

Developing local managers in the Ghanaian mining industry: an indigenous talent model

Ghanaian
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341

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to provide varied conceptualisation of talent management and development (TMD) by building managerial talent development model that is more appropriate to the context of the Ghanaian gold mining industry.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors use two sets of data – foundation pillars of TMD and industry and definition of TMD. The authors first create a TMD framework by conducting constructive alternative analysis using the TMD foundation pillars that inform local talent situation, and then use the results and evaluation of industry definition of TMD to build the model.

Findings – The authors find that the model departs from the predominantly Western version of human resource management that has characterised TMD in industry. Developed from indigenous perspective, the model is more likely to be effective tool for the development of local managers in industry.

Practical implications – From practical viewpoint, the study has provided insight into understanding of expatriate managers to integrate locally relevant experiences, which are of meaning to trainee managers into their development for successful outcome.

Originality/value – This is the first study which has explored prevailing talent situation and expectations of local managers in the Ghanaian gold mining industry. The constructed model provides an innovative approach for context-specific approach to the development of its local managers to satisfy the mining sector localisation policy.

Keywords Cross-cultural management, Management development

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Since its appearance during the 1990s and early 2000s, talent management and development (TMD) has been focused mainly on finding staff with high potential and/or high performance at work (Michaels *et al.*, 2001). Based on the view that talent provides the key difference between organisations in terms of success, it is argued that TMD needs to be treated with the same seriousness as other aspects of organisation performance (Charan, 2010). While it has also been suggested that TMD provides a repackaging of human resource management (HRM) practices as “old wine in new bottles”, others argue for a difference of approach that can create long-term success through the adoption of a talent mind-set (Ashton and Morton, 2005). There are also concerns about the narrow approach of TMD which is managerialist and unitarist (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013), reflecting a dominant view of TMD within western cultures that places emphasis on the individuality of key people. This has led to a call for more research to consider differences in how TMD is conceptualised, including at a country and/or cultural level (Cunningham, 2007). More recently, Devins and Gold (2014) have



suggested the need to shift attention in TMD from individuals to how work practice occurs mostly as a collective endeavour based on dependent and interdependent activity.

Our purpose in this paper is to respond to the call for a more varied conceptualisation of TMD based on the outcomes of two earlier studies (Oppong and Gold, 2013; Oppong, 2013) that seeks to build a TMD model for the Ghanaian gold mining industry, by providing a view of TMD that is more appropriate to this context and beyond. The paper therefore contributes to skills development literature in cross-cultural context. Our analysis provides unique insight into the blend of cultural practices of local employees and Western HRM policy implementation for effective people management in Western multinational subsidiaries in Ghana. We will begin with an overview of extant literature. We will then explain the methodology used, followed by the identification of the foundation pillars that support the TMD model and constructive alternative analysis of these pillars. Then we construct the model itself based on the outcome of our analysis and the TMD definition developed based on the findings from local managers. We conclude by considering the relevance of the model to the Ghanaian gold mining industry in particular and TMD in Ghana in general. We end the paper with implications for theory and practice.

Literature review

Development of employee skills in the era of the “war for talent” (Michaels *et al.*, 2001) has engaged the studies of many researchers. This is based on the premise that knowledge and skills are embedded in individuals as the main source of competitive advantage (Crook *et al.*, 2011) and for a firm’s survival. Linked to this view, Amankwah-Amoah and Debrah (2011) reveal that in Africa, lack of resources and expertise at managerial level, means that companies that seek to follow a high-growth strategy must “compete for the very few skilled personnel available” (p. 3565). This adds to the observation of Premoli (1998) who, referring to Ghana and Zimbabwe, observed that African countries have exceptional gold development potential and could match more established gold-producing countries such as Australia. To realise the gold development potential, Africa demands contrasting talents and these include a sure technical expertise. These could help explain why the government of Ghana has made managerial skills development a pre-condition for the granting of a mining lease to foreign investors as contained in the Minerals and Mining Law (2006) (Act 703).

Skills development (including managerial skills) in Ghana has gone through a number of phases in terms of funding. These phases, which highlight fundamental shifts from government funded to employee-funded and then to employer-funded skills development (Amankwah-Amoah, 2015) are reflected in the Ghanaian gold mining industry, which has witnessed deregulation and liberalisation. Until the early 1980s skills development was the responsibility of the government as most of the mining companies were state-owned and fell under the umbrella of the State Gold Mining Corporation. Government-funded training and development programmes sought to supply requisite skills to ensure successful running of these firms, and also to satisfy macro-economic responsibilities of providing jobs. The era of individual-funded skills development commenced from the early 1980s when the World Bank and International Monetary Fund’s privatisation policy required Ghana to sell their state-owned enterprises, mostly to Western multinationals. This era saw a shift from the government-funded training and development due to the government’s withdrawal from running and, in most cases, ownership of the firms. People who wanted jobs in the divested firms therefore had to develop themselves to secure jobs. The era was

characterised by aggressive lateral hiring and a talent pool created by redundancies and “reserved armies” (Farazmand, 2002) that resulted from the changeover from state-ownership to private. Firms therefore identified and recruited skilled personnel from other organisations (Chadwick and Dabu, 2009) or the skilled “reserved armies” (Farazmand, 2002) in mining communities such as Tarkwa, Prestea Konongo and Obuasi.

