EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO HPWPS (HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK PRACTICES), EMPLOYEE OUTCOME RELATIONSHIP IN THE NIGERIAN HOTEL SECTOR

Viva Report

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this thesis is a result of my own work, and that no portion of it contained herein has been submitted for another degree or qualification in this or any other university, to the best of my knowledge, and that the original work is mine except where due references are made.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ability, Motivation and Opportunity	*AMO*
Bachelor of Science	*B.Sc.*
Employee Engagement	*EE*
Employee Job Engagement	*EJE*
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level	*O Levels*
Higher National Diploma	*HND*
High Performance Work Practices	*HPWPs*
Human Resource Management	*HRM*
Hotel and Personal Services Employers' Association of Nigeria	*HOPESEA*
Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.	*KSA*
Master of Science	*M.Sc.*
National Bureau of Statistics	*NBS*
National Certificate of Education	*NCE*
Nigerian Hotel Association	*NHA*
Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	*OCB*
Senior Secondary	*SS*
Social Exchange Theory	*SET*
Strategic Human Resource Management	*SHRM*
Worldwide Hospitality and Terrorism Themes	*WHATT*

ABSTRACT

Numerous human resource practices have been developed to improve employee job engagement, and one particular practice (HPWPs) has received great attention and academic critiques. HPWPs (High Performance Work Practices) is a combination of distinct but interconnected Human Resource Management practices, designed to structure the HRM system and enhance employee engagement by stimulating creative performance. Despite its popularity, scholars' debate on how Employee Job Engagement (EJE) strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes still remains unclear. Based on the AMO framework and social exchange theory, the current research conducted a qualitative study to respond to the aforementioned knowledge gap, analysing how and why employee engagement is imperative for strengthening the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes within the hotel sector. Nigerian hotel sector has contributed to the domestic economy significantly and, more recently, many hotels have begun to adopt HPWPs in their personnel management. Following this trend, data collection was conducted via semi-structured interviews in Nigeria, in which hotel employees from different ranks of position were recruited. Findings revealed that when employees feel more engaged with their jobs, they are more likely to support HPWPs, recognising its importance and demonstrating creative performance. The relationship between HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee outcome are also strengthened by managers' trust in employee's capability and appreciation for work done. Overall, the current research contributed to literature and theoretical development, by offering unique insights from a developing country context (Nigerian hotel sector) and clarifying the complexity of HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee creative performance relationship. A new framework was also developed from the research findings to help managers apply HPWPs in their employee performance management policies and practices.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of Study

Over the years the term Employee Engagement (EE) has been seen to be one critical human resource construct and an indispensable part of every organisation that has become a more strategic approach to achieving competitive advantage, ensuring efficiency of work and driving a sustainable organisational performance (Schaufeli, 2012). Despite the growing interest in employee engagement, research has shown that the world of employment is experiencing a radical change and employees are becoming less motivated to work (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development [CIPD], 2016). Researchers have identified a worrying drop in job satisfaction (well-being of employees) and a significant increase in the number of employees looking for new jobs especially in the service industry in Nigeria, across the United Kingdom and the United State of America (Akinwade, 2011; CIPD, 2016; National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2015).

With the need to improve the well-being of employees, organisations constantly look for ways to engage and further advance employee outcomes. For instance, one common strategy has been to understand employee behaviour, and identify diverse possibilities of engaging employees in their jobs (Robertson-Smith & Marwick, 2009). In addition, another strategy has involved the strategic management of human resources within an organisation (Mittal, 2012). However, in order to manage human resources, research over the past two decades suggested that there may be Human Resource (HR) practices, which will improve employee engagement and lead to increased performance. These practices were referred to by Arthur, (1994) and Huselid, (1995) as High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs). These HPWP's refer to a combination of distinct but interconnected HR management practices, which when applied, serves to improve employee engagement and lead to employee outcomes (Applebaum et al., 2000; Hefferman & Dundon 2016; Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007). Some of these practices include: cross-departmental training, long-term customer relationship maintenance, internal promotion opportunities, job security, internal mobility/career development, empowerment, smooth communication channels, attractive salaries, teamwork, performance-oriented evaluation, and equality among employee levels (Applebaum et al., 2000; Becker & Huselid, 1998; Kroon et al., 2013; Lawler, 1992; MacDuffie, 1995; Takeuchi, Chen, & Kepak, 2009).

A study by Tomazevic, Seljak, and Aristovnik (2015) that gave credence to Arthur and Huselids claims, demonstrated that HPWPs which when applied to the HR practice could facilitate employee well-being, keep employees engaged, create competitive advantage and lead to employee outcomes. However, what HPWPs appear to share in common is that they are positively framed and seek to benefit both employees and organisations (Saridakis, Yanqing & Cooper, 2017).

Although there is growing evidence that High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) stimulate employee outcomes, there have been various sample characteristics, methods, several models, different research designs, practices examined, and employee performance measures used that have led extant literature to vary dramatically (Zhang & Morris, 2014). More so, the underlying mechanism through which HPWPs are linked to employee outcomes is still sporadic, in spite of its robust theoretical and empirical presence (Do 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015; Pereira & Gomes, 2012). Do (2016:14) identifying a number of issues pertaining to HPWPs, pointed out a few which includes; 'lack of conceptual lens (Beugelsdijk, 2008; Michaelis, Wagner & Schweizer, 2014); inconsistent dimensions of HPWPs (Shih, Chiang, & Hsu, 2013); a single source of data (Shih *et al.,* 2013); lopsided HPWPs research between Western and non-Western contexts and some sub-dimensions of HPWPs that are more critical than others (Selden, Schimmoeller, & Thompson, 2013; Werner, 2011).' This suggests the need to investigate the mechanism such as employee engagement specifically employee job engagement that strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes (Kehoe & Wright's, 2013).

Despite the theoretical and empirical establishment, Karatepe and Vatankhah, (2015) amidst many other authors' points out the sporadic and ambiguous outcome identified following studies around HPWPs. Over the years' one striking similarity across majority of the literature on HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee outcomes is the adoption a quantitative method of analysis, which may have created room for ambiguity for example Karatepe and Vatankhah, (2015); Lin and Liu (2016); Mahmood *et al.* (2019); Mihail and Kloutsiniotis (2016); Stephen, Daniels and Ogbonnaya (2018). This ambiguity advocates for more qualitative research to gain in-depth understanding on the opinions and perception of employees and managers on the relationship between HPWPs and employee job engagement (Ahmed *et al.,* 2019). For this reason, this research adopted a qualitative approach to further improve the understanding of how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship

between HPWPs and employee outcomes within the Hotel sector in Nigeria (Karatepe, 2014; Lee & Ok, 2016).

With the recent economic uncertainty in the Nigerian economy due to the high dependence on oil, the hospitality industry has become a niche to study as it contributes immensely to the country's economy (Worldwide Hospitality and Terrorism Themes (WHATT), 2016). According to the National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] (2015), the Nigerian hospitality and tourism industry which includes hotels, restaurants *etc.,* directly contributed ₦1.56 billion to the national economy. Undoubtedly, the growth of the hospitality industry specifically the hotel sector in Nigeria would have been faster and the quality of services better if the industry had access to a larger pool of motivated and engaged employees (Ibid, 2016). In a study carried out within the hotel sector in Nigeria by Adedipe and Adeleke's in 2016, employees reported poor levels of employee engagement, which influenced their capability to perform well within the industry (Adedipe & Adeleke, 2016). In their study, they reported two major findings: the lack of appreciation of employees in spite of the labour intensity of the job and apathy relating to the need for consistent investment in human resource development. Adedipe and Adeleke (2016), noted that by offering poor conditions of service, management (Human Resource managers and Employers) too may have contributed to the adversarial employment relationship characterised by negative service attitudes among employees. They believe the sustainability of the hotel investment in Nigeria relies heavily on management committing to the development of its employees. This approach should be embraced in the organisations Human Resource (HR) and corporate strategy (Ibid, 2016). These realisations justified the relevance to investigate and understand employees and employers' perception of the HR practices (HPWPs) and strategies needed to engage employees.

The evidence from research on HPWPs by Aryee, et al. (2012), Christian et al. (2011), Karatepe and Olugbade, (2016), Messersmith, et al. (2011), Schaufeli (2012), and Zhong et al. (2016), suggest that in order to extend the understanding of HPWPs and its importance to employee engagement, practices such as empowerment, cross-departmental training, internal mobility should be explored. Having mentioned the need to specifically examine some interrelated HPWPs, the verification of the HPWPs conceptualization was based on the Ability Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) framework. This framework developed by Appelbaum et al. (2000) has been seen as the starting point to explaining the HPWPs - employee engagement relationship. Giving credence to the pioneering work of Vroom (1964), the performance of an

employee depends on the individual's ability, motivation and opportunity to perform. This implies that organisations need to put in place practices and policies that will shape positively employee's ability, motivation and opportunity to perform, therefore, adding value to performance in a given context (Jiang *et al.,* 2012). It is not surprising that the AMO framework provides a basis for a stronger conceptualization of HPWPs as it has been cited by several authors such as Do (2016); Fu *et al.* (2015) and Rabl *et al.* (2014).

Evidently, Boxall and Purcell (2003); Obeidat *et al.* (2016); Sun *et al.* (2007) and Yen *et al.* (2016) acknowledging the work of Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000) pointed out that these three domains of the AMO framework by Appelbaum coherently put, will not only lead to but create work environment that provides the necessary support for them to express themselves. Following this, the AMO model in coherence with Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000) ideology suggests that HPWPs enhance the three main components of the model and can be described along three dimensions: ability-enhancing practices, motivation-enhancing practices and opportunity-enhancing practices which when put together leads to employee outcome. In the current research, the researcher argues that these three dimensions (A.M.O) coherently synergized broadly represent the domain of HPWPs. However, after reviewing the hospitality management literature, evidence shows that there is need to research empirically the HPWPs and its importance to engagement in service jobs using theoretical underpinnings (Karatepe, 2014; Lee & Ok, 2016). An understanding of the principle of social exchange theory (SET) and the motivational process of the AMO framework, reveals why the presence of HPWPs engages employees and motivates them to display quality employee outcomes (Karatepe, 2013b).

1.2   Significance of the Research

Findings of Samson and Timothy (2014) shows that the Nigerian hotel sector has contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of the country. The hotel sector has shown tremendous strength in the aspect of structural development with little attention to human resources (Adedipe & Adeleke, 2016; Ajake, 2015). As earlier stated the Nigerian hospitality and tourism industry directly contributed 1.56 billion Naira (approximately 4.17m USD) to the economy of the country, which indicates that the growth of this industry in relation to human resource development will not only improve the quality of service but also contribute to the country's economy (NBS, 2015). In a study conducted by Esu (2015), some evidence to

show the scarcity of high calibre engaged employees at all levels in the hospitality industry in Nigeria were identified. For instance, Esu, (2015) found that the country is presently experiencing a dearth of engaged, competent and willing persons that could transform the great hospitality resources to enchanting hospitality products, stressing that the human resource status of the sector is grossly inadequate. This necessitates the need to focus on strategies to manage employees, improve engagement and develop them to attain higher performances.

Observations made by Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot 2016; Karatepe (2013a); Mittal, 2012; Ohly and Bledow (2015) and many other researchers shows the importance of HPWPs but with little attention to employee engagement or certain employee outcomes such as creative performance within the service industry. Following the Buhari-led administrations' top priority on the agenda of diversifying the economy due to dwindling oil revenue, emerged the realization that Nigeria is endowed with materials and human resources that placed her in good stead to achieve greatness. For this reason, the need for creative performance is increasingly the cornerstone of employee engagement and economic progress for nations globally, including Nigeria (Florida, Mellander & King, 2015). Given the fact that Nigeria has since aspired to compete on the same level as the top 20 leading economies by the year 2020, the need to promote creativity that will increase performance and ensure competitive advantage becomes pertinent (British Broadcasting Channel [BBC], 2014; Dimnwobi *et al.,* 2016). In a study from a work psychology journal, it was explained that one of the most important developments has been to demonstrate that work is not stable. It changes from one task to the next, from one day to the next, from one client to the next, suggesting the need for creative performance (Bakker & Daniels, 2013). According to Oldham and Cummings (1996), creativity/creative performance is the generation/creation of unique and useful ideas in organisations, and it helps them to be successful in achieving competitive advantage. However, researchers have suggested that when little or no attention is paid to employee engagement, the level of creativity may be affected which may in turn affect performance (Gong, Zhou, & Chang, 2013).

Research has shown that due to the predominant focus on the determinants of creativity, HPWPs can serve as the main driver of creativity (Chiang, Hsu, & Shih, 2015; Fu *et al.,* 2015; Liu, Gong, Zhou, & Huang, 2016). However, the presence of HPWPs in any organization creates an environment that leads to feelings of engagement, which will in turn result in behavioural responses such as employee creative performance (Karatepe & Vantankhah, 2014). Due to this realization, expecting employees to display a positive performance outcome

requires a work environment where there is HPWPs and employee job engagement (Ibid, 2014). This realisation necessitated the examination of employee creative performance as a need for workers in jobs with minimal requirement for creativity, as this may lead to organisational performance. Taking into consideration the need to adopt strategies to manage employees and create an environment that will facilitate engagement and lead to high performance, researchers within Nigeria in agreement suggest the need to create a resourceful work environment to facilitate engagement and performance (Nwosu, 2014). Supporting this statement, Mackey (2016) suggested that research examining the understanding of HPWPs practices, policies and guidelines across organisations and industries would be informative.

1.3. Justification for the Research

This research intends to make several contributions. First, the bulk of HPWPs research is mainly related to data emerging from the American-European axis (Gibbs & Ashill, 2013). The implication is that empirical research pertaining to the influence of HPWPs on engagement in countries outside of the American-European mainstream remains scarce. Therefore, by analysing the HPWPs necessary for improving employee job engagement in the service sector in Nigeria, the researcher will provide insight into the process that motivates employees to perform better in their jobs (Babakus *et al.,* 2003). More recently, Karatepe and Olugbade, (2016) suggested that additional research in Nigeria is needed to both identify the factors that are likely to represent HPWPs and their outcomes. In addition, given the current economic and social problems such as political instability, corruption, high unemployment rate and gender inequality faced by Nigeria, it is important to focus on other alternative industries such as hospitality industry to generate effective drivers of economic growth (Cable News Network [CNN], 2016; Okpara & Wynn, 2008). Following this logic, observation by Adedipe and Adeleke (2016) that there is lack of appreciation for employee labour and apathy to invest in resources to develop that sector within Nigeria, the need to investigate and identify strategies and practices to engage employees becomes relevant.

Secondly, another noticeable challenge highlighted in empirical research on High Performance Work Practices and the underlying mechanism through which HPWPs influence employee outcome is who should be studied (Choi, 2014). Recent study on this relationship showed disparity in view amongst strategic HRM scholars, as some believe employees provide more reliable data given the critical role they play in an organisation, while others believe

management should be studied because they provide rich data when exploring the HPWS – employee outcome relationship (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Choi, 2014; Do, 2016; Hefferman & Dundon, 2016; Patel *et al.,* 2013; Sun *et al.,* 2007). According to the employee focused scholars', employees have the ability to provide more accurate and detailed interpretation on HPWPs and its importance to performance, thereby facilitating a review of a clearer HPWPs-performance relationship (Choi, 2014; Do, 2016). Hefferman and Dundon (2016: 212) further reinforce this view that "employees represent more than abstract objects against which researchers prod and measure certain responses to a given set of assumptions. Following this logic, it is necessary to explore beyond firm-level reported data to tease out the role of employees in shaping HRM." Nonetheless, scholars whose focus centres on management perception, believe a managerial self-reported data provides a detailed explanation on the relationship due to the fact that design and strategy rest on management (Hefferman & Dundan, 2016; Patel *et al.,* 2013; Sun *et al.,* 2007). Following this argument, data gotten from hospitality literature mostly focus on front desk employees, with very little research emphases on both frontline employees in different departments within the hotels and the management staff (Boxall & Purcell, 2011; Karatepe, 2011; Karatepe, 2013c; Paek, Schuckert, Kim & Lee, 2015; Purcell & Kinnie, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2013). Thus, there appears to be ample opportunity for employee understanding of management intentions to differ, potentially resulting in the ineffective implementation of HPWPs. Scholars therefore suggest that data should be collected from both employees and managers to gain more insight into both employees and managers perceptions of HPWPs (Choi, 2014).

Thirdly, another crucial and seemingly one of the most important issues surrounding the primary criticism thrown at HPWPs is the 'lack of theoretical development and the need for a better articulation of the "black box phenomenon" (Hefferman & Dundon, 2016: 211). Scholars have therefore argued that the underlying mechanism linking HPWPs to employee outcome lacks a robust theoretical perspective (Do, 2016). In view of this, the need to adopt, extend and refine existing theoretical framework surrounding the HPWPs-employee outcome relationship providing valuable insight becomes paramount. With respect to the mechanisms linking HPWPs and employee outcomes, scholars have attempted to identify and empirically test different components underlying this relationship. Some of these include; knowledge exchange and combination (Michaelis *et al.,* 2014); innovative work behaviours (Fu *et al.,* 2015), knowledge sharing (Flinchbaugh *et al.,* 2016); among others. Despite this, scholars still hold the view that our understanding of the mechanisms or processes has not received much

attention (Jiang, Takeuchi & Lepak, 2013; Mahmood, Naseer, Talat, Shuai, & Hyatt, 2019). Furthermore, it is evident that scholars are examining new variables as underlying mechanisms through which HPWPs influence employee outcomes (Do, 2016; Hefferman & Dundon, 2016; Flinchbaugh *et al.,* 2016; Jiang & Liu, 2015). These mixed findings suggest the need to understand the importance of employee job engagement to the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes.

1.4. Scope of Study

Nigeria, populated with over 200 million, hugely invests in oil and gas, telecommunications, banking, agricultural and tourism sectors. The country until recently was the largest and fastest growing market in Africa (Worldwide Hospitality and Terrorism Themes [WHATT], 2016). Specifically, in the hotel industry in Africa, Nigeria has the highest number of planned new international hotels in the development pipeline on the continent. These developments are stimulating demand for engaged human resources to support this growth, but where and how this human resource will emerge has no ready answer (Ibid, 2016). There is a chronic shortage of engaged people with the right industry-based education and training to occupy operational and managerial positions. Concerns have been raised about the absence of a strategic management practice for human resource development (WHATT, 2016).

Nigeria's hotel sector possesses a weak strategic framework which has given rise to imbalances in the employment relationship and business operations, creating a disengaged environment and the inability to develop knowledge and skills (Babalola & Oluwatoyin, 2014). It is believed that the scenario makes it difficult for workers to find fulfilment and satisfaction in the industry which in turn has a negative impact on organisation and employee performance. Thus, job seekers who are trained for the hospitality business are often forced to opt for jobs in banking, oil and gas and other well-paid service sectors (Ibid, 2014). However, with the economic implication of the hotel sector in Nigeria and refocus on human resource development, Nigeria provides an interesting context for the study because it represents an emerging market among West African countries. Also, of interest is that firms in West African countries have started paying interest in the development and implementation of HPWPs which highlight the importance of employee effort and contributions to the success and development of an organisation (Nwosu, 2014). Following this trend, Nigerian firms are constantly trying out new ways to foster HR outcomes (i.e., employee attitudes and behaviours and well-being),

which are considered important attributes that contribute to firm performance outcomes. The findings are expected to extend the theoretical and empirical understanding of the mechanisms why the use of HPWPs influences organisational performance. The next section provides a description of the objectives of the study.

1.5   Research Aim

The research aims to investigate how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes (employee creative performance) in Nigerian Hotel sector.

1.6 Research Objectives

- To understand employees and manager's perception of the importance of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) to Employee Job Engagement (EJE);
- To investigate how employee job engagement, stimulates employee creative performance in Nigerian hotels;
- To make practice-based recommendations to the organisations.

1.7. Thesis Structure

The Seven (7) chapters below introduced the concept of HPWPs, Engagement, and identified its importance to employee outcome within the Nigerian hotel sector. The first chapter introduced High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) as a management strategy adopted to enhance employee engagement. The chapter also identified gaps from very current research literature, justifying the need for further study within this stream of research. The first chapter further set out the aims and objectives of the research.

In the next chapter, relevant literature was reviewed discussing some key issues identified by scholars who reviewed the relationship between HPWPs and engagement. The chapter adopting a funnel principle, provided a brief overview of engagement, identified High Performance Work Practices as a Human Resource Management strategy that ensures engagement and reviewed the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome. Consequently, the chapter laid emphasis on the HPWPs theories and related them to the current

study.

The third chapter presented and justified philosophical rational and methodological approach behind the research paying attention to how it informs the study. This section further identified the research design, data collection technique, and further identified the sample size for the research. More so, the tool for analysing this research based on the research rationale was identified. Klein and Myers' (1999) principles of interpretive field research was adopted to evaluate the significance of the research, ethical consideration and proposed limitations of this study were identified.

With the need for a pilot study, the fourth (4) chapter presented and justified the feasibility of the study. In doing so, the chapter discovered the interest in a research setting, choose between alternatives, identified difficulties, conducted a risk assessment and tested the research instrument. The pilot study served the purpose of ensuring that questions were well understood by respondents, as well as allowing for preliminary investigations on the reliability of the scales used. At the end of the pilot study the researcher was able to test how well the research instruments worked and find out if interviews, surveys or observations were suitable for collecting data for the main study.

The fifth (5) chapter, presented a discussed the findings of the research and analysed the data in light of the historical analysis carried out in chapters two and three in order to answer the research questions set out in the literature review. The chapter presented the sample size and findings descriptively and analytically. The essence of this was to provide research evidence to answer the research questions. The substantive parts of the analysis were illustrated thematically, which offered significant evidence to answer the research questions.

In Chapter Six (6), the researcher revisited the research rationale, summarised crucial findings and reviewed how the research was conducted. The chapter also explained how the current research contributed to theoretical development, knowledge advancement and made recommendations for practice. Finally, the chapter identified the limitations in the current research and made suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature for the research and discussed some of the key issues from the secondary data. In doing so the researcher adopted a funnel principle by first giving a brief overview of engagement. This chapter further identified Human Resource Management strategies extant literature adopted in ensuring employee job engagement and high performance outcomes. Consequently, the chapter laid emphasis on the importance of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs), and critically analysed the challenges and inconsistencies in conceptualising HPWPs. The chapter further reviewed the potential influence of employee job engagement and examined its importance in strengthening the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes such as creative performance. In addition, this chapter elaborated the use of the Ability Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) model to conceptualize HPWPs. Conclusively, this section identified theories to support the importance of employee job engagement to the HPWPs and employee outcomes relationship.

2.1. Employee Engagement Overview

Employee engagement has become a popular construct used amongst scholars and practitioners (Van Rooy et al.,2011). The construct referenced by several practitioners, consulting firms and survey houses provides a holistic knowledge of employee's wellbeing in the workplace (Rafferty et al., 2005; Sen, 2009). Despite its popularity, the majority of literature surrounding employee engagement can be found in practitioner journals where the focus is on practice rather than on theory or empirical research (Malinen et al., 2013). Robinson et al. (2004), noted that there is interestingly little academic and empirical research on a construct that has become so popular. As a result, employee engagement has the appearance of being somewhat "faddish or what some might call, old wine in a new bottle' (Saks, 2006, p. 609)

Casual observation from literature on employee engagement suggests its importance to employee and organisational outcomes including performance. (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD), 2011). However, despite its popularity, there is a lack of

consistency in the operational definition of the construct (Christian, *et al.*, 2011). For example, Macey and Schneider (2008) found employee engagement to be a related but distinct construct from organisational commitment. Another definition by Saks (2006), perceived employee engagement as the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in their work environment and not an attitude. Rothbard (2001, p. 656) giving credence to the work of Saks defines employee engagement as a psychological presence focusing on attention and absorption. According to Rothbard, attention refers to the "cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role" while absorption "means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus on a role. Another widely referenced definition of engagement which differs from that of Saks (2006) and Rothbards (2001), was developed by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002, p. 74). They defined employee engagement "as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption." They further stated that engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but rather, it is "a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour." (p. 74).

The Gallup organisation also defined employee engagement as "an individual's involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work" (Harter *et al.,* 2002, p. 269) and this definition differs from that of Hewitt Associates that focused on "the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organisation as measured by three primary behaviours: Say (consistently speaking positively about the organisation), Stay (having an intense desire to be part of the organisation) and Strive (exerting extra effort and engage in behaviour that contribute to business success)" (Wellins *et al.,* 2005;2). Based on the definitions above, it becomes important to note that the Gallup organisation laid emphasis on employee work, while Wellins and his colleagues focused on the psychological connection an employee has with the organisation.

Other academics taking a different approach from Harter *et al.* (2002) and Wellins *et al.* (2005) noted that although these concepts are closely related, they consider employee engagement as a 'self-investment of personal resources at work.' It signifies that engagement represents a commonality among physical, emotional and cognitive energies that employees bring to their work role and not just on investment on a single dimension but of a multiple dimension (physical, emotional and cognitive) so that experience is holistic and simultaneous (Rich *et al.,* 2010).

Another factor in defining engagement as seen by Schaufeli and Sukanova, (2007) is its conceptualization as a state vis-à-vis' a trait concept. Most research conceptualises engagement as a relatively stable individual difference variable that differs between people. In another study on engagement Sonnentag, (2003) asserted that engagement is subject to moderate day fluctuations around an average level. Hence there has been a debate as to whether engagement is best thought of as a relatively stable trait, temporary dynamic state or both (Dalal *et al.,* 2008). However, what is clear is that engagement varies between individuals, therefore it could be said that engagement is a state of mind that is relatively stable but could fluctuate overtime (Schaufeli *et al.,* 2002; Thoresen *et al.,* 2003). Consequently, while others refer to employee engagement as psychological, trait or state, Maslach *et al.* (2001) referred to engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout, and suggested that engagement is characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy. This gave rise to the term 'Conceptual bleed' (Gibbons, 2007, p. 2) referred to as an unfortunate outcome. Gibbons (2007) also noted that executives in organisations are getting familiar with the fact that employee engagement does not mean the same to everybody in an organisation, rather it varies across different organisations and a precise definition of employee engagement remains somewhat problematic (Gibbons, 2007; Saks, 2006 & Vance, 2006). In the academic literature, a number of definitions have been provided and presented in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1

SELECTED DEFINITIONS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

AUTHOR	YEAR	DEFINITION
CIPD	**2018, p .4**	*"Engagement is about creating opportunities for employees to connect with their colleagues, managers and wider organisation. It is also about creating an environment where employees are motivated to want to connect to their work and really care about doing their job."*
John Storey cited in MacLeod and Clarke	**2009, p .8**	*"A set of positive attitudes and behaviours enabling high job performance of a kind which are in tune with the organisations mission."*

Institute for Employment Studies cited in Robinson *et al.*	2004, p.9	*"Engagement is a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organisation. The organisation must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee."*
Alfes *et al.*	2013, p.334	*"Employee engagement can be considered as a related, yet alternative mediator, which links perceived HRM bundles to OCB and turnover intentions."*
Schaufeli *et al.*	2002, p.74	*"A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption. They further state that engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but rather, it's a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour"*
Maslach *et al.*	2001, p.418	*"Engagement can be defined as the positive antithesis of burnout."*
Vance	2006, p.28	*"Engaged employees can help your organization achieve its mission, execute its strategy and generate important business results."*

One theme that resonates with the academic literature on engagement is that it has the tendency of being related to but distinct from other constructs in organisational behaviour. For example, Robinson *et al.* (2004, p. 8) state that ". . . engagement contains many of the elements of both commitment and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), but is by no means a perfect match with either. In addition, neither commitment nor OCB reflect sufficiently two aspects of engagement in its two-way nature, and the extent to which engaged employees are expected to have an element of business awareness."

After a review of engagement literature, it was observed that several scholars in conjunction with each other discussed the differences associated with organisational commitment, OCB, job involvement *etc.,* In regard to organisational commitment, Saks, (2006) noted that the construct differs from engagement given that it focuses on a person's attitude and attachment towards their organisation. To him engagement is not an attitude as it is the degree to which an individual or employee is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles. In relation to OCB, Saks, (2006) believed it involved voluntary and informal behaviours that can help employees and the organization, meanwhile engagement focuses on an employees' formal role performance rather than extra-role and voluntary behaviours.

Similarly, Saks (2006), referencing the work of May in 2004, suggested that job involvement associates itself with the cognitive judgment about the need satisfying abilities of the job and is linked to an employee's self-image. According to Saks (2006) the analysis differentiated job involvement and engagement as it has to do with how individuals employ themselves in the performance of their job. Stressing this belief he states that engagement may be thought of as an antecedent to job involvement. Although the definition and meaning of engagement in the practitioner literature often overlaps with other constructs, in the academic literature it has been defined as a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance (Ibid, 2006)

- **Employee engagement Context**

Given the growing interest in Employee Engagement (EE) and the multiple definitions associated with the concept, there has been quite a few studies that focus on the context of employee engagement. One study that introduced the term and context of EE was the work of Kahn (1990). Kahn (1990) described EE as the way people felt about their jobs, by which they get involved and express themselves physically, emotionally, and cognitively (Kahn, 1990). In simple terms EE is seen by Kahn as the psychological presence at work. Kahn's definition and conceptualisation were perceived within two contexts. The first focused on the employees' job role and the other focuses on the role as a member of the organisation (Malinen et al., 2013). Saks, (2006) giving credence to the work of Kahn suggests that job and organisational engagement are distinct but with different antecedents and consequences. For example, employees' understanding of procedural justice were predictive of organisational engagement

and not job engagement (Malinen et al., 2013). In similar vein, organisational engagement showed stronger prognostic utility than job engagement towards organisational outcomes such as organisational citizenship behaviour (Saks, 2006). Saks (2006, p. 34) added, "Employee engagement covers equally job engagement and organisation engagement". Saks' study is significant due to the fact that his work tackles the fears associated with engagement as a 'mere catchphrase', rather than a serious concept. Saks study offered a convincing debate that encouraged scholarly research, thus removing barriers to academic works on engagement. (Ibid, 2006).

Organisational engagement according to Farndale, *et al.* (2014) refers to people who are very positive about the organisation they work for and act as ambassadors for the corporate brand. In practice, they believe employees who are moved around the organisation in a job rotation program may enjoy one job role more than another but remain engaged with the organisation as a whole throughout the experience. Observing Saks' (2006, p. 617) operationalisation of organisation engagement, Malinen *et al.* (2013), noted that Saks definition of organisation engagement is summarised into three components which include the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement. He further highlighted a few responses from the respondents to illuminate Saks findings. These include: "being a member of this organisation is very captivating; one of the most exciting things for me is getting involved with things happening in this organisation; being a member of this organisation makes me come "alive"; being a member of this organisation is exhilarating for me; I am highly engaged in this organisation – we can see elements of absorption ("captivating", "exciting"), vigour ("exhilarating", "make me come alive"), and dedication ("into the goings-on")."

Job engagement on the other hand reflects "people showing positive behaviours in their job, having great enthusiasm to get up each day and do their daily tasks. This can lead to individuals talking passionately about their job, but not necessarily being loyal to the organisation" (Farndale, *et al.,* 2014, p. 603). Kahn, (1990) in his study defined job engagement as a motivational attribute which is reflected in the employees' spontaneous manifestation of inner resources as they contribute towards the organisation through their job performance. According to him people in their work role employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance (Arefin, *et al.,* 2019). Practically in highly competitive business sectors where there is less of a talent shortage, "it may be that organisations choose to focus on work engagement in order to attain higher levels of

productivity but allocating resources to build loyalty may be seen as less important" (Farndale, *et al.,* 2014, p. 603).

Although Kahn's (1990) engagement context indicates the psychological conditions necessary for engagement, his work does not explain in full why employees respond to these conditions with diverse degrees of engagement. A stronger theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement can be found in the social exchange theory (SET). This theory was referenced by several authors which include Arefin, et al. (2019); Saks, (2006) etc., The theory as seen in multiple EE literatures argues that obligations are generated through a series of interaction between parties who are in the state of reciprocal interdependence. The underlying notion around the theory is that the relationship between the parties involved in the interaction evolves overtime into loyalty, trust and commitment from both, given that both parties do not break the rules of exchange (Cropanzano and Mictchell, 2005). Reciprocity and repayment are at the core of the rules of exchange such that any action of one party leads to a response or action(s) by the other. For example, when employees receive socioemotional and economic resources from their organisation, they feel obligated to repay the gesture (Ibid, 2005). This aligns with Robinson et al.'s (2004) definition of engagement as a two-way relationship between the employer and employee.

Employee engagement has been seen to be one way for employees to repay their organisation. However, the degrees to which employees will choose to engage themselves varies in response to the resources they receive from their organisation. Being fully involved in their work roles and committing greater amounts of cognitive, emotional and physical resources is a way for employees to respond to organisations actions (Saks, 2006). Saks, p. 603 (2006) believed that "It is more difficult for employees to vary their levels of job performance given that performance is often evaluated and used as the basis for compensation and other administrative decisions. Thus, employees are more likely to exchange their engagement for resources and benefits provided by their organization." Saks (2006), believes that SET provides a strong theoretical foundation to explain why employees choose to become either more or less engaged in their job and organisation. In relation to Kahn's (1990) study of engagement, an employee or employees will feel obligated to immerse themselves in the job role as a result of the resources received from the organisation. However, when the organisation falls short on the ability to provide these resources, employees are likely to be less engaged and the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources they will likely devote to their job is contingent

on the economic and socioemotional resources received from the organisation.

Observations from literature on engagement has demonstrated a substantial interest in revealing the role of job engagement with little interest in the organisational human resource practice that facilitates job engagement, leaving room for scholarly research (Arefin, *et al.,* 2019; Zhong *et al.,* 2016). As a result of this, the research therefore, focused on specific human resource practices that lead to job engagement thereby stimulating employee outcomes.

However, in order to establish a definition of employee engagement that best suits this study and is at best with what has been identified in the literature, the researcher adopts the definition put forward by Arefin, *et al.* (2019) and Kahn, (1990), which explains engagement as a fulfilling and motivating construct that is highly influenced by physical, affective and cognitive energy that leads to a high level of job and organisational performance. A review by Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2016) on the nature of employee engagement shows that focusing on engagement may offer an organisation a competitive advantage and enable employees flourish and grow. They further suggested that employee engagement has the potential to broaden the understanding of work within an organisation (Ibid, 2016).

However, following the growing deficit and recent impact of the global uncertainties on economic downturn, organisations now have to cut down on prices and cost, refine their business strategies, and reduce the number of employees they have, in order to achieve competitive advantage (CIPD, 2016). In spite of the changes in labour trends, employees are expected to maintain a high level of engagement and quality performance with enhanced efficiency and productivity as a result of these continuous changes and uncertainties (Akinwade, 2011; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; CIPD, 2016). These considerable changes suggest that organisations need to seek ways to enhance efficiency and performance of their employees in the business environment in order to maximize cost and gain competitive advantage (Buchner, 2007; Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Covey, 2004). Due to this, employee engagement is quickly becoming the answer and has been seen as one of the main drivers critical for sustainable organisational performance (CIPD, 2011; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Despite the growing interest in engagement and the recent trend in the world of employment, employees are increasingly questioning the meaning of work (CIPD, 2016).

Akinwade (2011), CIPD (2016), and the National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] (2015), noticed a worrying drop in the well-being of employees and a significant increase in the number of employees looking for new jobs especially in the service industry. This drop as earlier stated has prompted organisations to constantly look for ways to engage and further advance employee performance. For instance, one common strategy has been to understand employee behaviour, and identify diverse possibilities of engaging employees in their jobs (Robertson & Marwick, 2009). Another strategy involved the management of human resources within an organisation, and researchers saw it as an additional engagement strategy (Mittal, 2012).

A substantial amount of research has been conducted and published by academics, consultants and practitioners on what drives engagement (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot 2016; Macleod & Clarke, 2009; Mittal, 2012). According to authors in this field, every organisation is characterised by its own unique dynamics, structure, and culture. Therefore, the solution to what strategy to adopt to ensure employee engagement varies for each organisation, employee group, individual and the job itself. Thus, it is imperative for organisations to conduct research that incorporates designs and analysis of driver or levers of engagement (Robinson *et al.,* 2004). Following this logic, this research was guided by a Human Resource Management strategy called High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) that was put in place by Arthur (1994), Mittal (2012) and Huselid (1995), which serves to improve employee engagement and stimulate employee outcome.

2.2. Human Resource Management

Mittal (2012) viewed Human Resource Management (HRM) as the way people are managed in an organisation which contributes to the employees' sustenance and success. In support of his statement, Marchington and Wilkinson (2008) defined HRM as the "management of employment." Although the concept has been widely discussed, some scholars have not come to a consensus on an agreed definition of HRM but distinguish between 'soft' and 'hard' versions of it. Beardwell and Claydon (2007, p. 671&675) giving credence to Guest (1987) and Storey (1992), stated that "soft HRM recognises employees as a resource worth investing in and tends to focus on high commitment/high involvement/high performance human resource practices," while hard HRM "identifies employees as a cost to be minimised and tends to focus on 'flexibility techniques' and limited investment in learning and development" (p.671&675). In a similar vein, Boxall and Purcell (2008) referred to Human

Resource Management (HRM) as activities that are affiliated with employment relationships management in the firm.

Beer *et al.* (1984), developed one of the earliest models known as the Harvard approach in an attempt to elucidate the understanding and meaning of a softer HRM. They believe that the Harvard model as seen in Figure 2.0 is associated with the 'developmental-humanist' standpoint laying emphasis on the term human in HRM (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1990, p. 21). The model has been seen to represent a unique way of thinking about employee management: Human Resource Management. In this model, there is value placed on 'human' (employees) as they are seen as a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability and high quality of skills and performance. Beer *et al.* (1984), further suggest that this model was built on the role of employees as both the major operating cost for most organisations and also human and social capital, the only resource able to generate value from other resources in order to create organisational success.

