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Perception of Operational Employees towards HPWS Implementation at High-End Hotels in Kuala Lumpur

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Abstract

The significance of operational employees especially in the high-end hotels has encouraged the adoption of strategic human resource management (SHRM) within the industry. While past literature predominantly linked High-Performance Work System (HPWS), a form of strategic human resource work system with improvement in organizational and employee outcomes, another research perspective associated HPWS with contrary consequences towards operational employees. Contradicting perspectives regarding HPWS implementation justify the need for this empirical work. Through quantitative research approach, this study examined the perception of operational employees towards eight sub-components of HPWS applied in high-end hotels. Data collected from a total of 392 operational employees from several five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur were analysed. This study revealed that communications as well as performance management and appraisal were regarded as the most perceived agreed practices, whereas compensation and benefits being the least agreeable among all High-Performance Work Practices (HPWPs). Limitations and propositions from this study are presented to guide future research. Overall, understanding the perception of HPWS implementation is crucial as it influence employees' behavioural decision that ultimately impacting the organizational outcomes.

Keywords: High Performance Work System (HPWS), High Performance Work Practice (HPWP), Operational Employees, Perception, High-End Hotel.

Introduction

Hotel Industry in Malaysia and Strategic HRM

Tourism is a major contributor to the Malaysian economy (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018) and hotel industry is a significant fragment within the tourism sector. According to Chee et al. (2017) as cited in the HVS Global Hospitality Services, a total of 98 additional new hotels were publicly announced for development between 2017 and 2021 to facilitate the continuous growing demand in this country. These developments will take place in major

cities around the country with Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya to receive 50 percent of the total new projects, Kota Kinabalu (15 percent), Penang (13 percent), Melaka (9 percent), Langkawi (7 percent) and Johor Bahru (6 percent). The upcoming hotels are expected to reform the landscape of local hotel industry with more high-end five-star hotels to enter market by 2021 (Chee et al., 2017).

The growth of hotel industry accelerates the adoption of human resource management (HRM) and this has been confirmed by a substantial body of research (Bakhtiar, Radzi, Sumarjan, Kedin and Azdel, 2018; Chen, Lin, and Wu, 2016; Sun, Aryee, and Law, 2007; Wilton, 2006; Haynes and Fryer, 2000; Hoque, 2000; Nankervis, 1995). A hotel depends largely on their operational human resources' skills and efforts to survive and the role played by these employees are relatively challenging. As such, they have to constantly customize the service delivery process to fulfilling different customer preferences (Yee, Lee, Yeoung, and Cheng, 2013), and manage service failure via personalized service recovery actions which can often be stressful to handle (Michel, Bown, and Johnston, 2009). These challenging roles are the norms for the hotel employees. The role of HRM is even greater at the high-end hotels as larger pool of employees are required to cater superior quality service experience to hotel's guests. While labour contributes the highest proportion of the total costs in this industry (Akbar and Tracogna, 2018; Sun et al., 2007; Wilton, 2006), high-end hotels are constantly challenged to keep labour cost to the minimum to remain competitive. For such reason, many researchers recommended the adoption of strategic approach to handling HRM; and it is also known as strategic HRM (Chen et al., 2016; Cafferkey and Dundon, 2015; Ahmad, 2010; Hoque, 2000).

Strategic HRM (also referred to as SHRM) is derived following the integration between HRM and strategic management. While a variety of SHRM definition exists, the majority of researchers agreed that the core of SHRM lies in gaining competitive advantage through managing human assets using an integrated, synergistic set of Human Resource (HR) practices or work system that both complements and promotes organizational strategy (Oppong, 2017; Lockyer, Nel, and Vilayvong, 2016; Huselid, Jackson, and Schuler, 1997; Schuler, 1992). The aim is to establish a cohesive fusion between HRM and organizational strategy, establish coherent HR policies and functional HR work system; that are acceptable by both operational managers and all employees (Nieves and Osorio, 2017; Li and Frenkel, 2017; Schuler, 1992).