The “war for talent” era, from the year 2000 was marked by a dwindling of the talent pool resulting in employers chasing the fewer skilled personnel left (Amankwah-Amoah, 2015). The era called for structured TMD programmes to develop company-specific skills (Cunningham, 2007) that would be less useful to other companies as a way of sustaining and developing competitive advantage. From their work on scarce talent in liberalised environments in the African context, Amankwah-Amoah and Debrah (2011) suggest that this competitive advantage purely depends on the firm’s ability to acquire, retain and develop managerial expertise. The emphasis of developing to suit one’s organisation needs has increasingly come to characterise the global labour market and firms were receptive to the practice to help address their human resource skills constraints (Gardner, 2002). Mining companies therefore had an extra battle to fight apart the battle for natural resources. This is the “war for talent” which is becoming fierce and forms integral part of a firm’s ability to gain and sustain competitive advantage. This could be attributed to the liberalisation of the mining industry and influx of new entrants that created the environment in which scarce human capital was competed for intensely (Amankwah-Amoah and Debrah, 2011).

These streams of research on skills formation, funding and sourcing to the current need to employers to develop and fund tailored skills to drive business growth and survival. The literature also reveals the scarcity of technical managerial skills in African gold mining industry (Premoli, 1998) and the need to develop industry-specific managerial skills. Many researchers however believe that skills development in Africa should be contextualised (Brock and Siscovick, 2007). For instance, Anakwe (2002) from the results of her study of HRM in Nigeria reveals how the world of work of most developing economies are characterised by foreign or alien practices from Western multinational subsidiaries that could conflict with the host country context and/or traditional ways of doing things. Such conflict has contributed to confusion and ambivalence of the employees of these countries and frustration, and sometimes, failure for the companies. These strengthen the observation by Lubatkin *et al.* (1999) that the issues of applicability, transferability and utility of advanced management know-how in African organisations have remained cloudy due to a narrow Western approach. This is because attempting to build African theory by copying Western countries can be likened to pretentious structures without foundations (Nzelibe, 1986). There is therefore evidence from extant literature of the need for adaptation of HRM strategies to local contexts (Brock and Siscovick, 2007). This was the view of Painter-Morland (2015) that understanding the assumptions that underpin management education helps challenge the current paradigm and to rethink the approaches to responsible management. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), these assumptions on management education and development include indigenous assumptions and ideas. This implies that indigenous voice contributes to sustainable management and development of humanity (Verbos and Humphries, 2015). In their discussion of principles of responsible management education (PRIME), a United Nations led initiative that includes a mandate to engage with voices generally marginalised in business schools, Verbos and Humphries found that inclusion of indigenous worldviews offer opportunities to

enhance responsible management education. This supports Painter-Morland's (2015) call for understanding the context within which management education and development research is conducted.

Despite the evidence, Western multinational subsidiaries in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa are likely to continue to individualise the TMD process around expatriate managers and this compounds the exclusion of local managers but also the suppression of their potential to become leaders and managers in the future. Further, and this is crucial, it is culturally oppressive for local managers and the workforce as a whole to be governed by Western values based on individualism when more social and collective values are likely to be accepted. Recent reviews of TMD have suggested that there is an over-emphasis on particular practices such as recruitment, development and retention, which tend to consider individuals, rather than considering what happens in the practice of work (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013) which Devins and Gold (2014) argue might best be considered in more collective terms of dependence and interdependence in the way work is designed and performed. Further, such work as a collective endeavour is always subject to the vagaries of local context set within a social milieu, which Omolewa (2007) termed as inclusion in pursuit of excellent performance. This, according to Coghlan *et al.* (2014), adds to the efficacy of research about indigenous people in indigenous environment.

Our research therefore pursues a counter to the Western dominant approach to TMD and provides varied conceptualisation of TMD by building a model that is more appropriate to the context of the Ghanaian gold mining industry. Oppong and Gold (2013) considered how local managers in gold mining could be equipped with the necessary competences and be empowered for eventual takeover of the management of the industry from expatriates. A key finding was that Western ideas and practices in developing local managers were alien and therefore called for TMD actions and practices that are based on Ghanaian cultural practices and values. Oppong (2013) compared the Western approach to an indigenous approach in developing managers in the mining industry, which established that the Western context of TMD could be reconciled with Ghanaian tradition that could be accepted by Ghanaian managers in formal business organisations. Oppong recommended that as an area for further research, Western ideas and practices could be localised to build a TMD model to fit the Ghanaian context. In the remainder of this paper we wish to complete such an undertaking.

Methodology

George Kelly's (2003) constructive alternativism is employed as our methodological approach to this research. Kelly's philosophical point of view that there is nothing in the world which is not subject to some form of reconstruction (Chiari and Nuzzo, 2004) is relevant to our study. Constructive alternativism invites one to substitute one analytical search for truth with a creative exploration of an alternative. Kelly's philosophy provides the basis for an active response to dominant Western TMD practices in the Ghanaian gold mining industry. We therefore offer pillars to produce a TMD framework which, together with industry definitions of TMD, are developed to build a model through a process of alternative construction.

The two studies (Oppong and Gold, 2013; Oppong, 2013) which form the precursor to this paper, employed indigenous and post-colonial methodologies. Indigenous methodology is summarised as research by and for indigenous peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the traditions of those people. This has the potential of producing an assessment of the problem and production of solutions

suitable to the people rather than non-indigenous others framing indigenous worldviews from a distance. Indigenous methodology has been proven to situate the research at a location most relevant to indigenous experience (Evans *et al.*, 2009). The use of indigenous methodology departs from Smith's (1999) observation that for the colonised, the term "research" is inextricably linked to Western colonialism and an imperialism which denies indigenous knowledge.