This model as described by Beer *et al.* (1984), further lays emphasis on the necessity of internally consistent and externally relevant HRM bundles that include: (internal or horizontal fit) in combination with the importance of aligning such HRM bundles with organisation strategy (strategic or vertical fit). Drawing on the model Legge (1995, p. 66) further added, "that employees' proactive input is capable of development, worthy of trust and collaboration that is achieved through participation and informed choice." With the need to improve and enhance managers' behaviours towards managing human resources, Beer *et al.* (1984) proposed in their model four (4) Human Resource Management systems managers need to take note of and be responsible for, regardless of the organisations size (Bloisi, 2007). First, the Harvard model (Figure 2.0) acknowledges a range of stakeholders, including not just shareholders but also employees and trade unions, management, community, and government. Second, the model applies a social systems perspective, that acknowledges, for example, the influence and relevance of multiple stakeholders (internal and external), their social interactions, and their influence on HRM policy choices. Third, given the model creates value the organisations needs to create economic value through organisational effectiveness, contribute to individual wellbeing and have policies that will have a long term benefit for the society (Beer *et al.* 1984). Fourth, the situational factors in the model comprises of the external elements (such as societal values, laws and labour market); the elements that are more directly under the organisation's control but that are limited by previous managerial decisions and

history, including the workforce characteristics, the task technology and the unions; and the elements that are directly related to the business but are outside the direct remit of HRM, such as the management philosophy and the business strategy. The aim of this model is to balance Individual needs and organisational needs, as they could appear different. This approach according to scholars reflects a pluralist approach (McKenna & Beech, 2008).
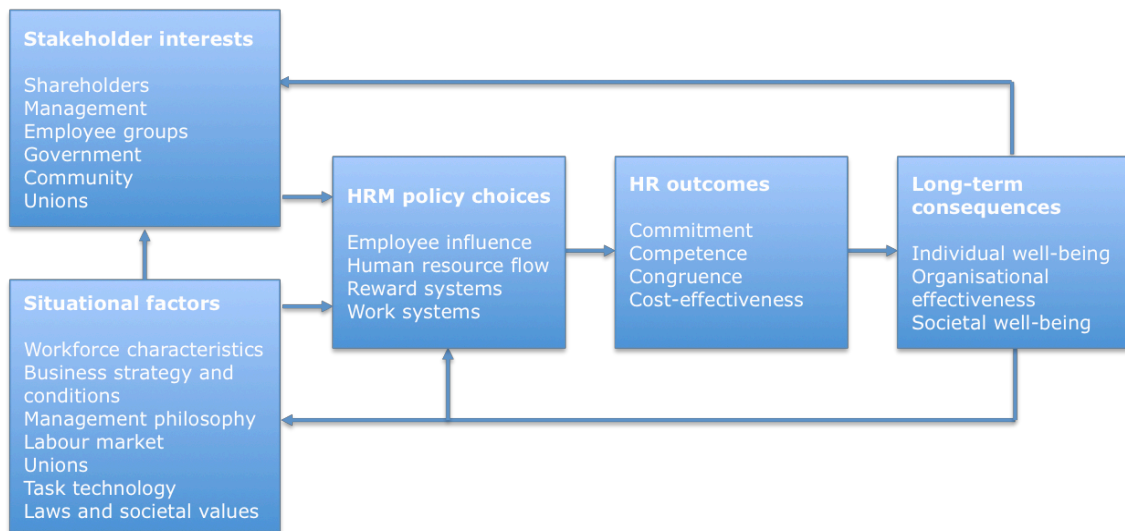
FIG 2.0: HARVARD APPROACH OF HRM

In recent years, Hugh, *et al.* (2016, p.622), given credence to the Harvard model by Beer, associated soft HRM with 'ingratiation and reason' which focuses on the subordinate's affective side. To them 'soft HRM involves polite and friendly behaviours that allow to target the option of whether or not to comply.' Specifically, Hugh *et al.* (2016), encourages a participatory management style that makes use of the soft HRM which improves the target's positive feelings, employee engagement, arouse enthusiasm, and thereby enhance the likelihood of carrying out a specific request.

In regard to the hard HRM, Tichy and Devanna according to Tiwari *et al.* (2019) formulated the fombrun model in 1984 where they suggested that the HR system and the organisational structure should be managed in a way that is congruent with organisational strategy. The model focused on four functions of HRM which include: selection, appraisal, development and rewards, and their interrelatedness. As one of the first HRM models, Tichy and Devanna model has been seen by scholars as a very simple model that serves as a heuristic framework for explaining the nature and significance of the key HR activities (Tiwari *et al.,* 2019). These four functions or constituent components of Human Resource Management are

expected to contribute to organisational effectiveness (Ibid, 2019). Given that this model represents the hard HRM, it lays emphasis on "tight fit" between the HR strategy and the business strategy. It suggests that human resources that are available must be matched with jobs in the organization.

Storey (2001) believed these definitions and models connote an elusive concept of HRM with diverse meanings, and that having a universalistic definition of the concept will create ambiguity and confusion. He therefore claimed that HRM is "elastic" and can be applied differently. However, while defining HRM, Storey (2001) developed three components to guide the operationalisation of the concept:

1. H: Human (something to do with people)
2. R: Ambiguous concept that people find it difficult to relate to
3. M: Management places in the domain of Business and Organisation.

While discussing the elements in HRM, Price (2000) observed that research surrounding the concept tends to ignore the human element and people are referred to as 'resource'. He believed that people should not be equated to equipment. The 'human' element of HRM focuses on the relationship between employer and employee, and associates itself with the human relations movement and the concept of high commitment work practices developed by (Walton, 1985).

The reasoning of Walton (1985), explains why HRM should therefore be part of management strategies concerned with the decisions, strategies, factors, principles, operations, practices, functions and methods related to the management of people as employees in any type of organisation (Fajana, *et al.,* 2011). Research has shown that in order for HRM to function effectively, it has to provide practical solutions drawn from theoretical and managerial traditions (Price, 2000). Against this altercation, Fajana, *et al.* (2011), agreed with the position of the American Management Association in 2000, that HRM is a philosophy of people management that identifies the uniqueness of human resources which is important to business success. They also believed that management is accountable for obtaining and maintaining qualified employees in today's complex environment.

Following the discussion above, extant HRM literature argued that the outcome of an employee's performance is positively dependent on two main strategies. One is the manner in which employees are well managed and the other is the performance of the Human Resources Department (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Based on on-going debate, a well-structured HRM

system may enhance employees' engagement, thereby establishing a high performing employee (Paauwe, 2009).

Nonetheless, increasing commitment and employee engagement has become a priority on the HRM agenda and research has shown that having an engaged and committed workforce can greatly improve performance and yield positive results such as superior organisational performance (Harrison *et al*., 2006). Furthermore, research has suggested that there is a link between an organisation and its employees (Guzzo & Noonan, 1994). Supporting this argument, Casper and Harris (2008), suggested that employees are sometimes clueless of the organisation's intention, and so rely solely on the HR department to direct, guide, and give them information in the organisation. This in turn, gives confidence to the employees that leads to employee job engagement and stimulates employee outcomes (Ibid, 1994). With the growing interest in improving employee well-being and engagement, the research adopted the soft HRM perspective, as this recognises employees as a resource worth investing in and tends to focus on high commitment/high involvement human resource practices within the Nigerian hotel sector.

With the increasing interest in Nigeria, the knowledge of HRM and factors that impact HRM becomes critical to the success of businesses in Nigeria (Ibid, 2011). Nigeria has been seen as Africa's most populous country with over 200 million people, and this population makes foreign investment attractive (Fajana *et al.,* 2011). HRM as a concept was introduced in the 40's at the time industrialization and commercialization were gaining ground. Ever since then, the growth of HR in Nigeria in recent years has been characterised by lack of professionalism and specialisation. Fajana (2009) observed that Nigeria is one of the African countries perturbed with abundant labour and limited talent. The ability to attract, develop and retain the best talent is a challenge. This resulted in the argument by Fajana and Ige (2009) cited in Fajana *et al.* (2011) that there is a need for effective management to attain top performance. Some may attribute Nigerians HRM as 'Infant' as a lot of academic research is still required in this area (Ibid, 2011). In addition, lack of indigenous and comprehensive HRM models, practices and policies is one of the challenges facing HRM in Nigeria, this is why most policies, principles and practices visible in Nigerian workplace have been adopted from western countries (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009; Ibid 2011).

Nevertheless, democracy has enhanced the practice of HRM, determining the number

of expatriates it permits (Fajana *et al.,* 2011). They also noticed an increase in the importation of technology to enhance HRM, and a slow progression in training. In Nigeria, applying management techniques to maximize cost efficiency is still growing, thus it becomes evident that HRM in Nigeria is open for further research. Amidst the challenges facing HRM in Nigeria is the lack of internal manpower to complete tasks and the complexity of today's business climate as a result of deregulation and globalization (Olofin & Folawewo, 2006). In addition, one interesting observation made by Fajana *et al.* (2011) is the loss of psychological attachment, commitment and loyalty of employees due to the HR ideologies adopted. They noticed an increase in temporary employment and contracts due to outsourcing strategy. Nonetheless, due to a refocus on development of several other sectors in Nigeria, most organisations now offer a continued education and training to help cultivate the right skills and expand their career within a global/collaborative workplace (Ibid, 2011).

Recent literature indicated that in Nigeria, the management team firmly controls the organisation by effectively managing the number of employees and matching them closely with their desired goals and objectives (Adedipe & Adeleke, 2016). Both management and the government try to ensure coherence in the HR policies and practice with the business strategy. For example, the oil sector in Nigeria made considerable effort to promote the participation of indigenous workers in the oil sector. Recruitment and selection are done in Nigeria and the employees are trained with the appropriate skills to handle the complexity of the sector (Fajana *et al.,* 2011). They believe this development strategy is a result of the affiliation with well-developed countries. For most organisations in Nigeria, performance appraisal, wage allocation and other benefits have been improved by collective bargaining between unions and employers (Fajana *et al.,* 2011). Another practice that has gained considerable traction is the emphasis on training. The hotel industry is another example that espouses the quality of work/performance, by focusing on the employees' environment, engagement, social relationship, remuneration, High Performance Work Practices and reward systems (Kwahar & Iyortsuun, 2018). Empirical literature suggests that, the quality of work/performance of an employee is centred on their perception of and attitudes towards their work and the total working environment (HR practices) (David, *et al.,* 2001; Nickson, 2009; Pulakos, 2009). According to researchers, organisations have begun re-emphasising the need for training to generate enthusiasm for creating new ideas that are mutually beneficial to employers and employees. They observed that the managers, supervisors and HR departments are responsible for ensuring that workers are effectively trained (Ibid, 2011). This recent interest in HRM has led organisations to

consistently search for strategies to develop and improve the wellbeing of employees.

Further review of the Journal of Management on HRM have consistently identified and addressed the balance between Micro (traditional) and Macro (strategic) aspects of HRM (Wright & Boswell, 2002). Mahoney and Deckop's review as seen in Wright and Boswell (2002, p .247), began this "dichotomization", identifying several trends within the field, one of which involved the transition from personnel administration to HRM and also from human resource planning to strategy. A couple of years down the line Wright and McMahan in 1992 departed from this balanced approach by focusing solely on strategic HRM research (Wright & Boswell, 2002). While these reviews have commendably identified some of the issues around the diverse aspects of HRM, they have consistently distinguished between the macro (strategic) and micro (functional) sides of HRM.

The term "strategic" HRM or macro HRM has been used increasingly and refers to research demonstrating the impact of HRM on a strategic goal which includes profitability. Due to the ambiguity surrounding the term "strategic," Wright and Boswell, (2002) referred to "macro" HRM as a more encompassing and broader term that focuses on the examination of HRM from an organisational perspective. Micro HRM on the other hand explored the impact of HR practices on individuals or employees. This stream of research explores how HR can increase or improve individual productivity, quality and engagement. It often involves the manipulation of relevant HR practices, implementing and examining the influence on individuals' skills, ability and attitude (Wright & Boswell, 2002). However, on the other hand, subsequent macro HRM literature investigates the impact or influence of HR practices using the organisation (corporation or business unit) as the level of analysis. For example, Huselid (1995) examined HR practices for both managerial and hourly employees. While this approach recognises differences across two broad categories of employees, it ignores any differences within these two categories (Wright & Boswell, 2002).

Strategic HRM research over the past two decades has indicated that there may be certain HR practices, which improve employee engagement, effectiveness and predict higher levels of organisational performance. The practices are either referred to as High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs), or High Involvement Work Practices (HIWPs). The central argument surrounding these labels is that organisations can achieve high performance by adopting practices that recognize and leverage employees' Knowledge, Skill and Ability (KSA), to

create value (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995). Findings from Matthijs *et al.* (2013) study suggest that not all HPWPs lead to employee outcomes. A few scholars have tried to determine why some HPWPs do not achieve their ultimate outcomes and called for a contingency approach (Purcell, 1999). However, some other scholars believe that the effectiveness of HPWPs depends on the macro factors, such as organisational strategy, and on micro factors, such as employee preferences (Ibid, 2013). Following this logic, the focus on HPWPs being dependent on the organisational strategy and the employee preference to achieve employee engagement and stimulate employee outcome informed this study, as the research aimed at understanding perceptions of both employees and HR managers within the hotel sector in Nigeria.

Given this typology, the next section will attempt to review some of the more significant research developments around the terminologies and conceptualisation of HPWPs.

2.3. High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs)

In the Human Resource Management field, there has been a shift in researcher's interest from a 'control-based personnel management' to more 'commitment-based HRM practices', which is referred to as High Performance Work Practices (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995). In the absence of a consensus in the literature on the agreed terminology, a wide variety of terms are used to describe these systems including HPWPs, high-performance work systems (Combs *et al.,* 2006; Karatepe, 2013a; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014); high-performance HR practices (Sun *et al.,* 2007); high involvement work systems (Edwards & Wright, 2001; Stephen & De Menezes, 2011); high-performance work environment (Weinberg *et al.,* 2013); among others.

Boxall and Macky (2009) justifying the use of a different terminology noted that using the broad concept of HPWPs more clarity can be achieved by reducing the focus to more specific and clearly defined subsets of practices. For example, High Involvement Work Systems (HIWS) which has been seen as one of the subsets of HPWPs is usually referred to as a bundle of practices that entail alternative job design practices such as creating communication channels to provide employees with information about the plans and goals of the firm as well as practices that give employees the chance to provide input on the decision-making process and to express their opinions to managers (Ollo-Lopez *et al.,* 2011).

Although a few scholars support the argument of Boxall and Macky (2009), Zachary *et*

al., (2018, p. 260) referencing majority of scholar's studies suggested that HR practices are considered "high performance" because when adopted they serve to improve the organisations performance as a result of its alliance with the organisational strategy. They clearly state that though these terminologies seem different from each other, they all serve to define the most suitable management practice within an organisation in order to gain competitive advantage and improve employee engagement (Barnes, 2012; Camps & Luna-Arocas, 2009; Mittal, 2012; Wood 1999). After a review of the literature, the researcher updated and adopted Do, (2016) illustration of the different terminologies used to represent High Performance Work Practices as seen in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2

DIFFERENT LABELS OF HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK PRACTICES

Author	Year	Terminology	Context
Iverson and Zatzick	**2007**	*High-commitment work practices*	*Manufacturing sector*
Boxall and Macky	**2009**	*High-involvement work processes*	*Multisector*
Gong, Chang and Cheung	**2010**	*High-commitment HR practices*	*Service sector*
Kim and Sung-Choon	**2013**	*High-involvement work practices*	*Multisector*
Tregaskis, Daniels, Glover, Butler, and Meyer	**2013**	*High-performance work practices*	*Engineering industry*
Mitchell, Obeidat, and Bray	**2013**	*High-performance human resource practices*	*Private industry*
Cristini, Eriksson, and Pozzoli	**2013**	*High-performance management practices*	*Private industry*
Chiang *et al.*	**2014**	*High commitment work system*	*Engineering industry*
Do	**2016**	*High-Performance Work Systems*	*Service industry*

Esch, Wei, and Chiang,	2016	*High-performance human resource practices*	*Manufacturing and service industry*
Kim, Karatepe, Lee, Lee, Hur, and Xijing,	2017	*high-performance work practices*	*Service industry*

2.4. Conceptualising High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs)

To give perspective into the increased focus on HPWPs before highlighting the inconsistencies in conceptualising HPWPs, HRM literature has identified the distinction within the number of practices examined. Studies have examined an individual practice for example (a selection technique) independent of any other HR practices that might exist. Micro researchers conducting such research often focus on the technological sophistication of a particular HR practice through demonstrating the efficacy of a specific HR technique in isolation from the others (for example how highly a structured interview correlates with individual job performance). Macro researchers conducting the same research attempts to demonstrate the organisational impact of a particular practice (for example, how the use of stock options correlates with organizational profitability) (Wright & Boswell, 2002).

Conversely, recent literature has started focusing on sets of HR practices. These researchers view multiple HR practices as a system, either referred to as high performance work system (HPWS) (Chiang *et al.,* 2014) or as a High Performance Work Practices (Arthur, 1994). This stream of research assumes that individual practices can complement, substitute for, or even conflict with other practices, and thus to truly examine the impact of HR practices on any variable of interest, one must examine the entire system of HR practices or specific practices functioning coherently (Delery, 1998). For example, Posthuma *et al.* (2013) noted that HPWPs represent the foundation of high performance work systems because when implemented in coordinated bundles they facilitate positive outcomes, flexible teams and employee engagement.

Clearly, the bulk of HRM literature has aimed at multiple, rather than single practice studies. The single practice studies tend to be driven by motivation in order to prove that certain functional arears matter (Wright & Boswell, 2002). However, such studies are problematic as they ignore the potential simultaneity that might exist with other practices. For example, quality

of work life programs are often accompanied by diverse HR practices such as training and skill-based compensation. If these practices are implemented together, then examining the impact of training for example without examining the skill-based pay may result in a 'spurious' relationship (for example, it's the pay, not training that impacts performance) or at least an overestimate of the effect of the focal variable (Wright & Boswell, 2002, p .255).

SHRM scholars have come up with several reasons why there has been increased interest in the combination of multiple practices into a coordinated system (Delery, 1998; MacDuffie, 1995). One focuses on the additive effect of a combination of practice and the other on the synergy that occurs when one practice reinforces another (Wright & Boswell, 2002). In relation to the former, an example that illuminates the additive nature of a combination of HPWPs is when two different selection tools are used to identify unique job skills. It is proposed that the systematic combination of staffing (recruitment, selection and training practices) will lead to the desired organisational performance, by attracting and selecting highly qualified applicants, who will undergo training then they will have the necessary skills to take on task and ensure a high level of performance (Jiang *et al.,* 2012). This implies that, neither staffing nor training functions better alone, but jointly, they can enhance the employee workforce (Obeidat *et al.,* 2016). While an example for the latter is the use of training which enhances participation, making employees equipped to make decisions (ibid, 2002). The effect of accumulating several HR practices that affects the same work characteristic may enhance employee engagement which in turn exert greater positive influence on organisational performance (Huselid, 1995; Jiang *et al.,* 2012). However, in spite of the positives deduced from a combination of practices, Becker *et al.* (1997) noted that it is possible for multiple practices to reduce organisational performance. They believe that this can happen when two practices are substitutes, for example when training is provided to develop a skill although the selection process ensured the employees already have it. In such situations, the cost incurred in implementing training is wasted.

Although there are diverse labels and distinction of HPWPs, there has been little consistency in the conceptualisation and selection of the required HR practices to be included in HPWPs literature (Boselie *et al.,* 2005). This lack of conceptual clarity and consensus of HPWPs, is challenging as Guest (1997, p .274) clearly stated that "understanding the concept and determining a HR practice to include is of utmost importance." HPWPs has been conceptualised by various researchers through various means. Some view HPWPs as a

collection of multiple and interdependent practices with no definitive linkages (Obeidat, Mitchell & Bray, 2016), while some other researchers view HPWPs as individual/single HR practices, that are more likely to lead to higher performance (Boselie *et al.,* 2005; Guest & Hoque, 1994). To highlight a few, the researcher has adapted and updated the Do, (2016) table highlighting several conceptualisations of HPWPs in the literature. See Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3

DIFFERENT CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF HPWPs.

Author(s)	Year	Definition	Dependent Variable(s)
Pfeffer	**1994**	HPWPs was identified as a series of sixteen HRM practices that lead to improved performance, including employment security, selectivity in recruiting, high wages, incentive pay, employee ownership, information sharing, participation and empowerment and training and skill development in firms in general.	*Competitive advantage*
Lado and Wilson,	**1994, p. 701**	*"HPWPs, is a set of distinct but interrelated activities, functions, and processes that are directed at attracting, developing, and maintaining a firm's human resources."*	*Competitive advantage*
Huselid,	**1995, p .635**	HPWPs aims to *"improve knowledge, skills and, abilities of a firm's current and potential employees, increasing their motivation, reducing shirking and enhance retention of quality employees while encouraging nonperformers to leave the firm."*	*Employee turnover, productivity and financial performance*

Appelbaum *et al.*	**2000**	HPWPs are defined as a combination of those HR practices that can facilitate employee involvement, skills enhancement and stronger motivation.	*Ability, Motivation and Opportunity to work (AMO model)*
Datta, Guthrie and Wright	**2005, p .135**	*"HPWPs are a set of HR practices designed to enhance employee's skills, commitment and productivity in such a way that employees become a source of competitive advantage."*	*Labour productivity*
Evans and Davis,	**2005, p .759**	*"HPWPs are seen as a combined set of HRM practices that are internally consistent (alignment among HRM practices) and externally consistent (alignment with firm strategy)".*	*Firm financial efficiency and firm flexibility*
Sun, Aryee, and Law	**2007, p .560**	*"HPWPs is a combination of single practices that jointly influence firm performance."*	*Turnover and productivity*
Takeuchi *et al.*	**2007, p .1069**	*"HPWPs are a group of separate but interconnected human resource (HR) practices designed to enhance employees' skills and effort."*	*Establishment performance*
Liao *et al.*	**2009**	HPWPs are a bundle of HR practices that are aimed at improving employees competences, motivation, and performance in terms of delivering high-quality service to customers.	*Employee service performance*
Gittell *et al.*	**2010, p .490**	*"HPWPs is a system designed to achieve high performance by adopting practices that recognise and leverage on employees' ability to create value."*	*Relational coordination, quality and efficiency outcomes*
Messersmith and Guthrie	**2010**	HPWPs, is a system of Human Resource (HR) practices established to entice, retrain and stimulate employees.	*Innovation and strategically congruent behaviour*

Messersmith *et al.*	**2011, p. 1107**	*"HPWPs are strong systems comprising internally coherent practices that send reinforcing messages and cues to employees."*	*Organisational citizenship behaviours and department outcomes*
Ang *et al.*	**2013, p. 3092**	*"HPWPs is a system of HR practices that are aimed at improving employee engagement and job satisfaction."*	*Affective commitment*
Rabl *et al.*	**2014, p .1011**	*"HPWPs are human resource (HR) practices designed to increase business performance by enhancing employee ability, motivation and opportunity to contribute (AMO)".*	*Performance effect size*
Van De Voorde and Beijer	**2015, p .63**	*"HPWPs is a group of separate but interconnected HR practices designed to enhance employee and firm performance through enhancing employee skills, motivation and opportunity to contribute".*	*Commitment and job strain*
Jiang and Liu	**2015, p. 127**	*"HPWPs, are high involvement or high commitment organisation managerial systems, and a bundle of HR practices that enables high performance."*	*Favourable interpersonal environment; knowledge transfer and firm performance*
Hefferman and Dundon	**2016, p .212**	*'HPWPs includes a range of innovative HR practices and work design processes that, when used in certain combinations or bundles, are mutually reinforcing and produce synergistic benefits."*	*Job satisfaction; effective commitment and work pressure*

Of all the studies and measures of HPWPs used in literature, Pfeffer's model appears to be one of the earliest referenced (Pfeffer, 1994). The Pfeffer model conceptualising HPWPs originally included 16 practices but was reduced to seven in 1998: job security, selective hiring,

autonomy, empowerment, high salary, extensive training and participation from the different departments in the company. Nonetheless, authors in this field suggested that only a few practices attain significant organisational results. For example, some researchers have linked HPWPs to motivation and organisational commitment, while some others have linked this to productivity and financial performance (Do, 2016). Another visible example that expands the understanding of HPWPs conceptualisation and its implication is the work of (Huselid 1995). According to him, the HPWPs that focus on hiring, performance management framework, rewards and incentives, and training, have important statistical and economic influence on the rotation of labour and productivity of the organisation.

In lieu of the abovementioned argument regarding the unresolved conceptualisation of HPWPs, recent studies suggest that Appelbaum *et al.* (2000) work provided a basis for a stronger conceptualisation of HPWPs through their AMO framework (Obeidat *et al.,* 2016; Sun *et al.,* 2007 & Yen *et al.,* 2016). This framework developed by Appelbaum *et al.* (2000) is viewed as the starting point to explaining HPWPs and its importance to engagement which in turn stimulate employee outcome. According to Appelbaum and the other researchers, HPWPs influence engagement through their impact on employee Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) to participate. Boxall and Purcell (2003) argued that according to the AMO framework by Appelbaum, employee's engagement will improve when they have the ability to work, are motivated and are in a work environment that provides the necessary support for them to express themselves. Following this logic, the AMO framework suggests that HPWPs enhance the three main components of the model and can be described along three dimensions: ability-enhancing practices, motivation-enhancing practices and opportunity-enhancing practices.

However, Obeidat *et al.* (2016), Sun *et al.* (2007) and Yen *et al.* (2016) acknowledging the work of Appelbaum *et al.* (2000) and extending the work of Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000) on the AMO framework argued that these three domains coherently put will lead to employee engagement and stimulate employee outcome. In this research, drawing on Appelbaum *et al.* (2000), Obeidat *et al.* (2016), Sun *et al.* (2007) and Yen *et al.* (2016), the researcher argued that these three dimensions coherently put together broadly represent the domain of HPWPs. Building on literature, the researcher proposed that HPWPs is conceptualised as a bundle of practices that influences employee's ability, motivation and opportunity to perform which strengthens the HRM system where employees' perception of the HPWPs within the hotel sector will enhance employee engagement that can stimulate

creative performance.

2.5. HPWPs and AMO (Ability, Motivation and Opportunity) Model.

Over the years many authors have promoted the practical implication and benefit of adopting HPWPs, following researches that explain its importance to engagement (Mittal, 2012; Obeidat *et al.,* 2016). However, despite extensive research and positive findings, understanding the importance of employee engagement to HPWPs - employee outcome relationship still remains scarce and challenging (Chang & Chen, 2011; Obeidat *et al.,* 2016). In an attempt to comprehend this relationship, this research sought for a well-evidenced understanding of the conceptualisation and components of HPWPs.

Appelbaum *et al.* (2000) suggested that the combination of distinct but interconnected HR practices influences employee engagement through their impact on employees' Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) to participate. The grouping of the HPWPs into categories using the AMO framework has been widely used and accepted by several authors (Jiang *et al.,* 2012, 2013; Mittal, 2012; Luna-Arocas and Camps, 2008; Shih *et al.,* 2006). One benefit of the approach is that it provides a better understanding of the HPWPs.

Consequently, amidst the three models developed by Appelbaum *et al.* (2000), Wright and Kehoe, (2008) suggested that the ability-enhancing framework improves the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) of employees through an investment in HR practices. HR practices such as staffing and cross training have been seen to influence employees' ability to perform by influencing their knowledge skill and ability (Katou & Budhwar, 2010). One example that supports this claim is the work of Delery and Doty (1996) who proposed two HRM systems that aims at enhancing employees' abilities, such as: "the buy-oriented and the make-oriented systems." (Obeidat *et al.,* 2016, p. 580) 'The buy-oriented system' enhances employee's abilities when HPWPs like selection and sophisticated recruitment are implemented. These methods bring new skills required to perform the required task within an organisation (Ibid, p. 580). 'The make-oriented system', on the other hand, focuses on transferring skills to existing employees through training and development (Ibid, 2016). These ability-enhancing practices are intended to buy skills and/or enhance the existing skills of employees (Ma Prieto & Pérez-Santana, 2014).

Motivation-enhancing model on the other hand suggest that the degree of investment in HR practices such as internal mobility, performance appraisal, compensation etc., functions to motivate employee behaviour (Wright & Kehoe, 2008). Extant literature suggests that when incentives are presented the employee will feel they are treated well, and this will positively affect their attitude and behaviour towards the company (Rahman & Ahmad, 2015). Finally, providing an opportunity for employees to perform is identified in the opportunity-enhancing model. This model suggests that HR practices such as empowerment, information sharing, quality circles, flexible work assignment, effective communication etc., will provide employees with opportunities to participate in substantive decision-making and on organisational outcomes which will in turn increase their confidence and performance (Jiang *et al.,* 2012; Tsai, 2006; Wright & Kehoe, 2008).

The AMO framework as identified by several researchers has been referred to as 'theoretically plausible' for conceptualizing HPWPs (Jiang *et al.,* 2013; Purcell & Kinnie, 2007). This model has been implicitly used by scholars in empirical research since it emerged in 2000 (Obeidat *et al.,* 2016). More than half of 104 empirical researches as explained by Boselie *et al.* (2005) made use of the AMO framework. Paauwe (2009, p. 136) confirmed this, saying: "So gradually we are witnessing the birth of at least a certain commonality around how HRM is operationalised when exploring the relationship between HRM and performance."

Based on the findings of Saridakis *et al.* (2017, p. 93) that "a system of different but complementary HPWPs has a stronger effect on performance" they confirmed frequent use of the three dimension model while providing preliminary support for the use of the AMO model to better conceptualize HPWPs. Although a set of coherent HPWPs are seen to be better than individual practices, Jennings (2006) and Becker *et al.* (1997) argued that some combinations of the HR practices may negatively influence performance. This observation gave credence to a number of scholars who also suggested that each bundle of HPWPs (AMO framework) do not impact performance equally (Jiang *et al.,* 2012). However, Saridakis *et al.,* (2017), believes that exploring the effect of HPWPs conceptualised in the AMO framework will be informative. In sum, extant literature conducted on the use of these practices at organisational level of the AMO framework, proposed by Appelbaum *et al.* (2000), indicated that little is known about employees' perception of the use of these practices at the individual level. This prompted Boselie (2010) and Obeidat *et al.* (2016) to conclude that future research should further look at the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes from different groups of

employees.

Following the thread of argument across the literature there is no one definition/conceptualisation, measurement and necessary components of HPWPs, the most emphasised HPWPs are; cross-departmental training, long-term customer relationship maintenance, internal promotion opportunities, job security, internal mobility, empowerment, career development, smooth communication channels, attractive salaries, teamwork, performance- oriented evaluation, and equality among employee levels (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Kroon *et al.,* 2013; Lawler, 1992; MacDuffie, 1995; Pfeffer, 1994; Takeuchi, Chen, & Kepak, 2009). However, identifying the right HR practices that should be bundled together to form the HPWPs system remains unresolved (Jiang *et al*., 2012). Efforts made to address this challenge have led researchers to view HPWPs as a set of common dimensions, grouping practices into distinct but related categories (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000; Jiang, *et al.,* 2012).

Not long ago, Do, (2016) reviewed literature on HPWPs from 1992 to 2014 and identified over sixty-one (61) HR practices that were mentioned over 2000 times. However, it appears only few of them are often stressed. For instance, Yen *et al.* (2016) placed emphasis on ten most frequently used namely: job security, cross- departmental education and training, internal promotion opportunities, performance- oriented evaluation, career development, long-term customer relationship maintenance, smooth communication channels, attractive salaries, teamwork, and equality among employee levels (Applebaum, *et al.,* 2000; Becker & Huselid, 1998; Kroon *et al.,* 2013; Lawler, 1992; MacDuffie, 1995; Sun *et al.,* 2007). However, in order to effectively analyse the objective of this research, and in accordance with Do, (2016), the researcher included three categories of practices that have been accepted in the literature as belonging to the construct HPWPs: Cross-departmental training, Internal mobility and empowerment. Consequently, to further explain the dynamics of HPWPs and the possibility of the relationship that exists, these three concepts must be explained.

2.5.1. Concepts of three HPWPs explained

Cross-departmental training: Training, which has been seen as a crucial HR practice, was defined by Armstrong (2006) as the use of systematic and planned instruction activities to promote learning. Supporting this view, Noe *et al.* (2014) opined that training refers to a planned and structured effort to improve or facilitate employees' learning of job-related

competencies which include ability, knowledge, skills, or behaviours that are critical for successful job performance. Thus, training has become a very crucial investment strategy to improve knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour of employees (Bulut & Culha, 2010).

Lashley (2002) also identified the benefits of training when he observed that trained employees display productivity, satisfaction, engagement and commitment. For him training can be regarded as a worthwhile investment, due to these benefits (Ibid, 2002). Given that employees play a key role in ensuring organisations achieve competitive advantage, the need to equip employees with the ability, right skill set, knowledge and competence is very important (Ramdani *et al.,* 2014; Selden *et al.,* 2013 & Tsai, 2006). For this reason, many firms are now investing extensively in employee training which in turn signals value for employees and motivates them to perform better (Selden *et al.,* 2013). Within the service industry, Karatepe *et al.* (2013a) stressed the necessity of training due to the nature of their role. According to Karatepe *et al.* (2013a) training employees, enables them to understand customer needs in order to align their delivery of service with customer expectations. They further suggested that every business within the service industry needs to equip their employees with the ability, knowledge, skill and understanding via training as this decides the fate of the organisation.

Similar to Babakus *et al.* (2008) perception, training employees within the service industry in certain task-related skills, and behavioural skills are invaluable as this makes them more engaged. According to Babakus *et al.* (2008), these service employees have constant interaction with customers and failure to deliver quality service could affect the performance of the organisation. In view of this, Liao *et al.* (2009) noted that employees are meant to be aware of the diverse demands of customers within the hospitality/service industry. To them, the employees' trained, needs to adapt their interpersonal style, training and service offering to the needs of customers. As a result, they are more likely to have more autonomy, feel engaged and will be able to resolve the problems and job duties on their own. As a consequence, these employees will likely be motivated, creative and engaged at work, thereby contributing to the overall performance of the organisation.

In addition to Babakus *et al.,* (2008) perception on training, Yen *et al.* (2016) highlighted another dimension of training called the cross-departmental training. In their study, they observed that cross-departmental training leads to career development and enables

employees to establish goals. The implication is that cross-trained employees expand their exposure to tasks and enhance their ability to perform better. More so, Obeidat *et al.* (2016) noted that cross training facilitates the transference of skills and ability. Literature on cross-departmental training indicates the continued rejection of one employee doing the same task continuously (Walker, 2007). More importantly, in the hospitality industry, cross-departmental training is not only a good practice but necessary with today's economic challenges and competitive work environment. To support this, Radin, (2013) identified four key reasons why organisations should adopt cross-departmental training at hotels:

1. ***Improve flexibility*:** According to Radin, (2013) cross-departmental training improves the team's versatility. To her, this approach indicates a good way to get each individual exposure to other key areas of management. For example, "having a front-desk manager who can knowledgeably fill in as a housekeeping manager in an emergency benefits the business and operations while also offering guest benefits." Following the line of argument, she suggests that employees, who are properly trained, should understand the task of the job. Additionally, improved flexibility helps when scheduling employees.

2. ***Improve productivity*:** cross-departmental trained employees give the organisation the liberty to operate with fewer personnel and with less expense (Radin, 2013). After her analysis, she observed that being trained prepares and allows employees to perform their tasks confidently. This confidence translates to customer satisfaction.

3. ***Improve bench strength*:** cross training also builds moral and internal advancements. For example, "should a front-desk manager take a vacation, it may be possible to schedule the F&B manager in that role if he or she has been properly cross-trained." (Ibid, 2013)

4. ***Improve employees' marketability*:** Conclusively, cross-departmental training ensures employees grow and move forward in their careers (Radin, 2013). She stated that employee's versatility as a result of cross-departmental training gives them a better chance of getting a new job. In this manner conducting this study using cross departmental training has been supported by several empirical studies in the hospitality and service industries who identified a positive effect of training on employees' attitudes and behaviours (Yen *et al.,* 2016)

Internal mobility: Several organisations have launched cross departmental training and development programmes specifically aimed at promoting career development (Yen *et al.,* 2016). In this context, training is provided both to adapt employees' skills and prepare them to

change functions, within the organisation (internal mobility) (Alessandra, *et al.,* 2013). According to Sun *et al.* (2007), and Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000) internal mobility involves 'promotion from within' 'broad career paths', where employees have the opportunity to move across departments horizontally or vertically. In view of this, Sun *et al.* (2007) and Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000), argued that such HPWPs signal an organisation's intention to establish a long-term exchange relationship with its employees. According to these scholars satisfying employees' goals influences the perception of a work environment that is supportive and facilitates employee engagement.

Drawing from a social exchange perspective, the benefit of having an engaged and supportive environment is that it facilitates reciprocity, as employees begin to display behaviours that are beneficial for the organisation (Blau, 1964). In essence, Leana and Van Buren, (1999, p.548) opined that "if individuals believe that their efforts are an integral part of a collective goal, they are more likely to spend time doing things the organisation and/or its members find useful (e.g., engaging in extra-role behaviours) and less time doing things benefiting the individual but not the organization (e.g., social loafing, self-promotion, or unwillingness to cooperate)"

Understanding internal mobility is significant not just because of its frequency, but also because of its central role in shaping the careers of employees. For employees, internal mobility highlights a sequence of job goals which constitute career development (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). As employees move across jobs, they accumulate skills and other career resources that enable them to move into subsequent jobs (Bidwell & Briscoe, 2010). When trained across different departments, employees represent repositories of skills, routines, and knowledge that can be carried from one job role to another (Corredoira & Rosenkopf, 2010). Internal mobility therefore facilitates the transfer knowledge, human and social capital so critical to organisational learning and performance (Ibid, 2010). As a result, strategically trained employees are increasingly seen as a potential source of motivation which will influence employee engagement and lead to employee outcomes (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000).

Ultimately, as earlier mentioned internal mobility is a significant predictor of employee engagement suggesting that promotion opportunity is an important component that stimulate employee outcome (Dill, *et al.,* 2014).The findings of Dill *et al.* (2014) explained that there are certain HR practices (for example, cross training) that are linked with internal mobility and

lead to employee engagement. They also found evidence to suggest that internal mobility induces greater commitment. However, in spite of positives associated with internal mobility, researchers have noted that, in some cases, employees may more likely leave their employers after receiving additional training to pursue promotional opportunities with another employer, but the refocus and increase in interest within the service industry (especially the hotel sector), there may be an increase in promotion opportunities within organisations (Dill, *et al.,* 2014).

One recurring challenge several researchers have observed is that explicit career ladders were not significantly related to internal mobility. Most studies have suggested that it is possible that organisations may have cross departmental training and career ladders in place but fail to make such career pathways known to employees (Ibid, 2014). Although there are studies that measure the construct 'mobility', the focus on the interpretative dimension of internal mobility is scarce, especially as it relates to employee engagement.

Empowerment: Another vital indicator of HPWPs is empowerment which is explained as "the freedom, opportunity and ability to make decisions and commitments" (Forrester, 2000, p.67). Guchait *et al.* (2012) and Yavas *et al.* (2010) stated that empowerment enables employees' make creative judgments, fulfil their duties, and provide quick and fair responses to customers' requests. However, in view of the abovementioned practice, Karatepe, (2013c) indicated that there is a relationship between training and empowerment. He suggests that making use of these practices coherently will generate the required outcome any organisation desires (Karatepe, 2013c). Adopting Karetepe's understanding of training and empowerment under HPWPs, suggest that these two practices coherently could lead to a higher performance as employees will feel engaged and display discretionary effort and creative performance.