Literature Review
SHRM in the Hotel Industry

Continuous change in the business environment has encouraged the hotel industry to be proactive and adopting strategic approach to HRM. Following SHRM approach, the significance of employees' involvement in strategy formulation, implementation, as well as, commitment are largely emphasized. Employees' involvement is imperative because the industry relies largely on these individuals to deliver superior service to their guests. In fact, delivering superior service experience by employees is regarded as an appropriate platform to build positive connection with guests; this also makes a high-end hotel appears more outstanding as compared to the others (Kandampully, 2007). Whilst an organizational

strategy highlights the significance of employees in achieving a firm's objectives, a further translation of the strategic decisions are reflected in HR work system.

HR Work System
HR work system are complex and interdependent components that need to be examined as sub-system or bundle, rather than as individual or independent element (Gooderham, Parry, and Ringdal, 2008). Various HR work systems or HR practices bundles that are linked to strategic implementation and improved organizational performance have been introduced by researchers over the past thirty years. Interestingly, a specific attention has emerged on HPWS (Jensen, Patel, Messersmith, 2013). This form of HR work system appears to be most examined over the years across different industries (Cafferkey and Dundon, 2015; Bozkurt, Ertemsir, and Bal, 2014; Chaudhuri, 2009; Knox and Walsh, 2005) including the hotel industry (Chen et al., 2016; Li, Frenkel, and Sanders, 2011; Sun et al., 2007).

HPWS and its sub-components
HPWS refers to as a group of separate, but interconnected HR practices designed to enhance employees' skills and effort (Takeuchi, Lepak, Wang, and Takeuchi, 2007). Enhancement of employees following HPWS implementation is often associated with improved organizational commitment and productivity leading to superior financial performance (Afsar, Shahjehan, and Shah, 2018; Delery, 1998; Becker and Huselid, 2006; Boxall and Macky, 2009; Posthuma, Campion, Masimova, and Campion, 2013). Meanwhile, a single HR practice deriving from HPWS is referred to as HPWP (Arendse, 2016).

While the fundamentals of HPWS remain intact, individual HPWPs applied in the past studies were constantly evolving (Zhang, Zhu, Dowling, and Bartram, 2013). According to Posthuma et al. (2013), among the challenges to a better understanding of HPWS is the lack of HPWP categorization. For such reason, they conducted a meta-analysis study on HPWS in the hospitality industry across twenty years of period. Nine components of HPWP were discovered, along with relevant studies explaining the contributions of each to organizational performance.

Compensation and benefits is the first HPWP identified. This form of HPWP is associated with direct as well as indirect payment and incentives. It is critical as both compensation and benefits were found to have a significant influence towards employee's productive behaviour (Arendse, 2016; Sheppeck and Militello, 2000). High-performance compensation and benefits may include incentive compensation pay plans and bonuses (Posthuma et al., 2013). The second HPWP is job and work design; it is associated with specific elements of jobs, the relationship between jobs and the organizational structure (Posthuma et al., 2013). This HPWP is associated with improved motivation and satisfaction among employees whose ability to exercise personal skills and talents while performing work. According to Jensen et al. (2013), a job design and internal systems that encourage employees' discretion may increase their sense of job autonomy and control. In return, employees experienced lesser stress at work, hence greater individual work performance and productivity are expected.

Moving to the third HPWP, training and development aims to improve employees' competencies on current and future jobs. High-performance training and development

practices may include cross-functional and multi-skill training as well as training for firm-specific skills (Posthuma et al., 2013). Training and development is crucial; efforts to inhibit its implementation may jeopardize the functional capacity of an organization (Truss, 2001). Such action would also inhibit an organizational competitive advantage; earlier studies indicated positive relationship between training and development and organizational performance; and negative relationship with employee turnover intention (Sheehan, 2012; Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck, 2014). It was also found that the volume of training transfer mediates the relationship between training and organizational performance. Hence, meaningful organizational outcomes can be driven by effective implementation in addition to strategic investment in training as well as the transfer of training (Saks and Burke-Smalley, 2014).

