“Sorry to Interrupt…”: How Work Interruptions Relate to Performance of Hotel Front Office Staff

by

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Abstract

Workplace interruptions are an inherent feature of hotel front-office operations, yet their cognitive consequences remain insufficiently examined within hospitality research. The present study investigates how interruptions originating from four distinct sources—coworkers, managers, guests, and workplace technology—influence frontline performance through mental workload. Data collected from 367 non-managerial front-office employees in U.S. hotels were analyzed using structural equation modelling. The findings indicate that mental workload is the primary mechanism linking the interruption intensity associated with each source to performance deterioration. Across all sources, higher interruption intensity increases mental workload, which subsequently reduces service speed, accuracy, order compliance, and service quality. Conversely, interruption frequency demonstrates limited effects, yielding significant indirect impacts only for technology-related interruptions. Overall, these findings highlight interruption intensity as a more consistent predictor of cognitive strain than frequency. This study extends interruption research within hospitality and provides practical implications for optimizing front-office operations and service reliability.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Disclosure Statement

ChatGPT was used solely as a language-support tool during the preparation of this thesis. Its assistance was limited to reviewing grammar and improving sentence structure. All aspects of the research, including the study design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and scholarly conclusions, were conducted independently by the author. The author assumes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the work presented in this thesis.

Digital Accessibility Disclosure Statement

In the preparation of this thesis, specialized digital accessibility tools were utilized to ensure the document complies with federal electronic distribution mandates. Specifically, the author employed the Microsoft Word Accessibility Checker alongside Adobe Acrobat Pro accessibility tools, supplemented by a comprehensive manual review of headings, document hierarchy, figures, tables, captions, and alternative text.

The author acknowledges full responsibility for the intellectual content of this work and has made a rigorous, good-faith effort to comply with all digital accessibility requirements in academic publishing, ensuring that the structural presentation of the content fulfills these standards without altering its theoretical or empirical nature. Furthermore, all components of this manuscript have been thoroughly reviewed, remediated, and verified to meet these accessibility criteria prior to final publication.

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I dedicate this work to the memory of my late father, Bader Alfataftah. You were my first mentor, my greatest role model, and my best friend. Long before I understood the value of education, you instilled in me a vision of learning, growth, and excellence. Although you are no longer with us, your presence has accompanied me throughout this journey. You remain the finest hotelier and leader I have ever known, and your legacy inspires me every single day.

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1. Introduction

Hotel front office staff (FOS) operate in fast-paced environments where they must simultaneously manage guest interactions, administrative responsibilities, and technology-supported operations. During peak periods, check-outs, arrivals, guest inquiries, internal requests, and system notifications often occur concurrently, requiring employees to continuously shift attention between competing tasks. Such interruption-rich environments place considerable demands on employees' cognitive resources and increase the likelihood of operational errors.

Errors occurring during check-in and check-out procedures are among the most common sources of guest dissatisfaction, service recovery, and negative online reviews (Choi & Pizam, 2015). Because the front office serves as guests' primary point of contact throughout their stay, even seemingly minor processing errors can compromise service quality, disrupt hotel operations, and damage customer trust. Understanding how workplace interruptions contribute to these failures is therefore critical for improving both operational reliability and guest satisfaction.

FOS routinely experience interruptions originating from guests, coworkers, managers, and workplace technology (Zhang et al., 2018). These interruptions fragment attention, interrupt workflow continuity, and increase the likelihood of task errors (Mark et al., 2005). According to *attention residue theory*, cognitive resources remain partially engaged with previously interrupted tasks, reducing employees' ability to fully concentrate on subsequent activities (Leroy & Schmidt, 2016). Given the limited capacity of working memory, repeated task switching is particularly problematic in hospitality environments that require sustained attention, rapid decision-making, and accurate service delivery (Reason, 1990).

Despite the prevalence of workplace interruptions, hospitality research has devoted relatively limited attention to the cognitive mechanisms through which interruptions affect employee performance. Existing studies have primarily focused on emotional labor, service interactions, and guest-oriented behaviors (Zhang et al., 2018), while considerably less attention has been paid to explaining how interruption-related cognitive demands translate into operational errors. Research outside hospitality suggests that employees experience numerous interruptions throughout the workday, many of which contribute little to task completion while imposing substantial cognitive costs (González & Mark, 2004).

Mental workload represents a key mechanism through which workplace interruptions may impair performance. Defined as the cognitive effort required to meet task demands (Hart & Staveland, 1988), mental workload increases when employees must suspend an ongoing task, process an interruption, and subsequently reconstruct the original task upon resumption (Altmann & Trafton, 2002). This suspend–resume process consumes working memory resources, increases cognitive load, and elevates the likelihood of human error (Baethge & Rigotti, 2013).

Hospitality research has traditionally explained employee performance in terms of skills, motivation, and attitudes. From a cognitive perspective, however, performance also depends on the availability of limited attentional resources (Kalyuga et al., 2011). Frequent interruptions and attention residue reduce these resources, increasing the probability of service failures, operational mistakes, reputational damage, and financial losses (Hoffman et al., 1995).

Importantly, not all interruptions impose the same cognitive burden. Interruptions originating from different sources vary in urgency, emotional demands, authority, and information-processing requirements (Line & Hanks, 2019). Guest interruptions frequently require emotional regulation; coworker interruptions encourage task switching; managerial interruptions often involve hierarchical urgency, whereas technology-generated notifications require rapid cognitive processing. These differences suggest that interruption sources differ in the volume of cognitive resources required to manage them and, consequently, in their effects on employee performance.

Accordingly, this study examines whether mental workload mediates the relationship between workplace interruptions and FOS performance. Specifically, it investigates how interruption frequency and interruption intensity relate to FOS performance, measured in terms of service speed, work accuracy, order compliance, and service quality.

This study addresses three research questions: (1) How do workplace interruptions originating from guests, coworkers, managers, and technology relate to FOS performance? (2) To what extent do the effects of workplace interruptions differ across interruption sources? and (3) What role does mental workload play in explaining these relationships?

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001) suggests that every job includes both job demands and job resources. Job demands require sustained mental effort and can lead to strain, whereas job resources help employees achieve work goals and reduce stress. When job demands consistently exceed available resources, employees experience a greater mental workload, increasing the likelihood of errors.

Drawing on this framework, the present study views frequent and intense workplace interruptions as job demands that increase mental workload and negatively affect FOS performance. By examining different interruption sources and their effects on mental workload, this study extends hospitality research beyond traditional motivation-based explanations by providing a cognitive perspective on employee performance. It also offers practical insights for improving workflow design, supporting optimum technology use, and enhancing managerial practices to reduce unnecessary interruptions and improve service quality.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Preliminary

In interruption science, interruptions are defined as the suspension of a primary task in order to engage in a secondary task, followed by an intended return to the original activity (Altmann & Trafton, 2002). This conceptualization is grounded in Memory-for-Goals (MfG) theory, which posits that successful task resumption depends on the activation level of the primary goal representation in working memory. When attention shifts to a secondary task, activation of the original goal decays over time, thereby increasing the cognitive effort required for retrieval upon resumption (Altmann & Trafton, 2002).