Additionally, empowerment, which has been seen as a strategic tool for the survival and success of an organisation, serves to create a feeling of value for employees by the organisation (Karatepe, 2013c). This practice has since been linked with autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Scholars have observed that employees who have autonomy have the ability to handle customer requests, in turn, making the customer satisfied and in turn engaging the employee and increasing their performance (Karatepe, 2013c; Liu *et al.,* 2016)

Empirical research also identified a relationship between empowerment and employee creative performance. As a construct, empowerment is described as a strategy to make

employees think for themselves and develop better understanding of their task (Bartram *et al.,* 2014). Drawing on Conger and Kanungo (1988) analysis on the construct, empowerment can be described as a combination of four different cognitions that influence employees' orientation towards their role and these are meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. In their study, they believed that these cognitions can increase employees' intrinsic motivation, improve their capability to perform and enhance their willingness to serve the organisation (Conger & Kanungo 1988). This suggests that empowerment could also be understood to be a need of the employees which helps to facilitate performance.

This expands the social exchange theory by affirming that employees' needs and motivation should be satisfied in order to enable them to harness their potential to the fullest (Miniotaite & Buciuniene, 2013). For example, if employees feel free, they can decide for themselves what is critical rather than being influenced by external factors (Ibid, 2013). Similarly, when employees perceive a sense of autonomy, they will be intrinsically motivated to try novel ways of performing their work duties (Sun *et al.,* 2012). Research demonstrates that being empowered, employees can yield benefits for performance-related outcomes (Aryee *et al.,* 2012; Ergeneli *et al.,* 2007; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). For example, a study by Bhatnagar (2012) showed that empowerment is greatly associated with employee engagement and creative performance. Another intriguing finding by Zhang and Bartol (2010) showed a significant relationship between empowerment and creative outcomes. Likewise, Huijun and Wei (2010) reported the potential influences of empowerment on service creative performance.

Extending the research on empowerment as a HR practice that influences performance, the researcher focussed on the perception of empowerment to creative performance. This is in line with an aspect of the AMO theory, which suggest that apart from the necessary skills set, knowledge and motivation to perform their job, the working environment providing the appropriate opportunity, that is, 'the support and avenues necessary to enable the desired behaviour' is construed as a complementary condition that enables employees to do their jobs at their fullest potential (Bos-Nehles *et al.,* 2013, p.862). Once employees feel valued, they are likely to be empowered, thereby creating in their work, the desire to repay their organisations support. Based on the above discussion, the researcher highlighted the importance of empowerment to employee creative performance in terms of meaning and autonomy. First, when employees work to give them meaning, they will acknowledge the importance of their work, thereby doing their very best, to develop to their fullest potential. Second, when

employees feel they have autonomy, they are free to carry out their work in their own way. They therefore have more opportunities to try out new ways of doing things, and thus become a source of creativity.

To recap, the HPWPs the researchers used are put together and referred to as a coherent system, which facilitates employee engagement that stimulate individual creative performance, service-oriented discretionary effort and subsequently contribute to organisational performance. Therefore, Table 2.4 highlights some HR practices used by extant literature within the service industry. As another justification for the selection of the specific HPWPs studied, Table 2.4 shows that several researchers have adopted the use of these practices which provide a strong reason to suggest its importance of cross departmental training, internal mobility and empowerment in the service industry.

TABLE 2.4.
SOME HPWPs IDENTIFIED IN HRM LITERATURE

Sun _et al._ (2007); Patel _et al._ (2013)	• _Selective staffing_ • _Extensive training_ • _Internal mobility_ • _Job security_ • _Clear job description_ • _Results-oriented appraisal_ • _Incentive reward_	_Service industry_
Beltrán-Martín _et al._ (2008)	• _Selective staffing_ • _Comprehensive training_ • _Developmental_ • _Performance appraisal_ • _Equitable reward systems_ • _Performance-based pay_	_Industrial and service industry_
Gong _et al._ (2010)	• _Selective hiring_ • _Participation in decision making through teams_ • _High pay contingent on performance_	_Service industry_

	• *Extensive training*	
	• *Career planning and advancement and regular performance for pay*	
	• *Promotion and development purposes*	
Zhang *et al.* (2013)	• *Recruitment* • *Training* • *Compensation* • *Employee participation* • *Job security*	*Service industry*
Karatepe and Vatankhah (2014)	• *Career opportunities* • *Empowerment* • *Selective staffing* • *Rewards* • *Job security* • *Teamwork* • *Training*	*Service industry*
Do, (2016)	• *Innovation-led strategy* • *Innovation-led HR policy* • *Training* • *Information sharing* • *Performance appraisal* • *Compensation systems* • *Interdepartmental service* • *Teamwork* • *Service discretion* • *Job design.*	*Service industry*
Yen *et al.* (2016)	• *Cross-departmental training and education* • *Performance-oriented evaluation* • *Long-term client relationships*	*Service and Manufacturing industry*

- *Attractive salaries*
- *Teamwork*
- *Morality*

2.6. High Performance Work Practices and Employee Job Engagement.

The constant focus on human resources indicates the importance of managing human resources to maximize and enhance organisational performance thereby creating value (Combs *et al.,* 2006). Having identified the recent adoption of HPWPs by organisations as the strategy to ensure employee engagement, manage human resources and further justify the need for an engaged environment where employee's performance can be improved, it becomes important to critically analyse the relationship between employee engagement and HPWPs (Camps & Luna-Arocas, 2009; Mittal, 2012). In order to gain a better understanding of how Human Resources (HR) Practices (HPWPs) can create an environment where employees are engaged which stimulate employee outcome, the next paragraph will provide a recap on HPWPs and discuss the literature surrounding its relationship to employee engagement.

The HPWPs perspective as earlier discussed emphasised the importance of having mutually reinforced HR practices, an idea that can consistently be maximized when integrated and bundled, this in turn forms a coherent system (Delery, 1998, Macky & Boxall, 2007). This simply means that HPWPs applied coherently give latitude to employees to act efficiently and make decisions (Macky & Boxall, 2007). Furthermore, the AMO framework categorises HPWPs into ability-enhancing, motivation-enhancing and opportunity-enhancing high performance work systems (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000; Huselid, 1995; Jiang *et al.,* 2012). This categorisation is grounded in the view that people perform well when they are able and have the ability, personal motivation and opportunity to do so (Huselid, 1995; Jiang *et al.,* 2012; Obeidat *et al.,* 2016). Indeed, scholars have increasingly and convincingly shown that HPWPs lead to various employee outcomes, such as employee creative performance, satisfaction and affective commitment (He *et al.,* 2017). Although there is growing evidence that High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) stimulate employee outcomes, the underlying mechanism through which HPWPs are linked to employee outcomes is still sporadic, as research has shown that there is no consensus relating to the mechanism underlying the relationship, in spite of its robust theoretical and empirical presence (Do 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015). However, in the search for the underlying mechanisms linking HPWPs to

employee outcome, which some authors refer to as the 'black box' (an unresolved issue in HRM), researchers and practitioners have begun to consider the role of engagement in shaping the understanding of the relationship (Barrick *et al.,* 2015; CIPD, 2016; Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot 2016).

Authors, academics, consultants and practitioners have published several studies on what drives engagement (Macleod & Clarke, 2009). For instance, Tamkin, (2004, p. 6) believed that "High involvement practices aim to create opportunities for engagement (for example semi-autonomous teams, problem-solving teams, continuous-improvement teams, responsibility for own work quality, job rotation within and/or between teams, team briefings, staff suggestion schemes, attitude surveys)." Further research Tamkin made also identified HPWPs as a strong and persuasive case that creates room for employee engagement. She believed that the critical value of the research in high performance work practices (HPWPs) is in highlighting the importance of considering investment in the workforce in the context of the broader company structure, practices and company strategy. Accordingly, it is likely that practices act to improve skills and increase motivation within the context of a philosophy of work that emphasises employee engagement and promotes work systems, allowing involvement and the freedom to make decisions. Under such conditions people can make a decisive difference to organisational performance (Tamkin, 2004).

Cross departmental training, empowerment, and internal mobility are the indicators of HPWPs used in this study. Such indicators are important in frontline service jobs and are crucial to employee engagement thereby stimulating employee outcomes and organisational success in the hotel sector (Boselie *et al.,* 2005; Kim *et al.,* 2017; Pfeffer, 1994). Hughes and Rog (2008), believe that the synergistic presence of all three HPWPs would trigger employee engagement. Gibbons (2006, p. 6) reviewing the results of 12 major research studies also identified some drivers of employee engagement of which internal mobility, cross departmental training and empowerment were a part of. He believed that many of these drivers arguably reflect an overall management philosophy and he suggested that managers at different levels of an organisation are expected to behave with integrity, treat employees with respect, communicate effectively, involve employees in decision making, foster personal relationships with direct reports, and engender pride in employee work.

One theory that has provided a strong justification for the relationship between HPWPs

and engagement is the social exchange theory developed by Blau, (1964). This theory suggests that employees are more likely to be engaged and committed to the organisation, when they perceive that their organisation is providing a system of interconnected and well-designed management practices, such as HPWPs (Masterson, *et al.,* 2000). Furthermore, Human Resource Management scholars have over the years used social exchange theory to explain the relationship between HPWPs, employee engagement and employee outcomes (Jiang *et al.,* 2012). Following the 'normative rule of reciprocity' the theory suggests that employees are motivated to display/develop positive attitude and behaviours towards work when they perceive employers value their contribution (Alfes *et al.,* 2013). Some employees expect a "give and take" practice to assure them that their contributions are valued. Accordingly, Fletcher (2015) argued that employees have been seen to continually participate in a 'give and take' relationship with their employer, whereby one party gives a socio-emotional resource that is desired by the other in exchange for what the other party desires. This exchange relationship is being upheld/maintained by the principle of mutual reciprocity that is "whatever you do to someone expect the same in return". As a result of this reciprocity, organisations now adopt a flexible work arrangement where employees decide 'how' and 'when' they work, giving the individual the ability to balance work and life (Lambert *et al.,* 2008). A study explained that the flexibility of work patterns creates within employees, a positive perception that they are well cared for by the organisation and this in turn enables them to participate in the social exchange relationship (Bauregard & Henry, 2009). Therefore, these employees feel obligated to 'repay' the organisation by engaging themselves in their respective roles and as such begin to display creative performance and service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour (Saks, 2006). Empowerment, cross departmental training and internal mobility when viewed from the perspective of the social exchange theory, gives employees the ability, motivation and opportunity to perform tasks. This realisation influences engagement, which subsequently will stimulate employee outcomes such as creative performance.

2.7.   Employee outcome (Creative performance).

Given the fact that the purpose of HPWPs is to more effectively manage people, it is intuitive that the impact of effective Human Resource Management would be felt first at the employee level. HPWPs should directly impact the employees of the firms where they are practiced and, if done effectively, will result in a number of positive employee outcomes. These outcomes might include such things as: employee creative performance.

- ***Employee Creative performance*:**

In today's competitive service market where there are continuous evolving demands of discerning customers, delivery of quality service and service recovery as well as retention of loyal customers are keys to success and survival (Karatepe & Vantankhah, 2014). Fu *et al.,* (2015), noted that employees play a critical role in ensuring they retain customers. Such employees are expected to make constructive suggestions for service improvements and offer creative solutions to customers in need. With this in mind, it appears that creative performance has become a requirement for service jobs.

Creative performance refers to the amount of new ideas generated, and novel behaviour displayed by employees in carrying out job-related tasks (Wang & Netemeyer, 2004). Bakker and Daniels (2013), research in work psychology demonstrated that one of the most important developments is that work is not stable from one task to the next, from one day to the next, from one client to the next, which suggests the need for creativity. Due to this realisation, expecting employees to display creative performance requires a work environment where there are high performance work practices (HPWPs) (Karatepe & Vantankhah, 2014). The existence of HPWPs in an organisation leads to feelings of engagement, which will in turn result in behavioural responses such as employee creative performance (Ibid, 2014).

Consequently, for creative performance to occur within a firm, several scholars stated that HPWPs must impact employees' needs for empowerment (autonomy), competence and relatedness by facilitating a collective HR practice, this thereby facilitates employee engagement. These three psychological needs acts as the foundation for classifying aspects of the environment as supportive or unsupportive essentials of human needs (Garcia-Chas *et al.,* 2014). Furthermore, Deci and Ryan (2008) noted that if employees' psychological needs are satisfied, these basic needs will benefit individuals in terms of well-being and enthusiasm for work (employee engagement). The current research theorizes HPWPs as a key factor that fosters employee job engagement for satisfying employee needs for autonomy that are important for creative performance. However, it is important to note that these aspects can only be fulfilled via perception of HPWPs, employee job engagement and its importance to fulfil autonomy. This argument is aligned with Lepak and Snell, (1999, p. 34) view that "HPWPs are a key factor in building an engaged job environment because core employee skills should be developed and maintained internally."

Giving clearer insight into the relationship between HPWPs and creative performance, the work of Aryee *et al.* (2012) suggested a refocus on the three dimensions of HPWPs - skill-enhancement, motivation-enhancement and empowerment-enhancement. According to them, the component of skill-enhancement, which includes extensive training and cross-departmental training, gives organisations the liberty to improve employee KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities). In addition, the component of motivation-enhancement which includes competitive compensation and internal mobility enable organisations to engage and attract qualified employees. Finally, the components of empowerment-enhancement such as job design and autonomy will support employees to develop their skills. Accordingly, Aryee *et al.* (2012) suggested that the use of HPWPs within the service context is expected to encourage employees to obtain and develop their KSAs to productively satisfy customer needs. In this vein, Iverson and Zatzick, (2011) supporting the general argument stated that HPWPs is considered as one of the foundations of creative HR policy because it can potentially create value from collective HPWPs. Therefore, if employees are engaged and motivated to utilize their enhanced skills and knowledge they have the ability to contribute to organisational outcomes.

From a sense-making perspective, Esch, *et al.* (2016, p. 7) making reference to Drazin, *et al.* (1999) work on creative performance stated that "employees' sense and seek guidelines from their environment to interpret events, develop appropriate attitudes and understand the expectations of behaviour and potential outcomes of behaviour" (p.7). Esch, *et al.* (2016) giving credence to James *et al.* (1977) suggested that expectancies and instrumentalities are formulated by employees' as a result of the information made available to them. They further stated that these expectations enable the employees to regulate their effort and behaviours. Amabile *et al.* (1996) adding to the work of Esch, stated that encouragement, engagement, freedom and availability of resources create an atmosphere for creativity. They noted that when employees feel valued and share a strong perception about the environment for creativity, they are more likely to accept the values, encouraging the acquisition of new skills and effectively supporting the implementation of HPWPs (Esch, *et al.,* 2016). Esch, *et al.* (2016) also suggested that, when organisations promote an environment for creativity, employees are more willing/motivated to take on unfamiliar situations that will create room for new experiences, perspectives, knowledge, skills and ideas. Esch, *et al.* (2016, p.7) study given credence to the work of Baird and Meshoulam, (1988); MacDuffie, (1995) further argued, that, "HPWPs are more likely to be effective if such practices are aligned with and reinforced by a favourable

organisational climate"

After reviewing literature on creative performance, Gong, *et al.* (2009) and Karatepe and Vantankhah, (2014) noted that little attention has been paid to employee creative performance within the service sector. This clearly indicates that knowledge on creativity would be "richer" and more useful (Gong, *et al.,* 2013). Consequently, researchers have suggested that when little or no attention is paid to employee creativity, the level of engagement may be affected which will in turn affect the acceptance of organisational strategies such as HPWPs (Lages & Piercy, 2012). In this study, the researcher expands and integrates the Strategic HRM and creativity literatures, therefore creating a conceptual argument for the contextual impact of firm SHRM on individual employee creativity (Gilson & Shalley 2004). As one example of SHRM, the researcher specifically focused on high performance work practices (HPWPs), which explains the interrelated "system of Human Resource Management practices (such as empowerment, internal mobility and cross departmental training) that signal commitment to the employees" (Xiao & Tsui, 2007, p. 2). In particular, several scholars have posited that the study of creative performance can be complex therefore, a good knowledge of the perception of both managers' understanding and employee's perception of the importance of creative performance will foster a truly dynamic and systemic understanding of creativity (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010).

Similarly, certain SHRM scholars have suggested that one has to acknowledge the diverse nature of HR systems and the intra organisational variability to advance the SHRM research. Reviewing the work of Bowen and Ostroff (2004, p. 206), "All HRM practices communicate messages constantly and in unintended ways, and messages can be understood idiosyncratically, whereby two employees interpret the same practices differently." In addition, Nishii and Wright (2008:206) further suggested that extant SHRM research have overlooked certain areas and to this note lack an understanding of the variability within organizations, stating that "we are concerned with the lack of attention which has been paid to variability within SHRM research. By variability we mean variability at all relevant levels of analysis, but particularly variability within organizations (i.e., individual and management)"

Another issue observed by Amabile, (1983) is the universalistic approach to the study of creativity. For the author, ''creativity is best conceptualized not as a personality trait or as a general ability, but as a behaviour resulting from particular constellations of personal

characteristics, cognitive abilities, and social environments'' (Amabile, 1983, p. 358). In other words, creative performance is obvious in observable responses that are generated from the interaction between the person and the environment. This majorly suggested that creative performance represents practicality in the thoughts and acts which may not necessarily be exhibited in the same manner or degree (Amabile, 1983). Consistent with the approach, organisational theorists sustain their view on creative performance, stressing the need to study this concept both within the confines of specific job characteristics and the specific work situation that calls for creative problem, which in this case will be the service industry (Mumford *et al.,* 1997). Employees' creative performance can be studied in different aspects of a workplace, in spite of the fact that creativity may vary. Most problems that are poorly structured and require several potential solutions require a creative attempt (Amabile, 1983). Given that hotel employees often face challenging and vaguely structured tasks, Joy (2017) suggested that employees may be able to come up with creative ways to consummate a transaction or satisfy a customer if there exist a strategy that stimulates such behaviours or attitudes. Joy, (2017) believes that creative ideas or performance may improve the effectiveness or efficiency of an employee's day-to-day task, increase the customer base, and ensure customer satisfaction, thereby contributing to overall hotel performance. Most argue that the HR department fails to make use of the appropriate HPWPs that will develop the employees and affect the strategy of firms (Joy, 2017). For this reason, this study makes use of the AMO model as discussed above in other to justify the selection and conceptualisation of HPWPs.

2.8. Employee outcome and Organisational Performance (OP)

Literature reviewed on HPWPs indicates that the use of HPWPs may lead to employee job engagement which stimulates higher levels of certain employee outcomes, such as creative performance, discussed above. When employees engage in creative performance this in turn might be expected to lead to higher levels of organisational (operational and financial) performance. Although the current research does not focus on the importance of HPWPs to indicators of organisational performance - it highlights the importance of positive employee outcomes, specifically creative performance – it is important to understand how employee outcomes have been found to be linked to organisational performance.

Traditional HRM practices over the years focused on rigorous job definition as well as some definite management boundaries between upper and lower management levels. This

system of practice, Yen and his colleagues claimed differs from the nature of HPWPs organisations have recently adopted (Yen, Wang & Kao, 2016). The difference has enabled HPWPs to encourage employees to make more decisions and adopt more flexible management practices (Ibid, 2016). Consequently, researchers have suggested that cross-departmental education and training, job security, performance-oriented evaluation, internal promotion opportunities, long-term customer relationship maintenance, career development, attractive salaries, smooth communication channels, teamwork, and equality among employee levels creates employee engagement, thus further stimulating employee outcomes that leads to organisational performance (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Kroon *et al.,* 2013; Lawler, 1992; MacDuffie, 1995). In support of Yen, *et al.,* (2016) view on HPWPs, Boxall and Macky (2009) as well as many other researchers opined that HPWPs can be used to develop human resources in the form of firm-specific distinct skills, therefore, creating a performance advantage for organisations.

Given that organisations (specifically, service industries) aim to achieve competitive advantage as well as generate profit, researchers have over the years suggested that the measurement of organisational performance constantly experiences difficulty (Hubbard, 2009). Nonetheless, researchers have measured organisational performance in several ways, one of which existed as a result of the development of the shareholder's theory, which suggested that performance can be measured from shareholders' returns. This theory supports the belief of Milton Friedman who asserted that every business aims to make profit (Owen, 2006). Consequently, Dyer and Reeves (1995); Huselid (1995) and Owen (2006) agreeing with the shareholders' theory believed that organisational performance involves several specific areas of firm outcome:

- Financial Performance (for example; profits, return on assets, return on investment),
- Shareholders Returns (for example; total shareholders return, economic value added)
- Product Market Performance (for example; sales, market share)
- Organisation goal achievement and
- Customer satisfaction.

Owing to expectation that organizations aim at achieving competitive advantage and generating profit, it is reasonable to expect that in service organisations, HPWPs should play critical roles in helping employees achieve high-quality customer service, thus enhancing

organisational service performance (Batt, 2002; Yen, *et al.,* 2016). With reference to the work of Appelbaum *et al.* (2000), Boxall and Purcell (2003), considered that performance is a function of an employee's ability, motivation and opportunity to contribute to an organisation. When these practices are implemented appropriately Guest (1997), believed that employers will be able to take advantage of employees' potential and discretionary effort. In relation to how performance is measured, Guest (1997) placed emphasis on the employee's behaviours and attitudes. For instance, a positive behaviour towards a customer can enable an employee to serve better and satisfy the customer. However, for the purpose of this study the researcher focused on overall firm performance, which is a general construct that tends to capture the shared difference among diverse performance indicators such as (customer satisfaction and growth in sales) (Dess & Robinson, 1984; Rowe & Morrow, 1999).

2.9.   HPWPs – Employee outcome Relationship

Boxall and Macky, (2009) amidst many other researchers provided a strong rationale supporting the value of HPWPs to employee outcomes which leads to performance. To them, the notion of a high-performance work system (HPWS) or HPWPs constitutes a claim that there is a system of work practices within organisations that leads to superior performance. In their study, they examine the underpinning processes experienced by employees when management seeks to pursue HPWPs and charting their links to employee and organisational performance outcomes. Boxall and Macky, (2009) developed a model in which they posit a cognitive path and a motivational path in which HPWPs increase employee satisfaction and other effective reactions. In this model as seen in Fig 2.1, they believed that an organisation's attempt to implement HPWPs for a particular employee group will involve both greater empowerment, greater work pressure, and will involve 'faking' (Ibid, 2009). They suggest that existing studies examining HPWPs as experienced by employees do not generally show its negative intensification, to which they are open to that possibility.
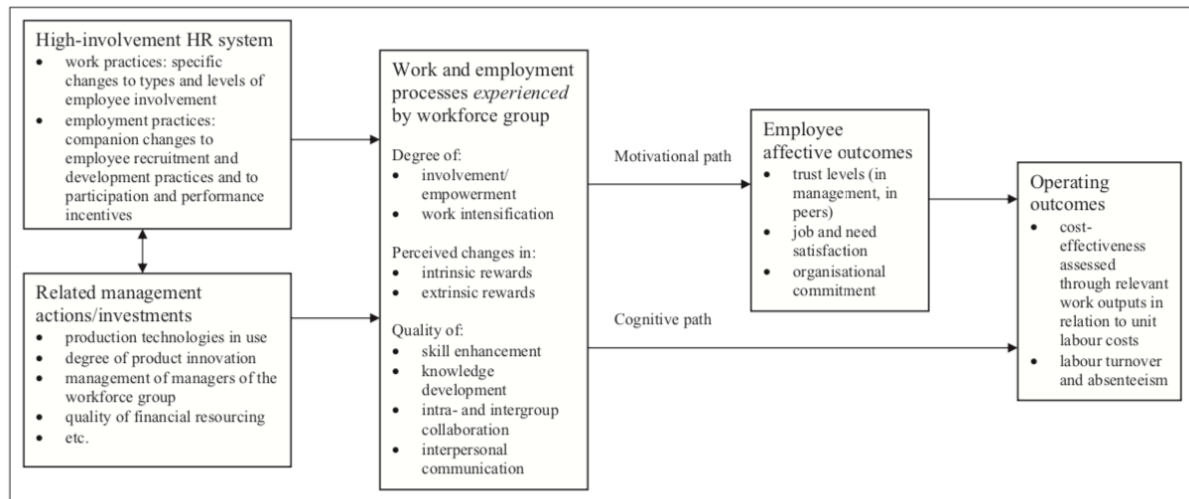
FIG 2.1: HIGH-INVOLVEMENT WORKS SYSTEMS: AN INTEGRATIVE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK Boxall and Macky (2009

Although Boxall and Macky (2009), like many others made significant contributions to the relationship between HPWPs, employee outcomes and performance, they noted the serious difficulties with specifying the mechanism linking HPWPs and employee outcome. They also noted that the concept itself gives no clue as to the pathway through which the desired practices are supposed to work and assumes what it should demonstrate.

Similarly, Gong *et al.* (2013) proposing underlying mechanisms linking HPWPs to employee outcome, further analysed the relationship of core knowledge creativity as an employee outcome and its impact on performance. This study shows that creativity does not necessarily enhance firm performance. Thus, the first practical implication is that firms should not be single-mindedly focused on creativity. Creativity is not an end in itself but rather a means to achieve superior firm performance. To achieve this, it is necessary to find a balance between creation and implementation. Managers must take coherent action to pursue both of these aims. One suggestion was the introduction of certain HPWPs that are used to influence idea creation and another practice when the idea is implemented. For example, they can reward employees for both creation and implementation and train them to have the capacity to do both (e.g., by developing their realized absorptive capacity). In cases where creation and implementation are carried out by separate units, employers must enhance the integration of these units, for example, by implementing a common-fate incentive system. Arguably, their study is grounded in the moderation arguments for riskiness orientation and firm size on the creation–implementation tension. However, they suggested a focus on the implementation as

this was identified as a limitation.

While reviewing the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome, Karatepe (2013b) who studied 100 fulltime frontline hotel employees and their managers in Poiana, Romania, suggested that work engagement fully mediates the relationship between HPWPs and job performance. The results from his analysis revealed that providing HPWPs such as training programs, has the tendency to improve the coping mechanism of employees who are constantly faced with hindrances. Accordingly, such HPWPs motivates employees to speak up and take charge of situations, which eventually lead to organisational performance. Concluding his research, Karatepe (2013b) stated that findings in his study emerge from an empirical study whose data are derived from frontline hotel employees in an under-represented developing non-Western country, where human resource management practices are poor. He further advised scholars to replicate this study in different hospitality settings in other developing countries for cross-validating the findings reported here and to improve the research stream.

Drawing from literature on the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome and in addition to the above examples, evidence suggest that there is no consensus concerning the mechanism underlying the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes due to a number of reasons, as argued earlier (e.g., lack of conceptual lens, measure inconsistency) (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015; Pereira & Gomes, 2012). To address such concerns, the study drew on and extended the AMO theory and the social exchange theory and collected data of both managerial and employee views of HPWPs. It also investigated how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome in the Nigerian Hotel sector. After a review of the literature, the researcher in Table 2.5 updated and adopted Do, (2016) illustration of the summary of some empirical studies of HPWPs on employee outcome highlighting some comprehensive empirical evidence for the aforementioned argument.

TABLE. 2.5.

EMPERICAL STUDIES SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HPWPs AND EMPLOYEE OUTCOME

Author(s)	Theory	Outcomes	Mechanism Variable(s)	Sample/Method	Key Findings
Karatepe, (2013b)	*Social exchange theory*	*Job performance and extra-role customer service*	*Work engagement (mediator)*	*A review of 110 fulltime frontline hotel employees and their managers in the Poiana Brasov region, Romania;* *The researcher obtained a response rate of 89.4%;* *Structural equation Model was adopted with the use of LISREL 8.30*	*Work engagement fully mediates the relationship between HPWPs and job performance.*
Mansour, *et al.* (2014)	*Strategic Human Resource Management*	*Firm performance*	*Organisational commitment and human capital (mediator)*	*A review of 351 employees in some financial services;* *The researcher obtained a response rate of 57.5%;*	*Human capital and organisational commitment directly mediate the relationship between*

					HPWS and firm performance.
				Multiple regression analysis was adopted using OLS regression.	
Fan *et al.* **(2014)**	*Contingency perspective and Social exchange theory*	*Subjective well-being (SWB); and workplace burnout*	*Organisation- based self-esteem (moderator)*	*A review of 1488 physicians and nurses in 25 Chinese hospital;*	*HPWS increases employees" SWB and decrease burnout;*
				The researcher obtained a response rate of 14,76%;	*HPWS is also significantly associated with SWB where collaborative relationship exists.*
				Structural Equation modelling was adopted.	
Zhang, *et al.* **(2014)**	*Unitarist theory*	*Employee outcomes: organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour*	*HPWS satisfaction as (mediator)*	*A review of 700 employees in companies in Jiangsu, Guizhou and Guangxi provinces, China;*	*HPWS significantly correlates with satisfaction;*
				The researcher obtained a response rate of 47%;	*Satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between HPWS and*

				Structural Equation modelling was adopted.	*employees' affective commitment (AC);*
García-Chas, *et al.* **(2014)**	*Social exchange and self-determination perspectives*	*Intention to leave*	*Job satisfaction; procedural justice; and intrinsic motivation (mediators)*	*A review of 155 engineers of a variety of economic and engineering firm in Spain:* *The researcher obtained a response rate: 76%;* *EQS 6.1 computer programme was adopted*	*HPWPs relates strongly to job satisfaction, procedural justice and intrinsic motivation.* *Job satisfaction mediates the linkage between HPWPs and engineers' intention to leave* *Procedural justice and intrinsic motivation mediates the relationship*

					between HPWPs and job satisfaction.
Shen, Benson, and Huang (2014)	*Resource-based view*	*In-role performance Extra-role performance*	*Quality of working life (QWL) (mediator)*	*A review of 1,051 teachers in the Guangdong province, China;* *The researcher obtained a response rate: 95%;* *Hierarchical linear modelling HLM7 was adopted.*	*QWL mediates directly and indirectly the relationship between HPWPs, teachers' in-role performance and extra role behaviour.*
Jiang, *et al.* (2014)	*Social information processing and social learning theories.*	*Financial performance*	*Service performance (mediator)*	*A review of 569 employees and 142 managers in footwear retail stores, China;* *The researcher obtained a response rate: 85% and 84% respectively;*	*Service performance mediated the relationship between collective customer knowledge, service climate, and financial performance*

				Structural equation modelling (LISREL 8.72) was adopted	
Zhang and Morris (2014)	*Ability, Motivation and Opportunity theory*	*Employee outcomes and firm performance*	*Employee outcomes (mediator)*	*A review of 168 single respondents which includes: HRM directors/managers or senior managers in China;*	*Employee performance mediates the link between HPWPs and firm outcomes.*
				The researcher obtained a response rate of 20.49%	*HPWPs utilisation and employee performance are significantly related to organisational outcomes.*
Demirbag *et al.,* (2014)	*Institutional theory*	*Employee and subsidiary level outcomes*	*Direct relationship*	*A review of 148 MNE subsidiaries in Turkey;*	*Adopting HPWPs leads to employee effectiveness.*
				The researcher obtained response rate of 29.6%	*The influence of*

				ANOVA tests, a traditional regression-based approach was adopted	*HPWPs on employee skills, development and organisational financial performance are unclear.*
Fu *et al.* (2015)	*AMO framework*	*Innovation performance*	*Innovative work behaviours (mediator)*	*A review of 195 managing partners, HR managers in 120 professional service firms in Ireland;* *The researcher obtained response rate of 36.6%;* *Hierarchical linear modelling (HLM) was adopted*	*Employees' innovative work behaviours mediates the link between HPWS and firm performance.*
Elorza *et al.* (2016)	*Social exchange theory; Communication theory*	*Discretionary behaviour*	*Employee HPWPs as a mediator; Management HPWPs (moderator)*	*A review of two samples. Sample 1:51 managers and 1,023 employees from 26 manufacturing companies in North Spain.*	*Employee perceptions of the HPWPs strongly predict discretionary behaviour than*

				Sample 2: 52 managers and 6,382 employees from 42 manufacturing companies in North Spain;	management perception of HPWPs.
				Multilevel SEM was adopted	Employees' perceptions of the same HPWPs predict different levels of discretionary behaviour
Hefferman and Dundon (2016)	Signalling theory; AMO framework	Job satisfaction; affective commitment; work pressure	Organisational justice (mediator)	A review of 187 employees from 3 firms in Ireland; AMOS 18.0 was adopted	Distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice mediate the relationship between HPWS, job satisfaction, affective commitment and work pressure.

Chowhan (2016)	Resource-based theory	Firm performance	Innovation as a mediator strategic activities (moderator)	*A review of 3,154 respondents and analysis of 2003–2006 statistical data (WES) from Canada; A* *The researcher obtained a response rate of about 83%;* *Generalized least squares (GLS) was adopted*	*There is a positive move from skill-enhancing practices to innovation to organisational performance.* *Strategic activity moderates the move.*

Table 2.5 highlighted some literature illustrating the relationship between HPWPs and diverse outcomes. Although the relationships between both concepts are widely established, there still exist gaps and limitations from the studies. For instance, in a review of the transmission pathway underlying the relationship between HPWPs and outcome by Chang (2015) and Van De Voorde, *et al.* (2016), new boundary conditions were identified, and have facilitated further investigation. Similarly, they also found that the underlying mechanism linking both concepts is still ambiguous and far from conclusion, as a result of several reasons like ambiguity, methodological stance, lack of conceptual lens, measure inconsistency etc., The researcher therefore believes that these variables remain as most scholars call it 'the black box' in the HPWPs - employee outcome relationship, thereby prompting the need for further investigation. The reason behind this underlying assumption is that these variables relate organisational factors to desired outcome (Jiang *et al.,* 2014), especially employee attitudes and behaviours. With these crucial mechanism underlying the importance of HPWPs on employee outcome, the study responds to the scholarly criticisms that the insight into the effect of HPWPs on employee outcome remains modest (Aryee *et al.,* 2012); the mechanism underlying this link has not been answered (Sun *et al.,* 2007); some researchers did not manage to reveal that HR practices lead to employee outcomes but are only concerned with particular facets of this finding (Chang & Chen, 2011). In an attempt to address some of these concerns, the study generated data that explained the part employee engagement plays in the interaction between HPWPs and employee outcomes, based on the social exchange theory and the AMO model.

Table 2.5 also shows that the bulk of employee engagement and HPWPs research is mainly related to data emerging from the North American-European axis (Gibbs & Ashill, 2013). Empirical research pertaining to the influence of HPWPs on employee outcome in countries outside of the American-European mainstream remains scarce. In addition, the work of Boxall and Macky (2009) provide a strong justification when exploring the concept of a high-performance work systems. They believe the term is 'ethnocentric' because certain practices defined as a high-performance work practice (HPWPs) in a North American context may be institutionally impossible in other national contexts. Therefore, Karatepe and Olugbade, (2016): Babakus *et al.* (2003) suggested that additional research in Nigeria is needed to both identify the factors that are likely to represent HPWPs and their outcomes. By analysing these HPWPs necessary for improving employee engagement which stimulate employee outcome in the service sector in Nigeria, the researcher may provide insight into the process that motivates employees to perform

better in their jobs. In addition, given the current economic and social problems such as political instability, corruption, high unemployment rate and gender inequality faced by Nigeria, it is important to focus on other alternative industries such as the hospitality industry to generate effective drivers of economic growth (CNN, 2016; Okpara & Wynn, 2008). This necessitates the need to develop employees within the hotel sector.

In developing economies, research has shown that there is no agreement about the mechanism underlying the relationship between HPWPs, employee engagement and employee outcomes (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015; Pereira & Gomes, 2012). This study contributes by providing a detailed analysis of how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes such as (employee creative performance) which in turn leads to organisational performance (Karatepe, 2014; Lee & Ok, 2016). Based on the precepts of social exchange theory (SET) and the motivational process of the AMO framework, this research provided an in-depth understanding of the relationship between HPWPs, employee engagement and employee outcomes.

In terms of theoretical adoption, Table 2.4 shows that researchers have adopted several theories to explain the importance as well as the link between HPWPs and Performance. For instance, Hefferman and Dundon (2016) researching employee wellbeing adopted two theories namely: signalling theory and the ability-motivation-opportunity framework to investigate how HPWPs influence employee well-being. Another scholar also made use of the resource-based view theory to explain the link between HPWPs, strategy, organisational performance and innovation (Chowhan, 2016). The study therefore advanced the theoretical logic by extending Social exchange theory, and AMO framework as tools to explain the relationship between HPWPs, employee engagement and employee outcomes. Taken together, this study continues to advance this stream of research by examining employee engagement and extended theories, with its focus on qualitative data to gain insights into how it strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes via semi structured interviews of frontline employees and HR managers in Nigerian hotels.

2.10. Conceptual Framework.

In this section, the study mapped out the development of the overall conceptual model

(shown in Figure 2.2). This research extending the theory of reciprocity (social exchange theory) and the AMO model examined how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome in the Nigerian hotel sector. As such, the model illustrated the relationship between HPWPs, and employee creative performance from a perspective of employee engagement. To this end, forecasting the importance of HPWPs for improved employee job engagement is premised on the assumption that if the HR practices influencing feelings of engagement are identified then creative performance being the response of employees to output could be determined.

The diagram began with the conceptualisation of HPWPs. In particular, it dealt with what employers use to develop employees giving them the ability, motivation and opportunity to perform in a job. The researcher explained how AMO models helped to elucidate the concept of HPWPs, and how the presence of cross training provides sufficient ability to perform in a job, creates opportunity for career development and enables employees establish goals. The study also discussed empowerment which serves as a motivational construct designed to ensure employees are willing to apply their abilities in the organisational interest by making decisions favourable to the organisation and are committed. Internal mobility, which provides the opportunity to perform and includes strategies adopted by organisations for promotions and career advancement, also formed part of the study discussion. A good test of any HR strategy as Mittal (2012), suggested is the ability of employers to successfully create an environment where employees are motivated and enthusiastic about work (employee engagement). Drawing from this statement, the existing research suggests that HPWPs creates an environment that leads to employee engagement which will in turn facilitate an improved employee outcome (employee creative performance). In simple terms, displaying a positive employee outcome requires a work environment where employees are engaged and there is the presence of HPWPs.

