mechanisms, and participatory HR design may improve this alignment. Furthermore, the effectiveness of HRM cannot be dissociated from broader organisational dynamics. Factors such as the quality of managerial relationships, the clarity and openness of internal communication, and the degree

of recognition and appreciation employees receive are critical levers that shape the credibility and acceptance of HRM systems. Addressing these transversal issues can significantly enhance the perceived fairness and motivational impact of HR practices. Finally, in contexts marked by evolving employee expectations and increased organisational complexity, HRM must adopt a more systemic, employee-centred logic, capable of integrating psychological, social, and organisational dimensions, to act as a genuine driver of ethical and productive behaviour at work.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several limitations should be highlighted for a nuanced interpretation of our findings. Firstly, some items, particularly within the “performance appraisal” dimension, exhibit standardised factor loadings close to the minimum acceptable threshold (0.50). However, these items were retained to avoid compromising the conceptual validity of the dimension, which encompasses essential aspects such as feedback quality, perceived fairness, and the developmental use of appraisal. We acknowledge that retaining these items may introduce some measurement variability, and we suggest that future research revisit and refine these scales. Secondly, the tested structural model shows imperfect fit indices, with a high RMSEA (0.160) and a negative AGFI, indicating overall poor model fit. This limitation is partly attributable to the absence of mediating or moderating variables, such as perceived organisational justice, leadership style, or employee engagement, which are frequently identified in the literature as key factors influencing the relationship between HR practices and counterproductive work behaviours. Including these variables in future models could significantly enhance the relevance and robustness of the analyses. Finally, the specific organisational context of the Moroccan private sector plays a crucial role in interpreting our results. The often uneven or symbolic implementation of human resource management practices, combined with a strong predominance of informal relational and hierarchical logics, may limit employees’ perception of the actual effectiveness of these practices. This discrepancy between formal mechanisms and lived organisational reality likely weakens the expected relationships in our model. Moreover, the diversity of companies and organisational cultures within our sample contributes to heterogeneity that may dilute observable effects. In summary, these methodological and contextual limitations warrant caution when interpreting the results, while offering

clear avenues to deepen understanding of the underlying mechanisms through mixed-method approaches and more culturally attuned measurement calibrations.

6. CONCLUSION

This study offers an in-depth examination of the complex relationship between human resource management (HRM) practices, namely recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal, and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) within Morocco’s private sector. Contrary to much of the existing literature, which often highlights a negative association between effective HR practices and organisational deviance, our empirical findings reveal no significant effects in this particular context. These results highlight the critical importance of adopting a nuanced and contextualised approach to evaluating the effectiveness of HRM practices. The gap between formally defined HR policies and their actual implementation, employees’ perceptions of organisational support, and the mediating roles of leadership, organisational justice, and workplace climate all play significant roles in shaping the HRM–CWB relationship. Furthermore, specific socio-cultural and economic characteristics of the Moroccan context, such as high power distance, social norms influenced by religion, and generally precarious employment conditions, add layers of complexity and moderation to these dynamics. By incorporating these elements, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of HRM by challenging Universalist assumptions about the effectiveness of HR practices and emphasising the need for models that include mediating and moderating variables grounded in local realities. From a practical perspective, the findings urge HR professionals and managers to focus closely on the quality of HR practice implementation, ensuring clear communication and active managerial involvement, alongside regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to align policies with actual practices. It is essential to foster organisational justice through transparent and equitable processes, particularly regarding appraisal and remuneration, to build employee trust. Developing a positive organisational climate that values employee participation and cultural diversity is also crucial. Moreover, adapting HR practices to the specific socio-cultural and institutional context of Morocco, taking into account hierarchical norms and employment instability, will enhance their relevance and effectiveness. Finally, strengthening the role of leaders and middle managers through targeted

training in ethical leadership and conflict management can be pivotal in reducing counterproductive behaviours. Looking ahead, future research would benefit from employing more sophisticated analytical frameworks, such as multilevel, longitudinal, and mixed-method

approaches, to explore the psychological and structural mechanisms underlying the HRM-CWB link. Such studies would enable better adaptation of HR practices to diverse organisational contexts, contributing to the development of healthier and more effective workplaces.

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