Human resource management practices in subsidiaries of Western multinational enterprises in Ghana: The interplay of standardisation and localisation

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Abstract

Western multinational enterprises (MNEs) often face specific challenges when seeking to transfer their human resource management (HRM) practices to their operations in Ghana. The host context exhibits peculiar cultural and institutional environments, different from the West, and these pose significant challenges to the implementation of western-centric HRM practices. Within a diverse and complex context such as Ghana, corporate headquarters of MNEs seek to implement practices which are consistent with the practices that they use at home while host context institutions prefer to utilise local practices. This requires managing the interplay of standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in the host context. Despite the increasing presence of foreign subsidiaries in Ghana, the International Business literature has so far paid limited attention to transfer of HRM practices in relation to this country, and Africa more generally. In this thesis I explore how western MNEs apply their HRM practices in Ghana. In particular, using institutional theory, I investigate how the normative institutional distance between the home countries of western MNEs and Ghana as a host country influences the standardisation and localisation of HRM practices. I employ a qualitative multiple case study approach using semi-structured interviews with employees and managers in purposefully selected foreign subsidiaries in Ghana and triangulate interview data with document analysis. The results suggest that the normative institutional distance does have an influence on the standardisation and localisation of HRM practices. The interplay is as a result of negotiations between subsidiary managers in Ghana and unions/employee representatives and local Ghanaian stakeholders – chiefs and community leaders – with consideration given to both the goals of subsidiaries and the Ghanaian context. This thesis contributes to the theoretical scholarly debate over whether aspects of both localisation and standardisation are implementable concurrently and it explains methodologically how and why interplay occurs. Practical implications associated with my study involve MNEs making decisions about which practices to transfer and which not. Local companies can collaborate with subsidiaries of MNEs and learn innovative HRM practices.

Keywords*: MNEs, Africa, Ghana, HRM, standardisation, localisation, interplay.*

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Chapter 1 Background and motivation of the study

This chapter presents an overview of multinational enterprises (MNEs) and my motivation for joining the scholarly discourse on transfer of human resource management (HRM) practices. The chapter discusses the motives for, and inflows of, foreign direct investment (FDI) to Africa, and Ghana in particular. I consider the role of context in International Business (IB) research and discuss the background of the study area. The gaps in existing research and the questions awaiting answers are presented. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

MNEs are engines of economic growth, conduits of technology and knowledge transfer (Hunya, 2012; Osabutey & Debrah, 2012; Osabutey, Williams, & Debrah, 2014) and vehicles for the transfer and replication of HRM practices (Morley & Collings, 2004; Tayeb, 1999). They are "prime movers of wealth creation" (Kotabe & Mudambi, 2003: 217). MNEs are also major sources of employment and capital formation (Osabutey & Debrah, 2012). According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2015) foreign affiliates of MNEs employed 75 million workers worldwide in 2014. In order to align subsidiaries' objectives with those of corporate headquarters (HQs), MNEs transfer managerial and organisational practices and skills to their foreign operations (UNCTAD, 2000).

MNEs establish subsidiaries internationally through greenfield developments, mergers and acquisitions (Hunya, 2012). Subsidiaries are therefore said to be embedded within the local context of host nations and concurrently linked with the MNE operation (Andersson, Forsgren, & Holm, 2007; Meyer, Mudambi, & Narula, 2011; Mudambi, 2011; Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994). This dual status of subsidiaries provides them with opportunities to use resources of the parent company in combination with the local context resources to produce goods and services (Meyer & Estrin, 2014). These resources may be plant, machinery, equipment and human resources. Meyer and Su (2015) conclude that subsidiaries are not only beneficiaries of knowledge and resources from the parent, but also contributors of knowledge to an MNE's competitiveness.

MNEs in Africa are fundamentally resource-driven due to the continent's vast endowment of natural resources (Anyanwu & Yameogo, 2015; Asiedu, 2006; Barthel, Busse, & Osei, 2011; Cleeve, 2008; Frynas & Paulo, 2007). Cleeve (2008) observed that about 60% of FDI in Africa is into oil and other natural resources. The continent contains 30% of the world's mineral

wealth, including substantial reserves of treasured minerals such as gold, cobalt and platinum (KPMG, 2013).

Also, population growth has attracted FDI in consumer industries such as food, information technology, tourism, finance and retail (UNCTAD, 2014: xix). The main drivers of economic growth in Africa are "rapidly emerging consumer markets, technology leap-frogging, and the opening up of new markets, especially in the service sector" (George, Corbishley, Khayesi, Hass, & Tilhanyk, 2016: 377).

As part of Sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana has not missed the opportunity to attract considerable FDI. As part of efforts to woo investors into the country and to regulate MNEs' activities, the government of Ghana established an independent umbrella body called the Ghana National Investment Centre (GIPC) through an Act of Parliament (GIPC Act 865, 2013). According to the GIPC, Ghana has, in recent years, witnessed continuous augmentation of the inflow of FDI by MNEs. For instance, the number of MNE investment projects increased from 399 in 2012 to 417 in 2013. Of the 417 projects, 310 were wholly owned foreign subsidiaries while 107 were joint ventures between Ghanaians and foreign partners. A total number of 89,398 jobs were expected to be generated from these investments in 2013 as against 24,562 jobs in 2012 (GIPC, 2013: 1). In section 1.2.2, I discuss FDI in Ghana in detail.

I have selected Ghana as the focus of this study because it is the sixth-largest recipient of FDI in Africa and second in West Africa (Ernest & Young, 2015; UNCTAD, 2013). The growth in FDI is significant for this study because of the associated expansion of employment opportunities (GIPC, 2016) and the probable transfer of HRM practices. Kehl (2007) classified Ghana alongside nine other African countries (Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland) as emerging economies. The country advanced to lower middle income status in 2011, with relatively strong democratic institutions, discoveries of oil and gas, and an economic growth rate of eight percent (8%) per annum, leading to significant attraction of FDI (GIPC, 2013; IMF, 2013). According to Sutton and Kpentey (2012: 1), "Ghana has been one of Africa's fastest growing economies over the past decade." Due to the stable institutional environment and the growth of FDI, there has been a corresponding increase in employment (GIPC, 2013).

Western MNEs usually endeavour to transfer HRM practices to their subsidiaries in developing countries using an ethnocentric approach (Siebers, Kamoche, & Li, 2015). These practices are

usually embedded in the parent country's values, assumptions and norms (Muller, 1998). Western MNEs perceive the HRM practices of corporate HQs to be well developed, validated and superior to the indigenous practices of developing countries (Arthur, Woehr, Strong & Akande, 1995; Thite, Wilkinson, & Shah, 2012). Following this argument, my motivation is to examine how successfully Western MNEs impose ethnocentric HRM practices in their subsidiaries in Ghana.

Also, research on the transfer of HRM practices that mirror the policies and practices of MNE parent countries (Myloni, Harzing, & Mirza, 2004; Siebers et al., 2015) often fails to discuss the cultural and institutional elements that hinder the imposition of ethnocentric HRM practices in host contexts (Siebers et al., 2015). In the case of Africa, Kamoche, Chizema, Mellahi and Newenham-Kahindi (2012) observed that the extant literature on Africa has systematically portrayed western management practices as incompatible with the African context. However, a major limitation associated with this line of research according to Kamoche et al. (2012: 2819) is its inability to explain specifically the cultural and institutional characteristics that trigger the "incompatibilities and inappropriateness of western practices." The motivation for my study therefore is to examine the role of the Ghanaian institutional context in limiting the application of ethnocentric HRM practices in the subsidiaries of western MNEs within the local context.

The one-size fits all approach whereby western theories are applied in the conduct of research without due regard to context is becoming increasingly unpopular, and a growing number of IB scholars challenging the established practice of largely treating context as an exogenous variable in research designs (Ghauri, 2004; Michalova, 2011; Tsui, 2007; Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, & Paavilainen-Mantynaki, 2011). These scholars are therefore calling for the incorporation of context into research. Context refers to the "surroundings, environmental forces, and situational opportunities and constraints [which] are methodically and analytically more influential in IB" (Poulis, Poulis & Plakoniannaki, 2013: 306), and it is useful for understanding organisational phenomena (Whetten, 2009). Contextualisation in research has become crucial in IB, as it informs "methodological choices and specifically case selection practices" (Poulis, Poulis & Plakoniannaki, 2013: 305).

Explaining the concept of context, Michailova (2011: 130) succinctly states that it is a

> *dynamic array of actors, features, processes or events which have an influence on a phenomenon that is examined. This influence can be exercised and expressed in*

> *multiple ways…is multifaceted and that both influences and is influenced by the phenomenon under investigation.*

The field of IB is complex and comprises a multiplicity of contexts with some implications for organisational HRM practices. Certain HRM practices may founder in some contexts but succeed in others. Meyer (2006: 120) surmised that "context is important for businesses as they develop their strategies and practices to fit with specific cultures, legal frameworks, geographies and industry structures." For instance, while the 360 degree appraisal is commonly used in some western countries, in Romania, it is often "perceived as alien and intrusive because it is seen to insult management dignity and undermine its authority" (Dalton & Druker, 2012: 596).

Michailova's (2011: 130) reference to the "parochial dinosaur" is particularly interesting in this perspective, in that it alludes to

> *the deep entrenchment in an Anglo-North American paradigm that represents various contextual, theoretical, methodological and presentational biases. Despite the fact that the reality in which we now live and work can no longer be confined to examination through Anglo-North American lenses, the preponderance of research questions, their accompanying theories, the chosen methods and means of articulating research findings still have roots in a distinctly Western, if not US-based, tradition.*

Therefore, even though Ghana has a context that distinguishes it from the western world, I am using borrowed theories and concepts with the aim of contributing to the "global scholarly discourses" (Meyer, 2006: 123) on localisation and standardisation of HRM practices by appropriately contextualising the study within the Ghanaian locale and concurrently embedding it in the international literature. Contextualisation is particularly relevant in emerging countries such as Ghana, where gaining access to organisations to conduct research is challenging and one may often have to abandon certain sites for others, even though those originally chosen are potentially rich sources of information. Conducting research in some contexts in Africa is very difficult and at worst impossible in certain circumstances (Parboteeah, Seriki, & Hoegl, 2014). Ghana poses challenges to conduct research, particularly gaining access to organisations, a situation shared by many other African countries (see Lages, Pfajfar, & Shoham, 2015). I took into consideration the contextual challenges associated with conducting research in Africa and I chose a qualitative research methodology where face-to-face personal interactions facilitated the process of data collection. Context also influences the analysis and interpretation of data. In contexts such as Ghana, which has rarely been examined

deeply, thick descriptions of HRM practices in western subsidiaries and the articulation of the Ghanaian context are vital for both foreign and Ghanaian scholars' understanding

1.1 Contextually important facts about Ghana

According to the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund (2012), Ghana is the second largest economy (after Nigeria) in West Africa and the twelfth largest in Africa. It has a land area of 239,000km². Even more importantly, Ghana outpaces most West African countries in terms of democratic rule, civil liberties, vibrant media and political rights. I elaborate on the politics and economy of Ghana below.

1.1.1 Politics and economy of Ghana

Ghana gained independence from British colonial rule in 1957. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was the Prime Minister and subsequently became the president when Ghana gained the status of a republic in 1960. Prior to independence, Ghana was known as the Gold Coast; it is located along the west coast of Africa, with Ivory Coast bordering it in the west, Togo in the east, Burkina Faso in the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Ghana has ten administrative regions, with Accra being the capital city. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2013), the population of Ghana was about 24.7 million in 2010.

Shortly after independence, the government embraced socialist ideals and implemented a state-controlled economy. There was rapid expansion of state-owned enterprises in the 1960s. However, the plan of establishing an industrialised economy soon eroded as these enterprises were mismanaged (Sorensen & Kuada, 2001). According to Salm and Falola (2002: 24), Nkrumah embarked on ambitious projects that "called for extraordinary spending, quickly depleting the country's coffers and sending the economy into chaos…within ten years Ghana accumulated a foreign debt of US$1 billion." Subsequently, the country witnessed political instability with change of governments from civilian to military and military to civilian, leading to a sharp economic decline. "With the exception of the First Republic under Nkrumah (1960-1966), the interludes of civilian governments under the Second (1969-72) and Third (1979-81) Republics have been short-lived, unable to survive for up to three years without being overthrown in a coup d'état" (Abdulai, 2009: 2).

In 1983 the government of Ghana, with the help of the IMF and the World Bank, embarked on a structural reform programme aimed at resuscitating the economy through price liberalisation,

rationalisation and privatisation of state-owned enterprises, infrastructural development and legal provisions to improve the overall investment climate (Sorensen & Kuada, 2001). The structural adjustment programme brought in its wake massive retrenchment of labour in the public sector, primarily designed to reduce waste, improve efficiency and to lessen the burden on the national budget (Debrah, 2001).

Despite such economic issues, Ghana provides an attractive environment for both domestic and foreign businesses. The country is relatively peaceful, politically stable and successfully conducted its sixth consecutive democratic elections in 2012. Also, corruption is comparatively low in Ghana relative to many sub-Saharan African countries. For instance, in the global corruption perception index (CPI) of 176 countries in 2012, Ghana ranked in position 64 and scored 45% on a scale of 0% to 100% with 0% being highly corrupt and 100% very clean (CPI, 2012). In the same report, Ivory Coast ranked 130 and scored 29%, Togo ranked 128 and scored 30% while Mali ranked 105 and scored 34%. Therefore, Ghana is more likely to be a centre of attraction for FDI than these nations.

The economy of Ghana is categorised into three sectors: agriculture (e.g. crops and livestock, fishing, cocoa production and marketing, forestry and logging), industry (e.g. mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity and water, construction) and services (e.g. hotels and restaurants, transport and storage, finance, insurance, real estate, information and communication). The economy has transformed significantly, with agriculture which hitherto dominated the economy now being replaced by the service sector. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), the service sector accounts for 51% of national output, followed by agriculture 30% and industry 19% (GSS, 2013). Despite agriculture falling to second position, the sector continues to be the lifeblood of the economy as it generates employment for about 45% of the labour force (Okudzeto, Mariki, Lal, & Senu, 2015).

With regards to international trade, Ghana's main export commodities in the agriculture sector are cocoa, cashew nuts, sheanuts, fresh or chilled fish, pineapples, and medicinal plants while the extractive industry sector comprises of gold, oil, diamond, bauxite and manganese. Ghana also exports handicrafts such as statuettes, basket ware, paintings and ceramic products (Ackah & Acquah, 2012). Imported items include capital equipment, refined petroleum, foodstuffs, chemicals, transport equipment and manufactured goods (CIA, 2015). The informal economy which refers to production and employment that takes place in an unincorporated or unregistered enterprises (ILO, 1993) complements the formal sector. Employment without

legal or social protection and not regulated by the government is classified as informal employment (ILO, 2003). The informal economy accounts for 86% of total employment in Ghana (GSS, 2013). The high percentage reported in the informal sector is partially attributed to the retrenchment exercise in the mid-1980s as a large pool of unemployed labour with little options gravitated towards the informal sector (Osei-Boateng & Ampratwum, 2011). It is also argued that the decline in the quality of education and mismatch between the skills that graduates acquire from tertiary education and those sought by industry contribute to the growing numbers of persons employed in the informal sector (Bawakyillenuo et al., 2013). Thus, there is a need to revise "tertiary education and pedagogy and curriculums" and to invest in technical skills and training in order to meet the needs of industry (Osabutey & Debrah, 2012; Osabutey, 2013: 229). Close linkages between industries and tertiary institutions such as polytechnics and universities in Ghana need to be established to facilitate knowledge and technology transfer to students (Osabutey, 2013; Osabutey & Debrah, 2012).

1.1.2 FDI in Ghana

According to Barthel et al. (2011), there are three most important motivations for MNE investments in Ghana. Specifically, in order of priority, they are macro-economic and political environment, market size and growth, natural and physical resources. They note that with the "wealth of natural resources, relative political stability and an excellent geographic position, ensuring access to markets to Europe and the sub-region, Ghana is a suitable place for foreign investors" (Barthel et al., 2011: 405). Nevertheless, there are certain constraints to FDI in Ghana which include access to land to site facilities, since the process of land acquisition is cumbersome, coupled with low productivity of the labour force and inadequate skilled labour in technical and managerial disciplines (Barthel et al., 2011).

The institutional environment, protection of investors and the provision of investment incentives also propel the investment choices of MNEs (Barthel et al., 2011). The GIPC governs investments in several sectors of the economy excluding mining, oil and gas. For instance, the law grants import and tax exemptions for plant inputs, machinery and parts imported for the purpose of investment. These tax incentives are accessible upon registration with the GIPC. There are also sector-specific laws regulating banking, non-banking financial institutions, insurance, fishing, securities, telecommunications, energy, mining and real estate. Foreign investors are required to satisfy the provisions of sector-specific laws. Investments in the form of acquisitions, mergers, takeovers and greenfield projects are regulated by the GIPC

Act, 2013 (Act 865). Thus as a result of the tax incentives, there has been significant increase in the number of foreign MNE subsidiaries in Ghana. For instance, the GIPC quarterly report indicates that for the first quarter of 2015, the Centre recorded 38 new projects of which 24 were wholly-foreign owned enterprises valued at US$1,030.13 million. The remaining 14 were joint ventures between Ghanaians and foreign partners valued at US$120.15 million.

The total number of new projects registered in 2015 was 170 with a total estimated value of US$2.68 billion (GIPC, 2015). These enterprises were expected to create 14,948 jobs with 13,534 jobs for Ghanaians and the remaining 1,414 for expatriates. GIPC also recorded 136 new projects in 2016 with a total of 8,103 jobs expected to be created. The capital city, Accra, is the recipient of most of the FDI. For instance 78.26% (106) of all the projects registered in 2016 are located in Greater Accra region (GIPC, 2016). The main investor countries in Ghana include USA, Britain, France, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, Norway, India and China (GIPC, 2015; 2016).

1.1.3 Ghana's national culture

Ghana has over 50 ethnic groups with each group having its own cultural features and traditions that give it identity, self-respect and pride (Ghana National Commission on Culture, 2004). The country is multilingual in character and has about 50 languages (Dakubu, 1996) with English language remaining the de facto, lingua franca (Adika, 2012; Bodomo, 1996). Bodomo (1996) points out that Ghana's languages can be categorised into ten major language subgroups which did not necessarily conform to the ten administrative regions of the country. Bodomo (1996: 39) describes Ghanaians (and for that matter many Africans) as polyglotic and the society very multilingual, meaning "using their mother tongue in their immediate local environment and any other inter-ethnic languages and lingua francas once they leave their environment." Some of these indigenous languages are used in the formal educational systems (Bodomo, 1996). Even though English is the official language, only about 20.1% of the population eleven years and older can read and write in the English language (GSS, 2013). According to Salm and Falola (2002: 30), despite earlier efforts by the colonialists and missionaries to "subvert African culture in favour of colonial and Christian customs," there was hardly any success because once "[…] Ghanaians became educated in the Western ways, they also began to reclaim the African past […]" In 2010 71.2% of the population were Christians (Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal/Charismatic and other Christian) while 17.6%

were Muslim and 5.2% were traditionalists. About 5.3% indicated that they had no association to any religion (Ghana Statistical Survey, 2013: 63).

With regards to Ghana's socio-cultural context, Gyekye (2014: 161) aptly sums it up as follows:

> *in spite of the multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual character of the Ghanaian society, there surely are cultural values that can be said to be shared by the different ethno-cultural groups in Ghana. It is impossible, in fact inconceivable, for peoples who have lived closely together for many, many decades not to affect one another culturally, not to borrow from one another's culture. As a result of cultural contacts, neighbouring cultures have not only learnt from one another but they have also had influences on one another. It would therefore be correct to say that cultural interpenetration through cultural contacts, exchanges and borrowing or appropriation of values, ideas, practices and institutions has resulted in the emergence of common or shared cultural values and practices that would justify one's talking of 'Ghanaian cultural values.*

Ohemeng (2009) noted that Ghanaians demonstrate collectivism and power distance. Collectivist societies underscore the importance of group goals, interdependence amongst members of a group with norms serving as a regulatory mechanism for people's behaviour (Vogt & Laher, 2009). Ghanaians attribute significant meaning to social relationships and it is common for individuals to be associated with members of an in-group. Members of an in-group are usually bonded by family ties or kinship with a responsibility to help each other when the need arises. The notion of family extends to the organisation. Thus as a member of "the organisation's extended family" employees expect support in the form of "material and socio-emotional needs," such as paid leave of absence and financial assistance in times of bereavement (Debrah, 2001: 125). Amoako-Agyei (2009) emphasises that considering the important role of the family in collectivist societies such as Ghana, foreign executives should learn to take the employees' family concerns and interests seriously if they want to succeed. Haybatollahi and Gyekye (2015: 27) conclude that organisational workers in Ghana are generally submissive to authority and "have a high need for social interconnectedness and mutual dependence and place premium on interpersonal harmony and loyalty, all of which make them feel bound to one another."

However, Earley and Gibson (1998) explained that in collective cultures, individual goals are pursued alongside group goals but personal goals could be sacrificed for group goals due to social pressure and normative control. This could equally be applicable to Ghana where social relations are considered vital to the individual (Aryee, 2004). Gyekye (2014: 173) made a distinct clarification of collectivism and individualism by emphasising that "in the social context of the community, each member acknowledges the existence of common values,

obligations and understandings and feels a commitment to the community…" but "it would be more correct to describe that order as amphibious, for it manifests features of both communality and individuality…African social thought seeks to avoid the excesses of the two exaggerated systems, while allowing for a meaningful, albeit uneasy, interaction between the individual and the society" (Gyekye, 1988: 31-32).

Power distance refers to "the extent to which the members of a society accept that power in "institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1985: 347). In high power distance cultures, workers are supervised closely. Management exercises authority through the administration of rewards and punishments. Management tends to be paternalistic and authoritarian (Beugre & Offodile, 2001; Chen & Miller, 2010). Consequently, as a result of the high power distance in the Ghanaian society, "senior managers perceive the conspicuous exercise of power as a source of respect and status within their immediate environment" (Kuada, 1994: 172). Power is both a means of influencing situations to achieve targeted objectives and secondly as a status symbol displayed for its own sake. There is close supervision of subordinates, elaborate instructions on all matters and disapproval of deviations from such instructions (Kuada, 1994). Aryee (2004) argued that despite the fact that decision-making was by consensus in traditional Ghanaian society, it was absent in organisational life due to the power distance. Aryee (2004: 125) surmised that "there is a preference for centralised decision-making, with subordinates reduced to implementing decisions and a "check with the boss mind-set." Gyekye and Salminen (2005) noted that the Ghanaian work place environment is characterised by a hierarchical system based on inequality, paternalism, obedience and deference to authority. They thus conclude:

> *by Ghana's sociocultural standards, the power and respect that are exercised at home by fathers, as the preservers and leaders of the family lineage, are bestowed onto workplace superiors and top management. The paternalistic managerial style that exists in Ghana's work environment thus derives much of its strength from the traditional expectation that a top management official assumes total responsibility for the welfare of his workers…thus allows the Ghanaian subordinate worker to reciprocate with feelings of dependency and loyalty towards workplace authority" (Gyekye & Salminen, 2005: 46).*

Managers in paternalistic cultures create a family work environment and provide care, protection and nurturance in both work and non-work lives of employees and in turn employees demonstrate loyalty and deference to management in appreciation for the paternal support (Aycan et al., 2013; Aycan et al., 2000; Jackson, 2016). Thus managers in Ghana are expected

to provide direction and foresight to their subordinates and failure to meet these goals is often interpreted as ineffective leadership (Hale & Fields, 2007).

However, Kuada (1994) explains that Ghanaian managers are usually selective in their patronage to subordinates. Managers provide extra opportunities and privileges to subordinates subservient to their interests. As a result, "the Ghanaian employee knows that it is necessary to cultivate the right people, particularly his immediate superior, in order to have a successful career" (Kuala, 1994: 173). Subordinates tend to place more emphasis on personal loyalty and goodwill to their superiors than to rely on their own competence. Thus ingratiation of the superior becomes the preoccupation of many. Also, Gyekye and Salminen (2005) reveal that the gap between management and subordinates is exacerbated by differences in educational status and expertise resulting in fear and unwillingness on the part of subordinates to disagree with decisions of their superiors. Kamoche and Harvey (2006: 166) suggest that expatriate managers in Africa "may have to study how to negotiate these tensions, favouritism, and potential ethnic jealousies among various organisational groupings" for successful operations of their enterprises. The African and Ghanaian culture tend to influence the form of HRM practices that emerge in Ghana.

In the next section, I identify the research gaps and discuss the objectives and questions that my research seeks to address.

1.2 Research gaps, objectives and questions

A review of the extant IB literature reveals that the study of HRM practices of MNEs has focused more on the developed world such as the US (e.g. Beechler & Yang, 1994; Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994); UK (e.g. Tayeb, 1999); Germany (e.g. Ferner & Varul, 2000) than Africa. Hoskisson, Eden, Lau, and Wright (2000) note that there is considerable research on enterprises strategies in China, parts of Central and Eastern Europe, with little research attention on Africa. Africa is relatively under-researched in the fields of HRM and IB (Anakwe, 2002; Kamoche; 2011). Also, Budhwar and Debrah (2001: xvii) point out that there is lack of "information regarding the dynamics of HRM in developing countries" despite their growing significance as avenues for cheap resources, buyers, competitors and capital users. Hearn (2014) explains that despite evidence of the importance of location-based factors influencing FDI, there is dearth of literature regarding multinational enterprise activity in Africa. In the case of Ghana, Akorsu (2011: 53) observed that even though Ghana has attracted a number of foreign investors, "very

little, if any, systematic empirical research has been conducted in Ghana – a developing African country – to ascertain the validity or otherwise of conflicting claims about labour management practices among MNEs in developing countries." Peng (2001) concludes that there is dearth of research on MNEs in developing countries.

In light of the above gaps identified in the literature, there is a compelling need for HRM research in other geographical contexts so as to broaden the scope of the IB literature. Particularly, Budhwar and Sparrow (2002) explain that academic scholars and management practitioners now need to know how human resources are managed in different regions of the world and how persons in different parts of the globe perceive or react to similar concepts and pressures. Anakwe (2002: 1043) states that "increased international business activities and emphasis on globalisation" necessitates studies on HRM practices in the African context. Kamoche et al. (2012: 2829) suggest the need for researchers in the African context to

> *re-orient their research questions and focus on how MNEs balance the dual pressures of developing globally integrated management policies and practices while trying to adapt and respond to local cultural and institutional pressures.*

MNEs, particularly from North America and Western Europe, often assume that their HRM practices are superior to host countries (e.g. Kamoche, & Newenham-Kahindi, 2012) and therefore endeavour to replicate such practices across the globe in a standard manner without due regard to context. For instance in an exploratory study into the applicability of Western HRM practices in Algeria, Mellahi and Frynas (2003: 75) argued that "while management justifications for the transfer of western HRM practices capture the economic and technical rationale for western HRM practices, they fail to identify local conditions under which these HRM practices might be transferred" resulting in "unplanned and haphazard importation of western HRM practices." Mellahi and Frynas (2003: 74) further argued that management preposterously and paradoxically argued that the incongruity between cultural norms and work values emanated from the failure of workers to leave "their cultural baggage at the entry point of the company." HRM practices that work effectively in one culture might become unproductive in a different one. MNEs have to consider the local cultural and institutional context in the transfer of HRM practices (Martin & Beaumont, 1998).

My research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the interplay between western HRM practices and the local institutional context and how best western MNEs can apply their HRM practices in Ghana. It is important to understand the interplay between western HRM practices

and the local cultural and institutional context for smooth implementation (Anakwe, 2002). I summarise briefly the research gaps below.

i. The applicability and efficacy of western HRM practices in African countries such as Ghana are questionable due to local cultural and institutional factors (Jackson, 2002; Mendonca, 2000; Kanungo & Jaeger, 1990) and there is relatively little research in IB on Africa (Kamoche, 2011).
ii. There is relatively little literature regarding MNE activity on the African continent (Hearn, 2014).
iii. Despite the significant growth of foreign MNEs in Ghana (GIPC, 2013) there is scant research on their HRM practices (Akorsu, 2011).

The objective of my study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the rationale for western MNEs standardising or localising their HRM practices in Ghana. The conflicting pressures for subsidiaries to align their HRM practices with that of HQ while concurrently meeting the expectations of the Ghanaian institutional context is the focus of my research. My first objective is to:

- *Examine how the Ghanaian institutional context influences standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana.*

As a result of differences in the institutional factors between the host and parent countries of western MNEs, transfer of HRM practices from one context to another is often problematic. MNEs may need to consider cultural norms, values, expectations, beliefs within the local context and which can influence the standardisation and localisation of subsidiary HRM practices. My second objective is to:

i. Investigate the rationale for standardisation of HRM practices in western subsidiaries in Ghana.

According to Osabutey et al. (2014: 564) foreign firms in Ghana usually have superior resources and expertise and as a result are likely to impose ethnocentric HRM practices in their subsidiaries (Kamoche & Newenham-Kahindi, 2012). They may thus perceive Ghanaian HRM practices as inferior and seek to transplant their HRM practices with a strong belief of superiority. My third objective is to:

ii. *Analyse the rationale for localisation of HRM practices in western subsidiaries in Ghana*.

This objective seeks to understand how the local cultural and institutional contexts of the host country impede the smooth implementation of western HRM practices. The fourth objective seeks to:

iii. Examine how western MNEs manage the interplay of localisation and standardisation.

This objective seeks to understand how the various actors involved in the implementation of subsidiary HRM practices are shaped by varying interests. Gamble and Hung (2009) aptly point out that the transfer of organisational practices is a contested activity. This contested process might lead to "symbiotic benefits of foreign-local collaboration" (Osabutey et al., 2014: 568) such as MNEs tapping local knowledge in order to compete effectively and host country employees gaining managerial expertise and technical knowledge from subsidiaries of western MNEs.

In pursuit of accomplishing the foregoing research objectives, I formulated research questions. Research questions serve as the linchpins of my study by interlacing the literature review with methods, data collection and analysis and conclusions. The research questions provide "point of orientation for an investigation" (Bryman, 2007: 5). As a result, the questions serve as my reference points in assessing the suitability of methods, sources and relevance of data for my study. The research questions therefore define the boundaries of my study. Crafting appropriate research question can be achieved through a thorough review of the literature to identify gaps in the existing scholarly conversations. I formulated the following research question to guide me in the empirical investigation.

i. Does the Ghanaian institutional context influence standardisation and localisation of HRM practices of western subsidiaries? Why and how?

ii. Do subsidiaries of western MNEs standardise their HRM practices in Ghana? Why and how?

iii. Do subsidiaries of western MNEs localise their HRM practices in Ghana? Why and how?

iv. How do western MNEs manage the interplay between localisation and standardisation of HRM practices in their subsidiaries in Ghana?

My research seeks to complement current studies in IB on Africa and also provide directions for future research and policy formulation.

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis comprises of six chapters. The present chapter discusses background and motivation of the research, research context and contextually important facts about Ghana (politics and economy, FDI, culture), research gaps, objectives and questions. Chapter 2 reviews literature salient to my study. The chapter discusses: the literature review process; cross-border transfer of HRM practices; factors influencing transfer; strategies and mechanisms used for the transfer of HRM practices. The review helped in positioning the present study in the context of previous studies. Chapter 3 discusses theory and the relevance of institutions in shaping the behaviours and actions of firms. The chapter presents institutional theory as a theoretical lens for this research. I developed a conceptual model that illustrates the interplay of the cultural and institutional forces of the host context and the HRM practices from corporate HQs of western MNEs. Chapter 4 describes the research design and methodology. I discuss and justify the reasons for applying a qualitative approach for this study due to the novel nature of the context and the suitability of the case study approach using semi-structured interviews and documents as sources of data to answer the why and how questions. The chapter also discusses the challenges associated with the collection of data in a developing country context such as Ghana. In chapter 5, I present the data analysis and main findings of the HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana. Chapter 6 discusses the findings in relation to the main research questions specifically on why and how western MNEs apply both polycentric and ethnocentric HRM practices in their subsidiaries in Ghana. The chapter concludes with contributions to theory, methodology, practical implications, limitations and directions for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature review

In this section, I review significant extant literature on transfer of HRM practices and categorise it into relevant subsections that provide understanding of the research phenomenon. The chapter commences by explaining the process of conducting the review. This is followed by an overview of the HRM practices applied in my research and HRM practices in Africa and Ghana. In turn, I examine cross-border transfer of HRM practices, namely factors influencing and mechanisms for the transfer of HRM practices. I also examine transfer of HRM practices from developed economies to developing countries. Additionally, the chapter examines the standardisation and localisation of HRM practices and the interplay of subsidiary HRM practices. Examining the literature across these areas provides a comprehensive understanding of HRM practices within MNEs.

The literature review serves as a platform to understand the current state of knowledge on transfer of HRM practices from developed to developing economies and to identify existing gaps in the scholarly discourse. In so doing I avoid duplicating existing research and uncover areas where research is needed (see Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016; Webster & Watson, 2002).

The review therefore provides foundation for legitimising the research questions and justifies the current study as one that adds something novel to the scholarly conversations (see Levy & Ellis, 2006) on the transfer of HRM practices in IB. In so doing, the review authenticates the approaches, methodologies and methods of my study. The review also illuminates the theoretical, empirical and methodological themes that have been applied in similar research, and which are beneficial for the current study. I examine different theoretical perspectives on transfer of HRM practices to be able to contextualise my research questions and to develop a conceptual model for the present study.

2.1 The process of conducting the literature review

My literature review process started with consultations with the University of Auckland library reference specialists, attending literature review workshops organised by the University Library and reading research recommended by my supervisors. I also read textbooks which provided me with the basic and broad overview of the field of IB. Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2014) explain that doctoral advisors, colleagues and library reference specialists are vital sources of information for the literature review process.

I critically and systematically reviewed the content of relevant articles on HRM practices in leading IB journals ranked by Dubois and Reeb (2000) and Tüselmann, Sinkovics and Pischulov (2016). Taking cognisance of the fact that "for a study of a well-researched topic, there may be extremely relevant theories, findings, or methods in other fields or disciplines" (Maxwell, 2006: 29), I added top-tier management journals ranked by Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1993), Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Bachrach and Podsakoff (2005) and Tuselman et al. (2016). This resulted in 33 journals to which I added 11 journals related to my research. As a result, 44 journals are included in the literature review of my research. Table 2.1 introduces the journals included in the review process.

Table 2.1: Journals included in the literature review

Academy of Management Journal	International Journal of Intercultural Relations
Academy of Management Perspectives	International Journal of Management
Academy of Management Review	International Journal of Manpower
Administrative Science Quarterly	International Journal of Selection and Assessment
Africa Journal of Management	International Management
American Sociological Review	International Studies of Management and Organisation
Asia Pacific Journal of Management	Journal of Applied Psychology
Compensation and Benefits Review	Journal of International Business Studies
Employee Relations	Journal of International Management
European Journal of Industrial Relations	Journal of Management
European Journal of International Management	Journal of Management Development
European Management Journal	Journal of Management Studies
Global Business Review	Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology
Global Strategy Journal	Journal of Vocational Behaviour
Human Relations	Journal of World Business
Human Resource Development International	Management International Review
Human Resource Management	Organisation Studies
Industrial and Labour Relations Review	Personnel Psychology
Industrial Relations	Personnel Review
International Business Review	Research in Organisational Behaviour
International Journal of Cross Cultural Management	Strategic Management Journal
International Journal of Human Resource Management	Thunderbird International Business Review

I reviewed journal articles because Mangematin and Baden-Fuller (2008: 118) argued that "journals are not only significant foci for the dissemination of knowledge, but they also have a role in identifying the research agenda through editorials, invited contributions from leading

thinkers and special issues." I particularly focused on what Sandberg and Alvesson (2011) termed neglect spotting. Neglect spotting is identifying

> *a topic or an area where no (good) research has been carried out. There is virgin territory – a white spot on the knowledge map – that produces an imperative for the alert scholar to develop knowledge about the neglected area" (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2011: 30).*

All these actions resulted in a review of over two hundred articles on HRM practices in MNEs in order to spot gaps and to formulate my research questions. I reviewed only articles published in scholarly peer-reviewed journals that have relevant information relating to the concepts and issues connected with my research. I excluded trade journals from the review process. Sandberg and Alvesson (2011) suggest that a comprehensive review of literature helps in identifying gaps in scholarly conversations. Whilst reading extensively the journal articles, I particularly paid attention to the reasons advanced by scholars for their research and the suggestions for future research. In this way, I was able to spot gaps in the literature and to generate questions.

I conducted both forward and backward snowballing. Forward snowballing refers to "identifying articles that have cited the articles found in the search and backward snowballing from the reference lists" (Jalali & Wohlin, 2012: 29). Backward snowballing starts with the knowledge of a few articles in the areas of interest and finding out from the reference lists those relevant articles that have been cited and subsequently retrieving them. The process continues with new articles retrieved until no more relevant articles are found (Sayers, 2007). I snowballed from the reference lists of journal articles and books to identify additional relevant sources of literature. Some of the books were mentioned in the reference lists of journal articles whilst others were recommended by my subject librarian. Textbooks usually present comprehensive overviews of certain topics and theories. Snowballing is significant in identifying articles from a variety of sources. Jalali and Wohlin (2012: 30) note that snowballing is "the best approach for identifying sources published in obscure journals." I snowballed from the reference lists in line with the steps outlined by Jalali and Wohlin (2012) who describe the snowballing process as comprising three stages by initially

> *starting the searches in the leading journals or the conference proceedings to get a starting set of papers* (ii) *going backward by reviewing the reference lists of the relevant articles found in step 1 and step 2 (iterate until no new papers are identified), and* (iii) *going forward by identifying articles citing the articles identified in the previous steps.*

Reviewing additional articles that have cited an article helps in locating follow-up research on the current phenomenon of study and thereby placing the research problem in broader scholarly context. I also included other relevant articles that I found when I was actually searching for some other information relating to methods, which Greenhalgh and Peacock (2005) referred to as serendipitous discovery. Furthermore, I searched Google Scholar, Emerald, Business Source Premier, and other University of Auckland Library databases. Some of these databases provide citation tracking by indicating articles that have referenced articles retrieved from the databases (Sayers, 2007). I followed this process tracking citations sometimes until I was not able to find any more relevant articles. I also conducted computer searches on Google using certain key words such as "HRM practices", "HRM practices in Ghana", "strategies for transfer" and "Headquarters of MNE."