In concluding this section, the researcher agreed with Boxall *et al.* (2016, p .158) who suggested that, "there is no performance unless employers can attract, train and motivate employees to do their jobs". This realisation as suggested by Boxall *et al.* (2016) indicates the necessity for employers to constantly engage in a process of constructing and renewing HR systems to meet the needs of customers. This includes, for example the implementation of certain HPWPs to improve employee job engagement and stimulate employee outcomes in service industries.
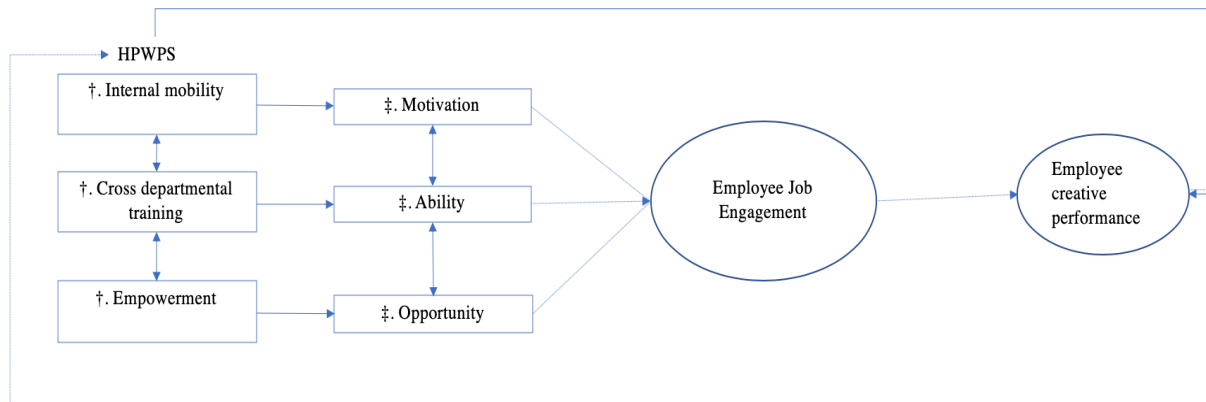
Note. ‡. AMO Model (Applebaum et al., 2000);

†. HPWP-related studies;

→ Proposed by previous studies of HPWP → Proposed by the research aims and objectives;

Concept in Oval shape was proposed by the research aims and objectives;

Concept in Square shape was proposed by previous HPWP studies.

FIG 2.2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.11. Research Questions

1. How do employees and managers perceive the importance of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) to Employee Job Engagement (EJE)?
2. Does employee engagement stimulate employee creative performance in Nigerian hotels?
3. What are the practice-based recommendations for organisations?

2.12. Summary

The current chapter reviewed several empirical studies supporting the argument around the main objective of the study. The specific objectives were put in place to help explain the various dimensions of how employee engagements strengthen the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes. While reviewing the different definitions and understanding of HPWPs at the commencement of this chapter, themes were explained, and it became clearer that these practices affect employee outcome by shaping employee's attitudes and behaviours. More specifically, high performance work practices (HPWPs) creates a condition where employees are highly involved, satisfied and committed in the organisation and ensure they perform their best to achieve organisation's success (Huselid, 1995). Although diverse labels have been used to describe the specific HR practices, there has been little consistency in the conceptualization and selection of

the required HPWPs to be included (Boselie *et al.,* 2005). This lack of conceptual clarity and consensus of HPWPs is challenging, as Guest (1997, p .274) clearly stated that "understanding the concept and determining a HR practice to include is of utmost importance." (p. 274). Following this, a clearer focus on employees' perception of the HPWPs using the AMO framework within the organisation was developed.

At first, the argument pertaining to employee engagement and its context was addressed. This was followed by a review of certain factors and strategies that give clarity to what influences employee engagement such as HPWPs and the outcomes facilitating the development of the concepts. From a historical viewpoint, the general trend indicates that there have been various sample characteristics, methods, several models, different research designs, practice examined, and organisational performance measures used that have led extant literature to vary dramatically. Generally, the underlying mechanism through which HPWPs are linked to employee outcomes is still sporadic, as research has shown that there is no consensus relating to the mechanism underlying the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes in spite of its robust theoretical and empirical presence (Do 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015; Pereira & Gomes, 2012). The current review found that the HPWPs-employee outcome relationship often neglects qualitative data to provide in-depth understanding to the argument. In a similar vein employee job engagement has received little or no attention regardless of its importance within this relationship. In relation to this, the theme of employee job engagement emerged. The notion surrounding employee job engagement suggests an environment where behaviours and attitudes are fuelled by certain HPWPs. Chapter Five draws on empirical data and discusses this theme. The same chapter presented engagement as a central component of the HPWPs- employee outcome relationship.

A related focus in chapter two is an emphasis on employee creative performance. To define creative performance would involve the development of novel ideas or behaviours that lead to performance, and further clarity on where feelings stand in that experience. Gong, Huang, and Farh, (2009); Karatepe and Vantankhah, (2014) noted that little attention has been paid to employee creative performance within the service sector. This clearly indicates that knowledge on creativity would be "richer" and more useful if the researcher also knows whether, and if so when, creativity enhances employees' performance (Gong, Zhou & Chang, 2013). Whether creative performance is perceived as an important employee indicator in the presence of HPWPS, was explored in chapters five.

A review of studies in the literature showed that there are several factors that could facilitate or hinder the implementation of HPWPs within a workplace. HPWPs has been seen over the years as a tool for not only achieving and sustaining high levels of performance in workplace environment but also developing and leveraging employees' knowledge, skill and ability to create value such as: worker productivity and equipment reliability, quality outcomes, customer service, financial performance, profitability, and on some several other performance outcomes. However, in spite of these, specific practices need to be tailored to fit different industries and occupations, since the implementation of these practices coherently have been seen to be most effective (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2011).

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As outlined, the purpose of this research is to explore how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and frontline employee outcomes within the hotel sector. The researcher further provided both guidance and direction to promote a more strategic Human Resource Management within the HR community and organisation at large. The past few chapters explored the HR literature on employee engagement, HPWPs and employee outcomes, identified the gaps within the HR literature, set the overall research aim and set the research questions to be answered.

This chapter discusses the ontological and epistemological considerations adopted in this research. In addition, the chapter presents the overall design of the study including the research strategy (case study), method of data collection, how the data was presented and analysed. To begin with, the ontology and epistemology underpinning the research are discussed. This discussion outlines the research strategy, design and research process. In addition, Klein and Myers' (1999) principles of interpretive field research were adopted to evaluate the significance of the research.

3.1. Brief introduction to Philosophy

Academic researchers broadly understand research philosophy to be the development and nature of knowledge/reality (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). Due to the challenging but yet dynamic nature of knowledge, several terms and categories continue to emerge; held together by an underpinning research philosophy. The phrase 'research philosophy' has been widely used in business and management research as it has helped researchers clarify the design of the research, determine what evidence is needed and suggest the method of data collection and analysis (Easterby-smith *et al.,* 2012). They further suggested that research philosophy identifies the limitations of each approach used and enables the researcher to identify and develop new designs (Ibid, 2012). According to Saunders *et al*. (2009), research philosophy is the vital starting point to any research method.

Consequently, researchers' trying to understand research philosophies started exploring the concept of research paradigms. Bryman and Bell, (2015); Saunders *et al.* (2009); Easterby-smith *et al.* (2015) suggested that 'Paradigm' has several meanings and is often used loosely in academic research. According to Bryman (1988b, p. 4), a paradigm is 'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which, for scientists in a particular discipline, influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted, and so on'. Some authors believe that paradigms influence the understanding of ontology and epistemology assumptions (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Bryman & Bell, 2015: Easterby-smith *et al.,* 2015). Burrell and Morgan (1979) believed that each paradigm contains an assumption that is either objective or subjective.

Bryman and Bell (2015) gave credence to the work of Kuhn (1970), who argued that a paradigm is a cluster of beliefs which influences what should determine how research should be carried out, how results should be interpreted and should also be studied in a particular discipline. Given the vast interest in research paradigms, Collis and Hussey (2014) stated that the way a research is conducted is guided by a research paradigm based on people's philosophical point of view and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge. Most of the debates among researchers in social science are based on the different philosophical positions underlying research methods and designs. One main feature of business research is the strong integration between theory and practice. Several studies carried out in HRM are not just for the sake of understanding and explaining theories, they traditionally serve to provide useful direction to the business community.

Carlisle, (2014) making reference to Russell work in the early 90's supported his definition of philosophy as he focuses on held assumptions that are being questioned. Referencing his assumptions Carlisle also agrees that philosophy challenges held convictions, prejudices, and beliefs. Generally speaking, these assumptions are what researchers operate with when conducting a research. Additionally, Scruton (1995, p .4) proposed that "philosophy is about asking abstract questions." For instance, in researching perception of how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome, the focus from a philosophical viewpoint is on asking the basic question about the understanding of HPWPs and its influence on employee engagement. The researcher may ask - what are your thoughts on a specific practice system and why do you think it is important to them as individuals? Philosophy asks about the true nature of things in the world. Such 'hands-on' orientation of the researcher bears significant implications as

to research strategies and the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions endorsed.

However, in order to provide a rationale for this research and a framework for interpreting the findings, a discussion of the philosophical stance, which is categorised into the ontological and epistemological assumptions that this research has chosen, is necessary (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Over the years, one recurring debate in the social sciences community has been the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative approach both of which depend on the abovementioned philosophical assumptions (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). While quantitative research is most times underpinned by positivist and objectivist philosophical assumptions, qualitative research draws from both interpretivism and constructionism assumptions (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The philosophical stance that best clarifies the design of the research, determines what evidence is needed and has helped suggest the method of data collection and analysis.

3.2. Research Philosophy

Ontological consideration – Realism Vs Constructionism

Realism is an ontological viewpoint that suggests entities exist independently of being perceived, or independently of the theories about them (Phillips, 1987). Schwandt adds that "scientific realism is of the view that theories refer to real features of the world. 'Reality' here refers to whatever it is in the universe (i.e., forces, structures, and so on) that causes the phenomena we perceive with our senses" (1997, p. 133). These views were disparaged during the twentieth century, by positivist, constructionist and other anti-positivists. However, they have emerged as a serious position in current philosophical discussion (Boyd, 2010). There are philosophical debates over realism that remain unresolved, and realist philosophers themselves disagree about many of these issues; one advocate of realist views claimed that "scientific realism is a majority position whose advocates are so divided as to appear a minority" (Leplin, 1984, p.1).

In the social sciences, the most prominent manifestation of realism is the "critical realist perspective" tradition, usually associated with the work of Archer, *et al.,* (1998); Manicas, (2006); Sayer, (2000) and Bhaskar (2011). This perspective comes between a relativist ontology which gives credence to the assumption that the social world is the product of interaction between people and a realist ontology which believes there is a world that exists independently of our knowing of

it. Sayer (2000) believes that the world can be objectively studied from a realist perspective, whereas there is no universal law or truth to be discovered only interpretation from a relativist perspective.

Critical realist ontology is a belief in a world that exists independently of our knowledge of it. Looking at the world from a critical realist perspective suggests an interest in why things happen or occur, on the basis that the social world is open to external influence and constantly changing, as new phenomena emerge and individuals interact with them (Hartley, 2012). Following Fleetwood and Hesketh (2010) critique of the quantitative research design employed in HPWPs-employee outcome or performance relationship studies, it was observed that ontology critical realism perspective has been widely used and referenced by qualitative researchers. This is because critical realism acknowledges an objective reality of the world that exists independent of subjective perceptions but at the same time concedes that experiences shape how people interact and make sense of the objective world (Bhaskar, 2015).

O'Mahoney and Vincent, (2014) while discussing critical realism, stratified reality into three categories; empirical, actual, and the real. The empirical reality suggests that humans observe from experience, the actual reality focuses on events or processes that exist in space and time while the real refers to the mechanisms which help to explain how and why these events and behaviours occur (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). This layered view of reality is important to understand the mechanism which connects HPWPs to employee outcomes (Wright & Nishii, 2013). Accordingly, events such as cross departmental training do occur in real time and space (actual), however the experience, observations and perceptions of employees (empirical) are extremely important to understand whether these systems will take root within the organizational system or not. Finally, the historical legacy, institutional pressures (real) are also important in explaining how these systems are adopted and used in specific ways.

Although the critical realism improves the study of HPWPs, organisational strategies and practices, it ignores the subjective perceptions of employees who use these practices and whose careers are impacted by the policy and organisational strategy (O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). In addition, this ontological view point is described by some commentators as providing scholars with an approach whereby they 'sit on the fence' when interpreting research data to maintain the illusion of objective reality (Simon, 2018).

While critical realism provides insight in the study of HPWPs, this study assumes constructionism as the preferred ontological approach. Constructionism from an ontological perspective is concerned with the 'nature of reality' which refers to the specific focus that social construction built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors. This perspective rejects the notion of an objective truth waiting to be discovered, a core proponent of objectivism and realism (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 22; Saunders *et al.,* 2007, p.108).

Constructionism explains that meaning is constructed within a specific context, i.e., employee engagement. This context can be referred to as an inherent meaning making system that allows people in a shared context to give meaning to a phenomenon (Crotty, 1998; Silverman, 2016). This then suggests that in a different context, the same object may likely be attributed with a different meaning. This notion differs from subjectivism, which assumes that the reality/object/world in question plays no part in the construction of meaning. Hence, constructionism assumes that there is a material reality observable by human sense. However, the object cannot be fully described without considering the subject who encountered the object and an experience does not occur in a vacuum devoid of the object of experience. This, therefore, suggests that data and interpretation by the researcher is also socially constructed (Bryman, 2012). Constructionism also suggests that there are no valid or true interpretations of phenomena but only more useful interpretations against other less useful ones (Cooper & Endacott 2007).

The researcher takes into cognisance the fact that constructionism focuses on the nature of reality with the aim of identifying if social reality is constructed through people's meanings and interpretation of the nature of reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Accordingly, in practice this means that beliefs will be defined from a personal perspective. Patton (2002, p. 97) further confirms that constructionism 'points out the unique experience of each of us.' This philosophical assumption suggests that everyone has a valid way of making sense of the world around them. It is believed that with the use of specific interview technique, interviewees' views of the relationship between HPWP's and engagement will be informed by their lived experiences. It is their subjective understanding and views that the relationship between HPWP's and employee engagement is paramount to constructionism. In sum, constructionism assumes that knowledge is dependent on human perception, social conventions and experience (Gilbert, 2008). It is not a description of social reality but of basic properties and assumptions in reference to meaning i.e., knowledge. In

particular, it assumes knowledge, meaning and systems are emergent and in constant flux (Bryman, 2012)

Epistemology consideration – Positivism vs Interpretivism

Bryman and Bell (2011) have noted that an important question of epistemology is whether the social world can or cannot be studied according to the same principle, procedures and ethos as natural science. Positivism, drawing on the philosophy of August Comte, has to do with the application of scientific methods to social reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Positivism as situated within the epistemological position advocates that methods of natural sciences should be applied to the study of social reality (Ibid, 2015). Similarly, Milliken (2001) describing positivism, suggested that it is an approach that tends to adopt the traditional scientific approaches when it refers to developing knowledge through the use of research methods. He also noted that positivism helps in producing a law-like generalisation just like those of sciences. Fundamentally, positivists believe "that the world exists independently of it being perceived" (Hunt, 2008, p .183). This emphasis makes it inappropriate for studying phenomena occurring in the human world.

However, the researcher in support of several critics of positivism suggests that the rationality of the concept is overwhelming, and it creates a world where any information quantifiable is accepted (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2007). Given that this research looks at how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes, it may be more appropriate to focus on interpretations rather than on items that are characterised by variations (variables). This implies that the perception of employees; gaining an in-depth opinion into how and why people behave the way they do cannot be understood using a positivist approach.

The challenges authors and philosophers observed with positivism led to a search for a new paradigm (Collis & Hussey, 2009). This new paradigm called interpretivism was discovered to be the alternative approach to positivism orthodox. This approach suggests that people cannot be separated from the social context they exist in (Bryman & Bell, 2015). They also noted that people can be best understood by examining their perception of theory and activities. Conclusively, Bryman and Bell observed that researchers introduce their values and interest in research which makes them subjective as they are part of what they observe (Ibid, 2015).

Interpretivism believes that social science or social reality is in essence different from natural science, because social reality is highly subjective and shaped by people's perceptions (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Interpretivism proposes that human behaviour is not so straight-forward and linear, rather, it is influenced by an abundance of complex and often indistinguishable factors (Ibid, 2009). One criticism of interpretivism is the inclusion of the researcher's pre-conceptions. Specifically, critics believe that researchers find it difficult to separate their own bias from the context under investigation. This to the critics may result in emergence of 'tainted' findings, and thus saturated with a researcher's own world-view. Although critics make a fair point, if the aim is to understand the subjective meanings behind actions, however, the researcher requires a meaning system of their own. This assumption is that all human perception is resultant and influenced by meaning. As a result, the researcher is charged with understanding the meaning making system of the participant and reports from their own common-sense view, i.e. participant's perspective (Thomas, 2004). A suggested solution is to report the 'facts' alongside the multiple interpretations, and by doing so, the researcher will be able to make sense of the meanings associated with the interpretation and also understand how the respondents view reality (Veal, 1997).This methodological position suggests that "behaviour cannot be understood unless the researcher understands those meanings and such meanings have to be interpreted according to the contexts in which they occur" (Thomas, 2004, p. 44).

This research therefore, adhered to an interpretivist approach which asserts that causal relationships in social settings are near impossible to identify (Crotty, 1998), thus, implying that social phenomena can be observed, understood and explained, ideally from the perspective of the subjects of the research. To better understand how both employees and managers perceive employee job engagement and its role in strengthening the relationship between HPWP's and employee outcome within Nigerian hotels, an epistemology of interpretivism is suitable by offering a narrow but sharp focus. This position enables the researcher to explore the depth of peoples' perceptions in a way that positivist social science cannot (Rosenberg, 1996).

This research, as clearly stated above, adopted an interpretivist epistemological position with a focus on understanding how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes in the Nigerian hotel sector. As such, a qualitative design was seen to be

appropriate. This was the philosophical approach adopted here and the next section moves on to consider the overall research strategy/approach.

3.3. Research Strategy/approach

In order to consider how important employee job engagement is to strengthen the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes within the hotel sector a qualitative strategy was adopted. Bryman and Bell, (2015) noted that qualitative studies emphasize words and studies people's lives under real-world conditions. Qualitative researchers claim that in order to really understand what motivates people, why they act/behave in a certain way, the adoption of a qualitative strategy/approach will be very useful (Myers, 2013).

Different from qualitative research is the quantitative research, which focuses on numerical statistics, where data is quantified and generalised. (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Marchington & Wilkinson, 2012). Although widely used, this approach lacks the credibility of enabling informants recognize their experience in the research finding (Krefting, 1991). The quantitative approach encounters difficulty in gaining a rich and in-depth understanding of an individual's behaviours and attitudes within the socio-cultural context within which they live (Myers, 2013). This criticism led the researcher to adopt a qualitative approach, which is in line with the aims and objectives of the study, in spite of the fact, that the qualitative approach is often criticised for presenting non-generalisable data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). This limitation informs my study as this research does not aim at generalising data but providing in-depth understanding on the social phenomena in the context they exist (Silverman, 2000).

In particular, there has been a number of distinguishing features surrounding the quantitative research strategy and the qualitative research strategy. However, Bryman and Bell (2015) suggested that these contrasts though fundamental are basic. Consequently, judging from the views of several scholars, the interconnections between these different features of quantitative and qualitative research are not as straightforward as Bryman and Bell implied (Hochschild, 1983). While it is useful to discuss the contrast between these two research strategies, Figure 3.1 has shown, it is important not to force a merge between them too deeply (Bryman & Bell, 2015)

Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
– *Epistemological orientation* – *Ontological orientation*	– Natural science model in particular positivism – Objectivism	– Interpretivism – Constructionism
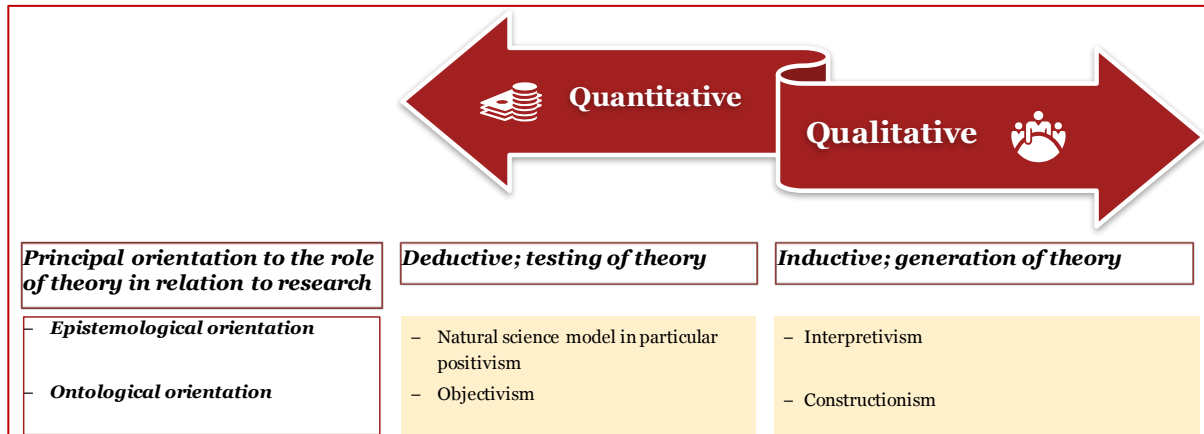
FIG 3.1: FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY (Bryman & Bell, 2015)

Common with all research is the relationship between theory and data. The main question commonly asked here is 'which is more important than the other?' and 'which has more priority?'. This debate has led to the discussion of inductive versus deductive research process (Johnson & Duberley: 2000). The deductive approach involves a development of hypothesis followed by a design of a suitable methodology to test the hypothesis. In addition, Johnson, (2008, P. 112) suggested that these hypotheses are constructed from prior studies which are then tested by empirical observation, this he referred to as "*the established mainstream methodology... in management research*". In this sense, the researcher is well aware of existing literature on strategic HRM and development and this informed his research questions and gave themes to explore. Bryman and Bell, (2015) as well as many other authors suggested that the deductive stance refers to the development of a hypothesis and then designing a suitable methodology to test this hypothesis. Validating this stance, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), stated that adopting a deductive approach supports the ideology that theory is the first source of knowledge, based on what is known theoretically. Alternatively, the inductive process is constructed on the ideology that starts from specific observations to broader generalisations and theories (Bryman & Bell, 2015) In this process the researcher actively encountered the natural world. In essence, the researcher got in the system to experience and examine where the phenomenon occurred in order to have a better understanding with the aim of elaborating a theory, and this process as seen by researcher drew on the "*logic of naturalistic inquiry*" (Denzin, 1971, p.166; Maylor and Blackmon, 2005).

The main reason for this research approach was to enable the researcher to find the best and most effective and suitable way to understand how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance. However, the researcher drew on a pre-existing theoretical framework, which shaped the research questions and methods of data collection for the study, whilst remaining open to themes that emerged inductively during analysis. The research thus incorporated both inductive and deductive elements (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p.36). This movement between deductive and inductive approach was fluid during data analysis because the choice of thematic analysis allowed the researcher develop themes from the collected data (inductive) which were then linked to the literature and theoretical framework.

3.4. Research Design

This section outlined the research strategy, research tools, data analysis, and field. Yin (2009) suggested that choosing the appropriate design is an essential step in ensuring reliability and credibility. He further stated that certain conditions have to be considered. These conditions range from the type of research question, the level of control the researcher has over the actual phenomenon adopted and the focus on contemporary events which justifies the research design. Adding to Yin's conditions in determining the research design, Easterby-Smith, *et al.* (2008) noted that understanding the research philosophy helps to clarify the research design, recognise what design will and will not work and finally help the researcher identify and create the design.

3.4.1. Case Study Design

According to Stake (1995, p. 76) a case study may be "a child, a teacher, an innovative program or all the schools in Sweden." But a relationship among schools, the reasons for innovative teaching, or the policies of school reform are less commonly considered a case. These topics are generalities rather than specifics. The case is a specific complex, functioning thing." Similarly, Stake (1995) further suggested that the ambiguity surrounding the clearly bounded occurrences, such as relationships between people, may constitute a case. This is because such entities may pose difficulties to bound and define clearly, thereby leading to difficulty in research. Case studies 'arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena' because 'the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events' (Yin, 2003, p. 2). For example, someone or an object can be studied as a system of parts.

Scholars like Eisenhardt (1989, p. 548-549) opines that case study research is 'well-suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate.' Consequently, it is important to note that case studies can be used both in qualitative or quantitative research, or a combination of both depending on the complexity of the research area.

Sheryl *et al.,* (2013, p. 1267) giving credence to the work of Creswell (2013) described the qualitative case study approach as 'an exploration of a "bounded system" or case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, each with its own sampling, data collection, and analysis strategies.' The result is a case description that comprises case-based themes. Several researchers have characterised have found it as difficult to separate a case from the context in which it occurs as these researchers believe its approach is context based (Ibid, 2013). According to Creswell, the type of case study is determined by the intent of the analysis or the size of the bounded case. As Stake (2005), and Yin (2009) have contended, the case study approach allows for a holistic understanding of a phenomenon within a real life context from the perspective of those involved. Stake has portrayed the case study approach as having the ability to latch onto the intricacies of a phenomenon. Case studies have been described as best suited to research that asks "how" and "why" questions (Stake, 2005).

According to Yin (2003) and Bryman and Bell, (2015) the use of case studies remains the most challenging of all social science endeavours. Questions around single versus multiple case studies exist. Compared with single case studies, each case in a multiple case study must be carefully selected so that it could predict similar results (literal replication) or produce contrasting results for predictable reasons (theoretical replications). In essence, multiple case studies allow scholars to compare and contrast the findings deriving from each case. This in turn enables the researcher to consider what is unique or common across cases or whether the findings of the first case occur in other cases (Bryman & Bell, 2015). On the other hand a single case study as implied by Yin (1994), is advisable to apply when research focuses on untouched areas. Bryman and Bell, (2007) argued that single case studies is more likely to cause the failure of generalisation. Nevertheless, Yin (2003, p. 10) stated that 'the goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation).' One reoccurring advantage with the single case study is that it 'disentangles what is unique in an organisation from what is common to other organisations' (Hartley, 2004, p. 326). Considering the objective of this study, which tried to expand existing literature by conducting the research in

an under researched unique context, the use of a single case study provided a rich picture of life and behaviour within a particular context.

The strategy adopted was a single case study research design. The researcher puts the individuals or participants under the microscope. The single case study approach enabled a focused study of the individual perception and experiences. These experiences are likely those that took place within an organisation (chapter five elaborates on this further). This approach enabled in-depth study of the perception, interpretation and practices of those involved, as well as being unique, and therefore of intrinsic interest. The research focused on one issue, that is the importance of employee job engagement to the HPWPs and employee creative performance relationship, and selected one bounded case to illustrate this issue. This case was bounded by time and location. The rationale behind this centres on its ability to integrate complex and variable phenomena of the importance of employee engagement to the HPWPs – employee creative performance relationship and evaluate three hotel contexts into a narrative report. The individual story of each setting was not told as this will result in three separate case studies (multiple case study). The focus was on holistic analysis (Stake, 1995).

Given the fact that the nature of the research question has been set earlier, the use of the unit of analysis within the research confirms the research perspective and thereby limits the consideration of information to that which is directly relevant for the overall research aim and research questions. According to McClintock *et al.* (1979, p. 614), units of analysis have been defined as 'individuals, groups, or organisation', but they could be almost any 'activity, process, feature, or dimension of organisational behaviour'. Within this research, the hotel staff in Abuja, Lagos and Makurdi is defined as the unit of analysis. The next section looks at Nigeria in which the service organisations studied is situated.

3.4.1.1 Nigerian Context

This section takes a brief look on the study area (Nigeria) and the service organisations where the research was conducted. The section also highlights the diverse aspects of Nigeria drawing from the social, economic and political context which shapes management and HR practices. With this, the researcher was able to analyse, interpret and discuss the findings within the context of the Nigerian service industry.

With approximately 200 million people who inhabit Nigeria, the country accounts for about 47% of West Africa's population. Research has shown that Nigeria has one of the largest youth populations in the world (World Bank, 2017). The country has been seen as a nation with an abundance of natural resources such as (lead zinc, limestone, oil and gas, tin, iron ore, coal, cement, gold, salt, palm oil, rubber, cocoa, rice, yam, cassava, millet, sorghum, fish, etc.) on land and in the waters (Nairaland Forum, 2015). Sequel to the recent recession faced by the economy, Nigeria was seen as Africa's biggest oil exporter and also the largest natural gas reservoir on the continent (Ibid, 2017)

In a recent study on the human development index by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in West Africa, it was revealed that Nigeria's low Human Development Index (HDI) combines life expectancy, job satisfaction, education, and income into a single measure. Of 0.51 (1 is the maximum; Nigeria is at 0.953). To put in perspective, Nigeria's HDI is falling lower than Kenya, Congo and Ghana, despite being called the "giant of Africa." The major difference in HDI scores points to the extreme inequality in Nigeria's well-being. With this in mind, researchers and the government have started to seek alternative sources of income, one of which is the hospitality industry.

In the annual survey of international hotel chains, Nwosu and Ward, (2016) reviewed the estimate for the total number of hotel rooms ready to be built. In Africa, he recorded an estimate of about 50,000 rooms with more that 70 percent of these developments in sub-Saharan Africa. Breaking the data into sub-regions, West Africa recorded about 53 percent of all new developments. His work revealed Nigeria as one of the countries with the largest economy, population and conurbations in Africa, with most rooms in the pipeline and over 8,500 rooms in 51 planned new hotels. Lagos and Abuja ranked top 10 when analysing the breakdown with about 40 percent of rooms. Within this survey, Ward highlighted a few hotels as the largest creators of jobs. It is important to note that hotels are highly reliant on skilled staff to deliver quality service and gain competitive advantage. Scholars opine that different brands/hotels have diverse standards that need maintaining. The increase in the number of possible jobs will facilitate the need for training. "Hotel groups typically have their own training modules and in-house business schools; however, a prior educational foundation provided by the formal education establishments will aid learning. There are presently only a few programmes of international standards available on the

continent, the need for more becomes pertinent as the hotel industry expands." (Nwosu, & Ward, 2016, p. 236)

Economic Outlook

Nigeria's economy slipped into recession for the first time in more than two decades reflecting adverse economic shocks, inconsistent economic policies, and the decline in the economy's GDP from 6.3% in 2014 to a significant 2.1% continues to raise concerns for the nation and its citizens. Since the fall in oil prices, there has been a significant shortage of power, fuel, and foreign exchange doubling inflation to 18.8% (projected) at mid-2016. Although speculations still exist, Nigeria's economy is expected to grow by about 2.5% in 2018, based on an expected increase in oil output, as well as the accelerated implementation of public and social investment projects by the Federal Government. The decline in the economic growth has resulted in a refocus on other sectors of the economy (agriculture, service etc.) to drive economic and job growth. (World Bank, 2017).

Political context

The fifth national election which was held from March till April 2015 recorded the first peaceful transfer of power in the democratic history of Nigeria. Amidst the weakness in the economy are the narrow fiscal space, large gaps in the infrastructure and the poor service industry. The new administration agreed to tackle corruption, unemployment, boost the climatic resilience and diversify the economy. By doing this the administration believes that the standard of living in Nigeria will improve (World Bank, 2017).

Restoring the macro economic growth in Nigeria the government made long and short-term goals one of which focused on the teeming young population. An analysis of Nigeria by the World Bank, (2017) suggested that diversifying the economy, developing human resources and creating jobs will lead to an inclusive growth. However, the seeming failure of Nigeria's economic growth could have been a result of the weak employment creation in a nation where labour is constantly increasing, and human development is at a standstill. As such, investing more in people becomes a priority for an organisation in other to achieve competitive advantage in this global world and also have a workforce with high levels of knowledge, skill and ability. Amidst the development strategy introduced by the government, development and management of employees in the service organisation becomes important. Becker and Gerhart (1996) suggested the need to

concentrate on certain key factors which include; business strategy, people management etc., in order to achieve competitive advantage and development. The success and failure of any organisation starts with the employees which indicate that people management should be prioritized (Somers & Nelson, 2001). Another reason justifying this study is the fact that the efficacy of HPWP's on employee engagement which stimulate employee outcome is greater in industries that have low capital intensity, thereby being more likely to be services where discretionary behaviour is high and customer contact is common (Combs *et al.,* 2006; Datta *et al.,* 2005). Therefore, service firms provide an ideal context to investigate how HPWP's works to strengthen employee engagement which subsequently stimulate employee outcomes,

Conclusively, the rationale for the selection of the three hotels namely: Hotel 1, Hotel 2 and Hotel 3 across Nigeria was due to a wide range of reasons, one of which is the accessibility to the hotels. (Hotel names are withheld from the research to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Hotel 3 which is an award-winning hotel with the best value for money is located at the heart of Victoria Island Lagos, a financial district in Nigeria. In addition, it is classified as one of the oldest standing hotels situated in Makurdi the capital of Benue State is Hotel 1. Finally, Hotel 2, which is an international hotel located in Abuja, the capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has its presence in several cities like Birmingham and the United Kingdom. In addition, these locations (Lagos and Abuja), ranked top 10 in a recent survey carried out by Nwosu and Ward*,* (2016) in the United Nations Development Programme. Within this survey, Nwosu, and Ward*,* (2016), highlighted the focus on the development of both employees and the hotel industries. It is important to note that hotels are highly reliant on skilled staff to deliver quality service and gain competitive advantage. Additionally, Kwahar and Iyortsuun (2018) referencing the Nigeria National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism [NIHT] in 2015 classified these hotels as four and five stars in Nigeria. The justification of selecting these hotels is based on the fact that they are top of the range in terms of the provision of hotel services and are regarded as ensuring a relatively high degree of provision of quality of work life. Furthermore, the four and five-star hotels give a good understanding of employees' perspective within the hotels in Nigeria as lower-ranked hotels understudy their programmes, policies and strategies. Other criteria for selection are the existence of strategic HR within the hotel, hotel performance, services and quality. Showing a 4.0 to a 4.8 customer review, these three hotels have invested in their employees to stimulate good performance. In addition, every year, hundreds of expatriates are posted to different parts of Nigeria and these expatriates make use of the hotels due to its strategic location and alliance with multinational corporations.

Further inquiry showed that Hotel 1, which was managed by the State government commenced in 1981 as one of the oldest hotels in the State. However, an international organisation called Best Western took over the management of the hotel in 2015.

Consequently, the need to study both an international and a local hotel in order to collect rich in-depth information informed the selection of these hotels. These three hotels are spread across three big cities in Nigeria and are rated from 4 -5 star and contribute immensely to the economy of Nigeria. With the selection of these three hotels the researcher was able to gain broad and in-depth understanding of how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes in Nigerian hotels.

FIG 3.2: HOTEL 3, NIGERIA

FIG 3.3: HOTEL 1, NIGERIA

FIG 3.4: INSIDE HOTEL 2, NIGERIA

3.4.2. Data Collection

Most scholars have observed that the method of collecting data is key to research and has the ability to answer the questions the research poses (Bryman & Bell 2015; Lapan *et al.,* 2012). Adopting a qualitative approach, King and Horrocks, (2010) and Yin (2009) observed that, one of the most frequently used method(s) when gathering data in qualitative research is the use of interviews. They further noted that the adoption of this method will enable the interviewer to understand respondents' interpretation, feelings, thoughts, intentions and meanings (Patton, 2002).

Qualitative interview methods have been seen to acquire a descriptive analysis of the interviewee's world in reality, and by interpreting the meaning of the phenomenon the researcher puts his/herself in the position of the respondents revealing the meaning behind people's experiences (Kvale, 1996; McCracken, 1988). For this reason, in an attempt to develop a rationale for how valuable, credible and reliable the data collection is Johnson (1997) and Grima-farrell (2016) stated that the use of different methods would inform this purpose. They further suggested that in adopting different methods both data and method serves as a check and balance medium with the use of multiple procedures and sources. Yin (2009) supporting this statement noted that during interviews there is the possibility of missing out valuable information that may affect the result of the analysis. However, for the purpose of this study the researcher made use of semi-structured interviews and documentation as methods of collecting data.

Patton, (2002) opined that putting oneself into the position of another just to understand how he perceives reality, offers meaning and knowledge which enables the researcher to provide reach and detailed answers to questions. In order to explore and understand the perception of employees and managers on how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes a semi-structured interview was conducted. There are several criteria's identified for adopting a specific data collection method. First is the research question, which determines the direction of the research. The Second focuses on the wealth of knowledge or literature available within the research area. While the third, is dependent on the time and resources (money) available to the researcher.

To facilitate the collection of data, interviews were conducted in English language using an interview guide (appendix 1), thus, there was flexibility in the approach as the interviewer gave the interviewees a great deal of leeway in their response. The interviewer also provided additional questions although there was a list of fairly specific areas to be covered (Bryman 2012; Saunders *et al.,* 2007). This approach gave room for follow up questions. The interviewer also adopted open-ended questions "as a trigger to stimulate the informant into talking freely about the particular area under discussion" (Arksey and Knight 1999, p. 92). Furthermore, the interviewer built up rapport with the respondents as this according to Roller and Lavrakas (2015, p.149) "creates trust that helps participants feel comfortable with the interviewer thereby allowing them to open up and give their honest opinion about the phenomenon being studied." Each interview kicked off with an icebreaker and then biographical questions (this is termed 'grand tour question') (Spradley, 1980),

Consequently, the interviewer made use of the critical incident technique where the respondent is encouraged to tell stories when an incident took place.' This technique as seen in Flanagan (1954) work cited in Bryman and Bell (2015) is referred to as 'an observable human activity where the consequence is sufficiently clear to leave the observer with a definitive idea as to their likely effect' (Ibid, 2015, p. 225). This concept, which is derived from the analysis of 'near disaster situation' enables the researcher to understand in detail the situation and also enhances the reliability and credibility of the interview questions. Although the critical incident technique is not the primary method of data collection, it enables the researcher to gain understanding of a sequence of behaviours and its significance for an individual. The researcher adopted Druskat and Jane, (2003) pattern of questioning respondents with the question consisting of the following:

- What led to the event?
- Who did and said what, to whom?
- What happened next?
- What were you thinking and feeling at the moment?
- How did you cope with the situation?
- What was the outcome?

While semi-structured interviews give room for exploration of life experiences of respondents in relation to the research area of interest (Galletta, 2012), the questions were asked in a way that would not be complicated, too technical or theoretical as this could lead to confusion. Prior to the main interview a pilot study was carried out to ensure that the questions were well understood (See chapter 4 for details). After a completion of the pilot study, the main interview was carried out. The interviews took around 35 - 55 minutes. This time allowed all questions to be answered and the adoption of the critical incident technique made participants more interested in the research questions. Drever (1995) confirms that a semi-structured interview usually takes about 45 minutes to an hour to complete. Furthermore, the awareness of the shortcomings of using just field notes encouraged the interviewer to employ a digital recording mechanism to capture the discussions that held. A replay of the audio files gave more insight into the responses of the respondents: what they said and their reasons for saying what they said. This was a suitable method as it "frees the interviewer to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview". (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 179). For the main interview, respondents raised concerns regarding the

use of recording devices. However, after assurance of confidentiality, and an explanation of the rationale behind the choice of a tape recorder, the respondents agreed. Healey & Rawlinson (1994) advise that the researcher should provide an explanation regarding the use of a recorder rather than simply requesting permission.

During the interview process the researcher approached the manager of the hotels, discussed the aim of the research, thereby creating a rapport with them. The researcher further presented documents (ethical and information sheet) to ensure confidentiality. In the course of familiarising with the different hotel environments the researcher experienced different forms of reception. For instance, in Hotel 1, the manager gladly offered a tour around most sections of the hotel explaining his achievements during the interpersonal discussions. However, in Hotel 3 the manager offered the researcher breakfast. Although this gesture was declined, the manager spent time enlightening the researcher on the nature of the hospitality sector in Nigeria due to the vast experience in the sector and, finally in Hotel 2, the manager was very interested in the study and had a conversation with the researcher on the journey so far. This technique as suggested by DeMunck and Sobo (1998) helped the researcher decipher from whom to gather data. Notes were taking on what was heard, and questions were asked.

