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Nana Yaw Oppong
University of Cape Coast

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Introduction

The Ghanaian mining industry went through various stages of development prior to the World Bank's negative assessment in the mid-1980s. This blamed the state ownership model, characterized by lack of adequate capitalization, obsolete technologies (Agbesinyale, 2008) and mismanagement, among other factors, for the decline in the sector. The Bank then recommended far reaching reforms in the mining sector within the context of the neoliberal structural adjustment programme. In the late 1980s, the industry began to recover due to the inception of the World Bank/IMF-led Mineral Sector Reform and the World Bank/IMF conditionality of the privatization of state-owned enterprises. The reform led to the Minerals and Mining Act of 1986 which provided incentives to investors in the sector. This law has been revised and the Minerals and Mining Act 2006 implemented. Since the World Bank/IMF structural adjustment programme which was implemented in Ghana from 1983, there has been massive involvement by Western multinational companies (MNCs). With the country's huge gold reserves estimated at 1600 tones and resources amounting to 2550 tones, with total gold production expected to increase to over 100,000 kg per annum by 2018 (Austrade, 2007), multinational gold mining companies are likely to continue to invest in Ghana.

Management localization (ML) is defined by Selmer (2004) as a process in which local officers increase their competencies and consequently improve their performance. The main objective has been identified as training and developing locals for the required competencies and efficiency to replace expatriates. The definition, used by Bhanugopan and Fish (2007), emphasizes competencies and efficiency more generally, going beyond replacement. It calls for conscious efforts to identify, train, develop and retain locals.

Many authors including Fayol-Song (2011) and Lassarre and Ching (1997) have identified the reasons or objectives for embarking on ML in MNC subsidiaries. Lassarre and Ching (1997) describe three reasons, cost reduction, retention of local managers and local market knowledge, whereas Fayol-Song (2011) reveals five reasons

❐ Nana Yaw Oppong, Lecturer in HRM, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. Email: noppong@ucc.edu.gh

including to reduce management cost, to resort to local competences, to replace the lack of appropriate expatriates, to develop and retain local talents, and to maintain good relations with local government. Lassarre and Ching admit, however, that four reasons for ML are predominantly cited in the literature. These are included in the reasons which emerged from Fayol-Song's empirical research into the reasons behind ML in MNCs in China. One or a combination of these four reasons explains any ML policy. The third of the four reasons, training and developing local managerial talent, best fits the government of Ghana's localization policy.

Localization is important in the socio-economic development of any developing country as localizing positions is more likely to improve the skills and capabilities of locals. However, ML has its own challenges, mostly coming from the MNCs. For instance, Bhanugopan and Fish (2007) report the case of Papua New Guinea where numerous expatriates continued to be employed and little consideration given to the development of local managerial talent, which defeated the country's attempt to address the paucity of skilled management staff. MNCs argue that their financial investments and technical requirements hinge on ensuring quality staff in cross-border locations and that such staff tend to be expatriates (O'Donnell, 2000). This was also reported by Oppong (2013a) who believed that the MNCs attempted to perpetuate expatriation and to avoid localizing expatriate positions. Many reasons account for MNCs' reluctance to localize. Selmer (2004) found that expatriates are less enthusiastic about localization because they prefer to stay on, or are of the opinion that localization is not necessary, which Bhanugopan and Fish (2007) believe is due to the high financial costs involved in training local managers including the risk of them leaving the firm after their training. Also, expatriates need to work extended time in training locals, in addition to fulfilling their normal responsibilities. Harry (1996) and Selmer (2004) identify a major reason for expatriates' reluctance: having adopted well to the local environment and having more influential positions in their cross-cultural assignments than in their home countries, embracing localization means the prospect of making themselves redundant. They therefore hesitate to train local staff, who could prematurely replace their expatriate bosses. In some cases, expatriates believe that it is not their job to train local employees.