The use of post-colonial methodology was based on the premise that implementation of the policies introduced by the World Bank/IMF and their conditionalities are regarded and accepted as a new form of colonialism in de-colonised states. As revealed by our two earlier studies, instead of helping African nations such as Ghana out of their precarious economic situations, the policies instead turned out to be policies for strong Western nations in seeking economic hegemony over the independent nations – a new form of colonisation through the ownership and management of Ghanaian gold mining companies. Because it was with great reluctance that the colonial masters granted independence to their erstwhile colonies from where they had for generations held total control that had enabled them exploit human and material resources (Salisu, 2010), the new form seemed very relevant. Post-colonial methodology was therefore developed to tackle the neo-colonial influence in industry though the processes of decolonising the local managers by breaking free from the Western research approaches which are in most cases very different from the indigenous ones, and are mostly suited for foreign knowledge instead of indigenous ways of thinking (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995). We speculated that post-colonial methodology complements indigenous methodology. This is because whilst indigenous methodology offers an alternative to address social issues of indigenous people, post-colonial methodology tackles the neo-colonial influence in industry to decolonise indigenous people from Western hegemony and research approaches. These approaches are speculated to be useful in capturing the range of experiences and challenges that national managers face as they work to lead change in cross-cultural environment (Coghlan *et al.*, 2014).

Original data for the study were collected through face-to-face interviews with 26 local managers from four major gold mining companies in Ghana. The data were transcribed and analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2013). Face-to-face interviews as a method of data collection suits an indigenous way of providing data – through oral narration, and the resultant data also fit into the input for CDA.

Foundation pillars and constructive alternatives

Analysis of our earlier two studies have produced seven foundation pillars, which support TMD in the mining industry. These pillars shown as Figure 1 include neo-colonisation; Ghanaian culture; Western multinationals; Western hegemony; local talent; power and dominance; and social change.

Results of data produced by participants confirmed that present interpretations of Western HRM practices are subject to revision or replacement providing an indication that there are alternative constructions available to choose from (Shane, 2001) in dealing with HRM practices in Western multinationals in Ghana. Figure 2 shows the dominant Western HRM ideas and practices in the mining industry of Ghana and how they are subjected to alternative constructions (Shane, 2001) to reveal the potential in the industry for an indigenous-friendly TMD framework.

Figure 2 shows that neo-colonisation and hegemonic dynamics form the social order in the industry – Western dominance in the form of non-development of local

Figure 1.
Seven pillars of
TMD in Ghanaian
gold mining industry

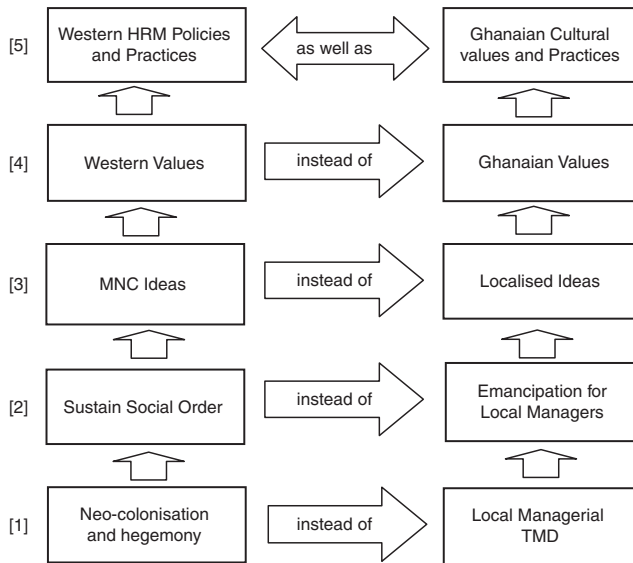
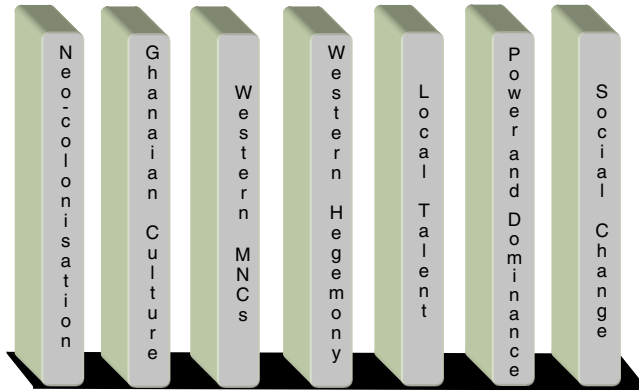


Figure 2.
Talent management
and development
framework

managers (Level 1). To perpetuate the control and dominance attempts are made to sustain the social order (Level 2) to prevent the TMD process that can transfer power to local managers. Sustenance of the social order continues to re-colonise managers. Alternative to this dominance is emancipation, which means local managers are de-colonised from the neo-colonised claws of Western expatriates. This calls for social change – for freedom from Western hegemony for development suitable for indigenous managers.

The social order, and attempts to sustain it, breed a set of Western ideas (Level 3) that become established in which local managers find themselves as a dominated group. The Ghanaian therefore becomes less connected to the business since he/she is new to these Western ideas and work values. Rather than Western ideas which are also interpreted and enforced to suit Western way of work, the alternative ideas can be localised for ease of understanding and success of implementation. By contrast, local employees'

interests will be sustained and will also be motivated to work if, for instance, work procedures are designed taking into account indigenous ways of doing things.