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the theoretical and empirical approaches utilised in IB, particularly in the area of transfer of HRM practices, I analysed articles for the following essential aspects: reference, issue, research question, theory, method and key findings. I also categorised articles into empirical and conceptual. Conceptual papers are those without empirical data (Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela, 2006; Ott & Michailova, 2016) but which are not necessarily theoretical ones (Ott & Michailova, 2016). Table 2.2 illustrates some examples of empirical articles researched from the literature (and including the essential aspects previously noted) in respect to standardisation and localisation of HRM practices.

In addition to academic journals, the review covered 13 books with an international focus such as *The Routledge Companion to Business in Africa, Managing Across Borders: The Transnational Solution, Handbook of Research in International Human Resource Management, International Business: Strategy and the Multinational Company* and *Advances in International Management.* I also reviewed individual chapters in other books including *Human Resource Management in Developing Countries, International Dimensions of Human Resource Management, the Changing Geography of International Business* and *Understanding and Managing the Multinational Firm.* This provided a comprehensive and up-to-date review of the literature on HRM practices in MNEs.

I used my research questions to determine key concepts and theories relating to my thesis. I used the key concepts stated in the research questions namely "institutions", "western MNEs", "standardisation", "localisation", "HRM practices", "interplay" to examine how other researchers in IB have applied them in similar studies and their findings. Subsequently, I

organised my review thematically by grouping topics I found in key researches related to my study. I adopted the funnel approach to organise the themes whereby distinct pieces of information are funnelled from broad to specific researches linked to my study.

Table 2.2: Some illustrations of empirical studies on standardisation and localisation of HRM practices

Reference	Issue	Research question	Theory	Method	Key findings
Ando, N. (2014). The effect of localisation on subsidiary performance in Japanese multinational corporations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(14), 1995-2012.	This study examines how the localisation of a foreign subsidiary in terms of staffing, affects the subsidiary's performance.	How does the localisation of a foreign subsidiary in terms of staffing affect the subsidiary's performance?	Institutional	Using a panel dataset consisting of 4662 foreign subsidiaries of Japanese firms	This study finds that localisation is positively associated with subsidiary performance for the subsidiaries operating in developed economies. In contrast, for subsidiaries in emerging economies, localisation does not improve subsidiary performance.
Björkman, I., Fey, C. F., & Park, H. J. (2007). Institutional theory and MNC subsidiary HRM practices: evidence from a three-country study. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38(3), 430-446.	The paper examines factors hypothesised to influence the HRM practices adapted in US, Japanese and European MNE subsidiaries.	What factors influence the adaptation of HRM practices in US, Japanese, and European MNC subsidiaries located in Russia, Finland and the US?	Institutional	Survey based on a sample of 158 subsidiaries	The status of the subsidiary HR department and the level of its involvement in knowledge transfer with other parts of the MNC had an effect on the type of HR practices used such as appraisal, communication, promotion and comp.
Gamble, J. (2003). Transferring human resource practices from the United Kingdom to China: the limits and potential for convergence. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *14*(3), 369-387.	This study examines the transfer of a British-owned retail firm's HRM practices from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China.	What are employees' experiences of differing HRM practices?	Institutional	Qualitative case study approach. Interviews with a cross section of seventy employees.	Expectations that service-sector firms are more likely to embrace local HRM practices rather than transfer those from the parent country have not been supported. Cultural distance does not present an insurmountable barrier to the transfer of HRM practices.
Kamoche, K., & Newenham-Kahindi, A. (2012). Knowledge appropriation and HRM: the MNC experience in Tanzania. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(14), 2854-2873.	The paper compares the approaches of two global MNE banks, Citibank, an American bank, and Standard Bank, a South African bank, and examines how each aligns its HR practices and policies with its conception of corporate culture.	How is knowledge appropriated through the processes of human resource management and culture by MNEs in a developing nation, Tanzania?	Foucault's social theory	Qualitative case study: using two case studies: semi-structured interviews Archival documents, observation	Recruitment and formal and well documented appraisal systems were created at HQ. City Bank used western management practices while Standard Bank mixed individualised and collective/team approach to HR.

Meyer, K. E., & Su, Y. S. (2015). Integration and responsiveness in subsidiaries in emerging economies. *Journal of World Business*, *50*(1), 149-158.	This paper examines the concept of 'transnational strategy' and under what conditions this strategy is most appropriate.	How do companies achieve integration and responsiveness simultaneously?	Contingency	Quantitative: questionnaire survey of 345 MNE subsidiaries	This study finds that transnational strategy enhances subsidiary performance in particular if the subsidiary is wholly owned, if it was not established by acquisition, and if it is highly export oriented.
Rosenzweig, P. M., & Nohria, N. (1994). Influences on Human Resource Management Practices in Multinational Corporations. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 25(2), 229-251.	This paper examines the forces that shape HRM practices in MNC affiliates	What forces influence human resource management in MNCs? What are the determinants of management practices in MNCs?	Institutional	Survey of 249 USA subsidiaries of foreign-based MNEs	The degree of similarity to local practices is significantly influenced by the method of founding, dependence on local inputs, the presence of expatriates, and the extent of communication with the parent. There is also evidence of country of origin effects.

2.2 Overview of the HRM practices applied in my research

In recent times, there has been a rapid expansion of MNEs into emerging and developing economies "which are increasingly key for their (MNEs) growth and success" (Hoenen & Kostova, 2015). With the increasing standardisation of technology, products and methods of production across the globe, MNEs are increasingly resorting to distinctive contributions of their human resources as a basis for competitiveness (Morley & Collins, 2004). Also, as a result of the sprawling nature of the MNE, others have argued that HRM practices serve as the glue that holds the MNE together (Evans, 1992; 1993; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1991).

Effective HRM practices are becoming increasingly important for companies in the face of a shortage of highly trained and qualified employees (De Kok, Uhlaner, & Thurik, 2006). However, there has not been any consensus on a fixed list of HRM practices that can be classified as best practices for managing people (Becker & Gehart, 1996; Boselie, Dietz & Boon, 2005; De Kok, Uhlaner, & Thurik, 2006).

In a review of 104 journal articles using a variety of HRM practices, Boselie et al. (2005) identified four practices in order of their popularity to be: training and development, performance-related pay and reward schemes, performance appraisal, and recruitment and selection. My research investigates these four HRM practices in addition to work-life balance, diversity management and employee communication and participation. I researched these HRM practices individually in line with Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994) who argued that different HRM practices differ in their level of standardisation and localisation which makes it necessary to examine them separately. In the next section, I explain the various HRM practices.

2.2.1 Recruitment and selection

Recruitment is the process of identifying and attracting suitable potential job candidates in sufficient numbers and quality from which an organisation can choose the appropriate ones to fill job positions (Russell & Brannan, 2016; Shen & Edwards, 2004). Organisations usually target best qualified job applicants to fill vacant positions (Rees & Smith, 2014). MNEs for instance often lure away talented and skilled employees from their competitors by offering them wage premiums. This technique is referred to as poaching targeted at competitors' pool of talent, particularly in cases of shortages of skilled employees (Farrel & Grant, 2005; Fortwengel & Jackson, 2016; Gardner, 2002; Hsieh, Lavoie, & Samek, 1999; Sheldon & Li, 2013). Headhunting is another strategy of recruitment targeted at getting the best persons to fill

senior level management positions (Marcin, 2008). This is further exacerbated by high attrition rates (Haybatollahi & Gyekye, 2015). Organisations are also employing contract and agency workers as a way of reducing cost in the face of growing competition (Purcell & Purcell, 1998). Poaching and headhunting are likely to be high among subsidiaries for the technical, middle and senior management levels. Selection on the other hand refers to the process of assessing and judging the fit between an applicant and the job, taking into consideration the knowledge, skills, abilities and other features deemed desirable for the performance of the job (Dowling, Schuler, & Welch, 1994; Russell & Brannan, 2016). Organisations also select existing employees to fill vacancies. This is usually achieved through the creation of talent pools. Employees are segmented into different categories based on their performance with some regarded as star performers and others low performers. The star performers are strategic to the organisation (Iles, Chuai, & Preece, 2010; Makela, Bjorkman, & Ehrnrooth, 2010) with greater resources usually devoted to them (Iles et al., 2010). Potential job candidates may also be selected based on how their behaviours and attitudes match with the values of an organisation (Russell & Brannan, 2016).

Japanese companies are likely to select a person with broad educational qualifications to be subsequently trained to acquire multiple skills whilst the US focuses selection criteria on specialisms that allow the "new recruit to fit the already determined position, with or without further training as may seem necessary at a later stage" (Tayeb, 2005: 31). However, in Africa and some Middle East countries, recruitment is likely to be done through "informal networks of relatives, friends and acquaintances" (Tayeb, 2005: 31).

2.2.2 Training and development

According to Fitzgerald (1992: 84), training is "the acquisition of knowledge and skill for present tasks" while development refers to "the acquisition of knowledge and skill that may be used in the present or future." The fundamental distinction between the two concepts is that development is long-term in focus between one to three years, while training is short term, usually one year or less. Training and development in MNEs are used to enhance employees' personal and organisational skills, competencies and knowledge usually to a level that is comparable to competitors to be able to compete favourably (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994; Taylor & Davies, 2004; Zheng, Hyland, & Soosay 2007). The overall goal is to nurture employees to become more efficient and effective, leading to the achievement of organisational goals. New recruits usually undergo orientation programmes and on-the-job training. In some

developing countries, apprenticeship is widely used for lower level employees alongside formal courses that are delivered in-house or externally sponsored programmes in some educational institutions (Tayeb, 2005).

Training programmes are aimed at providing employees with the abilities and confidence to be able to work effectively (Boselie et al., 2005). MNEs usually organise training programmes for their managerial and professional staff with the content of these programmes derived from HQ (Kamoche & Newenham-Kahindi, 2012; McDonnell, Russell, Sablok, Burgess, et al., 2011). Employee training and development of western MNEs usually serve as conduits for the implementation of western values and knowledge in non-western contexts which may result in failure (Mellahi & Frynas, 2003; Michailova & Hollinshead, 2009). Western MNEs therefore need to adopt a differentiation strategy to incorporate host country's economic and cultural conditions (Michailova & Hollinshead, 2009; Zheng et al., 2007).

2.2.3 Performance management

Performance management (PM) is the process that enables an MNE to "evaluate and improve continuously individual, subsidiary unit and corporate performance against clearly defined, pre-set objectives" (Shen, 2005: 1). MNEs are more likely to evaluate employee performance based on corporate goals and standards (Cascio, 2012; Fletcher, 2001). It is on the basis of performance management that organisational resources are distributed to business units and individuals. It is instrumental for career planning and development (Aguinis, 2013; Alimo-Metcalfe, 1993; Evans, Pucik, & Bjorkman, 2011) since individual weaknesses and shortcomings are brought to light in the course of their work performance. Organisations are also able to draw up corrective action plans to help bridge individual performance gaps. However, performance management in collectivist context tend to focus on interpersonal relations between supervisors and those who report directly to them. For instance, Varma, Pichler and Srinivas (2005) reported that Indian supervisors inflated the ratings of low performers based on empathy whereas the USA managers were able to identify and act upon job performance regardless of their personal feelings towards their subordinates.

The fundamental purpose of the PM is to ensure that employees at the subsidiary level are acting in accordance with the parent company's interests (Aguinis, 2013; Armstrong, 2009; Shen, 2005). Despite the universal consensus on the importance of performance appraisal, there is lack of agreement on what is best practice of international performance appraisal due to "the

complexity of international practices, relating particularly to diversified operating host environment" (Shen, 2005: 71). Some scholars suggest the need to be context sensitive in the administration of performance appraisal (PA) in MNEs (Dowling, Schuler, & Welch, 1994). For instance in China and Japan, feedback is not given in the open in order to save face whereas in other contexts "coherence and harmony in a company are more vital to its smooth running and survival in uncertain and political circumstances than setting performance measures which would encourage competition and perhaps discord among employees and departments" (Tayeb, 2005:34). American MNEs emphasised individual achievement based on hard work and therefore conduct PA on individual basis. On the whole, performance appraisal is used by an MNE to monitor performance towards the achievement of organisational goals (Boselie et al., 2005).

2.2.4 Rewards management

Rewards (sometimes referred to as compensation and benefits in some contexts) are both financial and non-financial. Financial rewards are key mechanisms for attracting, motivating, retaining employees and enhancing performance. Examples of financial rewards include basic pay, paid annual leave, lump sum bonuses (Peterson & Luthans, 2006; Silverman, 2004; Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003). Others include car grant/company car, funded medical scheme, study leave with pay and pension scheme. Employee pay usually encompasses two components, namely variable and fixed elements. The fixed element is not usually influenced by employees' performance and it is customarily based on the company's pay philosophy and structure while variable pay may consist of monetary payment in the form of bonuses (Armstrong & Murlis, 2004; Peterson & Luthans, 2006; Slavic, Berber & Lekovic, 2014; Wickramasinghe & Wickramasinghe, 2016).

Organisations also use non-financial rewards which are non-cash to recognise individuals or groups for their performance (Armstrong & Murlis, 2004; Peterson & Luthans, 2006; Silverman, 2004). Non-financial rewards include programmes such as employee of the month, praise, and public appreciation of an individual or group in an organisation's newsletter (Peterson & Luthans, 20006; Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003).

Consideration of whether these financial rewards are based on individual or group performance is important. The country of origin of an MNE has a great influence on the type of pay systems adopted by the subsidiary. For instance, US companies are usually associated with

performance-related pay, Japanese companies with seniority-based pay whilst the German firms use co-determination with the work councils that represent employees (McDonnell et al., 2011). Rewards management in a collectivist context often tends to be discriminatory in favour of subordinates that managers have a like for. For instance Hu, Hsu, Lee and Chu (2007) found that Taiwanese managers gave more rewards to subordinates with a closer affective relationship whereas their USA counterparts allocated rewards based on task performance. Financial compensation of the subsidiary may be determined by HQ as a governance control mechanism to monitor the financial operations of affiliates (Tayeb, 1998). In the next section, I discuss work-life balance programmes followed by diversity management and employee communication and participation.

2.2.5 Work-life balance

Work-life balance programmes refer to "strategies, policies, programmes and practices initiated and maintained in workplaces to address flexibility, quality of work and life and work-family conflict" (De Cieri & Bardoel, 2008: 3). Work-life balance programmes were first developed and practiced in the US (De Cieri & Bardoel, 2008) in response to changes in the composition of the workforce such as dual career couples, single parents, and working mothers for whom there might be the need to balance the two spheres of work and family life (Allen, 2001; Bond, Galinsky & Swanberg, 1998; Kemske, 1998). Many organisations have responded to these demographic changes on the labour front by introducing and implementing programmes such as on-site child care, flex-time, counselling and referral services, and leaves of absence (Allen, 2001; Arthur & Cook, 2003; Lobel & Kossek, 1996; Mitchell, 1997). Organisations have also introduced other work/life balance programmes that include compassionate and emergency leave, shifts, paternity leave, parental leave, career leave and subsidised workplace nurseries (Nickson, Warhurst, Lockyer, & Dutton, 2004). Work and life balance programmes enable organisations attract and retain talent, reduce absenteeism and enhance productivity leading to positive financial returns (Alegre & Pasamar, 2017; Cegarra-Navarro, Sánchez-Vidal, & Cegarra-Leiva, 2016).

The benefits of work-life balance to organisations according to Hobson, Delunas & Kesic (2001: 43) are that "such efforts clearly communicate that employees are valued as human beings. The resulting psychological bond has dramatic implications for corporate success." Similarly, Allen (2001: 415) stated that these "benefits are designed to alleviate the difficulty inherent in coordinating and managing multiple life roles" by employees. It is important to

emphasise that work-life balance programmes are usually designed to support all employees as a way of ensuring that everyone has balance between work and personal life, for instance in matters relating to employee health and wellbeing. Allen (2001) noted that employees perceived flexible work hours to be associated more with family-supportive organisations than child-care related benefits, since the latter were more likely to be valued by a section of the labour force.

However, employees across countries and continents at various stages of economic development vary in their reactions to work and family demands (Chandra, 2012: 1041). The way work-life balance is perceived in some contexts is different due to family structures and cultural influences (Hassan, 2010). Chandra (2012: 1043) in a comparative study of eastern and western perspectives on work-life balance concluded that in China, "financial and material rewards have been the main mechanisms for alleviating employees' grievances of work-life conflict, inflicted by work intensification." Also, in Asian countries, work-life balance programmes are usually classified as issues for women rather than for men. In western countries, work-life balance programmes are issues for both men and women (Chandra, 2012: 1055). Thus, in the multinational context, certain global influences such as market forces, local cultural influences and the level of economic development influence the degree of adoption and implementation of work-life programmes (De Cieri & Bardoel, 2008). Also, characteristics of MNEs such as availability of resources and level of international experience (De Cieri & Dowling, 2006) might guide the application of work-life programmes to suit the various contexts. Managerial support is also relevant for successful implementation of work-life programmes, since supervisors can encourage or discourage employees from utilising such programmes (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

2.2.6 Diversity management

Scholars have empirically examined various dimensions of diversity management including differences in age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, education or workforce (Cox, 1993; Kreitz, 2008; Sippola & Smale, 2007). Diversity also refers to "any significant difference that distinguishes one individual from another" ranging from factors such as skills, abilities, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, position and union/non-union (Kreitz, 2008: 102). The concept of diversity management originated from the US in response to the country's diverse gender and ethnic composition of its workforce (Ferner, Almond, & Colling, 2005). Diversity management denotes "the voluntary organisational actions that are designed to create greater

inclusion of employees from various backgrounds into the formal and informal organisational structures through deliberate policies and programs" (Barak, 2014: 234). Diversity increases valuable resources in terms of knowledge, insights, and perspectives that enable organisations to solve complex problems (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Ely, 1996).

Cox and Blake (1991: 45) referred to diversity management as "a variety of management issues and activities related to hiring and effective utilisation of personnel from different cultural backgrounds." Organisations that practised diversity management encourage constructive ideas and a culture that allowed employees to realise their full potential through training and career development (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Egan and Bendick, (2003: 701) noted that the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) made a distinction that even though diversity management is related to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, it differed in "origin, intent, and activities." Equal employment opportunity and affirmative action are "grounded in moral and social responsibility to amend wrongs done in the past, with legal obligations to increase the representation of minorities and females in the workforce to reflect their availability in the labour market." Diversity management is "based on a voluntary corporate approach to valuing difference" (Ferner et al., 2005: 308), and to make organisational cultures "more welcoming to individual differences" (Egan & Bendick, 2003: 701). Thomas and Ely (1996) observe that diversity management contributes to organisational effectiveness through enhanced learning, creativity and flexibility. Companies, therefore, need to embrace frank and open discussions of how individual differences can be sources of benefits to individual employees and the organisation.

Nevertheless, given that effectively managing a global workforce is crucial in achieving competitive advantage, diversity initiatives need to be locally contextualised to be meaningful and to be devoid of ethnocentrism (Sippola & Smale, 2007). Sippola and Smale (2007: 1898) concluded that "the global integration of diversity management represents an oxymoron insofar as it cannot be integrated without significant local modifications." There are instances where US-derived models of diversity management are applied in a foreign cultural context with limited or no success (Ferner et al., 2005).

2.2.7 Employee communication and participation

Communicating with employees is usually classified under the broad term employee voice. Lavelle, Gunnigle and McDonnell (2010: 396) refer to employee voice as "any type of

mechanism, structure or practice, which provides an employee with an opportunity to express an opinion or participate in decision-making within their organisation." Employee voice is further categorised into direct and indirect. Indirect voice could be through trade unions and unstructured collective representation such as works councils (Lavelle et al. 2010). Direct voice mechanisms may also include participation, consultation and information sharing (Lavelle et al., 2010). Certain strategies aimed at promoting employee communication and participation include regular meetings and informal interactions with employees using town hall forums (Sartorius et al., 2011) and conducting employee attitude surveys (Muller, 1998). Interactive communication may encourage employees to speak on issues concerning subsidiary business and HRM practices without fear of reprisals. Such exposure to plural viewpoints can facilitate the clarification of HRM practices to employees. Communication therefore provides avenues through which MNEs incorporate diverse sources of information and perspectives from employees and managers (Troster & Knippenberg, 2012).

Participation denotes "employee involvement in decision-making processes and the concept of influence" (Michailova, 2002: 180). Thus the more employees are able to exercise influence over decisions, the greater the level of participation. True participation is exercised in the absence of coercive control (Michailova, 2002). Participatory mechanisms "give workers some degree of influence over organisational and workplace decisions" such as problem-solving groups (Williams & Adam-Smith, 2006: 42). Thus in participative mechanisms, workers are involved in the decision-making processes while consultative mechanisms are mostly used to advise employees on certain managerial decisions. According to Blyton and Turnbull, 1998: 224), consultative mechanisms are arrangements that "involve management discussing production and other issues with representatives of the workforce, seeking comments and suggestions." Examples of consultative mechanisms include meetings with the workforce, suggestion schemes and attitude surveys which are mostly used to advise employees on certain managerial decisions. Information-sharing mechanisms are "used by management for communicating with employees on issues affecting the organisations and employee interests at work" (Farnham, 2000: 187). Examples of information-sharing methods include team-briefing groups, newsletters or emails (Lavelle et al., 2010). Organisations adopt participatory mechanisms in order to enhance employee involvement and "commitment to an organisation" (Croucher, Gooderham & Parry, 2006; Croucher, Rizov, Goolaup, 2014; Guest, Peccei & Thomas, 1993: 192; Lavelle et al., 2010; Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). Lavelle et al., (2010) noted that country of origin effects influenced the choice of employee voice. US MNEs are likely to

adopt participatory, consultative mechanisms as a way of engaging with employees. Also, MNEs operating in traditional manufacturing industries are likely to have greater unionisation whilst those in services are likely to adopt participatory, consultative and information-sharing approaches (Lavelle et al., 2010).

Michailova (2002: 181) concluded that employee participation schemes in organisations are often characterised by Western (particularly US) normative recipes based on certain assumptions, without taking into consideration the "specific national context and organisational context" in which they are implemented. I discuss next these HRM practices as they pertain to the African context and Ghana in particular.

2.2.8 HRM practices in Africa and Ghana

Sartorius, Merino and Carmichael (2011: 1963) observed that "in many instances, Western based organisations have attempted to export home-based HRM systems to African countries with widely different cultural loci" that could conflict with local contextual norms, values and beliefs (Anakwe, 2002). According to Mamman, Baydoun, and Adeoye (2009), certain decisions and actions concerning HRM practices in African societies reveal features of particularism (decisions based on ethnicity and relations) at the expense of universalism (decisions based on qualifications and expertise). Cultural practices often undermine the transparency and objectivity of the implementation of HRM practices in many organisations (Debrah, 2001; Kuada, 1994). Blunt and Popoola (1985) noted that in times of scarcity of employment, the selection process becomes instrumental in fulfilling one's obligations to kin and personal relations. For instance, while western MNEs might prefer certain HRM practices such as training and development, employee appraisal and pay to be dispensed based on merit, some African countries might prefer collectivism with group-based implementation of HRM practices (Sartorius et al., 2011).

In many African organisations, all authority is vested in top management with little discretion to subordinates. "There is very limited, if any, delegation of authority… delegation of responsibility normally takes the form of assignment of specific tasks, which are carried out in constant consultation with one's superior" (Amoako-Agyei, 2009: 335). It is considered rude for subordinates to openly disagree with a superior. Moreover in Africa, while top management is generally

> *highly educated and entitled to privileges and amenities, the subordinate workforce is normally uneducated, unskilled, or at best semi-skilled, and have little or no access to*

> *workplace amenities…top management exercise judicial influence and authority in both domestic and work life activities (Gyekye & Salminen, 2009: 2655).*

Nonetheless, managers and organisations are usually expected to be supportive of employee welfare and other vital personal issues (Amoako-Agyei, 2009; Anakwe, 2002). Welfare of employees' families extends to health, education and rent. In a case study of a multinational aluminium smelting enterprise in Mozambique, Sartorius et al. (2011) observed the cause of conflict between management and the workforce to be the perceived lack of concern on the part of the company for the welfare of employees' families. However, management thought employees were not grateful to the company for having well-paid jobs. As Gyekye (2014) noted in the Ghanaian proverb *onipa ne asem: mefre sika a, siak nnye so, mefre ntama a, ntama nnye so; onipa ne asem* meaning *it is the human being that counts: I call upon gold, it answers not; I call upon cloth; it answers not; it is the human being that counts* (Gyekye, 2014: 227). It is thus the human being that is of real value, for in times of need it is to a human being that one can appeal. Management assumes a paternal role and is expected to provide social, material and emotional support to employees.

Similarly, in the case of Ghana like some other parts of Africa, certain socio-cultural variables such as respect for age, kinship, family ties and ethnicity are influential in shaping HRM practices such as recruitment and selection in Ghana (Amoah & Afranie, 2014). Decisions to hire and promote should normally be based on the universal principle of merit but in particularistic societies such as Ghana, these decisions could be influenced by ethnic/kinship ties. For instance, in a study of two public organisations in Ghana, Akuoko, (2008) revealed that heads of most organisations ignored standard criteria for recruitment and selection so that they could employ their tribesmen. Employment was not based on merit and persons who spoke a common language were recruited. It is equally difficult to fire employees outright in collectivist contexts for non-performance, especially if the employment of such persons was influenced by family ties or an opinion leader in the community (Amoako-Agyei, 2009). Abdulai (2000: 452) concludes that despite the Ghana Civil Service Law of 1993 prohibiting the appointment of any individual into the service without the requisite qualification as a mechanism to promote the merit system, "corruption, nepotism and other forms of unethical practices invariably conspire against the application of this system in developing countries."

Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) observe that workers in collectivist cultures influence HRM practices such as recruitment. For instance, employees influence the recruitment of friends and

relatives into lower level positions within organisations based on referrals from the employees (Nyambegera, 2002). Word of mouth is a powerful tool that complements internal recruitment to fill job vacancies (Satorius, Merino & Carmichael, 2011). The traditional values, culture, norms have compromised integrity and efficiency and introduced subjectivity "in management practices, such as recruitment, performance appraisal, and compensation" (Debrah, 2001: 196–7). Consequently, personal contacts and influences play a significant role in securing jobs for members of the in-group (Aryee, 2004).

Respect for the elderly is very important in the Ghanaian context. The elderly are expected to serve as role models and repositories of knowledge (Moemeka, 1996). Ohemeng (2009) notes that it is, particularly difficult for younger managers to reprimand, appraise or discipline an elderly person. As a result, appraisal information tends to be unreliable. Furthermore, "lack of incentives and sanctions make performance appraisals ineffective" (Ohemeng, 2009: 121). Similarly, in their study of performance management in Ghana, Mmieh, Mordi, Singh and Asiedu-Appiah (2011) noted that employees had difficulties in discussing their work problems with managers during annual appraisals due to power distance and for fear that managers might interpret it to mean they were inefficient. Amoako-Agyei (2009) cautioned that discussing employee's performance and shortcomings openly with the employee could cause embarrassment and loss of face leading to disharmony in work. Open discussions with group or team-based performance may be more appropriate.

Also, notwithstanding the important role of performance appraisal in identifying employee training needs, many organisations are unable to conduct training programmes to fill these training gaps due to inadequate resources (Debrah, 2001). In a comparative study of citizenship behaviour between Ghanaian and Finnish industrial workers, Haybatollahi and Gyekye (2015: 28) observed that organisational management in Ghana seldom provided training and development activities for employees. In addition, companies that invest in employee training are not getting the required returns due to high labour turnover among managerial staff that migrate to foreign countries in search of greener pastures (Kuada, 1994).

To ensure fairness in the labour market, the government of Ghana legislated laws to govern employment practices. The law covers both employers and employees. The scope of application of the law includes rights and duties of both employers and workers. The law include rights of workers for equal pay for equal work; and to form or join a union. It is the right of the employer to transfer, promote or terminate employment within certain guidelines.

The employer is equally duty bound to provide training and retraining of workers, remuneration and open channels of communication.

Furthermore, wage and salary administration is determined by a Tripartite Committee comprising the Government, Employers' Associations and the Trade Union Congress which is the umbrella of all labour unions in the country. The national minimum wage determines the basic wage for unskilled and skilled labour in Ghana. Many organisations also have their own salary structures based upon which employees negotiate annually for increments to keep pace with inflation (Aryee, 2004). In such circumstances every employee benefits from the annual adjustment or increment in the public sector. There is also equal pay for an equal job and in practice there is no difference in the salaries of men and women performing a task of equal value and having the same qualifications and experience (Aryee, 2004).

With regards to employee communication and participation, Croucher *et al.* (2014) noted that the host country's institutional environment is likely to affect the extent of intensive communication mechanisms that MNEs implement. They noted that strong internal hierarchies that characterise African companies "may serve to weaken communications if information sharing is seen potentially to dilute the authority and control of those at the top...they may not be adopted where local managers maintain hierarchical views in foreign-owned companies" (Croucher *et al.,* 2014: 2425). Some scholars have also argued that managers in collectivist and power distance contexts are often paternalistic and maintain "status and authority hierarchy" (Aycan, Schyns, Sun, Felfe, & Saher, 2013: 963). However, Aryee (2004) explained that even though decision-making in traditional Ghanaian society was characterised by consensus through engagement and involvement of the people, it was lacking in organisational life as a result of the power distance**.** Abugre (2013) explains that the high power distance of the Ghanaian context fosters a centralised communication and decision-making process in many organisations. As a result "employees find it difficult to communicate directly to their superiors and this stems from a cultural trait where most managers fail to tolerate dissenting views" (Abugre, 2013: 36). Communication is top-down and it usually takes the form of face-to-face, telephone, memoranda, report writing and electronic mails. However, e-mails are least used due to deficiency in technology. The title "sir" is often used as reference to managers in public organisations, while first names are used in private organisations. As a result of the power distance, "most Ghanaian workers do not take part in the decisions of their organisations and therefore are unaware of some pertinent organisational issues" (Abugre, 2012: 220). However,

employees prefer to be in constant touch with their superiors. It is therefore suggested that face-to-face communications, telephone conversations, meetings, get-together; report and memo writings, durbars and conferences should be encouraged and held regularly (Abugre, 2011; 2012; 2013). Effective employee communication and participation requires managing employees from diverse backgrounds with unique experiences and perceptions appropriately.

Diversity management is key in integrating the various skills and knowledge of employees from distinct cultural backgrounds. It is particularly important in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic contexts such as that of Ghana. "Being aware of language differences, status differences, various ethnic perceptions, stereotypes in the country make competitive advantage possible when operating in this market" (Amoako-Agyei, 2009: 331). An MNE might be in position to influence the buying decisions of consumers from the various ethnic groups by recruiting and selecting persons from diverse cultural backgrounds. In fact, it is argued that a heterogeneous workforce serves a diverse customer base better and is able to offer better insights into customer needs (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2012). Equally important to diversity management is work-life balance.

Work-life balance refers to "the ability to integrate work into one's whole life and may include issues unrelated to family and care considerations, such as the ability to take time off work to pursue personal interests or self-development goals or to be involved in community issues" (Dancaster, 2012: 21). The literature I reviewed and to which I attend in chapter 2 has largely focused on work-family balance which on the other hand denotes a "form of inter-role conflict in which the roles pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985: 77). Arguably, work-family conflict arises "when time devoted to the requirements of one domain makes it difficult to fulfil requirements of the other" (Mokomane, 2014: 4).

Unfortunately, past research on work-life and work-family balance has largely been conducted in western contexts such as USA and UK. Studies in non-western contexts have centred mainly on Asia (e.g. Kusakabe, 2006; Lu, Siu, Spector, Shi, 2009). There is scant literature on work-life balance and work-family balance in Ghana (Annor, 2014). However, Annor, (2014: 22) observes that little effort has been made to implement "family-friendly policies to support employed parents" in Ghana. Though the Ghana Labour Act 651 of 2003 stipulates a 40 hour work-week, the law is not strictly enforced. Additionally, about 48% of workers on average work between 40 and 70 hours per week (Annor, 2014). The Labour Act also allows employers

to interrupt employees' leave and ask them to return to work when their services are urgently needed.

According to the Ghana Labour Act, workers are entitled to their annual leave, sick leave, study leave and other entitlements but these vary from one organisation to another and the rank of an employee. Also, women are entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and this can be extended by additional two weeks. Parental and paternal leave are absent in the act which tend to exacerbate the already stressful role that women play in the Ghanaian context due to unpaid family responsibilities that are usually left to them to execute (Annor, 2014). Furthermore, "flexible working arrangements and employer-provided childcare are largely non-existent" in the Ghanaian context (Annor, 2014: 22). Privately owned child care centres are relatively expensive for the ordinary worker and as a result many parents rely on extended families as a source of social support (Annor, 2014). I discuss cross-border transfer of HRM practices next.

2.4 Cross-border transfer of HRM practices

Many scholars have conducted studies into how HRM practices are transferred within MNEs (Edwards, Colling, & Ferner, 2007; Gamble, 2010; Morgan & Kristensen, 2006; Vo & Stanton, 2011). Organisational practice is an essential capability considered crucial for MNEs with high interdependence between HQs and subsidiaries (Klimkeit & Reihlen, 2016). Transfer of organisational practice enables MNEs to take advantage of the opportunities in every local context, particularly in countries where skills and expertise are lacking. Thus, MNEs can derive the benefits accruing from the host contexts and subsidiaries can as well benefit from resources from corporate HQ.

Transferability refers to the process of diffusion of HRM practices from the parent company of the MNE to its subsidiaries (Liu, 2004). Yahiaoui (2015) explains transfer of HRM practices as twofold, comprising contextualisation and re-contextualisation with several stakeholders playing crucial roles, while Gamble and Hung (2009) emphasise that the transfer of organisational practices is a contested process and not a one-off event. It is important to note that transfers of HRM practices could take any direction within an MNE; from parent to subsidiary, subsidiary to parent and subsidiary to subsidiary (Kostova, 1999). For purposes of my research, I focus on transfer from MNE parent company to subsidiary or affiliate, for the fundamental reason that there is likely to be one way transfer or forward diffusion of HRM practices from developed countries to developing countries, since managerial practices in the

latter are often considered inferior (Thite *et al.*, 2012; Yahiaoui, 2015). MNEs from developed countries often claim their management and technical skills are superior to those of their counterparts in developing countries (Chang, Mellahi, & Wilkinson, 2009; Chung, Sparrow, & Bozkurt, 2014), particularly in Africa where talent and effective work practices are deficient (Asiedu, 2004; Kamoche *et al.*, 2012). With particular reference to Ghana, Barthel et al. (2011) noted that foreign firms expressed concerns about the low productivity of the labour force and shortage of technical and managerial skills. These findings coincide with Akorsu and Cooke (2011) where Chinese MNEs gave the same reason for importing Chinese labour into Ghana. These observations may lead to MNEs transferring HRM practices from their home economies that they have successfully implemented before and which they believe are suitable for the subsidiary context (Dickmann & Muller-Camen, 2006).

Following Kim and Gray (2005) that employees are carriers of cultural values, my objective is to examine why and how the Ghanaian institutional context influences the standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries of Western MNEs.

2.4.1 Factors influencing, and mechanisms for, the transfer of HRM practices

2.4.1.1 Factors influencing transfer of HRM practices from HQ to subsidiaries

The HQs of an MNE is the central organisational unit responsible for coordinating value creation activities in the entire enterprise (Chandler, 1991; Collis, Young, & Goold, 2007; Menz, Kunisch, & Collis, 2015). It is responsible for monitoring the performance of the various affiliate divisions and continuously checking and allocating resources as and when necessary to them (Chandler, 1991; Collis, Young, & Goold, 2007). The HQ therefore plays a supervisory and integrative role in an MNE. Integration refers to the control and coordination of transnational or cross-border businesses (Cray, 1984). To coordinate is to develop "linkages between geographically dispersed units of a function, whereas control concerns regulating business activities to align them with the expectations set in targets" (Kim, Park & Prescott, 2003: 329). The process of aligning and linking subsidiary HRM practices to the HQ is termed as integration (Ahlvik & Bjorkman, 2015).

Kostova (1999: 308) stated that "for purposes of synergy and efficiency, organisations often engage in cross-unit transfers of business practices that reflect their core competencies and

superior knowledge and that they believe to be a source of competitive advantage." Global competition may therefore be a driving force for diffusion of HRM practices internationally. To buttress the argument of competitive advantage with the transfer of HRM practices, Parry, Dickmann and Morley (2008) concluded that MNEs are likely to transfer HRM practices regarded as competitive and superior to their subsidiaries. These HRM practices which are considered "best practices" are derived from HQ and are acclaimed to work efficiently thus, making it possible to avoid the duplication of effort in testing other unfamiliar HRM practices derived from the host context (Geary, Aguzzoli, & Lengler, 2017).