There is ample literature, therefore, to imply that expatriates may consider themselves unable to contribute to the localization process or unwilling to do so. This puts a burden on local governments to intensify their enforcement of ML policies as, left to their own volition, MNCs may prefer not to implement the policy as they see this as cost and also as an attempt to force them to relinquish their positions to their subordinates. If the situation is not changed, management positions will continue to be dominated by expatriates, therefore defeating the objectives of the policy and preparing fertile ground for policy failure.

The aim of this paper therefore is to report on the prevailing local managerial talent development situation in the Ghanaian gold mining industry and to offer an innovative approach for management localization success. The rest of the paper will proceed as follows. The next section considers the method applied in producing the paper and explanation of the key terms used. This will be followed by presentation of key issues depicting the local managerial talent situation in the industry. An innovative approach to streamlining the management localization process to ensure success of the policy is presented next, with the conclusion occupying the final section of the paper.

Method and use of terms

Evidence of the talent situation presented in this study comes from part of a research project on management localization in the Ghanaian gold mining industry. Two earlier publications present the qualitative data (Oppong & Gold, 2013) and discuss the results (Oppong, 2013a). The research analysed the local managerial talent situation and showed how the localization policy in the Ghanaian gold mining industry is implemented.

The concept of managerial talent development is used instead of the traditional management development. This is to suit the purpose of the paper, which is investigating the development of people who are already managers but whose talents (skills directed towards a given managerial contribution) need to be developed for eventual takeover from expatriates. Management development in this context is therefore 'tailored' and departs from the traditional approach. Additionally, it is appropriate to label it managerial talent instead of managerial skills. This is because in the light of employee development, concern for skills means concern for all, but concern for talent means concern for a selected few. The focus of the industry is the development of those potential local managers for top senior management roles to run the industry. Also, whereas 'talent management' is usually used to describe the whole talent process, 'talent development' pertains to the training and development aspect, which is the major concern of the localization policy.

Local managerial talent in the Ghanaian gold mining industry

Managerial talent development in the gold mining industry has been explored through the lens of privatization, Western HRM practices, and Ghanaian cultural values and practices (Oppong, 2013a; Oppong & Gold, 2013). Interpretation of primary qualitative data has offered a challenging insight into the sources, process and underlying assumptions of the talent development in industry. This section presents the key findings of the research which represent the local managerial talent situation in response to the localization policy.

No common industry definition of talent and talent management

There is no common industry definition of 'talent' though talented employees are described as high potentials, high fliers and stars. Talent is seen through high performance or personal attributes that lead to higher performance. Like 'talent', there is no common definition for talent management as there emerged different descriptions/definitions. The various definitions described the processes and procedures of each individual company's talent development needs. A common definition is necessary, and the definition should not be too restrictive (Uren, 2007) so that it is relevant to all organizations within the industry. Based on the data categories that emerged, industry's views on talent management definition could be summed up as follows.

> Identifying potential senior managers and harnessing their (raw) talents towards the achievement of organizational goals: the harnessing process involves training and developing; retaining and utilizing: deploying within the organization; and rewarding their contributions.

Lack of common definition implies that the industry does not depend on a common interpretation of what is meant by talent and talent development. Defining them differently emphasizes how companies consider these as they suit their individual needs. This outcome corroborates a hypothesis developed by Oppong (2013b) that talent definition is saddled with uncertainties and lack of clarity, after identifying many definitions most of which contradict each other. The situation also supports the view of Cunningham (2007) that talent management is best when it is company specific.

Legally required talent development provisions are not implemented

The industry supports the need for local managerial talent, but the extent in practice is limited. This is despite the fact that the development of national managers in the industry by MNCs is a legal requirement and, therefore, compulsory for companies to implement. The localization plan is a prerequisite for the granting of mining leases, which means that mining companies cannot operate legally without a local managerial talent development programme. However, the Minerals Commission is not enforcing these provisions, and the MNCs are not implementing them.