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that such goal decay heightens the likelihood of resumption errors, including omissions, repetitions, and incorrect sequencing of task steps (Westbrook et al., 2010). Interruptions also undermine task efficiency. Reconstructing goal states and reorienting attentional focus prolong task completion times and increase mental workload (Mark et al., 2005). Repeated switching further taxes executive control processes, contributing to mental fatigue and diminished attentional regulation (Monsell, 2003). Notably, even brief disruptions can produce disproportionate effects; interruptions lasting only a few seconds have been shown to significantly elevate post-resumption error rates (Altmann et al., 2014).

Extending this line of research, in high-reliability and office-based domains, interruptions are treated as central determinants of performance reliability (Speier et al., 1999). Healthcare research documents clear associations between interruptions and medication administration errors (Westbrook et al., 2010). Aviation studies identify interruptions as critical risk factors in cockpit task management (Dismukes & Nowinski, 2007), while office-based investigations demonstrate how workflow fragmentation undermines productivity (Mark et al., 2005). Collectively, these studies position interruptions as a significant threat to attentional stability and task performance in complex work environments.

Building on this broader evidence base, a notable contribution is the observational study by Westbrook et al. (2010), which systematically categorized interruptions by source—such as doctors, nurses, or phone calls—and found that interruption occurrence significantly increased both the likelihood and severity of procedural errors. Importantly, the study indicated that interruptions were not equally consequential; socially initiated interruptions were more strongly associated with deviations from established procedures. This source-based differentiation underscores the importance of examining interruptions not as a uniform construct, but as events that vary in risk depending on their origin.

In contrast, hospitality scholarship has rarely conceptualized interruptions as discrete, goal-disrupting cognitive events. Instead, interruption-related phenomena are typically embedded within broader constructs such as work overload, multitasking, role conflict, and environmental distractions. Empirical studies in hotel and restaurant contexts demonstrate that these operational stressors predict service errors, slower transaction processing, and diminished service quality (Karatepe, 2013; Lam et al., 2019; Park & Jang, 2017). Research further indicates that workflow fragmentation in housekeeping and food-and-beverage operations reduces efficiency and heightens role stress, particularly under high hotel occupancy conditions (Kang & Hyun, 2012).

Parallel work links service disruptions to *emotional labor* outcomes, defined as the process by which employees regulate and manage their emotions to display organizationally desired feelings during service interactions (Hochschild, 1983), showing that frequent task interference intensifies emotional exhaustion, increases surface acting, and weakens service recovery effectiveness (Kim et al., 2012; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016; Liat et al., 2017). Studies of irregular shift schedules in hotels additionally suggest that fatigue amplifies attentional failures and performance variability (Blomme et al., 2010). At the organizational level, service climate and managerial support have been shown to buffer the negative consequences of operational stressors (Hong et al., 2013), whereas poorly integrated technologies contribute to technostress and reduced productivity (Okumus et al., 2016). Collectively, these findings imply that hospitality employees operate under conditions conducive to cognitive disruption, yet interruptions themselves remain under-theorized.

Given that hotel front office environments are characterized by sequential, accuracy-sensitive tasks performed under real-time service expectations and continuous guest visibility, the cognitive implications of interruptions warrant direct theoretical attention. These contextual features create distinctive performance demands that differ from those observed in healthcare, aviation, and traditional office settings. Drawing on the precedent of source-based differentiation in healthcare research, it is plausible that interruption sources in hospitality vary in perceived urgency, authority pressure, and deferrability, thereby generating different levels of cognitive disruption. Examining interruptions in front-of-the-house settings through a source-sensitive lens may therefore yield a more precise understanding of interruption intensity, rather than assuming equivalent effects across all disruption types.

Despite relevant adjacent findings, hospitality research has not systematically integrated interruption science with front office operations. Consequently, a theoretically grounded explanation of how interruptions relate to FOS performance remains underdeveloped. The following conceptual model addresses this gap by integrating insights from interruption science with the operational realities of front office hospitality work. It specifies the core constructs examined, articulates the hypothesized relationships among them, and provides a cognitively grounded framework for explaining how interruptions interact with FOS performance outcomes. The following sections define each construct as operationalized in this research and outline the theoretical rationale underpinning the proposed relationships.

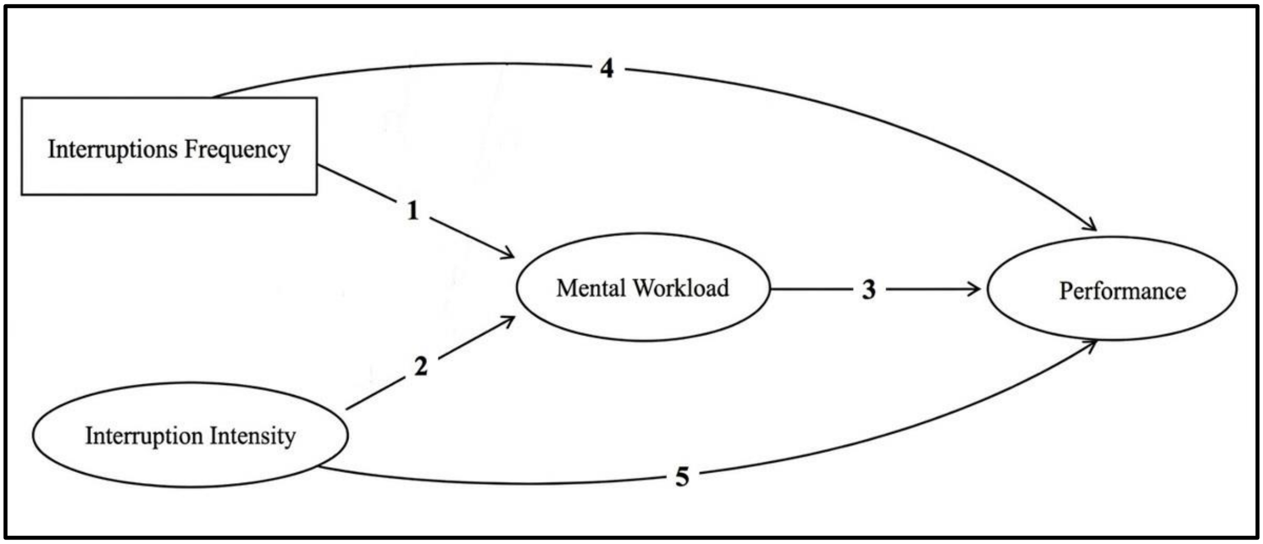


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model.

Oval shapes denote latent constructs measured by multiple observed indicators, while the rectangular shape denotes a directly observed variable. The staff performance construct represents performance deterioration attributable to workplace interruptions. Source: Developed by the author.

2.2 Interruption Intensity

Building on the preceding discussion of interruptions as goal-disrupting cognitive events, interruptions may vary not only in frequency but also in their qualitative characteristics. Prior research commonly distinguishes between social interruptions—originating from human sources—and technological or environmental interruptions, such as system alerts and phone notifications (Baethge & Rigotti, 2013). Each type imposes distinct attentional demands on frontline staff, shaping how interruptions are perceived and managed in real time.