Hetrick (2002) noted that western HRM practices such as training and performance management are transferred from parent companies to subsidiaries as a mechanism of instituting a common corporate culture. The HQ is often involved in recruitment and selection, training, designing of training and performance appraisal materials and financial regulations. These practices are likely to be subsequently transferred to its various subsidiaries.

An MNE may be regarded as a network of capital, product and knowledge transactions between parent companies and subsidiaries located in different countries (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1991). The intensity and criticality of these transactions vary from one subsidiary to another. Also the directionality of these transactions differs depending upon whether a given subsidiary is a receiver or provider of the business being transacted (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1991).

An MNE's influence on a subsidiary HRM practice may be greater when the subsidiary relies on the parent for critical resources such as technical and managerial know-how (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994). Thus the importance and non-availability of substitutes for resources in the host country increases the level of dependency of a subsidiary on the parent company (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; 2003). The parent company is likely to exert a greater influence on subsidiary decision-making processes with high dependence on the parent for critical resources than a subsidiary with less reliance on it. A high dependence on the parent company for resources makes it easier for an MNE to transfer its HRM practices to subsidiaries (Hannon, Huang & Jaw, 1995: 548). Lu and Bjorkman (1997), in a study of Chinese and Western joint ventures, observed that a subsidiary's reliance on the parent for resources such as managerial know-how was very crucial in determining the introduction of HRM practices to the local context. Also, USA MNEs were more involved in the selection process of managers in subsidiaries with high resource dependence on the parent than in subsidiaries with low dependence on the parent. Similarly, the importance of a subsidiary increases with the parent

company's reliance on subsidiary key "roles and contributions" such as "generation of profits and/or sales, the assembly or production of components or end-products" (Martinez & Ricks, 1989: 467) in order to protect its interests and remain competitive. There is the likelihood that a parent company will tend to control and implement its HRM practices at a subsidiary on which it relies for key resources (Beechler & Yang, 1994; Mahmood, 2010). Also, subsidiary dependence on local resources may lead to localisation of HRM practices. When subsidiaries become embedded in the local context, their practices tend to resemble local firms (Hannon et al., 1995; Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994).

The mode of establishment also influences the extent to which subsidiaries comply with local HRM practices. A subsidiary established through a greenfield project tends to conform to the parent company's practices, because MNEs can staff such subsidiaries with employees who are not yet used to any practices and are willing to accept practices of the corporate HQ (Slangen, & Hennart, 2007). MNEs are usually involved in the selection, approval and appointment of local staff, with key actors sent to HQ for training at start-ups to facilitate the transfer of HRM practices but staff training at HQ may be reduced to meetings at maturity (Kynighou, 2014). However, MNEs may encounter resistance in introducing parent company HRM practices to affiliates established through acquisitions because employees in such subsidiaries are already used to certain practices which might be different from that of the MNE. HRM practices of acquired subsidiaries might have already assumed a taken-for-granted status, 'the way things are done here' (Björkman et al., 2008). Thus employees in acquired firms are likely to resist the introduction of practices with which they are not familiar (Cho & Padmanabhan, 2005; Slangen, & Hennart, 2007).

In the case of joint ventures, the level of ownership may influence the degree of standardisation or localisation of HRM practices. A distinguishing characteristic of the joint venture is its dual parenthood which may lead to divergent interpretations as to what constitutes appropriate HRM practices. The local parent might be more influenced by local HRM practices, particularly by successful ones, and would want to conform to them. Also, the degree of equity held by either the foreign or local company may also determine the degree of control in the decision-making processes with regards to localisation or standardisation of HRM practices (Björkman et al., 2008). The parent company with the greater equity is likely to have a greater say in how HRM practices are applied.

Trade unions, regulations and legal laws are other powerful sources of institutional forces that can influence subsidiary HRM practices. It is therefore expected that subsidiary HRM practices may resemble local practices where employees are represented by unions (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994). In a study of Japanese affiliates in the US, Beechler and Yang (1994) noted that the transfer of Japanese HRM practices to unionised subsidiaries was strongly resisted. Legal actions also compelled some of the subsidiaries to adopt local practices and to hire American experts to design American-style HRM practices. The presence of unions and labour laws may constrain the transfer of HRM practices.

In conclusion, a variety of factors influence subsidiary HRM practices. Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994) observed that HQ support for subsidiary with people and ideas seemed to have a greater influence on the adoption of corporate HRM practices. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasise that the degree of corporate HQ influence on subsidiary HRM practices varies from one country to another because some contexts are more liberal and receptive to foreign practices than others.

2.4.1.2 Mechanisms for transfer of HRM practices

IB researchers have identified a variety of mechanisms used by multinationals in the transfer of HRM practices which include use of expatriates (Gamble, 2003; Lu & Bjorkman, 1997), in-patriates (Kynighou, 2014), staff selection and acculturation, staff training (Tayeb, 2005), conferences, face to face meetings, and virtual interactions by human resource managers on a monthly or weekly basis (McDonnell et al., 2011). MNEs use both former inpatriates and expatriates as conduits for the transfer of HRM practices to subsidiaries (Sarabi, Froese, & Hamori, 2017). Former inpatriates refer to HCN managers who were transferred to work at HQ and have returned to the subsidiaries. They acquire work experience at, and consequent knowledge of, corporate HQ. They are familiar with MNE routines that enable them to align subsidiary practices to those of HQ (Harzing, Pudelko, & Reiche, 2016; Sarabi *et al.*, 2017).

Staff of MNEs may consist of host country nationals (HCNs), parent country nationals (PCNs) and third country nationals (TCNs) – expatriates who are neither from the host nor parent country (Michailova, Mustaffa, & Barner-Rasmussen, 2016). PCNs are in a position to understand better the knowledge base of an MNE and its networks with other subsidiaries than both HCNs and TCNs. Thus, they are conversant with the business environment in which the corporate HQ operates which enables them to provide knowledge and expertise to subsidiaries

(Michailova et al., 2016). In turn, this knowledge and expertise facilitate the implementation of corporate HQ HRM practices.

The torchbearers of standardisation of HRM practices in affiliates of MNEs are expatriates. Expatriates are PCNs who are usually relocated temporarily to live and work in a country other than their country of origin (Despotovic, Hutchings, & Mcphail, 2015). This type of expatriation is organisationally driven. PCNs are usually familiar with the corporate culture of the MNE and often occupy middle or upper level managerial positions within the subsidiary (Cullen & Parboteeah, 2010). They are regarded as cultural carriers (Edstrom & Galbraith, 1977) and transmitters of corporate culture (Janssens, 1994). They are key figures in the transfer of parent company HRM practices to subsidiaries and they demonstrate on a daily basis the desired behaviours and attitudes consistent with HQ (Ando & Paik, 2013; Bjorkman, Barner-Rasmussen, & Li, 2004; Gaur, Delios, & Singh, 2007; Gong, 2003; Hetrick, 2002). Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994) concluded in their study of U.S. affiliates of foreign-based MNEs that the HRM practices of subsidiaries with a high level of PCNs were for the most part similar to their parent companies. Similarly, in a study of 170 Western-owned subsidiaries in China and India, it was revealed that HRM practices were more similar to the MNE parent companies where there was an increased presence of expatriates. The PCNs "tend to have taken-for-granted views of the kind of HRM practices that are efficient" (Bjorkman, Budhwar, Smale, & Sumelius, 2008: 968). The presence of PCNs reinforces the belief that the transfer of MNE parent company HRM practices makes subsidiaries competitive. Thus some expatriates continue to look for models of HRM practices from their parent companies to implement in their subsidiaries (Bjorkman & Lu, 2001).

Gamble (2003: 374) explains that "expatriates spread explicit knowledge through such means as the introduction and dissemination of employee handbooks, training manuals and standard operating procedures." HRM practices are spread through the movement of expatriates, and their prominence "can be measured either in terms of their number compared to local nationals or in terms of the influence of positions they hold" (Rosenzweig & Singh, 1991: 351). Hetrick (2002: 1) notes that expatriates play several roles in the transfer process of HRM practices to a subsidiary. She summed up these key roles of expatriates to include:

> *as 'role models', displaying the appropriate company behaviours, values and way of doing things; as 'fixers', adapting corporate values and mission statements; as 'key actors', enacting the HRM practices; as 'networkers' or 'boundary spanners' connecting local managers with other parts of the company; as 'agents of the owners',*

ensuring that the new subsidiary company could be trusted; and as 'coaches' or 'mentors' transferring knowledge to local managers.

It is therefore evident that expatriates play a crucial role in the transfer of HRM practices to subsidiaries.

In addition to PCNs, in-patriates play a useful role in bridging the knowledge gap of expatriates about the local socio-cultural and institutional context. In-patriates are HCNs who have worked in the HQs of an MNE and have been socialised into the corporate culture, mission and vision (Harvey, 1997; Kynighou, 2014). HCNs have valuable knowledge of the local context in terms of market and business practices and as a result help "decrease the subsidiary's liability of foreignness in the host country" (Michailova et al., 2016: 118). They play a significant role in the transfer of HRM practices since they "are more likely to be accepted by host country nationals than are expatriates" (Harvey, Novicevic, & Speier, 2000: 388) because they are instrumental in providing input towards the development of HRM practices "by providing accurate advice on the adaptation of specific technical dimensions of the human resource process, i.e. selection criteria, compensation plans, performance evaluations and training of host country nation" (Harvey et al., (2000: 388). Thus "rather than enforcing an 'outside' organisational culture, following the in-patriate's insights into the host country culture allows the organisational climate in an emerging market subsidiary to evolve overtime" (Harvey, et al., 2000: 388). Kynighou (2014: 125) surmised that both in-patriates and expatriates "act as bearers of knowledge who are utilised strategically by HQ to facilitate transfer of practices."

Furthermore, Siebers et al. (2015), in six case studies of retail firms in China, noted how parent companies of MNEs used attractive remuneration and career prospects opportunities to entice HCN managers to facilitate the transfer of HRM practices. The local managers usually had preferences for western style of management and as a result facilitated the transfer of HRM practices. The findings of this research concur with Edwards and Rees (2006) who stated that MNEs through the complicity of local managers can transfer their HRM practices by providing HCN managers with opportunities in the form of increased pay, international travel and postings and broader career advancement. Nevertheless, local managers from host countries tend to play a double-edged role in the transfer of HRM practices, for it is argued that they are equally committed to the local context and cannot easily be stripped off their cultural values (Kim & Gray, 2005; Tayeb, 2005).

Staff training serves also as a conduit through which transfer of HRM practices takes place. MNEs invest in subsidiary training sessions for all employees as a way of ensuring that employees 'live the values' of corporate HQs (Grøgaard & Colman, 2016). The content of training programmes is largely derived from HQ manuals detailing procedures and methods of work (Ahlvik & Bjorkman, 2015; Belizon, Morley, & Gunnigle, 2016; Mamman et al., 2009). Such training programmes are usually prescriptive in nature and replete with westernised business concepts and philosophy without adequate knowledge and needs of the local context (Michailova & Hollinshead, 2011).

Some senior employees may be sent to the HQ of an MNE to learn more about the job and the culture of the company. They are "trained at corporate level so that they can acquire the necessary skills and knowledge that will allow them to diffuse the corporate philosophy, and key values and processes to the local unit" (Kynighou, 2014: 128). Bjorkman and Lu (1999: 316) note that "training overseas was used […] to co-opt high-level local managers into accepting certain organisational changes advocated by foreign executives."

Interactions with HCN managers through official visits by regional HQ and corporate HQ officials to subsidiaries might result in increased exposure to issues and clarification of corporate HQ values. Such communication is also facilitated through international transfer of HRM managers from subsidiaries to HQ, face-to-face meetings (Temple, 2001), conferences and regular meetings (Edwards, Edwards, Ferner, Marginson, & Tregaskis, 2010). These meetings can serve as avenues for subsidiary managers to clarify certain issues and to gain understanding of corporate HQ values and practices. Subsidiary managers are likely to develop a shared understanding of the mission and corporate culture with the frequent interactions with corporate HQ staff (Ahlvik, Smale, & Sumelius, 2016; Bjorkman, Barner-Rasmussen, & Li, 2004; O'Donnell, 2000; Smale, Bjorkman, Ehrnrooth, John, Makela & Sumelius, 2015) that can allow easy implementation of corporate HQ practices. In a study of HRM practices in 249 USA subsidiaries of foreign based MNEs, Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994) noted that frequent communication between subsidiary and parent company managers tended to make subsidiaries share parent companies' practices.

Corporate socialisation is a frequently used mechanism for the diffusion of HRM practices in MNE foreign subsidiaries. Van Maanen and Schein (1979: 21) defined corporate socialisation as the process through which "an individual is taught what behaviours and perspectives are customary and desirable within the work setting." Socialisation is used to explain corporate

values and appropriate work ethics and behaviour (Smale et al., 2015). Socialisation is instrumental for shaping employees' identification and commitment to an organisation (Buchanan, 1974; Edstrom & Galbraith, 1977; Ouchi, 1979). As a result of socialisation, subsidiary employees learn the beliefs, values and behaviours necessary to perform their tasks effectively in line with corporate expectations (Bjorkman et al. 2004; Grøgaard, & Colman, 2016). MNEs are thus able to align subsidiary HRM practices to their own.

Corporate socialisation can be achieved through job rotation, extensive travel and transfer of managers between subsidiaries and headquarters (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1991); for instance the "ization" programme used by Unilever to "Unileverize" the operations of the company globally through executive transfers and regular meetings (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1988: 371). Socialisation contributes to integrating the various units of MNEs by communicating a set of values intended to guide subsidiary actions and behaviours (Grogaard & Colman, 2016).

Benchmarking is another mechanism for the transfer of HRM practice. MNEs use both internal and external benchmarking. Internal benchmarking refers to transfer of HRM practices from parent companies and other subsidiaries in an MNE to host country subsidiaries in order to drive organisational performance. In a similar vein, external benchmarking refers to firms imitating successful HRM practices developed by local firms deemed efficient and effective in achieving desirable outcomes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Farndale & Paauwe, 2007; Martin & Beaumont, 1998). By externally benchmarking their HRM practices, subsidiaries imitate practices of successful local firms (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). According to Zairi and Leonard (1996: 26) benchmarking is "the search for best industry practices that lead to superior performance." MNEs benchmark their HRM practices against best practices, inside and outside the organisation in order to achieve top-quality performance.

2.4.2 Transfer of HRM practices from developed country MNE HQs to subsidiaries in developing countries

Developed country MNEs face challenges in transferring HRM practices to their subsidiaries in developing countries as a result of differences in institutional and technological gaps that exist between them (Zhao, Anand, & Mitchell, 2005). MNEs replicate HRM practices implemented at the HQ in its foreign subsidiaries (Kopp, 1994; Reiche, 2007; Reiche & Harzing, 2011; Taylor, Beechler, & Napier, 1996) for purposes of achieving efficiency and superior performance.

Miah and Hossain (2014), in a comparative study of a local garment company and US and UK subsidiaries in Bangladesh, noted that the foreign companies implemented their home grown HRM practices particularly in areas of recruitment, training and development, performance appraisal and top management appointments. Also, in a case study research on the transfer of Western HRM practices into a private Jordanian utility Al-Husan, Brennan, and James (2009) indicated that recruitment and selection, promotion and pay were all tied to relevant educational qualifications, experience and competencies rather than being based on kinship ties. Delegation of authority and decentralisation were introduced with some resistance from the local staff. Some senior local staff were unwilling to delegate authority due to lack of trust in junior staff while lower level employees were also unwilling to accept additional responsibility.

With reference to the African context, Mamman, Baydoun, and Adeoye (2009) researched into the performance management of Swedish and Swiss subsidiaries in Nigeria that employed host country national managers. They concluded that PM practices were partly ethnocentric since the content of practice was formulated in the home companies of the subsidiaries without the input of the Nigerians. However, there was also some degree of nepotism and favouritism in the system by the host country national managers which Mamman et al. (2009) described as informal adaptations by the local managers to suit the Nigerian traditional context of power distance and humaneness. This seems to suggest that the transfer process is probably influenced by the nationality of persons implementing decisions. Thus, while western values are centred on universalism, those of Nigeria are based on particularism.

A review of the major IB and management journals discussed previously in the literature review process revealed that there is no study in the field of transfer of HRM practices from western MNEs to their subsidiaries in Ghana. Nonetheless, there are few studies of MNEs from emerging countries such as South Africa and China. In a qualitative study using 18 top managers of South African MNE subsidiaries in Ghana, Adams, Nyuur, Ellis, and Debrah (2016) observed that HRM systems and practices, namely recruitment and selection, talent management and performance appraisal, were transferred to subsidiaries in Ghana with little adaptation to contextual realities. The study also revealed that compensation and industrial relations practices were localised. Akorsu and Cooke (2011) also researched employment practices of Chinese-owned and Indian-owned manufacturing companies in Ghana in relation to Ghana labour laws and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards. The insight gained about poor employment practices, importing labour from China, and filling all

managerial positions with PCNs reflects how emerging economies may tend to transfer their HRM practices to developing countries. There were no training programmes in place for employees except induction training for casual workers. Cooke (2014: 887) noted that due to the support that some Chinese MNEs enjoy from the Chinese Government coupled with intergovernmental relationships with host nations, labour unions "are unlikely to be an effective agent of improved labour conditions for workers." Akorsu (2011) observed that despite the tremendous growth of FDI in Ghana, there is dearth of literature on MNE HRM practices. There is a serious gap in the literature on the interplay between localisation and standardisation of HRM practices of western subsidiaries in Ghana. My study aims to fill this gap and to enhance understanding of the standardisation and localisation of HRM issues in the Ghanaian context. To my knowledge, this study is the first of its kind to carry out an extensive and in-depth empirical investigation on transfer of HRM practices by western MNEs to their subsidiaries in Ghana.

2.5 Standardisation and localisation of HRM practices

Managing the interplay of standardisation and localisation of HRM practices is considered crucial for the successful operations of MNEs. A dual management approach incorporating both standardised and localised beliefs and values is vital (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1991; Berchtold, Pircher, & Stadler, 2010; Brewster, 1993). MNEs often seek to standardise their HRM practices for purposes of coordination and interaction with the various subsidiaries (Festing, Knappert, Dowling, & Engle, 2010). Standardisation of HRM practices is intended to "smooth the transfer of MNE competencies across the organisation" (Wocke, Bendixen, & Rijamampianina, 2007: 829). Host country cultural and institutional factors often counter the transplantation of foreign HRM practices (Bjorkman & Lervik, 2007; Farndale, 2010; Festing et al., 2010). It is argued that the cultural distance which is the difference between two cultures along identifiable dimensions such as power distance can impede the transfer of HRM practices (Ferner, 1997; Peng, 2014). According to Kostova and Zaheer (1999), the normative institutional distance refers to the differences and similarities between the normative institutional environments (beliefs, norms, social values) of the MNE home country and the host context. Kostova, (1997) notes that if there is any big difference between the institutional contexts of the MNE's home and host countries, the more difficult it becomes to transfer HRM practices to subsidiaries. The normative institutional distance is explained in detail in chapter 3 under the theoretical foundation of the study.

Thus, for effective and appropriate application of foreign HRM practices in Africa, Jackson (2004) suggests that managers should take cognisance of both endogenous and exogenous factors that might influence their actions. Smith (2008: 319) concluded that

> *there is little doubt that effective management is a blend of universal processes and specific local issues. The question that remains open for debate is the relative preponderance of the universal and the local*.

Notwithstanding the fact that MNEs might be working in the interest of their shareholders, it is necessary to take account of the different stakeholders within the African context such as the chiefs, traditional leaders, employees and managers.

I now explain the two typologies and their influence on the integration and localisation of HRM practices in MNEs.

2.5.1 Standardisation of HRM practices and the country of origin effect

Ethnocentric beliefs inform the standardisation of HRM practices in host country contexts in relation to MNE home country practices. In an ethnocentric MNE, the home country thinking and approaches to HRM practices are said to be dominant over local practices (Heenan and Perlmutter, 1979; Perlmutter, 1969; Reynolds, 1973). The assumption is that the parent company's practices are superior to those of host countries and as a result there is a need to replicate these practices, usually without consideration for context (Kamoche & Newenham-Kahindi, 2012; Siebers et al. 2015). In a study of the profile of HRM in MNEs in Australia, McDonnell et al. (2011) observed that 53% of the enterprises agreed that the traditions of the country of origin dominated the HR approach.

An ethnocentric MNE fills top vacancies in a subsidiary with parent country nationals (PCNs). In this way, ethnocentric practices not only affect morale and motivation of local managers and employees but also place a glass ceiling on the advancement or promotion opportunities of the local workforce (Kopp, 1994; Reiche & Harzing, 2011; Shen, 2005; Wood, Mazouz, Yin, & Cheah, 2014).

The HQ defines a suitable way for local managers to conduct themselves through management practices that replicate an ethnocentric ethos or the parent company's traditions and norms (McDonnell, et al. 2011). In a research on the transfer of management practices to China,

Siebers et al. (2015: 563) noted that ethnocentrism disempowered local managers and created "cognitive dissonance amongst the local managers who felt embarrassed, powerless and culturally inept when prevented from engaging in culturally accepted practices that would have enhanced their effectiveness when dealing with clients" in the Chinese settings.

Subsidiaries of MNEs are likely to be influenced by the national business systems and culture of their country of origin. Vo and Stanton (2011: 3514) observed that "particular features of the home country become an ingrained part of each MNE corporate identity and shape its international orientation." It is suggested that the parent company is embedded in its home country's institutions (Ferner, 1997; Vo & Stanton, 2011) and as a result, certain elements could have a carryover effect at the subsidiary such as industrial relations, labour market institutions, HRM practices and cultural orientations in line with Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions of power distance, collectivism and individualism which might have been developed and implemented at the parent company of an MNE (Ferner, 1997). MNEs are therefore more likely to carry over their HRM practices to their overseas subsidiaries; this is evidenced in a number of empirical studies. For instance, Japanese are more likely to rely on informal face-to-face appraisal systems while the USA, applies standardised world-wide performance appraisal systems. The Germans rely on their co-determination system with workers' representatives' councils and apprenticeship training (Ferner, 1997; Ferner & Quintanilla, 1998). Standardisation of HRM practices which originate from the home of the parent company of the MNE, known as the country of origin effect, is further explained below.

MNEs of different national origins behave in significantly different ways, demonstrating the relevance of institutions in the home country (Ferner, 1997). As a result, an enduring and distinctive national effect on MNEs is created. The cultural values of certain countries may give flexibility to MNEs in the management of their subsidiaries and allow their subsidiaries to adopt host nation's practices (Schuler, Dowling, & De Cieri, 1993; Taylor & Beechler, 1993). Sethi and Elango (2000: 286) noted that a:

> *Country's physical and human resources and political institutions, as well as culturally based characteristics, could provide its firms with superior competitive advantage in comparison with firms from other countries… These COE-based factors (country of origin effect - COE) induce MNEs from different countries to exhibit differential behaviour in their strategic choices and operational modes.*

Thus the home country's resources in terms of wealth of technological know-how, stable legal and political structures, and high skill levels of the workforce provide for that country's MNEs competitive comparative advantage with respect to countries less endowed with these resources (Sethi & Elango, 2000). For instance, American MNEs are inclined to apply their own nationally idiosyncratic, HRM practices across borders and in certain cases challenge HRM practices in their European subsidiaries such as pay for performance (Sayim, 2010). US MNEs also tend to be more centralised and formalised in their practices with a one-world, one strategy technique (Bjorkman & Furu, 2000). Similarly, Adler (1995) observes that while promotion in US companies is based on merit and performance, it is based on seniority and loyalty in Japanese MNEs. Hofstede, Van Deusen, Mueller, Charles and The Business Goals Network (2002: 800) emphasised that "the national origin of an enterprise continues to matter; it matters precisely in one of the most profound issues in the management of the enterprise, the goals held by its leaders." Applying insights from institutional theory and literature discussed above in subsections 2.2 Overview of the HRM practices applied in my research and 2.4.1 Factors influencing, and mechanisms for, the transfer of HRM practices, I identify and summarise key characteristics of standardisation of HRM practices in Western MNEs in Table 2.3. Standardised HRM practices that are utilised in Ghana (Africa) are derived from the corporate HQs of Western MNEs.

Table 2.3: Standardisation of HRM practices

Standardisation	**Characteristics of practices**
Recruitment and Selection	Poaching, company websites, interviews and tests at HQ or host country based on potential, skills, competencies, establishing talent pools
Training and development	Content developed at HQ, training at HQ, use of inpatriates, experts from Regional HQ, use of expatriates.
Performance management	Content derived HQ and deemed transparent
Rewards management	Contingency rewards based on targets
Diversity management	Host country nationals in key positions, use of English as medium of communication, employees from diverse religious backgrounds
Work and life balance	Flex-time, shifts to allow time off for employees, paternity leave
Employee communication and participation	Speak-up policies, town hall, non-unionised work environments, surveys

Ethnocentric transfer of management practices to the African region can be traced as far back as colonial rule of the African continent. Kiggundu (1991: 34) observes that:

> *During colonization, the various colonial powers first destroyed or denigrated local institutions and management practices, and then developed their own colonial administrative systems. […] because the colonists were convinced of their cultural, biological, and technological superiority and the inferiority of African administrative systems.*

It has been suggested that the destruction of indigenous organizations and management systems amounts to depriving Africans of practices that are more situationally appropriate (Kiggundu, 1991).

2.5.2 Localisation of HRM practices and host country effect

Local laws, regulations, and cultural forces act as countervailing forces for the transfer of foreign HRM practices. Some MNEs' usual home-based practices may have to be adjusted to comply with local norms and preferences (Bjorkman & Lervik, 2007; Farndale, 2010; Festing et al., 2010), which results in the localisation of practices. In contrast to the ethnocentrism of standardisation, localisation of HRM practices is associated with polycentrism where the host country's beliefs and practices prevail over the use of practices from the country of origin of an MNE (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979; Perlmutter, 1969). The need to adapt to practices similar to host nation HRM practices may be attributable to cultural difference (Hannon et al., 1995), consumer preferences (Bartlett & Goshal, 1989; Prahalad & Doz, 1999), legal regulations (Kostova & Roth, 2002) and labour markets (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994). Thus, national cultures create pressures for MNEs to decentralise decision making of HRM issues to conform to local context. For instance, French food retailers met resistance in their transfer of HRM practices 'as is' to their operations in Poland (Hurt & Hurt, 2005) because they failed to adapt these practices to the local context.

A polycentric MNE hires HCNs who have background knowledge of the cultural and institutional context considered essential for navigation of the host environment (Ando & Paik, 2013; Collings & Scullion, 2006). They are thus responsive to local cultural and institutional demands which provide subsidiaries with legitimacy (Ando, 2015; Gaur, Delios, & Singh, 2007; Michailova et al., 2016). HCNs have knowledge of customer needs, business practices, language, and how best to manage and motivate host employees (Konopaske & Ivancevich, 2004). Additionally, host country nationals are able to develop closer business ties with other businesses within the local context. However, the challenge facing MNEs is "how can a local

person identify and personify with the company's HQs corporate culture?" (Cullen & Parboteeah, 2010: 410).

According to Tayeb (2005: 102), whether an MNE acquires a company or sets up a new one, the MNE cannot easily eradicate "its host-country employees' cultural attitudes, values and beliefs from a distance and through rules and regulations." For instance, in a study of Chinese MNEs in Africa, Xing, Liu, Tarba, and Cooper (2016: 34) observe that "work constitutes only part of the African employees' life, and that community life and family are more important." This is a manifestation of the *Ubuntu* principle of treating others as your brothers and sisters: 'I belong, therefore I am' (Xing et al., 2016: 34). In this case foreign managers adapted to local customs and granted African employees religious holidays and showed respect for their culture.

Also, Kim and Gray (2005: 823) stated that "as HRM deals with people who are the main carriers of cultural values and dispositions, the transfer of parent HRM in culturally distant subsidiaries may be not only ineffective but also counterproductive." HRM practices that are developed and implemented in the parent company of the MNE may not be appropriate for the subsidiary. Kostova and Roth (2002) stated that subsidiaries' practices are subject to the influences of employees' beliefs which are largely shaped by the institutional environment of a firm. It is the institutional context that gives meaning to HRM practices through employees who are regarded as "carriers of institutions" (Kostova & Roth, 2002: 218).

Michailova (2002) observed in a study of two Russian firms that Western expatriates tried to apply employee participation and empowerment without success. The Russian employees regarded the attempts made for participatory decision-making and empowerment as the managers' evasion of responsibility and lack of professionalism. Similarly, Bjorkman and Budhwar, (2007) in their study of foreign firms in India concluded that subsidiaries that implemented HRM practices similar to the parent company yielded poor performance in contrast to high performance by firms that localised their HRM practices. The reasons for this high performance emanated from the fact that localisation increased the firm's legitimacy and enhanced employees' morale.

Yahiaoui (2015) examined HRM practices in French subsidiaries in Tunisia. The HQ of one of the companies introduced variable pay linked to company targets. However, local employees preferred an increment based on fixed pay rather than variable pay relying on individual and overall company performance and profitability. Employees pressured management to modify

the system to enable all of them to benefit. Accordingly, the local managers increased the fixed part more than the variable portion of pay. They also considered the skills evaluation criteria transferred from the HQ to be too high and rigid for the Tunisian context and consequently adapted them. The adjustment was made to maintain group solidarity and to align with the Tunisian collectivist culture. Because employees regarded criticisms and penalties as individual affronts, performance appraisal practices were also modified to remove penalties. This case underscores the need for MNEs wanting to do businesses in Tunisia to uphold cultural values such as: respect for elders; cooperative management style; consensus through negotiation; dignity; and pride in the local context.

Caligiuri (2014) concludes that cross-cultural differences affect the extent to which HRM practices can be effective and regarded as fair when implemented and therefore calls for cultural sensitivity in their design and implementation. Certain options are available to the MNE which include either to adopt the prevailing local practices or seek to introduce country of origin practices into host country operations to create 'cross-national isomorphism' (Ferner, 1997: 26). Foreign subsidiaries of MNEs are likely to adapt HRM practices of host nations if there are similarities between the national cultures of both the country of origin and host nation. MNEs are expected to be more responsive to cultures that are similar to their own (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994) probably due to the fact that little or no modifications would be made to existing practices. Applying insights from subsections 1.1.3 Ghana's national culture and 2.2.8 HRM practices in Africa and Ghana and institutional theory, I identify and summarise the key characteristics of localisation of HRM practices in Table 2.4. Localisation of HRM practices refers to practices that are used in local firms.

Table 2.4: Localisation of HRM practices

Localisation	Characteristics of practices
Recruitment and selection	Subjective (not based on merit), tribalism, government ministers influencing selection processes, persons who spoke a common language, word of mouth
Training and development	Favouritism, not based on needs analysis, managers determine who is to be trained, lack of resources
Performance management	Arbitrary assessment, selective patronage, employees fear communicating their work performance, unreliable, lack of incentives/sanctions.
Rewards management	Subjective e.g. based on kinship, family ties, tribalism and paternalism
Diversity management	Employees are a family, varied ethnicities see themselves as Ghanaians first and a member of a specific ethnic group second.
Work and life balance	Flexible working arrangements and employer provided childcare are virtually non-existent.
Employee communication and participation	Limited delegation of authority, constant consultations with superiors, centralised decision-making.

Localised HRM practices are embedded in the traditions and norms of host country that differ considerably from Western practices. As a result, subsidiaries adopt a dual approach to HRM practices in order to accommodate the interests of local stakeholders to achieve mutually acceptable goals (Kamoche & Harvey, 2006).

2.5.3 A dual approach to subsidiary HRM practices

The forces of standardisation and localisation require MNEs to manage the dual embeddedness of subsidiaries in the MNE internal corporate network and the host context (Figueiredo, 2011; Meyer et al., 2011; Narula & Dunning, 2010; Tavares & Young, 2005). The contested nature of transfer of HRM practices (Gamble & Hung, 2009) makes it imperative for corporate managers to be well informed about the contradictory nature of standardisation and localisation forces that are entailed in subsidiary management (Chung, Bozkurt & Sparrow, 2012; Collings & Dick, 2011; Evans, 1999; Evans et al., 2002). Tayeb (1998: 332) notes that "some practices can be transferred across nations almost without any change from one country to another. Some must be modified to become workable in another setting. And some are more deeply culture-specific and may not always be transferable". Laurent (1986: 97) concluded that:

> *In order to build, maintain, and develop their corporate identity, multinational organizations need to strive for consistency in their ways of managing people on a worldwide basis. Yet, and in order to be effective locally, they also need to adapt those ways to the specific cultural requirements of different societies. While the global nature of the business may call for increased consistency, the variety of cultural environments may be calling for differentiation.*

Managing the opposing forces of localisation and standardisation of HRM practices simultaneously necessitates negotiations between management and employees to achieve the MNE's strategic business goals. MNEs often argue that local practices are not competitive (Bjorkman & Budhwar, 2007) and hence would not align with the business strategy for their operations; thus implying that standardisation and localisation cannot be simultaneously implemented. A differing view is that localisation and standardisation are not mutually exclusive but are implementable and attainable at the same time with varying emphasis on aspects of the practices (Berchtold, Pircher, & Stadler, 2010).

An MNE implementing its HRM practices in foreign subsidiaries has to be responsive to the host nation's institutional, cultural beliefs and values (Lazarova, Peretz, & Fried, 2017). Employees in subsidiaries may resist HRM practices for reasons of their conflict with local cultural and institutional values while MNEs may also oppose local practices because they perceive them not to be efficient and effective. Finding the right balance between standardisation and localisation might lead to mutual learning and compromises (Gamble, 2003). Gamble and Hung (2009) point out that, the transfer of HRM practices is not an event, but a process which is often challenged, varied and resisted. Transfer of HRM practices is "people dependent and hinges with the interpretations and attitudes of recipients" which are subject to change (Bjorkman & Lervik, 2007: 331). The local cultural and institutional factors "influence the meaning, interpretation and implementation of foreign practices in these organisations" (Anakwe, 2002: 1047).

According to Debrah (2001: 196)

> *In Ghana, society, traditional practices, and culture permeate management in modern organisations. Hence, a complex situation has emerged whereby traditional Ghanaian behaviour, beliefs, practices, and attitudes, which often militate against Western modern management systems and practices, seriously, undermine organisational performance*.

I argue that the transfer and application of western HRM practices in the Ghanaian context may encounter serious challenges that may lead to the adoption of a dual approach to subsidiary HRM practices. Adopting a dual approach to subsidiary HRM practices can permit subsidiaries

to take advantage of opportunities that stem from the local environment and still fulfil the MNE's expectations of the subsidiary (Meyer et al., 2011; Mudambi, 2011). It has been suggested that MNEs' social interactions with actors in the local environment are likely to improve knowledge of the subsidiary, which is key to gaining competitive advantage within its location (Ambos, Asakawa, & Ambos, 2011). In particular, Western MNEs are likely to gain from improved work relations with HCNs whilst local employees can learn new skills and advance their careers (Kamoche & Harvey, 2006).

In summary, this chapter reviews key HRM practices that western MNEs seek to replicate in their subsidiaries in developing countries with the intention of gaining perceived advantages of efficiency, effectiveness and competitive advantage. The review examines motives and strategies for standardisation and localisation of HRM practices. The review suggests that ethnocentric beliefs informing the standardisation of HRM practices in institutionally distant countries may not be effective. In contrast to ethnocentrism of standardisation, localisation of HRM practices is associated with polycentrism where the host country's norms and practices overshadow those of MNE corporate HQ. The chapter concludes that interplay of standardisation and localisation is feasible through negotiations with stakeholders such as employees and managers in the local context, as adopting an uncompromising stance of either complete standardisation or localisation of HRM practices may not be fruitful. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical foundation of the study.

Chapter 3 Theoretical foundation of the study

In chapter two, I reviewed the relevant literature on transfer of HRM practices in order to place the present research in its historical and current perspective. In this section, I elaborate on the theoretical underpinning and its role in my research. I advance reasons for my choice of institutional theory as a theoretical lens to guide and illuminate the research process and findings.

The existing literature on HRM practices is embedded predominantly in western thinking (Pudelko & Harzing, 2007) and as such, it has its own ethnocentric origin. Scholars in emerging and developing countries have relied largely on theories developed in the USA and Western Europe to conduct research and it is suggested that this "cross-context theory borrowing" be curtailed in "favour of producing indigenous alternatives" (Whetten, 2009: 29 - 30). Researchers have noted challenges associated with conducting research in Africa, including lack of indigenous theories (Lages *et la.,* 2015). Thus, as a result of lack of indigenous theories in Ghana, I used borrowed theories with the aim of contributing to the scholarly conversation on the transfer of HRM practices by appropriately positioning the study within the Ghanaian locale and embedding it in the international literature simultaneously. Adopting this kind of scholarly discourse can provide novel insights to IB and the academic literature. This is in line with Meyer (2015: 370), who suggests "using existing theories to explain empirical puzzles". Thus, in this research, I examine whether the forward diffusion of HRM practices by developed western countries to a developing African country with unique cultural and institutional contexts is workable. I focus on how relevant factors such as the values, norms, expectations and beliefs in the host country influence localisation and standardisation of HRM practices in Ghana.

3.1 Considerations on the role of theory

Theory propels the ideas that fuel research and practice (Udo-Akang, 2012). Bacharach, (1989: 498) defines theory as "a statement of relationships between units observed or approximated in the empirical world", where approximated signifies constructs that cannot be observed directly such as culture and satisfaction and observed units refers to variables that can be measured empirically. "Theory is a statement of concepts and their interrelationships that shows how/or why a phenomenon occurs" (Corley and Gioia, 2011: 12). Theory concerns "any coherent description or explanation of observed or experienced phenomena" (Gioia & Pitre, 1990: 287). It is "formulation of apparent relationships or underlying principles of certain

observed phenomena which has been verified to some degree" *(Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2014).* Ferris, Hochwarter, and Buckley, (2012: 96) indicate that "…theory represents a systematic explanatory statement about the relationships among a set of constructs, with accompanying logic and assumptions", while to DiMaggio, (1995: 391) it is "an account of a social process, with emphasis on empirical tests of the plausibility of the narrative as well as careful attention to the scope conditions of the account."