Recruitment and selection is the fourth HPWP; it involves locating, recruiting as well as selecting potential job applicants. This HPWP is significant because it may yield positive outcomes such as higher profitability and greater labour productivity (Michie and Sheehan, 2005), increased levels of employee commitment (Fiorito, Bozeman, Young, and Meurs, 2007; Taylor, Levy, Boyacigiller, and Beechler, 2008), and higher levels of human capital leading to higher overall performance (Takeuchi et al., 2007). The integration of innovative recruitment and specific selection criteria based on organizational strategy within HRM are positively linked to sales growth, market share, profit expansion, employee productivity, and satisfaction (Chanda, Bansalm and Chanda, 2010). The fifth HPWP is employee relations. It entails managing the relationship between employer and employee within an organization. This HPWP is crucial as it influences an organization's climate and culture, which in turn relates to organizational outcomes (Godard and Delaney, 2000). As such, employees who work within a trusting business culture were found to portray more commitment towards their organization, thus leading to better firm performance (Kim and Wright, 2011).

Communication is the sixth HPWP; it deals with channels and methods in which information is exchanged (Posthuma et al., 2013). Communication was found to be positively related with the organizational outcome (Gibson, Porath, Benson, and Lawler, 2007; Gittell, Seidner, and Wimbush, 2010). Information sharing practices are useful to minimize the feeling of uncertainty among employees, clarify goals and enable individuals to foresee connection between their works with the organizational strategy (Arendse, 2016). Therefore, providing employees with strategic business information through formal information sharing systems as well as emphasizing internal communications are deemed as beneficial high-performance communication practices (Beh and Loo, 2013). Onto the seventh HPWP; performance management and appraisal measure and improve individual as well as team performances. This HPWP is critical in aligning individuals and team performances with organizational strategies (Zhang and Li, 2009). Examples of high-performance appraisal and performance management practices would include providing frequent feedback based on team and organizational goals as well as managing objectives linked to organizational strategies (Posthuma et al., 2013).

The eight HPWP identified is promotion. This HPWP deals with opportunities and methods to allow employees moving into higher positions within an organization (Posthuma et al., 2013). It does not only ensure that there are candidates for job openings but at the same

time acts as a type of extrinsic reward to motivate employees by providing them with opportunities to advance within the organization (Macky and Boxall, 2008). This opportunity is linked to organizational outcomes in the sense that a higher level of employee commitment yield a lower level of employee turnover. On top of that, Gong, Chang, and Cheung (2010) revealed that promotions based on performance appraisals were perceived by employees as the fair treatment and they elicited commitment to the organization. The final HPWP is turnover, retention, and exit management practices. They are designed to identify and rationalize the reasons for voluntary turnover. This HPWP is significant in the sense that lower employee withdrawal and turnover can be linked with improved organizational performance (Hausknecht and Trevor, 2011; Huselid, 1995). Furthermore, a literature proven that investment in the long-term retention strategies minimized employee turnover, and in return contributed to the organizational performance (Batt and Colvin, 2011).

Employees' Snapshot on HPWS
The emergence of a "darker side" of research perspective argues that HPWS has negative repercussions on individual employees; as a result of higher demands placed on individuals by these performance enhancing practices (Arendse, 2016). The scope of responsibilities among operational employees in high-contact service firms such as at the high-end hotels is equally dynamic and challenging (Yee et al., 2018). Not only these employees have to constantly interacting face-to-face with guests, they are also required to fulfil guests' expectations on service time, content and quality, thus adding extra uncertainty and challenges into their existing duties (Chase, 1981). In other words, the "darker side" research perspective suggests that HPWS, which aimed to create a competitive advantage for organizations, do so at the expense of individual employees.

These scholars also argued that prior research mainly pays attention towards HPWS from the firm-level management perspective, and neglecting employees' actual experiences or perceived HR work system (Liao, Toya, Lepak, and Hong, 2009). This managerial approach assumes uniform understanding and reaction to HPWS on behalf of all the employees with little or no deviation between them. The truth is HR work system experienced by employees can be totally different from what the management perceived (Geare, Edgar, McAndrew, Harney, Cafferkey, and Dundon, 2014; Nishii and Wright, 2007). Based on the facts from existing research, it is assumed that employee groups from separate employment status will experienced HPWS and HPWPs applied differently (Liao et al, 2009). Thus, it will contribute towards variability of employees' experiences following HPWS implementation.