Consequently, the research made use of archival records and documentation while collecting data. Archival records and documentations provided both administrative records, and past or present documents that could be recent or shows the organizational structure, department, values, goals and achievements (Yin, 2009). Scholars have noted that data gotten from archives or documentations are classed as secondary data as this information was collected for a different purpose (Saunders, *et al.,* 2009). While collecting secondary data the researcher observed that some records were difficult to access as they were labelled "classified documents." In other words, the data/information were protected. Following Saunders *et al.* (2009) suggestion, this researcher used a combination of various data collection techniques such as; interviews (written and voice records), and documentation in carrying out this study. This method provides reliability and validity in collecting data as observed by (Cohen & Manion, 2000).

While in the field, the researcher searched for "rich points" which led to saturation (Agar, 1997, p. 1157). In simple terms, while the researcher was on the field information gathered at a point became repetitive and deemed sufficient in answering the research question. At this point the

researcher reached saturation. Similarly, as observed by Fetterman (1989) saturation point is reached when there is a recurring pattern of behaviour and response or when the idea put forward reaffirms itself over and over. For this reason, the researcher spent more time travelling across three different states located in different geo-political zones and made sure that sufficient data were collected to justify this claim. Below is an excerpt on some information that was documented.
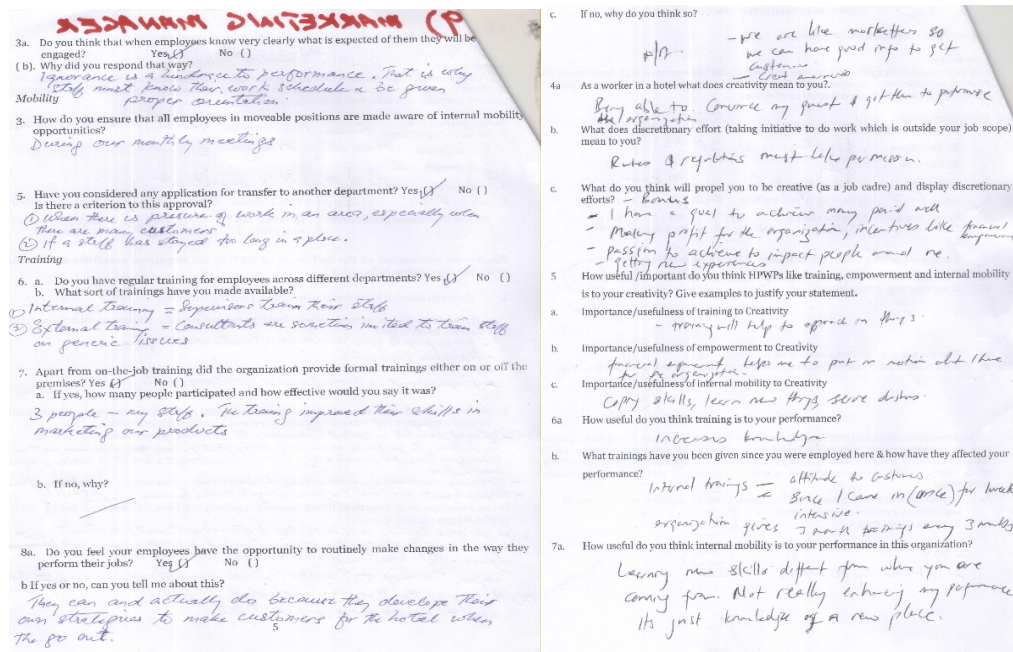
FIG 3.5: INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

3.4.3   Credibility (Reliability, Validity), Trustworthiness and Authenticity of research

In providing a rationale for the reliability and validity of this study, an understanding of what these two constructs mean became important. The term Reliability according to qualitative researchers has been widely used for 'evaluating' research (Golafshani, 2003). She further suggested that assuming the idea of evaluating could be seen as a way of 'information elicitation' then evaluating qualitative data has to do with its quality (Ibid, 2003). Having this in mind a good qualitative study should be able to help elucidate a situation and not create enigma (Eisner, 1991). This, Stenbacka (2001), relates to good quality research.

Although some researchers suggested that "the concept of reliability is misleading in qualitative research and if a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good" (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 552). Scholars like, Agar

(1986); Krefting, (1991); Lincoln and Guba, (1985); Patton (2002) believe that a different language is essential to fit the qualitative view, one that would replace reliability with such terms as credibility, accuracy of representation and authority of the researcher. Similarly, Leininger (1985) claimed that the challenge is not with data reliability but with the definitions of the term. She recast the term reliability in a qualitative sense to focus on the importance of identifying and documenting recurrent patterns, themes and values in qualitative research. The meaning associated with reliability suggests the need for sufficient time to be spent with the respondents to identify recurring patterns.

Similar to the misleading nature of the reliability of qualitative research, threats such as subject error, observer error and biases are commonly found with reliability (Yin, 2009). To ensure these errors were addressed, the researcher when responding to the possibility of a subject error, ensured that a work plan was developed showing the semi-structured interviews that were scheduled in advance, time slots, venues, respondents who would participate in the discussions and respond to some pertinent questions. In addition, observer error and biases were addressed using an audio recording gadget and a semi-structured interview schedule. Furthermore, adopting a multi case study also served as a strategy to ensure reliability, as this directed the data collection technique. However, Patton (2002) suggested that the ability and skill of a researcher to conduct qualitative research rests on reliability, which he opines is a consequence of validity.

The concept of validity has been described as a 'contingent construct,' which is grounded in the process and intention of a research methodology and study (Winter, 2000, p. 1). Although controversies surround the applicability of validity to qualitative research, there is a general perception that there is a need for some 'qualifying check' (Golafshani, 2003). One good example would be, Creswell and Miller (2000) who suggested that people's perception of validity in terms of what choice of paradigms they adopt, influences validity. Recasting the term validity in a qualitative sense, Agar, (1986) suggested that validity means gaining knowledge and understanding of the nature (i.e., the meaning, attributes, and characteristics) of the phenomenon under study. As a result, many scholars suggest that validity in qualitative research deals with quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001).

Therefore, to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of multiple and diverse realities, the

researcher highlighted Guba's (1981) model which provided justification for the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings. Guba's model identified four aspects of trustworthiness that are relevant to qualitative studies: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. These strategies, he stated are important in ensuring the rigor and serves as a means of assessing the value of qualitative research findings.

In the current research, truth values were obtained with the use of semi-structured interviews, organisational documents and the critical incident sampling technique to obtain the discovery of human experiences, as they are lived and perceived by respondents. Lincoln and Guba (1985) termed this credibility. In relation to the second criterion 'applicability', Guba (1981, p. 216) refers to this term as transferability, "where the research finding fits into context outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts." He argues that if the researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison, the problem of applicability is addressed. In view of this, the researcher provided a dense demographic background information about the respondents, research context and setting to allow others assess how transferable the findings are.

The third criterion for trustworthiness is neutrality. In an attempt to increase the worth of the findings, the researcher prolonged the contact with the respondents therefore shifting the emphasis of neutrality in qualitative research from the researcher to the data findings. The key to qualitative research is the emphasis on the unique human situation, in order to understand the variations in experience. Guba (1981) identified the final criterion for trustworthiness as consistency but recast the term as dependability from a qualitative standpoint. In the current research, the researcher described the exact methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, providing a dense description of methods in line with acceptable relevant research methodologies which shows how unique the situation is.

The term authenticity extends the understanding of reliability. It is important to note that authenticity means different things in different studies. Holistically, the term represents 'an indication of the quality of the research data and the claim that is made based on conducted research' (Talat, 2015, p. 107). This definition according to Silverman (2000) refers to whether what is purported to be measured is what is being measured. In similar vein, Lincoln and Guba (2000, p.178) believed authenticity raises concerns as it involves asking the question like "Are

these findings sufficiently authentic (isomorphic to some reality, trustworthy, related to the way others construct their social worlds) that I may trust myself in acting on their implications? More to the point, would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them?"

From the statement above, Talat, (2015) revealed that authenticity on the one hand is spoken about in terms of a social human existence and not physical/material development. For example, my study could raise some concerns around the participant's perception being fuelled by beliefs held by them. Over the past few years Lincoln and Guba (2000) argued that research has increasingly changed focus from a quantifiable explanation to a more narrative explanation of social truths. This means that truth is authentic when it results from a personal narrative of an individual. Accordingly, this narrative is presented rationally, emotionally and intuitively. That is the participant's truth reflects a reason that is similar to related experiences. Supporting this argument Fineman's (2008) suggested that narratives can be employed within interpretivist research that focuses on studying interpretations. In view of this, chapter five of this study presented participant's perception, interpretation and understanding of experiences that bring out personal truths. These are authentic within the context of their experiences. On the other hand, Lincoln and Guba (2000) focused on the implication of the research finding. According to them, the output should facilitate a practical implication. As a result, this research presents the theoretical implications in the discussion (chapter Five) and practical implications are covered in (chapter Seven). Therefore, authenticity of research is addressed as the logic running through the presented research data.

3.4.4. Sampling Technique

The focus in this section is on the way the research was conducted which includes the chosen sampling technique for the participants. Sampling as a term has been used extensively as a technique to select the participants needed for a study (Bryman, 2012). The participants in the current research were HR manager and frontline employees within three hotels in Nigerian. Scholars have over the years agreed that there is no consensus to the specific requirement for a qualitative research with regards the number of participants, response rate and sample size (Patton, 2002), it is however important to note that the quality of a qualitative research thrives on the richness of information and the analytical capabilities of the researcher than the sample size (ibid).

In light of this, recruitment of a sample occurred first by means of the purposive sampling technique, which was used to identify the respondents who match the criteria as closely as possible (Stake, 2005). The researcher consulted with personal contacts within the hotels and reviewed the organisations documents which identified several departments that consist of frontline employees and HR managers. Ultimately, the sample comprised staff of the following units/departments: Housekeeping, Accounts, Personnel, Laundry, Sales and Purchasing, IT and Maintenance, Kitchen, Security, Food and Beverage, Front Office. This provided ample opportunity to gain more insight into employees (from different departments) and HR managers' understanding of how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes. The use of this technique was also to try and gain a range of views. This sample was recruited from specific departments, to avoid potential influence from participants in the same department and therefore bias. Demographics of the respondents is provided in section 5, Table 5.1.1 and Table 5.1.2. Purposive sampling emerges as an attractive choice due to its cost effectiveness and time management.

Having adopted a qualitative approach as discussed in section 3.2, identifying a sample size was not based on arithmetical rules and probability statistics but on the quality of information the researcher expected to obtain using the approach. However, following the identification of respondents that match the research criteria, the researcher further adopted a snowball sampling technique to carry out a semi-structured interview. The snowball sampling technique starts with a small number of respondents who have been selected by the researcher on the basis of specific characteristics relevant to the study as mentioned above and also those who can identify other respondents potentially eligible for inclusion in the research. A snowball sampling method was employed in this research because a participant who fitted the criteria and satisfied the requirements of the research objectives introduced a relevant respondent who also met the research criteria outlined above, and they were willing to take part in the study. In the current research, participation was voluntary in order to produce a more reliable data as suggested by Bryman and Bell, (2015). The feasibility of this technique was drawn from a close affiliation with a number of employees in the Hotels. Subsequently, an estimate of 30 minutes to 1 (One) hour was used to carry out the interviews. With several email correspondences with the managers of the hotels, the company was willing to allow the researcher interview both employees and managers.

Conclusively, the researcher carefully identified and selected organisations for the multiple case study analysis based on the following criteria. First, the researcher made sure that the organisation has a structured human resource department. Further to that, the selection of the hotels was due to the fact that these three hotels are spread across three big cities in Nigeria and are rated from 4 -5 star. One of which is international and the other two are national hotels. The researcher also had to solicit referrals from identified experts and sought suggestions from the Hospitality sector to identify organisations known for their HPWPs which provided direction as to what kind of hotel will be ideal for a study of such nature. The researcher was finally able to select organisations such that the sample were similar on the basis of type within Nigeria as suggested by Yen *et al.* (2016).

3.4.5. Data Analysis

Bernard, (2011) in describing data analysis, explained that it involves the search for patterns and ideas in data that help inform the development of patterns embedded in the data. In analysing data collected for this study, the qualitative approach was used and Saunders *et al.* (2009) stated that, for qualitative data to be meaningful and understandable, it has to be analysed rigorously. These rigorous procedures range from categorisation of responses to identification of relationships between categories, (inductive/deductive) in approach, which allows the researcher to develop or test existing theories (Ibid., 2009). However, Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2008) stated that a major challenge of qualitative research is the difficulty encountered when trying to reduce data collected from different sources to meaningful conclusions.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2009) the quality, understanding and meaning a data possesses in qualitative research relies on the rigorous process. Although the researcher was faced with a large amount of disorganised, rich and fertile data, he found the process of transforming the data into findings 'creative,' 'complex' and 'difficult' as observed by Patton (2002); Marshall and Rossman (2010, p.211). 'The final destination or result remains unique for each inquirer, known only when and if arrived at' (Patton, 2002, p.432).

3.4.5.1. Thematic analysis

In researching how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between

HPWPs and employee creative performance, the researcher made use of the thematic analysis which involves the collection of data, developing themes, constant comparison, interpretation of data and summarizing what has been learned and answering the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Following Padgett (2008) argument, about comparing and contrasting, the researcher was able to refer to the research questions alongside the literature and kept in mind what is known and not known, because, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p.185) 'the unknown areas such as unfamiliar words and phrases may signify aspects of the setting important to explore'.

In terms of data analysis, the researcher obtained a number of recorded responses from open and closed ended questions, semi structured interviews and notes taken from archival documents. The procedure for analysing the data commenced from categorising the responses and identifying the relationships between these categories, which were inductive and deductive in approach; allowing the researcher to develop themes from data or to test existing theories. Although challenging, Grbich (2012) argues that the process of analysing data in qualitative research involves the combination of these key areas which include: the researcher's views, choices, design, methods, description of findings and the theoretical interpretation of the data.

The researcher took certain steps to organise the data collected for the study. First, given the diverse forms of data collected which involves the archival documents, sounds and written words, the researcher in line with Bernard (2011) and Seidman, (2013) strategy of organising the data, put together the raw data which were messy, not always organised, incoherent and grammatically incorrect. In order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness the researcher created an excel spreadsheet and an encrypted folder on a personal computer detailing the names of the interviewees, interview excerpts and demographics. Following this, the information gattered were transcribed (Grbich, 2012). In transcribing the data, the researcher converted raw data into text, a process King and Horrocks (2010.p, 142) defined as 'data transcription' which they believe is the first step in analysing data. Each recorded interview was transcribed verbatim into a Microsoft Word document, and a pseudonym was adopted to withhold the identity of the respondents. In order to ensure accuracy of data, the researcher transcribed data as soon as they were collected, going through the excerpt thoroughly. The raw data was constantly reviewed throughout the process.

Consequently, in transcribing data the research referred to the research questions, as this

enabled the research focus on what was known and not known, because unknown areas such as unfamiliar words and phrases 'may signify aspects of the setting important to explore' as observed by Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p.185). This process was carried out whenever the data was collected. This method also helped the researcher identify, track and organise the data, with the aim of gaining in depth understanding of the values and meanings embedded in the data (Grbich, 2012). Any issue identified was highlighted while the data was being sorted. As a result of adopting a semi-structured interview, the researcher took over 5 hours to transcribe each respondents interview which had lasted about an hour. This resulted in investing more time and effort as Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2008) noted. In relation to time constraints, King & Horrocks (2010) observed that transcription is time consuming and can take many hours to transcribe raw data depending on the quality of recording and the researcher's typing skills. Irrespective of the time taken to transcribe the interview excerpt, the researcher became acquainted with the data and thus making the development of the themes less stressful.

The early stage of analysing data using thematic analysis involves identification of themes from the raw data i.e. interview transcriptions. As Bernard and Ryan (1998) noted, the process is deceptively simple: (1) read verbatim transcripts, (2) identify possible themes, (3) compare and contrast themes, identifying structure among them. During this process, the researcher wrote down some general thoughts considered interesting, important or significant (Bryman & Bell, 2007). All the textural materials were read again carefully and line-by-line manner, so as to identify concepts. Data was broken down into clusters, examined, compared and assigned labels. This process is called initial coding or open coding (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The researcher further reviewed the generated labels, identified connections between them and then created themes. Themes within the data were constructed from the detailed interviews which took place with participants at their respective hotels. With the development of the initial themes, the researcher started categorising the data according to themes and sub themes. The importance is to gain a clearer understanding of the research scope and provide a reasonable reconstruction of the meaning of the data that has been collected (Blismas and Dainty, 2003). Categorising this data made it possible to eliminate the irrelevant information from the volume of data collected in order to make sense of the themes realised. The emerging themes and sub themes provided creative insight on the analysis of the data. After the themes were developed, the researcher interpreted the data in order to explain what was found, made sense of findings, offered explanations and drew conclusions in accordance with the ideas of Patton (2002). Despite the fact that different meanings and influences of the themes

emerged from employees' and management's perceptions, the researcher however, extracted meanings from the interview data in order to answer the research questions sensitively and rigorously. As Miles and Huberman, (1994) suggested this analytical stage that links the themes with the research questions involved the narrative description using thematic analysis. Although grounded theory shares similarities with thematic analysis, Strauss and Corbin, (1998) noted that searching for certain themes or patterns within the data set, requires detailed theoretical knowledge of approach. Social scientists believe that thematic analysis is relatively easy and quick to learn and first-time researchers in social science, seem to agree that thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used methods of qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Howitt & Cramer, 2008).

The method used to interact with, and analyse the data was a manual approach. This involved scanning, photocopying, filling/indexing, colour coding and highlighting similarities and differences in the data. The entire process enabled the researcher to trace back ideas that are important and relevant, brought the researcher closer to the words and perceptions of the respondents, helped to develop patterns of meanings and maintain links with sections of the data collected. As discussed above, after each interview was transcribed, categories were developed in the form of words and phrases drawn from the raw data. This approach is in line with Strauss & Corbin (1998) who suggest that researchers begin to develop codes and concepts from data by approaching things with an open mind. As a result of this, the researcher analysed systematically the data and identified consistency of themes. Through the analytical process of labelling the recurring phrases, highlighting the sentences which are relevant to the research question, writing notes in the margin of the transcriptions, arranging and rearranging the data, relationships in terms of recurring words/phrases, concepts and themes relevant to the research questions emerged. Quotes from interviews were tagged where they fitted together, and additional provisional categories of possible, likely and unlikely connections were introduced.

In researching how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes, the current research adopted the step-by-step process of thematic analysis as this process enabled the researcher look for patterns of meanings and issues of potential interest in the data, through interviews, and also from documents, up till the end of the analysis process where content and meaning of patterns (themes) within the data were finally reported.

3.5. Ethical Issues

In business management research, and in carrying out this study ethical issues took priority from start to finish of the research, as the researcher accessed the sampled service organisations, interviewed its employees and reported the findings. Blumberg *et al.* (2005, p.92) and Saunders *et al.* (2007, p.178) defined ethics as 'moral principles, norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others.' 'Others' might include those who become subject of this research, and also those affected by it. To ensure that the design of this research is methodologically sound and morally defensible, it followed the guidelines for postgraduate research students of Salford Business School at the University of Salford, Manchester.

As a prerequisite in collecting data the researcher ensured informed consent was gained. Hyams-Ssekasi (2012) giving credence to the work of Diener and Crandall (1978.52) defined informed consent as "the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely influence their decisions". This definition could be broken down to mean an individual's competency, voluntarism, full information and comprehension to participate in data collected (Hyams-Ssekasi, 2012). The use of this tool is to inform respondents about the research scope, purpose and main design as well as the possible risk and benefits of partaking (Ibid, 2012). All respondents were presented with a copy of the information sheet and consent form (See Appendix 4 &5). The document consisted of the title of research, the purpose of the research and a reassurance of anonymity and confidentiality.

The researcher took a number of measures to preserve their anonymity; i.e. changed their names, the name of the hotels, and used codes to identify the participants. Throughout the study the respondents were informed and briefed about all aspects of the research; i.e. that their identities would be concealed, the respondents' names, references, towns or events would not to be identified in the published materials without their consent, research data was to be secured in lockable filing cabinets, and password protected computer files only accessible by the researcher would be used throughout the research process as noted by King and Horrocks (2010).

The researcher again reassured all respondents of anonymity and confidentiality, informed all respondents, making sure they were aware of any information given and that their opinion would be handled in confidence. Healey and Rawlinson (1994) argued that re-assuring respondents

increases the level of confidence in the researcher's trustworthiness and minimizes the possibility of a biased response. The researcher also stated and explained to the respondents that the research was strictly for academic purposes. In doing so, they had the right to withdraw at any time. This method simply protects the interest of the participants. Owing to the ethical procedures necessary for the research, certain ethical issues such as causing harm to participants were paid attention to, and such harm were categorized as 'personal', 'psychological' and 'social harm' (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Singleton & Straits, 1999). Another issue that could come up was the problem of invasion of privacy. In order to address this, the researcher discussed the research objectives and explained the impact his/her response would have on the research outcome. This method Gray (2004), states is vital in clarifying the rationale and impact of the information being collected. In this respect, the researcher needs to establish his/her own credibility in other to gain confidence (ibid).

3.6. Proposed Research Limitations

Time constraint was one limitation to this research, nevertheless the researcher adopted a qualitative research that does not require a generalisation of the research topic thereby in-depth knowledge could be deduced, just focusing on a comparative analysis. However, another limitation in the use of interviews was the possibility of the respondent's unwillingness to discuss some sensitive topics that might arise. In a similar vein, data analysis and privacy limitations could as well arise. Similarly, physical, psychological and social harm (Singleton & Straits, 1999) were likely to emerge therefore, the respondents were informed of the confidentiality policy in place.

Accordingly, the process of data analysis was rigorous and difficult, especially when the researcher made use of audio data such as: taped interviews, narrative and speeches; bearing in mind that people may be disorganised, incoherent and grammatically incorrect (Sandelowski, 1994). With this in mind the researcher took notes during observations and interviews. More so, in an attempt to achieve efficiency with bulk data, the researcher organised the information (Seidman, 2013).

Consequently, a limitation of interpretivist research showed that they produced snapshots of perspectives at a given time, and perspectives could change (Biggam, 2011). Notwithstanding, to circumvent this challenge, the interview guides the researcher used was designed to cover as many themes identified with individual conciliation. This reflected as much depth as possible in

data collected from the research participants.

3.7. Research Evaluation

As discussed in the introduction section, the research integrity was maintained by adhering to the seven principles set out by Klein and Myers (1999) that were used in evaluating an interpretive field research. Table 3.1 summarises the principles and reflection in the research.

TABLE 3.1.
RESEARCH EVALUATION SUMMARY

No.	Principles for Interpretive Field Research	Reflection in the Current Research
1	**Hermeneutic Circle:** The principle suggests that all human understanding is achieved by iterating between considering the interdependent meaning of parts and the whole that they form.	Data analysis process was an iterative process as the data gathered were read multiple times in order to make the right correlation and meaning of the whole problem.
2	**Principle of Contextualisation:** The principle of contextualisation requires critical reflection of the social and historical background of the research setting in order for the intended audience to see how the current situation under investigation emerged.	This principle was achieved by a detailed research context chapter (Chapter two) that gives an overview of the research topic within the Nigerian and HPWPs context in understanding the relationship between HPWPs and performance outcomes.
3	**Principle of Interaction between the Researcher and the Subject:** This principle requires critical reflection on how the research materials were socially constructed through the interaction between the researchers and participants.	In the current study, the researcher avoided presenting preconceptions to the respondents for example: (Have you heard of employment engagement in the work place, if yes/no, what does it mean to you?). Interview participation was voluntary and in order to avoid bias

		throughout the data collection process, a detailed description of the data collection process and the analysis was documented to minimise this.
4	**Principle of Abstraction:** This principle requires relating the idiographic details revealed by the data interpretation through the application of principles one and two to theoretical, general concepts that describe the nature of human understanding and social action.	A detailed description and illustration of interviewee statement was categorised. The principle of abstraction was met through discussion of the research results in relation to the ideas and concepts originating in previous research papers.
5	**Dialogical reasoning principle:** Requires sensitivity to possible contradictions between the theoretical preconceptions guiding the research design and actual findings with subsequent cycles of revision.	The researcher explained in detail philosophical approach, literature and a concise explanation of the data analysis and coding process to make it transparent.
6	**Principle of Multiple Interpretations:** Requires sensitivity to possible differences in interpretations among the participants as are typically expressed in multiple narratives or stories of the same sequence of events under study.	Multiple interpretations were detailed in the analysis chapter. Interview transcripts were analysed iteratively following the interviews.
7	**Principle of Suspicion:** Requires sensitivity to possible 'biases' and systematic 'distortions' in the narratives collected from the participants.	The current research aimed to avoid possible biases by collecting and analysing data from different sources. Description of the data collection technique and the analysis process were in detail, and this guided the researcher in avoiding biases.

The Principles of Klien and Myers hinge on the best practice of interpretative research that has been developed for many years. In view of this, the current research with the aim to identify the quality and rigor criteria, have addressed all the principles and justified their use.

CHAPTER FOUR
PILOT STUDY

Introduction

A Pilot study has been described as a feasibility study which aims to discover the interest in a research setting, choose between alternatives, identify difficulties, conduct a risk assessment and test the research instrument (Gomm, 2009). Some scholars believe that questions do not come full-fledged as they have to be created, fashioned and developed (Oppenheim, 1992), However, coherent with the above-mentioned description, pilot studies serve the purpose of ensuring that questions are well understood by respondents, as well as allowing for preliminary investigations on the data collection tool used (Reaves, 1992). Bryman and Bell (2015) also suggest that a pilot is a way of finding out how well the research instruments work, and if interviews, surveys or observations will be suitable to collect data for the main study, otherwise, fine tune the instrument for data collected.

Bryman and Bell (2015) suggested that pilot studies aim to evaluate the reliability and validity of the tool used in collecting data, which means ensuring the questions are easy to understand and that the content of the questions are valid. Accordingly, this approach prepared the researcher for the main data collection and increased the experience of the researcher. Given that pilot studies serve the purpose of ensuring that questions are well understood by respondents, this study allowed for preliminary investigations on the credibility of the scales used as stated by Reaves (1992).

4.1   Pilot Study Design

An interview guide showing the topic and issues to be investigated was first developed before the pilot study was carried out. In doing so, the researcher was able to steer the questions and conversation in the direction that best suits the research. Semi structured questions were designed and pilot studied prior to the main study which enabled the researcher to use follow-up and probing techniques to ensure the research questions addressed the objectives of the study. Specifically, the interviews were conducted with three potential respondents via a Skype interview. The instrumentality of the study proves that gaining feedback from respondents sheds more insight

into the time, instruction and question wording. According to the pilot study, there were several problems regarding the appropriateness and wording of the interview questions. As a result of the feedback, changes were made correspondingly prior to the data collection process.

In an attempt to obtain some basic information on the respondents, the researcher started with some demographic-based questions that were followed by specific questions of interest like "how long have you worked for this organization?" By doing this, the researcher aimed at making the respondent feel more relaxed and comfortable. With the use of the interview guide the researcher was able to tailor questions, which ensured that the information collected were very useful.

During the interview, the researcher explained terms that were considered necessary to give respondents better understanding of the subject matter. In addition, attention was paid to the visual, body language and the silence that sometimes exists when respondents are unsure of the terms used. The interview questions were directed to frontline employees and human resource managers/supervisors). The choice of these categories of workers was predicated on the objectives of the study that aimed at finding how certain terms and relationships were perceived. Furthermore, these groups of workers were able to contribute more on the topic due to their knowledge, skills and ability during discussions that took place. Below is an outline of the topic area covered during the study:

List of topic areas covered during the study

1. General information about the hotel industry
2. Respondents understanding of the main concepts in the study: Engagement, HR practices, HPWPs and employee outcomes
3. What HPWPs are available within the organisation
4. How effective are the practices?
5. How attractive is the organisation?
6. What is the perception of respondents on the implementation of the HPWPs within the organisation?
7. What are the constraints and benefits of implementing the HPWPs?
8. How can employees' performance be improved?

4.2   The pilot study process

The researcher conducted a pilot study with interviewees from Hotel 3 and Hotel 2 in order to evaluate the clarity of the interview questions and also revise the research design for the main study. A few problems were identified by the researcher during the pilot study and adequate changes were made, which is shown in the next section. These changes further increased the reliability and validity of the findings from the main study. The pilot study was aimed at:

- Testing the clarity of the interview questions;
- Determining how participants felt about the interview questions in order to avoid leading questions and to eliminate bias;
- Determining the estimated time schedule for each interview;
- Using audio recorder to record interviews;
- Confirming the method of interview adopted for the study (Skype semi-structured interview).

4.3   Outcome of the pilot study

The pilot study was able to identify some problems relating to the interview questions and timing of the interview. These problems were addressed and modified in preparation for the main study. The questions and reliability of this research was also tested and verified in preparation for the main study.

The pilot study further helped the researcher re-word interview questions, making them free from ambiguity and bias. For instance, during the pilot study the researcher discovered that one of the interview questions was too ambiguous and lacked clarity, this led the researcher to recast **Interview Question 5**: from 'What does the term internal mobility mean to you? - How useful do you think it is to performance?' to 'How *useful do you think internal mobility is to employee performance?*'

4.3.1   Interview questions

Table 4.1 shows a breakdown on the changes made to the original interview questions, the revised version and the rationale behind making these changes.

TABLE 4.1.
PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THE CHANGES MADE

Original interview question	Revised version	Rationale behind the change
1. **Thinking about engagement how useful /important do you think HPWPs like training, empowerment and internal mobility is to creativity? If it is very useful could you give me examples to justify this?**	*How important do you think training, empowerment and internal mobility is to creativity? If it is very useful could you give me examples to justify this?*	When the interview question was asked in the pilot study the respondent felt the question was too ambiguous and the researcher reworded the question
2. **What does the term internal mobility mean to you? - How useful do you think it is to performance?**	*How useful do you think internal mobility is to employee performance?*	This Interview question was revised as it was wrongly worded.
3. **Do you participate in the training made available to you? How many have you been involved in and why those specific trainings?** 4. **Does the organisation provide you with trainings in different departments, if so how?**	*Do you participate in the training made available to you in different departments? If yes? How many have you been involved in and why those specific trainings?*	Interview questions 6 and 9 were merged to ensure precision and avoid questions that connote repetitive answers

5. What is your understanding of empowerment and do you think it engages employees and creates a platform for creativity? If yes/no, why?	*Deleted*	Researcher realized this question was repeated several times.

Method of data collection

The pilot study adopted two forms of interview techniques. The first was a Skype semi-structured interview, which showcased a positive and negative outcome. The negative feedback was the difficulty in getting through to respondents. However, the method showed the need to visually interview respondents in order to identify body language. For this reason, the researcher conducted another face-to-face semi-structured interview. During the pilot study, the semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to plan, prepare and make changes to the interview questions ahead of time using the interview guide. The researcher was also able to ask probing questions enabling the respondents to express their views freely.

Venue

Concerns about the use of a Skype interview arose as there were difficulties getting through to respondents at appropriate times due to availability issues and instability in the network. This challenge inspired a face-to-face pilot interview. The challenge to availability of respondents was averted as respondents felt very comfortable answering the interview questions both in their homes and in their private offices, as there was no fear of confidentiality and anonymity. During the pilot study, respondents spoke very freely as they were away from work and were assured anonymity and confidentiality which protects the identity of the respondent.

Time

The estimated time for each interview section was 30-45 minutes. However, during the pilot study respondents spoke longer than required due to the fact that they were at home after the day's work and had less or no work done during the late hours of the evening. Drever (1995) confirms that a semi-structured interview usually takes about 45 minutes to an hour to complete

Audio recording

In preparation for the pilot study the researcher tested the audio device and its ability to capture the information clearly. King & Horrocks (2010) argue that audio recording serves as the preferred method in a qualitative research study. Some respondents raised concerns regarding the use of recording devices. However, after assurance of confidentiality, and an explanation of the rationale behind the choice of a tape recorder, the respondents agreed. Healey & Rawlinson (1994) advise that the researcher should provide an explanation regarding the use of a recorder rather than simply requesting permission.

Changing batteries

The batteries for the audio recorder were not changed as the respondent had a power bank that served as an alternative medium to charge the device while the interview proceeded.

Summary

The pilot study process gave the researcher access to develop valuable and relevant skills, which includes: communication, project management and attention to details. The ability to articulate and structure the spoken word of the researcher was also developed. Participants provided feedback to the researcher, which was very beneficial as it improved the quality, validity and reliability of the entire study.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapters one and two reviewed current research and found that the study on HPWPs, and employee outcomes relationships has gained a lot of attention. Subsequently, there have been various sample characteristics, methods, several models, different research designs, practices examined, and organisational performance measures used that have led extant literature to vary dramatically (Zhang & Morris, 2014). Furthermore, the fundamental mechanism through which HPWPs are linked to employee outcomes is still inconclusive, as research has shown that there is no agreement in spite of its robust theoretical and empirical presence (Do 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015; Pereira & Gomes, 2012). On this front whilst studies continue to relate a variety of topics with HPWPs-employee outcome relationship; the question of how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between High Performance Work Practices and employee creative performance within the hospitality industry in Nigeria, remains unanswered.

This current chapter (Chapter Five), addressed this question by providing insights into employees and managers' perception of employee job engagement and HPWPs in Nigerian hotels via face-to-face semi-structured interviews and a review of documents. By doing this, the researcher examined how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome (creative performance) within Nigerian hotels.

With the use of an interpretative framework, chapter five described data collected with careful inclusion of participant's viewpoint using qualitative thematic analysis. This step-by-step process of thematic analysis enabled the researcher to look for patterns of meanings and issues of potential interest in the data. However, while reporting findings and meaning of patterns (themes) some new themes were generated as they emerged during data analysis. The semi structured interview and organisational documents offered the most significant evidence to answer the research questions, and these are fundamental to the discussion of the findings.

Specifically, this chapter responded to all the three research objectives discussed in chapter one. First, employees and manager's perception of the importance of High Performance Work

Practice (HPWPs) to employee job engagement was explored. The context was important because it informed the participants of everyday thinking about HPWPs and employee job engagement. This to some extent addressed the second objective which investigated how employee job engagement stimulates a specific employee outcome (creative performance). Following this, the third objective which, focused on the existing HPWPs in Nigerian hotels, giving employees and managers the opportunity to freely think "outside the box." To this the participants introduced the concept of trust in employees and appreciation for work done. The findings are discussed and concluded with some reflections on managerial implications, and implications for future research in Chapter Six.

5.1.   Demographics of Respondents

A face-to-face semi-structured interview was carried out with Thirty-four (34) participants in all which included: Employees and Managers. One salient point that led to the selection of employees and managers to participate in the semi-structured interviews rest on empirical research on employee engagement and High Performance Work Systems literature which reveals that, there is a possible disconnection between management and employee perception of employee engagement and HPWPs (Den Hartog *et al.,* 2013; Zhang *et al.,* 2018).

Research has shown that HPWPs designed by organisations may not always be positively perceived by respondents and lead to employee engagement and stimulate employee outcome (Katou & Budhwar*,* 2014). Therefore, it is imperative to explore whether HPWPs that the hotels have designed are consistent with employee perception of HPWPs.

Consistent with the above justification is the realisation that data gotten from hospitality literature only focused on information derived from front desk employees, with very little research focusing on both frontline employees in different departments within the hotels and the HR managers (Boxall *et al.,* 2016; Karatepe, 2011; Karatepe, 2013c; Paek, *et al.,* 2015; Purcell & Kinnie, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2013). Thus, there appears to be ample opportunity for employee understanding of management intentions to differ, potentially resulting in the ineffective implementation of HPWPs. Furthermore, frontline employees were interviewed due to their constant interaction with customers and because they are the first point of contact within the hotel.

On the other hand, the rationale for choosing HR managers to participate in the semi-structured interviews was based on several reasons. First, managers could be expected to have certain knowledge and a broad perspective on organisations' HPWPs and thus were deemed as being able to address questions examining perceptions of HPWPs. Second, employees at the management level were believed to have experiences of how HPWPs are implemented within the hotels. Third, it is important to note that this study implicitly assumed that managers who enact HR practices are the agents of organisation and their understanding of HR practices represent the use of practices in organisations. However, in order to improve and enhance the reading of the data, a diagram illustrating demographics of the respondents interviewed and the concepts and themes that emerge are outlined before the description.

TABLE 5.1.1

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES IN NIGERIAN HOTELS

NIGERIA. (HOTEL 1)

S/no	Form No. of respondents	Department	Education	No. of years in Hospitality Industry	No. of years in Hotels 1	Respondents Code
1	1	Reception	HND/BSc	0	1	Frontline employee (1a)
2	7	Food & Beverage	NCE/HND	12	2	Frontline employee (2a)
3	3	Sales & Marketing	Degree	0.8	0.8	Frontline employee (3a)
4	4	Waitress	HND/BSc	0	0.1	Frontline employee (4a)
5	2	Executive House Keeping	HND/BSc	30	0.4	Frontline employee (5a)
6	6	Security	SS2 (Secondary)	0.8	0.2	Frontline employee (6a)
7	5	Gardening	SS2 (Secondary)	4	4	Frontline employee (7a)
8	9	Accounts	HND/BSc	6	2	Frontline employee (8a)
9	8	Maintenance	HND/BSc	6	5	Frontline employee (9a)

NIGERIA. (HOTEL 2)

S/no	Form No. of respondents	Department	Education	No. of years in Hospitality Industry	No. of years in Hotel 2	Respondents Code
1	1	Front office	BSc	1	1	Frontline employee (1b)
2	10	House Keeping	NCE/HND	6	4	Frontline employee (4b)
3	9	Accounts	MSc	2	2	Frontline employee (5b)
4	8	Accounts	BSc	5	3	Frontline employee (6b)
5	7	Personnel/Porters	HND	5	5	Frontline employee (7b)
6	6	IT and maintenance	MSc	0.8	0.2	Frontline employee (8b)
7	4	Kitchen	BSc	12	10	Frontline employee (9b)
8	3	Kitchen	BSc	10	8	Frontline employee (10b)
9	5	Food and Beverage	BSc	6	5	Frontline employee (2b)
10	2	Security	O levels	15	2	Frontline employee (3b)

NIGERIA. (HOTEL 3)

S/no	Form No. of respondents	Department	Education	No. of years in Hospitality Industry	No. of years in Hotel 3	Respondents Code
1	1	Front office	BSc	0.2	0.2	Frontline employee (1c),
2	5	Front office	BSc	1	1	Frontline employee (2c)
3	2	House Keeping	NCE/HND	1	0.5	Frontline employee (3c)

4	3	Accounts	BSc	8	4.2	Frontline employee (4c)
5	4	Accounts	BSc	10	2	Frontline employee (5c)
6	10	Personnel/Porters	O levels	2	1	Frontline employee (7c)
7	7	Sales and Purchasing	BSc	8	1	Frontline employee (8c)
8	8	Kitchen	BSc	10	7	Frontline employee (9c)
9	9	Food and Beverage	BSc	6	5	Frontline employee (6c)
10	6	Security	O levels	20	5	Frontline employee (10c)

KEYS:

B.Sc. = Bachelor of Science

HND = Higher National Diploma

M.Sc. = Master of Science

NCE = National Certificate of Education

O Levels = General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

SS2 = Senior Secondary year two

The result in Table 5.1.1 shows that twenty-nine (29) frontline respondents from different departments in Hotels participated in the Semi-structured interview that held August the 12th to 31st 2017 in the hotels. The Table also shows that all the participants had one form of formal education or the other having qualifications that range from Senior Secondary School Certificate to master's degree certificates. Working experience shows a record of 0.1 to 10 years in the hospitality industry. Further inquiry showed that hotel 1, which was managed by the State government commenced in 1981 as one of the oldest hotels in the State. However, an international organisation took over the management of the hotel in 2015. Thereafter, series of adjustments were made, and this explains why 44.4% of the respondents have stayed for 1 - 8 months

The Tables show that it was predominantly frontline employees from different departments who took part, although a few respondents were from the same department. For example, S/No 4 and 5 (referred to as Respondent 4c Front desk, and Respondent 5c Front desk) in hotel 3 were in the Accounts department. To provide a guide to the rationale adopted for the tables as detailed above, respondents' interview and notes were numbered according to the form numbers, this enabled the researcher to track the documents easier. In addition, to ensure anonymity and ensure confidentiality, all frontline employees were labelled 'Respondent code (department name), hotel (1/2/3)' across the chapter.