Thus, it is worth having some criteria in place to evaluate the usefulness of a theory. Bacharach, (1989) outlines two main criteria for evaluating theory, namely falsifiability and utility. Falsifiability refers to whether a theory could be refuted or not, whilst utility denotes its usefulness and how it can both explain and predict. Explanation determines the meanings of constructs, variables and their linkages, while prediction tests the substantive meaning by comparing it (meaning) with empirical evidence. Bierstedt (1959: 41) notes that utility is "the bridge that connects theory and research." Theory will guide my research process by clarifying the meanings of constructs used and their usefulness, without refutation and prediction, since the purpose of my research is not to test a theory.

I explain the concept of theory along the lines of Whetten, (1989) and Bacharach, (1989) who suggest that the fundamental objective of theory is to answer the questions of what, how and why. What, how and why are fundamental to answering my main research questions and to give an in-depth description of the phenomena under investigation: Does the Ghanaian institutional context influence standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in western subsidiaries? Why and how? And how do Western MNEs manage the interplay between standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in their subsidiaries in Ghana?

What reflects the variables, constructs and concepts which "logically should be considered as part of the explanation of the social or individual phenomena of interest" (Whetten, 1989: 490). Bacharach, (1989: 498) notes that a "theory may be viewed as a system of constructs and variables in which the constructs are related to each other by propositions and the variables are related to each other by hypotheses." Kaplan (1964: 55) describes constructs as "terms which, though not observational either directly or indirectly, may be applied or even defined on the basis of the observables." Bacharach (1989: 500) further explains that a "construct may be viewed as a broad mental configuration of a given phenomenon, while a variable may be viewed as an operational configuration derived from a construct." For instance, my theoretical foundation is institutional theory based on normative distance between the home country of the

western MNEs and Ghana and how it influences localisation and standardisation of HRM practices. Normative distance is seen with respect to norms, values and culture and in addition to HRM practices, localisation and standardisation are constructs. My research seeks predominantly to examine differences, patterns and relationships among these constructs. Whetten (1989) observes that the guiding principles in ascertaining whether or not, one has included the "right" factors for a study are comprehensiveness (that is, are all relevant factors included?) and parsimony (that is, should some factors be deleted because they add little additional value to our understanding?).

Successful identification of the necessary constructs and variables for my study paves the way to answer the *how*. This refers to how constructs are related to each other or how variables are related amongst themselves (Bacharach, 1989). The *why* seeks to justify the selection of factors and the causal relationships. The why "constitutes the theory's assumptions – the theoretical glue that welds the model together" (Whetten 1998: 491). "What must be clear is *how* and *why* constructs influence each other, the logic of the direction of the relationship specified and under what conditions the relationship is predicted to exist" (Thomas, Cuervo-Cazurra, & Brannen, 2011: 1074). Thomas et al. (2011: 1075) further note that since the objective of qualitative research is to inform and not to test theory, there is the need to explain how constructs emerge in coding and analysis of qualitative data and "to specify *how* and *why* the observed patterns of empirical results are logically related."

In summing the what, how and why, Whetten, (1989: 491) concludes that "*what* and *how* describe; only *why* explains. *What* and *how* provide a framework for interpreting patterns, or discrepancies, in our empirical observations." A good theory should therefore incorporate a good explanation for "why we should expect certain relationships in our data." Miles (2012: 3) elucidates more elaborately that

> *the 'what' and 'how' elements of a theory make up the domain, or the subject of the theory. The "why" parts of a theory help explain the relationships among the 'what' and 'how' elements. More specifically, the why elements help explain underlying…social dynamics of the constructs and the proposed relationships of those factors*.

In sum, a good theory should incorporate the "what", "how" and "why" elements. Theory provides guidance to the research process and findings (Bordage, 2009; Reeves, Albert, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008). According to Reeves et al. (2008: 631),

> *Theories provide complex and comprehensive conceptual understandings of things that cannot be pinned down: how societies work, how organisations operate, why people*

> *interact in certain ways. Theories give researchers different "lenses" through which to look at complicated problems and social issues, focusing their attention on different aspects of the data and providing a framework within which to conduct their analysis.*

Having analysed theory and its various components paves the way to explain the nature of a theoretical framework. A theoretical framework provides a structure and boundary within which to carry out research. Thus with the help of a theoretical foundation, I am able to organise complex phenomena such as HRM practices in MNEs by asking the relevant questions and identifying the answers that are likely to provide insights. Theoretical framework also provides insights into what is already known and what needs to be discovered. Additionally, it helps to expose patterns or relationships that contribute to predicting events (Ennis, 1999). A theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts within which research is grounded. It will guide my research, mirror the relationships among the constructs and facilitate understanding of these relationships. It creates boundaries for my research.

Maxwell (2013) states that a theoretical framework serves two purposes, specifically how a research question fits into what is already known (the link with prevailing theory and research) and the contribution of the research to existing knowledge in the field. A theoretical framework therefore helps to illuminate my research, highlighting key relationships among constructs that could have probably gone unnoticed. These functions of the theoretical framework are accomplished through a review of the literature. A review of the literature also serves to ground my research in "the relevant previous work, and to give the reader a clear sense of your theoretical approach to the phenomena that you propose to study" (Maxwell, 2013: 145).

IB scholars have used a range of theoretical perspectives in empirical studies to examine the extent to which an MNE subsidiary complies with HRM practices of the parent company rather than with local practices of a host country. To address the research questions put forward in chapter 1 of this thesis, I apply institutional theory and focus on how Western MNEs apply their HRM practices within Ghana. Institutional theory as a theoretical foundation serves well to explain how existing norms and expectations within a social context influence the behaviour of organisations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Mike, Sunny, Brian, & Hao, 2009). Institutional theory provides a context that gives meaning to the factors affecting the transfer of HRM practices. Hoskisson et al. (2000: 263) underscore the need to employ institutional theory in probing issues in emerging economies, pointing out that "it is anticipated that as markets emerge, institutional theory first becomes relevant." Also, institutional theory emphasises thick

descriptions of the cultural and institutional contexts that influence organisational goals (Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008).

My choice of institutional theory is premised on the fact that institutions influence MNE practices (Li, Jiang, & Shen, 2016; Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008; Scott, 1995). It is an appropriate theoretical lens for researching MNEs relations with the cultural and institutional contexts of host countries (Hoenen & Kostova, 2015; Li et al. 2016). Institutional theory is suitable for unearthing how western MNEs respond to Ghana's institutional context. It is a suitable theoretical framework for examining the localisation and standardisation of HRM practices of foreign MNEs in Ghana because of its sensitivity to cross-border contextual variations (Ang & Michailova, 2008). It is in this light that institutional theory becomes the logical theory to apply in my study.

3.2 My theoretical choice: Institutional theory

Institutional theory has been used extensively in the IB literature to study HRM practices in foreign affiliates of MNEs, such as global integration versus local adaptation (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1991; Berchtold, Pircher & Stadler, 2010; Björkman, Fey, & Park, 2007; Meyer & Su, 2014) and a country's institutional profile (Kostova, 1997, 1999; Kostova & Roth, 2002). MNEs are complex organisations with multiple subunits having varying degrees of independence and interdependence (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1990). These subunits are embedded in different national institutional environments and probably with different local community practices (Meyer & Su, 2015; Westney, 1993). Kostova et al. (2008: 1001) state that MNEs are complex entities that are embedded in "multiple, fragmented, ill-defined, and constantly evolving institutional systems." They suggest a blend of both the old and new institutionalisms when conducting research involving institutional contexts and MNEs. According to them, international management research has been largely characterised by a "narrow set of neo-institutional ideas" (Kostova et al. 2008: 994). This resonates with an earlier observation by Greenwood and Hinings (1996) that both the new and old institutionalisms be combined, since organisations are not just passive to their institutional settings but do react in ways that promote their interests.

Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997: 407) observed that the old institutionalism is associated with action "focusing on dynamics, change, social construction and values", while the new institutionalism emphasises "statics, outcomes, cognition and the dominance and continuity of

environment." Also, Greenwood and Hinings (1996: 1022-1023) note that the "old institutionalism" is associated with "issues of influence", "competing values" and "informal structures" while the new institutionalism endorses "legitimacy, the embeddedness of organisational fields, and the centrality of classification, routines, scripts, and schema." The neo-institutionalists view MNEs as "passive pawns, adapting willingly to institutional expectations" (Tempel & Walgenbach, 2007: 10). Nonetheless, MNEs are "rational, and self-interested actors with stable preferences", despite being constrained by institutional rules and norms (Jackson & Deeg, 2008: 545).

As a result of the complex nature of MNEs, institutional demands imposed on MNEs are often conflicting in nature (Djelic & Quack, 2003; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Kraatz & Block, 2008; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Saka-Helmhout, Deeg, & Greenwood, 2016). Institutional demands can emanate from actors such as employees who promote norms, values and beliefs that they have been socialised or trained in (Pache & Santos, 2010). According to Pache and Santos (2010: 458), "when organizations depend on key institutional referents for resources, such as funds, staff, or license to operate, they are likely to comply with what these stakeholders expect from them to secure access to these key resources." In Ghana for instance, organisations sourcing land from local chiefs are likely to yield to demands of these tribal leaders in the areas of employment opportunities for their constituents. Organisations therefore respond to institutional demands with different strategies (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011; Oliver, 1991; Pache & Santos, 2010).

Mudambi and Navarra (2002) argue that institutions are means that MNEs utilise to achieve their ends. It is therefore possible to find MNEs in the same environment responding differently to similar institutional demands (Pache & Santos, 2010). MNEs are active players in co-constructing meanings of institutions wherever they are situated. In line with these arguments, I blend the dual perspectives of both the new and old institutionalisms in this research by arguing that MNEs not only adapt to the institutional expectations of host country context but also act rationally to achieve their strategic goals. This line of argument is intended to gain a holistic understanding of the forces of interplay between localisation and standardisation of HRM practices of western subsidiaries within the Ghanaian context.

3.2.1 Institutional components

The proponents of institutional theory are from two major disciplines, namely economics and sociology. The pioneers among the economists are Williamson (1975, 1985); North (1990) and the early sociologists are Meyer & Rowan (1977); DiMaggio & Powell (1983); Scott (1987, 1995, 2008). Deriving inspiration from both institutional economics (North, 1990) and institutional theory in sociology (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1987), I explore the influences of the normative dimension of institutional theory on HRM practices of subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana. Table 3.1 shows the various elements of institutions.

Table 3.1: Dimensions of institutions

Degree of formality (North, 1990)	Examples	Supportive pillars (Scott, 2008)
Formal institutions	• Laws • Regulations • Rules	• Regulative (coercive)
Informal institutions	• Norms • Cultures	• Normative • Cognitive

Source: Peng et al. (2009: 64).

As seen in Table 3.1, Scott (1995; 2005; 2008) notes that institutions comprise of three pillars: regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements. He notes that regulative elements emphasise rule-setting, monitoring and sanctioning activities. The regulative or coercive dimensions are usually designated formal institutions since the rules, regulations and laws are usually codified while the normative and cognitive dimensions are considered informal institutions (Peng, Sun, Pinkham, & Chen, 2009). Normative elements "introduce a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension into social life" (Scott, 2008: 54), while cultural-cognitive components accentuate the "shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made" (Scott, 2008: 57). Peng (2014: 95) explains that the norms regulate the behaviour of individuals and firms whilst the cognitive refers to personal beliefs, "internalised taken-for-granted values and beliefs" that guide behaviours of individuals and firms. The norms, values and beliefs of a society are shared meanings that reflect the national culture of any given nation (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990; Kogut & Singh, 1988). Eden and Miller (2004: 201) state that the normative dimension "specifies how things should or should not be done, reflecting the values and norms of society. Such informal prescriptions and proscriptions are often culturally driven, tacit understandings that are opaque to outsiders."

The sociologists or neo-institutionalists argue that organisations sharing the same environment become isomorphic with each other (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Isomorphism refers to the "constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 148). Institutional rules act as myths that organisations assimilate in order to obtain acceptability, gain access to resources, secure stability and enhance survival prospects (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Thus organisations are products of institutional forces (Ang & Michailova, 2008).

Henisz and Swaminathan (2008: 539) conclude that an MNE's responses to each institutional construct will vary depending upon its prior experience in its "home country institutional environment as well as those of other countries in which it has operated." Scott expounded that the "three elements vary substantially in the type of institutional order they support, each differing in the bases of order, motives for compliance, logic of action, mechanisms, and indicators employed. Each pillar offers a different rationale for claiming legitimacy, whether by virtue of being legally sanctioned, morally authorised, or culturally supported" (Scott, 2008: 51).

North (1990: 3) explains that institutions are the rules of the game which are "humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction." The game, he notes, consists of three elements, namely individuals, organisations and nation states with unwritten codes of conduct to complement written rules. North (1990) explains that when formal institutions such as laws and regulations cease to be effective, the informal institutions such as norms, beliefs and values governing interpersonal relationships play a significant role in influencing an organisation's practices. Peng (2014: 104) concurs with North (1990) that informal institutions play a vital role in reducing uncertainty "and providing constancy to managers and firms" in situations where formal institutions fail. Informal institutional forces can influence an MNE's choice of decisions and performance (Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008). Hofstede et al., (2002: 800) argue that institutions "are the crystallisations of culture and culture is the substratum of institutional arrangements." Institutions are instrumental in minimising uncertainty by signalling desirable and undesirable behaviours.

In line with Scott's three pillars, Kostova (1997; 1999) developed a new construct called institutional distance denoting the differences in norms, values and beliefs between the MNE parent and host country. Kostova and Zaheer, (1999) maintain that the larger the institutional

distance between the host and parent country of the MNE, the more difficult it is to establish legitimacy or to transfer a practice from the parent company of an MNE to a subsidiary. Gaining legitimacy both within an MNE and externally in a host country is crucial for successful operations (Xu, Pan, & Beamish, 2004). Legitimacy is the process of the MNE gaining acceptance and approval to operate in its environment by the legitimating authorities in the host countries (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999).

The difficulty of establishing legitimacy or transferring a practice is attributable to the fact that organisation structures and practices tend to mirror the institutional environments in which they were nurtured (Kogut, 1993). From the foregoing, an MNE has to dynamically manage the interplay between standardisation and localisation of its practices in order to gain internal and external legitimacy. Legitimacy evolves as a result of a congruence of values between an MNE and society (Parsons, 1960) and "the degree of cultural support for an organisation" (Meyer & Scott, 1983:201). Suchman (1995: 555) concludes that organisations gain legitimacy by implementing practices deemed "desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions."

Xu and Shenkar, (2002: 611) conclude that:

> *Among the three pillars of institutions, the normative component, which defines organisational goals and objectives as well as the appropriate ways to pursue them, has direct bearing on organisational practices. [...] The transfer of MNE routines, therefore, is mainly constrained by the normative distance between the host and home countries.*

Xu and Shenkar's (2002) conclusion corroborates the findings of an earlier study by Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994) of HRM practices in US affiliates of non-US MNEs. The findings of this study suggested that subsidiaries were not coerced with regulatory mechanisms to adopt local practices. To a certain extent, the "tendency of affiliate HRM practices to resemble local practices may better be understood as normative or mimetic in nature: affiliates consistently seek to adopt local HRM practices although they are not compelled to do so" (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994: 244). However, one needs to exercise some caution in interpreting these results since the context of this empirical research is the US which is regarded as an innovator of HRM practices (McDonnell et al., 2011) that subsidiaries might want to emulate. Gamble (2010: 729) concluded that an MNE was likely to transfer HRM practices considered to have competitive advantage but "least likely to succeed when it fails to align with host labour market norms and practices."

It is nonetheless necessary to complement institutional distance with the cultural distance construct since neither of them describes fully the national differences with regard to MNE behaviour (Xu & Shenkar, 2002). Cultural distance refers to the extent to which "different cultures are similar or different" (Shenkar, 2001: 519; 2012: 1). HRM practices of any nation, it is argued, are rooted in cultural beliefs (Myloni, Harzing, & Mirza, 2004). Schneider (1988: 231) noted that subsidiaries of MNEs "are embedded in local national cultures wherein the underlying assumptions about people and the world may differ from that of national and corporate culture of the multinational."

What, therefore, constitutes appropriate cultural distance dimensions? Tung and Verbeke (2010: 1260) defined cultural distance dimensions as "societal values on which nations and societies tend to differ", such as Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (1998) cultural factors (e.g. universalism vs. particularism; equality vs. hierarchy) in addition to Hofstede's dimensions. In analysing the cultural distance, it is recommended to incorporate the sources accounting for the cultural distance such as level of economic development, and the educational, functional and geographic experience of senior management of the MNEs (Tung & Verbeke, 2010). I discuss some of the institutional peculiarities of the African context from the Western context next.

3.2.2 Africa's institutional specificities

Africa is considered by far the most ethnically and linguistically diverse region of the world, with African ethnicities characterized by economic traits and distinct cultural norms (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2013, 2015). The continent comprises 54 countries with a population of more than 1.1 billion people belonging to several ethnic groups. "More than 25% of all languages are spoken only in Africa with over 2000 recognised languages" (George et al., 2016: 381). In that sense, understanding the institutional environment of one African country may not necessarily translate into understanding institutions prevailing in another African country. Also, the level of inequality across ethnic groups in Africa is much higher than in other continents and differences in geographic endowments across ethnic localities and the inability of central governments to manage those intensify the already existing ethnic disparities (Alesina, Michalopoulos, & Papaioannou, 2012).

The multi-layered cultural differences within and across African countries are reflected in Africa's institutional complexity (Nyuur, Osabutey, & Debrah, 2014). Many African

economies are considered institutional voids (Gardner, 2011; Khanna & Palepu, 1997) due to weak educational institutions (Osabutey & Debrah, 2012); corruption (Osabutey, 2013); "absence of market-supporting institutions, specialised intermediaries, contract enforcing mechanisms, and efficient transportation and communication networks" (George et al., 2016: 377); and numerous culturally-grounded challenges (Osabutey, Nyuur, & Debrah, 2015). For instance, despite the prevalence of information technology in many parts of Africa, many people still prefer to do business in person. An in-person introduction and a handshake mean much more than videoconferencing or sending emails, because they are viewed as signs of respect. In some cases, it is impossible to get business done unless the person responsible is physically present, because failure to be there can be viewed as being rude.

Gardner (2011: 1) argues that the prevalence of the institutional voids mentioned above creates the basis for social contracts – "beliefs, unwritten rules of behaviour, familial ties, social and moral norms of a given social community"; and social institutions – "the social hierarchy as promoted by traditional and religious leaders." In other words, in the absence of strong institutions, social norms regarding expected behaviour prevail. In Africa formal institutions such as courts and other legal mechanisms have high costs and are therefore seldom utilised. The large institutional distance between Africa and the western world poses challenges that can seriously impede the implementation of western MNEs' preferred HRM practices in their African subsidiaries.

"Ghana, like most countries in Africa is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Its current population […] is a vast mosaic of large and small ethnic groups" (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004: 1). There is equally an uneven distribution of infrastructural development and natural endowments between the north and south of the country (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004).

Further to this, Acquaah (2007: 1240) observes that in Ghana, as in many other African countries, "there are two parallel political systems and authorities: (1) the formal political system of the modern nation state, and (2) traditional political systems that pre-date the modern nation state." A gerontocracy which comprises of the chief and his elder kinsmen tends to constitute the law courts in the community, and the paramount chief performs the role of a chief justice (Zoogah, Peng, & Woldu, 2015). Chiefs help to instil discipline and to "improve the legitimacy and enforceability of rule of law and property rights" (Dia, 1996: 106). This is not surprising bearing in mind that about 80 percent of land in Ghana is customarily owned by

families, clans and traditional authorities, such as chiefs (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001). In Ghana, "households individually owned the crops that they grew on the land they cultivated, but their rights over the land did not include the full bundle of rights we typically call ownership....the farm is my property, the land is the chief's" (Bubb, 2013: 559).

Western MNEs, particularly those in the extraction industry, have to communicate and work with chiefs and community leaders who are custodians of the land (George et al., 2016). They have to negotiate with government, tribal leaders and chiefs for lease of land and payment of royalties in many African countries such as Ghana. Chiefs are also influential in mediations between their communities and MNEs in times of crises where community members protest against actions of organisations. Acquaah (2007: 1240) points out that "in Africa, community leaders such as local chiefs and kings and religious leaders are very influential in garnering resources and providing access to valuable information and knowledge to businesses." In fact, the national constitution of Ghana recognises ethnic institutions in the settlement of property rights, disputes, and enforcement of customary law (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2013). In Ghana, there is a whole ministry for Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs responsible for coordinating affairs between the Government and traditional authorities.

In the next section, I develop a conceptual model that illustrates the relationship between MNE corporate HQ HRM practices and subsidiary HRM practices.

3.2.3 Conceptual model

A framework "highlights or emphasises different aspects of a problem or research question" (Bordage, 2009: 313). A conceptual model provides a structure and boundary within which to carry out research. A conceptual model provides insights into existing literature and key variables that influence a phenomenon of research (Bordage, 2009, Ennis, 1999; Reeves et al. 2008; Swanson, & Chermack, 2013). Thus with the help of a conceptual model, I am able to organise complex phenomena such as HRM practices in MNEs by soliciting answers to relevant questions that provide insights.

It is envisaged that a large institutional distance between the host and parent country of an MNE constrains the transfer of organisational practices (Eden & Miller, 2004; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). The regulative, cognitive and normative dimensions each constitute a distinct distance with varying implications for MNE behaviour. However, since the regulatory and

cognitive dimensions are beyond the scope of this thesis, I focus on normative institutions as explained above under institutional components. A key component of a country's social context is its normative institutions. For instance, the literature on standardisation and localisation of HRM practices indicate that, the Ghanaian cultural and institutional specifics diverge significantly from the West. Nonetheless, corporate HQs of Western MNEs put considerable pressure on their subsidiaries to adopt HRM practices of HQ which are deemed financially competitive and superior to those of host context (see Thite *et al.,* 2012). For example, the cultural rules of the game that tend to favour members of an in-group in terms of recruitment and selection; training and development; performance management; rewards management and employee communication and participation are likely to foster organisational ineffectiveness, inefficiency and low productivity (Zoogah *et al.,* 2015). Western MNEs regard their own HRM practices as "best practices" which are claimed to work efficiently and also circumvent the possibility of duplicating effort and time in experimenting with other unfamiliar HRM practices (Geary *et al.,* 2017). Subsidiaries of Western MNEs usually standardise the following HRM practices: recruitment and selection; training and development; performance management; rewards management; diversity management; work and life balance; employee communication and participation. For instance, to ensure that HRM practices of subsidiaries align with those of HQ, expatriates and former inpatriates who are familiar with HQ routines are used to train local employees to ensure that subsidiary work practices conform to HQ (see Sarabi *et al.,* 2017). The deployment of these HRM practices to subsidiaries facilitates the coordination and control of HRM practices and the institutionalisation of a common corporate culture (Edwards *et al.,* 2007).

Nevertheless, the incongruity between Western MNE and local HRM practices creates tensions and disagreements among institutional actors in the host environment, such as union representatives, chiefs and traditional leaders and HCN managers. There is pressure on subsidiaries to adopt parent MNE's HRM practices in order to gain internal legitimacy and equally to conform to host country's practices in order to achieve external legitimacy (Chung *et al.,* 2014).

The dual embeddedness of subsidiaries within Western MNEs and the host country results in an interplay of standardisation and localisation of HRM practices. This interplay of standardisation and localisation is considered crucial for the success and effectiveness of subsidiaries (Laurent (1986) of Western MNEs operating in institutionally distant countries such as Ghana, with host country specifics posing significant challenges to transferred HRM

practices. Subsidiaries are likely to adopt a dual approach in the implementation of recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, rewards management and employee communication and participation. Further to this dual approach, Western MNEs are likely to adopt certain communication strategies including negotiation, consultation, collaboration and dialogue with host country institutional actors (see Kamoche & Harvey, 2006). These management strategies can help resolve and accommodate divergent interests in order to attain mutually acceptable goals to both subsidiary management and local stakeholders. MNEs are equally likely to appoint HCNs to key positions and allow them some degree of autonomy to configure subsidiary HRM practices to suit the local context (Geary *et al.*, 2017; Kamoche & Harvey, 2006).

Figure 3.1 below is a conceptual model that depicts the specificities of the host context that include chiefs and traditional leaders who have the power to allocate land and preside over the settlement of disputes (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015). The arrow in Figure 3.1 from the home country of the MNE represents HRM practices embedded in corporate HQ values that are deemed superior, efficient, effective and financially competitive. Countervailing these transferred practices is the arrow from the host country, Ghana, signifying local contextual norms, values, beliefs and social expectations in which HRM practices are embedded. This leads to interplay between localisation and standardisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries as depicted by the middle arrow. The conceptual model is further examined in the discussion section of this thesis to incorporate the normative institutional demands of host actors that necessitate the interplay of localisation and standardisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana.

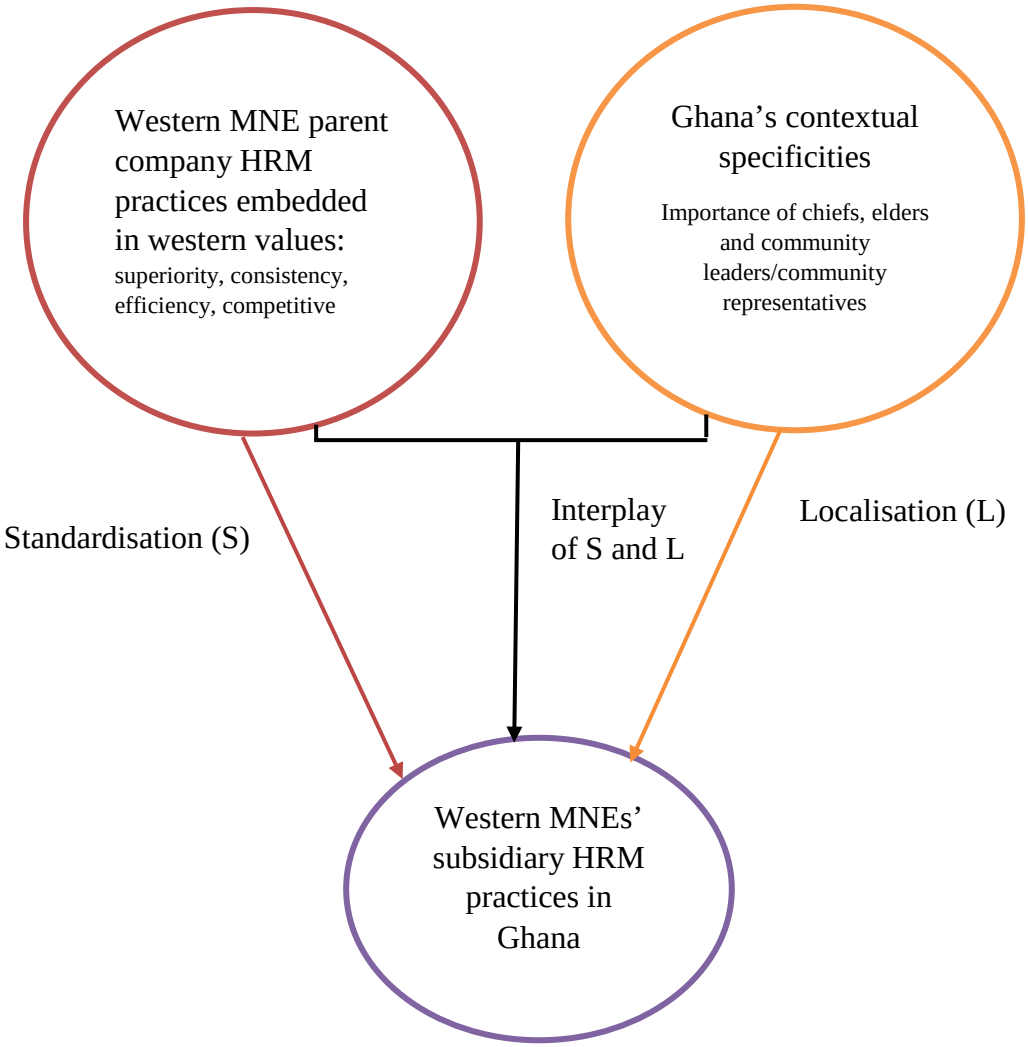

Figure 3.1: HRM practices in Western MNEs in Ghana.

The next chapter describes the research design and methodology. It discusses and justifies the reasons for applying a qualitative approach as the most appropriate approach given the novel nature of the context. I discuss the suitability of the case study method for my study which uses semi-structured interviews and documents as sources of data. The chapter also discusses the challenges associated with the collection of data in the context of a developing country such as Ghana and concludes with reflections on exiting from the research site.

Chapter 4 Research methodology

In chapter three, I discussed the relevance of institutional theory as the theoretical lens for this research. In this chapter, I discuss the ontological and epistemological underpinnings to the research design, and the ethical considerations and strategies I adopted in gaining access to research sites. I expound the challenges associated with my data collection and the methods I applied for data triangulation.

4.1 Ontological and epistemological considerations

Ontology is the "study of being, that is, the nature of existence and what constitutes reality", while epistemology "provides a philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate" (Gray, 2014: 19). Identifying the philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality and how knowledge is construed about social phenomena is considered crucial to the research process. According to Bryman and Bell (2015: 34), the "ontological assumptions and commitments feed into the formulation of research questions and the way research is carried out." Bryman and Bell (2015: 32) note that:

> *The central question here is whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered as social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors. These positions are frequently referred to respectively as objectivism and constructionism.*

A theoretical view closely associated with objectivism is positivism which claims that there is a social and natural reality out there (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Gray, 2014; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Leitch, Hill, & Harrison, 2010; Salner, 1989) and which "stipulates a correspondence criterion of truth" (Sandberg, 2005: 43). Salner (1989: 47) argues that this truth presupposes that "facts are out there to which our ideas and constructs, measuring tools, and theories must correspond." Positivists believe that social phenomena can be accurately researched applying laws of the natural sciences to measure its properties in order to uncover truths and facts in an unprejudiced manner (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012; Gray, 2014; Lundgren & Jansson, 2016).

It is nonetheless salient to make a distinction between the natural and social sciences. It is argued that the natural sciences study natural objects and focus on theory testing, control/measurement and generalisability, whilst the social sciences focus on human and cultural phenomena in an authentic setting, aiming at enhanced understanding (Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2015). Positivists downplay the role of values and

beliefs in research and mostly rule out these sources of understanding the world as unscientific (Given, 2008; Gray, 2014; Myers, 2013). However, the failure of positivists to highlight values and instead place emphasis on generalising research findings using statistical and mathematical techniques tends to ignore the research setting. It is argued that the research setting is an integral part of the research process and its importance in IB cannot be disregarded (Birkinshaw, Brannen, & Tung, 2011; Michailova, 2011; Welch et al., 2011). Disregarding the research setting may lead to loss of valuable insights to the study.

Accordingly, arguing that employees and managers are actively involved in creating meaning and interpreting transferred HRM practices through their daily active interaction in western subsidiaries in Ghana makes me adopt the ontological constructionism lens for my research. I view the transfer of HRM practices as a social construct arising from the multiple meanings, understandings and explanations that employees and managers assign to the implementation of these practices in their work settings. Social actors create meanings of social phenomena through interaction (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Gray, 2014; Patton, 2015). In a research setting such as Ghana, characterised by high degree of informal institutions in the political, economic and social spheres coupled with multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-linguistic labour force, this makes the choice of constructionism appropriate in order to uncover underlying meanings of HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs.

Furthermore, in order to understand the multiple meanings arising from the application of transfer of HRM practices in western subsidiaries from the point of view of employees and host country managers, I applied the interpretivist approach which is closely linked to constructionism with a view that the "methodological procedures and claims for objective knowledge have significant theoretical limitations for advancing our understanding of human and organizational phenomena" (Sandberg, 2005: 41). Interpretivism focuses on the perceptions of research participants and the notion that understanding of social phenomena can be derived from the experiences of those working in organisations (Gephart, 2004; Patton, 2015; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014; Welch et al., 2011). Yanow (2007: 409) argues that "from an interpretive perspective the evidentiary material that the researcher analyses is constructed by participants in the event or setting being studied." Myers (2013: 39) too argues that "interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared

meanings, and instruments." Interpretivist research, therefore, diverges from the deterministic explanation of human behaviour that establishes causal relationships between variables (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 1999; Berger & Luckman, 1967; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gray, 2014; Leitch, Hill, & Harrison, 2010; Prasad & Prasad, 2002) and focuses on ''capturing the actual meanings and interpretations that actors subjectively ascribe to phenomena in order to describe and explain their behaviour'' (Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2006: 132). The researcher is in a position to study a social phenomenon "holistically, get close to participants, enter their realities, and interpret their perceptions" (Leitch et al., 2010: 70). In my research, I uncover meanings and understandings that social actors - in this case host country managers and employees in western subsidiaries - assign to transfer of HRM practices.

The application of an interpretive philosophy to answer my research questions is in line with Gephart (2004: 457), who argues that "rather than producing qualitative facts to evaluate hypotheses, interpretive researchers seek to describe and understand members' meanings and the implications that divergent meanings hold for social interaction." I conducted my investigation in a natural setting interviewing employees and host country managers in addition to documentary evidence in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana, in order to deepen my understanding of transfer of HRM practices. This is because the social phenomenon, transfer of HRM practices, is "construed intra-subjectively and inter-subjectively through the meanings and understandings garnered from our social world. There can be no understanding without interpretation" (Angen, 2000: 385). Transferred HRM practices from an interpretivist perspective can therefore best be construed from the experiences of employees and host country managers working in western subsidiaries.

Having established the basis of the ontological and epistemological philosophies for my study, I next discuss the methodology, methods, research design and approaches I applied to answer my research questions.

4.2 Methodology and research design

Methodology refers to "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods, and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (Crotty, 1998:3). Examples of methodologies include case studies, grounded theory and experimental research. Methods on the other hand, refer to "the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question" (Crotty, 1998: 3). Examples

of methods include questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The research design therefore serves to knit the various components of the research process towards ensuring that the evidence adduced provides answers to the research questions (De Vaus, 2001).

Three approaches used in conducting research are quantitative, qualitative and mixed strategies (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Myers, 2013). The quantitative approach aligns with positivism which is anchored in objectivism (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lundgren & Jansson, 2016; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The main features of quantitative research from ontological and epistemological stance may be encapsulated as "measurement, causality, generalisation and replication" (Bryman & Bell, 2015: 174). It applies the lens of the natural sciences to social science using universal laws to provide causal explanations of social phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Easton, 2010; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014).

Quantitative approach studies large samples of populations for purposes of prediction and generalisations (Castro, Kellison, Boyd, & Kopak, 2010; Gelo, Braakmann & Benetka, 2008; Myers, 2013; Patton, 2015). The approach places emphasis on measurement tools (Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka, 2008; Patton, 2002). It applies hypothetical-deductive methods to establish statistical relationships between variables and to test hypotheses (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Curry, Nembhard, & Bradley, 2009; De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gephart, 2004). Meaning is typically construed through the hypotheses generated and conclusions drawn, usually aiming at confirming, extending or challenging a theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka, 2008; Myers, 2013).

4.2.1 Why quantitative and mixed approaches are less appropriate for this study

Due to the nascent state of literature on HRM practices in Africa (Mellahi & Mol, 2015), it would be preferable to avoid hypothesising relationships between variables in a context with several unexplored issues relating to HRM, until qualitative research can bring more clarity into the understanding of the key concepts related to this complex process. Edmondson and McManus (2007) rightly point out that using a quantitative approach to study a phenomenon in a new context is likely to yield little learning from a study. This is because the measures are likely not to be directly related with the phenomenon under investigation.

Similarly, Karra and Phillips (2008) aptly point out that as the focus of research on international management shifts from the developed world to emerging economies, getting access to reliable data becomes a serious challenge, and public data is usually unreliable. Application of survey methods in such contexts is also problematic. Lages et al. (2015) note that quantitative research utilising surveys in Africa generally yields a low response rate, because respondents consider it as waste of time. Lages et al. (2015) further contend that most of the scales developed and tested in the developed world might not allow for the in-depth analysis required of phenomenon that has been under-researched in the African context.

Furthermore, quantitative research is often criticised for not being able to provide depth and insight into human actions, values, beliefs, assumptions, experiences and perspectives (Gephart, 2004; Given, 2005; Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela, 2006; Jick, 1979; Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2006). By relying on responses to pre-formulated structured questions, the quantitative approach constrains the possibility of a researcher probing further to gain participant perspectives on researched phenomenon. As a result, issues that are not included in questionnaires do not form part of the analysis. Furthermore, respondents may be uncertain about the intended interpretations of questionnaires. Also, in the absence of information explaining the underlying logic behind respondents' answers, a researcher may not be in a position to explain whether respondents understood or interpreted survey questions the way the research design intended (Yauch & Steudel, 2003). This can possibly lead to inaccurate understanding and interpretations of phenomena in MNEs (Birkenshaw, Brannen, & Tung, 2011).

Also, unlike qualitative research where contradictory evidence should be accounted for in the data analysis with any novel insights generated therein (Anderson, 2010), quantitative research focuses on the "typical, the average, the trend that can be generalised to large populations" (Vanderstoep & Johnson, 2008: 168). As a result, it tends to silence the voices of the marginalised (Ebbs, 1996; Vanderstoep & Johnson, 2009). Deviant responses classified as outliers to survey questions are usually not included in quantitative reports (Vanderstoep & Johnson, 2009).