In line with the earlier notion, it is equally significant to understand the non-strategic or operational employees' perspective of HPWS implementation. Focusing on these employees as the main provider of products and services especially at the high-end hotels, requires particular attention to their actual experience with HPWS. Within the hotel industry, the non-strategic employees are referred to as 'rank-and-file'; they hold basic positions in the operational departments including front office, food and beverage, and housekeeping. These employees execute strategic decisions made by top-level managers into daily operational tasks. They are compelled to perform their roles and accept the consequences of such strategic decisions (including HR work system) that may affect them both positively or

negatively with no capacity to refute them. Hence, understanding these non-strategic employees' psychological outcomes following HPWS implementation is significant as it will ultimately affect the organizational performance.

Methodology
Sample and Procedures
This study focused on five-star hotels predominantly in Kuala Lumpur, which has the highest density of five-star hotels in Malaysia (Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, 2018). Rank-and-file employees from these properties were selected as samples for two fundamental reasons: (a) these employees are considered as non-strategic employees; they have to execute strategic decisions made by the top level management with no capacity to refute them, and (b) rank-and-file job roles are critical contributing to the firm success especially in five-star hotels, as they are required to deliver superior quality of service experience (Kandampully, 2007).

A cover letter was sent to all human resource managers within the target population via physical mail and email requesting permission to collect data. According to the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) 2010, it is perceived inappropriate for any organisation to reveal their employees' personal information to any third party. In compliance with this principle, human resource managers of the participating hotels were requested to forward an online survey link provided by researchers to all their respective rank-and-file employees' mobile phone. Using online survey, all responses were automatically transferred into a spreadsheet once respondents submitted their feedback. Neither respondents nor their contact details were accessible by the researchers during the data collection process. This approach was also meant to avoid any operational disruption at the hotel since samples may respond to the survey at their own convenient time. A total of 392 usable responses were successfully gathered throughout the data collection period after 10 straight-lining or patterned responses were excluded from the dataset. Table 1 present the demographic characteristics of respondents in this study.

Measures
For the purpose of this study, a five-point Likert scale was used to indicate samples' level of agreement on items representing all HPWPs experienced at work. A score closer to 5 means a very strong attitude in favour of the statement; while a score closer to 1 means a very strong attitude disagreeing the statement.

HPWS Items
Following the peer-reviewed academic literature of HPWS within the hospitality industry, nine classifications of HPWPs were proposed. This taxonomy consist of: (a) compensation and benefits, (b) job and work design, (c) training and development, (d) recruitment and selection, (e) employee relations, (f) communication, (g) performance management and appraisal, (h) promotions and (i) turnover, retention and exit management (Posthuma et al., 2013). For the purpose of this study, all HPWPs were applied except turnover, retention, and exit management. This particular HPWP would require samples with both prior working and turnover experience in the five-star hotels. Given the access limitation in approaching rank-and file employees, further search of samples with earlier specific criteria was literally

impractical to the researchers. For such reason, turnover, retention, and exit management was omitted. The instrument applied in this study was validated by two expert academicians (in HR and research methodology) and four human resource officers from five-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur. The list of items are included in the Appendix section.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents Demographic Characteristics		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	142	36.2
	Female	250	63.8
Age	18 – 25 years	199	50.8
	26 – 35 years	185	47.2
	36 – 45 years	-	-
	46 – 55 years	-	-
	Above 55 years	8	2.0
Marital status	Single	258	65.8
	Married	134	34.2
Education level	High school (PMR/SPM)	104	26.6
	Undergraduate (Diploma/Degree)	280	71.4
	Postgraduate (Master/ PhD)	8	2.0
Tenure of service in current hotel	Less than 1 year	137	35.0
	Between 1 – 2 years	124	31.6
	Between 3 – 4 years	91	23.2
	Between 5 – 6 years	8	2.0
	Between 7 – 8 years	24	6.2
	Between 9 – 10 years	-	-
	More than 10 years	8	2.0
Tenure of service in hotel industry	Less than 1 year	113	28.8
	Between 1 – 2 years	108	27.6
	Between 3 – 4 years	83	21.2
	Between 5 – 6 years	32	8.2
	Between 7 – 8 years	24	6.1
	Between 9 – 10 years	24	6.1
	More than 10 years	8	2.0
Working department	Food and Beverage (Kitchen)	110	28.1
	Food and Beverage (Service)	96	24.5
	Front Office	124	31.6
	Housekeeping	62	15.8
Monthly salary	Less than RM1,000	16	4.1
	RM1,001 to RM2,000	253	64.5
	RM2,001 to RM3,000	107	27.3
	RM3,001 to RM4,000	16	4.1
Turnover frequency within the industry	Never	156	39.8
	1 – 2 times	180	46.0
	3 – 4 times	48	12.2
	5 – 6 times	8	2.0
Total		**392**	**100.0**