A critical dimension for advancing this distinction is *interruption intensity*, defined in this study as the extent to which a frontline employee feels compelled to suspend an ongoing task and respond immediately to an interruption. Whereas frequency captures how often interruptions occur, intensity reflects the perceived importance and deferrability of the disruptive source.

Emotional intensity represents a critical mechanism through which interruptions exert their influence on frontline staff. It reflects the affective emotional weight attached to an interruption and shapes how employees prioritize and respond to competing demands. Operating within complex social environments, FOS must continuously evaluate the relational implications of delaying a response (Bardi, 2011). Concerns about appearing unresponsive, undermining social harmony, or failing to acknowledge the interrupter may prompt immediate task suspension (Grandey, 2000). Such relational pressures are particularly salient in interpersonal interruptions, where social stakes heighten emotional intensity and diminish perceived deferrability (Jett & George, 2003). Importantly, technological interruptions are not devoid of emotional implications. System notifications or alerts may signal more than operational requirements, as they can influence employees' perceptions of competence (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Tarafdar et al., 2007).

Differences in perceived *source-imposed urgency* are particularly evident across interruption sources, reflecting the expected consequences, whether as a positive gain or a negative outcome, in addressing an interruption. Interruptions from managers are typically experienced as highly urgent and less deferrable than those from coworkers, as they may carry evaluative or corrective implications that heighten perceived consequences (Rosen et al., 2019). Guest-initiated interruptions, while central to service delivery, introduce immediate and often competing demands that require FOS to suspend ongoing tasks to address pressing customer needs (Zhang et al., 2018). Coworker interruptions may facilitate coordination; however, they can disrupt workflow when they occur at inopportune moments (Perlow, 1999). Technological interruptions—such as alerts from property management system—are externally imposed and often difficult to defer, prompting abrupt task switching and increasing attentional fragmentation (Line & Hanks, 2019).

2.3 Mediating Role of Mental Workload

Within the human factors and ergonomics literature, there is a focus on designing tools, workspaces, products, and systems to align with human abilities and limitations.

Mental workload is commonly conceptualized as the proportion of an individual's limited cognitive and attentional resources required to meet task demands while maintaining a desired level of performance (Wickens et al., 2015). Mental workload emerges from the interaction between objective work demands and the operator's available processing capacity and is therefore understood as a multidimensional construct shaped by both task-related characteristics and individual differences. A key distinction in this literature is between objective task demands, often referred to as *stress*, and the individual's internal response to those demands, referred to as *strain* (Hancock & Meshkati, 1988). Because this internal response is influenced by factors such as skill level, fatigue, and psychological state, two operators exposed to identical objective stressors may nonetheless experience substantially different levels of perceived strain.

Frequently, mental workload is assessed using standardized instruments such as the NASA Task Load Index (NASA-TLX) (Hart & Staveland, 1988). Performance metrics provide an additional behavioral perspective, indicating that individuals may initially sustain output within a functional comfort zone by compensating for increasing task demands through heightened effort. However, once cognitive capacity is exceeded, performance typically declines sharply, reflecting an inability to further offset rising strain. This relationship is consistent with the principles of cognitive load theory, which explains how performance deteriorates when cognitive demands exceed an individual's available mental resources (Sweller, 1988).

The present research employed the NASA-TLX to obtain a multidimensional assessment of mental workload during interrupted FOS work. The NASA-TLX evaluates six dimensions of perceived workload: *mental demand*, referring to the degree of task complexity involved; *physical demand*, reflecting the level of physical activity required to perform the task; *temporal demand*, capturing the time pressure experienced during task execution; *performance*, representing the individual's self-assessment of successful task accomplishment; *effort*, defined as the amount of mental work required to achieve the desired level of performance; and *frustration level*, indicating the extent to which the individual felt irritated or stressed while performing the task.

2.4 Performance

In service contexts, staff performance is often evaluated across several key dimensions. Dewi et al. (2022) define *speed* as the perceived ability of staff to complete core tasks, such as guest check-ins for FOS, within prescribed hotel operating timeframes. The same authors highlight *service quality* as another vital component, reflecting staff responsiveness and guest-oriented behavior. Parasuraman et al. (1985), in their conceptual model of service quality, emphasize *accuracy*, which measures the extent to which staff complete tasks correctly and without errors—for example, applying the correct room rate when charging guests. Finally, Bitner, et al. (2008), in their service blueprinting framework, describe order compliance, which assesses whether staff follow prescribed operating procedures in the correct sequence—for instance, obtaining a guest signature on a registration card before processing a credit card transaction.

These four dimensions were selected because they capture complementary aspects of front office staff performance, encompassing efficiency, service effectiveness, task accuracy, and adherence to standard operating procedures. In this study, overall performance is operationalized as the combination of these four dimensions.

Drawing on the theoretical arguments reviewed above, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Mental workload induced by workplace interruptions is negatively associated with FOS performance.
H2: Mental workload mediates the relationship between interruption frequency and FOS performance.
H3: Mental workload mediates the relationship between interruption intensity and FOS performance.

3. Methods

3.1 Sample and Procedure

This study received ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Auburn University (Protocol No. STUDY00001099). The survey instrument was developed and administered using the Qualtrics online survey platform.

Data were collected through a purposive sampling strategy using the Prolific research platform. Prolific was selected because its large participant pool and advanced prescreening capabilities enable researchers to recruit highly specific professional populations (Peer, 2024). Additionally, the platform provides a cost-effective means of participant recruitment and compensation. By utilizing Prolific's screening tools, access to the survey was restricted to individuals possessing the professional characteristics required for the study, thereby ensuring that responses were obtained from participants capable of providing informed insights into front-office work environments.

Participants were required to be at least 18 years of age and to have current or recent professional experience in the front office department of a hotel located in the United States. The study focused exclusively on hotels with 100 or more rooms, as these properties typically involve greater operational complexity, higher volumes of guest interaction, and more extensive use of information technologies, all of which increase exposure to workplace interruptions. In contrast, smaller hotels often operate with fewer guest interactions, lower technological demands, and greater role overlap among employees.

Participation was limited to non-managerial front-office employees, including receptionists, guest relations staff, and concierges. Front-office managers and supervisory personnel were excluded because their work responsibilities and exposure to interruptions differ substantially from those of frontline employees who maintain a continuous presence in guest-facing areas.

Eligibility was verified through a series of screening questions embedded at the beginning of the survey. Respondents were required to confirm that they were at least 18 years old, currently employed—or employed within the previous 12 months—in a front-office role at a U.S.-based hotel with at least 100 rooms, and not serving in a managerial position. Individuals who failed to meet any of these criteria were automatically disqualified and prevented from proceeding to the main questionnaire.