Continuous imposition of Western ideas implants Western cultural values (Level 4) in the Ghanaian gold mining industry. Cultural values represent the implicitly or explicitly shared values about what is good, right, and desirable in a society (Schwartz, 2006). Western ideas therefore cannot be effective in determining what is good in Ghanaian society because the values are alien to that society. The alternative is Ghanaian values to inform local managers as to what is appropriate in work situations. The way local managers function in individual mining companies, their goals and modes of operation, all express cultural value priorities (Schwartz, 2006). Because cultural value priorities are shared, local managers draw on them to choose appropriate behaviour and to justify their choices in organisational practices. The cultural values of Ghana and the West show important contrasts. For example, Hofstede's (1980) analysis of cultural dimensions suggest that the West places emphasis on the desirability of individuals independently perusing their own ideas. By contrast, Ghana (one of three countries grouped under West Africa) finds meaning in life mostly through social relationships and identifying with and participating in groups (Schwartz, 2006). The main motive behind Hofstede's study was to find out how values in the workplace are influenced by (national) cultures. Given its core goal, each type of work value is more compatible with and emphasises the society's cultural values (Schwartz, 2006). This implies that Western cultural values are translated into the work values that inform expected work behaviour and outcomes in the gold mining industry.

Translation of home national cultural dimensions by Western multinational subsidiaries into work values has resulted in dominant Western HRM policies and practices (Level 5) in the Ghanaian gold mining industry. This dominance tendency has created a neglect of Ghanaian cultural values and practices that shape the behaviour of the indigenous people and have significant influence on HRM practices. As a result, Ghanaians tend not to mobilise their full strength and potential because they are not fully connected to the business. This is in part because Ghanaian culture has not been integrated into the workplace and existing corporate cultures are foreign to most Ghanaian workers. There is therefore isolation and exclusiveness of traditional Ghanaian values in industry (Mthembu, 1996). To remedy the isolation and exclusiveness Western companies need to maintain high level of awareness of the contributing factors to the way their subsidiaries in Ghana are managed through home country principles, policies and practices, and their appropriateness to the Ghanaian socio-cultural context. Home country HRM policies need to be translated and implemented with due cognisance of Ghanaian cultural practices and social values. Culture in the context of cross-cultural businesses also includes host country laws and regulations. In this regard, there should be a reconciliation of the conflict between Western HRM policies and practices, and Ghanaian cultural practices (including laws regulating mining) in order to obtain commitment from Ghanaian managers.

The constructive alternative analysis reveals that TMD needs to be carried out with regard for the cultural values and practices of local managers as these values and practices are drawn upon to interpret and implement a Western multinational subsidiary's home country HRM policies to suit the understanding and work behaviour of the Ghanaian. This indicates a better balance between predominant Western management and an alternative that suits Ghanaian context.

Local managers' definition of TMD

Analysis and discussion of interview data revealed dominant Western HRM ideas and practices in the gold mining industry. Local managers enacted a very traditional version of TMD, which we summarise as follows:

Identifying individual potentials and harnessing their (raw) talent towards the achievement of organisational goals. The harnessing process involves training and developing potentials; retaining and utilising them; deploying them within the organisation; and rewarding their contribution.

This definition has two main parts – identification of individual potentials; and harnessing their talent. The harnessing processes include training and development; retention and utilisation; deployment; and rewarding contribution. These processes form components of the TMD programmes that prevail in the mining industry but elsewhere. This definition is however a reproduction of the Western idea of TMD. For example, in the UK the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's 2015 survey (CIPD, 2015) retains an individualistic definition of TMD as concerned with "those individuals who are of particular value to an organisation." (p. 20). Such a meaning is clearly in contrast to knowledge and practices of indigenous managers and this shows how the Ghanaian manager responds to the overpowering foreign influences. According to Lassiter (2000), the response is derived from a personal strategy for survival within the Ghanaian community, and individuals who are conditioned not to challenge what they depend on and from which they cannot escape.

The local managerial TMD process will not yield the required outcome if managers are dominated, controlled and manipulated to operate in alien cultures that do not support their way of life. The next section looks at the construction of the TMD model defined by the industry, and our alternative construction.

The model

The current situation in industry is that the various work procedures are alien to local managers because these are mostly informed by Western ideal and models. The situation has been subjected to constructive alternative analysis as presented in Figure 2. There are three stages in the model building – the input stage, process stage and output stage as presented in Figure 3. The constructive alternative analysis reveals Western hegemony instead of development of local managerial talent therefore leading to domination of Western HRM policies and practices in industry and totally ignoring the Ghanaian cultural values and practices, which forms the first (input) stage of the three-stage model. The model therefore seeks to reverse these phenomena for TMD that is based on localised ideas and practices instead of Western hegemony. In this regard, the model building starts from Level 5 on the framework in reverse order to Level 1. The talent definition reveals how local managers want to see their development unfold and therefore forms the process (second stage of the model).