Given the strengths and weaknesses associated with dichotomous qualitative and quantitative approaches, IB scholars suggest that mixed methods can probably mirror the complex issues of IB as comprehensively as possible (Coviello & McAuley, 1999; Hurmerinta-Pelomaki & Nummela, 2006). Mixed methods refer to a research strategy that combines and integrates both

qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single study (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka, 2008; Molina-Azorin, 2012; Teye, 2012), and where the various components such as data analysis and integration of results are given equal treatment (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007; Turner et al., 2015).

The assumption is that, methods which are mixed do not share the same weaknesses and that the weaknesses associated with one method might be counterbalanced by the strengths of the other, with an overall objective of enhancing confidence in results, typically via convergence (Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1979; Molina-Azorin, 2012; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Teye, 2012).

Mixed methods are useful for "comparing different perspectives drawn from quantitative and qualitative data" (Creswell, 2014: 231), and the results of one approach can be used to elaborate and clarify perspectives of another (Hurmerinta-Petlomaki & Nummela, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teye, 2012). The qualitative approach can be used to explain in detail the meaning behind the numbers in quantitative research. Additionally, surprises and discrepancies in mixed methods results would necessitate a supplementary inquiry to reconcile the differences which might lead to novel insights and rich explanations (Denzin; 1978; Jick, 1979; Meetoo & Temple, 2003; Teye, 2012). Mixed methods strategies, it is claimed can produce more comprehensive and meaningful results but with huge challenges.

Giving equal priority to the various components of mixed methods has proven elusive in practice, since researchers end up prioritising one component over the other with the quantitative designs dominating studies (Piekkari et al., 2008; Ketchen, Boyd, & Bergh, 2008; Phelan, Ferreira, & Salvador, 2002). Similarly, there are usually problems associated with integrating the large amount of data generated from both approaches. Morse, Wofe and Niehaus (2006: 68), observed that "mixed-method design never has two components of equal weighting", usually with the qualitative part providing a merely supportive role (Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela, 2006).

Mixed methods design requires more financial resources, time and labour (Niglas, 2004; Turner et al., 2015). Applying mixed methods in a study in Ghana, Teye (2012: 389) enumerated the problems associated with the strategy and emphasised that "cost of research, time constraints, problems of integrating findings across methods, conflicts in data interpretation" make the approach laborious. He further observed that certain peculiar problems including "lack of reliable transportation and telecommunication networks" and the myriad of disappointments associated with travelling for long distances to schedule appointments without

success contribute to the dearth of mixed methods application (Teye, 2012: 387) in developing countries such as Ghana.

Also, a hybrid method may not be appropriate for my thesis due to the novel aspects relating to HRM practices, until qualitative research can bring more clarity into the understanding and appreciation of important concepts and beliefs pertaining to the Ghanaian context. Edmondson and McManus (2007: 1171) state that the mixed methods approach is less appropriate for studying phenomenon in a new context until "sufficient exploration of a new area has pinned down factors to measure." Statistical tests are therefore likely to be less informative and insightful in such contexts.

Molina-Azorin (2012) concludes that it is the research question that determines a suitable approach to apply in a particular context because none of the approaches is superior over the others. With particular reference to my research questions, the quantitative and mixed methods approaches are less appropriate for answering, and even establishing, the research questions. Furthermore, time and financial resource constraints make the application of mixed methods for this thesis not practically feasible, leading to the adoption of the qualitative inquiry approach that I discuss below.

4.2.2 Qualitative approach

Qualitative researchers regard the world as "complex, dynamic, interdependent, textured, nuanced, unpredictable, and understood through stories…(they) distrust generalisations and are most comfortable immersed in the details of a specific time and place" (Patton, 2015: 13). Qualitative research employs texts, words, and talk to develop concepts that facilitate understanding of social phenomena (Gephart, 2004; Yauch & Steudel, 2003). It "studies, documents, analyses, and interprets how human beings construct and attach meanings to their experiences" (Patton, 2015: 13). Qualitative research has a "humanistic focus" (Gephart, 2004: 455) and sensitive to detail and research setting (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Doz, 2011; Janasik, Honkela, & Bruun, 2009) and as a result endeavours to understand typically a small number of participants' worldviews rather than concrete realities of objects (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013) and testing of hypothesis on large samples (Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka 2008). The voice of the researched is valued and occupies a central position in the research process (Ebbs, 1996).

To emphasise the importance of the qualitative line of inquiry, Morgan and Smircich (1980: 498) argue that as the

> *social world constitutes some form of open-ended process, any method that closes the subject of study within the confines of a laboratory, or merely contents itself with the production of narrow empirical snapshots of isolated phenomena at fixed points in time, does not do complete justice to the nature of the subject.*

The qualitative strategy provides authentic setting (Aguinis, Werner, Abbott, Angert, Park, & Kohlhausen, 2010; Turner et al., 2015) and permits me, the researcher, an opportunity to delve into and uncover the underlying assumptions, beliefs and values (Yauch & Steudel, 2003) shaping the HRM practices in western subsidiaries.

The qualitative approach is less structured, more open-ended and flexible allowing participants to voice issues considered salient to them. I tried my best not to impose any predetermined set of preconceived concepts and opinions on research participants. Participants have an opportunity to reveal their perspectives about the phenomenon under investigation. My research employs constructs and meanings in use by social actors to explain their interactive experience of social reality. The flexibility and open nature of qualitative research is likely to uncover new phenomena in IB worthy of further inquiry and thereby enriching the discipline (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Doz, 2011; Gephart, 2004; Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela, 2006; Sinkovics, Penz, & Ghauri, 2008; Yauch & Steudel, 2003).

As discussed in chapter two, I was not able to identify a study on transfer of HRM practices to subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana in the literature that I reviewed. Due to the nascent state of literature on HRM practices in Africa (Mellahi & Mol, 2015), I argue that qualitative research, in particular, is useful to explore in greater detail how HRM practices are transferred to subsidiaries located in Ghana. The motivation to explore and uncover the institutional and cultural influences on HRM practices make qualitative approaches appropriate for this study. Ghana is a new context in this regard and this study seeks to extend the IB literature to that region. It is proposed that doing research in emerging markets requires qualitative research, since some instruments developed and used in the developed markets may not be readily applicable in emerging market settings (Hoskisson et al., 2000; Zhao, Anand, & Mitchell, 2005). Detailed, rich and evocative data are needed to shed light (Edmonson & McManus, 2007) on the transfer of HRM practices as an important, yet not well understood phenomenon in the Ghanaian context. Thus, gaining a deeper insight into these practices will enable me to explain and analyse the interplay of standardisation and localisation of HRM practices.

My research questions serve as the lodestar of this study. My research question is "How and why do western MNEs standardise or localise their HRM practices?" Qualitative methods are appropriate for addressing how and why questions (Agee, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Doz, 2011; Given, 2008; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). I seek to explore 'how' and 'why' HRM practices are transferred to subsidiaries.

The qualitative approach is useful in explaining the Ghanaian context within which western HRM practices are implemented. It is possible to illuminate meanings and contextual influences on people's perspectives and actions within a certain milieu (Buckley, Chapman, Clegg, Gajewska-De Mattos, 2014; Given, 2008; Maxwell, 2013; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014; Yauch & Steudel, 2003) employing qualitative methods. The approach describes situational details and "provides insights that are difficult to produce with quantitative research" through thick and detailed descriptions of events in their natural context (Gephart, 2004: 455). "Up-close qualitative types of methodologies" are appropriate for researching phenomena that require "deep contextual understanding to be meaningful" (Birkinshaw, Brannen & Tung, 2011: 575). Qualitative approaches can unearth the reality of employees and managers' perspectives and interpretations of HRM practices.

In fact, quantitative approaches have dominated the IB field with qualitative methods in a supporting role. Some scholars interpret this as a loss to the field of IB, because qualitative methods can shed light on the complex cultural and institutional settings of MNEs (Birkinshaw et al., 2011; Doz, 2011; Gephart, 2004; Piekkari, & Welch, 2006; Welch *et al.,* 2011). Qualitative research is therefore more likely to provide meaningful contextualisation and clarity to the research questions and concepts within the Ghanaian social setting rather than hypothesising and testing variables. Klingebiel and Stadler (2015: 197) conclude that "in-depth studies of decidedly African phenomena often hold greater promise than traditional surveys, at least as an initial step towards understanding contexts better." Some important issues relating to HRM practices still remain not well understood in the Ghanaian context and as a result, this justifies the use of qualitative approaches.

Birkinshaw et al. (2011: 573) observe that "qualitative methods can once again play a critical role to interpret and understand the complex plurality of contexts." In Ghana, for instance, MNEs may need to acquire land for various purposes and it is interesting to note that about 80 percent of land is customarily owned by families, clans and traditional authorities, such as

chiefs (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001). These informal institutions are likely to have some influences on HRM practices in subsidiaries that have acquired land. Mason (2002: 3) observed that qualitative research produces "rounded and contextual understandings on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data." The choice of qualitative approach is therefore considered appropriate for the purposes of my research.

Maxwell (2013: 30) explains that "a major strength of qualitative research is in getting at the processes that led to the outcomes, processes that experimental and survey research are often poor at identifying." With qualitative methods, I was able to probe in-depth for explanations about how HRM practices are standardised or localised and the reasons for doing so, from the perspectives of employees and managers experiencing the phenomena. Qualitative approach, therefore is "uniquely suited to 'opening the black box' of organisational processes" (Doz, 2011: 583) Thus, through the qualitative approach, I gained rich insight and nuance for understanding HRM practices in Western subsidiaries in Ghana.

4.2.3 Inquiry from an emic perspective

Pike (1967) originally coined emic and etic terminologies derived from the suffixes of the nomenclatures phonemic and phonetic, classifications for linguistic analysis. Phonetics refers to the study of speech sound and analysis while phonemics denotes the distinctive meanings and structure of a particular language (Morris, Leung, Ames, & Lickel, 1999; Perterson & Pike, 2002; Pike, 1967; Sinkovics, Penz, & Ghauri, 2008). It is suggested that "in a strict linguistic sense, the phonetic implies an objective description, fully specified in all possible dimensions, and the phonemic implies a description which is based upon the categories employed by the people under study" (Buckley, Chapman, Clegg, Gajewska-De Mattos, 2014: 309).

An etic orientation perceives reality as objective, culture free and suitable for hypothesis testing and generalisations (Buckley *et al.*, 2014; Morris et al., 1999; Sinkovics, Penz, & Ghauri, 2008). Social phenomenon is independent of the researcher (Evered & Louis, 1980). It is associated with the universalists who argue in the context of IB that state of the art organisational practices are valuable, context free and universally applicable (Mendonca, Kanungo, & Aycan, 1999). However, Adler and Adler, (1987) disagree with the etic assertion and conclude that all human knowledge is influenced by the values and interpretations of the researcher.

Emic perspectives are often associated with subjective/idiographic/qualitative/insider terms (Buckley *et al.*, 2014; Evered & Louis, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Morey & Luthans, 1984; Sinkovics, Penz, & Ghauri, 2008). An emic approach focuses on researching social phenomenon within a particular cultural context and understanding this phenomenon as members of that cultural context understand it (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003). I adopt an emic perspective that favours the study of transfer of HRM practices from the point of view of employees and host country managers within their work context.

The emic perspective avoids imposing the researcher's constructs on research participants and focuses on understanding the insider's contextualised experiences, viewpoints, perceptions, meanings and interpretations of social phenomena (Evered & Louis, 1981; Morey & Luthans, 1984; Morris et al., 1999). This perspective is suitable for my research because it supports my philosophical, ontological and epistemological stance that phenomenon is socially constructed and can be interpreted from the perspectives of research participants. In line with Pfeffer (1981: 8), my research seeks to understand how social phenomena – HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs - are "perceived, interpreted and legitimated" from the perspectives of employees and host country managers.

In-depth emic approach with a focus on participants' interpretations has the potential of expanding researchers' knowledge horizons about emerging, interesting phenomena in IB. Thus, it is suggested that fieldwork enables researchers to gain "a deep understanding of the meanings that research participants attribute to the contextual factors in the field rather than just reading about them" (Michailova, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, Ritvala, Mihailova, & Salmi, 2014: 148). My research seeks to appreciate and share the experiences of host country managers and employees of transferred HR practices in western subsidiaries.

4.2.4 Limitations of the qualitative approach and strategies adopted to address them

Despite the strengths of qualitative research in providing a nuanced understanding of researched phenomena, critics of qualitative research argue that the approach is an assembly of anecdote, too impressionistic and subjective to researcher's bias (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mays & Pope, 1995). These criticisms are centred on the notion that qualitative findings "rely too much on the researcher's often unsystematic views about what is significant and important" (Bryman & Bell, 2015: 413). Researcher's biases and conceptions can colour the interpretations of findings (Janasik, Honkela, & Bruun, 2009). Mays and Pope

(1995: 110) recommend "systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication" as a possible way to reduce these biases. The strategies I adopted to minimise any potential weaknesses of the qualitative approach are explained in detail under sub-section 4.5.1 conducting interviews.

Qualitative studies are criticised for being subjective with a researcher's bias towards the selection of informants (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Ghauri, 2004; Macpherson, Brooker, & Ainsworth, 2000; Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). The selection of informants is deliberately aimed at ensuring that appropriate responses are obtained for research questions. Also, interpretations of interview data are likely to be influenced by the subjective leanings of the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Creswell (2009) noted that researchers should be critical and reflexive of the research processes and decisions made.

Also, due to the limited number of participants in qualitative research, it is difficult to generalise results to other settings. As already discussed in previous sections, the purpose of qualitative interpretive research is not to generalise but to gain in-depth understanding of social phenomena from the subjective experience of participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015; Welch et al., 2011). I discuss my chosen qualitative case study approach next.

4.2.5 My chosen qualitative approach: Case study involving multiple cases

4.2.5.1 Case Study

Creswell (2013) identifies five approaches to qualitative research namely narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. In describing the type of research problem best suited for a particular approach, Creswell (2013) explicates that relating stories of individual experiences is suitable for narrative research; describing the importance of a lived phenomenon is appropriate for phenomenology; building a theory in the views of participants is fitting for grounded theory; describing and interpreting shared patterns of culture of a group is apt for ethnography while providing an in-depth understanding of a case or cases is right for case study.

Case studies are the most popular qualitative approach in IB research (Piekkari, Welch, & Paavilainen, 2008; Yang, Wang, & Su, 2006), but qualitative case studies are relatively few in IB compared to inductive theory-building case studies (Welch et al, 2011; Welch, Plakoyiannaki, Piekkari, & Paavilainen-Mäntymaki, 2013). Case study is suitable for studying social phenomena "that have taken place in an authentic context" (Turner et al., 2015: 5)

without controlling the context (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Overlooking the context might lead to loss of meanings resulting in superficial knowledge (Lertxundi & Landeta, 2012; Myloni, Harzing & Mirza, 2004; Tayeb, 1998). The beliefs, values and assumptions of the cultural and institutional context shape HRM practices.

According to Yin (2014: 2), case study may be applied for a study when "a researcher has little or no control over behavioural events; and the focus of study is a contemporary (as opposed to entirely historical) phenomenon." Case study is a research strategy that utilises multiple sources of data to examine a phenomenon in its natural setting (Piekkari et al., 2008). The focus of this thesis corresponds well with the criteria for qualitative case study methods to investigate a contemporary phenomenon - standardisation and localisation of HRM practices - in an authentic context, Ghana.

I adopt an exploratory case study method because little is known about my research question in the Ghanaian context. An exploratory qualitative case study design is useful for conducting research in a novel context with relatively little research on a topic (Zhao, Anand, & Mitchell, 2005). Additionally, there is a lack of common set of measures for institutional environments in developing countries due to the rapid changes in these economies (Hoskisson et al., 2000). The focus of exploration is therefore to gain "in-depth understanding of local, emic meanings, and of remaining open to alternative perspectives and tensions in the research setting" (Leppaaho, Plakoyiannaki, & Dimitratos, 2016: 161) of transfer of HRM practices.

Additionally, De Massis and Kotlar (2014: 16) suggest that *an exploratory case study* is applied when the "aim is to understand how a phenomenon takes place." These 'how' questions help to describe the processes and events involved in the application of MNE HRM practices. My study seeks to extend prior research by examining how the complex cultural and institutional settings influence HRM practices within western subsidiaries in Ghana. Furthermore, De Massi and Kotlar (2014: 16) explain that "*an explanatory case study* should be used when the aim is to understand why a phenomenon takes place." Explanatory case study is therefore appropriate for answering the thesis research questions: why do subsidiaries of western MNEs standardise their HRM practices in Ghana? And why do they localise their HRM practices?

My research combines the explanatory and exploratory objectives of case study in order to elicit "contextualised, holistic perspectives" **(**Piekkari et al., 2008: 581). The combination is in

line with the philosophy of the interpretive case study to "enhance the case study's explanatory power and potential for contextualisation" Welch et al. (2011: 740). Thus, understanding and explanation "are not as opposed as they may seem" (Welch et al., 2011: 753) and "interpreting and understanding the social world also involves offering an explanation as to why events occur in the way they do" (Welch et al., 2011: 757). Thus, "to explain is to create understanding" (Kakkuri-Knuuttila, Lukka, & Kuorikoski, 2008: 279). My study therefore seeks to make a methodological contribution to case studies in IB by combining "context sensitivity with explanatory rigour" (Welch et al., 2011: 741). This is in line with what Welch et al. (2011: 757) suggest that researchers need to "recognise and make more explicit the explanatory fabric that permeates their contributions." Case studies therefore provide a researcher an opportunity to give a vivid description of the lived experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2015; De Massi & Kotlar, 2014; Pettigrew, 1973; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014) of employees and managers in subsidiaries of western MNEs about the co-existence of standardised and localised HRM practices.

Representativeness is not a selection criterion in interpretive case studies research (Stake, 1994). Stake (1995) explains that the objective of interpretive case studies is to embrace context. Case studies are equally appropriate for generating thick descriptions of a phenomenon in its locales (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Otley & Berry, 1994; Patton & Appelbaum, 2003), in order to facilitate understanding (Ghauri, 2004; Lingreen, 2001; Perren & Ram, 2004). Also, case study makes it possible to collect wider-ranging amounts of information than other methods to explore complex situations (Bryman, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Denzin, 2012; De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Morse & McEvoy, 2014; Lauckner, Paterson & Kruper, 2012). Sources of information may include company brochures, interviews, newspaper publications, observations, memoranda and other archival documents which help to crosscheck and validate information obtained from these sources (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014). The case study strategy is appropriate for my research.

Furthermore, Verschuren (2003: 137) notes that a case study is

> *a research strategy that can be qualified as holistic in nature…looking at only a few strategically selected cases, observed in their natural context in an open-ended way, explicitly avoiding (all variants of) tunnel vision, making use of analytical comparison of cases or sub-cases, and aimed at description and explanation of complex and entangled group attributes, patterns, structures or processes.*

Flyvberg (2006) notes that case studies are useful in providing a nuanced view of reality since human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood using laws of cause and effect. It might

therefore be difficult to understand subsidiary HRM practices well without the context in which they are applied.

Case studies offer an opportunity to study phenomena in a holistic manner from multiple perspectives (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Ghauri, 2004; Gummesson, 1991; Yin, 2014). I collected information from both host country managers and employees in addition to documents that can provide a holistic view of how western MNEs transfer their HRM practices. I address these sources of information in detail later in this chapter. Multiple sources of data serve to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the research claims (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Denzin, 1978; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Mathison, 1998; Mok & Clarke, 2015; Yin, 2014).

In conclusion, my study seeks to understand holistically the contextual meanings of HRM practices in western subsidiaries in Ghana by gathering multiple sources of information. Precisely, my objective is to gain an appreciation of how the Ghanaian institutional context influences HRM practices in western subsidiaries. My choice of qualitative case study approach is appropriate to generating insights and thick contextual descriptions of HRM practices without risking any loss of meanings.

4.2.5.2 Multiple case studies

A qualitative approach using case study methodology may entail single or multiple cases (Meyer, 2001; Shekhar Singh, 2014). Single case studies are suitable for studying critical, revelatory, extreme or unique phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Siggelkow, 2007; Yin, 2014). The focus of my thesis does not fit into any of these categories of single case study. Additionally, single cases are associated with biases and the "risk of misjudging the single event and exaggerating easily available data" (Vissak, 2010: 377).

Multiple cases on the other hand, serve to minimise biases (Vissak, 2010). They are useful for replication, substantiating and enhancing the robustness and confidence of research findings (Bensabat, Goldstein, Mead, 1987; Ghauri, 2004; Halinen & Tornroos, 2005). Yin (2014) suggests that multiple case studies support theory replication and make findings robust, while Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007: 27) conclude that "adding three cases to a single case offers four times the analytical power." Multiple case studies allow a researcher to compare and

contrast findings from each of the cases selected, taking into consideration what is common and unique across cases (Tsang, 2013; 2014).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 25), by examining the similarities and differences between cases, "we can understand a single-case finding, grounding it by specifying how and where and, if possible, why it carries on as it does." Multiple cases are extensions of single case studies (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Yin (2014) explains that multiple cases may be deemed as multiple experiments. The range of cases, relevant to, and considered in this research, is subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana. Each of the subsidiaries constitutes the unit of analysis (Fletcher & Plakoyiannaki, 2011; Rowley, 2002) with host country managers, employees and organisational documents serving as sources of information.

For this research, I analysed HRM practices in recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, rewards management, work/life balance and employee communication and participation within each foreign subsidiary and compared across subsidiaries to identify what is common and peculiar to the selected cases.

4.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical responsibilities and considerations are usually required in research involving human participants (Begley, 2005; Kidd & Finlayson, 2006; Stening & Skubik, 2007). Ethical issues may emerge in qualitative research during the process of data collection and dissemination of results. Certain questions can embarrass participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Maintaining ethical standards helps to protect the rights of participants through confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent (Aita & Richer, 2005; Guillemin & Guillam, 2004; Kidd & Finlayson, 2006; Morgan & Guevara, 2008; Wiles, Crow, Health, & Charles, 2008).

I applied and obtained ethical approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 9th December, 2014. The Ethics application process helps to ensure that the study complies with the principles and practices of research involving human participants. Ensuring that the research is conducted along approved institutional guidelines helps protect participants and me, the researcher from risk of harm (Guillemin & Guillam, 2004; Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). Guillemin and Guillam, (2004: 277) further observed that:

> *Although procedural ethics is unable to inform and guide all aspects of research practices, it does serve a valuable function in forcing us to consider and reflect on the fundamental guiding principles that govern research integrity.*

Acknowledging the rights of participants and seeking their consent to partake in the research are considered crucial for any ethical research (Aita & Richer, 2005, Begley, 2005; Kidd & Finlayson, 2006; Stening & Skubik, 2007). The research participants in the case subsidiaries were duly informed about the nature and purpose of the research through participant information sheets sent to them through the HR Managers of their respective organisations.

I advised participants that I would use pseudonyms in the thesis and any publications produced from the research. Also, I obtained consent formally through the signing of a consent form. I provided contact details in case of any further questions that might arise later. I strictly complied with all procedures in order to safeguard and protect participants' confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to not divulging information obtained from interviewees to third parties that might identify research participants (Kidd & Finlayson, 2006; Wiles et al., 2008). Research participants might be willing to share information with a researcher if confidentiality is ensured (Ogden, 2008). At all stages of the interview process, I reassured them of the confidentiality of their names and organisations.

I reminded interviewees that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. For my research, I kept digital recordings, all documents and processed data locked. Also, all transcriptions and notes taken during and after interviews are assigned codes. Contact details of participants are securely kept and separate from the interview narratives. I follow Ogden (2008) who recommends that identifiable information from interview scripts be removed to prevent the possibility of linking responses to individual participants.

I informed participants that the interviews would be recorded only with their consent in order to minimise loss of data and that these recordings would be given to a transcriber. A confidential agreement would be signed between the transcriber and me indicating that, the content should not to be disclosed or discussed with any other person except me, the researcher. Nonetheless, the production of the transcripts by the transcriber was replete with errors and I had to carry out the assignment by myself. Furthermore, I explained that data would be stored with my principal supervisor for a period of six years and subsequently destroyed according to the regulations of the University.

4.4 Data Collection

4. 4.1 Selecting the cases

A key decision in the conduct of case research is how to select the cases (Ghauri, 2004; Ghauri & Firth, 2009). I carried out the selection process in two phases. The first phase started with my travelling to Ghana in February, 2015. I arrived in Ghana on 12th February, 2015 and on 17th February, I visited the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) to solicit information about current subsidiaries of foreign MNEs operating in Ghana. I submitted the ethics application to the Chief Executive Officer of the GIPC but I was told to write a letter of request detailing the information I needed. I obliged and attached the ethics application from the University of Auckland. Also, since the GIPC is well known in the Ghanaian context among MNEs operating in Ghana, I requested an introductory letter from its management to supplement my ethics application from the University of Auckland in order to facilitate access. An introductory letter from the GIPC was much more likely to be readily accepted, since companies could easily verify information with a simple phone call. The GIPC granted my requests and gave me an introductory letter and the lists of registered wholly foreign projects, totaling 339 for the period 2008 to 2013 and their contact details.

The list of companies I collected from GIPC proved less than useful; as was evident after making about 40 phone calls which did not result in any access. The companies that I succeeded in contacting were mostly in their teething stages and comprised of eight to 15 employees without an HR manager or HR department and their contact details were also inaccurate. Also, other companies had relocated to other sites within the capital city of Ghana without updating GIPC about these developments and the phone numbers contained in the list given to me were no more valid. More often, the response I received from my phone calls was “Oh, they are no longer here.” Thus, the public physical address system of some of the companies was inaccurate. There was only one call which achieved connection and after introducing myself and the nature of my research, I asked if the manager was willing for his company to participate. He replied in the negative and bluntly told me “I will not allow you to use my company for research purposes” and hung up the phone. I felt embarrassed. Yet, I remained unwavering in my efforts to find companies for my empirical study.

I established the criteria for purposeful sampling. I deliberately looked for participants who had experience of the research phenomena and could provide in-depth rich information and multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015; Piekkari, et al., 2008). Purposeful

sampling concerns the fitness of the cases for the purpose of the research, and accessibility to the research setting (Coyne, 1997). To Creswell (2013: 156) purposeful sampling means "the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study." Stake (1995) cautioned that consideration be given to cases where learning is expected mostly to occur.

The criteria I adopted for purposefully selecting subsidiaries are: industry sector; size; existence of HRM department; type of HRM practices in operation; and access. Size refers to the number of employees working in a subsidiary, as a large number of employees may necessitate the establishment of an HR department. The HRM department plays a significant role in the development and implementation of HRM practices across subsidiaries of MNEs (Bjorkman & Welch, 2015). The HR managers in the various case studies identified key informants or employees with deep experience of the phenomenon of interest as participants. I was determined to get as many cases as I could, but as Ghauri (2004) points out, research challenges such as time available for research, financial resources and personal contacts demand a combination of theory and pragmatism as a necessary solution for successful research. However, a key question still remains with regards to the number of cases to be considered for my research.

It is argued that "the literature recommending the use of case studies rarely specifies how many cases should be developed. The decision is left to the researcher" (Romano, 1989: 36). Eisenhardt (1989: 545) argues that "while there is no ideal number of cases, a number between four and ten cases often works well." Creswell (2013) recommends not more than four or five cases while Hedges (1985) recommends a maximum number of 12 cases. Miles and Huberman (1994: 30) warn that findings are likely to be "unwieldy" when cases are greater than 15. In the selection of cases, I was cautious not to sacrifice depth for breadth to an extent that one "can no longer lay claim to a contextualised, holistic perspective" (Piekkari et al., 2008: 581).

Perry (1998) notices that observations with regards to the number of cases suitable for multiple case study fail to incorporate the time constraints and funding for postgraduate students. I add that the number of cases also depends on the willingness of organisations and employees to participate in the research and with a proviso that HRM practices under investigation were operational in the chosen subsidiaries. The ability to access firms is critical for case study. The model shown in Figure 4.1 summarises the key steps involved in selecting the relevant cases for my analysis.

I selected eight cases in the manufacturing, service and extractive sectors. These sectors account for the greatest part of FDI in Ghana (Sutton & Kpentey, 2012). The Ghana Investment and Promotion Centre quarterly reports indicate a growing trend in FDI, with the service and manufacturing sectors recording the highest number of foreign projects (GIPC, 2014; 2015). The choice of subsidiaries across these sectors was also to circumvent the prospect of industry-specific practices obscuring the findings (see Hutchings, 2005b). Out of the eight cases, six are located in the capital city, Accra; one in Tema which is home to numerous factories and one in northern Ghana. The last was included for a fair geographical representation, since the other selected subsidiaries are situated in the south. Most of the industries are located in the southern part of Ghana, as the northern part is often described as a deprived area with high illiteracy and poverty, with most of the people engaged in small scale farming. I come from this part of the country and I have lived almost all my life in this deprived area.

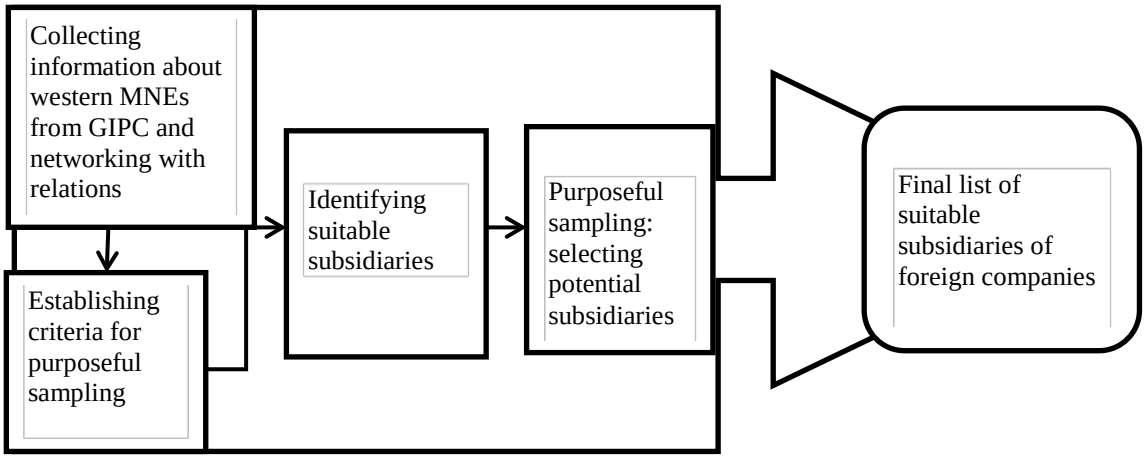

Figure 4.1: The case selection procedure

The number of companies and their nationalities are: three British, one French, two USA, one German and one Swiss. For purposes of confidentiality, pseudonyms are used in place of real names. I coded the cases as USA1, USA2 for American companies; UK1, UK2, UK3 for British companies; F1 for French, S1 for Swiss and G1 for the German company. I chose companies in line with Stake (1995) that selected cases should be where learning is greatest. The choice of countries such as the United States, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Germany is informed by the fact that these countries were among the top ten countries with the highest number of registered projects in Ghana in 2014 (GIPC, 2014). These countries can therefore be considered as Ghana's most important western trade partners. In order to conduct

successful interviews, gaining access and cooperation of research participants in organisations is of utmost importance. I next elaborate on this important aspect of the research procedure.

4.4.2 Challenges in gaining access to research sites in Ghana

The process of negotiating with gatekeepers to be allowed into a particular work setting to interview participants is the first step of gaining access. Access is a "precondition for the research to be conducted" (Burgess, 1984: 45). "The central paradox of access is that we have so little to offer our informants, yet we still gain access. In this respect, there is much we do not understand with respect to the motivations of those being studied" (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2004: viii). Access needs to be handled with care. What makes it complicated is that one may gain official permission to conduct research in an organisation but yet be unable to get the cooperation and collaboration of lower level employees or management (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007; Wanat, 2008).

Feldman et al. (2004: 3 - 4) note that gaining official permission from top management "will simply provide access to doors." Official permission to conduct research can "be sabotaged by the subjects", since "permission will have to be sought and cooperation gained as you move out into new territories and meet new people" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003: 76, 78). Gaining access to an organisation from multiple gate keepers becomes even more challenging and problematic (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Wanat, 2008) because more time is needed to negotiate and build relationships of trust with each of these gatekeepers (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007; Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016), which may result in delays of data collection.

The process of gaining access to research sites can be daunting and full of challenges (Peticca-Harris, deGama, & Elias, 2016). It is a continuous process throughout the entire duration of the data-gathering process (Crowhurst, 2013; Crowhust & Kennedy-Macfoy, 2013). It is therefore necessary to cultivate good relations with research participants and to study the social structure of research settings to be able to appropriately navigate through the system (Berg, 2004, Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003).

The experiences and challenges encountered in conducting research in difficult contexts are well documented in the IB literature and strategies employed in western organisations may not readily be transferred and applied in non-western organisations (Clark & Michailova, 2004). In the case of Africa, Lages et al. (2015) observe that there are often delays and difficulties

associated with obtaining permission from some organisations to conduct research, whilst others are totally unwilling to grant such requests for access to their organisations.

Initially, I decided to contact some of the western subsidiaries that I knew by virtue of being native of the context. I was often not granted access at the reception to see management. The question repeatedly asked was, 'Do you have appointment or is he/she aware you are coming?', to which I replied in the negative, but I took time to explain the purpose of my visit. On one occasion, a receptionist did not even bother to look up at me but quickly responded, 'We have stopped granting access to students wanting information for their research purposes.' Soulsby (2004: 46) observed that "the researcher is often dependent on the goodwill of gatekeepers, who have the power to control access to the research site and may have their own views about the purpose and outcomes of the research." Gatekeepers may envisage the purpose of a research to be at variance with the business interests and as a result put in place several obstacles.

In another instance, the receptionist in a multinational subsidiary that I visited requested I complete a visitor's form which I did and added my business card, the introductory letter from GIPC and the ethics application from The University of Auckland. All these documents were sent to the HR Manager. I sat at the reception from 10am to 6pm only to be told in the end that the manager was too busy and as a result could not see me. I understood this message to mean that I could come the next day, which I did. When she was informed of my presence, she invited me in, called the receptionist in the presence of all her subordinates and asked her to explain to her why she allowed me to return to the company when she, the manager, had informed her to tell me that she would get back to me. She consequently informed me that she could not grant me the interview straight away since she had to seek approval from the regional HQ in Nigeria (by scanning and sending my interview protocol both for management and employees and ethics application), before any interview could take place. She further questioned why I was interested in interviewing employees as well. I explained to her that scholars claimed what management believed to be prevailing practices might not necessarily be the case, since employees occasionally devised their own means of executing routines. She concluded, 'Well, I read your Participant Information Sheet and in fact your topic is very interesting' and I thanked her for the compliment. She promised to contact me but, after waiting for two months without any response from her, I went back to the company just to be told that she was indisposed. The receptionist gave me the choice to either leave a note or return in a week. I opted for the former but I never received any response.

Soulsby (2004: 44) notes that the "research site is always full of surprises and the process never goes quite as we have planned." My earlier assumptions that being a Ghanaian would allow easier access to companies were quickly dispelled. I was shocked that I was treated like a foreigner in my own country. What may have exacerbated my inaccessibility into companies was the wide perception of investigative journalism to uncover unethical practices in workplaces and the pervasive press freedom in Ghana. As a result, companies, especially multinational ones, have become discreet in giving out information and my topic concerning HRM practices might have been considered a sensitive area by some HR managers. I had to explain to participants that my research was not a "quality audit" of their organisations (Kemp, 2010) and that I could provide them with a short report of my findings if they needed.

As a result of these initial discouraging experiences, I renewed my professional networks and applied snowballing techniques. Making use of pre-existing networks in the research context can mitigate constraints to access to research sites (Feldman et al., 2004; Karra, & Phillips, 2008). Hutchings (2005a; 2005b) notes that snowballing through the use of personal contacts is a popular strategy used by IB scholars. My networks contacted their friends/relations who probably knew somebody working in western subsidiaries. This approach was also not without challenges. At times, I had to leave my residence as early as 6am to avoid being caught in traffic. In one instance, I sat in one office from 8am to 4:30pm, without eating, because I was afraid if I stepped out of the building to look for food and those that I had scheduled to meet also went out, I would have lost the opportunity for an interview.

In one instance, the Vice President of HR of USA1, whom I knew well, saw me and enquired about my mission. I explained to him the purpose of my visit and he expressed willingness to help. He asked me to wait for him. I waited from 9am to 4pm when he came and apologised that he had completely forgotten about me. I concur with Soulsby (2004: 44) that:

> *One has to be prepared to cope with the long periods of sitting around in foyers and offices waiting for people to telephone back or confirm the next set of interviews. …The uncertainty and the constant need to stay flexible and focused on seizing any opportunity that comes up can be very stressful. It can take its toll on both one's self-confidence and confidence in the project itself. Doubts creep in as you begin to wonder if you will ever be able to get inside someone's office and get a 'real' interview.*

The Vice President of HR of USA1 scanned through the Participant Information Sheet and interview sheets for both management and employees and expressed reservations about why I wanted to interview employees as well. I explained to him that there was the need to understand

the views of employees as well. Although he did not say anything further, I could read from his facial expression that he was not satisfied with the answer. He probably might have thought, "What do employees know about HRM practices?"