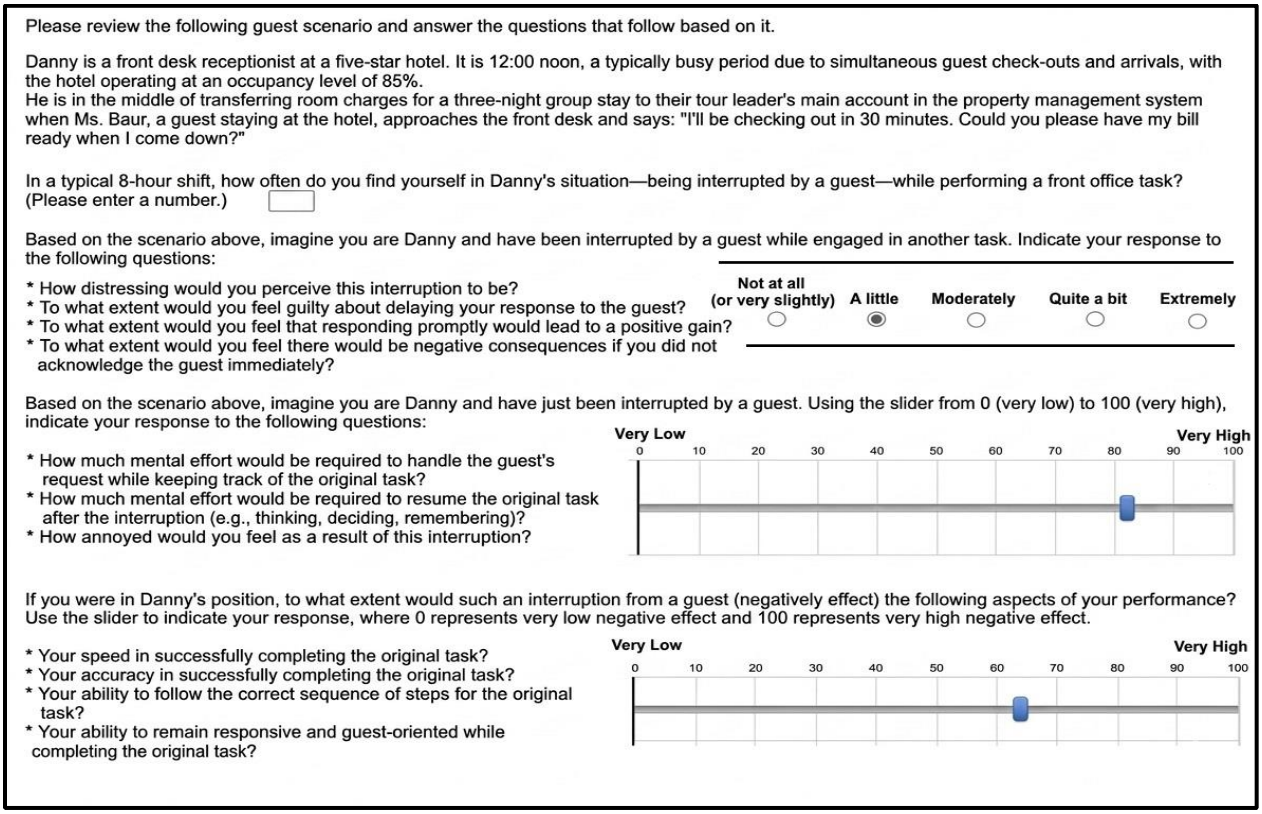
Prior to the primary data collection, a pilot study involving 70 participants was conducted to evaluate survey functionality, item clarity, completion time, and the overall quality of the survey through an open-ended feedback section in which participants could provide comments and suggestions regarding the questionnaire. The pilot results indicated that respondents who successfully passed the quality-control measures required approximately 13 minutes to complete the survey, which was consistent with expectations and confirmed the feasibility of the instrument.

Several procedures were implemented to ensure data quality and response validity. Attention-check items were distributed throughout the questionnaire to identify inattentive responding. Specifically, these items were presented in a 5-point Likert scale format and included explicit instructions directing participants to select a particular response option (e.g., "For quality-control purposes, please select 'Agree' for this item"). Participants who failed one or more attention-check items were excluded from the final dataset. In addition, Qualtrics timing data were examined, and responses exhibiting unrealistically short completion times relative to the pilot study benchmark were removed prior to data analysis. Participants who successfully passed all screening and quality-control procedures and completed the survey received monetary compensation in accordance with Prolific's participant payment guidelines.

After the removal of ineligible and low-quality responses, the final validated sample consisted of 367 participants. Of these respondents, 52% were male, and 55% identified as Caucasian. The demographic characteristics of the sample are generally consistent with those reported in recent studies of U.S. hotel employees (e.g., Armijo et al., 2025), suggesting that the sample is representative of the target population.

3.2 Measures

Following the demographic assessment, participants were presented with four scenario-based prompts representing four distinct sources of workplace interruptions: coworkers, managers, guests, and technology-based systems. Each scenario was designed to reflect a realistic workplace interruption originating from one of these sources. An example of the scenario format is provided in Figure 2, which illustrates a guest interruption and provides context for the sections that follow.



Please review the following guest scenario and answer the questions that follow based on it.

Danny is a front desk receptionist at a five-star hotel. It is 12:00 noon, a typically busy period due to simultaneous guest check-outs and arrivals, with the hotel operating at an occupancy level of 85%.
He is in the middle of transferring room charges for a three-night group stay to their tour leader's main account in the property management system when Ms. Baur, a guest staying at the hotel, approaches the front desk and says: "I'll be checking out in 30 minutes. Could you please have my bill ready when I come down?"

In a typical 8-hour shift, how often do you find yourself in Danny's situation—being interrupted by a guest—while performing a front office task? (Please enter a number.)

Based on the scenario above, imagine you are Danny and have been interrupted by a guest while engaged in another task. Indicate your response to the following questions:

* How distressing would you perceive this interruption to be?
* To what extent would you feel guilty about delaying your response to the guest?
* To what extent would you feel that responding promptly would lead to a positive gain?
* To what extent would you feel there would be negative consequences if you did not acknowledge the guest immediately?

Not at all (or very slightly)	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

Based on the scenario above, imagine you are Danny and have just been interrupted by a guest. Using the slider from 0 (very low) to 100 (very high), indicate your response to the following questions:

* How much mental effort would be required to handle the guest's request while keeping track of the original task?
* How much mental effort would be required to resume the original task after the interruption (e.g., thinking, deciding, remembering)?
* How annoyed would you feel as a result of this interruption?

Very Low — Very High
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

If you were in Danny's position, to what extent would such an interruption from a guest (negatively effect) the following aspects of your performance? Use the slider to indicate your response, where 0 represents very low negative effect and 100 represents very high negative effect.

* Your speed in successfully completing the original task?
* Your accuracy in successfully completing the original task?
* Your ability to follow the correct sequence of steps for the original task?
* Your ability to remain responsive and guest-oriented while completing the original task?

Very Low — Very High
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Figure 2. Guest Interruption Scenario. Source: Author's Research Questionnaire.

Participants first reported the frequency of interruptions. This was followed by four items measuring interruption intensity, three items assessing the mental workload associated with the interruption incident, and four items measuring the resulting FOS decline in performance. Although each survey item was presented individually in the online questionnaire, the response anchors and digital sliders are shown collectively in this figure for illustrative purposes only.

3.2.1 Interruptions Intensity

Interruption intensity was measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale based on four items: two capturing *emotional intensity* and two reflecting *source-imposed urgency*, building on the conceptualization presented in Section 2.2 above. Scores across these four items were first combined and then averaged to represent the overall perceived intensity of an interruption source.