Pilot Study

To ascertain the validity and reliability of measure applied, a pilot study was conducted. Three human resource officers from three different five-star hotels in Subang Jaya and Shah Alam (neighbouring towns to Kuala Lumpur) were successfully persuaded to assist in the study. An online survey containing the research instrument and feedback column was developed. A link to the survey was sent to those human resource officers via mobile phone for further dissemination among their rank-and-file employees. The researchers then monitored the ongoing responses and decided to close the survey link after 100 responses were successfully gathered. This cut-off point was in line with Bryant and Yarnold (1995) as well as Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) propositions to have a minimum of 100 samples regardless of subject-to-variables ratio in order to run for exploratory factor analysis.

Table 2: Factor Analysis for High Performance Work System

	Component							
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
TD1	.772							
TD2	.743							
TD3	.707							
RC1		.841						
RC2		.781						
RC3		.751						
PA3			.764					
PA1			.645					
PA4			.625					
PA2			.553					
JW3				.773				
JW1				.769				
JW2				.599				
JW4				.590				
ER3					.821			
ER2					.730			
ER1					.556			
CM1						.791		
CM2						.720		
CM3						.544		
CM4						-		
PM2							.848	
PM3							.696	
PM1							.623	
CB2								.884
CB1								.759
CB3								.675
EV	14.058	2.059	1.589	1.540	1.477	1.382	1.163	1.014
% VE	52.068	7.626	5.885	5.704	5.470	5.119	4.307	3.756

TVE	89.935
KMO	.849
BTS	2807.054***

Notes:
1. EV = Eigenvalues, % VE = Percentage Variance Explained, TVE = Total Variance Explained, KMO = KMO and Bartlett's Test, BTS = Bartlett's Test of Sphericity
2. N = 100, *p < .10; **p < .05, ***p < .001
3. CB = Compensation and Benefits; CM = Communication; ER = Employee Relations; JW = Job and Work Design; PA = Performance Management and Appraisal; PM = Promotions; RC = Recruitment and Selection; TD = Training and Development

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA was performed on 27 items measuring HPWS. Principal components analysis through varimax rotation was applied to extract the factors and results are tabulated in Table 2. Result shows that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy value for all items is at 0.849, meaning that the samples for this study being sufficient for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of spherecity with the value of (Approx. Chi-Square = 2807.054, p < .001) also indicated the significance of the correlation matrix being appropriate for factor analysis. The varimax rotation extracted eight factors with eigenvalues more than 1.0 that accounted for 89.935 percent of the variance. In the end, only an item labelled CM4 "adequate communications are provided prior to implementation of new policies/ procedures" was omitted due to lower than 0.5 factor loading. The subsequent reliability analysis on research instrument also suggested "acceptable" alpha coefficient (α) value for all sub-components of HPWS ranging between 0.867 and 0.928.