TABLE 5.1.2.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MANAGEMENT STAFF IN NIGERIAN HOTELS.

S/no	Form No. of respondents	Department	Education	No. of years in Hospitality Industry	No of years. in Hotel	Respondents Code
1	5	Management [Hotel 1]	HND/BSc	18	1	Respondent (1d)
2	3	Management [Hotel 1]	HND/BSc	2	2	Respondent (2d)
3	1	Management [Hotel 1]	HND/BSc	6	2	Respondent (3d)
4	2	Management [Hotel 2]	BSc	33	18	Respondent (1e)
5	4	Management [Hotel 3]	BSc/MSc	21	10	Respondent (1f)

KEYS:

B.Sc.   = Bachelor of Science

HND   = Higher National Diploma

M.Sc.   = Master of Science

The result in Table 5.1.2 shows that Five (5) Management staff from the Hotels participated in the Semi-structured interview that held August 12th to 31st 2017 in the hotels. The Table above predominantly focuses on the HR managers within   the three hotels (i.e., Hotel 1, Hotel

2 and Hotel 3). To ensure anonymity and ensure confidentiality, all HR managers that participated in the research were labelled 'Respondent code (department name), hotel (1/2/3)' across the chapter.

5.2. Findings and analysis

The analysis of the interview adopted an extensive activity throughout the research. Following the interview protocol as a broad framework for this research, the interviewed transcripts were read and re-read, noting down initial ideas. As a result of this the researcher coded interesting features of the transcript in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, making sure all the relevant data pertaining to the code were collected. These codes were collated into potential themes. The process of collating themes from the different codes allowed the researcher to check if the themes work in relation to the entire data set. Consistent with this, the researcher revisited the analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and gathered a clear definition and names for each theme. Finally, the researcher related the investigation to the research questions and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

This chapter provides the key findings of this research as well as the analysis of data collected from the semi-structured interviews with respondents. The first section focused on the interpretation of data following the research questions. The themes were identified and categorised into different sub-themes. These core theme (For example: importance of HPWPs to employee job engagement, role of employee engagement in stimulating employee outcome HPWPs improvement and suggestion) which were generated from the semi-structured interviews were subdivided into sub themes such as Labour utilisation, shadowing, trust, appreciation *etc.,* The next section looked at the themes in line with the objectives of the study.

5.2.1. IMPORTANCE OF HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK PRACTICES (HPWPs) TO EMPLOYEE JOB ENGAGEMENT

In this study, a range of data was used to try to find out employees' and HR managers' perception of the importance of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) to employee job engagement within the Nigerian hotels. First, the perception and conceptualisation of HPWPs and employee job engagement was set. Second, the presence of cross-departmental training,

internal mobility, empowerment and other HR practices were established. Third, the understanding employees and managers have of the importance of HPWPs to employee job engagement was identified. On this note, the researcher built an argument that helped to explain the research questions and made it easier to better answer the issues raised. Below is an interpretation of the findings.

- **HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK PRACTICES (HPWPs)**

HPWPs in this research is seen as the combination of distinct but interconnected HRM practices, such as cross departmental training, empowerment, and internal mobility, which serves to improve employee's ability, motivation and opportunity to perform and therefore stimulate creative performance (Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007; Yen *et al.,* 2016). Data that emerged shows that the term 'HPWPs' appeared to be unfamiliar amongst the respondents in the hotels studied. Of the 34 respondents, a few claimed they were aware of the concept HPWPs, but perceived it differently. One respondent, for example stated that:

> *Coming to work early and closing at the appropriate time is a High Performance Work Practice* (Frontline employee 6(a) [Security], Hotel 1).

This perception is further supported by the waitress, porter and housekeeper who described HPWPs as:

> *I believe when an employee or myself ensures that work is done according to schedule preventing a query, that is HPWPs* (Frontline employee 7(b), [Personnel/Porters] Hotel 2)

> *HPWPs refers to a certain kind of work characteristics exhibited by the employee which results in good performance* (Frontline employee 4(a), [Waitress] Hotel 1).

> *Ensuring that employees avoid different forms of misconduct such as mismanagement of funds, stealing and cheating is HPWPs* (Frontline employee 3(c), [housekeeping] Hotel 3).

The response asserts a firm notion of a preferred work pattern that is prevalent in the hotels studied. It indicates HPWPs as a preferred work behaviour. Clearly, it is not just about the

specific human resource practices embedded within the HR system, but the systems that ensure employees are compliant and efficient at work. In this instance, the meaning of HPWPs terminology to some is not clear.

Although the term 'HPWPs' appeared to be unfamiliar to most respondents, a description was given which gave a better understanding and thereafter, all respondents exhibited awareness of the concept and concurred to its existence within the hotels. Most respondents perceive HPWPs as human resource practices that aim to improve or 'enhance performance'. The following quotes from the frontline employee 8(b), 5(c) and respondent 1(f) are provided below to reflect the understanding of HPWPs:

> *HPWPs deals with rewards, pay, job security etc., I believe all these systems put in place increases the performance of the employee* (Frontline employee 8(b), [IT and Maintenance] Hotel 2).

> *I believe it involves a pay rise like a reward system, succession planning and anything in that line. From experience, these set of resources have the capability to improve my ability to perform my work and also encourages me to work for this organisation.* (Frontline employee 5(c), [Accounts] Hotel 3).

> *The use of HR resources to enhance performance of employees within the hotel is ok by me. In terms of performance, training for instance will give employees the skills needed. I do not want employees complaining or claiming they make a mistake because they do not know… this is something very common with employees in this hotel* (Respondent 1(f), [Management] Hotel 3).

From the tone of the responses above, there is noticeably a better understanding of the term HPWPs but respondents stress its mediocre existence in their work environment. Interestingly, management staff believe that HPWPs are fully functional and utilised within the hotels. Some HPWPs mentioned include: pay, cross departmental training, job security, internal mobility, rewards, feedback etc. In this study it is clear that each definition put together by respondents is highly characterised by the respondent's knowledge, understanding and exposure. The next section looks at the existence of HPWPs and the interpretation associated with the strategy.

- **EXISTENCE OF HPWPS**

As critical as the HPWPs are to the understudied Nigerian context, the researcher adopted the use of archival documents to determine the existence of cross departmental training, internal mobility and empowerment, and any other HPWPs within Nigeria. The evidence demonstrates that there are quite a few HR practices, such as pay, colleague feedback, cross departmental training and development and internal mobility that are frequently mentioned within the hotels. Nonetheless, some HR practices mentioned varied across different hotels due to organisational strategies etc. With the use of the critical incident techniques, questions were asked to identify how respondents' perception suggest the existence of HPWPs within the hotels. This interview technique served as a starting point in identifying patterns that suggest the existence of HPWPs within hotels.

Cross-Departmental Training Or Shadowing?

Noe *et al.* (2014) described cross departmental training as that which refers to a planned and structured effort to improve or facilitate employees' learning of job-related competencies which include ability, knowledge, skills, or behaviours that are critical for successful job performance. The idea behind cross departmental training suggests a technique that leads to career development and enables employees establish goals. Data that emerged from interviews suggested that the understanding of cross departmental training was not homogenous across all respondents, but there were some commonalities. One themes that emerged from interviews was shadowing.

Most of the respondents had some ideas of the meaning of cross-departmental training, and were able to speak of time when they have received training/s not within their department. The majority stated that they have received specific and technical training relating to different departments, while some others stated that they have never been trained. Most typical comments were:

> *I have received customer service training a few months back when I was working as a kitchen staff… Now when I am told by my manager to assist the porters, I understand what is expected of me* (Frontline employee 2(a) [Food & Beverage] Hotel 1).

Wow that is an interesting question…. Now you mentioned this I received training [ethical] on how to respond to customers at the front desk and as accounts personnel, I just found it useful…, I asked and was given that opportunity to work there. I would also state that this kind of training is not always made available to me… this is me speaking for myself (Frontline employee 6(b), [Accounts] Hotel 2).

I have received trained internally (in-house training) and by external consultants, specific to departments such as: Trainings on room dressing, entering and knocking procedures, loading and packing of trolleys and turn down service, sales calls (to convince the public) and purchase criterion (study on other hospitality industries to help them strategize) (Frontline employee 3(a) [Sales & Marketing] Hotel 1).

A three yearly training was conducted as soon as I started, and this runs every year, I have also had training on the use of grass/flower trimmers for staff of Maintenance department, and on right attitude and behaviour to customers (Frontline employees 10(c) [Security] Hotel 3).

I had an external consultant train us on treatment of customers, use of computer and record keeping. I learnt how to use the office software's and some social media tools (Frontline employee 4(b) [housekeeping] Hotel 2).

Probing to find out how the respondents felt about the training they have received within different departments and what the benefits have been. The responses suggested that a good number of respondents agreed that cross departmental training improved their performances because it increased their ability, knowledge and skills set. For instance, respondent 1(e) believed that he had been influenced by learning about the hotels functions and suggested that he current position was influenced by his ability to work with others while he was assigned a different function:

I started as a front desk assistant and as soon as I had moved around all these departments, the manager believed I had the skill and ability to take on a higher role and soon I became a supervisor and after a year I moved to the management

team… I believe it is a result of the knowledge gained through training and watching others perform their duties like an apprentice. [shadowing]... (Respondent 1(e) [Management] Hotel 2).

Like respondent 1(e), respondent 1(d), related that encouraging employees to work with colleagues in different departments will improve their skill set. Respondent 1(d) believes this is another training strategy:

While training, I ensure that the employees have a first-hand experience of what has been taught…. I sometimes implore the employees to just shadow what others are doing as another means of training. (Respondent 1 (d), [Management], Hotel 1).

The fact that the majority of the employees agree to the existence and usefulness of cross departmental training, this implies that their ability, knowledge and skill set are improved. As such, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that cross departmental training motives employees and gives them the ability and opportunity to perform work. However adding to respondent 1 (e)'s response, frontline employee 4 (b), stated that:

Cross departmental training has definitely given me the opportunity to assist when I can. I have helped in several departments when I see them struggling… This majorly has been because I have 'shadowed' somebody in the past and understands how to function in that role (Frontline employee 4 (b), [Housekeeping] Hotel 2).

Highlighting this interesting technique called 'shadowing', some frontline employees noted that their hotels have adopted this strategy in order to train and equip staff with the necessary ability and skills set to perform in different departments.

The usefulness of cross departmental training also appealed to most HR managers as they noted that cross departmental training gives employees the ability to do a job accurately and well. They also believed that employees with the knowledge of the organisational best practice should be able to perform in any given task at hand. One respondent mentioned:

One of my employees attended a professional training on Total Hospitality in

Abuja, Nigeria recently…. He later sponsored himself for another training on Entrepreneurship Base Camp in Abuja. (Respondent 1(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

In order to develop and maintain the standard of employees, the HR managers commented that:

I periodically conduct onsite training, in order to keep employees and supervisors up to date with events around the organisation and develop their knowledge on the hospitality sector across Nigeria. (Respondent 1(f), [Management] Hotel 3).

I believe in knowledge acquisition; the more you know the more you can give... part of my development goals is to make sure I acquire a lot of information and when I come across a challenging project I can be well prepared and creative to tackle it (Respondent 1(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

This might be a selfish answer given my position within the firm but, I train our employees with the aim of getting them to work in other departments. I will say it gives them some sort of flexibility (Respondent 2(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

Contrary to the general opinion of the respondents, a few respondents believed that there was no use for some of these training as the knowledge gained has not been put to use. One example is:

I don't think it was necessary…, I would have preferred to determine what training I need. Imagine I was trained how to serve food, but I work in the accounts department. The major issue is because they believe it is cheaper…, when they have these 'oyinbo people' (foreigner) around, they just make everyone do the same kind of training (Frontline employee 4 (c) [Accounts] Hotel 3).

It is important to note that cross departmental training exists within the hotels in Nigeria and are designed to equip and enhance employee's skills, knowledge and ability to perform a task better.

Internal Mobility or Labour Utilisation?

With regards to the existence of internal mobility, evidence from respondents show a superficial understanding of what it means. The overwhelming majority of respondents claimed they have functioned in different departments in the past which they believe is internal mobility. Some typical examples are:

> *Well for me I have worked as a security and also a gardener in the past. My 'boss' just tells me what I should do, and I don't have any choice but to obey the order.* (Frontline employee 7 (a) [Gardening] Hotel 1).

> *Working in the kitchen can sometimes be lonely and I have, with the permission of my manager, worked as a porter. I enjoyed the opportunity as this helps me cope with boredom when the workload is not too much…But let me assure you this has happened on very rare occasions* (Frontline employee 9(c) [Kitchen] Hotel 3).

According to Sun *et al.* (2007), and Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000) internal mobility involves 'promotion from within' 'broad career paths', where employees have the opportunity to move across departments horizontally or vertically. In view of this questions surrounding the opportunity for promotion within the hotels in the past few years, showed that it rarely happens. The response from respondent 9 (c) suggests that there have been minimal success stories of career opportunity available to internal staff. In support of respondents 9 (c) statement, some respondent believes there is a need for a good relationship with management staff to guarantee career development or internal mobility:

> *Only if you have a good rapport with management... I don't think you usually get offered higher positions. With the economy of Nigeria, I don't even complain. I am always ready to work so I don't care what position as long as I can feed my family* (Frontline employee 8 (a)[Accounts] Hotel 1).

With minimal success stories regarding career development, over half of the respondents were asked if they have had the opportunity to transfer to other departments or if the organisation has a career development plan where they can move upward in the organisation. In their response, they explained that some of them have been transferred to two (2) to three (3) other departments, stating that internal mobility has greatly contributed to their performance in terms of knowledge, flexibility and skill acquisition. In the words of some of them:

Working as an account officer, I was able to understand financial requests from the other departments such as reception and sales and marketing, and to treat them as quickly as possible (Frontline employee 8(a), [Accounts] Hotel 1).

I now better understand some other policies of the hotel as I observed the way things are done in the departments. This understanding enabled me to act properly without running into difficulties (Frontline employee 7(a), [IT and Maintenance] Hotel 1).

Personally, I started off in the front desk and was moved to accounts after some months… As I speak I can go to the front desk and still perform very well. I like the idea of moving around the hotel you know. The knowledge I gained from doing that is nice. Before I forget, an employee can cover for another employee if he/she falls sick without being scared that they cannot work in that department. (Frontline employee 5(b), [Accounts] Hotel 2).

A variety of perspectives were expressed when respondents discussed the existence and useful internal mobility. A small number of respondents felt that they were not able to ascertain the usefulness of internal mobility to their performance because they had not experienced it personally. Frontline employee 3(a) commented:

I am definitely looking forward to such an opportunity as I believe it will give me the opportunity to understand the operations of the different departments thereby improving my knowledge and skills (Frontline employee 3(a), [Sales and Marketing] Hotel 1).

In line with frontline employee 3(a) response, frontline employee 1(a) suggested that the company's aim is to save cost making them utility staff. This perhaps could imply that there is little or no motivation. Frontline employee 1(a) said:

This kind of practice will definitely save the hotel a lot of the cost of hiring new staff. The implication is that internal mobility will make employees 'utility' staff…. In other words, their services can be utilised in any department when the need

arises (Frontline employee 1(a), [Reception] Hotel 1).

Drawing from a social exchange perspective, the benefit of having cross departmental training signals an organisation's intention to establish a long-term exchange relationship with its employees. Accordingly, satisfying employees' needs for skill development will influences the perception of a work environment:

> *I believe very strongly that internal mobility has the capacity to improve my knowledge, understanding and skills* (Frontline employee 7(a), [Gardening] Hotel 1).

> *In my opinion, this practice gives room for flexibility...., that is, the opportunity to function in another department within the organisation... and as earlier mentioned I personally will perform better if I feel more involved not just isolated.* (Frontline employee 2(c), [Front office] Hotel 3).

> *I find it very useful as I get very knowledgeable in activities of different departments* (Frontline employee 10(b), [Kitchen] Hotel 2).

HR managers were asked to explain how they ensure that all employees are aware of internal mobility opportunities and the Management staff explained that those to be moved are informed during general monthly meetings and are in some instances followed with official letters. Respondent 3(d)respondent stated that:

> *Sometimes I mobilise staff due to pressure of work for a short period of time. It may not be considered as internal mobility in the context of HPWPs, especially as official letters do not accompany them.* (Respondent 3(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

Surprisingly, one respondent noted that the opportunity for career development is not always made available to everyone but only the high performers. The following example is illustrated to prove this argument:

> *The system does not necessarily have a structure in place to give employees career development, all though in the past I have reviewed some employee's performance*

and given them a different role more than once ……. The other staff are just moved around for a short period just to give them an understanding of the organisation's best practice. (Respondent 1(e), [Management] Hotel 2).

A common view amongst respondents indicated that internal mobility does not necessarily create room for career development or promotions but an opportunity for management to utilise labour when it is lacking.

Empowerment – (The relationship between Trust and Empowerment)

Empowerment appeared to be a familiar term amongst the front line employees and HR managers in the hotels studied in Nigeria. However, the meaning lacked consistency amongst a few respondents. On one hand, the majority of respondents considered empowerment as the freedom, opportunity and ability to make decisions and commitments where employees' make creative judgment, fulfil their duties, provide quick and fair responses to customers' requests. However, very few respondents believed empowerment is the provision of working materials, chemicals etc., to facilitate work and make it easier and more effective. For instance:

The provision of grass cutting equipment instead of handheld cutlass enables staff in the maintenance department to regularly keep the lawns in good shape with little stress, thus increasing their performance level (Frontline employee 9(a), [Maintenance] Hotel 1).

I also believe that free food offered to all staff twice a day is empowerment; thereby reducing the time they would have spent going out to look for a place to eat. Instead of spending about an hour thirty minutes sourcing for food, they spend about 15 minutes and the remaining one hour fifteen minutes is utilised in service. In my opinion, free food enables the employees to save some reasonable amount of money every month. An average meal costs N1, 800 (approximately £3.8) and average junior staff monthly salary is N18, 000 (£38.3). Suggesting that employees could save as much as N35, 720 (£76) in just 20 days by eating free food. The money saved (which is more than the monthly salary) empowers, encourages and *motivates the employees to take their work seriously and perform well* (Frontline employee 9(a), [Maintenance] Hotel 1).

The majority who understood the meaning of empowerment within the context of performance enhancement were asked to tell me of a time when they took a decision without consulting their managers. The feedback was interesting as respondents clearly stated that they have several restrictions on what authority they wield as they are constantly supervised. Fairly typical was this example

> *The management team trains you and gives you the "skill" but, yet you can't always make decisions on your own.* (Frontline employee 8(a), [Accounts] Hotel 1).

Establishing the existence of empowerment, response from the respondents showed that empowerment as a HPWPs, enables employees' make creative judgment, fulfil their duties and provide quick and fair responses to customers. They further noted that empowerment gives employees a sense of belonging where they feel they are valued by the organisation and in return display certain attributes like creativity. This strategy according to respondents helps organisations accomplish their set goals.

Consequently, respondents were asked to explain how they have been empowered. The result of the interview showed that a number of the respondents felt they have not been empowered the way they expect. However, the majority of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the level of empowerment received from the hotel. For instance, comments of some of the respondents are as follows:

> *I believe that those who take decisions without the consent of their managers do so within their job descriptions for issues that are mild and to make the work better… I also believe these decisions make the person think creatively* (Frontline employee 4 (b), [Housekeeping] hotel 2).

> *The general rule is that permission must be sought from managers to carry out modifications or introduce innovations. Those who dared to take the risk must inform their managers on the adjustments…. In my opinion, these decisions taken, or judgment calls are creative as they are made on the spot. Although I don't frequently do this I feel the ability to make such decisions requires creative ideas.*

(Frontline employee 5(a), [Executive Housekeeping] hotel 1).

I believe jobs done without the consent of managers included the introduction of a Point of Sale (POS) by a Waitress, release of little cash for purchase of maintenance equipment, shutting down some apartments to carry out proper cleaning at a time where inflow of customers is very low etc., (Frontline employee 9 (c), [Kitchen] Hotel 3).

Some other respondents expressed the fear they encounter and noted that empowerment is a bit 'far-fetched' as one mentioned:

The outcomes of taking decisions that may turn out to have negative consequences without consultations with managers are suspension and/or termination of appointment. As a result, most employees would not take the risk of losing their jobs in an attempt to bring about changes that are perceived to improve the hotel's performance. (Frontline employee 5(c), [Accounts] hotel 3).

The reaction of respondents to questions around the handling of customer complaints or taking decisions without consent showed that most grievances are directed to the Human Resource Manager or immediate supervisors if they cannot be resolved easily by frontline staff so easily. Management staff believed that empowering staff could potentially affect the business especially when it has a financial implication. One typical example is:

I cannot overemphasize the stress I will go through if I let my employees decide the faith of some enquiries that pertain to pay. I am concerned that there may be some financial implications to this.... (Respondent 1(f), [Management] Hotel 3).

The general notion from the result of the semi-structured interviews indicate that employees are in so much fear and tend not to take decisions or make judgment calls unless there are no managers or supervisors available. Although, they believe that 'empowerment is vital within an organisation and will definitely give them a feeling of value and encourage creative ideas.'

Surprisingly frontline employee 4 (b) and some other respondents stated that they have some sort of authority to make decisions, but they are scared to do so sometimes. According to the

respondent in this study, trust in this context is believed to be very important in making decisions within the hotels. Some noteworthy statements were:

> *Hahah… the truth is I have the authority to make certain decisions, but I can't do a lot because I am not allowed to [scepticism], I might be able to replace a broken bottle of coke if it drops off my hand and breaks while serving a customer* (Frontline employee 4 (b), [Housekeeping] hotel 2).

> *To me I have been able to make decisions maybe it is because in the past I have proven trustworthy and the manager believed I could handle some task on my own. The first step is to be trained and because I get trained occasionally, I believe I first have the skill and then my manager gives me the authority to make certain decisions* (Frontline employee 9(c), [Kitchen] Hotel 2).

For frontline employee 9 (c) there was an element of trust that has been built over time which is necessary when discussing empowerment. Likewise, frontline employee 4 (b) had some scepticism in performing tasks without gaining consent from the manager but liked the idea of having the authority to make decisions without interference from the manager. With the introduction of management's trust in employees by the frontline employee(s), frontline employee 9(c) provided some insight into the outcome of a decision taken.

> *I have changed the food menu in the past because I have been given the authority to make such changes with or without the approval of my manager. Ideally, I need to speak with the manager to make such changes but since she believes in me and have given me that authority I just did it and she was impressed because she got a good feedback from some of the customers who called her attention to the food* (Frontline employee 9(c), [Kitchen] Hotel 2).

Contrary to the responses from frontline employees across the hotels studied, respondents 1 (d) who fall under the management team made no mention of trust in employees but stated that employees have the opportunity to routinely make changes in the way they perform their jobs provided it will help to attract customers to the hotel. Respondent 1 (d) further stated that his staff develop their own strategy when they are at work but that they do not have to obtain permission. The respondent added that employees should be allowed to

routinely make changes in the way they perform their jobs, but it should be in the interest of the employers.

Overall, these results indicated that most of the respondents believe 'trust' would create room for empowerment. One major concern relating to empowerment was more widespread when respondents noted that they have been trained and functioned in different departments which should give them the skill set to take responsibilities for their actions and make decisions without obtaining permission from their managers. The next section moves on to look at the perception of employee engagement.

- **PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEE JOB ENGAGEMENT**

Initial discussions revealed that the term 'employee job engagement' is an unfamiliar phrase within the Nigerian hotel context. Thus, to ensure conceptual clarity for the interview process, a common definition drawn from the literature was provided i.e. engagement as a fulfilling and motivating construct that is highly influenced by physical, affective and cognitive energy that leads to a high level of job and organisational performance (Arefin, *et al.,* 2019; Kahn, 1990). Despite the fact the terminology was unfamiliar to most respondents, after describing engaged job employees, most respondents came to terms with the concept and showed a bit of awareness. Prior to describing the term, a few respondents claimed they are aware of the concept of engagement but perceived it differently. Respondents had several perceptions of engagement in the workplace. Frontline employee 4(c), for example, stated that:

> *Employee engagement in my opinion refers to someone who is involved with work* (Frontline employee 4(c), [Accounts] Hotel 3).

This perception is further supported by frontline employee 10 (b) and respondent 1 (f), who believe that employee job engagement drives satisfaction and gives value to employees within the hotel. The following fairly typical comments:

> *Engagement to me comes off as a feeling of satisfaction derived from work, I love what I do so I get engaged* (Frontline employee 10(b), [Kitchen] Hotel 2).

> *Engagement clearly focuses on satisfaction, relationship, happiness, this*

summarises engagement in my opinion (Respondent 1(f), [Management] Hotel 3).

Contrary to the understanding of engagement above, some other respondents view engagement as a pay related and the relationship between employee and employer. Following this line of reasoning some respondents commented:

> *Yes, I have heard of it before ....and to me it's a process where the employer engages the employee to help the employer manage the lower cadre employees* (Frontline employee 2(c), [Front office] Hotel 3).

> *I think engagement has to do with the communication between an employee and the employer* (Respondent 1 (b), [Front office] Hotel 2).

> *When you get a job and you are paid monthly or when you are employed then you are already engaged* (Frontline employee 6 (a), [Security] Hotel 1).

Nonetheless, one manager, who was uncertain of the terminology, stated that:

> *Engagement focuses on the ability to properly manage employees. In fact, making sure that these employees don't experience belated pay is very essential for their engagement* (Respondent 1(e), [Management] Hotel 2).

In trying to further capture the concept of engagement from the Nigerian hospitality context, not just what it means but what is expected of an engaged employee, respondents admitted that, as a result of the satisfaction derived in terms of pay, trust, autonomy, employees showcase hard work and willingness to work. In all, the employees believe that they are fully engaged as long as they are working, looked after and are being paid. Data that emerged from the responses from management staff suggest that employees are fully engaged because in rendering services, they demonstrate readiness to work, dedication, obedient to orders, decency, politeness and honesty. According to the HR managers, employees receive their wages regularly, are trained and have not shown any sign of dissatisfaction.

Surprisingly, one notable finding shows that the satisfaction respondents derive comes from practices (HPWPs) that are embedded in the organisational strategy. Having looked at the

various definitions or meanings associated with the HPWPs and employee job engagement, the chapter moves on to look at the importance of HPWPs to employee job engagement.

- **HPWPS IMPROVING EMPLOYEE JOB ENGAGMENT**

Alongside the fact that employees and HR managers have defined HPWPs and employee engagement highlighting several HPWPs that exist within the hotels, data emerged showing the importance of these practices to employee job engagement. A number of respondents share fairly similar perceptions of the necessity and importance of HPWPs to employee job engagement. Most typical were the following:

> *Yes... it is normal for an organisation to provide such practices… in fact, to me, practices like training are a part of the benefits an employee should enjoy in any organisation. If you train someone, they will put what they have learned to practice and same goes with moving employees around departments and empowering them. In fact, the idea of cross departmental training improves skills across departments and this advances flexibility. In this industry you will find out that a lot of people don't turn up sometimes, this system will equip every employee within the hotel with the skills to provide cover* (Frontline employee 4(c), [Accounts] Hotel 3).

> *'No man is an island of knowledge which means that practice such as training is good for an employee. If an employee is idle, motivation will "dry up"'. This goes on to suggest that training will motivate him to work harder as it shows concern for the employees' progress.*
> *Based on my understanding of HPWPs I would reason that cross training would keep an employee engaged and make him/her perform a lot better, making the employee able to perform in any role he/she finds him/herself.*
> *In terms of mobility, it is a good incentive to work: it will make them happier and they will put in their best. It will also boost their CV (Curriculum Vitae).*
> *For me, empowerment is scary because there are circumstances where I have done some things and I was questioned. For example, I manage funds and I have the authority to refund money if the need for a refund is logical. On this occasion I did so and got reprimanded. I would say the empowerment in my opinion will make me feel very important* (Frontline employee 6(b), [Accounts] Hotel 2).

Well…. If you train me in different departments, it will enhance my knowledge, improve my CV and I will be able to represent the organisation wherever I find myself. Mobility on the other hand is really necessary as well. Finally, empowerment is very important, and this strategy gives the employee a sense of belonging. The employee will not feel like he/she is being treated as a slave. There are so many instances that have happened (Frontline employee 1(b), [Front office] Hotel 2).

In agreement with the above interview responses, most management staff openly stated that employees should have access to HPWPs specifically cross departmental training, as this will develop their skill set, empower and give them the flexibility to move around departments, thereby ensuring engagement, creativity, trust and satisfaction. Respondent 1(f), for example mentioned that:

Yes, it is a motivational strategy; if you motivate staff they will be able to perform better and when they perform it's my duty to elevate them. We do something called 'management by objectives', where staff are given the opportunity to recommend solutions (Respondent 1(f), [Management] Hotel 3)*.*

One interesting finding that is consistent with Appelbaums' model emerges when speaking with respondents. The majority stated that the combinations of these practices (HPWPs) would improve employee ability, motivation and opportunity to perform work which can stimulate employee engagement:

Cross departmental training will strengthen the knowledge and skills of employees in their various areas of specialisation. It will also empower them and make them happy because 'knowledge they say is power'…. With this the employees will feel enthusiastic about their work (Frontline employee 3(a), [Sales and Marketing] Hotel 1).

Internal mobility gives staff the opportunity to have a comprehensive understanding of the hospitality industry and broadens staff understanding of the different departments and their contributions to the overall performance of the

organisation. This opportunity is usually fuelled by training. It will make frontline employees to be 'utility' staff (Frontline employee 5(a), [Executive housekeeping] Hotel 1).

From the discussion with respondents, the majority also implied that internal mobility, empowerment and cross departmental training makes an employee a 'utility staff' since utility workers can be called upon at any time to do any job in the hotel and that staff will perform well. They further mentioned that staff develops a sense of belonging and fulfilment that he/she is recognised to be capable of doing other jobs.

One interesting interpretation on the importance of HPWPs to employee engagement emerged when speaking with frontline employee 5(a), as the respondent focused on the cost implication of HPWPs for the hotel. While discussing, the respondent stated that HPWPs specifically Internal mobility is believed to save cost and stimulate employee engagement. Adding to this, frontline employee 5(a), also felt that moving staff to other departments would reduce the cost of hiring additional labour and gives a sense of satisfaction:

> "*Because I have moved around different departments I have experience, and, in my opinion,* experience *is said to be the best teacher". Why will I be in an organisation for this long and not be able to work in different departments? The only department I will avoid will be the accounts as I have no understanding of accounting* (Frontline employee 5(a), [Executive housekeeping] Hotel 1).

One final salient point that needs to be highlighted here is the fact that a few respondents disagreed with the majority of frontline employees' perception on HPWPs relevance to employee outcomes. These few believe some of the abovementioned practices may not be relevant for employee engagement as they do not see its importance. Some examples are recorded below:

> *Employees are lazy, I have trained my kitchen manager so many times, but he lies and is not accurate when giving me a quote of expenses or what quantity is required to make certain dishes. You can imagine I take my kitchen manager for a cooking competition and he will not know the right quantity. I am not saying he is not good,*

but he is not willing to learn. Why will I train him (Respondent 1 (f), [Management] Hotel 3).

I can't afford to give authority to my employees to do so much; they are not trustworthy. I don't want a scenario where they begin to steal money. I am fine with training and I believe those that get engaged have more knowledge when they are trained or have the opportunity for mobility. I just believe Nigerians are not ready to work when they do not own the business. They want to be "spoon fed". I initially tried to test my employees and put one of the supervisors in charge for a month and lost over 10 million naira (21,000 pounds) in a month (Respondent 1 (e), [Management] Hotel 2).

"Hmm… I think training can engage the employees, but the problem is they don't make use of the training made available to them. Recently they were taught etiquettes and I still found a few kitchen staff serving and speaking rudely to customers. They can't put the cutlery right, even though they were taught." (Respondent 1(e), [Management] Hotel 2)

What really comes to the fore in this section is the importance of HPWPs to employee job engagement. Nearly all employees and HR managers who perceived the existence of HPWPs and the given definition, conveyed some link with employee job engagement. These initial perceptions were deemed an important premise to enable respondents to provide the definitions of HPWPs and employee engagement in their own ways. Furthermore, the meaning associated with the implementation of HPWPs within the hotels stands out as a road block affecting how the practices are executed.

A number of frontline employees stress the need for managers to trust in their ability to perform tasks without interference or obtaining permission. Throughout the interviews, some respondents made mention of shadowing as a cross departmental training strategy. From the findings in this section, many respondents see the importance of HPWPs, as a tool that will stimulate a fulfilling and motivating construct that is highly influenced by physical, affective and cognitive energy that leads to a high level of job performance. The next section summarises the responses from employees and HR managers on the role of employee job engagement to employee outcome.

5.2.2. EMPLOYEE JOB ENGAGEMENTS ROLE IN STIMULATING EMPLOYEE OUTCOME

This section explores how employee job engagement stimulates employee outcomes in Nigerian hotels. To achieve this, the perception of employees and HR managers was sought on their understanding of the importance of the specific Employee Outcome (EO). The importance of specifying the employee outcome will be discussed in relation to its interaction with employee job engagement. In concluding the section, an attempt was made to briefly discuss the wider implication of Employee Engagement, Employee Outcomes and HPWPs for the hotel's performance

- **EMPLOYEE OUTCOME (CREATIVE PERFORMANCE)**

Employee outcomes refer to the employee behavioural and attitudinal response of the organisational strategy (HPWPs) which includes creative performance. Research has shown the need for management of organisations to invest in HPWPs, and as a result, employees begin to display creative performance. Thus understanding respondent's view of the importance of employee engagement to employee outcomes (creative performance) will be informative. Having identified respondent's perception of HPWPs and its relevance to employee engagement, the researcher first asked questions to establish what creative performance meant to the employees and HR managers.

Idea generation and taking initiative

With reference to the nature and structure of this question, the interview evidence indicated that the majority of respondents believe that creative performance is key to the success and survival of any organisation. Respondents also believe that the above mentioned employee outcome is important in today's competitive service market, where there are continuous evolving demands for discerning customers, increased need for quality service delivery, service recovery and retention of loyal customers. The following examples are illustrated to support this argument:

Creative performance for me means bringing about new things that will attract

more customers. For instance, I would decorate Spaghettis with carrot, leafy vegetables, sliced fresh tomatoes and onions or with some indigenous food items to make it different from the way it used to be (Frontline employee 2(a), [Food and Beverage] Hotel 1).

I will say creative performance means making the lawns look more attractive and pleasing to customers, **and to the Executive Housekeeper***, it means rearranging the rooms and putting new decorating items from time to time to make guests happy and comfortable. These customers will always want to come back.* (Frontline employee 7(a), [Gardening] Hotel 1 & Frontline employee 5(a), [Executive Housekeeper] Hotel 1)

I am a firm believer in creativity, I make the bed for the customers when they leave and occasionally, I design the towels like birds, elephants and all sorts which is completely different from the way I normally put them. There was a time where one customer was in and I cleaned the room and did exactly that and he loved it and spoke to my manager and I was congratulated for a job well done (Frontline employee 3 (c), [Housekeeping] Hotel 3).

Having taken the initiative to redecorate rooms and more lawns in a specific way, most frontline respondents in the hotels in Nigeria, felt being creative is beneficial for the success of the organisation since, displaying such behaviours or attitude attracts and retain customers thereby improving the performance of the hotel.

While the majority had a good understanding of creative performance, the response from some other respondents suggested that the word creative performance was not quite understood as it is explained as using my own methods and style to do my work"; "Do my work the way I think is good and my boss will be happy" and "Doing my work with minimum supervision."

A crucial finding acknowledged by Frontline employee 6(a), in the research was the inability to take on roles or perform tasks in a specific way without appropriate permission. In the response frontline employee 6(a) stated that:

"You are not allowed to take up a job that has not been assigned to you without getting clearance from your immediate boss" (Frontline employee 6(a), [Security] Hotel 1).

Consistent with employees and HR managers' perception of the importance of HPWPs to employee engagement, it is evident that the need for management's approval to perform tasks is significant. The next section presents how employee engagement will stimulate creative performance.

- **THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE JOB ENGAGEMENT**

In recent research in work psychology, one of the most important developments has been to demonstrate that work is not stable from one task to the next, from one day to the next, from one client to the next, which suggest the need for creativity (Bakker & Daniels, 2013). Due to this realisation, expecting employees to display a positive employee outcome requires a work environment where there is HPWPs (Cross departmental training, internal mobility and empowerment (Karatepe & Vantankhah, 2014). The existence of these practices in an organisation leads to feelings of engagement, which will in turn result in behavioural responses such as employee creativity (Ibid, 2014).

Consistent with this logic, it is important to note that, although there were different interpretations of the employee job engagement, HPWPs adopted and implemented in the hotels, the underlying meaning and application were fairly consistent across respondents. One interpretation that generated an interesting response is the relationship between employee engagement and employee creativity. Most of the findings showed that empowering employees and giving them the ability to move horizontally and vertically within the organisation will lead to engagement and when engaged, employees display creativity.