The emotional intensity component was assessed using context-specific items tailored to the source of the interruption, capturing two specific affective responses: feeling *distressed* and feeling *guilty* about delaying a response. These items were adapted from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) (Watson et al., 1988). Although the original PANAS includes a broader range of affective states, only these two items were selected because the remaining emotions (e.g., hostile or proud) were not directly relevant to the workplace interruptions examined in this study. The PANAS is a well-established and widely used measure in the literature that has demonstrated strong internal consistency in prior research.

The adaptation of these affective measures to specific workplace events aligns with Affective Events Theory, which posits that discrete work events elicit emotional reactions that subsequently influence employees' attitudes and behaviors (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

This approach is also consistent with prior research on emotional reactions to task interruptions. For example, Zijlstra et al. (1999) assessed affective responses such as irritation, effort, and distress following interruptions during work tasks. In the present study, responses were recorded using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all or very slightly) to 5 (extremely), consistent with PANAS-based affective measurement approaches.

The study also assessed source-imposed urgency, which is driven by two primary factors: the anticipated *reward* associated with acknowledging the interruption and the *perceived negative consequences* of failing to respond. These items were adapted from Yukl and Falbe (1991) to capture the influence exerted by the interruption source. Items adapted from this framework are commonly used to capture perceived position power—specifically reward power and coercive power—and are typically treated as reflective measures. In prior organizational research, these specific position power subscales have demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients ranging from 0.45 to 0.79 depending on the power base and direction of influence (Yukl & Falbe, 1991). To ensure consistency across the overall intensity scale, the same 5-point Likert-type response anchors used for the emotional intensity items were applied.

3.2.2 Interruptions Frequency

Interruption frequency is defined in this study as the total number of interruptions from a particular source experienced by a hotel FOS member during a typical eight-hour shift.

Several contextual factors may influence the relationship between workplace interruptions and outcomes in front office work environments. Accordingly, to ensure internal validity, key potential influencing variables were controlled by standardizing them across all scenarios.

First, shift timing was standardized to noon during a daytime shift to eliminate circadian-related variations in fatigue, alertness, and mental workload (Åkerstedt, 2003). Second, hotel occupancy was fixed at 85% to mitigate the effects of fluctuating service pressures and operational demands. Task complexity was controlled by using representative front-office duties of equivalent difficulty. Additionally, the duration of all interruptions presented in the scenarios was standardized by limiting them to very brief interruptions lasting only a few seconds. Finally, temporal demand was standardized by enforcing a uniform 30-minute window for task completion.

3.2.3 Mental Workload

Mental workload associated with each interruption source was assessed using three items adapted from the NASA-TLX (Hart & Staveland, 1988), a widely established and validated measure of subjective workload (Hoonakker et al., 2011). The items were combined and then averaged to form an overall score of perceived mental workload.

Consistent with the original NASA-TLX scoring approach, all items were measured on a 0–100 scale anchored at 0 (“Very Low”) and 100 (“Very High”). However, rather than using the original paper-based 21-point visual analog format, the present study employed digital slider scales to facilitate online administration.

Given that workplace interruptions require employees to simultaneously manage the interrupting request while maintaining awareness of the primary task, the measurement focused primarily on the *cognitive effort* associated with interruption management. Accordingly, two items were used to capture the effort-related dimension of workload.

The first item assessed *concurrent mental effort*, defined as the mental effort required to address the interruption while continuing the original task, thereby requiring employees to divide their attention between two competing demands. The second item assessed *re-engagement mental effort*, referring to the effort required to resume and refocus on the original task after the interruption had ended. A third item measured the *frustration level* associated with the interruption experience.

Building on the dimension structure of the NASA-TLX outlined in Section 2.3 above, several original dimensions were intentionally excluded to align the measure with the specific context of front-desk work. Physical demand was considered less relevant because front office service tasks are predominantly sedentary and cognitively oriented. Temporal demand and task complexity were held constant across scenarios, as described in Section 3.2.2 above. Finally, the performance dimension was excluded because employee performance was examined separately as a distinct outcome variable.

3.2.4 FOS Performance

The items used to evaluate the hypothesized negative association on FOS performance as a result of an interruption incident—across *speed*, *accuracy*, *order compliance*, and *service quality*—are presented in the lower part of Figure 2. The performance measure was adapted from the NASA-TLX performance subscale and extended to capture these four dimensions, which were selected based on the theoretical rationale outlined in Section 2.4 above. The items were combined and then averaged to form an overall performance score.

In each scenario, participants rated the extent of perceived negative effects on their successful completion of the primary task. Responses were captured using the same 0–100 slider scale to ensure measurement consistency across the questionnaire.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Mplus version 9.1 through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SPSS Version 31 was used to compute descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency reliability, while Mplus was used to conduct the SEM analyses. Because the study examined four interruption sources, four separate SEM models were estimated, with one model specified for each source.

For each model, the analysis followed a two-step approach. First, the measurement model was assessed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate reliability and validity. Second, the structural model was examined to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. Composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to assess internal consistency and convergent validity, while discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion ratios. Model fit was assessed using χ^2/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. Finally, mediation effects were tested using bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples for each structural model.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were screened for missing values, outliers, and normality. No substantial missing data were detected, and skewness and kurtosis values fell within acceptable ranges. The sample characteristics are presented in Table 1, which also reports the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among the study variables for each SEM model.

	Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	1	2	3
Coworker	1. Interruptions Frequency	4.42	2.54	—		
	2. Interruption Intensity	2.85	0.78	$\mathbf{0.13}^{*}$	—	
	3. Mental Workload	47.56	20.41	0.02	$\mathbf{0.42}^{***}$	—
	4. Performance	50.94	23.91	-0.03	$\mathbf{0.23}^{***}$	$\mathbf{0.48}^{***}$
	Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	5	6	7
Manager	5. Interruptions Frequency	2.84	2.05	—		
	6. Interruption Intensity	3.43	0.81	-0.04	—	
	7. Mental Workload	55.05	21.78	0.05	$\mathbf{0.43}^{***}$	—
	8. Performance	53.7	23.77	0.08	$\mathbf{0.21}^{***}$	$\mathbf{0.55}^{***}$
	Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	9	10	11
Guest	9. Interruptions Frequency	5.66	3.01	—		
	10. Interruption Intensity	3	0.87	0.1	—	
	11. Mental Workload	43.36	21.7	-0.07	$\mathbf{0.42}^{***}$	—
	12. Performance	45.85	25.96	$\mathbf{-0.13}^{*}$	$\mathbf{0.21}^{***}$	$\mathbf{0.56}^{***}$
	Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	13	14	15
Technology	13. Interruptions Frequency	3.29	2.52	—		
	14. Interruption Intensity	3.17	0.91	-0.02	—	
	15. Mental Workload	54.26	21.83	0.05	$\mathbf{0.48}^{***}$	—
	16. Performance	51.1	23.64	0.05	$\mathbf{0.27}^{***}$	$\mathbf{0.67}^{***}$

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for the Four Interruption Models (N = 367).
Note: * $p<.05$; *** $p<.001$.