Result and Analysis
Descriptive Analysis

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of HPWS covering eight HPWPs in the study. The mean scores and standard deviations of all HPWPs are reported. Compensation and benefits is associated with direct as well as indirect payment and incentives, were found to have a significant influence towards employee's productive behaviour. According to the data in Table 3, it can be suggested that most of the answers leaned towards the mid-third point on the scale indicating either 'neutral to minimally agree' level of magnitude. The first two items scored relatively higher means. The respondents were partially agreed that their salaries and rewards were determined based on their work performance (M = 3.4668; SD = 1.08885) and they received monetary or non-monetary rewards for extra effort and good performance (M = 3.5357; SD = 1.14376). However, they perceived that their organization placed minimal emphasis on the importance of having fair compensation and rewards (M = 3.2755; SD = 1.14682).

Job and work design was the second HPWP tested in the survey. Consisted of four items, this sub-component of HPWS measured specific elements of jobs, relationship between jobs and the organizational structure (Posthuma et al., 2013). From the result, the respondents portrayed similar perspective about their job and work design with the earlier HPWP. They expressed fair motion of agreement to point out that their duties were clearly defined (M = 3.6020, SD = 0.96475). In addition, they felt empowered to make decisions for

customers (M = 3.4745, SD = 0.96981) as well as received sensible amount of attention by the management when preparing their schedules (M = 3.4490, SD = 1.12286). Item with the lowest mean score for job and work design was 'my duties involve reasonable amount of job rotation'. Although the margin of discrepancy between this item and the others seems to be small (M = 3.3265, SD = 1.14901), it served as an indicator to highlight that opportunity for job rotation was limited among the rank-and-file employees.

Data from training and development indicated that none of the items recorded a clear-cut level of agreement. Again, all mean scores were concentrated around the mid-third point on the scale indicating 'neutral to minimal agreement' level of magnitude. In general, the respondents fairly agreed that the training and development programs encountered may facilitate their advancement of career path (M = 3.5153, SD = 1.06791). Unfortunately, the respondents perceived that they were not offered a comprehensive training and development programs (M = 3.3878, SD = 1.03526), and even lower perceived to have received continuous training and development programs (M = 3.2908, SD = 0.93640). From the above findings, it was presumed that many respondents may not have experienced a well-coordinated training and development program at work. Probably, the nature of work among these employees that revolve around ongoing operational duties indirectly inhibit them to participate in a well-planned training and development programs.

Result revealed that the respondents were inclined towards 'agreement' with all the three items representing recruitment and selection. Each item received well above 3.5 mean values on the five-point scale. Overall, these respondents perceived that the management implemented a reasonably comprehensive selection process (M = 3.6250, SD = 1.04853), and emphasised on individual's long term potential prior to selection (M = 3.5638, SD = 1.02202). Moreover, they perceived that the management were comparatively searching for the best of all-round candidate, beyond a specific job when selecting new employee (M = 3.5077, SD = 1.09635).

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations for HPWPs

Code	Item	Mean	SD
Compensation and benefits			
CB1	Salaries and rewards are determined according to my work performance	3.46	1.088
CB2	I receive monetary or non-monetary rewards for great effort and good performance	3.53	1.143
CB3	This organisation emphasises the importance of fair compensation and rewards	3.27	1.146
Job and work design			
JW1	My duties are clearly defined	3.60	.964
JW2	My duties involve reasonable amount of job rotation	3.32	1.149
JW3	I am empowered to make important decisions for customers	3.47	.969

JW4	The management considers my personal factors (e.g., family, school) when making schedules	3.44	1.122
Training and development			
TD1	Comprehensive training and development programs are offered to me	3.38	1.035
TD2	Continuous training and development programs are offered to me	3.29	.936
TD3	Training and development programs designed enable me to advance my career path	3.51	1.067
Recruitment and selection			
RC1	Selection of new employee is comprehensive (e.g., uses interview and test)	3.62	1.048
RC2	Selection of new employee focuses on finding the best all-round candidate, beyond a specific job	3.50	1.096
RC3	Selection of new employee emphasises on individual's long term potential	3.56	1.022
Employee relations			
ER1	There is a formal grievance procedures to take care of my complaints or appeals	3.15	1.144
ER2	I feel my job is secure	3.46	1.021
ER3	I can maintain a reasonable balance between work and personal life	3.49	.915
Communication			
CM1	Communication within this organisation is generally good (e.g., with supervisor, colleagues, and inter-departments)	3.45	.945
CM2	I feel informed about matters going in the organisation that affects me	3.43	.929
CM3	I am often asked to suggest/participate in work-related decisions	3.33	.983
Performance management and appraisal			
PA1	Performance appraisal is based on objective, quantifiable results	3.32	.935
PA2	Supervisors get together with me to set my career goals	3.19	1.108
PA3	Performance appraisal provides accurate assessment of my strengths and weaknesses	3.30	1.00
PA4	Performance appraisal is done at least once a year	3.49	.873
Promotions			
PM1	I understand the career path in this organisation	3.77	.913
PM2	I have the opportunities to be promoted in this organisation	3.45	1.161
PM3	I have more than one potential position to be promoted in this organisation	3.30	1.108