I felt both physical and psychological discomfort in my field research, particularly on the 3rd of June, when on my way home after visiting a company to request their participation, there was suddenly a heavy downpour of rainfall. There was flooding in the capital city and both people and vehicles were washed away. Taxi drivers were not interested in passengers as they were running for their own safety. I took shelter in a restaurant but it was raining unceasingly from 4pm to 11pm before it subsided. I decided to walk in the rain for about four miles to go home since no taxis were available. I had to call my landlord to alert him not to lock the entrance. It was past midnight and I had to walk through a forest to reach where I lived. So many thoughts were running through my mind: if armed robbers attacked me at this particular moment, what could I do? I had with me my laptop; digital recorder and my passport containing my New Zealand visa. I finally got home at 1:20am and at about 10am I heard in the news both on TV and radio that as many as 159 lives were lost to the floods. I was traumatised but the key word that sustained me was 'perseverance.' Shaffir and Stebbins (1991: 1) aptly capture the frustrations of researchers in the field by stating that:

> *Fieldwork must certainly rank with the more disagreeable activities that humanity has fashioned for itself. It is usually inconvenient, to say the least, sometimes physically uncomfortable, frequently embarrassing, and to a degree, always tense.*

I continued the networking with contacts, some of whom also neither answered my phone calls nor returned them. Other networks through relations who also promised to help me find suitable companies likewise were not of assistance. A cousin remarked, 'Why did you choose such a topic to study multinationals when you know that they hardly open their books to outsiders.' I answered that it was possible, for other scholars have done it in other parts of the world and I was also determined to do same in my country. In fact, my experiences are similar to those of Paboteeah, Seriki and Hoegl (2014) in their study of five companies in Nigeria and South Africa. Parboteeah et al. (2014: 986) point out that it is a big hurdle to gain access. They note that:

> *In cases where the only available contact persons were official gatekeepers to whom no personal links were available, access was generally denied…strong persistence suggesting an introductory conversation with a decision maker led to organisation members becoming irritated and totally breaking off contact.*

After two months into the field work I got to know more people. I had to visit popular clubs where people went to socialise in order to reconnect with old contacts. I explained to them the type of companies that I was interested in and they also suggested some companies; some of which were African MNEs and hence did not meet my research criteria. They were able to link me to some companies but this was done in a piecemeal manner. In some cases I was able to access only one company in a month.

Through my pre-existing connections, I was able to access four companies and another four were approached without a personal referral. In fact, the companies that I accessed without any referral turned to have higher participation rate such as USA1, UK2, UK3 and F1. These are companies in which I knew some of the employees at the university when I was studying for my undergraduate degree. Thus employees were more willing to participate than in the other four subsidiaries to which I was referred. I did not know anyone in the other four companies that I was referred to, probably explaining the low numbers such as USA2, 3; S1, 3; UK1, 4; G1, 4. Karra and Phillips (2008: 552) observed that respondents in emerging contexts **"**are often unclear on what research is and have complex reasons for not wanting to disclose even basic information such as the number of employees in a firm or total sales." Another possible explanation for the low numbers is the unnecessary anxiety some employees express in granting interviews. At USA2 for instance, the HR Manager wanted to invite another manager from the marketing department to participate alongside with her. She argued that it was necessary to invite this person in addition, in case she could not provide answers to some of my interview questions. I explained to her at length that it was not to test her knowledge on HRM practices but to know what practices prevailed in the company to which she finally agreed. I visited these companies several times in anticipation of increasing the number of interviews but a routine response I received was, 'Oh, I am busy, try and come another day.' I followed up with phone calls but to no avail.

My fieldwork experience has given more credence to the choice of qualitative research. As my physical presence in some companies was ignored by some managers, this might imply that if I had sent a survey questionnaire it would not have received any responses or any meaningful results. This confirms the findings of Lages et al. (2015) that gaining access to organisations in Africa is very challenging. A working example is that of Parboteeah et al. (2014), who originally started their study using a survey based questionnaire but had to change to interviews. Respondents felt insecure with the survey instrument and wondered whether the

results would be reported to management, leading to their disengagement. Thus qualitative research, based on interviews, where I was physically present to assure participants of their confidentiality, coupled with perseverance, flexibility and coping strategies proved more appropriate for the Ghanaian context. I present the profile of the companies in which I conducted the interviews and obtained some documentation next.

4.4.3 Background information of western subsidiaries in Ghana

The profile of the companies are summarised and presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Profile of case companies

MNE	Sector	HQ base	Type of entry in Ghana	No. of Ghanaian interviewees	Regional HQ.	Number of employees in Ghana
USA1	Extraction	Denver, USA	Greenfield	5	Ghana	2000
USA2	Service	Memphis, USA	License	3	Dubai	350
UK1	Manufacturing	Manchester, UK	Greenfield	4	Nigeria	149
UK2	Manufacturing	London, UK	Acquisition	5	South Africa	500
UK3	Service	London, UK	Greenfield	6	South Africa	1167
F1	Service	Paris, France	Acquisition	7	La Cote* D'Ivoire	671
S1	Energy	Geneva, Switzerland	Acquisition	3	South Africa	118
G1	Service	Bonn, Germany	Greenfield	4	South Africa	160

** In fact we do not have a regional head office. The one in charge of our region is in Paris. We have the IT hub in Côte D'Ivoire* (HR Manager for F1).

From Table 4.1, the mode of entry of MNEs with the highest number of employees is through Greenfield and headquartered in America and UK with 2000 and 1167 employees respectively. Entry through license is not popular in Ghana as seen from the Table while greenfield projects and acquisitions remain the popular modes of entry. South Africa seemed to be the preferred place for MNEs to locate their regional offices. This is probably attributed to the more developed nature of this country than the rest of Africa. In Table 4.2 below, I present the profile of employees and managers who participated in this study.

Table 4.2: Profile of interviewees

MNE	Position	Gender	Years working in subsidiary	Educational qualifications	Interview Date, 2015
USA1	HR Manager	Female	5	MBA and Professional certs.	27th May
	Employees				
	- Survey department	Male	10	1st degree in Survey	26th June
	-geology department	Male	6	1st degree in Geology	26th June
	-Communications department	Male	8	1st degree in Journalism	27th June
	-Transport	Male	3	High school certificate	27th June
USA2	HR Manager	Female	8	1st degree in Business	22nd May
	Employees				
	-Marketing department	Male	9	Professional marketing certificate	1st June
	-Delivery services department	Male	4	High school certificate	1st June
UK1	HR Manager	Female	9	MBA	7th May
	Marketing Manager	Female	7	MBA	7th May
	Employees				
	-Warehouse	Male	3	1st degree in Commerce	19th May
	-Research and development	Male	2	1st degree in Economics & Statistics	19th May
UK2	HR Director	Male	18	MPA (Public Administration)	18th July
	HR Manager	Female	13	1st degree in Business	18th July
	Employees				
	-HR department	Female	4	1st degree in Business	18th July
	-HR department	Female	12	1st degree in Business	18th July
	-Transport	Male	30 (due for retirement)	Middle school leaving certificate	18th July
UK3	Area Manager	Male	30	1st degree and Professional certs.	16th July
	Employees				
	-Customers services department	Male	8	MBA	16th July
	-Customer services department	Female	8	MBA	17th July
	-Customer services department	Male	6	MBA	17th July
	-Customer services department	Male	11	1st degree and professional certs.	17th July
	-Customer services department	Male	6	1st degree in Business	17th July

F1	HR Manager at Head Office	Male	3	MPhil in Psychology	29th May
	Branch Manager	Male	20	MBA	10th June
	Branch Manager	Female	29	1st degree and Professional certs.	11th June
	Operational Manager	Male	20	1st degree and Professional certs.	10th June
	Employees				
	-Customer services department	Female	2	1st degree in Commerce	10th June
	-Commercial department	Female	2	MBA and professional certs.	29th May
	-Customer services department	Male	26	MBA	13th June
S1	HR Manager	Male	2	MBA	26th June
	Employees				
	-Accounts department	Male	3	MBA and Professional certs.	27th May
	-ICT department	Male	4	1st degree in computer science	27th May
G1	HR Manager	Male	5	MBA	15th June
	Employees				
	-HR department	Male	4	Diploma in Business	15th June
	-Customer services department	Female	7	1st degree in HRM	16th June
	-Customer services department	Male	5	1st degree in Computer Science	16th June

For anonymity and confidential purposes, I use pseudonyms in place of real names for all interview participants in the case studies. Table 4.3 below shows a complete list of the pseudonyms used for interview participants in the eight subsidiaries.

Table 4.3: Research participants' pseudonyms

MNE	Position	Pseudonym
USA1 (American extractive firm)	HR Manager Employee Employee Employee Employee	BiyarUSA1-HR Mger. GonaUSA1-Emp. GeoUSA1-Emp. JonaUSA1-Emp. chalieUSA1-Emp.
USA2 (American courier licensee).	HR Manager Employee Employee	MulkaUSA2-HR Mger. RoeUSA2-Emp. MikUSA2-Emp.
UK1 (British manufacturer of household consumables)	HR Manager Mketing Manager Employee Employee Employee	MarvinUK1-HR Mger. AbaUK1-Mketing Mger. OsuaUK1-Emp. SelomUK1-Emp.
UK2 (British Manufacturing of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages)	HR Director HR Manager Employee Employee Employee Employee	TurayUK2-HR Director. IsaUK2-HR Mger AbiUK2-Emp. FloraUK2-Emp. TonyUK2-Emp.
UK3 (British financial institution)	HR Manager Employee Employee Employee Employee Employee	RobertoUK3-HR Mger. MayaUK3-Emp. WesehUK3-Emp. SantanaUK3-Emp. AsanaUK3-Emp. AlorUK3-Emp.
F1 (French financial institution)	HR Manager Manager Manager Manager Employee Employee Employee	BertoF1-HR Mger. WiliF1-Mger. DugaF1-Mger. JoF1-Mger. SofiF1-Emp. MakiF1-Emp. NilieF1
S1 (Swiss downstream oil firm)	HR Manager Employee Employee	RobetiS1-HR Mger. RalfS1-Emp. RoyS1-Emp.
G1 (German courier)	HR Manager Employee Employee Employee	FramG1-HR Mger. OnoahG1-Emp. EtoG1-Emp. BelG1-Emp.

I discuss the research procedure in the next section.

4.5 Research procedure

Case studies make it possible to explore complex contextual phenomena using a range of sources of information (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Lauckner et al., 2012). Using the research

questions as a guide, I developed and adapted two separate interview guides for host country managers and employees respectively. In addition to the interview guides, I also obtained company bulletins, brochures and flyers. I also accessed company websites and Ghanaweb for additional documentary data. Table 4.4 shows the various sources of information used for my research.

Table 4.4: Sources of information for research

Source of information	Type
Interviews	Semi-structured interview guides adapted from those used in previous studies and in published journal articles, literature review and research questions.
Documents	Company bulletins, newspapers, flyers, mission and vision statements, company brochures, websites.

I discuss these sources of data and their suitability for my research in the ensuing section.

4.5.1 Conducting interviews

Interviews can take the form of "face-to-face interactions in which researchers typically pose questions that respondents answer" (Gephart, 2004: 458). Interviews are avenues through which multiple realities are constructed (Stake, 1995). Simons (2009: 43) observes that interviews permit research participants to "reveal more than can be detected or reliably assumed from observing a situation." Kvale (1983: 174) explains that qualitative researchers "gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". Interviews are a "construction site for knowledge" (Kvale, 1996: 14) with mutual learning simultaneously taking place between the interviewee(s) and the interviewer (Lorentzen, 2004).

Conducting this research in my own country made it possible to relate easily to the cultural context and the research participants. I acquired cultural competence of this context having worked and lived in this setting my entire life. This made it possible to understand the "cultural nuances and conceptions" of the interview participants (Karra & Phillips, 2008: 553). My cultural know-how made it possible to pursue my interview questions with finesse. Karra and Phillips (2008: 553) argue that without the "necessary linguistic and cultural competence, an interviewer is likely to either abandon a line of questioning too early or to carry on and offend the interviewee."

The interviews allowed me to probe for underlying values, beliefs and assumptions of participants shaping their interpretations of HRM practices. The interviews also allowed participants a voice on issues deemed salient to them (Yauch & Steudel, 2003). It is further argued that "interviews are well suited for capturing behaviours that have taken place in an authentic context" (Turner et al., 2015: 5) and to learn unique perspective from participants. The method highlights the context where transfer of HRM practices takes place, in order to succinctly explicate employees' "understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions" (Mason, 2004: 3).

I developed an interview guide to safeguard consistency (Brewster, Curry, Cherlin, Talbert-Slagle, & Horwitz, 2015) based on the research questions and systematic review of the literature. The participant information sheet and interview questions for HR managers are provided as examples of questions and information. The participant information sheet and interview questions for employees were adapted from that of management. The participant information sheet and interview questions for HR managers are shown in Appendices A and B respectively. I developed the interview questions based on the research questions and systematic review of the literature. The interview guide ensures that the interview addresses themes identified in advance in the literature as crucial to the research questions (Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2004). It provides a relatively high level of flexibility and structure than the unstructured conversational interviews (Patton, 2015). A structure facilitates the organisation and analyses of the interview data (Bowen, 2005).

As a result of the nascent nature of my research topic, I used open-ended semi-structured interviews. Unlike forced choices in surveys, open-ended inquiry enhances the accuracy of retrospective reports because participants are at liberty to state whether they remember certain events or not (Graener, 2009; Lipton, 1977; Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997). This method requires the interviewer to decide in advance the main topics and questions to be covered in the interview, and the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom as to what to say, how much to say and how to express it (Drever, 1995; Rowley, 2012).

Also, a semi-structured interview corresponds with the qualitative research design for answering the questions 'how' and 'why.' Semi-structured interviews are associated with the ontological and epistemological stance that reality is socially constructed and interpreted in line with the worldviews of participants (Bartunek, 1994; Buckley, Chapman, Clegg, & Gajewska-De Mattos, 2014; Mason, 2004) which can be applicable to managers and employees

working even in the same organisation (Heintz, 2002). Similarly, semi-structured interviews are flexible and offered me the opportunity to approach different interviewees in varied ways while still covering the same questions. The flexibility in semi-structured interviews makes it possible to crosscheck and validate information from previous interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

A semi-structured interview allows research participants to give a vivid description of their feelings, experience and views about the importance of a topic – in this case recruitment and selection, rewards, training and development and performance management, work/life balance, diversity management and employee communication and participation. Also, the prospects of verifying information from previous interviews with other interviewees are made possible in semi-structured interviews, which further enhances credibility of the findings. Also, in conducting interviews from a constructivist stance, it is necessary to be reflexive and flexible by analysing what is said, reading between the lines and more deeply to understand certain words used by the respondent (Lauckner et al., 2012).

Information obtained from semi-structured interviews is often criticised for generating inconsistent data that cannot be compared between cases. Mason (2004: 4) challenges this criticism as inaccurate because semi-structured interviewing "uses a logic where comparison is based on the fullness of understanding of each case, rather than standardisation of the data across cases." Comparing cases is not based on how uniform the data are across cases but based on comprehensive understanding of the HRM practices prevailing in each case subsidiary.

A structured interview, on the other hand, usually conforms to the positivist epistemological belief that reality is out there and is measurable (Cassell, 2015). Structured interviews may therefore not capture a vivid description of HRM practices characterising the lived experiences of both managers and employees in western subsidiaries in Ghana. Shkedi (2005: 59) posited that structured interviews "standardised interview topics and general questions" devoid of flexibility for the interviewer to probe in-depth for meanings underlying certain actions and practices within organisations. Mason (2004: 4) concludes that:

> *A more standardized and structured approach might overly impose the researcher's own framework of meaning and understanding onto the consequent data. It might also risk overlooking events and experiences that are important from the interviewees' point of view that are relevant to the research but have not been anticipated.*

One question I did ask myself was, 'How many interviews is deemed enough for my research?' Perry (1998: 794) suggests that from experience and anecdotal evidence, a "PhD thesis requires about 35 to 50 interviews" but cautions that these "figures are merely rules of thumb that assist research design. Patton (1990:185) states "the validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size." Chreim, Williams and Hinings (2007: 1535) concur that "naturalistic case studies should be judged not on the basis of generalisability, but on the basis of transferability and comparability." Thick descriptions of the research settings allow an audience to vicariously experience the natural work settings (Stake, 1995). Gardner, Chapple and Green (1999) argue that a small sample size does not threaten the generalisability of findings, since generalisability is derived from the concepts that may be transferable to other settings.

I conducted 37 interviews of both managers and employees in the eight companies from May to July 2015 which lasted on average about one hour per interview. Interview informants include HR director, Area manager, HR managers and employees of participating companies. All interviewees were fluent in English because it is used as the international business language in the subsidiaries. Consequently, I conducted all the interviews in English. I recorded interviews only when participants consented. However, as Hutchings (2004: 143) notes "tape-recording interview notes has been considered de rigueur for modern research" but in my research, not all participants were prepared to have their interviews recorded. Five participants refused to be recorded. In such a situation, I listened attentively and took notes at the same time. Then, in order to minimise the richness of data loss, as soon as the interview was over, I quickly typed the notes and emailed them to the interviewee to authenticate. In all cases that I sent these emails, participants made corrections and additions to the texts.

In conformity with the constructivist approach, I endeavoured to establish rapport and trust by reassuring interviewees that I was only eager to learn and understand how HRM practices are standardised or localised in their organisations. I reassured interviewees of the confidential nature of their responses, their names and their organisations. I further explained that the email addresses and phone numbers contained in the Participant Information Sheet were there to protect them in case of unethical behaviour. However, Karra and Phillips (2008: 554) caution researchers who are natives of the research context that being close to the "the topic of study may make certain features seem more salient and important than they really are." I therefore

adopted a reflexive stance by paying attention to "the most insignificant detail" and organising interview data "in a case study database" to enhance the transparency and reliability of the research (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010: 17).

Also, in order to identify myself with the research participants (Lauckner et al., 2012), I introduced myself as a lecturer in Bolgatanga Polytechnic who was on study leave pursuing PhD studies at the University of Auckland. I emphasised that I was conducting research in an area for which I did not have the answers and was seeking to learn from their experiences. The purpose of this introduction was to establish a more collegial atmosphere/relationship.

I adopted the funnel approach of interviewing in order to minimise biases from both the interviewer and interviewee (Hutchings, 2005a). Questions were structured beginning with name, position, professional experience, education leading to company history and finally focusing on HRM practices. This type of funnel approach was adopted to build rapport and trust between the interviewee and the interviewer (Alvesson, 2003). In each organisation, I interviewed a key person such as the HRM Manager or Director who is knowledgeable about the organisation in terms of its structure, policies and HRM practices. Also, in order to ensure security of data, I placed a code on each company name and interviewee name and then had a separate sheet which provided the names for the codes. Employees of participating subsidiaries were also interviewed along similar lines but questions about strategic policies concerning HRM were not included in lower level employee interviews. The interview for each manager lasted approximately 1.5 hours whilst those of employees lasted for between 50 minutes to 1 hour.

Certain salient reasons explain why I opted to interview both host country managers and employees. Gamble and Huang (2009: 1686) observed that empirical studies on the transfer of HRM practices in MNEs are criticised for "their 'thin', monochrome texture, with a reliance upon survey 'snapshots' and/or interviews with a handful of managerial staff." For instance in the IB literature, examples of empirical studies confined to managerial level include: middle to senior management (Morris, Wilkinson, & Gamble, 2009; Yu & Meyer-Ohle, 2008), top management and HRM mangers (Bjorkman & Lu, 1999; 2001). In a review of HRM studies in China between 1998 and 2007, Cooke (2009: 9) observed that ''at least two-thirds of the empirical studies have collected their data from managers, and most of them relied on managers as the sole source for empirical data.'' Using managerial staff as the sole source of empirical studies may mean that ''the voice of employees is largely unheard'' (Cooke, 2009: 9). Relying

on a single participant may limit the authenticity of the interviews, if there are no other sources to crosscheck the veracity of the information relayed (Patton, 1990). Michailova and Minbaeva (2012: 68) concluded that relying on a single participant per MNE or subsidiary top managers is not only ontologically problematic but also implies that "espoused values or 'wishful thinking' are captured." Also, there is the need for research to "move beyond opinion obtainable among a population potentially part socialised to western mores – looking below the senior managerial surface to solicit views among the 'average' employee, for whom the prospect of hybrid HRM may remain more elusive" (Azolukwam & Perkins, 2009: 66).

Additionally, interview participants might not recall correctly past events due to memory failures leading to distortions (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Golden, 1992; Nutt, 1986). It is suggested that using multiple participants and "well-informed interviewees" with different perspectives might mitigate these problems (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014: 19) and enhance the confidence and trustworthiness of the findings (Graener, 2009).

There is also a need to distinguish between HRM practices intended by a subsidiary and those actually implemented by interviewing managers and employees within and outside the HRM department (Khilji & Wang, 2006). For instance, in their study of the banking sector in Pakistan based on interviews, questionnaires and documents, Khilji and Wang (2006) found among other things that HRM practices could not simply be found from a single respondent in a subsidiary such as the HRM manager. Also, there was a lack of alignment between implemented HRM and intended HRM practices (Khilji & Wang, 2006). Thus management knowledge and intentions of HRM practices may differ from what prevails in practice. As a result, the lived experience and knowledge of HRM practices of employees might differ from management (Zhu, Cooper, Fan, & De Cieri, 2013). The choice to interview a cross-section of employees and managerial staff was therefore appropriate for my research design.

Senior and middle managers could be biased due to training received from corporate headquarters or prolonged western education and training. Managers may also use the interview as a site for identity work. According to Alvesson (2003) interviews could be used by the interviewee as a site for identity work by exhibiting one's public relations aspects. Van Maanen (1979:542) also notes that interviewees may also tend to put forward a "manufactured image" of routinized activities of the studied group to the fieldworker. I therefore assumed a reflexive stance during the interviews by trying to make sense of every word and gestures used

and to establish good rapport with the research participants, contrary to the positivists who view interviewees as subjects serving as sources of data (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006).

4.5.2 Rational for studying and analysing documents

In addition to interviews, I studied documents which are regarded as key sources of data for qualitative research (Bryman, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Patton, 2015). Documents are considered "the fabric of our world" (Love, 2003: 83). They "contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention" (Bowen, 2009: 27). Hughes and Godwin (2014: xxvi) define documents as "typically involving the written word, pictures or sound recordings which, while they have the potential to serve as informants on human experiences in relation to specific life events, historical periods, social changes…were not necessarily created for the purpose of documenting these." Thus, unlike interviews, documents are created independently without a researcher's intervention (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Miller & Alvarado, 2005).

Stake (1995: 68) stated that documents function as "substitutes for records of activity the researcher could not observe directly." Documents are stable and discreet sources of data (De Massi & Kotlar, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) but accessibility to organisational documents remains a challenge (Bryman, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2015). Some organisational documents that may be accessible and within the public domain are reports to shareholders, mission, vision and value statements. I found it difficult to gain access to other documents such as minutes of meetings and employee handbooks. As a result, I relied on documents within the public domain such as mission and vision statements and other organisational websites, in addition to other company bulletins that I obtained during the interviews for my analysis.

In addition to problems of accessibility, documents "exist in great numbers and in many forms" and there is a need to evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of documents (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). McCulloch (2004: 42) suggested that "the author, the place and the date of writing all need to be established and verified." There is need to ascertain the "authenticity, credibility, accuracy…preponderance of evidence that the documents will provide" (Bowen, 2009: 33). However, establishing the authenticity of these documents may be very challenging and in some cases impossible because these documents are from web sources. Merriam and Tisdell (2015: 176) observed that "the issue of authenticity about dealing with online documents and identities is much more complicated." As a result, I relied on

company documents in line with Bryman (2012) who suggested that documents emanating from companies are likely to be authentic. Reviewing and analysing relevant contextual documents (Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016) enhanced my understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by providing additional data for crosschecking and verifying first person accounts (Forster, 1994; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016) of HRM practices in subsidiaries.

Despite problems of accessibility and authenticity, documents play a crucial role in the research process. They provide a description of "historical process and developments in organisations and can help in interpreting informants' rewriting of history in later verbal accounts" (Atkinson & Doffey, 2004; De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Forster, 1994: 148; Patton, 2015).

Also, since organisational documents already existed and were not generated at the request of a particular research (Dolan, 2009; Forster, 1994; Hughes & Goodwin, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), a crucial criterion I adopted for selecting documents include relevance to the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The research questions guide the entire research design.

Documents do not suffer interviewer and interviewee effects. They exist without the influence of a researcher (Brym & Lie, 2012; De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Foster, 1994; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The interviewer and interviewee effects on research findings can be attenuated by supplementing documentary data to that of interviews. I used documentary evidences to complement the interview data in my research.

Nevertheless, because organisational documents were not generated at the instance of my research, they are often in a fragmented, inaccurate form for the research purpose. Also, documents might not encompass actual events and processes of an organisation (Forster, 1994; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Atkinson and Coffey (2004: 58) conclude that researchers

> *should not use documentary sources as surrogates for other kinds of data. We cannot, for instance, learn through records alone how an organisation actually operates day-by-day. Equally, we cannot treat records-however 'official'-as firm evidence of what they report.…This recognition or reservation does not mean that we should ignore or downgrade documentary data. On the contrary, our recognition of their existence as social facts (or constructions) alerts us to the necessity to treat them very seriously indeed.*

As a result, I have used documents in this study to triangulate and corroborate interview data. This variety of sources of information offers me the opportunity to look at the phenomenon

under investigation holistically with an open mind (Bowen, 2009). If the information contained in the documents is similar to that of the interview scripts, then the confidence and trustworthiness of the qualitative information would have been established.

4.5.3 Triangulating interview data with documents

Gibber, Ruigrok, and Wicki (2008: 1465) noted that "the case study method has been prone to concerns regarding methodological rigor in terms of validity and reliability." Scandura and Williams (2000: 1263) cautioned that "without rigor, relevance in management research cannot be claimed." The question I ask is what can I do to promote trustworthiness and confidence in my research analysis and findings? Triangulation is the strategy usually applied to increase confidence in results (Brinberg & McGrath, 1985; Denzin, 2012; Yeung, 1995). It refers to using a "combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1978: 302). Bryman and Bell (2011:397) stated that "triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena." Application of different methods (qualitative and quantitative) or research strategies (interviews and documents) can enhance knowledge about a research question and provide unique perspectives leading to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Research results are considered more valid when there is an agreement across the different sources of data or between the methods (Jick, 1979; McGrath, 1982; Turner et al., 2015).

There are two types of triangulation: between methods and within methods (Denzin, 1978). Between methods or cross methods triangulation refers to using mixed methods that is combining qualitative and quantitative methods in research usually for purposes of cross validation and to increase external validity (Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1979; Olsen, 2004). Within methods triangulation refers to using multiple sources of data within a given method to study a phenomenon (Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1979; Turner et al. 2015) such as interviews and observation in qualitative studies.

I applied within-method triangulation utilising open-ended, semi-structured interviews as the major source of data on standardisation and localisation of HRM practices, with documents functioning as triangulation and supplementary sources of data (Corley & Gioia, 2004). I used documentary evidence to verify or question the details provided by research participants. In this way, the weaknesses of interviews usually associated with memory loss of participants (De Massis & Kotler, 2014; Nutt, 1996) and distortion of information due to the presence of

interviewer (Grinnell & Unrau, 2010) make the unobtrusive nature of documents (Brym & Lie, 2012; De Massis & Kotler, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016) compensate for these shortcomings (Corbetta, 2003). Triangulation helps to minimise the researcher's biases and increases confidence in findings (Jick, 1979; Jonsen & Hehn, 2009; Turner et al. 2015). It is particularly relevant in developing countries such as Ghana, where power distance is high, to use multiple sources of data. It is argued that persons in managerial positions in high power distance countries are more likely to monopolise information flow within an organisation with subordinates finding it difficult to air their views (Ghosh, 2011).

Using documents and interviews as sources of information provides holistic comprehension, digestion and interpretation of the findings about the phenomena under investigation with the possibility of new facts emerging (Jick, 1979; Mok & Clarke, 2015; Turner et al., 2015; Shah & Corley, 2006). Thus, in situations of divergence in findings from these multiple sources of data, further probing and seeking new alternative explanations could be generated to explain the phenomena (Denzin, 2012; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011; Hoskisson et al., 2000; Jick, 1979). For instance in my analysis, I observed that participants at UK3 strongly indicated that recruitment and selection practices were rigorously executed and only candidates who successfully passed an aptitude test were selected. However, in the process of triangulating the documentary data, a shareholder of UK3 who is a British citizen with a Ghanaian ancestry visited many branches of UK3 in Ghana during a holiday trip to transact business and interact with staff. At the end of her visit, she wrote a damning article on the recruitment and selection practices at UK3. She stated:

> *I have documentary evidence and other forms of evidence to prove that many inexperienced people have been and are being recruited to management positions. For example, management roles B5 that require individuals with over five years relevant working experience were handed to unqualified cronies of top managers and Directors. I have no problems if a qualified friend or relation of a manager or Director is employed as best fit for a role. I am against the deliberate practice of cronyism in a subsidiary of an international bank because it affects the fortunes of the bank and that of shareholders.*

An anonymous commentator on this very source also had this to say in relation to recruitment and selection at UK3. "This had always been the case at UK3 and others. You have to know someone or be a relative of a big man." Thus, these documentary evidences diverge from those of the interviews and may probably be communicating the reality with the type of details and staff ranks contained in the article.

Also, I refined data from both interviews and documents through triangulation (Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010) by grouping together data that conveyed similar meanings into categories. Where for instance there was a divergence, I probed further through emails and phone call for clarification. For instance, I called the HR Manager of USA1 and sent emails to the HR Managers of G1 and F1 respectively seeking further clarification and interpretation.

Thus, triangulation helped me to promote a better understanding through the unique insights gained from the application of the multiple and different approaches utilised in a study as suggested by Burton & Obel, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, 2012; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Jick, 1979; Pettigrew, 1990; Stake, 2013; Scandura & Williams, 2000; Shah & Corely, 2006 and Turner et al., 2015. It involves viewing the phenomena under investigation from multiple perspectives.

Triangulation helped me improve accuracy of judgments and claims. Enhancing the reliability, confidence, and trustworthiness of the findings of this research motivated the triangulation of data. Also, the continuous expert review by my supervisors of any drafts emanating from this study provided consistency, credibility and transparency in the preparation of the final report. They raised critical questions about some aspects of my initial interpretations of findings, which led to further refinement of my explanations and analysis. Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) note that having drafts of an evolving case research reviewed by other academics other than key informants of the researched organisation can help foster consistency, accuracy and rigor of a research.

4.6 Reflections on exiting from the research site

I adopt a relational perspective of exiting from my research site in line with Michailova et al. (2014: 139) who view this approach as a "process (rather than a single act) of ending relationships with research participants over a period of time, be it longer or shorter." Cunliffe and Alcadipani (2016: 543) emphasised that a relational perspective

> *Foregrounds the mutuality of researcher–research participant relationships and influence and requires researchers to be sensitive to the nature and agency of the researcher–research participant relationship, how each is perceived and positioned by the other, and the political and ethical issues that may arise*.

The degree of trust developed during the process of my data collection made some of the participants reveal some issues about their work-life experiences which probably were not even shared with their fellow employees.

For instance some interviewees in one of the subsidiaries explained how some injuries were under-reported in order not to forfeit their safety bonus. Meanwhile, management continued to rate the company high on safety issues. In another instance, I asked one of the managers whether their salaries were indexed to the USA dollar. The manager replied that she could not tell me everything because they have competitors. However, when I inquired from a lower level employee, he explained how their salary was indexed to the dollar to cushion them from the constant loss of value of the Ghanaian cedi against the dollar.

Thus being privy to highly sensitive information required that I exit the field with care and consideration for my research participants and it was mutually understood that data relating to them would be treated in confidence and with respect. It is precisely for reasons of confidentiality and respect that Morrison, Gregory and Thibodeau (2012: 424) argued that research participants

> *deserved not only a voice regarding their day-to-day lives but also a voice to indicate how the participant – researcher relationship should end. Respecting the participant – researcher relationship does not necessarily end once data are collected, but once the participants and the researcher mutually agree to a closure process that is amenable to all parties.*

Nonetheless, my research was bound to come to an end due to time constraints and funding. I thus communicated clearly through personal conversations the timing and reasons for my exit. We conducted the exit rituals and exchanged pleasantries. I presented thank you cards to my participants as a sign of respect for their contribution to the research. Also, as a further step of reassuring my participants that I had engaged them in the process and would keep their names confidential, I gave them all my relevant contact details to get in touch with me if they had any anxieties regarding their participation in the study. None of the participants contacted me, so there was a mutual closure to the field work. Such closure provided me with the intellectual space for critical reflection. To facilitate the reflective process, I used a memorandum to note my observations following each of the interviews. The memorandum helped me to remember, question, analyse and make meaning of participants' usage of words; which assisted me as I undertook the data analysis. The detailed analysis of the data is presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis and findings

In Chapter four, I discussed the rationale for using the qualitative case study methodology and techniques in gathering data for this research. In this chapter, I describe and explain the procedure used in the interview and documentary data analysis, followed by a presentation of the findings. I report the findings in line with the research questions for this thesis. The first section focuses on standardisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana. Subsequently, I introduce the findings in relation to localisation of these HRM practices in the same subsidiaries. The findings are discussed in respect to recruitment and selection; training and development; performance management; rewards management; diversity management; work and life balance and employee communication and participation practices in the case study subsidiaries. The final section of this chapter explains how and why these practices are standardised and localised.

5.1 Data analysis

I employed both deductive and inductive approaches in analysing the data. The deductive approach uses an organising framework comprising of themes for the coding process (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The framework, often referred to as a start list (Miles & Huberman, 1994), is applied in the analysis in anticipation that certain core concepts are in the data (Bradley et al. 2007; Thomas, 2006). The inductive approach on the other hand, involves working exclusively from the participant experiences that drive the analysis entirely. According to Thomas (2006: 238), the inductive analysis refers to "approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts and themes." It entails going through data line by line thoroughly and assigning codes to paragraphs or segments of texts as concepts unfold (Bradley et al., 2007; Curry et al., 2009) relevant to the research questions (Thomas, 2006). It is a recursive process that involves moving back and forth between data analysis and the literature to make meaning out of emerging concepts (Neeley & Dumas, 2016) and was used to capture "the most empirically grounded and theoretically interesting factors" (Schussler, Ruling, & Wittneben, 2014: 147). In the inductive analysis, "although the findings are influenced by the evaluation objectives or questions outlined by the researcher, the findings arise directly from the analysis of the raw data, not from a priori expectations or models" (Thomas, 2006: 239).

Figure 5.1 captures and depicts the deductive and inductive approaches that I utilised in analysing the data. The data analysis process started with organising both interview and documentary data for each subsidiary. As an initial step, I immersed in the data reading and digesting in order to make sense of the whole set of data and to understand "what is going on" (Morse, 1999: 404) through reflexivity, open-mindedness and following the rationale of participants' narratives. After several readings of the transcripts I began to identify key concepts and themes using the research questions as the lenses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utrianinen, & Kyngas, 2014).

I adopted a sequential approach to analyse the data, by initially applying a deductive approach. With the deductive approach, I coded data into categories using a start list. Subsequently, I used the inductive approach to derive themes from the data (Thomas, 2006). The sequential approach using deductive and inductive analysis resulted in two data sets of categories which I reduced to manageable sizes by collapsing similar categories into higher order ones which are contained as an integrated set of data in Figure 5.1. From the integrated data set, I cross-tabulated data to examine relationships among categories (see Suter, 2012).

5.1.1 Deductive data analysis

I applied a deductive approach by "basing analysis on pre-existing theory" (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013: 3), that is institutional theory in this thesis. HRM practices are examined against the background of a multiplicity of cultural and normative institutional challenges that western MNEs face when they seek to transfer their preferred HRM practices to the Ghanaian context.