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency. As presented in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.67 to 0.94. Interruption Intensity demonstrated acceptable reliability (α = 0.67–0.75), Mental Workload showed good reliability (α = 0.79–0.83), and Staff Performance exhibited excellent reliability (α = 0.91–0.94). Although the reliability coefficients for Interruption

Intensity were slightly below the conventional .70 threshold in some models, they exceeded the recommended minimum value of .60 for short scales comprising fewer than five items (Hair et al., 2019). Overall, these results indicate satisfactory internal consistency across all measurement scales and support the reliability of the measurement instruments used in the study.

Construct	Number of Items	Coworker α	Manager α	Guest α	Workplace Technology α
Interruption Intensity	4	0.69	0.68	0.67	0.75
Mental Workload	3	0.79	0.82	0.80	0.83
Staff Performance	4	0.91	0.91	0.94	0.93

Table 2. Cronbach's α Reliability Analysis of Interruption Intensity, Mental Workload, and Staff Performance Measures Across the Four SEM Models.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement properties of each interruption model were evaluated using CFA. Across all four interruption scenarios, the CFA was conducted to assess convergent validity, discriminant validity, internal consistency reliability, and overall measurement quality. CR values exceeded the recommended threshold of .70 for all constructs, ranging from .70 to .94, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. AVE values ranged from .38 to .81. Although the interruption intensity construct produced AVE values below the recommended .50 criterion in several scenarios, the corresponding CR values remained above .70, indicating acceptable convergent validity. Furthermore, all factor loadings were statistically significant ($p < .001$), and most exceeded .50.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Across all four models, the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with the remaining constructs, providing evidence of adequate discriminant validity.

The CFA fit indices are presented in Table 3. The coworker interruption model demonstrated the strongest fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.22$, CFI = .974, TLI = .962, RMSEA = .058, SRMR = .040). The technology interruption model also showed acceptable fit ($\chi^2/df = 3.42$, CFI = .963, TLI = .945, RMSEA = .083, SRMR = .044). The manager and guest interruption models exhibited comparatively weaker fit, particularly in terms of RMSEA and TLI values. Nevertheless, all models demonstrated satisfactory reliability, significant factor loadings, acceptable convergent validity based on CR, and adequate discriminant validity; therefore, all four measurement models were retained for subsequent SEM analyses.

Model	χ²(df)	χ²/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Coworker	84.55 (38)	2.22	.974	.962	.058	.040
Manager	198.40 (38)	5.22	.928	.892	.109	.064
Guest	253.96 (38)	6.68	.917	.876	.126	.091
Technology	130.00 (38)	3.42	.963	.945	.083	.044

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for the Measurement Models Across the Four Interruption Sources.

4.3 Structural Model Results

Following validation of the measurement models, SEM was employed to examine the relationships among interruption intensity (I), interruption frequency (F), mental workload (MW), and performance (P). Abbreviated source identifiers are used throughout this section: C = coworker interruptions, M = manager interruptions, G = guest interruptions, and T = technology interruptions (table 4). These abbreviations facilitate comparisons across the four structural models. Mental workload was significantly associated with performance deterioration across all interruption sources.

Interruption intensity consistently and positively predicted mental workload (β = 14.45–21.02, all $p < .001$). The effects of interruption frequency, however, varied by interruption source. Specifically, interruption frequency significantly increased mental workload in the manager ($\beta = 0.92$, $p = .041$) and technology ($\beta = 0.85$, $p = .034$) models. In the guest model, interruption frequency was negatively associated with performance deterioration ($\beta = -0.75$, $p = .022$). Intensity exerted a significant direct effect on performance only in the technology model ($\beta = -5.23$, $p = .005$).

Model	Path	(β) Estimate Effect	(SE) Standard Error	*p* value	95% CI confidence interval
Coworker	CI → CMW	18.67	2.36	**< 0.001*** **	[14.41, 23.70]
	CI → CP	-0.50	2.94	0.866	[-6.57, 5.02]
	CF → CMW	-0.40	0.41	0.324	[-1.21, 0.38]
	CF → CP	-0.29	0.37	0.434	[-1.00, 0.42]
	CMW → CP	0.53	0.10	**< 0.001*** **	[0.32, 0.73]
Manager	MI → MMW	17.41	2.06	**< 0.001*** **	[13.37, 21.45]
	MI → MP	-4.86	2.56	0.057	[-9.88, 0.16]
	MF → MMW	0.92	0.45	**0.041***	[0.04, 1.80]
	MF → MP	0.26	0.44	0.551	[-0.60, 1.12]
	MMW → MP	0.65	0.10	**< 0.001*** **	[0.46, 0.84]
Guest	GI → GMW	21.02	3.27	**< 0.001*** **	[14.61, 27.43]
	GI → GP	-5.81	3.49	0.096	[-12.65, 1.03]
	GF → GMW	-0.67	0.38	0.079	[-1.42, 0.08]
	GF → GP	-0.75	0.33	**0.022***	[-1.40, -0.10]
	GMW → GP	0.74	0.08	**< 0.001*** **	[0.58, 0.90]
Technology	TI → TMW	14.45	1.27	**< 0.001*** **	[11.96, 16.94]
	TI → TP	-5.23	1.85	**0.005*** *	[-8.86, -1.60]
	TF → TMW	0.85	0.40	**0.034***	[0.07, 1.63]
	TF → TP	-0.19	0.32	0.541	[-0.82, 0.44]
	TMW → TP	0.92	0.09	**< 0.001*** **	[0.74, 1.10]

Table 4. Structural Model Results for the Four Models.
Note: significant effects are indicated by * p < .05, ** p<01 and *** p < .001.

4.4 Mediation Analysis

Bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was employed to examine whether mental workload mediated the effects of interruption frequency and interruption intensity on performance deterioration.

4.4.1 Frequency Related Mediation

As shown in Table 5, a significant indirect effect was found only for technology interruptions (β = 0.78, 95% CI [0.02, 1.54]). This pattern indicates full mediation. In contrast, coworker, manager, and guest interruptions did not show a significant indirect effect through mental workload.

Source	Indirect Effect (β)	95% CI confidence interval	Mediation Type
Coworker	-0.21	[-0.69, 0.19]	No mediation
Manager	0.60	[-0.02, 1.22]	No mediation
Guest	-0.49	[-1.07, 0.07]	No mediation
Technology	0.78	[0.02, 1.54]	Full

Table 5. Mediation Results Related to Interruption Frequency.

4.4.2 Intensity Related Mediation

As shown in Table 6, the findings reveal a consistent pattern whereby mental workload serves as the primary mechanism linking interruption intensity to performance deterioration. Significant indirect effects were observed for coworker (β = 9.88, 95% CI [5.93, 15.03]), manager (β = 11.36, 95% CI [7.45, 16.36]), guest (β = 15.56, 95% CI [9.74, 21.38]), and technology interruptions (β = 13.27, 95% CI [9.45, 17.09]). Full mediation was observed for coworker, manager, and guest interruptions, whereas partial mediation was observed for technology interruptions.

Source	Indirect Effect (β)	95% CI confidence interval	Mediation Type
Coworker	9.88	[5.93, 15.03]	Full
Manager	11.36	[7.45, 16.36]	Full
Guest	15.56	[9.74, 21.38]	Full
Technology	13.27	[9.45, 17.09]	Partial

Table 6. Mediation Results Related to Interruption Intensity.