The attitudes of the MNCs in the industry confirm the view of Charan (2010) that organizations do not attach the needed seriousness to their talent development. Charan observes that if businesses managed their finances as loosely as they manage their talent development, most would go bankrupt. There is also indication that talent management practices are informed by headquarters policies. The situation leads to domination of Western talent ideas rather than indigenous approaches that are familiar to the trainee managers (Oppong, 2013a).

The communication dilemma in the talent process

Industry is strongly divided on whether or not to communicate to those identified for the talent programme and also during the talent development process. This communication is in two forms – informing those selected for the talent programme and communicating to those who do not succeed at the end of the talent process, if a role is targeted as basis of the talent process. According to Uren (2007), this is perhaps the most hotly debated of all the questions that arise when designing and implementing talent management programmes. This is regarded as a dilemma as managers are not sure about whether or not to inform the trainees. Each party justifies their choice. Those who support communication to the selected few believe that this will bring about transparency, enable participants to prepare for the programme and make the necessary inputs, and enable management to provide feedback to improve performance. These, the proponents believe, are necessary for the success of the programme. On the other hand, those in favour of non-communication explain that it prevents participants from behaving in ways intended to achieve the talent target at the expense of their normal duties and responsibilities because trainee manager is motivated by the new role which is usually higher than their current position.

Problems with the selection approach

For any given role/position targeted for the talent process, two to four employees are selected for development, and one eventually elevated into the role. As criteria for selection, management looks at the individual's current performance level or at whether or not the individual has the qualities required for performance at the higher level. These two are therefore the indicators of talent. A person's potential is seen in his level of performance or personal characteristics that lead to higher performance. These differentiate the selected from the other national managers.

Complementing the selected few approach is the identification of critical or key positions as a basis for developing managers. Even a company that does not have a talent management programme in place tries to train graduates in the core business areas to ensure that such positions do not become vacant. Overall, companies direct their investments towards the development of the few that drive business success by maximizing the use of limited resources. Warren (2006) describes the approach as a competitive necessity.

Talent retention difficulties in the industry

Another key issue is that there is difficulty in retaining talent as turnover of managers is very high. This is explained by two factors – internal and external. The internal factor has to do with dissatisfaction with conditions of service, whereas the many mining companies in and outside Ghana competing for these managerial talents account for the external reason. Study of turnover phenomena of managerial and senior staff of a major Ghanaian gold mining company by Oppong (2013c) found a remarkable exit trend among local managers to other mining companies both in and outside Ghana. Industry is however divided on the appropriate retention tools. This points to the fact that mining companies do not only have to invest in the development process but should also put in place plans to keep those they have developed. This not only increases the returns on investment but also ensures that the right talent is always available. This supports McCauley and Wakefield's (2006) advice that businesses must be able to identify the most talented individuals and develop them for long-term retention due to the forthcoming talent shortage when many baby boomers approach retirement, leading to companies worldwide competing for a smaller pool of talent.

Outside hires damage corporate culture

Managers are developed from within the organization to maintain the organization's culture, norms and values as new hires do not only bring in new values (that may conflict with the company's), but they also need time to learn the new values or may find it difficult to learn. This makes their development more difficult than that of in-company managers. Also, as potentials for further development are identified by a manager's level of performance and behaviour or characteristics perceived to result in high performance, it is difficult to assess these in new hires. All companies with talent programmes therefore depend solely on internal managers for their talent needs. Though a few managers thought this should not have been the case, they were quick to say that the approach was policy of the mining companies, and therefore, they accepted it. This outcome implies that individual mining companies try to maintain their culture, as outside hires are regarded as bringing in different norms, values and work behaviours that alter these corporate cultures. Being multinationals that thrive to maintain same culture in subsidiaries globally, and with their managers being drivers of this agenda, a manager alien to the company is deemed as defeating this objective.

Necessary changes in policy and practice

The applicability and transferability of a model are dependent on who it is applied to, in which context and whether or not it is acceptable for application. The issues outlined in the previous section provide insight into national managerial talent development in the Ghanaian gold mining industry. They also highlight the importance of the need for new and innovative approaches to better reshape the localization process. The following reforms are therefore recommended. These should help to mitigate most of the difficulties inherent in the localization plan implementation and encourage the MNCs to become more committed towards the process.