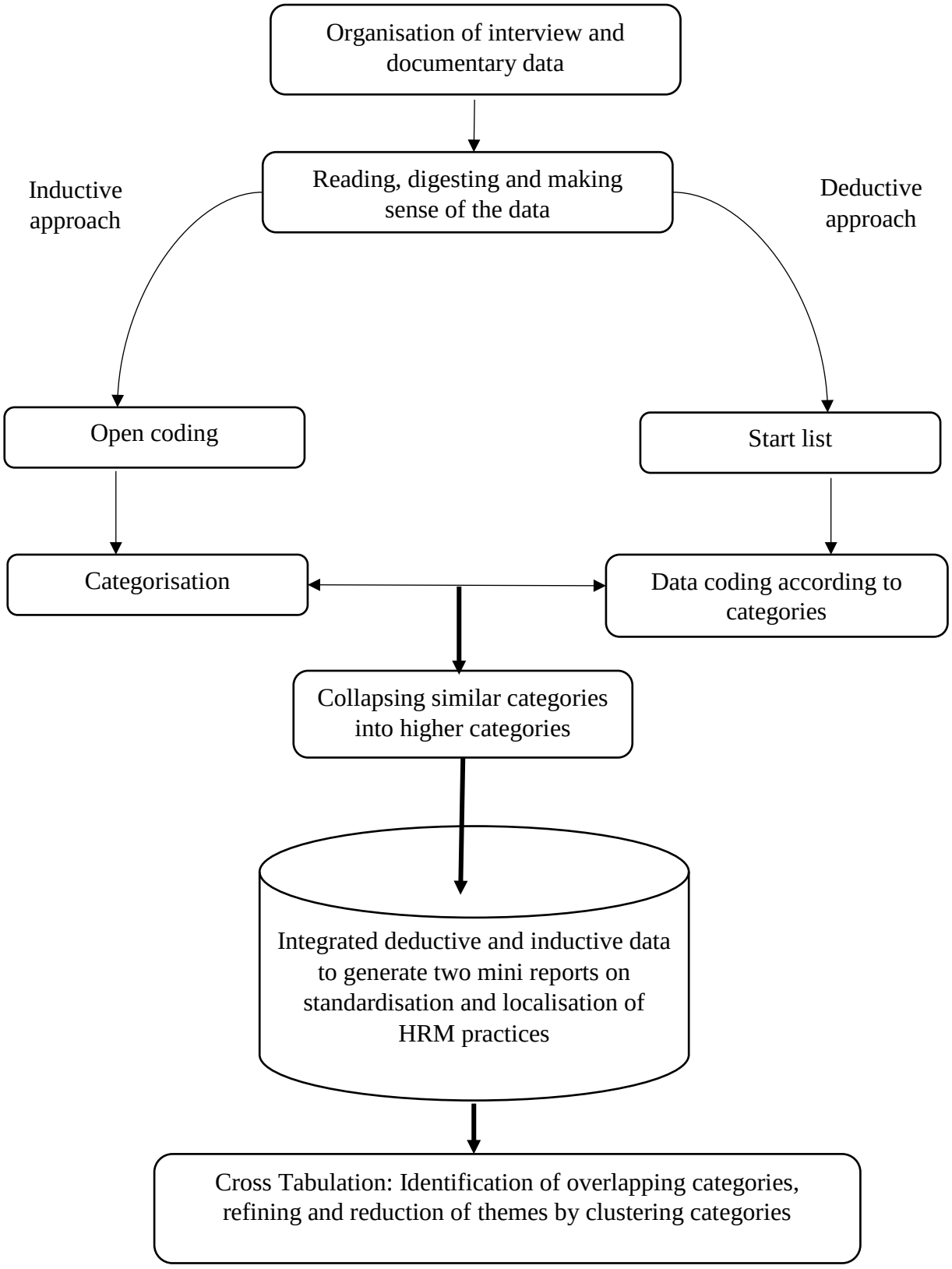

Figure 5.1: Preparation, organisation and data analysis process

The ‘keyness’ of a theme depends on “whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82). In order to make full sense of the data, I generated a start list of a-priori categories in line with previous research (e.g. Hutchings, Michailova, & Harrison, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Zikic & Richardson, 2016) - as illustrated in Table 5.1 – using the research questions. Using the topic recruitment and selection as an example, I illustrate how the start list is generated from issues mentioned in response to interview questions in relation to the research questions (RQs).

Table 5.1: Category start list for recruitment and selection

Example sub-questions from interview questions	Relates to RQ	Category (Start list)	Rationale for category
Is the Headquarters (HQ) directly involved in the implementation of HRM practices?	RQ1 Do subsidiaries of western MNEs standardise their HRM practices in Ghana? If yes, why and how?	Influence of HQ (expatriates, rules, regulations).	For controlling and ensuring that HRM practices align with corporate practices.
What mechanisms does HQ use to implement its HRM practices?	RQ1 Do subsidiaries of western MNEs standardise their HRM practices in Ghana? If yes, why and how?	Mechanisms (manuals, visits by HQ personnel).	Guiding HRM practices.
Does the Ghanaian culture influence your HRM practices? How?	RQ2 Do subsidiaries of western MNEs localise their HRM practices in Ghana? If yes, why and how?	Informal institutions (power distance, selective patronage, centralised decision-making).	For legitimising HRM practices of subsidiaries.
Describe how you were employed.	RQ1 and RQ2	Mode of employment (company websites, tests, relations working in the company.	Signalling either standardisation or localisation.

The start lists provided initial focus in identifying certain key aspects of the data that directly relate to the research questions. The first column in Table 5.1 presents sub-questions from the

interview guide that relate to research questions one and two shown in column two. The start lists are shown in column three while the fourth column explains the rationale for the start list. I entered the interview transcripts as text files to NVivo software version 11 to code the data based on Nvivo codes using participants' own expressions, terms and phrases (see Corley & Gioia, 2004; Dacin et al. 2010; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Petriglieri, 2015). I deductively analysed the raw data to develop clusters of data. The application of HQ rules and regulations, manuals by HQ personnel to subsidiaries signify standardisation of HRM practices while issues portraying power distance, selective patronage, centralised decision-making, influence of chiefs or politicians and favouritism reflect localisation.

5.1.2 Inductive data analysis

Having developed clusters of data from the deductive analysis, I also conducted an inductive analysis in line with that suggested by Thomas (2006) by engaging in detailed readings of data not only to gain a holistic understanding of what was said (see Gale et al. 2013), but also to ensure that all important aspects of the data are captured (see Charmaz, 2014; Gale et al. 2013). I read texts line by line thoroughly and assigned codes to paragraphs or segments of texts relevant to the research questions. I identified key concepts and themes using the research questions as the lenses. Deriving themes from the raw data using the inductive approach pre-empts the possibility of a researcher forcing a predetermined result (Bradley et al., 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Glaser, 1992).

The detailed analysis of the eight cases with a description of "what is going on" in each case (Wolcott, 1994: 16) resulted in two distinct mini-case reports of the eight subsidiaries on standardisation and localisation of HRM practices comprising 36 and 21 pages respectively. The summaries of the case studies facilitated the next phase of an inductive analysis which primarily focused on identifying "essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them – in short, how things work" (Wolcott, 1994: 12). I employed cross-case analysis methods (Eisenhardt, 1989; Graebner, 2009), using tables to compare and contrast data by themes between cases (Gale et el. 2013; Graebner, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Applying the constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I identified overlapping categories which I further refine and reduce by clustering (see Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwich, 2008). I grouped data that conveyed similar meaning to higher level nodes through triangulation of data from both interviews and documents to generate first order descriptive codes (Neeley & Dumas, 2016; Vuori & Huy,

2016). In Table 5.2 below I illustrate how I use documents such as company bulletins, newspapers, flyers, mission and vision statements, company brochures, and information from company websites to triangulate interview data. Consistent with the principle of convergent triangulation, I found documentary analysis supporting the interview results in recruitment and selection, performance management, and diversity management. For purposes of confidentiality and to pre-empt the possibility of identifying the case companies, direct quotes from company websites are paraphrased.

Documentary analysis in relation to the recruitment and selection practice supports the notion that the case study subsidiaries embark on cost-cutting strategies by hiring contract and agency workers. Documentary evidence further supports the interview results about performance management in that subsidiaries do not focus solely on financial results but also how employees exhibit company values in the course of discharging their duties.

Table 5.2 also illustrates that there was divergence between interview comments and the documents in the areas of recruitment and selection and employee communication and participation. Documents sourced from Ghanaweb suggest that favouritism and nepotism play a role in recruitment and selection practices of some subsidiaries. Also, even though MNE documentary evidence states that policy advocates participatory decision-making, it becomes less prevalent in the case study subsidiaries due to the power distance nature of the context as mentioned by interviewees. Subsidiaries seek to standardise participatory decision-making process but the cultural and institutional forces of the context favour localisation.

Table 5.2: Using documents to triangulate interview data

Interview participants	Convergence	Documents
"Because entities do not want to incur much cost, they rely on other companies to provide some services so that, they will not pay certain things like your health care. F1 is a foreign bank, so they are practicing what they do over there here" (MakiF1-Emp).	Recruitment and selection	F1 is regularly increasing its operation competencies by ascertaining, cutting and keeping tab on its operational costs (Subsidiary F1 Web sources).
"You know we have values, you have to meet your targets using those values" (MayaUK3-Emp)	Performance management	We will evaluate and compensate our people, not just on commercial results, but on how they live our values (Subsidiary UK3 web sources).
"Diversity is the differences, we say inclusion. We don't focus on the diversity, we focus on the inclusion" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).	Diversity management	We build an inclusive work environment where employees have an opportunity to play a role, work together to achieve our strategy (Subsidiary USA1 documents).
	Divergence	
"But for me, I know the selection process is critically looked at in UK3. That one I am very sure of it. They are very strict on that" (MayaUK3-Emp).	Recruitment and selection	"You have to know someone or be a relative of a 'big man' before you can get a good job. A friend sought the help of a big man to get a job at UK3 though he was more than qualified. The HR Manager who was surprised that the big man was about to help, asked the big man, Isn't your son in the final year in the university? If we employ this guy, how would your son get a job after school? It's happening everywhere in Ghana both foreign and local companies" (Ghanaweb sources on subsidiary UK3).
"We have a general manager who is very authoritative, doesn't care about other people's views, suggestions. She is on top and does what she wants to do, nobody challenges her and that is the order of the day. " (JonaUSA1-Emp).	Employee communication and participation	We build an inclusive work environment where employees have the opportunity to contribute, develop, and work together to deliver our strategy (Subsidiary USA1 values from company documents)

Figure 5.2 below illustrates data on standardisation of HRM practices comprising first-order categories, second order themes and aggregate theoretical dimensions. Figure 5.3 illustrates data on localisation. First order quotes are shown in the first columns of figures 5.2 and 5.3 respectively.

Having established the first order categories, the next phase of the analysis involved identifying links among the first order categories in order to group them into theoretical distinct second order themes (Dacin et al. 2010; Lawrence & Dover, 2015). This phase of the analysis was equally iterative, moving back and forth between the first order descriptive codes and the evolving patterns in the data, until I developed conceptual patterns for second order themes. Thus while the first order descriptive codes comprise mostly of "informant-centric terms", the second order categories employ "researcher-centric concepts, themes, and dimensions" (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013: 18). According to Van Maanen (1979: 540) informant-centric terms, are the "facts" of the research. They are the interpretations of the "routinized practical activities actually engaged in by members of the studied organisation" (Van Maanen, (1979: 542). Thus informant-centric terms represent informants' interpretations of their lived experience of HRM practices in subsidiaries. Researcher-centric terms on the other hand, are the researcher's interpretations of participants' interpretations of their lived experience of the study's phenomenon. Van Maanen (1979: 541) notes that they "represent what could be called interpretations of interpretations."

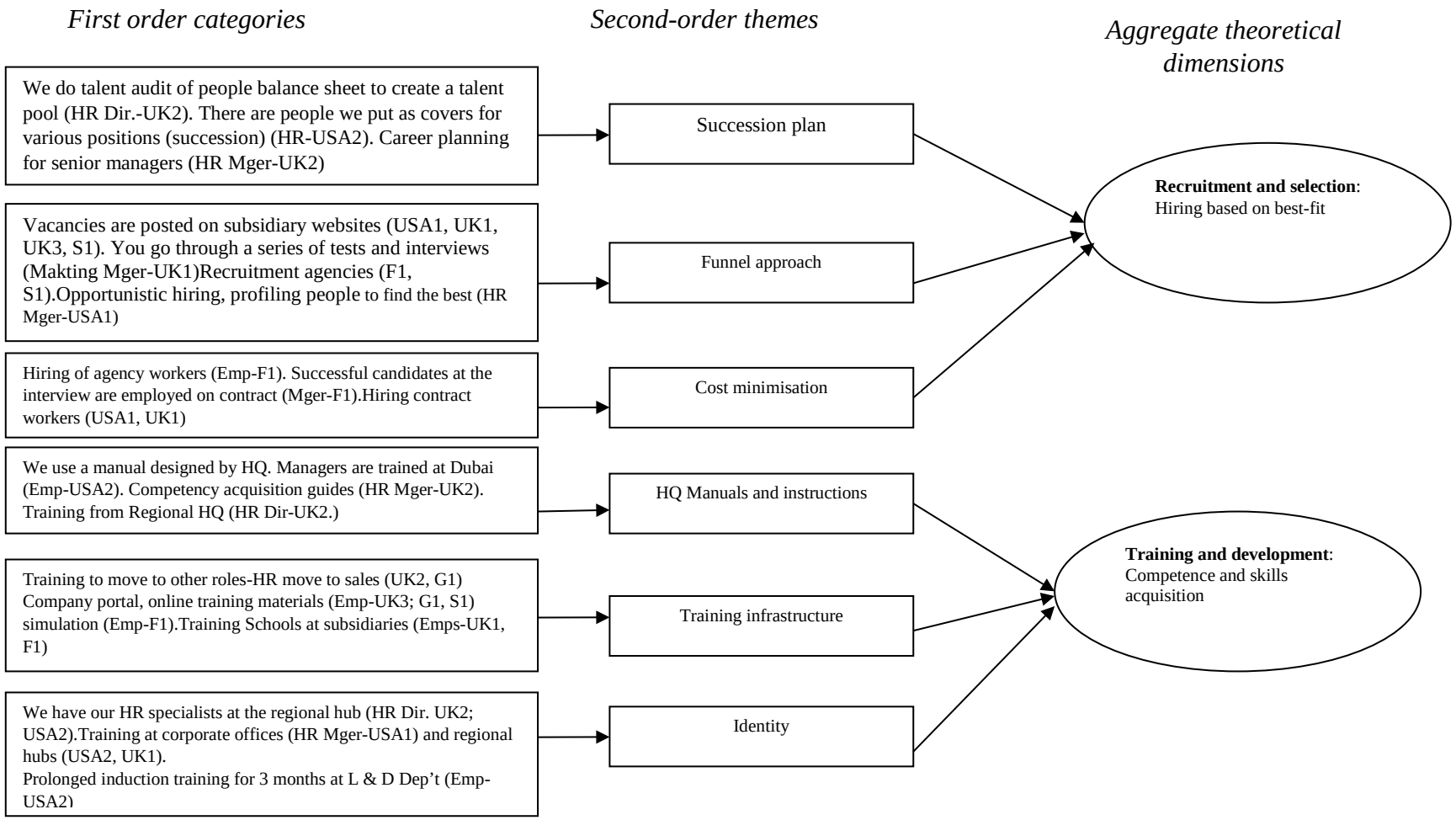

Figure 5.2: Data structure on standardisation of HRM practices

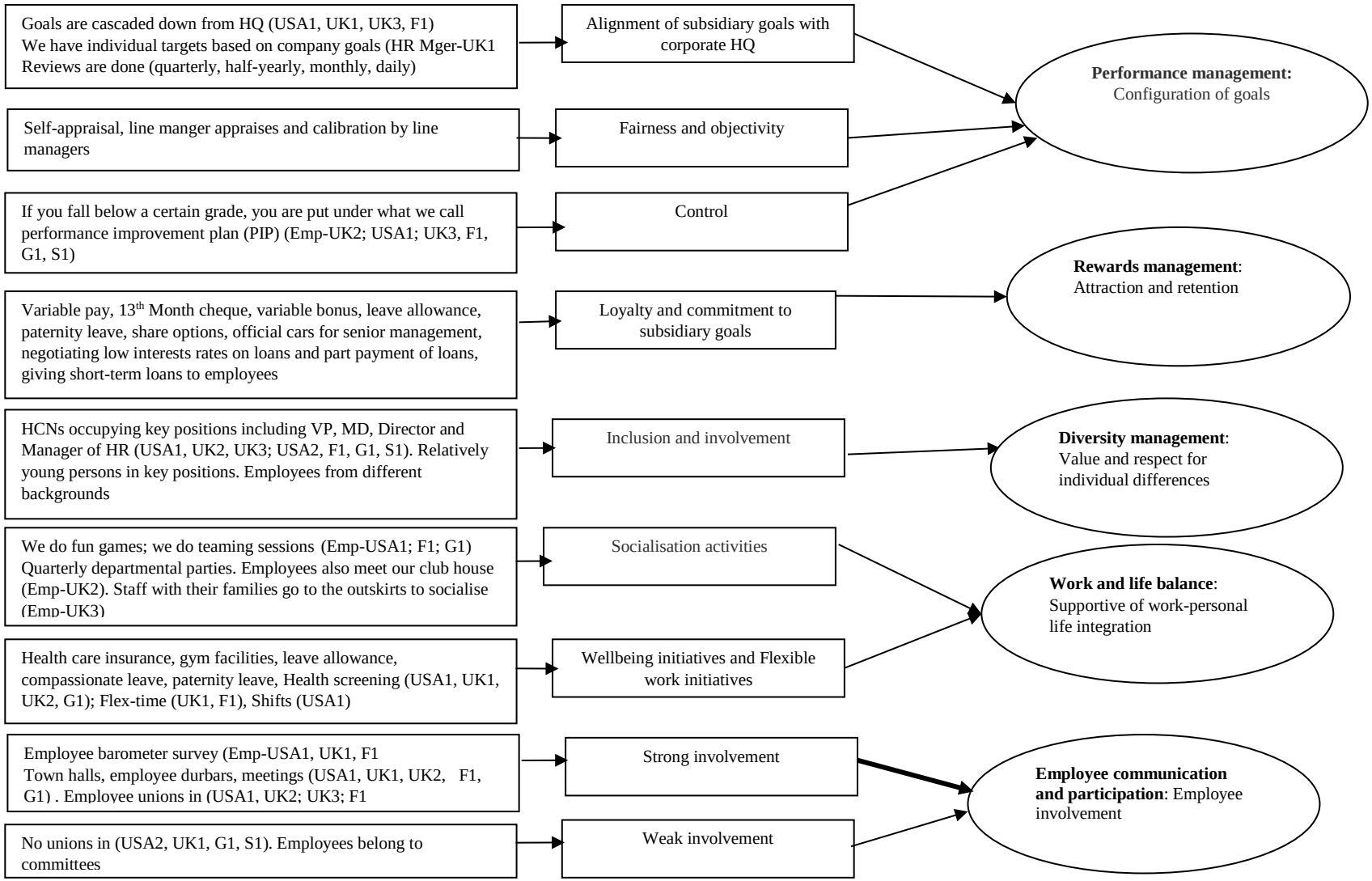

Figure 5.2 cont'd.

In the final phase of the analysis I determined how the second-order themes interacted with and related to one another within a larger context in order to collapse these into aggregate theoretical dimensions (Dacin et al. 2010; Lawrence & Dover, 2015; Neeley & Dumas, 2016; Petriglieri, 2015).

In the process of analysing data, a researcher may intuitively search for data that confirms his/her personal experience and beliefs and fail to notice data that contradicts personal values (Smith, & Noble, 2014). Thus, in order to minimise the incidence of personal bias and enhance the trustworthiness/rigour of the analyses (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000), a colleague PhD student, who worked with oil multinational companies in Nigeria and is familiar with MNEs' operations in Africa, checked my coding schemes. He posed critical questions about the processes of my analysis which urged me to look for additional ways of interpreting the data (Lauckner, Paterson, & Krupa, 2012). He explained how employees in Africa for instance understood compassionate leave to cover emergency cases involving extended family members which in the MNE context is limited to the immediate family and further that payment of health care is interpreted to mean a caring organisation. These insights helped to refine my explanations and to expand my coding scheme. This independent review provided further perspectives and additional credibility to the analysis (Baker &Nelson, 2005; Gioia et al., 2013).

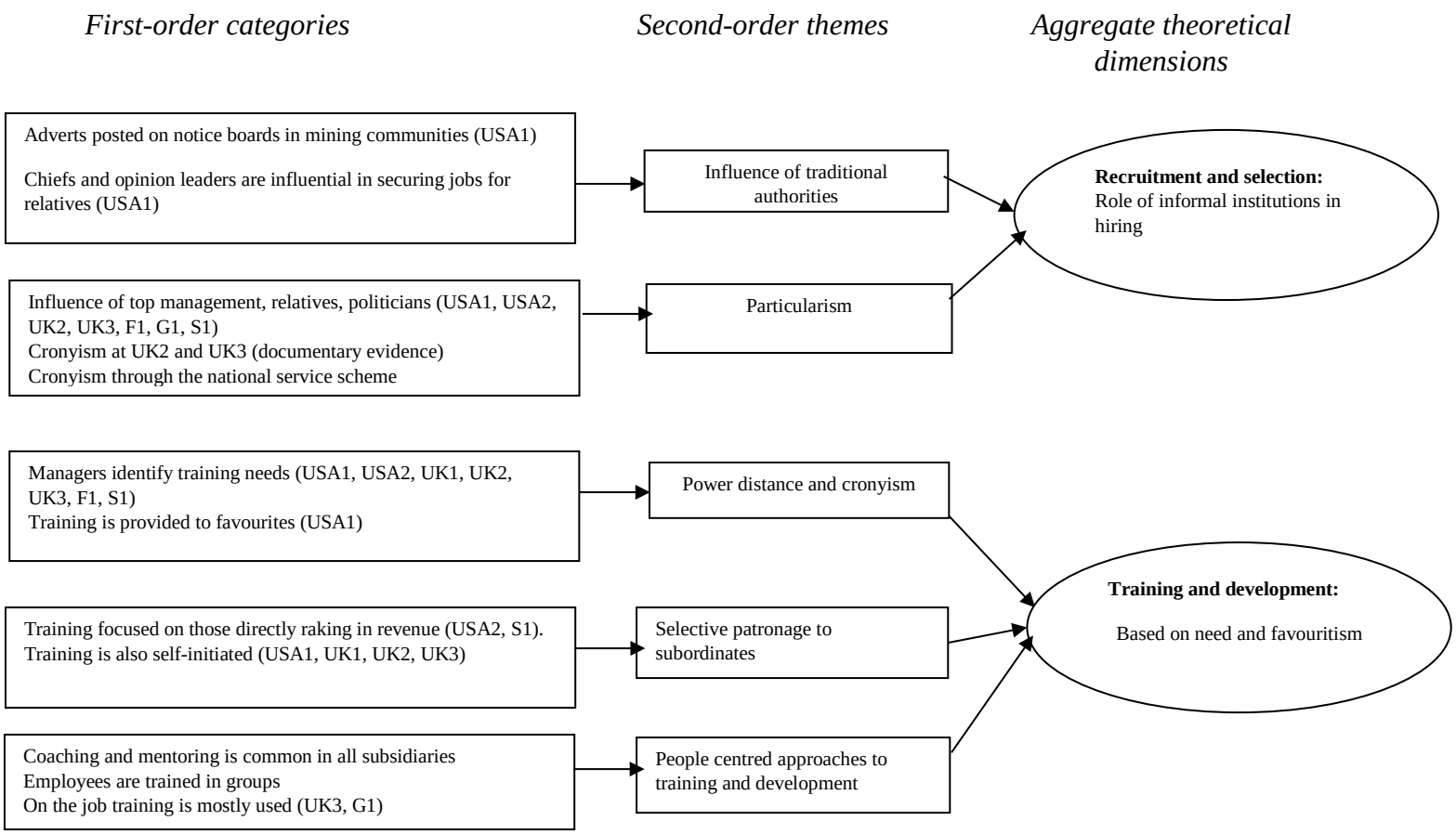

Figure 5.3: Data structure on localisation of HRM practices

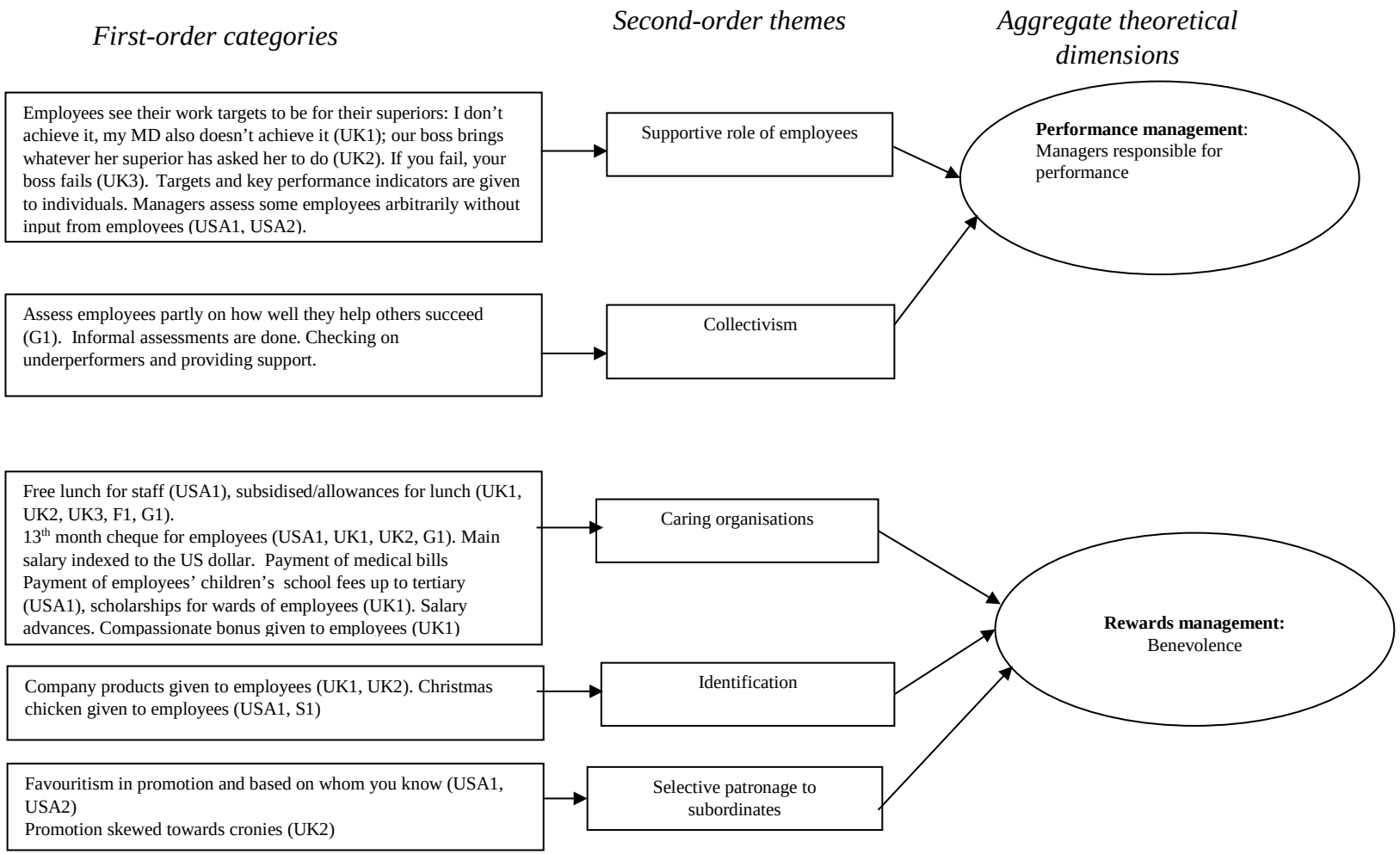

Figure 5.3 cont'd.

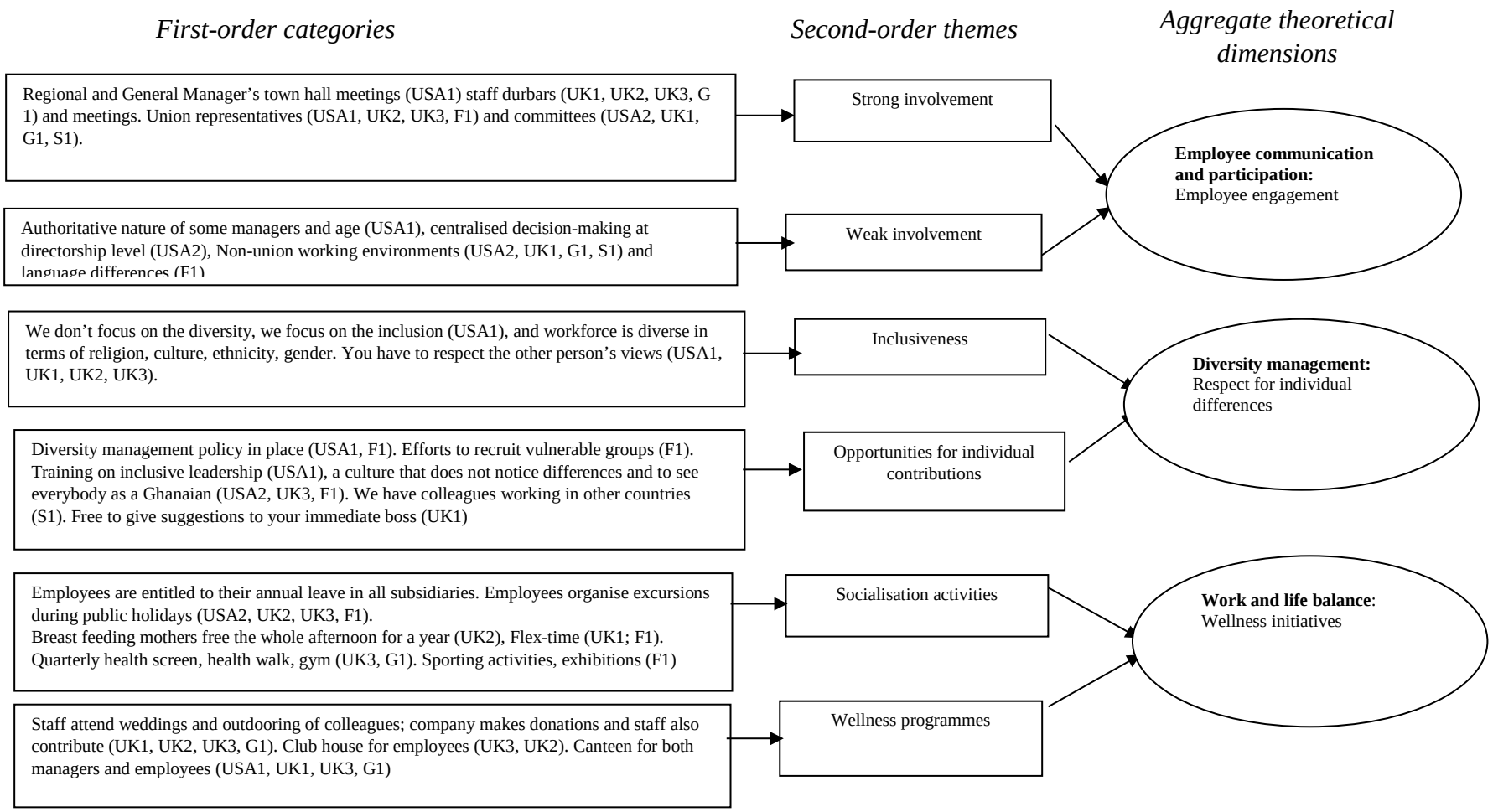

Figure 5.3 cont'd.

5.2 Findings

This section presents the findings of the empirical investigation. I analysed western MNEs' standardisation and localisation of recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, rewards management, diversity management, work and life balance and employee communication and participation. I subsequently examined why and how these HRM practices are standardised or localised. The findings on standardisation are presented next.

5.2.1 Standardisation of HRM practices

MNEs standardise HRM practices in their subsidiaries based on the features of universalism, where job vacancies are filled based on merit. Recruitment and selection practices are targeted at attracting the best candidates. Selected candidates undergo training and other socialisation activities which enable them to understand and work with corporate values. Employees use these corporate values to accomplish their tasks. MNEs use attractive reward packages that facilitate employee acceptance of these corporate values. In order to maximise the use of available talent in the host context, MNEs implement diversity management through the appointment of HCNs in key positions in line with corporate HQ staffing strategies. Communication between management and employees is done through unions, committees and town halls. In line with previous research, I present illustrative quotes supporting second-order themes (see Lawrence & Dover, 2015). I discuss these practices in more detail below.

5.2.1.1 Recruitment and selection: Hiring based on best-fit

Table 5.3 illustrates that subsidiary recruitment and selection practices largely focus on hiring persons with best fit for roles through the implementation of succession plans, funnel approaches and cost minimisation strategies (as was presented as second order themes in Figure 5.2).

Table 5.3: Recruitment and selection: Hiring based on best-fit

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Succession planning								
i. Career planning	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. skills inventory				✓				
Funnel approach								
i. Company portal	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Test	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
iii. Interviews	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iv. Recruitment agencies	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
v. Opportunistic hiring	✓							
vi. Poaching/headhunting	✓						✓	
Cost minimisation								
i. Contract workers	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
ii. Agency workers					✓	✓		

Succession planning, funnel approach and cost minimisation are implemented in varied ways in subsidiaries as deliberate strategies to have the best candidates with best-fit for roles.

5.2.1.1.1 Succession planning

Seven of the eight subsidiaries have succession plans in place as illustrated in Table 5.3. These subsidiaries are the American extractive company USA1, the British manufacturing and distribution of household consumables company UK1, the British beverage manufacturing company UK2, the British Bank UK3, the French Bank F1, and the German courier G1. The American courier, the Licensee, has no succession plans in place and the HR Manager claimed that the company was still young after being in operation for almost twenty-two years.

Succession planning seeks to fill vacant positions with internal candidates. These are existing employees who have distinguished themselves through high performance. These high performing employees are classified as “high flyers” (IsaUK2-HR Mger); “people with stretch potential” (AbaUK2-Mketing Mger); and “covers for various positions” (AlbertoF1-HR

Mger). These persons are given “challenging jobs” (RobertiS1-HR Mger) and put on the “radar of the company” (FramG1-HR Mger). According to the HR Director of UK2

> *Succession planning is done through audit of the people balance sheet. This involves an audit of the existing talent pool. We start from head count, age analysis, tenure in position analysis, exit analysis and finally you populate your people in a quadrant where you have people with very high potential, medium potential, low potential and vexation potential. Vexation means you have the potential to grow and perform better but you are not doing it. Psychologists call it fixated” (TurayUK2-HR Director).*

Preference is given to existing employees to assume higher roles because they have acquired the tacit knowledge and understood the norms and values of the business.

Furthermore, outstanding employees are put on a career plan. The employee is intermittently evaluated to determine whether he/she is fulfilling certain roles, taking on additional responsibilities or acting successfully in certain roles when his/her superior is not there. The HR Manager for the French bank F1 corroborates with the above arguments stating that

> *Some local companies do not care who comes to fill their role. They do not keep a talent pool, without knowing that if you keep a talent pool, and there is a vacancy, you do not need too much time to push the person there or to help that person to be able to fit that role, forgetting that if the person is not able to fit the role earlier, productivity will suffer and it will have direct impact on the cash flow. This is because the time you are supposed to use to get the job done, you are training the person or somebody is virtually leaving his/her job to help that person do his work (BertoF1-HR Mger).*

Subsidiary USA2, the American courier licensee, has no succession plans in place. A possible explanation is that all the directors are Ghanaians. Vacant positions are therefore likely to be filled not based on competence but on ‘whom you know.’ Any suggestion to management about having succession plans in place is likely to be interpreted to mean wanting the downfall of a superior; which can trigger animosity in the work environment. The lack of succession planning in such circumstances can lead to inability to take certain strategic decisions in the event of strategic positions such as chief executive position becoming vacant.

5.2.1.1.2 Funnel approach

The eight subsidiaries use funnel approaches to filter from the large pool of job applicants in order to arrive at best-fit for roles. The funnel approach which refers to the steps in recruitment and selection practices entails inviting a large pool of job applicants and selecting the best. With the exception of the American licensee company, USA2 that mostly relies on unsolicited applications, all other seven subsidiaries often advertise vacant positions through their

company portals. Job applicants in all subsidiaries are usually required to sit an aptitude test. Selecting job applicants through a test is regarded as fair and transparent. According to an employee of the Swiss oil company S1, "*there is nothing like whom you know here. You need to be qualified for you to be hired. Even if it is your sister, husband, or friend in-charge, you still cannot be employed if you do not pass the aptitude test. That is the culture" (RoyS1-Emp).* Similar views are expressed in the other subsidiaries. MNEs use tests as a way of controlling and limiting the discretion of subsidiary managers in decisions relating to recruitment and selection practices. These tests are also used to ensure that successful applicants are the most suitable by corporate HQ standards.

Additionally, job candidates who pass the test have to attend interviews. At executive level, job candidates are sometimes interviewed at the global corporate HQs. For instance, in the American extractive company USA1, executive level job candidates are sent to Denver where they undergo several screening interviews. This extractive company also executes a distinctive recruitment and selection process called opportunistic hiring. The HR Manager explains that

> *We do what we call opportunistic hiring, which is before the position becomes vacant, if we know we don't have an internal candidate, we start to profile people. Let's say, Mine Manager, we know we don't have an internal candidate, we profile all the mine managers in Ghana to know who the best is. We actually go and talk to the person and ask if he/she is interested in a particular role" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).*

Interviews, both at the subsidiary and corporate level, are meant to ensure that candidates possess the job attributes considered success factors by MNE control standards. These are control mechanisms put in place to determine membership of the corporate family. Tests and interviews are also considered standardised procedures in formalising HRM practices at subsidiaries. Although tests and interviews are also used in indigenous organisations for recruitment and selection, an interviewee revealed that "*some persons are recruited into certain roles not based on their performance at the test or interview" (AlorUK3-Emp).*

The scarcity of talent in the host context leads subsidiaries to poach from their competitors by offering wage premiums. The HR Manager for G1 reveals how he was employed *"it is a poaching sort of situation – where I was contacted by an agency" (FramG1-HR Mger).* Similarly, at USA1, the HR Manager explains that "*we also do head hunting" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).*

With the exception of USA2, subsidiaries also hire through recruitment agencies as a means of saving time and costs related to tests and background checks. Hiring through agencies has the benefit of limiting the influence of cronyism in the recruitment process and hiring the best candidate in line with HQ standards since the identity of the employer is often not disclosed. Subsidiary managers may therefore be free from undue pressure to employ relatives. Table 5.4 presents data that supports standardisation of recruitment and selection.