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	*Mental workload induced by workplace interruptions is negatively associated with front office staff performance.*	Supported
H2	*Mental workload mediates the relationship between interruption frequency and performance.*	Partially Supported
H3	*Mental workload mediates the relationship between interruption intensity and performance.*	Supported

Table 7. Hypotheses Testing Results.

5. Discussion

5.1 The Universal Cost of Mental Workload (H1)

The results fully support H1 across all tested sources of interruption. Whether an interruption originates from a coworker, a manager, a guest, or front office technology, the resulting increase in mental workload consistently hurts FOS performance.

From a cognitive load theory perspective, this is sensible. Interruptions force employees to split their limited cognitive resources. When the mental workload spikes, there are simply fewer cognitive resources left for primary tasks. In high-stakes, fast-paced environments such as a hotel front desk, this drain makes it much harder for employees to maintain performance.

A closer examination of the standardized path coefficients further reveals a distinct hierarchy among interruption sources. While mental workload consistently impaired FOS performance, the strongest negative association was with technology-induced interruptions, followed by guest-, manager-, and coworker-initiated interruptions. This pattern suggests that technological and guest-related disruptions may be imposing a greater cognitive burden in front office settings.

5.2 Frequency vs. Intensity: Divergent Psychological Mechanisms (H2 and H3)

One of the most compelling insights from this study is that interruption frequency and interruption intensity operate through different psychological mechanisms. H3 was supported across all sources of interruptions. Interruption intensity acted as a major driver of cognitive strain. Regardless of who or what caused the interruption, it universally increased mental workload, which subsequently reduced performance. Intensity requires immediate and heavy cognitive effort, making it a highly stable predictor of performance decline across all sources.

In contrast, H2 was only supported for technology-related interruptions. Surprisingly, mental workload mediated the relationship between frequency and performance only in the case of technology-related interruptions and not for human-driven interruptions. This suggests that frequently clicking through system notifications or dealing with technological alerts creates a unique and unpredictable task-switching burden that depletes an employee’s mental bandwidth more rapidly than recurring human interactions. Overall, this highlights mental workload as a more stable explanatory mechanism through which interruption intensity, rather than interruption frequency, affects FOS performance.

5.3 Nuanced and Unexpected Insights

Beyond our main hypotheses, the data revealed several anomalies that challenge traditional assumptions about workplace interruptions:

5.3.1 The Manager Paradox (Frequency vs. Direct Impact)

Frequent interruptions from managers directly increased employees' mental workload. However, mental workload did not significantly carry through to affect performance via the indirect path. This suggests that while managing a boss's requests is mentally taxing, employees likely prioritize these tasks or adopt coping strategies to protect their final performance outcomes.

5.3.2 The "Guest Engagement" Benefit

Interestingly, a higher frequency of guest interruptions had a *negative* direct effect on performance deterioration—meaning that more interruptions actually helped prevent performance from slipping. In the hospitality industry, interacting with guests is the core mission. Because of this, employees may perceive these interruptions not as distractions, but as meaningful guest engagement that actively mitigates performance decline. This engagement naturally enhances the service experience and boosts overall FOS performance metrics, even though the indirect path through mental workload remains insignificant.

5.3.3 The Double-Edged Sword of Technology Intensity

Perhaps the most surprising finding was that technology intensity had a *negative* direct effect on FOS performance deterioration, even though its indirect effect through mental workload remained *positive*. Unlike a distracting coworker, front office technology serves as a functional tool. Intense technological inputs often represent vital data streams, critical system updates, or essential communication channels that directly help FOS perform their jobs more effectively, thereby counteracting performance decline. However, when these technological demands exceed a certain threshold, they overload the employee's cognitive capacity, creating an indirect drag on performance.

6. Implications for Theory and Practice

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the hospitality literature by extending our understanding of workplace interruptions within the hotel front-office context, moving the field beyond traditional attitudinal and behavioral explanations toward a cognitively grounded perspective of frontline service work. By integrating interruption sources and mental workload into a unified framework, the findings demonstrate that interruption-induced mental workload is a key mechanism through which workplace disruptions impair FOS performance across service speed, accuracy, order compliance, and service quality. In doing so, the study extends the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework by highlighting interruption-related cognitive demands as an important job demand that operates through mental workload, thereby linking attention fragmentation to performance deterioration in high-reliability service environments.

Furthermore, this research advances interruption theory by shifting scholarly attention from mere interruption frequency toward a source-based understanding of interruption intensity. The findings establish that the consequences of interruptions originating from different sources are not psychologically equivalent. By demonstrating that intensity serves as a powerful driver of cognitive strain across all sources, this study supports a more nuanced conceptualization of workplace disruptions. Ultimately, introducing source intensity as a distinct dimension opens new avenues for investigating how specific workplace sources affect emotional regulation, social pressure, and power dynamics within hospitality settings.

An additional insight from this study concerns the technological complexity of contemporary front-office work. An exploratory question included in the study’s survey, shown in Figure 3, revealed that respondents simultaneously interact with approximately four technology platforms during a typical shift, highlighting the fragmented digital environment in which FOS operate and the continuous need to juggle multiple screens, applications, and information streams. The findings suggest that technology proliferation itself may constitute a significant source of cognitive demand by increasing attentional switching and mental workload. Consequently, future research should investigate the optimal level of technology utilization in front-office settings and examine whether AI-enabled platform integration can reduce cognitive burden by consolidating multiple operational systems into a unified interface.

During a typical shift, which of the following technology platforms do you utilize? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Property Management System (PMS) (e.g., Opera, Cloudbeds, OnQ)
- ☐ Key Card Encoding Systems (Software interface for room keys)
- ☐ Guest Messaging/Chat Platforms (apps for guest requests)
- ☐ Loyalty Program Database
- ☐ Self-Service/Kiosk Management Interface
- ☐ Online Travel Agency (OTA) Extranets/Interfaces (e.g., Expedia Partner Central)
- ☐ Social Media & Online Reviews Management Tools
- ☐ Front Office Telephone/Mobile Systems (Voice-based guest/internal communication)
- ☐ Internal Hotel Messaging Platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Teams, Slack for internal staff coordination)
- ☐ Email Communication Platforms (Outlook, Gmail, etc.)
- ☐ Quality Management System (QMS)
- ☐ Housekeeping/Maintenance Coordination Apps (e.g., Quore, HotSOS)
- ☐ Front Office Group Communication Apps
- ☐ Payment Gateways & Credit Card Terminals (POS systems)
- ☐ Accounting/Back-Office Software (Daily reconciliation/financial reporting)
- ☐ Staff Incentive/Upselling Management Applications

On average, how many of these technology platforms do you interact with simultaneously (i.e., keep open or actively monitor) during a typical shift?

Figure 3. Simultaneous Use of Workplace Technology Platforms by FOS During a Typical Shift. Source: Author's Survey Data (This Research).

6.2 Practical Implications

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be proposed for hotel front-office management and learning and development departments. Hotel managers must acknowledge the inherent risks and operational threats associated with service failures that stem from a decline in FOS performance due to workplace interruptions. To mitigate these risks, organizations should implement targeted training programs and robust Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) designed to minimize unnecessary disruptions to the FOS.