Notes:
1.   N = 392
2.   CB = Compensation and Benefits; CM = Communication; ER = Employee Relations; JW = Job and Work Design; PA = Performance Management and Appraisal; PM = Promotions; RC = Recruitment and Selection; TD = Training and Development

Three items were used to assess employee relations in the HPWP. From the analysis, the respondents perceived that they were able to maintain a reasonable balance between work and personal life (M = 3.4949, SD = 0.91589). On top of that, they seemed to be secured with their present job (M = 3.4694, SD = 1.02105). Despite being slightly positive on the earlier two items, it seems that the respondents were minimally confident about the grievance procedures established by the management to take care of their complaints or appeal (M = 3.1505, SD = 1.14445).

Following the analysis made, it can be suggested that most of the responses for communication leaned towards the mid-third point on the scale indicating either 'neutral to minimal agreement' level of magnitude. Overall, they perceived that the communication level between them, their superior, and their colleagues from other departments as acceptable (M = 3.4592, SD = 0.94524). They also felt informed about the matters going in the organization that affects them (M = 3.4311, SD = 0.92995). However, they argued that the management gave minimal focus to get these employees being involved to suggest or participate in work-related decisions (M = 3.3393, SD = 0.98307). From the above results, it was presumed that the communication among rank-and-file employees were mainly concentrated among individuals within their close work-circle, thus leaving others outside these boundaries as mere stranger. As a result, they may not have the confidence to share their views with the top-level managers or relevant key decision makers in the organization. This may also cause them to feel deprived within the broader working environment.

Using four items, the descriptive analysis for performance management and appraisal are detailed in Table 3. From the analysis, it was noticeable that the results were akin to previous HPWPs with average mean pointing towards the third-point on the scale. This reflected a neutral perspective with slight inclination towards agreement. From the four items, respondents were relatively comfortable to have performance appraisal done at least once a year (M = 3.4974, SD = 0.87301). They were also somewhat confident that the established performance appraisal was set on objective and quantifiable results (M = 3.3291, SD = 0.93599). Moving on, these respondents were minimally convinced about the appraisal reliability to provide an accurate assessment of their strengths and weaknesses (M = 3.3087, SD = 1.00083). Item with the lowest mean score for performance management and appraisal was 'supervisors get together with me to set my career goals' (M = 3.1913, SD = 1.10873). Based from the survey result, it seemed reasonable to say that performance management and appraisal needs improvement. Ideally, supervisor's role may need to be intensified; they may act as facilitator to explain the appraisal methods and processes, as well as, to promote the integrity of such system. In addition, supervisor may also serve as a guardian facilitating goals or setting targets for their subordinates.

Promotion was the last HPWP in the survey. Three items were used to measure this HPWP with the descriptive results presented in Table 4.2. Data from the aforementioned table revealed that the respondents were generally understand the career path at their workplace (M = 3.7755, SD = 0.91345). Despite being agreed however, they seemed to have lower perceived expectation about their opportunity to be promoted within the organization (M = 3.4541, SD = 1.16115). Moreover, they were also less confident about their probability to be promoted to multiple positions within the same organization (M = 3.3010, SD = 1.10853).

Overall, it can be presumed that majority of respondents were having moderate expectation about growing their career path within the same organization. If such expectations were left unattended, it wouldn't be a surprise for the industry to continuously experiencing high turnover among its rank-and-file employees.