Input stage

The input includes Ghanaian cultural values and practices as well as Western HRM policies and practices as indicated by the double arrowed sign. This corresponds with Level 5 of the framework (Figure 2) that Western HRM policies and practices, when being implemented, should also take into account Ghanaian cultural values and practices. This corroborates the concern of Nzelibe (1986) that the result of building African theory by copying advanced countries is an assortment of pretentious

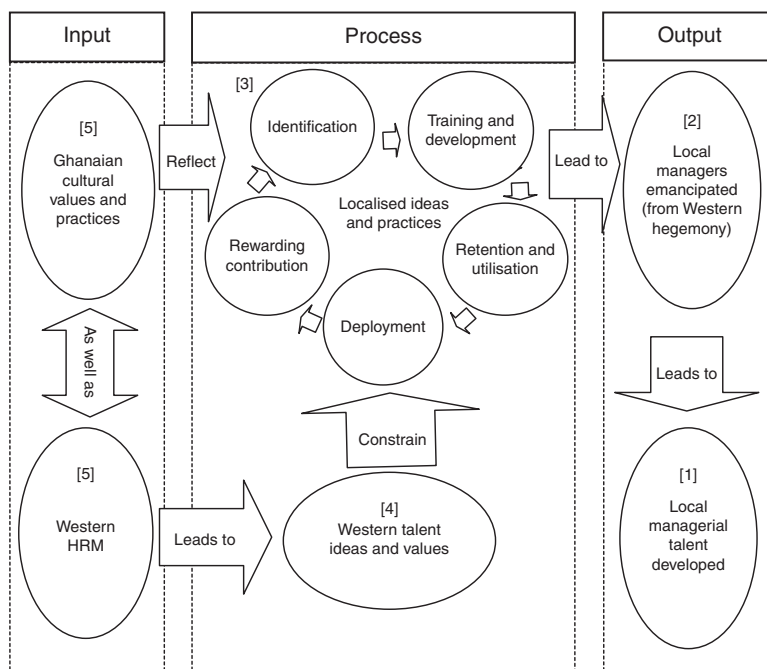


Figure 3.
Managerial TMD
Model for Ghanaian
gold mining industry

structures without foundation. To build a good foundation for a local managerial TMD model in the industry therefore requires multinational companies to reconcile local and Western ideas in their subsidiaries in Ghana. We speculate a high potential for success since such policies and practices would be implemented in a way the local managers would understand and appreciate.

Process stage

Ghanaian cultural values and practices in the input stage reflect localised ideas to develop managers to suit local requirements. However, Western HRM policies and practices lead to Western ideas and values (Level 4 of the framework) that constrain the TMD process locally. This level requires cross-cultural competences (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2008) to provide for the potential of creating empathy towards cultural differences and the willingness to reach a compromise or better, a reconciliation of alternatives. Understanding or uncovering the tacit ideas behind the local managers' attitudes and practices is a way forward because the companies are nested within societies. Therefore Ghanaian culture generally is an important external influence on the organisational culture within Western multinational subsidiaries. There is thus a need for mining companies to gain minimal level of approval from the Ghanaian society (in the form of cultural practices) to function effectively (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007). Such approval is necessary in order to develop managers by consideration of how they learn and perform. As Nzelibe's (1986) research demonstrated, most management problems in Africa are attributed to conflicting principles that underlie Western and African management thoughts. This was the recommendation of Painter-Morland (2015) that there is the need for understanding the

assumptions that underpin management education, and Coghlan *et al.* (2014) observed these assumptions from indigenous context.

Learning achieves the desired outcome when there is construction of valued and agreed common ground between the new and the already known because learning is an active and potentially creative construction process that can only take place based on previous acquired knowledge (Duit, 1991). Even in today's Ghana where Western education is recognised, the indigenous Ghanaian does not see it as superior to traditional education but as one with defect in traditional knowledge and wisdom is often insulted as *yantetew' wo fie*, one without home training and a stranger in his own society.

Once the constraining effects are neutralised, the TMD process informed by localised ideas and practices can work more smoothly. The process follows the local managers' definition of TMD which has been identified and explained earlier, and includes five elements – identification, training and development, retention and utilisation, deployment and rewarding contribution.

For identification, managers revealed reliable databases, a Western style of record-keeping for identifying potentials for the talent process. This intellectually philosophical factor is not part of the Ghanaian culture, which is rarely associated with a written record. Identification of managers will be more acceptable if based on wisdom and memory of people they regard as knowledgeable and trusted and who orally share the information on the potential to the selectors. Senior managers should be made aware of this cultural value to monitor managers and recommend them verbally and inform them verbally that they have been selected. This is because the Ghanaian traditional knowledge is stored in the memories of people and reproduced or shared orally through cultural and religious beliefs, taboos, folklores and myth as well as in individual's practical experience (Omolewa, 2007). Story/oral account has been the primary mode of conveying culture, experience, values, knowledge and wisdom (Fasokun, 2005) and "the use of stories as educative devices in traditional African societies" (Omolewa, 2007, p. 600). This would suggest that senior managers must become more attuned to the stories told and enacted by local managers. As well as familiarity with local customs, such attunement can begin with the use of narrative coaching skills (Drake, 2007). These views suggest the relevance of indigenous knowledge in management development as found by Coghlan *et al.* (2014).

Basic values of Ghanaian traditional education emphasise the inclusion of all and the pursuit of excellence (Omolewa, 2007) but inclusion also refers to those capable for excellent performance and outcomes. At this point, Ghanaian values have a tendency to exclude many who might make an excellent contribution to working life and society. For example, the traditional Ghanaian regards a disabled child as a curse from the ancestors and therefore a misfit who should either be excluded or hidden from the society. Further, and this is a traditional value throughout Western Africa and beyond (Ampofo *et al.*, 2008), females are also perceived as inferior both in strength and in reasoning should give way to men who can perform and achieve excellence. The Ghanaian will say, *woka mmaasem* or you reason like a woman, usually inconsequential to the ways being explored to solve a given problem. Inclusion in terms of disabled people and females is not an issue of concern in the selection of potentials. Clearly, such values reflect long-held traditions which countries such as Ghana need to begin to challenge. However, as argued by Fakeye *et al.* (2012) culture does endure but it is only through challenge and change to the culture that such losses of potential for TMD can be recovered.