Mining companies should renew their commitment to talent management

Companies within the industry should consider a fully integrated process of developing national managers as the study found limited commitment in this regard. This should not be considered as a business cost that should be avoided or just as rebranding of the traditional HR function. Embracing the talent development concept and strategies can build advantage in terms of requisite talents in order to create long-term organizational success.

This requires localizing the talent management actions and processes to obtain the commitment of national managers who will be more willing to follow talent programmes if they are designed and delivered based on traditional Ghanaian methods of learning, which local managers are more familiar with. This calls for the two (effective) indigenous learning approaches – learners to be led by an elder (leader) regarded as wise and knowledgeable, and group learning for learners to exhibit their communal spirit. The suggested methods are informed by two of the cultural dimensions that have been proved to be effective in managing the learning process of indigenous employees in their indigenous environments. These include the traditional Ghanaian's respect for the elderly (authority) and their communal orientation, which they will combine to learn to achieve the desired outcomes when they are in groups and under an authority who should also be an elderly person (Oppong, 2013a). These are likely to produce optimum results and better results than the application of Western approaches which do not effectively address the development needs of national managers.

Employee–employer interests need to be balanced

In designing and implementing talent development programmes, the interests of both employer and employee must be balanced to justify the investment. The dominant practice in industry replicates the organization-man era, where employers solely decide which candidates are ready to be developed to meet the talent needs of the company. Whereas employers want to have the requisite skills when they need them and delivered in line with parent company policies that justify investment, national managers also want prospects for growth and control over their careers which also benefit the larger community and enable them realize their *Ubuntu* spirit. Once this balance is not achieved (employee's expectation in the process not met), national managers are likely to harbour exit intentions and eventually leave. This has been evident in the related data analysed (Oppong & Gold, 2013). This means trainee managers or their respected representatives need to be involved in the design of the talent programmes to ensure trainees' interests are served.

One way of achieving the employer–employee balance is by allowing those developed to apply for higher job openings in the organization as people may leave because they are not happy with their current jobs but may have alternative jobs in the organization that they could be happy with. As the approach in industry is to develop between two and four managers for a given role, there stands to be excess of managers who have successfully passed through the talent process. Despite such a move to retain talent, management should ensure that they do not lose control over their internal talents as an employee's choice of role may not be in line with employer's business interest.

Companies should build a reliable database for identifying potential talent

The various identified indicators of potentials for the talent process are summed up as either higher performance or qualities for improved performance. The right managers are developed only if there is accurate and reliable data detailing indicators of potential to inform the identification and selection, which will also help defuse the communication dilemma. For this part of the talent process to be reliable and more acceptable to national managers, it is recommended that the task of identification should be done verbally and entrusted in 'elders' who are believed to be knowledgeable and trusted by national managers. This is in line with traditional methods of storing information (in memories of elders). Elders in societies are trusted and their opinions respected. Managers will therefore accept as fair any identification of potentials based on traditional Ghanaian methods.

Cost-sharing is needed to improve returns on investment in developing managers

It is difficult to restrict talented people from leaving the organization after developing them. They are not only valuable assets to the company but also expensive investments who are potentially mobile. If they continue to leave, mining companies will not be wrong when they regard investment in talent as business cost that should be avoided to increase profit because the more the company commits resources, the more it loses when talents leave after their development. It is therefore recommended that individual gold mining companies should put in place cost-sharing or cost-reducing measures to improve returns on investment.