Specifically, it is recommended to station a senior front desk team member in the immediate vicinity of the reception area, at least during anticipated peak hours. While the physical presence of a supervisor may marginally increase an employee's baseline mental load, this pressure is not expected to negatively affect FOS performance, as detailed in Section 5.3.1.

Concurrently, this strategic placement offers a solution to interruptions originating from multiple sources. This senior individual can provide direct oversight and support for newly hired FOS who might otherwise continuously interrupt peer-level colleagues for assistance during a shift. Furthermore, this supervisor can serve as an operational buffer, effectively intercepting and managing incoming guest interruptions when an agent is engaged in a high-concentration task or addressing another guest's request. Technological interruptions can be managed by this individual in the same manner, thereby preserving the primary agent's cognitive focus.

While a baseline level of guest engagement prevents FOS performance decline and fosters service excellence (as detailed in Section 5.3.2 above), an excessive volume of guest-initiated interruptions can quickly overwhelm front office personnel, a vulnerability exacerbated by traditional hotel lobby design. Positioning the reception desk directly facing the main entrance and along the primary thoroughfare to guest rooms and elevators creates a continuous flow of pedestrian traffic, making it the default destination for every routine query or directional request. This traditional layout binds employee workstation design directly to foot-traffic flow, inadvertently exposing personnel to unavoidable, non-essential interruptions.

To mitigate the resulting cognitive overload, this study recommends that hotel designers deviate from conventional layouts. The front desk should be situated in an area that remains highly visible and easily accessible to arriving guests, yet intentionally removed from direct structural eye contact upon entry and completely decoupled from the primary foot traffic pathways to guest rooms. This architectural shift allows guests to actively seek out and reach the front desk only when direct human assistance is required. Furthermore, if automated self-service check-in and check-out kiosks are available, they should be structurally positioned prior to reaching the physical front desk, serving as an initial operational filter. Figure 4 provides a comparative visual conceptualization of these two distinct design approaches.

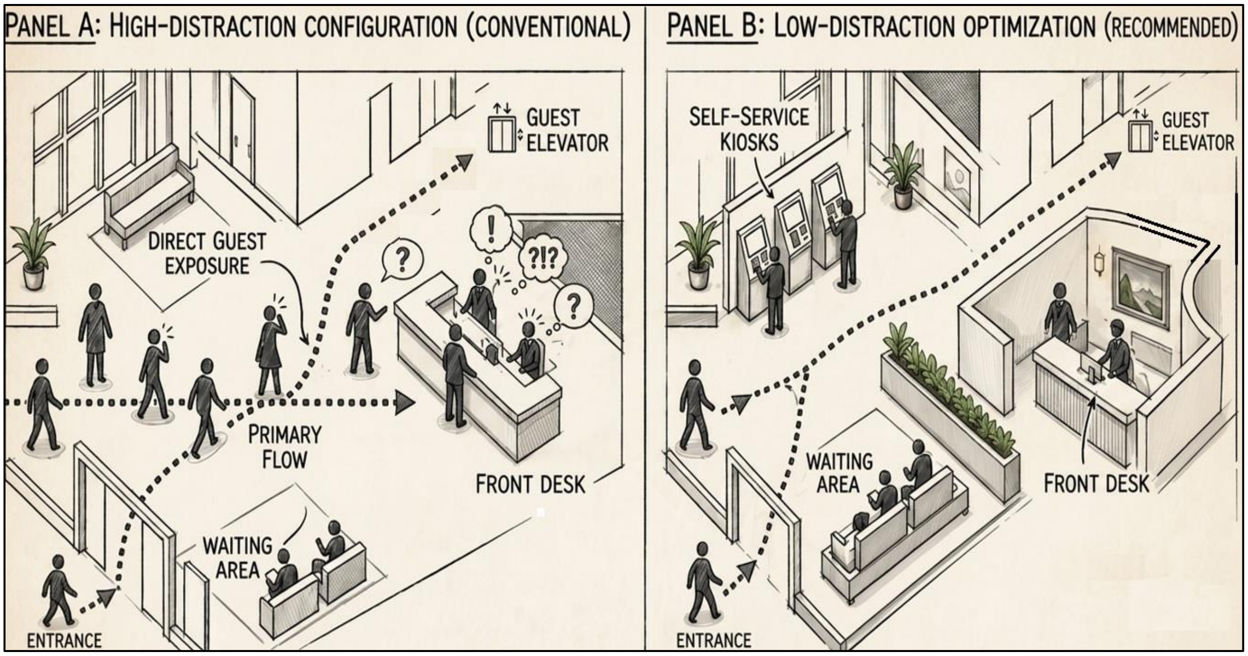


Figure 4. Conventional vs. Proposed Front Desk Placement. Source: Developed by the author.

Note: Panel B represents a single conceptual idea visualization; architects and designers may execute this same core concept through alternative visual formats.

7. Limitations and Future Research Avenues

The scope of this research was limited to FOS working in U.S. hotels with 100 or more rooms, with the aim of focusing on relatively complex and technology-intensive operational environments. Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalizable to boutique hotels, smaller lodging properties, or hotel contexts outside the U.S., where staffing structures, operational procedures, and levels of technology integration may differ substantially. In addition, cultural differences across regions may further shape these relationships and hence workplace interruptions associated with them.

Drawing on Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework (Hofstede, 1980), one relevant dimension is *power distance*, defined as the extent to which less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. In high power distance cultures, hierarchical relationships between employees and supervisors—such as between receptionists and front office managers—may be more strongly pronounced, potentially influencing how interruptions are experienced and how they affect mental workload and performance outcomes.

Future research should therefore replicate this study across different cultural contexts and hotel segments, including smaller and independent properties.

Future research should also aim to further validate these findings using field observations to capture organic workplace interruptions as they occur. In addition, future empirical models can benefit from objective operational data, such as system logs from Property Management Systems (PMS) (e.g., error tracking), supervisor evaluations, or guest-related performance data and indices.

It is also important to acknowledge that the scenarios presented in this study cannot be expected to fully replicate the visceral, real-time experiences encountered at a live, high-volume hotel front desk; that, in turn, may limit the extent to which they capture the frequency or intensity of operational interruptions in actual hotel environments. Future research would therefore benefit from field-based designs that capture interruptions as they naturally occur in the workplace, while carefully adhering to ethical considerations to ensure that participating hotels are not harmed or exposed in ways that could affect their reputation or reveal sensitive operational information.

While this research represents an initial step toward a deeper understanding of workplace interruptions in the hospitality industry, and although interruption intensity demonstrated acceptable Cronbach's alpha values across the four SEM models, some values were slightly below the conventional 0.70 threshold. Future research should therefore refine and extend the measurement of this construct by strengthening the emotional intensity and source-imposed urgency subscales through the inclusion of additional items, thereby improving its psychometric robustness. Further validation using different samples is also recommended to enhance generalizability and support the continued development and refinement of the construct.

Ultimately, the findings of this research highlight the critical importance of looking beyond a one-size-fits-all view of workplace interruptions. To truly understand employee performance and the operational errors resulting from disruptions in the hospitality sector, researchers and managers alike must carefully distinguish between how often an interruption occurs, how intense it is, and the source from which it originates.

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