Readiness level was identified by managers as a criterion for selecting potentials and this can be likened to the Ghanaian value for hierarchy. Managers being developed will respect who is first in line without any conflicts when this is made clear. Tasks and responsibilities should be made clear and this will encourage participation because challenging the hierarchy could lead to sanctions. The learner will therefore not challenge the trainer or the training procedure. This could however create distance and discourage team work, if not well managed. Readiness level could rather be branded as *gyinabre* or where one is meant to be (as demanded by elders or deities) and this is highly respected. Clear hierarchy therefore empowers managers through the TMD process but there need to be a reconciliation between where “one is meant to be”, based on traditional readiness, and readiness for performance.

For training and development, Ghana, like other African countries south of the Sahara, is guided by the spirit of *Ubuntu* which is based on recognition of a human being (the individual) as a social being who prefers to be with others (Bangura, 2005) and serves a spiritual foundation for the African society (Nafukho, 2006). Learning associated with *ubuntuism* as a concept is *Ubuntugogy*, which is defined as the “art and science of teaching and learning undergirded by humanity towards others” (Bangura, 2005, p. 13). *Ubuntu* spirit or *onuado* (in Ghanaian society) guides training and development of the local manager. This is supported by the outcome from the study by Devins and Gold (2014) that recent views on TMD should be based on collective terms in a way word is designed and performed.

Managers mentioned coaching as a method. *Ntete*, coaching has been a traditional method of passing the elder’s wisdom and trade to the young, usually for a number of years in the *kyerekyereni*, the teacher’s compound or workshop. For instance, artisan, craftsman or drummer teaches *adesuafoo* to learners from the community, and this has been the main access to the acquisition of most kinds of knowledge, skills and training to be used to unlock employee potential and commitment. This accompanies respect for the trainer and determination to excel and not to be outperformed by subordinates, usually determined by age as Ghanaian traditional education is an age grade system.

The coach-coachee relationship brings about obedience and adherence to rules. Perceived as wise expert with experience in the trade, instruction/advice is taken without question or challenge, another attribute of Ghanaian indigenous education. Good discipline is part and parcel of the Ghanaian traditional education as learners respect the master and senior apprentices because the learner is taught about respect and is made to pay dearly for non-conformity. Sanctions are established through culture and taboos and each member appreciates the danger of failing to conform (Omolewa, 2007). Sanctions are not only from the master but also from the gods who are omnipresent and omniscient. This induces strict discipline since there is no wrongdoing that goes unpunished, either committed in the open or in secret unlike the Western approach where wrongdoing needs to be proved-based evidence of committing the act before he can be sanctioned. It is evident how domination blamed on the West (Anakwe, 2002) also formed part of the traditional method of education. Applying coaching based on the traditional system could however bring about discipline, compliance and commitment to work. However, with wisdom comes the need to be critical otherwise there is a potential for domination based on prejudice.

For an indigenous method of TMD to add value, trainees should be treated as a group as managing trainees individually may bring negative outcome. Ghanaians believe and accept that whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual (Lassiter, 2000).

The Ghanaian may say *yetease nti na metease*, I live because we live, or *woyonko da ne woda*, your friend's predicaments are yours. These highlight the shared values which are fundamental characteristics of Ghanaian identity and culture. This is one of the tenets of *Ubuntu* – consensus building which is guided by *nkabom* (togetherness); *biakoye* (oneness) and *asomdwee* (peace). Ghanaian traditional education methods therefore do not only bring about teambuilding but also foster consensus building among peers (team members) who are regarded as equals and therefore dissipates the hierarchical structure that may discourage brainstorming. Team work is encouraged among peers, and a formal and structured hierarchy will discourage one from seeking help as hierarchy connotes the (elder) teacher-subordinate relationship which should be respected, receive instructions from, rather than share ideas with. Ghanaians also value symbols and rituals (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007) which have been part of the culture, and which Ahiauzu (1986) describes as the natural expression of the African mind. Different uniforms, for instance, could express a hierarchical-oriented company and should be discouraged among managers in the TMD process. Physical setting such as open offices system will symbolise managers living in the community (the company) in solidarity but not in private. The challenge for TMD is to give as much attention to understanding the collective nature of work, based on interdependent (Devins and Gold, 2014) and reciprocal efforts, wherein skills and abilities are performed as well as the individual focus of traditional TMD practices (see Oldroyd *et al.*, 2015).

During training and development process including coaching, organised management development programme, classroom learning or international assignment as identified by managers, there are two distinct learning approaches. First, trainees are expected to be fed by a leader regarded as wise and knowledgeable whose opinion will be accepted, and whose expertise is required to develop the manager. Learners are not to challenge or disagree with the teacher, which is regarded as disrespectful behaviour in Ghanaian society. Second, group work is assigned to peers. Managers will be motivated by engaging in socially responsible behaviour that preserves the social fabric, and by managing their unavoidable interdependencies. Tasks assigned on individual basis should be discouraged and rather offered group work where managers will exhibit their communal spirit and feeling of responsibility towards one another to accomplish tasks. Ghanaians are traditionally not curious to attempt intellectually “autonomous” tasks that encourages one person pursuing their own ideas but would rather like to perform as a group for the group's interest and be socially responsible to each other. A good reconciliation approach would incorporate action learning in one form or another (see Anderson and Coleman, 2014).