Organizations could bond managers for a given period after their development before they could leave to enable the company recoup their investments. For instance, employees could be made to sign a contract stating that if they leave the business before certain period, they will have to pay back the cost, or part thereof. This could be pre-condition for undergoing the talent process. Also, as it may be difficult to stop a manager from leaving, the company can keep an inventory of its talented former staff and maintain ties with them. Some national managers, once they leave, may be willing to come back if conditions in the new employment are below expectation, but in most cases, employees find it difficult to do so. However, once they know that their former employers will be pleased to get them back, they will also be pleased to accept and return. This would require promising them development and matching their expectations. Already trained with the skills, company knowledge and culture, they are ready to perform and contribute right away.

The talent process should be communicated to trainee managers

Industry is divided on how communication should be handled during the talent process (including identification development and notification of talent outcomes). It is recommended that companies inform participants of the programme they are undergoing. This communication could result in one or a combination of the following.

1. It means that organization is being transparent about the potential of the selected people, and this is likely to inflate their expectations and therefore motivate them to achieve these expectations.
2. If it is not communicated initially but the trainee manager gets to know about this through the grapevine, they may engage in behaviour directed towards achieving the targets of the talent process at the expense of their normal work schedule, and management will have difficulty mitigating this.
3. The talent programme should not be forced on the employee. The knowledge creation process benefits both employee and employer. This means the trainee manager should give consent to undergo the programme, which can only be done if the manager is notified.
4. Communication is important because of health and safety. There is a high level of hazards associated with gold mining, and the core businesses (the high risk areas) are the most focused in the talent process. For instance, someone being developed for a higher gold processing role cannot just be observed without making him/her aware of, and taking him/her through, some of the risk spots including handling such dangerous substances as cyanide and mercury.
5. It will allow feedback to be communicated for improved performance. This will be difficult to achieve through the observation approach, even in support functions where health and safety risks are minimal.

With regard to communicating outcomes, transparency should be the key. Participants should know how the process works including criteria for selecting the successful. Once the process is understood and believed to be free from bias, hopes of those not elevated are not crashed, but they can accept outcomes as true reflections of their performance.

Retention tools need to be considered integral part of the talent process

Effective retention tools should be built into the talent process to retain talent during and after their development. Their retention becomes more of a worry as those recently developed are the most likely to leave. It should be noted that due to globalization (and its attendant easy mobility and access to information), talented national managers are not limited to marketing their skills in Ghana but in mining companies and other organizations across the world. It is evident from data that many that were tagged talented left for other countries in and outside Africa. This renders investment in development of human resource expensive and sometimes not worthwhile. If retention strategies are not put in place to motivate managers to stay, the programme becomes worse in several ways than having no talent programme at all.

The actual incentives or motivational factors may vary but whichever is settled on should have clearly defined objectives, which should be aligned with the company's overall strategy and local managers' expectation from work including their obligations towards the wider community. For instance, the CIPD (2010) comparison of employers' and employees' views on motivational rewards indicates that although employers rated bonus highly as a retention tool, employees rated it much less, whereas employees rated basic pay much more highly than employers. Retention tools need to be discussed to ascertain their efficacy in retaining talents; otherwise, they will fail.

Conclusions

It is concluded that, generally, there are no well-structured and sustainable programmes for developing local managers in the Ghanaian gold mining industry, despite such programmes being required by law. Also, the few 'young' talent programmes in place are saddled with numerous challenges. Recommendations for practice have been made, which are intended to offer the way forward for the industry. Possibly, the recommendations in part or whole may be applicable to management localization in other industries and countries, depending on their specific facts. It is hoped the suggested approach injects innovation into the localization process and motivates MNCs to be more committed to achieve the success of the policy. It is the author's view that success of this approach depends to a large extent on the government. Therefore, until the government of Ghana enforces the law on localization and strengthens its monitoring role, industry will continue to be dominated by Western technical management skills. It could be deduced from the talent behaviour of MNCs in industry, and supported by outcomes of various studies (including Bhanugopan & Fish, 2007; Fayol-Song, 2011; Selmer, 2004) that the policy will be a failure if MNCs are left to their own volition. This is because MNCs may see localization as an unnecessarily costly exercise and an attempt to render expatriate managers redundant by giving away their jobs to locals that they develop.

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