Interestingly, while the extant literature rarely includes employee job engagement as a sub-dimension of HPWPs, the majority of the respondents indicated that an environment where with cross departmental training, empowerment and internal mobility will lead to an engaged work space and when engaged employees will display creative performance. The following comments were noted:

"I find empowerment, cross departmental training and mobility very important. I know in an environment or work space where these practices exist I will love working there. It gives me a sense of belonging. One clear example was when I was given a task in the past to oversee and to an extent manage it myself. I made certain decisions and even changed the way I sort out finance which was different from the way it was previously done. In the past I used documents to pill up data, I introduced the use of Microsoft excel and started sorting out that way. Although it was a bit slow when there are volumes, but I started using it and now it is the norm" (Frontline employee 4(c), [Accounts] Hotel 3).

I like being in control of whatever I do, for this reason I know this practice you mentioned are very important for any organisation (Frontline employee 7(b), [Personnel/ porter] Hotel 2).

For me in an environment where there is provision of finance, state-of-the-art facilities and working materials, I will feel very enthusiastic about work. This to me is very useful in creativity, because it gives me satisfaction and motivation to do new things (Frontline employee 1(a), [Reception] Hotel 1).

Empowerment with physical cash in the pocket, which can be used to purchase marketing software for trying out new things, will definitely make me develop new ideas (Frontline employee 3(a), [Sales and Marketing] Hotel 1).

As with other domains of HPWPs, empowerment has a vital role to play in both employee engagement, organisations and their employee's creativity. With respect to empowerment, employee job engagement also helps promote employee creativity which results in high performance. It is also noteworthy that by executing empowerment, frontline employees will begin to display creative behaviours and attitudes. As a consequence, they will work to their fullest potential and thus contribute to organisational performance. Empowerment is a key to HPWPs that helps employees develop to their fullest potential.

In addition, despite the fact that empowerment creates an environment that develops creative behaviours and attitudes, some other respondents mentioned that internal mobility also creates room for employee job engagement which leads creativity:

In the past, because I have been given the opportunity…I have chosen to work in the accounts department just to have an idea of what happens there. In fact, there was a time I had to cover for the account's supervisor when unavailable. I have also been in some training sometimes they can be useful and at other times to me it is a waste of time (Frontline employee 1(c), [Front office] hotel 3).

Internal mobility is useful in facilitating creativity because it gave me exposure to observe how other people do things. Such opportunities made me begin to think differently and become creative. (Frontline employee 1(a), [Reception] Hotel 1).

Management, in their understanding of the importance of cross departmental training, empowerment and internal mobility to creativity believes that since employees are fully engaged, they receive their wages regularly and have not shown any sign of dissatisfaction, they should be creative. For example, some managers clearly expressed their views and said:

Yes, these practices are very useful and important. You know who some of the employees are; they would have most of the facilities needed to do work, yet they will not do the work correctly. When you complain and express concern, they will tell you they are not aware that the facilities are available. That is the reason why they should be exposed to the operations of the different departments. So, I can definitely say that empowerment, cross departmental training, mobility and awareness are very important (Respondent 1(f), [Management] hotel 3).

Being aware of what motivates your employees to be creative is essential, I know these practices in my opinion may facilitate creativity, but the problem lies with the employees as these practices have been made available, but they end up ignoring it and act recklessly (Respondent 1(f), [Management] hotel 3).

During a discussion with management staff, Respondent 1 (d), [Management] Hotel 1, noted that management expectations from employees are always expressed during general monthly meetings. The respondent further mentioned that ignorance is a hindrance to good performance. That is why staff must know their work schedules and be given proper orientation. The need to attain good knowledge of what they are expected to do will improve the quality of services.

If the quality of services improves they will feel happier, motivated and have a sense of being engaged. A priori expectation is that good employees' services will attract more guests/customers to the hotel, thereby giving the staff a feeling that they are doing well. It is expected of management to give credit to the employees who are making it possible.

Surprisingly, a number of respondents believed that cross departmental training being another vital HPWPs will lead to employee engagement but may not generate creativity as one mentioned:

> *Cross departmental training is essential, but I do not see how cross departmental training will make me more creative in thinking. In this hotel, you are trained and are expected to adhere strictly to what has been taught. For instance, cheerfulness and smiling to welcome customers, how can I be creative when smiling?*
> (Frontline employee 1(a), [Reception) Hotel 1).

Although the link between cross departmental training and creativity was not majorly supported, very few respondents believed that cross departmental training will lead to creative ideas and behaviours. For example:

> *In my own opinion, oh…. Cross departmental training is very important. Like I said earlier cross departmental training will help an employee perform better and will make the employee knowledgeably to develop new ideas. Same goes with internal mobility* (Frontline employee 4(c), [Accounts] Hotel 3).

The general perception across all respondents indicates that the effectiveness and efficiency in performing any given role is influenced by creative activities which have its precursor from the HPWPs. Most respondents believe that the more flexible a role is, the better opportunity for creative improvement in the job. The next section briefly presents the usefulness of creative performance to customer satisfaction.

Creative performance and customer satisfaction and growth in sales.

Following the interpretation of respondent's knowledge and understanding of HPWPs, employee engagement and its importance to creative performance, the researcher briefly

presented findings to determine how essential creative performance is for ensuring performance advantage for organisations.

When the researcher asked how the HR managers will compare the hotel performance over the past year with that of others that offer the same services. Most managers believe that the high level of employee's skill, ability, opportunity and cross departmental training gives them advantage over other organisations when it relates to customer satisfaction and sales. Some other respondents pointed out the reviews from the Hotel and Personal Services Employers' Association of Nigeria (HOPESEA) and the Nigerian Hotel Association (NHA) identifying the sales growth over the past few years. Some examples are:

> *Customer satisfaction derived from feedback is high in terms of quality of food, services and discounts for groups of people and certain categories of members of the public. [Shows the annual report document] …. If you look at this document, you will see that I have risen in the past 2 years and have been placed as best in this region.* (Respondent 1(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

> *There are fluctuations in the sales because there are low (May to July and December), fairly stable (January to April) and peak periods (August to November). More recently, a recent review on our financial turnover in terms of profit showed that we have made remarkable improvement after I hired some foreigners and they revisited the organisation's strategy.* (Respondent 2(d) [Management] Hotel 1).

> *I annually review the customer satisfaction survey as I believe if the organisations lose customers it may be as a result of the level of service they get…. I also make sure I keep on top of the hospitality sector making sure I am at par with digitalisation or strategies that are in place. I also calculate the revenue per room and I review this quarterly* (Respondent 1 (e), [Management] Hotel 2).

> *Comparing this organisation with others within this sector…, I usually attend Annual General Meetings and these organisational sects (Hotel and Personal Services Employers' Association of Nigeria (HOPESEA) and the Nigerian Hotel Association (NHA) which gives a breakdown on where I stand amidst other*

*organisations (*Respondent 1(f), [Management] Hotel 3).

Given that managers believe customer satisfaction is vital to organisational performance. The assumption suggests that, in such circumstances, employee outcome is necessary to achieve organisational performance. In support of the above statement, respondent 1(f) and 1(d) believe the employee outcomes shape hotel performance. The following example is illustrated to prove this argument:

> *Customer satisfaction is key in ensuring performance….., if the employees are well motivated, have the appropriate skill, passionate about their job and the company, and creativity becomes inevitable. I have seen that this drives customer satisfaction and sales…. You know people want the best service and once I have the capability to do that I can go above and beyond* (Respondent 1(f), [Management]Hotel 3).

> *I very strongly believe that employees need to display creativity when responding to customer requests. I want our employees to be devoted to their work and of course this has a great impact on our customer retention.* (Respondent 1(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

Whilst not citing a specific circumstances that creativity was needed for organisational performance, respondent 1(d), recognised that creativity and devotion to work has an impact on customer satisfaction.

Looking at the employee job engagement, and the role it plays in stimulating a specific employee outcome (creative performance), has highlighted that respondents were motivated by the ability and opportunity HPWPs presents which lead to job engagement. They perceived this would enhance their creativity. Majority believed the need for managers appreciation and trust in their ability to perform tasks will not only lead to job engagement but will stimulate creative performance. All of this implies that the respondents were open to the creative performance. This might, according to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). mean that employees are more likely to be engaged and committed to the job, when they perceive that their organisation is providing a system of interconnected and well-designed management practices, such as HPWPs.

The fact that managers' approach in implementing HPWPs was not seen as desirable by the employees suggests that the meaning and importance of these practices and how they influence employee job engagement and lead to creative performance is unclear. A certain degree of pragmatism appeared to accompany this view, in that the managers seemed to accept the need to be involved in decisions employees make which sometimes may limit creativity. The next section moves on to look at suggestions on how HPWPs can be improved.

5.2.3. HPWPS IMPROVEMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

This section explicates the interpretation of respondent's view on the suggestion for improving HPWPs in Nigerian hotels, when considering employee job engagement and employee outcomes (creative performance). The researcher first presents the opportunities implementing HPWPs will have and concludes this section with the potential constraints involved in HPWPs implementation.

- **EFFECT OF HPWPS IMPLEMENTATION ON EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES**

Appreciation and Financial Incentive

When the question of what opportunities would HPWPs implementation have on respondents' ability to display creative performance and exhibit service-oriented discretionary efforts, majority of the responses suggest that implementing HPWPs appropriately would create a platform for engagement, trust, appreciation, empowerment and pay which will lead to creativity and service-oriented discretionary effort. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the extent to which the employee's perceptions of the effectiveness of HPWPs implementation on employee outcomes could vary. Some express the need for self-determined practices in line with the HPWPs, while others prefer a management determined HPWPs. The following comments were fairly typical:

> *If I am happy…….. I will think of what I can do to contribute, but if I am not happy I would not share knowledge. For me I don't think I will contribute at all as I do not think I am well valued. Creativity has to do with my own personal effort... I believe if you introduce career advancement and progression properly, be rest assured I will feel very happy and valued… Trust me I will put in a lot of effort in*

this work. (Frontline employee 1(c), [Front office] Hotel 3).

We have a few practices implemented over the past year or so… However, I am not entirely sure it has had any impact on my desire to put in extra work. Well if the management is receptive to creativity this might improve my ability to be creative. The truth is that some managers don't respect the ideas of the employees because of their lower cadre. It is not just introducing certain practices; it has more to do with doing it right. I believe, if there is an avenue where the management listens to the kind of training we want and appreciates the employees publicly for good performance, allowing us to practice what we have been trained on independently it will also lead to creativity. The truth is some employers don't appreciate creative thoughts (Frontline employee 6(b), [Accounts] Hotel 2).

Creative performance and discretionary effort could be achieved if salaries are improved on, promotions done on schedule, materials for work are readily available, overtime allowances paid on time, and if my immediate boss do not feel embarrassed and angry when the result turns out poor (Frontline employee 1(a), [Reception] Hotel 1).

About taking initiative…. to be honest, most employers do not give credit to who credit is due. Take for instance an employee who found 500 US dollars on the floor in the bedroom and reported it…I know this does not relate to the discretionary effort, but the employee was not commended appropriately. If I do something good and it gets recognized I will definitely want to do it again (Frontline employee 6(b), [Accounts] Hotel 2).

When I am motivated I go an extra mile to achieve the best for the organisation. I also believe in appreciation; I will say it is the driver of motivation. If the employer shows a good level of appreciation for work done, I will put in much work (Frontline employee 4(c), [Accounts] Hotel 3).

Incentives from the organisation like marketing allowances, bonus, free food that is provided for staff, releasing service charge to recipients, provision of free medical services and pension are major motivating factors. If these things are in

place, they will create passion for employees to achieve something for the hotel,
impact on the people and make profit for the hotel. (Frontline employee 1(a),
[Reception] Hotel 1).

Further investigation shows that most respondents appear to be interested in being creative for the reasons outlined above, but a few may not be too keen in making discretionary efforts because of the organisation's policy. It is generally agreed that staff are expected to obtain clearance and permission before they can do a work that is outside their schedule. The implication is that discretionary efforts can contribute to organisational performance but in the hospitality industry in Nigerian, it must be done within the framework of the organisation's policy environment.

A number of management respondents believe in the positive impact or opportunity HPWPs implementation will have and already has on performance within the hotel. The need for creative performance and service-oriented discretionary effort is necessary given the effort and cost involved in implementing HPWPs as this shows commitment to work. Nevertheless, it should be noted that management staff believe that employees (their staff) are not willing to be committed. These managers also believe that the employees must inform them of any changes intended as they do not trust their judgment. One manager stated:

> *"I like the idea of creative performance and service-oriented discretionary*
> *effort….," I believe every employee must have that commitment to enhance the*
> *company. But you see some of these employees are not committed, "it is a Nigerian*
> *thing," people are more concerned about the money. They will only display these*
> *indicators if they own the business (Respondent 1 (e), [Management] Hotel 2).*

Fairly typical were:

> *Training to develop the abilities of staff were introduced like: communication*
> *skills, accommodation skills, technical skills such as tiling, electrification,*
> *plumbing, catering…. A monthly package of N10, 000 (about £20) given to the most*
> *outstanding employee, continuous free feeding of staff and words of*
> *encouragement from managers /supervisors are some of the motivational*
> *strategies adopted. In addition, I create staff interaction with prominent men and*

women in the society. Finally, I invite members from the ownership of the hotel and the State government to speak to our employees and sponsor part time studies to higher institutions of learning. These are opportunities other hotels don't have… to be brutally honest this works on some employees but not all (Respondent 3(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

A lot of employees have utilised the first opportunity as they have established contacts with some prominent people in the society, and a lot more have taken advantage of training opportunities to develop themselves… we have witnessed changes in employee attitude, behaviour and commitment (Respondent 3(d), [Management] Hotel 1).

For the firm, we have experienced a growth in good customer service since the implementation of cross departmental training and rewarding hard work with pay. These practices have been implemented over the past year and I find they have had a positive effect on the employee's performance as well as the hotel. (Respondent 1 (f), [Management] Hotel 3).

These responses show how the respondents perceived HPWPs effect on employee attitudes, behaviours, commitment, productivity, and vaguely firm performance. The impact of HPWPs on employee outcomes seems to go above and beyond the norm by creating an environment for engaging employees in which employee's exhibit creative performance. Needless to say, employees believe the implementation of HPWPs provides a lot of opportunity but if the practice is flawed there will be no evidence of good performance.

Perceived constraints of HPWPs on employee outcomes

Respondents were asked to either identify or explain what constraints they perceive HPWPs would have on employee outcomes. The result as indicated by the majority of respondents focused on the practicability of HPWPs: that is, how these practices are delivered and used within the organisation. One example is:

Lack of empowerment…, when staff in the department are told to be proactive but when they engage in work without the appropriate consent from their immediate

boss, they get into trouble. I am the head chef but can't even dictate what we are cooking without proper permission despite the fact that I have been given the authority to be in charge of this. Also, when people are not united and prove difficult to work with or when they are dishonest &disloyal…, this will hinder the implementation of HPWPs. (Frontline employee 9(b), [Kitchen] Hotel 2).

I will appreciate it if the manager asked me what I would like to be trained on. Let them give me the money and I will determine what kind of training I require. The downside is there are some certifications I will want to get but due to budgeting and cost I am certain the managers will not consider me at all (Frontline employee 8(c), [Sales and Purchasing] Hotel 3).

Similarly, some managers, who seemed to be pessimistic about what they perceived as a constraint influencing the implemented HPWPs, suggested employees' attitude towards work, honesty and transparency. Specifically*:*

The HPWPs that I have tried to implement in this hotel have fallen short and may not be suited for these employees. I have enrolled my staff on a training internationally which cost the hotel quite a lot of money. Unfortunately, there were no improvements. This could lead to poor organisation performance. We have further attempted a few practices like promotion and performance appraisals, unfortunately, not all employees are willing to make use of these because they are "lazy." Don't quote me wrong there are many other employees who have had good experiences with the HPWPs and which has reflected in their performance…. (Respondent 1(f), [Management] Hotel 3).

Table 5.1.3 summarises the research objective, questions, themes and interview questions in the current research, with the aim to clearly define the structure of the research.

TABLE 5.2.

RESEARCH MAP OUTLINE.

	Employee Engagement and its importance to HPWPs (High Performance Work Practices) employee outcome relationship in the Nigerian Hotel Sector			
AIM	To investigate how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes in Nigerian Hotel sector.			
S/N	**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**	**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**FIELD THEMES**	**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**
1	To understand employees and manager's perception of the importance of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) to Employee Job Engagement (EJE)	• How do employees and managers perceive the importance of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) to Employee Job Engagement (EJE)?	• Importance of HPWPs to employee job engagement	• Have you heard of HPWPs in the work place, if yes/no what does it mean to you? • Do you think organisations should provide materials/ HPWPs such as: trainings, internal mobility, empowerment etc., necessary for engagement? If yes/no, why? • What do you think will propel you (job cadre) to perform better?

				• How much influence do you think these HPWPs such as internal mobility, empowerment, trainings have on you? – Could you please give me an example
2	To investigate how employee Job engagement stimulates employee creative performance in Nigerian hotels	• Does employee job engagement stimulate employee creative performance in Nigerian hotels?	• Employee job engagements role in stimulating employee outcome	• Have you heard of employment engagement in the work place, if yes/no what does it mean to you? • How important do you think cross departmental training, empowerment and internal mobility is to creativity? If it is very useful could you give me examples to justify this? • Do you think employees knowing what is expected of them will make them more engaged? If yes/no, why?

3	To make practice-based recommendations to the organisation.	• What is the practice-based recommendations for organisations?	• HPWPs Improvement and Suggestions	• How useful do you think internal mobility is to employee outcomes?
				• How often do you make decisions without the consent of the manager? – could you tell me a time when this happened.
				• How do you handle or resolve customer complaint?
				• Do you participate in the training made available to you in deferent departments? If yes? How many have you been involved in and why those specific trainings?
				• What in your opinion will prompt or prevent you from performing beyond expectation?

- How do you ensure that all employees in these positions are made aware of internal mobility opportunities?

- Do you have regular training for employees across different departments? What sort of trainings have you made available?

- Do you feel your employees have the opportunity to routinely make changes in the way they perform their jobs? If yes/no can you tell me about this?

- How will you compare the hotel performance over the past year with that of others that offer the same services? What about:

➢ Average total cost per room

	➤ Revenue per available room ➤ Customer satisfaction ➤ Growth in sales • Have you considered any application for transfer to another department? Is there a criterion to this approval? • Apart from on-the-job training did the organisation provide formal training either on or off the premises? If yes, how many people participated and how effective would you say it was? And If no why?

5.3 Summary

This chapter provides answers to the research questions that determined the direction of this research journey. Overall, this chapter addressed the research aims which focused on investigating how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance in Nigerian Hotel sector by looking at three (3) objectives.

First, I explored employees and manager's perception of the importance of HPWPs to employee job engagement within the service industry in the Nigerian context, where the focus was on research objective one. The context was important because it informed the participant's everyday thinking about HPWPs and their perception of its importance to employee job engagement. The results of this analysis revealed a positive perception employees and managers have towards the utilisation of HPWPs and its influence on employee job engagement. Following this, I investigated employee's and managers' interpretation/perception on how employee job engagement may stimulate employee outcome (creative performance) in Nigerian hotels. The respondents highlighted the importance of an engaged environment facilitating the need for enthusiasm and motivation to work. Consequently, when exploring the importance of employee engagement to creative performance, the respondents revealed the importance of the two salient concepts, (trust in employees and appreciation given by employers for work done) to the performance of their organisations. In order for creative performance to occur in organisations, employers should invest optimally in employees ensuring they possess the right skill set, knowledge (ability), motivation and opportunity needed for high performing and creative performance. In view of this, organisations must design, strategize and implement certain HR practices that advance the ability (skills, knowledge of employees), encourage their willingness to exert effort and opportunities to express their talents in work tasks as demonstrated by Boxall (2012). Similarly, HR managers should give their employees the opportunity and support that can motivate them to work more creatively. According to respondents, trust and appreciation can stimulate their potential creativity. Finally, I addressed the concluding question which is to evaluate the existing HPWPs in Nigerian hotels making suggestions for improvement in Nigerian hotels. The next chapter discussed the analysis of data gotten from respondents' perception of HPWPs and performance with existing literature.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

Distinct from the wider range of research on the HPWP-employee outcome relationship, the study of how important employee job engagement is to the HPWPs-employee outcome relationship has not been given much attention. It may be assumed that there have been various sample characteristics, methods, several models, different research designs, practices examined, and employee performance measures used that have led extant literature to vary dramatically or the underlying mechanism through which HPWPs are linked to employee outcomes is still sporadic. This research has challenged these assumptions and has provided evidence about the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee outcome. While the study has benefitted from the available literature on HPWPs and employee job engagement, this research has demonstrated that there are under-researched issues behind this relationship, especially within the hotel sector. The fundamental issues that emerge from the findings have implications for the employees and the HR managers. These issues create unique constraints and may sometimes dis engagement.

The importance of HPWPs to employee outcomes that have been given significant consideration by other researchers (Do 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015; Pereira & Gomes, 2012; Zhang & Morris, 2014) provide prolific ground for understanding the underlying mechanism linking these two constructs. Contributions made by these researchers also add value to the perceived importance of the relationship by HR managers and employees. The data collected showed that employees face issues in relation to managers appreciation and trust in employees work as this can have adverse effects on their engagement and further deter creative performance.

In the current research, the evidence indicates that non appreciation and trust in employees ability to perform work can deter the perception of the importance of HPWPs and also pose challenges to employee engagement. This research has identified that presence of cross-departmental training, internal mobility and empowerment that is accompanied by managers trust

and appreciation creates an environment that will lead to employee job engagement, this therefore stimulates creative performance.

This chapter is structured around four parts. Section 6.1 provides an overall summary drawn from the data analysis and the discussion contained in the previous chapters. Included in this section are: a summary of the achievements of the research aims; the theoretical framework for the relationship between HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee outcome; Section 6.2 outlines the contribution to theoretical development, knowledge advancement and managerial practice of the thesis. Within this section, a discussion on the knowledge contribution, addresses the emergence of a new integrated framework of HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee outcome relationship. It begins by presenting the model, including two new types of concepts/ideas identified. Drawing on the contingencies highlighted within the framework, possible explanations for these emerging of appreciation for employees work and managers' trust in employees are then elaborated. In addition, the section also focuses on the theoretical contribution of the thesis, in terms of extending the theoretical underpinning adopted to understand the relationship between HPWPs and employee performance within the Nigerian context. The section then considers the third contribution of the thesis, the recommendations for policy and practice. Section 6.3. outlines the limitations of the work and opportunities for further research. Finally, section 6.4 brings the chapter and thesis to an end, with a brief summary of what has been achieved.

6.1. Research Questions Achievements

Following the three major themes (Importance of HPWPs to employee engagement, the role of employee job engagement in stimulating creative performance and HPWPs Improvement and Suggestions), a detailed discussion of each research objective was presented by comparing the result of the interviews with literature review in chapter two. In doing so, this section highlighted corroborations and contradictions. Secondly, the chapter showed the need for employee job engagement by formalising the argument that HPWPs creates room for employee job engagement which stimulate employee outcomes. Finally, it brought the research together by developing a framework that addressed the ambiguity around HPWPs (employee outcome relationship created by authors adopting a quantitative methodology) and presented the achievement of the research

aims. Taking into account this view and in order to put the thesis into perspective this section points out the extent to which the researcher met the objectives of this study.

6.1.1 Employees and manager's perception of the potential influence of High Performance Work Practice (HPWPs) to employee job engagement

This research question was covered extensively. The decisions made by employees and HR managers provided an overview of the importance of HPWPs to employee engagement in the hotels sector in Nigeria. The results suggested that the terminologies (i.e., HPWPs and employee job engagement) are unfamiliar within the Nigerian hotels, but each definition put together by respondents is highly characterised by the respondent's knowledge, understanding and exposure. These initial perceptions were seemingly inconsistent but deemed as an important premise to enable the respondents to provide the definitions of HPWPs and employee job engagement in their own ways. The discrepancies among the definition of specifically HPWPs amongst employees and management was also identified across strategic HRM researchers (Aryee *et al.,* 2012: Nishii & Wright, 2008). Researchers have demonstrated that employee perceptions of HPWPs definition/conceptualisation may not necessarily be consistent with managers perceptions of HPWPs definition, but all serve to define the most suitable management practice within an organisation in other to gain competitive advantage (Aryee *et al.,* 2012: Barnes, 2012; Wood 1999).

For most, the perception of HPWPs as a set of distinct but interconnected practices that improve employees ability, motivation and opportunity to perform and therefore is somewhat similar to the definition proposed by (Obeidat, Mitchell & Bray, 2016). Common with the literatures view of HPWPs as a collection of multiple and interdependent practices with no definitive linkages, a number of respondents added that the combinations of these practices would, therefore, lead to employee job engagement (Wright & Boswell, 2002; Yen *et al.* 2016; Sun, *et al.* 2007). To have a complete understanding of employees and manager's perception of the potential influence of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) on employee engagement, it is important to ascertain HPWPs exist within the hotels and further discuss its influence on employee job engagement.

Based on the conceptualisation of HPWPs, nearly all employees perceived the mediocre existence of HPWPs and the given definition conveyed some link with the implementation of HR activities in their hotels. However, most management staff believe that HPWPs are fully functional and utilised within the hotels. Some HPWPs mentioned includes: shadowing, increased pay, cross departmental training, job security, internal mobility, rewards, feedback etc., Drawing on the three HPWPs discussed within this study, some interesting finding that spun interest is the inconsistent perception around the use of cross departmental training, internal mobility and empowerment. While cross departmental training and internal mobility was perceived as a shadowing technique to make employees utility workers, empowerment was perceived superficial as the employees had no autonomy to make decisions within their workplace. This line of reasoning is not in line with the work of (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Karatepe, 2013c; Liu *et al.,* 2016) but supports the work of Babakus *et al.* (2008); Obeidat *et al.* (2016) and Yen *et al.* (2016) who suggest that not all practices have the same outcome. It becomes evident that the line of thought expressed by the respondents was as a result of the HPWPs implemented. In addition, some researchers have linked HPWPs to motivation and organisational commitment, while some others have linked this to productivity and financial performance (Do, 2016). A visible example that expands the understanding of HPWPs and its implication, is the work of Huselid (1995). According to him, the HPWPs that focus on hiring, performance management framework, rewards and incentives, and training all have an important statistical and economical influence on the rotation of labour and productivity of the organisation. This realisation justifies the claim that not all HPWPs attain the same outcome.

Although the findings relating to the use of the HPWPs were partly inconsistent with literature's analysis, employees and HR managers indicated that managers' trust in employees would encourage the acceptance of the HPWPs studied. These perceptions expanded the work of Miniotaite and Buciuniene, (2013) who believed that when an employee feels free, they can decide for themselves what is critical rather than being influenced by external factors. The work of Coleman (2001) and Combs *et al.* (2006), that supports the idea of high-performance work practices (HPWPs) and trust explained that employees don't leave companies, they leave managers and supervisors. In their work, the theorists believe that practices that enhance performance promotes flexibility and efficiency which in turn increase the knowledge, skill and abilities (KSA)

of the employees and provide them the autonomy and motivation to exercise these KSAs for the benefit of the organizations (Combs *et al*., 2006). This autonomy is as a result of the trust in management. However, interview evidence suggested managers trust in employees and not in management, thereby adding knowledge to the HPWPs – trust literature.

Accordingly, satisfying employee's needs influences the perception of a work environment that is supportive and facilitates engagement. Findings from this study, further suggested that employees develop a sense of belonging and fulfilment when they are recognized to be capable of doing other jobs. Tamkin, (2004) research in support of this findings identified HPWPs as a strong and persuasive case that creates room for employees who will start having great enthusiasm to get up each day and do their daily tasks. This is characterised by employee job engagement. She believed that the critical value of the research in high performance work practices (HPWPs) is in highlighting the importance of considering investment in the workforce in the context of the broader company structure, practices and company strategy. Drawing on the interview protocol, the findings from the analysis discussed in chapter five shows that the appropriate adoption of HPWPs supported by managers' trust in employees and appreciation for work done within the hotel will have a positive effect on the employees' job engagement.

6.1.2. *Employee job engagements' role in stimulating employee outcome (creative performance) in Nigerian hotels*

This research has shown the role of employee job engagement in stimulating creative performance. The analysis shows that, employees and HR managers identified a positive influence on the role of employee job engagement within the hotels in Nigeria. These findings revealed that most respondents will display creative performance when they are happy and satisfied with their line of work, it seemingly connotes employee job engagement. This line of argument supports the work of Kahn, (1990) who believed the way people felt about their work is engagement.

In trying to further capture the concept of engagement from the Nigerian hospitality context, not just what it means but what is expected of an engaged employee, it could be concluded from the result of the interviews that, as a result of the satisfaction derived from the HPWPs

studied, employees showcase hard work and willingness to work. In all, the employees believe that they are fully engaged as long as they are working, looked after and are being paid. Evidence from literature shows some level of similarity when an article from CIPD, (2011) as well as articles by authors such as Harter et al. (2002) and Wellins et al. (2005) discussed employee engagement from both behavioural and attitudinal perspective. For them, employee engagement is the emotional, intellectual involvement and satisfaction of job roles, which is characterized by efficacy, energy, where employees display discretionary effort and enthusiasm for such work. Interestingly, the management understanding of engagement adds more depth to the understanding of employee job engagement as they believe that employees who are fully engaged should render services (readiness to work, dedication, obedient to orders, decency, politeness and honesty), receive their wages regularly and have not shown any sign of dissatisfaction.

Drawing from the findings, it can be concluded that work is not stable from one task to the next, from one day to the next, from one client to the next, which suggests the need for employee job engagement. Accordingly, expecting employees to display a creative performance requires a work environment where there is HPWPs (Cross departmental training, internal mobility and empowerment). The existence of these practices in an organisation leads to feelings of engagement, which will in turn result in behavioural responses such as employee creative performance as also observed by Bakker and Daniels (2013) and Karatepe and Vantankhah (2014).

Consistent with this logic, is the disclosure that although there were different interpretations of employee job engagement, HPWPs adopted and implemented in the hotels, the underlying meaning and application was fairly consistent across respondents. One interpretation that generated a response in line with literature, is the relationship between HPWPs, employee engagement and employee creative performance. Majority of the findings support Tamkin, (2004), p.12 study as she stated that there is "the likelihood of HPWPs acting to improve skills and increase motivation within the context of a philosophy of work that emphasises employee engagement and promotes work systems, allowing involvement and the freedom to make decisions. Under such conditions people can make a decisive difference to organisational performance." Some theories have also provided justification for the relationship between employee job engagement and

creative performance . One is the social exchange theory discussed by Blau, (1964), Masterson et al. (2000) and Takeuchi et al. (2007) which, suggests that employees are more likely to display creative performance as a result of being engaged and committed to the job or organisation, when they perceive that their organisation is providing a system of interconnected and well-designed management practices, such as HPWPs.

What has to be noted, however, is that respondents considered employee creative performance as a critical tool to understand the importance, efficiency and effectiveness of HPWPs to employee engagement. Owing to this, it is reasonable to expect that in service organisations, HPWPs should play critical roles in helping employees achieve high-quality customer service, thus enhancing employee engagement and therefore stimulating service outcomes as observed by Batt (2002 and Yen et al, (2016). With reference to the work of Appelbaum et al. (2000), Boxall and Purcell (2003), believe that employee outcome is a function of an employee's ability, motivation and opportunity to contribute to an organisation. When these practices are implemented appropriately Guest (1997), believed that employers will be able to take advantage of employees' potential and discretionary effort. In relation to how employee outcomes are measured Guest (1997) placed emphasis on the employee's behaviours and attitudes. For instance, a positive behaviour towards a customer can enable an employee to serve better and satisfy the customer. In addition, the generation of a new idea or behaviour can also enable employees to serve and satisfy customers. However, from the result of this study, employees and HR managers believe that with work being unstable, as it changes from one task to the next, from one day to the next, from one customer to the next, the need for creative performance is fuelled by an environment that ensures employee job engagement. This line of argument is supported by Bakker and Daniels (2013).

Undoubtedly, respondents revealed that the need to have cross departmental training, internal mobility and empowerment that will prompt or serve as a catalyst to enhance employee job engagement thereby leading to creative performance is in line with the empirical data from literature. Additionally, the social exchange theory in support of this relationship, suggests that human relationships are formed by the use of strategic HR practices (HPWPs), subjective cost-benefit analysis and a comparison of alternatives (Blau, 1964). This relationship lays emphasis on the extent to which a person is willing to go above and beyond for an organisation. Hence, scholars

believe that ensuring creative performance is important for employees who serve customers (Podsakoff et al., 1997).

On account of creative performance, the reaction of most respondents in the hotels in Nigeria, proved their understanding of its usefulness from the ability enhancing perspective. They believe these systems will equip employees with the knowledge to perform a task and this will create room for creativity. This understanding echo's the work of Amabile, et al. (1996, p. 1155) 'that creativity is the seed of all innovation, and psychological perceptions of innovation (the implementation of people's ideas) within an organisation are likely to impact the motivation to generate new ideas.' They noted that creative performance is often measured in terms of new and practical ideas, solutions and suggestions; new products or services introductions; and new ways or methods of implementing things. Evidence from the interview identifies a number of instances where employees have come up with new ideas and strategies to perform tasks, however, the term appreciation in work done and employers' trust in employees was reinforced as employees believe this is vital to creative performance.

While gaining an in-depth understanding of respondents' perception of the role employee job engagement plays in strengthening the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes, the concept trust was reinforced and mentioned as another indicator that also provides a better understanding of this relationship. This can be seen across the interview excerpts as well as the researcher's response to the first objective. Although this term was not addressed in the literature it became important to identify the similarity with existing literature as it was vital to this study. While researching extant literature, authors have provided evidence to support the relationship between trust and employee creativity. For example, Barczak et al. (2010) discovered a link between trust and an engaged environment, suggesting that an engaged environment where trust is present promotes creativity. Grounded in the interview excerpt, most employees believe that working in hotels where their leaders can trust them gives them the opportunity, ability and motivation to take risks and experiment on new ways of doing their jobs with the hope of being more productive. This explicitly and/or implicitly becomes a source of employee creativity that an organisation aims to pursue so that it can achieve the set goals.

In view of this, findings show that when employees are equipped with the skills, knowledge, motivation and opportunity provided by the organisation via the strength of the HPWPs, they are likely to feel trusted by the organisation, develop new ideas and put in extra effort to see the organisation succeed. In support of this line of argument, Chang, (2015) observed that trust can facilitate an exchange of ideas, thereby becoming a salient source of creativity formation. Therefore an engaged environment is fuelled by trust which acts as a driver of employee creative performance, and thus it is seen as a construct that shapes the understanding of the link between HPWPs perception, employee engagement and employee creativity. Following this logic, trust is conceptualised as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trust, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, p. 712). Therefore, some level of workplace trust is necessary for efficiency (Zeffane & Connell, 2003).

These findings also briefly suggest that organisations aiming to achieve success through employee outcomes need to trust the employees. However, it is noteworthy that creative performance is also a necessary condition to ensure organisational success. This is well aligned with the view that "in order to survive and succeed in today's market turbulence, firms need to invest more effectively in creative performance to harness the opportunities created by such a constantly changing market (Oke et al., 2012). However, it is important to note that although trust and creativity are increasingly important constructs shaping employee attitudes and behaviours being arguably key psychological mechanisms that underlie the HPWPs-engagement relationship, the aforementioned studies have not explored these constructs at their fullest potential.

In sum, the current investigation identified employee job engagement as a very important yet hardly explored underlying mechanism, which shapes the understanding of HPWPs employee outcome relationships. As previous studies suggested, researchers have provided a rationale supporting the value of HPWPs to employee outcomes. With evidence to prove this, several scholars have proposed underlying mechanisms linking HPWPs and employee outcome. One example is a study by Gong et al. (2013) who when focusing on HPWPs and employee outcomes analysed the relationship of the core knowledge employee creativity on performance. Within this

study, most employees and HR managers believe that the HPWPs discussed within this study will improve the ability, motivate employees thereby influencing the physical, affective and cognitive energy with their line of work that seemingly connotes employee engagement. Undoubtedly, this relationship has gained a lot of attention over the years but has recorded several inconsistencies. However, following a review of the literature in Chapter two (2) and the interview excerpt, the general perception across respondents indicate that the effectiveness and efficiency of employee job engagement (creating an environment where employees performing any given role) is influenced by creative activities which, has its precursor from the employer's trust in employees, appreciation for work done and existence of HPWPs.

6.1.3. HPWPs Improvement and Suggestions

HPWPs has been seen over the years as a tool for not only achieving and sustaining high levels of employee outcomes in the workplace environment but also developing and leveraging employees' knowledge, skill and ability to create value (Appelbaum et al.,2011; Becker & Gerhart 1996). In addition, the ability, motivation and opportunity to perform work has been seen as a model that best conceptualises HPWPs. This research has so far been able to understand how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes in Nigerian hotels. However, identifying what improvements and suggestions employees and HR managers have in implementing HPWPs within the hotels, provides a holistic view on the general perspective and tends to draw on concepts and ideas that have not been established or discussed within the research. Interview excerpts suggest that an environment where employees are valued by the employer, given authority to make decisions, have a pay rise and are satisfied with work, will propel discretionary effort. This line of argument supports the Appelbaum et al. (2011) work on the impact of HPWPs on efficiency outcomes. In their work, worker productivity, equipment reliability, quality outcomes, customer service, financial performance, profitability, were the outcomes of HPWPs.

Further investigation shows that most respondents appear to be interested in being creative for the reasons outlined above, because of the organisation's strategy. It is generally agreed that employees are expected to obtain clearance and permission before they can do a work that is

outside their schedule. The implication is that creative performance can contribute to organisational performance but in the hospitality industry in Nigerian, it must be done within the framework of the organisation's policy environment. This realisation suggests that there is a potential disconnect between what employees believe is HPWPs and what is in practice within these hotels. Finally, although the interview excerpt supports the work of Appelbaum, et al., (2011); Gibbert, (2006); Nahapiet, and Ghoshal (1998) who claim HPWPs fosters development of human capital, enhances motivation and commitment of employees, supports employee, and builds organisational social capital, evidence from the interviews suggest a flaw in the use of these HPWPs, as employees feel they are not appreciated and trusted with responsibilities. Having outlined the conclusions of the research, these findings contribute to theoretical development , knowledge advancement and practice, which the next section moves on to discuss.

6.2. Contributions of the thesis

This section revisits the research rationale and reviewed how the research was conducted. The chapter also explained how the current research contributed to theoretical development, knowledge advancement and makes recommendation for practices. Finally, the chapter identified the limitations in the current research and made suggestions for future studies.

6.2.1 Research rationale revisited

As seen in the literature review, there has been an increase in the popularity of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) and its importance to employee outcome over the years, as scholars have since examined the underlying mechanisms through which HPWPs stimulate employee outcome outcomes. For instance, in researching employee wellbeing, Hefferman and Dundon (2016) adopted two theories namely: signalling theory and the ability-motivation-opportunity framework to investigate how HPWPs influences employee well-being. Another example of a study that reviewed the relationship between HPWPs and performance was the work of Karatepe (2013) who studied 100 fulltime frontline hotel employees and their managers in Poiana, Romania. He suggested that work engagement fully mediates the relationship between HPWPs and job performance. The results from his analysis revealed that providing HPWPs such

as training programs, has the tendency to improve the coping mechanism of employees who are constantly faced with hindrances.