The above reveals why Western managers need to understand and appreciate the Ghanaian traditional education “curriculum” and translate them into work process that can inform TMD programmes. For instance, traditional Ghanaians believe in success in life which they believe is from gods and ancestors through the adherence of indigenous customs and beliefs. Success accrues to people who work hard, and who strictly adhere to the customs, and traditional norms of morality of the community. The gold mining industry could exploit this strong Ghanaian value that will induce hard work which can be achieved through adhering to the customs (organisational rules and regulations); the norms of morality (discipline); and harmonious living (team work) in the community (the organisation). This is a way of developing industry-specific skills (Cunningham, 2007) to tackle the lack of managerial expertise (Amankwah-Amoah and Debrah, 2011) for sure technical expertise in the mining sector (Premoli, 1998).

Application of the Ghanaian traditional education method helps retain talent. For instance, in Ghanaian apprenticeships, the end of training does not mean an end of staying and serving the *kyerekyerani*, the teacher. Training continues through observation, self-improvement and search for wisdom as it is only through the master that these are possible. Some may even decide to stay permanently with the master to benefit from the “whole library” in the master’s memory. Ghanaian traditional education is therefore a life-long process. Since people were developed in the area of the master’s trade and, in most cases, offered post-development employment, this took the form of employer-funded skills development as revealed by Amabkwah-Amoah (2015) as one of the three phases of funding skills development. Nafukho (2006) describes this as holistic learning for life and work that, like many other African countries, forms the foundation of society. This ensures that not only knowledge and skills but also attitudes and a whole way of life are integrated into the learning process and promote life-long learning, which is considered by Rohrbach (2007) as a requirement for participation in knowledge society.

It is traditional in Ghanaian society that children learn from adults to live, behave and function in society; girls learn from women about how to keep the house, feed the family and serve their husbands; and boys learn from men about life and to develop work skills. Elders including grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts continue to teach younger adults essential knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (Nafukho, 2006), a continuous process even when these young adults are married and are full adults. This is because it is believed that once one becomes an elder, he continues to be wiser. So in Ghanaian society once we continue to live and grow, teaching and learning continues. This is a retention strategy that can be exploited by the gold mining industry to reap returns on investment in TMD. Once the organisation is portrayed as a community within which there are people with wisdom that can be imparted, people will be prepared to continue to learn and be committed to the organisation to be able to do so. Ghanaians also portray benevolence as a value emphasising in serving the interest of others by showing care and concern for them. Encouraging the local manager to show this value is a potential retention strategy as he tends to have “calling” orientation and sees the job as a vocational mission which he accepts and tolerates, which also enables him serve the interest of others, thus revealing his *onuado* or brotherly love value.

Managers described deployment as the process of assigning talent to other roles within the company; to another site/subsidiary within Ghana; or in a subsidiary abroad (including headquarters) where their skills will be mostly needed. The Ghanaian pursuit for excellence (Omolewa, 2007) will let him accept roles in which he can perform and excel. Traditionally, Ghanaians specialise in various professions which usually belongs to families. For instance, the *akyerema* represents a family of drummers; *adunsifo* represents a family of healers; and *akuafo* represents a family of farmers. These are professions that adult family members perform to cater for the whole family. A manager will be pleased and willing to perform when deployed into a role which he believes is his specialist role that he is most fit to perform, and not just a means of economic survival but as an integral part of his life and the lives of his family and the larger society. This is a form of company-specific skills development as revealed by Cunningham (2007) and Crook *et al.* (2011) as a way of developing skills that are less useful to industry competitors to develop and sustain competitive advantage for firm’s survival. The quest for excellence in his profession and concern for the family or the wider society are motivation for the local manager to devote himself to the role he is deployed into. This is the spirit of *onuado* or *ubuntu* which inspires the manager to

view the business organisation as a community to which he belongs not just as a person with a fixed legal contract but as a member by choice (Choudhury, 1986), a mind-set that needs to be created by employers.

The last component of the local managers' TMD definition was "rewarding contribution". Recognition for one's contribution to the community has been a Ghanaian traditional value and rewards are usually in the forms of titles and raising one's status in the community such as a chief of a whole village or sub-chief in charge of a department of the administration of the village. These are rewards that go towards serving the community. Any such reward is identified prior to one's contribution which usually results from contest among men in pursuit of community projects such as hunting for wild animals or fighting to protect one's village from attacks from enemies. This has encouraged the indigenous Ghanaian to be competitive and improve performance. During the TMD process therefore, any reward should be pre-determined and something that other employees (community members) will be aware of, and which creates competition to encourage performance. Skills developed are therefore relevant to the community and used for the purpose of the community. This tackles the issue of applicability, transferability and utility of managerial know-how in African organisations remaining cloudy due to the narrow Western approach in developing these skills (Lubatkin *et al.*, 1999) and therefore requires adaptation of local contextual strategies (Brock and Siskovick, 2007).

Another reward system that has become part of industrial reward culture in Ghana is informed by the public-private sector reward debate which gained popularity in the post-privatisation era when many private sector companies (including the multinational gold mining subsidiaries) were created. It is believed that the public sector is characterised by culture of absenteeism, employee involvement in alternative employment, low productivity while the private sector is found to be proficient in producing good performance through rigorous goal setting, result demanding, and imposition of sanctions (Dartey-Baah *et al.*, 2011). Private sector employees therefore associate themselves with high performance contrary to public sector stereotyped of being slow and unproductive. This calls for good retention packages if the manager is to be retained in the company with rigorous work rules and high performance standards. High pay and related incentives have been the major drivers for joining mining companies in Ghana. For local managers in the gold mining industry (with perceived high performance standard) to feel that their contributions are being recognised, reward packages should therefore outclass what apply in the private sector. This is post-privatisation benchmarking which should not be ignored in the TMD process.