Conclusion
Given the importance of operational employees within the hotel industry especially in the high-end hotels, this paper explored their actual perception of the HPWS implementation. The descriptive analysis indicated that communication as well as performance management and appraisal were regarded as the most perceived acceptable practices; whereas compensation and benefits is the least perceived acceptable HPWP. Nonetheless, the HR managers are encouraged to re-examine all existing HPWPs applied on their employees to identify the problematic ones (HPWPs with disagreeing statement) that needed improvement. This effort is necessary to gain employees' perception and acceptance towards HPWS as a whole. Based on the existing data, the following practical recommendations are proposed.

First, the HR managers are encouraged to impart highly valued HPWPs among employees (i.e. encourage an open communication system, a mutual two-way interaction between management and employees, as well as, a participative decision making) in the workplace. Such initiatives may indirectly signal that the management cares for its employees. Second, the management should consider improve the existing compensation and benefits offered. Instead of revising their remuneration package, the operational managers or supervisors should be trained and constantly reminded to practice mutual communication in planning and executing operational tasks with their employees. In line with this effort, successful companies are starting to realise the value of making employees feel like stakeholders, instead of mindless drones that should just shut up and do what they are paid to do (Tan, 2020). On the other end, operational employees must also be made aware about how their individual elements of performance management and appraisal are contributing towards the overall organisational performance and most importantly linked to the compensation and benefits received. Both efforts are hoped to boost the feeling of fairness relating to compensation and benefits among the rank-and-file employees.

Theoretically, this study offers a methodological contribution where an alternative HPWS measurement scale is introduced. While the existing HPWS scales were commonly applied across multiple employment groups within an organization (Sun et al., 2007; Takeuchi et al., 2007), several items were found less appropriate when tested on specific employment category (such as rank-and-file job position). Disparities in working culture between initial users of the scale (i.e. Japanese and Chinese employees) versus those in present study further inhibit its practicality for application. In the end, a new HPWS scale was produced following rigorous meta-analysis, necessary reliability and validity tests. Therefore, this study contributes methodologically to the SHRM research by proposing an updated HPWS scale consisting 26-items. This updated instrument may be employed in subsequent research to substantiate the findings of this as well as other studies.

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Appendix
Items in the HPWS scale
Below are the items that organizations may apply to accessing employees' perception of HPWS in the workplace. The following statements assess HR activities applied in your workplace. Tell us how much you agree or disagree with each statement by selecting appropriate scales

Compensation and benefits

CB1	Salaries and rewards are determined according to my work performance
CB2	I receive monetary or non-monetary rewards for great effort and good performance
CB3	This organisation emphasises the importance of fair compensation and rewards

Job and work design

JW1	My duties are clearly defined
JW2	My duties involve reasonable amount of job rotation
JW3	I am empowered to make important decisions for customers
JW4	The management considers my personal factors (family, school, etc.) when making schedules

Training and development

TD1	Comprehensive training and development programs are offered to me
TD2	Continuous training and development programs are offered to me
TD3	Training and development programs designed enable me to advance my career path

Recruitment and selection

RC1	Selection of new employee is comprehensive (uses interview, test, etc.)
RC2	Selection of new employee focuses on finding the best all-round candidate, beyond a specific job
RC3	Selection of new employee emphasises on individual's long term potential

Employee relations

ER1	There is a formal grievance procedures to take care of my complaints or appeals
ER2	I feel my job is secure
ER3	I can maintain a reasonable balance between work and personal life

Communication

CM1	Communication within this organisation is generally good (e.g. with supervisor, colleagues and inter-departments)
CM2	I feel informed about matters going in the organisation that affects me
CM3	I am often asked to suggest/participate in work-related decisions

Performance management and appraisal

PA1	Performance appraisal is based on objective, quantifiable results
PA2	Supervisors get together with me to set my career goals
PA3	Performance appraisal provides accurate assessment of my strengths and weaknesses
PA4	Performance appraisal is done at least once a year

Promotions

PM 1	I understand the career path in this organisation
PM 2	I have the opportunities to be promoted in this organisation
PM 3	I have more than one potential position to be promoted in this organisation