In spite of the existing theoretical and empirically established relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes, Do (2016), Karatepe and Vatankhah, (2015) Pereira and Gomes, (2012) have indicated that the essential mechanism through which HPWPs are linked to employee outcomes is still erratic (Do 2016;). These researchers found that there is no consensus relating to the mechanism underlying the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes. Accordingly, scholars started advancing this area of study by extending the theoretical lens, measuring new mechanism and adopting several methodologies to better understand the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes (Stephen, *et al.,* 2018; Mihail & Kloutsiniotis 2016; Lin, & Liu 2016; Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2015 Mahmood, *et al.,* 2019). However, the advancement of this field of research is still limited in terms of theory, context and methodology. To curb this limitation, the current research examined how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance, and made use of a qualitative method approach to extend and refine the relevant theoretical lens.

Furthermore, this research adopted the theory of social exchange and the AMO framework to elucidate the theoretical understanding of how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes. The justification for selection of the theory was discussed in detail in chapter two (2). This research was framed on an interpretivist paradigm, which accommodates the research exploratory and explanatory nature. As a result of the social nature of the research subject, a qualitative approach was used in collecting data through interviews. Interviews were conducted with thirty-four participants mostly from three hotels in Nigeria. Evidence in the research suggested that employer's strategy to ensure employee engagement involves the introduction of HPWPs. Finally, following the trend in the existing study, this research contributed to the existing knowledge in terms of theory, methodology and practice.

6.2.2. Contribution to the Theoretical Development

Advancing beyond the empirical and theoretical evidence linking HPWPs to employee job

engagement and employee creative performance, discussion and explanation of the importance of employee job engagement to the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance have largely relied on AMO model and the social exchange theory (Hefferman & Dundon 2016; Jiang, et al., 2012). The AMO model suggested a motivational pathway which contends that HR practices such as HPWPs influence growth, development and learning by meeting human and organisational needs, motivating, creating opportunity, developing ability and assisting them accomplish their goals. Following this logic, HPWPs therefore, becomes a reasonable investment strategy employers adopt to improve employee engagement and stimulate employee outcomes within organisations. Social exchange theory on the other hand suggests reciprocity where employers ensure that employee needs should be satisfied in order to enable them to harness their fullest potential (Miniotaite, & Buciuniene, 2013). Research has shown that the one efficient strategy is the use of HPWPs that encourages employees to engage in performances that are productive. The current research brings all these ideas together in order to improve the understanding of how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes from a Nigerian hotel's viewpoint. Based on the motivational and reciprocity corridors of the AMO model and the Social exchange theory respectively, employee job engagement, managers trust in and appreciation of employees has been suggested as inputs that shape the understanding of HPWPs and employee creative performance.

The findings of this current research contributed to the current debate in strategic HRM literature around the nature and level of synergy between the ability, motivation and opportunity framework. The level of synergy between the frameworks is often assumed in theory but is rarely examined in practice and in a few studies (Jiang et al., 2012). The research has contributed to Applebaum et al. (2000) assumption, as it found out that Nigerian hotel employees when given the ability through cross-departmental training are motivated, have the opportunity that may lead to internal mobility and feel engaged within the workplace. The study contributed to the AMO dimensions, by establishing that HPWPs which influence ability, motivation and opportunity lead to employee engagement in Nigerian hotels studied, and these are motivating factors that makes them display creative performance.

Further to this, the current research adopted a different approach from the SHRM literature

by integrating the Social exchange theory and the AMO framework as the theoretical underpinning to develop the research and utilizing a set of both employees and management staff for data analysis. In doing so, this research is amongst the few to incorporate such theories to uncover the linkages between HPWPs and employee outcomes as suggested by Michaelis et al. (2014). The study, therefore, responds to the criticism that strategic HRM literature lacks a solid theoretical basis underpinning the underlying mechanisms through which the use of HPWPs influences employee outcome.

Also, of interest is that this research extends and contributes to prior research on strategic HRM and creative performance by examining employee job engagement as a construct that strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and creative performance. This research also provided empirical evidence supporting the relationship between HPWPs and creative performance by introducing 'trust in employees' and 'appreciation for work done' to explain how employee engagement shapes the understanding of the HPWPs and creative performance relationship, thereby complementing a growing body of theoretical lens in this field. The findings from this study suggests that employees are more likely to be committed to the organisation and willing to exert creativity and discretionary effort, when they perceive that their organisation is providing a system of interconnected and well-designed management practices. For example, encouraging creative performance by introducing empowerment and trust to employees. These extra role behaviours then serve to enhance organisational performance (Masterson, et al., 2000; Podsakoff et al.,1997).

The findings implied that appropriate HPWPs are likely to foster an engaged environment and employees can develop creative ideas and behaviours (Karatepe & Vantankhah, 2014). As a result of this, employees are likely to contribute to the organisational success. However, it is noteworthy to mention that for creative performance to occur within a firm, HPWPs must impact employees' needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness by facilitating a collective HR practice, which smoothens the progress of an engaged environment. Once these employee needs are fulfilled, they feel motivated and this will lead to creative initiatives. As such, this research starts from the most immediate outcome of HPWPs rather than examining the direct effect on employee outcomes.

Rooted in the Social Exchange theory, the current research explored the intermediate relationships between HPWPs, and creative performance through employee engagement and identified two concepts that provided in-depth understanding of the relationship between HPWPs, and creative performance. These are appreciation and employers trust in employees. As a result, organisations that have introduced HPWPs need to trust employees with the ability they possess and appreciate hard work in order to facilitate creative performance. This finding further extends the Social exchange theory, whose idea behind human development and the pursuit of opportunities is to achieve a good performance (Roche & Haar, 2013). This notion therefore provides a credible basis for understanding the link between employees' and managers' perception of HPWPs, the work environment/engagement, and creative performance (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

6.2.3. Contribution to Knowledge Advancement

This section begins by presenting the emerging framework of HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee creative performance, including the two new concepts which serve to extend the understanding of the research aim (see figure 6.1, page 182). The section then goes further to elucidate the research's contribution to knowledge advancement.
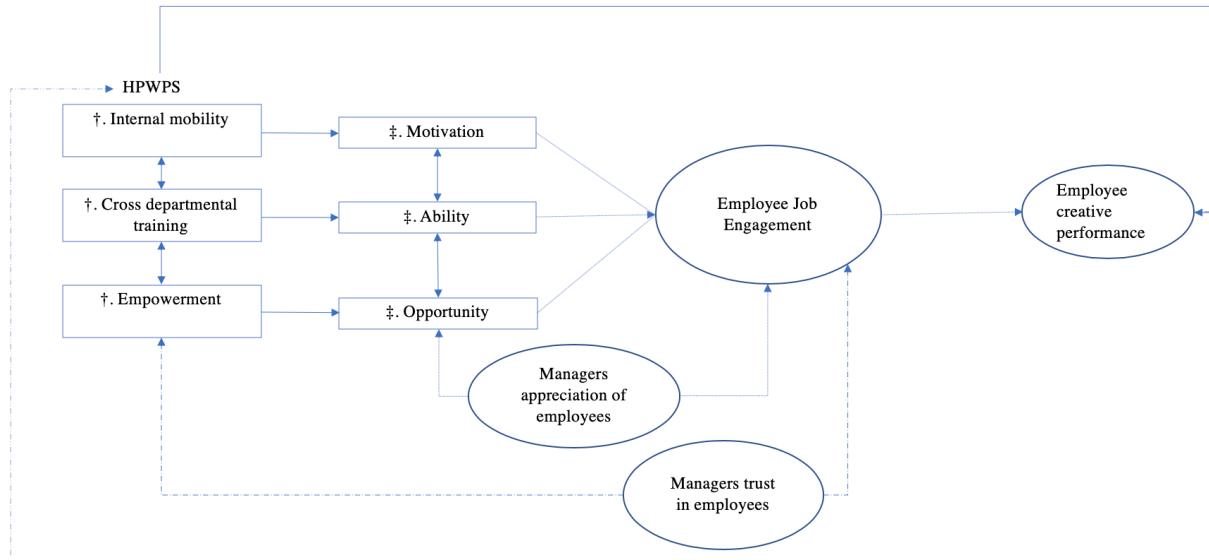
Figure 6.1. Research findings Framework

Note.   ‡. AMO Model (Applebaum *et al.,* 2000);

†. HPWP- Employee Engagement related studies;

──▶ Pproposed by previous studies of HPWP ┈┈▶ Proposed by the existing research findings;

Concept in Oval shape was proposed by the research findings;

Concept in Square shape was proposed by previous HPWP studies.

FIG 6.1:THE RESEARCH FINDINGS FRAMEWORK ON THE AMALGAMATION OF EXISTING RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION FROM PRIOR STUDIES.

The new research framework of employee job engagement, HPWPs and employee creative performance, shown Figure 6.1, will now be explained in more detail. Within the framework is the existing AMO model developed by Applebaum, et al., (2000), with some additions. In addition, the research framework indicates the findings that examine how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance.

The model began with the conceptualisation of HPWPs and in particular, it focused on how AMO models help elucidate the concept of HPWPs. Further to this, the findings suggest that a combination of these practices will improve employee ability to work (cross-departmental training), motivation to perform work (empowerment) and the opportunity to perform work

(internal mobility) (Appelbaum et al., 2000). The aforementioned findings reflect that while HPWPs can relate to ability, motivation and opportunity, the application of HPWPs is indirectly influenced and improved by employers' trust in employees and appreciation for work done (Wright & Kehoe, 2008). Consequently, the presence of these HPWPs (cross training, empowerment and internal mobility) leads to employee job engagement which as seen in existing literature is a very important yet hardly explored underlying mechanism which strengthens the understanding of HPWPs, and creative performance relationships. However, following a review of the literature in Chapter Two and the interview findings, the general perception across all respondents indicate that the effectiveness and efficiency of employee job engagement, is predicated on creating an environment where employees performing any given role is influenced by creative activities which has its precursor from the HPWPs.

Having identified the importance of employee job engagement, the research findings suggested that organisations aiming to achieve success through employee job engagement need to appreciate and trust the employees. This is well aligned with the view that in order to survive in today's market turbulence and succeed in ensuring employee engagement, firms need to appreciate and trust employees to carry out responsibilities given the investment in HPWPs (Oke et al.,2012). However, although strategic HRM scholars have called for an examination into new factors that unveil the intermediate relationships between HPWPs and employee outcomes, appreciation in employees' work done and trust in employees seem to have been understudied in this literature. To date, there have been few studies investigating the relationships between HPWPs, appreciation, trust and creativity (see Collins & Smith, 2006; Jiang et al., 2012). These studies predominantly focus on the importance of trust in management paying little or no attention to employers/management's trust in employees (Sidorenkov, & Sidorenkova, 2013). However, it is important to note that although employers trust in employees and appreciation in employees are increasingly important constructs shaping employee attitudes and behaviours - being arguably key psychological mechanisms that underline the importance of employee job engagement to HPWPs-employee outcome linkage, the aforementioned studies have not explored these constructs at their fullest potential.

Drawing on the social exchange theory, this research framework elucidates the view that

implementing HPWPs appropriately within the hotels in Nigeria would create an engaged environment where employees feel appreciated and trusted to carry out their responsibilities thereby facilitating an improved employee outcome: employee creative performance. In simple terms, high performance work practices (HPWPs) increase organisational effectiveness by creating conditions where employees become highly involved in the organisation and work hard to accomplish its goals. Conclusively, Boxall and Purcell (2016, p.158) suggested that "there is no performance unless employers can attract, train and motivate employees to do their jobs". This realisation as suggested by Boxall and Purcell (2016) indicates the necessity of employers to constantly engage in a process of constructing and renewing HR systems to meet the needs of customers. This include, for example employees focusing on certain HPWPs to improve performance of employees in service industries. This necessitated the need for a feedback loop.

Based on one of the gaps identified in recent literature, which, was to provide support for the relationship between HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee outcomes outside the American-European mainstream, the current research provided an interesting context for the study because it represents an emerging market among West African countries (Nwosu & Ward, 2016). With the increased interest in the development and implementation of new and/or old HRM practices around firms in West African countries as seen by Nwosu and Ward (2016), this research analysed the use of three HPWPs within the context of Nigeria's service industry, paying close attention to employee engagement as the mechanism underlying the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes (creative performance). In doing so, the research stressed the importance of employee job engagement, as well as employee effort and contributions to the success and development of an organisation. The findings from this research thereby extended prior research and explained that employees and HR managers within the hotels in Nigeria believe employee job engagement is vital and important in strengthening the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance within Nigeria.

In addition, data that emerged from the findings with regards to appreciation were anticipated considering the literature derived from Nigeria (for example; Adedipe and Adeleke 2016; Nwosu & Ward, 2016; Okpara & Wynn, 2008). The findings corroborate and extends the work of Adedipe and Adeleke (2016) that highlights the lack of appreciation for employee labour

within the hotel sector in Nigeria, stressing the need to investigate and identify strategies and practices such as HPWPs that promote appreciation in the workplace and lead to employee engagement. The findings also reveal the growing interest in employee job engagement as organisations have started focusing on the development and implementation of new and/or old HRM practices which highlight the importance of employee effort and contributions to the success and development of an organisation (Nwosu & Ward 2016). Importing Western HR practices to Nigerian organisations was seen to have been a strategic practice (Fajana *et al.,* 2011). However, it is of interest that, regardless of the obvious religious and cultural differences, employees and HR managers in the Nigerian hotels studied seem to have responded to these practices in similar ways to employees in Western countries. These findings have proven to be of interest and require further discussion, to investigate the impact of contextual variables on the relationship between HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee creative performance.

While extant empirical establishment largely suggest a positivist quantitative study when analysing how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance, research has shown there is limited study of the relationship qualitatively (Huselid, 1995; Shih *et al.,* 2006). For instance, studies by Karatepe and Vatankhah, (2015); Lin and Liu (2016); Mahmood, *et al.* (2019); Mihail and Kloutsiniotis (2016); Stephen, *et al.* (2018) that have adopted similar categories of HPWPs based on AMO framework/model generalised the finding and statistically justified the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome. These studies have been seen to create ambiguity. For example, the work of Obeidat *et al.* (2016), who provided a fair understanding of the relationship between HPWPs and organisational performance through a multi-dimensional model of relationship, recorded some level of causality which tends to associate itself with previous studies on HPWPs-employee outcome relationship and does not provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship. Their model like most quantitative models creates a 'black box' as there are so many unanswered questions. The conceptual framework/model adopted does not preclude overlap among HPWPs due to the nature of analysis. Similarly, the work of Bakker and Demerouti, (2007) provided further insight into the relationship between HPWPs and performance as they developed a model to justify the antecedents and consequences of work engagement. To them, the resources provided by organisations which include performance feedback, support etc., leads to work engagement and

consequently high performance. However, they further suggested a need for a more elaborate and qualitative approach to objectively measure the predictors and outcomes of engagement. For this reason, adopting a positivist quantitative approach limits the study as this emphasizes the detection of trends and patterns, whilst it does not enable detailed qualitative exploration that may be gauged through in-depth interviews with organisational actors (Mahmood, *et al.,* 2019).

The research adopted a qualitative approach guided by interpretivism that enabled the discovery of a potentially new concept (employers trust in employees) with additional explanatory power. Evidence regarding how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes takes precedence from the scholars as discussed above. This extends the theoretical and knowledge underpinnings surrounding the relationship between HPWPs-employee creative performance and further advocates for more qualitative research to gain in-depth understanding on the opinions and perception of employees and managers on the relationship between HPWPs, employee job engagement and employee creative performance. New insights from the current research regarding employee job engagements role in strengthening the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance were raised in the research. The evidence from this research facilitated the development of the overall research framework (shown in Figure 6.1). As such, the framework shows the relationship between HPWPs, management trust in employees, appreciation of employee work and employee creative performance from a perspective of employee job engagement. To this end, forecasting the importance of HPWPs for improved employee output is premised on the findings that if the HR practices (HPWPs) influencing feelings of engagement, trust and appreciation in employees are operational in an organisation then employee creative performance could be determined.

In addition, the research investigation has also contributed to the field of employee job engagement, HPWPs and employee outcomes especially in Nigeria as it identified themes such as (role of employee job engagement, managers trust in employees, appreciation, etc.,) that contribute to the literature framework, allowing for the understanding of the intricate relationships and associations between the various factors. The identified themes provided a holistic framework for future research in employee engagement, HPWPs and employee outcome relationship in Nigeria.

6.2.4. Recommendation for Practice

In relation to the importance of employee job engagement to the HPWPs-employee creative performance relationship there are some specific recommendations for practice that have emerged. First, the improvement of the awareness level and application of HPWPs could be a source of competitive advantage for hotels if properly implemented. Towards this goal, hotels should design, structure and execute HPWPs with the aim of ensuring employee job engagement to enhance positive behaviours and attitudes. There appears to be a need for training and guidance for HR managers implementing HPWPs. The fact that HR managers were unsure of the actual utilisation and meaning associated with the HPWPs suggests that they needed greater clarity regarding the use. HR managers need to be able to communicate the objectives and expectations behind any HPWPs adopted to employees, in order to ensure clarity. According to the evidence suggested in the current research, hotel organisations should ensure the HPWPs studied exist within the hotels as this will improve employee job engagement and increase employee perception of a supportive engaged environment. With such a climate that encourages employees to participate, gives them the opportunity to perform and equips them with skills that improve knowledge and facilitate autonomous decision making, employees are more likely to increase their creative performance

Second, the researcher believes that the current study is therefore seen as a starting point for Nigerian hotel managers generally and specifically HR managers who are constantly involved in the utilisation of the HPWPs, to ensure these practices influence employee job engagement and simulate employee creative performance. According to the findings, the knowledge and proper implementation of HPWPs is crucial for managers, since they play an important and critical role in establishing a relationship based on trust with employees. Furthermore, the need to display clarity when introducing HPWPs, support to employees by trusting them to carry out responsibilities and also appreciating them for the work done has been reemphasized in the current research. This is important as prior studies suggested that any behaviour that opposes perception of fairness and justice is likely to corrupt the level of trust within an organisation (Aryee et al., 2012). Hence the increase in management attention to the employees, especially in relation to HPWPs, will likely contribute to employee job engagement and creative performance. The

findings also revealed that HR managers should be much more confident in focusing on these HPWPs and policies that develop employees' ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) to perform when considering employee/human development. The research framework discussed on page 173 can assist managers develop a well-rounded approach to HPWPs by promoting several strategies in each practice area. Furthermore, the findings suggested that each practice represented by a dimension has the potential to contribute to performance in general. The current research further advises managers to ensure their approach to Human Resource Management encompasses cross departmental training in order to guarantee the development of skilled employees; internal mobility/career advancement. It is expected that adherence to this advice would produce motivated employees, bring about empowerment to create and permit opportunity to display creative performance.

Finally, the subject of human resource development within the hotel sector in Nigeria has been a widely discussed topic since the recession. There is a need for synergy between hotel associations to give legitimate voice to the stakeholder's interest in the sector. The essence of hospitality and tourism relies heavily on the quality of employees (Nwosu, 2014). As the primary product, the role employees perform in service delivery becomes more critical for the growth, profitability and competitive advantage of the hotels. Fajana (2009) succinctly explains that "Nigeria has abundant labour and less engaged talents". With this in mind, the researcher suggested that the government in collaboration with Nigeria National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism place human resource development as top priority and a pressing need. In addition, the current study suggested a need to revisit existing HR practices in order to allow for the promotion of employee job engagement. In simple terms, the adoption of HPWPs needs to be practical for the hotel's needs. Table 6.1 summarises the researcher's contribution to theoretical development, knowledge advancement and practice.

TABLE 6.1:
RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION SUMMARY

No.	Contribution	Summary

1	**Contribution to Theoretical Development**	• Extended the theoretical underpinning adopted to understand the relationship between HPWPs and employee performance within the Nigerian context.
2	**Contribution to Knowledge Advancement**	• Developed a framework from the research findings which extends the understanding of how employee engagement strengthens the relationship between relationship between HPWPs and employee outcome.
		• Advancement of the research field within the Nigerian Context.
		• The understanding of the HPWPs - employee outcome relationship is improved
		• Novel recommendations with the introduction of employee job engagement, employers trust in employees and appreciation of employee work done.
		• Development of themes and emergent themes for example: importance of HPWPs to employee engagement, role of employee engagement and HPWPs improvement and suggestions.
3	**Recommendation for Practice**	• Improvement of awareness and application of HPWPs.
		• Managers clarity and appropriate use of HPWPs to improve employee job engagement which will stimulate employee creative performance.
		• The research framework developed within the study will assist managers develop a well-rounded approach to HPWPs by promoting several outcomes
		• Synergy between hotel associations and hotels to improve HPWPs adopted in Nigerian hotels.

6.3.   Limitation and Opportunity for future research.

The findings uncovered in this research are the result of a single case study, and so carry the usual caveats associated with such a research design, in terms of their ability to generalise beyond the case itself (Hartley, 2012). Adopting an interpretivist single case study indicates that, data collected can produce snapshots of perspectives at a given time, and perspectives can change (Biggam, 2011). However, collecting data from multiple frontline employees in different departments and management staff, the findings captures a well detailed and objective explanation on how employee job engagement strengthens the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes (Choi, 2014). In addition, the views and experiences of a comparison group of frontline employees and HR managers were sought, in a bid to determine how representative the group was of the employees who have constant interaction with customers and to corroborate certain findings. This research study has taken the first steps in showing how employees and HR managers perceive the importance of employee engagement in strengthening the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes in the short term. As a result of this, the findings support the argument that this research serves as a baseline for researchers intending to adopt a longitudinal qualitative study. However, given the limited number of existing longitudinal studies and difficulties associated with interpretative qualitative designs, examining the importance of employee engagement to the relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes requires further research so as to develop the current research in other to contribute and supplement the pool of literature. By doing so, the study will reflect as much depth, clarity and enhance the study of HR practices and its importance to performance over time.

Another noticeable limitation for the existing research is the adoption of a subjective analysis of employee creative performance. This imperfection has been adopted by prior researchers (Aryee *et al.,* 2012; Takeuchi *et al.,* 2007) as it is difficult to fully include an objective analysis of creative performance when the researcher has adopted a subjective approach. Objective measures may include the number of effective solutions an employee offers or how many ideas have been generated. This research contributing to existing knowledge, expands and integrates HPWPs and creative performance, creating a conceptual argument for the impact of HPWPs on employee creative performance. In particular, the researcher posits that understanding creative

performance will develop a truly dynamic and systemic understanding of creativity and will serve as a starting point for analysing creative performance objectively. To fulfil this limitation, future research should combine both subjective (idea generation) and objective measures (idea implementation) of employee creative performance in order to extend the findings of this study.

In addition, while the study adopts the AMO model when conceptualising HPWPs, the framework has been seen to have its limitations. One example that has generated a lot of interest is the work of Lepak *et al.* (2006), when they observed that the model does not preclude an overlap amongst the HPWPs. For example, when cross departmental training which is designed to improve employees' skills and knowledge may also communicate commitment to employees which evoke motivation also (Wright and Kehoe, 2008). Another scholar also argued that HPWPs constitute just one component of the employment relationship. For them work systems are linked to the way jobs are organised within companies. In this study, I explained how AMO models help elucidate the concept of HPWPs, drawing inference form the relationship between cross department training, empowerment and internal mobility and how it leads to employee engagement and employee outcomes. However, there is room for expansion of the model developed. Therefore, future research may examine the relationship between each of the AMO dimensions to provide a clearer specification of factors or mechanisms that can influence the model.

Another limitation is indicated in the homogenous nature of the sector, which is reflected by shared and similar job characteristics across the developing context of Nigeria. For example, some of HPWPs used in the existing research might not be so critical in other service contexts. With this is mind, future studies should tailor HPWPs specifically to the service context from which the sample would be derived (Den Hartog *et al.,* 2013). Based on this rationale, future studies can examine the importance of employee engagement to the HPWPs- employee outcome relationship within other service sectors such as malls and stores in Nigeria.

Despite these limitations, the existing research has emphasized the relevance of HPWPs in improving performance within organisations. In particular, the study supports extant literature that provides verification for the AMO model as an appropriate structure for understanding HPWPs. The HR practices included in this model focused on improving employees' ability, motivation and

opportunity to perform in the company. The result of improving employees' ability, motivation and opportunity to perform lends support to the direct relationship between HPWPs and employee outcomes.

CHAPTER SEVEN
PERSONAL REFLECTION

7.1. Personal Reflection

The Ph.D. journey has been a humbling and enlightening experience for me. I have learnt one valuable lesson on this journey, I now understand that success is not final, failure is not fatal as it is the courage and grace to continue that really counts. Reflecting on this process, I look back and see how far I have come. The first learning agreement I framed, which was reviewed by my supervisor, made me realise that I have just ventured into an unknown intellectual space. I became overwhelmed with so much fear questioning my decision to leave a well-paid job and join the world of intellectual researchers. What motivated me was my passion for excellence, dedication and change. These values constantly gave me the opportunity to keep moving and striving for nothing but the best. The desire to learn, innovate, share, respect, develop courage and succeed is something that definitely matches my goals and helped me excel in my first year.

In my second year, I had so much zeal and had set a target to finish the entire thesis within the year. Unfortunately, my research took an unexpected turn, when I was asked to resubmit my internal report. This period proved to be the most challenging and difficult time of the year for me, my holidays and passion were all lost in a blink of an eye. It was by God's grace, my family, supervisor and friends' encouragements that I was able to pick myself up. I discovered that doing something again and again does not make you a failure but improves your knowledge, writing and research skills. I repeatedly told myself that 'Perseverance leads to success,' as I strongly believed that one day I will look back and smile. To be able to motivate myself, I have always believed in counting on your blessings. This method indeed reminded me of the success to come.

When you realise how little is known and how much there is to learn, you are humbled by the learning process. In the period of this study, I developed many practical skills like managing a large project, sifting through qualitative data, keeping my curiosity within the scope of the project, and even learning to eat well and exercise. In retrospect I hope most to continue to grow in courage, perseverance, and above all genuine humility.

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APPENDIX 1

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General sample of interview Topics (Background)

Topic for discussion

1. General information about the hotel industry
2. What they understand of the main concepts (Engagement, HR practices, HPWP, Performance outcomes)
3. What HPWP are available within the organisation
4. How effective are the practices?
5. How attractive is the organisation?
6. What is their perception on the implementation of the HPWP within the organisation?
7. What are constraints and benefits of implementing the HPWP?
8. How can the practices be improved?

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

My name is Kikachukwu U. Odiaka a PhD researcher at the University of Salford, Salford Business School Manchester, United Kingdom. I am conducting a research aimed aims to examine the importance of High Performance Work Practices to performance outcomes within the hospitality industry in Nigeria.

Frontline employee's questions

Research Question	Who to be interviewed	Questions for interviewees	Memo
1. How do employees and managers perceive the potential influence of HPWPs on employee	Frontline employees	2. Have you heard of HWPs in the work place, if yes/no what does it mean to you? 3. Do you think organisations should provide materials/	The questions examine and critically discuss employees perception of the potential influence of High Performance Work Practices (HPWP) on

		HPWP such as: trainings, internal mobility, empowerment etc., necessary for engagement? If yes/no why? 4. What do you think will propel you to as a (job cadre) to perform better?	employee creativity and service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour
5. Does employee engagement strengthen the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance?	Frontline employees	6. Have you heard of employment engagement in the work place, if yes/no what does it mean to you? 7. How important do you think cross departmental training, empowerment and internal mobility is to creativity? If it is very useful could you give me examples to justify this?	The second question justifies the objective that investigates how employee engagement shapes the relationship between HPWP and employee creativity in Nigerian hotels.
• How important is HPWPs to creative performance and service-oriented OCB? • What opportunities and constraints (if any) would implementing HPWPs	Frontline employees	• How useful do you think internal mobility is to employee performance? • How often do you make decisions without the consent of the manager? – could you tell me a time when this happened. • How do you handle or resolve customer	These cluster of questions explores the importance of HPWP to performance outcomes and also seeks to determine the opportunity and constraints (if any) of implementing HPWP in Nigerian hotels.

have in Nigerian hotels?		complaint? • Do you participate in the training made available to you in deferent departments? If yes? How many have you been involved in and why those specific trainings? • What in your opinion will prompt or prevent you from performing beyond expectation?	

HR Managers/Supervisors questions

• How do employees and managers perceive the potential influence of HPWPs on employee performance?	HR Managers/ Supervisors	• Have you heard of the term HPWP such as internal mobility, empowerment, trainings? If yes/no what does it mean to you? • How much influence do you think these HPWP such as internal mobility, empowerment, trainings have on your employee's performance? – Could you please give me an example	The questions answers the question that aims to examine and critically discuss employees perception of the potential influence of High Performance Work Practices (HPWP) on employee creativity and service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour

• Does employee engagement strengthen the relationship between HPWPs and employee creative performance?	HR Managers/ Supervisors	• Do you think employees knowing what is expected of them will make them more engaged? If yes/no why?	The second question justifies the objective that investigates how employee engagement shapes the relationship between HPWP and employee creativity in Nigerian hotels.

• How important is HPWPs to creative performance and service-oriented OCB?
 	
• What opportunities and constraints (if any) would implementing HPWPs have in Nigerian hotels?
	HR Managers/ Supervisors	• How do you ensure that all employees in these positions are made aware of internal mobility opportunities?
		• Do you have regular training for employees across different departments? What sort of trainings have you made available?
		• Do you feel your employees have the opportunity to routinely make changes in the way they perform their jobs? If yes/no can you tell me about this?
		• How will you compare the hotel performance over the past year with that of others that offer the same services? What about:
		  ➢ Average total cost per room
		  ➢ Revenue per available room
		  ➢ Customer satisfaction
		  ➢ Growth in sales
			These cluster of questions explores the importance of HPWP to performance outcomes and also seeks to determine the opportunity and constraints (if any) of implementing HPWP in Nigerian hotels.

		• Have you considered any application for transfer to another department? Is there a criterion to this approval? • Apart from the on the job training did the organisation provide formal training either on or off the premise? If yes, how many people participated and how effective would you say It was? And If no why?	

APPENDIX 2

ETHICAL APPROVAL

19 June 2017

Dear Kika,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION SBSR1617-25 – Can HR Practice contribute to Performance? From the perspective of Employee Engagement and HPWP in Nigerian Hotels

Based on the information that you provided, I am pleased to inform you that your application SBSR1617-25 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting SBS-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Professor David F. Percy
Chair of the Staff and Postgraduate Research Ethics Panel
Salford Business School

APPENDIX 3

TRANSCRIPT

Date: 15/08/2017

Venue: face to face interview

Record Available: 12.00 noon – 12.30 pm

Duration: 30 minutes

Transcript from semi-structured interview conducted with an employee at Organisation

    (A) XXXX Hotel

Researcher- Good Afternoon Sir, my name is Kika; may I know your name please?

Interviewee- My name is XXX

Researcher- Thank you for taking out time in your busy schedule to attend to me, hope you had a great day at work?

Interviewee- It has been a bit hectic but we thank God.

Researcher- I am a PhD researcher at the Business school in the University of Salford Manchester, United Kingdom. I am very pleased once again to gain audience from you. As you are aware this hotel constantly generates not only income and employment for Nigeria and its people but contributes to the development of the hospitality sector. Currently, I am conducting a research aimed to examine the importance of High Performance Work Practices to performance outcomes within the hospitality industry in Nigeria. I believe these practices will not only create an environment that will engage employees but will also improve both the employees' and organisations' performance. This research will also facilitate the implementation and formulation of new hotels policy, improve the effectives and efficiency of the hospitality industry services in Nigeria and make undoubtedly attractive the hospitality sector.

As earlier mentioned this research is purely for research purposes and any information given is highly confidential.

Researcher- Can you please read the information sheet, it contains vital information about the research and covers ethical issues. Please sign and date the document once you are satisfied. Thanks (Consent Form was signed by interviewee and retained by researcher on the 15th of August, 2017).

Researcher- what is your role in the organisation

Interviewee- I work in the accounts department

Researcher - How long have you worked for this organisation?

Interviewee- I have worked here for about four years now.

Interview Ques 1- Have you heard of employment engagement in the work place, if yes/no what does it mean to you?

Interviewee- Yes I have heard of it before …. and to me it's a process where the employer engages the employee to have an idea of the employer.

Researcher- (Explains the concept of engagement to the respondent)

Interview Ques 2- Having that in mind do you think organisations should provide materials/ HPWP such as: trainings, internal mobility, empowerment etc., necessary for engagement? If yes/no, why?

Interviewee- Yes it is normal for an organisation to provide such materials… in fact, to me, materials like training is a part of the benefits an employee should enjoy in any organisation. If you train someone they will put what they have learned to practice and same goes with moving

employees around departments and empowering them.

Interview Ques 3- What will propel you to be creative (novel idea generation) and display discretionary effort working as an accountant

Interviewee- It is motivation nah……if you are motivated you will go an extra mile to achieve the best for the organisation.

Researcher- What kind of motivation?

Interviewee- well appreciation, I will say is the driver of motivation. If the employer shows a good level of appreciation for work done, I will put in much work.

Interview Ques 4- How important do you think HPWP like training, empowerment and internal mobility is to creativity? If it is very useful could you give me examples to justify this?

Interviewee- it is very important...

Researcher- Are there examples to support this?

Interviewee- I have been given task in the past to oversee myself and to an extent managed it myself. I made certain decisions and even changed the way I sort out finance which was different from the previous way it was done. Before we used documents to pill up data but I introduced the use of Microsoft word and started sorting out that way although it was a bit slow when there are volumes but we started using it and now it is the norm.

Researcher- what about training and internal mobility?

Interviewee- In my own opinion oh…. It is very important. Like I said earlier training will help an employee perform better and will make the employee knowledgably to develop ideas. Same goes with internal mobility.

Interview Ques 5- How useful do you think internal mobility is to your performance performance?

Interviewee- I, personally started off in the front desk and was moved to accounts after some months… As we speak I can go to the front desk and still perform very well. I like the idea of moving around the hotel you know. The knowledge I gained from doing that is nice. Before I forget, an employee can cover for another employee if he/she calls in sick without been scared that they cannot work in that department.

Interview Ques 6 How often do you make decisions without the consent of the manager? – could you tell me a time when this happened.

Interviewee – Ahhh… in this hotel no oh I still have to run it by my manager.

Interview Ques 7 How do you handle or resolve customer complaint?

Interviewee – well as far as this discussion is concerned, customers are kings even if they are at fault you try and settle with them amicably. Some can be rude but you definitely need your customers.

Interview Ques 8 Do you participate in the training made available to you? How many have you been involved in and why those specific trainings?

Interviewee – Within the organisation here, the training I receive I finance it myself. Between you said this is confidential right?

Researcher- Yes

Interviewee- As far as this place is concerned the organisation does not provide any sort of training.

Researcher- The truth is the hospitality industry is becoming more relevant in Nigeria as we speak and you are aware of that. The whole idea is to make the hotels a lot more attractive to attract and engage employees.

Interview Ques 10 What in your opinion will prompt or prevent you from performing beyond expectation?

Interviewee – Sense of belonging will make me perform better, also motivation, incentives and the opportunity make decisions on my own.

Researcher- what then will prevent you?

Interviewee- If there are no incentives, motivation and everything I do is not good for the employer then I will not perform well at all.

Researcher- Is there anything else that you would like to add that you feel might be relevant that has not been discussed?

Interviewee – No.

Researcher- Well, thanks for taking the time to talk with me today. I really appreciate it. You are free to keep the information sheet given to you. My contact details are below and you can contact me if you have any further information regarding the research and also for feedback and a copy of transcript if interested.

(Participant Information Sheet was issued to the interviewee on 15th August 2017).

APPENDIX 4.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEWEES

May 11th, 2017

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: HR practice and its role in promoting performance in Nigerian hotels

Dear [Name of participant]

My name is xxxxx PhD researcher at the University of Salford, Salford Business School Manchester, United Kingdom. I am conducting a research aimed aims to examine the importance of High Performance Work Practices to performance outcomes within the hospitality industry in Nigeria.

Research Aim

The primary aim of this research is to scrutinise the following HPWP such as: empowerment, cross Training and internal mobility that operate to enhance engagement and lead to employee creativity, organisational citizenship behaviour and Hotel performance.

Research Objectives

- To examine and critically discuss employees and manager's perception of the potential influence of High Performance Work Practices (HPWP) on employee creativity and service-oriented organisational citizenship behaviour;

- To investigate how employee engagement shapes the relationship between HPWP and employee creativity in Nigerian hotels;
- To explore the importance of HPWP to performance outcomes;
- To determine the opportunity and constraints (if any) of implementing HPWP in Nigerian hotels.

Voluntary participation

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time from participating in this research without giving a reason. If you do not wish to participate you do not have to do anything in response to this request. If you are happy to participate in the research, we will ask you to read this information sheet, sign the consent form and return it to the researcher.

Risks and discomforts: This research study does not have any known risks or discomforts associated with it.

Benefits: The study does not offer any personal benefits for your participation. The information you provide will help the researcher gain more insight into this research work and the result of the study could be beneficial to the Nigerian hospitality sector.

- **Anonymity and Confidentiality**: Any comments / inputs made during the course of the study will be treated with confidentiality by the researcher. All data collection, storage and processing will comply with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. Hardcopies will be reserved in a locked box, and all digital copies of files and backup copies will be stored on a password protected USB and password protected computer. After completion of the research, all the tapes and drafts will be secured properly to prevent any misuse.

  The information provided by you will be used solely for the PhD Thesis and other academic publications therefore openly accessible; under no circumstance will identifiable responses be provided to a third party. The use of pseudonyms will be employed to protect the identity of research participants.

If you do have any queries or would like to contact me to receive further information about this research work, please do not hesitate to contact me through my email:

K.U.Odiaka@edu.salford.ac.uk

APPENDIX 5.

CONSENT FORM

University of **Salford** MANCHESTER | Salford Business School

Consent Form

Research Project Title:
HR practice and its role in promoting performance in Nigerian hotels

Name of the researcher:
Kikachukwu U. Odiaka

Name of the supervisor:
Prof. Kirk Chang & Dr Usman Talat

Please tick the appropriate boxes

	Yes	No
1. I have read and understood the project information sheet dated..15/08/17..	☑	☐
2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the above research project.	☑	☐
3. I agree to take part in the project.	☑	☐
4. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and audio recorded.	☑	☐
5. I agree to the use of my statements as anonymous quotes in publications.	☑	☐
6. I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.	☑	☐

████████████████   _Afonladie ne_   15/08/17
Name of participant   [printed]   Signature   Date

Kikachukwu Odiaka   _KP_   15/08/17
Researcher   [printed]   Signature   Date

E-mail address: odiakaku@gmail.com
Contact Tel Number: 07034265196