Output stage

Developing managerial talent according to Ghanaian localised ideas and practices as well as Western ideas means diffusion of the social order for achievement of social change or emancipation of local managers (Level 2). Local managers now feel de-colonised from Western power and domination that dictated development ideas and approaches that were not only foreign to the trained managers but also ignored the benefits of the local manager's development to his community. Therefore, if traditional Ghanaian education methods are integrated into the TMD process, the programme becomes practicable and acceptable to the local manager since he is being trained to work in his community and (mostly) with his people. Here he feels that he is not being given personal training (individualism) but being developed the way acceptable to the

community and which can enable him serve the community (collectivism). This is the Ghanaian value of *onwado* or *ubuntu* where the individual signifies a plurality of personalities and multiplicity of relationships in which the individual in question stands (Nafukho, 2006).

In developing the indigenous manager through *Ubuntu*gogy, a manager does not refer to solitary aspects of human development to the detriment of communal aspects but a move from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, and from individuality *vis-à-vis* the community to individuality in the community (Bangura, 2005). As the Ghanaian will say, *nipa anti na nipa tease*, the individual is human through the existence of other human beings. Therefore, one should reciprocate by serving the community, given any available resources. As this happens in relation to development of the local manager he sees himself as developed (Level 1) as the development is not to him alone but through him to the community to which he owes his existence. The findings of Devins and Gold (2014) and Thunnissen *et al.* (2013) that management development should be more collective and interdependent are of great value.

Conclusion

In this paper we have sought to build an appreciation of a TMD model that is more appropriate to the context of the Ghanaian gold mining industry. It is based on the outcomes of two earlier studies by Oppong and Gold (2013) and Oppong (2013). Like all models, it is only a partial reflection of what can happen in practice but we believe it has the potential to move closer to practices in TMD that are more acceptable for those working in the mining industry and the economy of Ghana, more generally.

The model was developed initially from findings reflecting a predominantly Western version of HRM, which are presented as foundation pillars shown in Figure 1. Our task was to challenge this orthodoxy so as to open up the potential to explore other possibilities more critically that connected to the culture of Ghana. To do this, we were informed by George Kelly's (2003) constructive alternativist philosophy which allowed the emergence of the basics of a new TMD model. To add detail to the model, we challenged the Westernised version of TMD that seemed to dominate those working in the mining industry. We employed methodologies that were informed by indigenous experience (Evans *et al.*, 2009) and were sensitive to post-colonial critique (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995) so that Western ideas and practices could be localised – based on indigenous Ghanaian practices and traditional learning methods – to develop the model to fit the Ghanaian context. The model reveals that a holistic approach is required for foreign managers to understand what makes local managers “tick” and approach this in a way conducive to organisational performance. However, what we are not suggesting is a switch from one model based on Western values to another, based on local culture and history. After all, we have revealed the potential for prejudice and domination within Ghanaian values and traditions. Both have their potential to dominate with adverse effects. What is needed is an appreciation of the potential for both models to work. If both locals and expatriates have better cultural awareness in general, and an ability for dilemmatic thinking (Billig, 1996), there will be less incidence of misunderstanding in both words and actions since everyone is equipped to appreciate the difference.

Implications for theory

Our paper contributes to, and extends the literature on understanding of how local knowledge and cultural practices influence the effective people management practices

of foreign multinational corporations in Ghana by developing a model that provides unique insight into how local knowledge could be useful in the implementation of multinational firms' human resource policies in their subsidiaries in Ghana. Our constructive alternative analysis and the TMD pillars and the three distinct stages of the TMD model building provides literature on management development in indigenous and post-colonial contexts. Our findings also extend the literature on management development in cross-cultural context as the model could be a guide not only to development of local managers in foreign multinational subsidiaries in Ghana but also in Western multinational subsidiaries in other countries (especially SSA) that exhibit similar cultural practices and social values. This is because management development has been mostly viewed from Western perspective. Viewing this from SSA and particularly Ghanaian cultural and traditional educational backgrounds all to the existing literature.

Finally, the paper contributes literature on how best multinational firms can develop and manage their human resource in foreign locations to defuse the ever-growing debate on the global integration vs local responsiveness dilemma (Kamoche, 1996), referred to as the dual pressure in cross-cultural HRM (Brock and Siscovick, 2007) and HRM puzzle (Festing and Eidems, 2007). We have done this by suggesting a constructive analysis of both Western (home country) and Ghanaian (host country) factors which results in a TMD model which fuses the most desired aspects of both the home country demands and the host country factors.

Implications for practice

As revealed in our discussion of the traditional Ghanaian educational system in building the model, understanding or uncovering the ideas behind the local managers' attitudes and practices by senior managers of Western multinational subsidiaries provides a way forward because the companies are nested within Ghanaian society. Therefore, Ghanaian culture and social values are an important external influence on the organisational cultures of the foreign subsidiaries operating within such societies. As our discussion has revealed, the traditional Ghanaian education has its strong and enduring versions of the elements of the Western approach to TMD, most of which we believe can play a part in driving the TMD process. There is therefore the need for mining companies to gain a level of approval from the Ghanaian society to function effectively. Such approval is necessary in order to develop managers and others in the way they learn and perform. We encourage senior expatriate managers to appreciate the local knowledge through narrative coaching (Drake, 2007) and support the themes which can provide a direct link to trainee managers in the TMD process. We believe this can allow multinationals to integrate locally relevant experience into the management TMD programmes for more successful outcomes.

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