Table 5.4: Supporting data for each second-order theme on standardisation of recruitment and selection

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Recruitment and selection: Hiring based on best-fit
Succession plan	"We look at our talent base and agree on the high flyers in there. So we agree on the high flyers. There are some when you identify, you are supposed to either promote or move the person outside for appointment somewhere to tend our business. There are others you put as covers. The reason behind this is that if these people are managed well, we will always have our talent pipeline" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).
Funnel approach	"You write a series of tests and if you pass, you are short-listed and you go through an interview" (AbaUK1-Mketing Mger). "If it is an executive, you would be interviewed by about ten people. You would go to our corporate office at Denver to meet our executive team leaders who will do an HR chart assessment which is an assessment for executives to ascertain whether you are capable of making those kinds of decisions, are you at the level they are looking for" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).
Cost minimisation	"I think that because entities do not want to incur much cost, they want to rely on other companies to provide some services, so in that case, they will not pay certain things like health care because they know that it will be the sole responsibility of the agency. F1 is a foreign bank, so they are practising what they do over there" (MakiF1-Emp).

5.2.1.1.3 Cost minimisation

Subsidiaries adopt certain recruitment and selection strategies targeted at achieving efficiency and effectiveness at minimal cost. Usually, employees regard employment to be a permanent relationship with an organisation. Although short-term contract employment exists in Ghana, in the case of the subsidiaries for instance in F1, there was an agency employee for six years until she was finally appointed. All the subsidiaries in this study make use of contract workers. A participant of F1 explains that the underlying reason for using contract workers is because *"entities do not want to incur much cost, they want to rely on other companies to provide some*

services" (WiliF1-Emp) for them. Subsidiaries do not want to incur health related costs and other benefits. This is contrary to a context where the business organisation is considered an extension of the family (as will be elaborated in the section on inclusivity under diversity management). Website sources of the French bank F1 state that F1 increases its "operation efficiencies by identifying, cutting and keeping tab on its operational expenses." MNEs control operational labour cost at subsidiaries by introducing standardised codified guidelines with regards to recruitment and selection practices.

5.2.1.2 Training and development: Competencies and skills

Table 5.5 illustrates the components of training and development programmes in the subsidiaries, comprising HQ manuals and instructions, training infrastructure and employee identification with corporate MNE.

Table 5.5: Training and development: competencies and skills acquisition

		USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
HQ Manuals and instructions									
i.	Competency guides				✓				
ii.	Corporate HQ training	✓					✓		
iii.	Regional HQ training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
iv.	Networks of HR Managers	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
v.	Conferences at HQ	✓					✓		
Training infrastructure									
i.	Corporate training portal	✓				✓		✓	✓
ii.	Training schools					✓	✓		
iii.	Simulation	✓				✓	✓		
iv.	Certified apprenticeship	✓							
Employee identification with HQ									
i.	Specialists at Regional HQ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
ii.	Specialists from HQ	✓					✓		
iii.	induction training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Subsidiary training and development programmes are designed to assist employees to acquire the necessary competencies and skills in order to bridge performance gaps. Training and development also help employees cultivate the necessary corporate identity. The HR Manager

of the British manufacturer of alcoholic and non-alcoholic manufacturer UK2 defines training as the process of up-skilling employees *"so that if there is any vacancy, filling that role will not be a problem because the people are skilled anyway and also to address specific problems in specific departments for specific individual employees" (IsaUK2-HR Mger)*. In building these competencies and skills, subsidiaries use corporate HQ training manuals and instructions with appropriate training infrastructure.

5.2.1.2.1 HQ manuals and instructions

Training manuals, competency guides, training at the regional and corporate HQs, seminars, conferences and virtual networks of HR managers facilitate the standardisation of parent company training practices at the subsidiary level. Training content is derived from manuals designed at corporate HQ. For the French bank F1, the HQ designs training programmes "*related to managerial efficiency and leadership skills" (AlbertoF1-HR Mger)*; the British firm UK1 uses the "*Manchester policy as a guide*" *(MarvinUK1-HR Mger)* while USA2 uses a "*standard manual for training that comes from HQ*" *(MulkaUSA2-HR Mger)*. The HR Manager for UK2, surmised that "*there is the HR manual which has been developed at the headquarters to which we refer to, to ensure that we are aligned. So for all practices with regards to HR, we refer to the HR manual*" *(IsaUK2-HR Mger).* MNEs seek to formalise the procedures for the implementation of HRM practices by applying these manuals. Subsidiary managers are constrained in their decision-making process due to the application of common procedures and processes in their training and development programmes.

Furthermore, to facilitate the identification of employee training needs, UK2 uses competency guides. An employee of UK2 revealed that

> *We do what we call competencies acquisition process (CAP). This CAP is developed at the HQ. These are assessments that are conducted for all job holders in this company. All jobs in this company have a competency guide. Competencies guide refers to the skills that are required for every job holder in his/her area to function very well on the job (AbiUK2-Emp).*

Other subsidiaries call it (CAP) the personal development plan (PDP) which helps the employee to know his/her training needs. The competency guides serve as signposts for desired work attributes and behavioural practices aligned with MNE corporate culture.

In addition to training manuals, competency guides and personal development plans, subsidiary officials are trained at HQ. For instance in the French bank F1, there are "*attachment*

opportunities for specific roles at the HQ in Paris" (NiliF1-Emp), while for USA1, the HR manager explains *"for my role, at least I go to the head office once a year, when we are doing our strategy because some of the work that I do is driven by the corporate side" (*BiyarUSA1-HR Mger*).* Visits to HQ by subsidiary managers serve as opportunities to share information on corporate vision, mission and culture face-to-face with HQ managers. Subsidiary managers get to know more of the goals, culture and decision-makers of HQ, which also has the potential to enhance their tacit knowledge. They may begin to see themselves as members of the corporate team.

Subsidiaries equally receive training from their regional hubs. In the American courier licensee, USA2, Dubai provides *"training for the sales team" (RoeUSA2-Emp)* while for G1, trainers from South Africa "*come in to train us on new practices within the group*" *(EtoG1-Emp)*. Also, there is a virtual network of HR managers of subsidiaries USA1, UK1, UK3, F1, G1 and F1. HR Managers organise monthly video and phone conferences to discuss corporate global policies. All these interactions between subsidiaries and regional HQs as well as corporate HQ lead to building and solidifying employees into a corporate family. Subsidiary managers come to appreciate their roles and those at HQs better and are likely to develop a shared understanding of corporate values.

5.2.1.2.2 Training infrastructure

With the exception of the American courier licensee USA2, the other seven subsidiaries have training infrastructure in place including company portals, schools and centres. The British Bank UK3, and the German courier company G1 and the Swiss downstream oil company S1 have online portals with pre-designed training programmes from corporate HQ. An employee at G1 states, "W*e have a training platform even if you are in Bonn or in Ghana, it is the same training platform for everybody, the same courses accessible to us and the sort of training that is received there, is the same training that we also get here" (EtoG1-Emp).* Expressing similar views about the online training portal, an employee of UK3 notes that

> *It is computerised, it is electronic. It is not like you have to lobby your way like the Ghanaian system, no, you key everything in and then it populates. For instance, at the end of year, even as part of the talent management system (TMS), what I do as training is different from what my colleagues will do. The TMS has so many courses, so many topics and so many areas. You go into it and you pick any of them (WesehUK3-Emp).*

These online training programmes provide consistency in the level of skills required by subsidiary employees in order to be integrated into the HRM practices of corporate HQ. These

online training programmes are mandatory for all employees and to underscore the seriousness attached to these training programmes, a participant explains

> *Excuse me to say they are more serious. Even if you skip any training, you will not be comfortable on the job because you are expected to produce a certain level of returns or a certain level of output so if you are not better equipped, there is no way you can bring that up" (MayaUK3-Emp).*

Subsidiaries have little option other than to comply with and implement these training programmes. These training programmes are integrated electronically which is regarded as cost efficient compared to sending expatriates to subsidiaries to provide training. These electronic platforms serve to integrate all subsidiaries within the MNEs.

The British and the French banks (UK3 and F1) have each established training schools/centres for junior and middle level managers. These training centres are strategically located in Accra and Kumasi to serve the southern and northern sectors of the country respectively. The American mining company USA1, on the other hand, has instituted a four year certified apprenticeship training programme for technical training. These trainings are instructor-led and simulations are also used for different types of workflow processes. These training schools/centres serve as grounds for sharing the values of MNEs.

5.2.1.2.3 Employee identification with HQ

Subsidiaries use prolonged induction and specialists from both the Regional and Corporate HQs in their training, aimed at ensuring that employees learn corporate values. With the exception of the French bank F1 which does not have Regional HQ in Africa, all the other subsidiaries benefit from specialist services from their respective regional HQs. The HR Director for the British beverage manufacturer UK2, points out

> *We have an HR Director for Africa who sits in South Africa with specialists such as talent management specialists, compensation specialist, industrial relations specialist and organisational development specialist. So all these people are there and they provide services to us and even if you want them to visit your country, they will and they do it. We have our own way of training our sales, marketing, technical and human resource people. So, most of the content comes from the Regional hub because there are specialists who sit there and their work is to develop all these things" (TurayUK2-HR Director).*

Specialists from the global corporate office also visit subsidiaries to train employees in new programmes and technology. Employees and managers imbibe the values and beliefs of MNE and are likely to engage in cooperative and committed behaviours towards the achievement of corporate goals. These corporate trainers further enhance the coordination, monitoring and

control of subsidiary HRM practices to align with HQ. Table 5.6 presents data that supports standardisation of training and development.

Table 5.6: Supporting data for each second-order theme on standardisation of training and development

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Training and development: competencies and skills acquisition
Manuals and instructions	"The content of our training comes from our head office. There is a manual that we use and it is revised every year. When it is revised, the managers are called for training at the regional HQ" (RoeUSA2-Emp).
Training infrastructure	We have online training sessions. We have compulsory ones and depending on the department you work with, they have other suggested training you can do" (OnoahG1-Emp).
Identity	"When we wanted to move to a new software system for our work processes, it was a big project. We had people from all over the regions going to work in Denver for two years because we are so different that we wanted still to be able to use one system which gives us leverage" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).

Corporate HQ sometimes engages consultants to train employees. For instance, the HQ of USA1 had contracted a consultant to conduct training on inclusive leadership. The HR Manager explains that it is *"a company that is known to train people to become more inclusive, so from a global level we contracted that company and they are the ones going across all our regions to do that training" (BiyarUSA1-Emp).* Corporate HQ officials as well as consultants visit subsidiaries and conduct training which aimed at integrating subsidiary HRM practices to parent company practices.

Prolonged induction training also enables new employees to build corporate identity by sharing the values, vision, mission and goals of subsidiaries. Induction training allows new employees to understand the processes, systems, mission and vision and the strategic direction of subsidiaries. The HR Manager of the British detergent manufacturer UK1, reveals that *"when we employ new graduates, we take them through a training programme, for a maximum of two years but sometimes it is shortened"*, depending on individual performance. At the American mining company, new employees are placed in the Learning and Development Department for three months to learn theoretical and practical aspects of the jobs. They also learn the values and behaviours necessary to work effectively within the subsidiary. Employees might begin to see themselves as corporate citizens of MNEs. Western subsidiaries also use performance management to configure subsidiary goals with those at HQ.

5.2.1.3 Performance management: Alignment of subsidiary goals with HQ

Table 5.7 illustrates the various components of the performance management practices, namely alignment of subsidiary goals with corporate HQ and putting in place improvement plans.

Table 5.7: Performance management: Alignment of subsidiary goals with HQ

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Alignment of goals with HQ								
i. Goals cascaded from HQ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Individual targets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iii. Appraisal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iv. Calibration	✓		✓					
Improvement plan	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2.1.3.1 Alignment of subsidiary goals with corporate HQ

Performance management serves as a vehicle for achieving corporate and subsidiary goals. MNE performance targets are communicated to subsidiaries with criteria to be used to achieve them. The process of linking subsidiary and corporate goals is referred to as cascading. All subsidiaries derive their performance goals from corporate HQ and even though there is more autonomy for USA2, it does comply with certain HQ standards such as anti-corruption. Explaining the goal-cascading process of subsidiaries, the HR Manager of G1 points out

> *We do what we call a strategic meeting where policy direction of the organisation right from the mother company in Bonn through our sub-regional offices that is Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and is also cascaded down to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). So from the Sub-Saharan Africa's strategy, it is also brought to country and within country we also look at how we will adapt to be able to meet the broader strategy of SSA going into EMEA and then to the global picture" (FramG1-HR Mger).*

Subsidiaries have shared strategic objectives and values with the parent companies. These objectives are codified in manuals spelling out the procedures and policies, sometimes with little discretion for subsidiary managers.

Staff are evaluated twice yearly – mid and end of year. Objectives with key performance indicators known as operational and behavioural objectives are set at the beginning of the year to monitor and guide employee actions. The operational objectives are linked to the strategic direction of the business and the targets for each department are usually spelt out. Heads of departments sit with their teams to agree on individual targets. "*You have to meet your targets using company values"* (MayUK3-Emp). Therefore, *"the 'what' refers to what you have to do and it covers 60% and 'how' refers to how you achieve the targets using company values and it takes 40%. For instance, your target may be excellent customer service which is the 'what' and 'how' may be by respecting the customer" (SantanaUK3-Emp).* Though, the American courier licensee does have performance goals cascaded from its regional hub in Dubai, there seemed to be no detailed system in place for performance management. The HR Manager reveals that "*we ask the departmental heads to do the assessment on yearly basis and then they report to the HR department. There is a template sent to them to do the appraisal" (MulkaUSA2-HR Mger*). The other seven subsidiaries have elaborate electronic systems in place to track performance against targets. Performance management is associated with bonuses, salary increments and promotion to align employee work output to corporate goals. Corporate HQ values are entrenched in performance management practices at subsidiaries to guide behaviours and actions of employees.

Employees are divided in their opinion about the merits of performance management practices. Some are of the opinion that it is good, fair, transparent and objective, while others feel that it makes them overwork and they are unable to take their full entitlement of annual leave. Employees at UK2 and S1 resisted strongly the implementation of performance management, but management's decision prevailed. The HR Manager at UK2 explained that "*initially there was resistance here and there*", *(IsaUK2-HR Mger)* whilst an employee at S1 also noted that for the bi-yearly appraisals

> *We are not use to this but either you stay or jump out. If not because of unemployment in the country, we would have left because their policies are not suitable but some have already left because everyone would love to work in a relaxed environment (RalfS1-Emp).*

The HR Manager of UK2 indicated, "*If it is coming from the hub, you have no option than to implement for instance the performance management*" *(IsaUK2-HR Mger).* The procedure of appraising employees is a product of the parent companies with little input from subsidiaries.

Assessments of employees in all subsidiaries are based on what they agreed with their heads of departments to do from the beginning of the year against what they have been able to do at the end of the year. A manager of the French bank F1 explains

> *Hereto, performance appraisal was subject to whims and caprices of supervisors and managers before the acquisition. Now, no one can cheat any person since it is objectively and scientifically recorded using online platforms. The system is able to tell how far you have gone, what you are doing, so they look at your targets and then they give a particular mark to it" (JoF1-Mger).*

Based on these targets, there is a midyear review and end of year appraisal. The content of the performance management practices is embedded predominantly in western thinking and as such, it has its own ethnocentric origin.

The Marketing Manager at UK1 explains

> *You yourself will grade yourself; met target, didn't meet target, there is a column for your boss, there is column for other people too who have been working with you to fill and either agree with your boss or not, then they go and discuss" (AbaUK1-Mketing Mger).*

At the end of year appraisal, the employee rates himself/herself first and the manager or supervisor also rates. Calibration is done at only USA1 and UK1 where the manager and his peers review the performance ratings of their direct reports. Table 5.8 presents supporting data for standardisation of performance management.

Table 5.8: Supporting data for each second-order theme on standardisation of performance management

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Performance management: Configuration of goals
Alignment of subsidiary goals with corporate	The Ghana goals are from the Africa goals. Then it comes down to the MD, to the various directors and to their direct reports so that everybody's goals align to the business goals and it is signed off at the beginning of the year, meaning these goals have been agreed upon at all levels (AbiUK2-Emp).
Fairness and objectivity	"You will grade yourself; met target, didn't meet target, there is a column for you to fill and there is a column for your boss, there is a column for your boss's peers who have been working with you to fill and either agree with your boss or not then they go and discuss" (AbaB1-Mketing Mger).
Tracking systems	"We have performance grading system. If you fall below a certain grade, you are put under what we call performance improvement plan and that allows you to improve on the areas that you fell short" (MayaUK3-Emp).

5.2.1.3.2 Improvement plan

All subsidiaries have control mechanisms in place. At USA2, the process is informal where the manager or supervisor holds discussions with an employee whose performance falls below expectation. However, employees who perform well during appraisals can be promoted, given bonuses or a salary increase. Nonetheless, employees who score poor ratings are usually put on performance plans and supported with necessary coaching and mentoring. The German courier website sources indicate that "*our performance management system ensures that we recognise our employees' and executives' potential early on so that we can help them grow in a systematic manner" (G1 Subsidiary website).* Through formal monitoring procedures introduced in subsidiaries, western MNEs are able to shape performance decisions to conform to those of HQs.

In addition to the provision of codified guidelines and procedures on performance, MNEs ensure that employees and managers are incentivised to accept transferred practices and to act according to corporate standards.

5.2.1.4 Rewards management: Attraction and retention

Table 5.9 shows the rewards management components of the subsidiaries with an aim to attract and retain skilled and professional employees.

Table 5. 9: Rewards management: Attraction and retention

		USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Attraction and retention									
i.	Variable pay				✓			✓	✓
ii.	13th month cheque	✓		✓	✓			✓	
iii.	Variable bonus	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
iv.	Leave allowance	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
v.	Paternity leave	✓				✓		✓	
vi.	Safety bonus	✓							
vii.	Free/subsidised lunch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
viii.	Share options						✓		
ix.	Company products			✓	✓				

By making certain rewards such as variable pay and bonuses, contingent upon satisfactory performance, MNEs are able to align HRM practices at subsidiaries with those at HQ. Reward packages differ from one subsidiary to another, with a focus on attracting and retaining best talented employees and fostering their commitment and loyalty to subsidiary goals. Wage and salary increment rely on negotiations between unions and management in companies USA1, UK2, UK3, and F1. In other subsidiaries such as USA2, UK1, G1 and S1, committees negotiate on behalf of employees. In the German courier G1 for instance, the HR Manager explains that "*we compare salaries with the market to see where we stand and to ensure that we are always competitive" (FramG1-HR Mger).* However, USA1 is a distinctive case where salaries of employees are indexed to the United States of America (USA) dollar (USD). An employee claims that "*the main salary is indexed to the USA dollar because of the instability of the Ghanaian cedi (currency), employees negotiated with management through their unions and the salary was indexed to the dollar" (JonaUSA1-Emp).* Reward systems are designed to facilitate the acceptance of MNE corporate values and goals at the subsidiary. Individual employees are incentivised to exhibit cooperative work behaviours with a sense of corporate citizenship. Table 5.10 presents supporting data for standardisation of performance management and rewards management.

Table 5.10: Supporting data for each second-order theme on standardisation of rewards management

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Rewards management: Attraction and retention
Attraction and retention of talent	"If you get a good score in your performance, you get a huge salary increment and this one is totally dependent on the individual employee. "Whether you do well or not is totally dependent on you" (IsaUK2-HR Mger). "Every year around November, you are paid an extra month salary in addition to your November salary, which is your yearly bonus" (GonaUSA1-Emp).

However, despite the existence of unions and their influence on salary scales, salary increases are dependent on individual performance. The HR Director for the beverage manufacturing firm UK2 points out

> *Pay is based on the achievement of performance targets that one can either get an increment or not. Before the acquisition, at the beginning of the year unions negotiated for salary increments and everybody gets. But now you can only get these monies increased by way of your hard work. There is no free lunch anywhere" (TurayUK2-HR Director).*

The HR Manager for UK1 explained that "salary is performance-related and employees with good performance receive higher salary." Company website sources also emphasised that it is 'operating a multicultural meritocracy, in which individual employee contribution is compensated' (UK1 company web sources). Financial rewards of employees and managers are linked directly with individual performance.

Additionally, employees of USA1, UK1, UK2, and G1 are paid thirteen times in a year. There is an annual bonus which is tied to individual performance at USA1, UK1, UK2, UK3, F1, and G1. Two participants at F1 concurred that a bonus is given to *"everybody but it cuts across at a certain percentage"* (MakiF1-Emp). A percentage is "the *same for everybody and another percentage is based on the individual performance. The individual range is bigger than the group bonus*" (NilieF1-Emp). The variable bonus process is transparent, based on whether an individual employee has met his/her performance targets or not. The Marketing Manager of UK1 explains, "*If you yourself have written that missed target and they didn't give you that bonus, you shouldn't be angry because the process is transparent. We don't have issues on*

that" (AbaUK1-Mketing Mger). Corporate assessment criteria devoid of personal biases are used to track employee performance in line with HQ goals.

Also, with the exception of the American Licensee USA2, the British bank UK3 and the Swiss oil company S1, employees in the other subsidiaries are paid allowances when going on annual leave. MNEs use financial rewards to control performance and enhance commitment towards global corporate strategic goals.

The components of rewards are least in the American Licensee USA2 and the HR Manager argued, "*it is the directors who do their own thing" (MulkaUSA2-HR Mger).* This implies that the placement of individual employees within the salary range is not consistently applied, with some employees put on a lower scale, whilst others are put on a higher notch, probably without commensurate skills, qualifications and experience.

Paternity leave, which is rare in Ghana, is offered by USA1 and UK3 and G1 for a period of ten paid days. An interesting finding at USA1 is that there is a safety bonus of 5% of employee salary. Employees are given 100% of this bonus if no injuries or accidents occur in a month. However, the desire to get the bonus leads employees to conceal the reality of the number of accidents because *"even a small cut and you report it to management, the whole bonus is cancelled" (GonaUSA1-Emp).* As a result, minor accidents are not reported. This mining company also provides free lunch for its employees, while lunch is subsidised or monthly allowances are paid to employees in the other subsidiaries. The two British manufacturing companies, UK1 and UK2 in household consumables and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, provide their employees with free company products monthly. The French bank F1 gave shares to its full time employees in 2010. Thus, all financial and non-financial rewards are targeted at motivating employees and managers towards accomplishing corporate HQ strategic goals.

5.2.1.5 Diversity management: Respect for differences

Table 5.11 below illuminates the different constituents of diversity management comprising inclusion and respect for differences in the subsidiaries.

Table 5.11: Diversity management: Respect for differences

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Respect for differences								
i. HCNs in key positions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Different ethnicities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iii. Different religions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iv. Promotion of women	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inclusion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2.1.5.1 Respect for differences

Diversity is variously interpreted in the subsidiaries. In the British household consumables manufacturer UK1, diversity means *"value other people's opinions irrespective of status" (MarvinUK1- HR Mger); "respect"* in the British bank UK3; *"inclusion"* in the American extractive firm USA1; *"work in other countries"* (RobertiS1-HR Mger); and "*having women in leadership positions"* (FramG1-HR Mger). Diversity management can be a pragmatic way that western subsidiaries employ to promote their businesses to diverse cultures through an inclusive and harmonious work environment. Giving details about the nature of diversity management in the American mining company, the HR Manager states that

> *Diversity is the differences, we say inclusion. We don't focus on the diversity, we focus on the inclusion…inclusion is one of our values. You can have the difference and not do anything with the difference and you will still be the same. The advantage is including the difference and harnessing the impact of the difference. So that is why we value inclusion" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger). Company documents supports the assertion of the HR Manager stating 'we build an inclusive environment and provide opportunities to employees to contribute and work together to deliver our strategy' (Company documents).*

Thus, corporate HQ values guide subsidiary diversity management practices. Subsidiaries implement diversity management strategies to increase the possibilities of accessing diverse talent in the local labour market. Diversity management can provide subsidiaries with diverse work teams and competitive advantage. The HR Manager for USA2 pointed out that *"our sales team used to be full of Christians but in sales, you meet all kinds of people: Christians, Muslims and Buddhists. Management decided that we diversify our workforce by recruiting Muslims" (MulkaUSA2-HR-Mger).* Company documents support this assertion stating *"our commitment*

to diversity is evident in our hiring, training and promotion practices. We believe that to achieve the needs of a diverse customer base, we must mirror that diversity within our organisation." (*USA2 documentary sources*).

5.2.1.5.2 Inclusion

HCNs occupy key positions in all subsidiaries. For instance, the Regional Vice-President of HR in USA1, the Managing Director of the British Bank UK3, and all the Directors of the American Licensee USA1, the HR Director of UK2 and the HR Managers in all subsidiaries are all Ghanaians. One of the core values of USA1 stated in its news flyers and bulletins is inclusion, that is "*We build an inclusive environment where employees have the opportunity to contribute, develop and work together to deliver on our strategy" (USA1 subsidiary news bulletin).* This statement supports the HR Manager's assertion that *"We don't focus on the diversity, we focus on the inclusion that is why inclusion is one of our values*" (*BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).*

Western subsidiaries have also taken into consideration the multicultural, multi-ethnic nature of the Ghanaian context in implementing their HRM practices. The vision of the British household consumables manufacturer partly states, "*We are a result-oriented team, working in an open, multi-cultural meritocracy, in which individual contribution is rewarded and development is encouraged" (UK1 subsidiary website).* Similarly, in their beverage manufacturing firm UK2, the HR Director reveals that *"we have people from virtually every part of this country and we do not allow one culture to subdue the other, by using English as the medium of communication due to the diverse background of the people. Even at the team meetings, it is English, no vernacular" (TurayUK2-HR Director).* It is interesting to note that employees in subsidiaries are from different ethnic groups with different histories, languages, customs and traditions. Yet, English language is the medium of communication in all subsidiaries. The use of English in the work environment in such a multilingual context signifies inclusion.

Subsidiaries equally value and respect employees from diverse religious backgrounds. In the American Licensee Company USA2, the HR Manager points that

> *Our sales team used to be full of Christians but in sales, you meet all kinds of people: Christians, Muslims and Buddhists. Management decided that we diversify our workforce by recruiting Muslims. Accordingly, businesses we could not get, we were*

able to bring them on board because the decision-makers in those businesses were Muslims. So we blend all that to be able to get more business" (MulkaUSA2-HR Mger).

Respect of persons from different religious backgrounds is manifested in the British bank UK3. According to an employee:

Diversity is part of our values. The basic things in UK3 are our values. Our values are respect, service, integrity, excellence and stewardship. You have to respect the other person's view that is how you can have feedback. You have to respect it and respect the person who is giving it, and you must give it constructively…I wear a veil to work. We pray together before we start the day's work and it can either be a Muslim or Christian prayer. We have Jehovah witnesses who do not believe in the Lord's prayer but when Christians are saying the Lord's prayer, a Jehovah witness has to take part because when it is his turn to lead the prayers and we are doing it his/her way, we all take part, so that is the respect and the diversity comes in. When you do that, you begin to appreciate each other's differences (MayaUK3-Emp).

Respect is linked to the strategic goals of creating diverse workforce teams with the aim of generating innovative products, widening markets and creating more revenue. It is when people are respected that they feel accepted as members of a corporate team working to achieve corporate HQ goals.

In addition to teaching the need for respect in subsidiaries, diversity management programmes are also targeted at providing women with equal opportunities in terms of recruitment and selection, training and development and promotion. Women have been marginalised in formal job opportunities in Ghana and as the HR Manager of the German courier G1 explained

We do not discriminate between male and female in terms of job opportunities and promotions. We realised that we have few women in leadership positions, so we have taken positive steps where we want to develop women within our teams who are getting ready for senior positions to get them ready to increase their capacities to be able to take on further responsibilities (FramG1-HR Mger).

Thus pragmatic steps are taken to ensure a fair balance between the male and female employee populations in subsidiaries' talent pools. For instance, the HR Managers in five of the eight case studies are women, the Managing Director of the British bank UK3 is also a woman. Some of the subsidiaries such as UK1, G1 and S1, extend their diversity outlook to include provision of opportunities to work in other subsidiaries. To the HR Manager of S1, "*If management finds a particular expertise here, they might fall on it, so that is where diversity comes in. So for me, I do support Benin, I go to Cote D'Ivoire and Senegal to support" (RobertiS1-HR Mger).* Table 5.12 illustrates data that supports standardisation of diversity management.

Table 5.12: Supporting data for each second-order theme on diversity management

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Diversity management: Inclusion and respect for differences
Inclusion and respect	"We want our leadership team to reflect the diversity of the markets in which we function and for that reason, we are focused on developing local talent who understand different cultures. For example, this last year, we appointed a Ghanaian Managing Director in our Ghanaian business" (Documents) "The strategic talent programme is to ensure a fair balance between the male and females populations in the talent pool since women have been marginalised for a long time in the Ghanaian society" (NilieF1-Emp).

The HR Manager of UK1 shares similar views that as *"I sit here I have three employees who are in Nigeria, who are working there, so that is the kind of diversity that we have" (MarvinUK1-HR Mger).*

Western subsidiaries in Ghana manage diversity through the appointment of HCNs to management positions, recruitment and selection of employees from different cultural backgrounds, recruitment and promotion of women to managerial positions, respect and value of employees with different religious orientations.

5.2.1.6 Work and life balance: Flexible work initiatives

Table 5.13 shows the components of flexible work initiatives including flex-time, shifts and paternity leave aimed at integrating work and personal lives of employees for a better work-life balance.

Table 5.13: Work-life balance: Flexible initiatives

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Flexible initiatives								
i. Flex-time			✓			✓		
ii. Shifts	✓		✓					
iii. Paternity leave	✓			✓			✓	

Work and life balance programmes are rare except in USA1, UK1 and F1. At UK1 for instance, the HR Manager explains that "*you may come in late or early depending on your work schedule. So, you need to choose the time such that within a particular period during the day*

you are in the office because that is considered the core of the day" (MarvinUK1-HR Mger).

In the case of F1, flex-time/shifts are available for some roles. Table 5.14 illustrates data that supports standardisation of work and life balance practices

Table 5.14: Supporting data for each second-order theme work-life balance

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Work and life balance: Work and personal life integration
Socialisation activities	"We have various activities that we do to promote not work-life balance but wellness. We do interdepartmental games, we do teaming sessions that is we go outside of work and talk about our teams" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger). "We have what we call work and happiness which is an annual thing where all staff with their families go to the outskirts to socialise at the expense the bank. We meet with colleagues and our children also get to know places and their colleagues" (MayaUK3-Emp).
Healthcare	"We have health insurance cover which is managed by a private insurance company not the government one and the terms are very beneficial" (OnoahG1-Emp). "We have a health care if you are sick; we have a specialized hospital that you go to" (SelomUK1-Emp).

However, the scenario at USA1 is different. An employee observes that *"those in the mining area go for seven days night duty for a week and the following week, they work seven days during the day and subsequently given seven days off" (GonaUSA1-Emp).*

Employees of USA1 and UK2 and G1 are granted paid paternity leave for fathers to spend time with a new born child for a period of ten working days. Also, subsidiaries have employee wellbeing activities including healthcare, gym facilities, leave allowances and compassionate leave, which interviewees consider to be part of assisting employees with work and life balance. Flexible initiatives are noticeably absent in USA2, UK2, UK3 and S1. Flexible work initiatives are not popular in Ghana.

5.2.1.7 Employee communication and participation: Employee involvement

In Table 5.15, I illustrate the various approaches that subsidiaries adopt in employee communication and participation which are either classified as strong or weak involvement.

Table 5.15: Employee communication and participation: Employee involvement

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Strong involvement								
i. Unions	✓			✓	✓	✓		
ii. Town halls/durbars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
iii. Employee surveys	✓		✓			✓	✓	
iv. Speak-up policies	✓		✓					
Weak involvement								
Non-unionised staff		✓	✓				✓	✓

5.2.1.7.1 Strong involvement

Employee communication and participation refers to employees being involved in issues that affect them in the workplace and it differs across the subsidiaries. Employees are unionised in USA1, UK2, UK3 and F1. The nature of USA2 as a licensee also limits HQ control on its HRM practices. Subsidiaries also organise town hall meetings. According to the HR Manager of the American gold mine subsidiary USA1, "*Town halls are done across the business globally. They are open fora where management shares information with employees on the strategic direction of the business and employees are given opportunities to ask questions or provide their opinions" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).* In the British bank UK3 likewise, the senior management/executives of the bank hold durbars (formal meetings) with employees. Town hall meetings and durbars are held in all subsidiaries except S1. Subsidiaries can possibly implement HQ practices with less resistance because of these fora serving as avenues to explain and disseminate corporate guidelines.

In addition to town hall meetings, subsidiaries such as USA1, UK1 and F1 have instituted on-line platforms called employee barometer surveys, where employees are anonymously allowed to freely express their opinions about the organisation, including its HRM practices. An independent organisation collates and analyses these questionnaires, sending the results to their respective HQs. Issues of concern are addressed and employees are subsequently informed of actions taken. Employee barometer surveys as part of consultative mechanisms are utilised to test the pulse of employees on new practices or to advise employees on certain HRM practices.

They are useful means of ensuring that employees are integrated within the MNE corporate culture.

Additionally, the American subsidiary USA1 and the British manufacturer UK1 have instituted speak-up policies. UK1 has operationalised an anonymous telephone service that employees can use to report their concerns, while USA1 has a policy in place to safeguard employees to speak up on issues of concern. A participant at USA1 notes that:

> *They have something called speak up, whatever bothers your mind you have to come out with it. I can say it is a policy because it is there for us to speak up what is not going on well. There is speak up team. If something is bothering your mind about the work (CharlieUSA1-Emp).*

I enquired from the HR Manager of UK1 whether employees used this speak-up policy to which she replied in the negative.

5.2.1.7.2 Weak involvement

Subsidiaries USA2, UK1, G1 and F1 are non-unionised work environments. In these non-unionised work environments, workers are instead represented by a taskforce committee in the case of G1; social club in S1; and a committee in USA2 and G1. A participant in G1 reports that "*we don't have unions. That is not our culture" (OnoahG1-Emp).* Documentary evidence from web sites corroborates this assertion that G1 "*respects union rights at its sites in Europe, but the picture is quite different somewhere else in the world. Management has victimised pro-union workers in scheduling, leave, assignments and several other important areas of work" (G1 web sources).*

An employee of S1 observes that

> *We have never had a union here in this company. Unions are ways and means to express yourself to the big boss in a professional way. Employees are not involved in decision making here. Though we hold meetings, but is always about something that has been talked about by management and it is only left for us to be informed but not to contribute. So, we are only going to listen and ask questions but it is often A, so you have to deal with A, more or less (RoyS1-Emp).*

There is likely to be greater alignment of HRM practices in subsidiaries to corporate HQ in non-unionised subsidiaries than in unionised ones. Table 5.16 illustrates data that supports standardisation of employee communication and participation.

Table 5.16: Supporting data for each second-order theme on standardisation of employee communication and participation

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Employee communication and participation: Employee involvement
Strong involvement	"We have unions. We have town hall meetings where depending on the topic the business wants to discuss, management gives opportunity to employees to also talk" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).
Weak involvement	"Staff are not supposed to have unions. That is not our culture. We do not have unions in G1" (OnoahG1-Emp).

However, it is important to note that whilst USA1 and USA2 are both American, USA1 is unionised while USA2 is not. USA1 was founded as a greenfield and USA2 as a licensee. Also, UK1 and UK2 are both British manufacturing firms but UK2 is unionised whereas UK1 is not. UK1 was founded as a greenfield while UK2 was acquired. Thus, unions existed in UK2 prior to the acquisition. However, UK3 was equally founded as a greenfield but is unionised and has existed for many decades. The widely held notion that parent company control of subsidiary is high when it is established as a greenfield seemed not to apply in this situation. The mode of establishment seemed not to have influence on the presence of unions and probably the degree of parent company control on the subsidiary.

5.2.1.8 Summary of standardisation of HRM practices

The evidence of interviews and documentary analysis indicates that recruitment and selection practices in the subsidiaries are largely standardised. With the exception of the American courier licensee USA2, all subsidiaries have succession plans in place where opportunities are given to internal candidates who might have been socialised and have accepted the HQ corporate values and culture. Subsidiaries have formalised procedures such as portals for instance in USA1, UK1, F1, G1, and S1 where potential job applicants can upload their applications. Standardised tests are also used to short-list applicants. Recruitment and selection practices are based on rigid criteria, particularly for managerial positions, but with a certain level of flexibility for junior level positions, albeit using corporate guidelines.

MNEs also have quite standardised training and development programmes, in that they use training manuals and instructions, corporate portals and specialists from HQs to integrate training and development programmes at subsidiaries. The American mining company USA1, seem to be leading in the training and development of its employees. The German courier, on

the other hand, has up-to-date training facilities and career progression paths for its employees in line with corporate guidelines. With regards to the two British manufacturing companies UK1 and UK2, training and development programmes at the beverage manufacturer UK2 are more highly developed, with training specialists from its regional hub in South Africa.

With the exception of the American licensee USA2, where financial and non-financial incentives are low, all subsidiaries seek to standardise their rewards practices. Managers in subsidiaries receive relatively better pay with career prospects. Managers in subsidiaries linked their career success to the performance of the subsidiary, making it possible for corporate HQ to control and coordinate HRM practices.

Similarly there is some standardisation of diversity management practices. Staffing subsidiaries with HCNs is probably in line with HQ strategy of accessing the diverse talents and customers preferences in a multicultural setting. HCNs have assumed senior positions in all subsidiaries. Work and life balance programmes are yet to gain popularity in subsidiaries, with only USA1, UK1, and F1 implementing such programmes on a small scale. In respect of employee communication and participation there is variation among subsidiaries but still efforts at standardisation overall. While USA1, UK2, UK3 and F1 have unions, the other subsidiaries are non-unionised.

5.2.2 Why and how HRM practices are standardised

I present in Figure 5.5 the data structure on why subsidiaries standardise their HRM practices. As explained under data analysis, I generated first order descriptive codes by grouping data that conveyed similar meanings through triangulation of interview data with documents. Consequently I identified links among the first order categories that conveyed similar meanings and grouped them into second order themes.

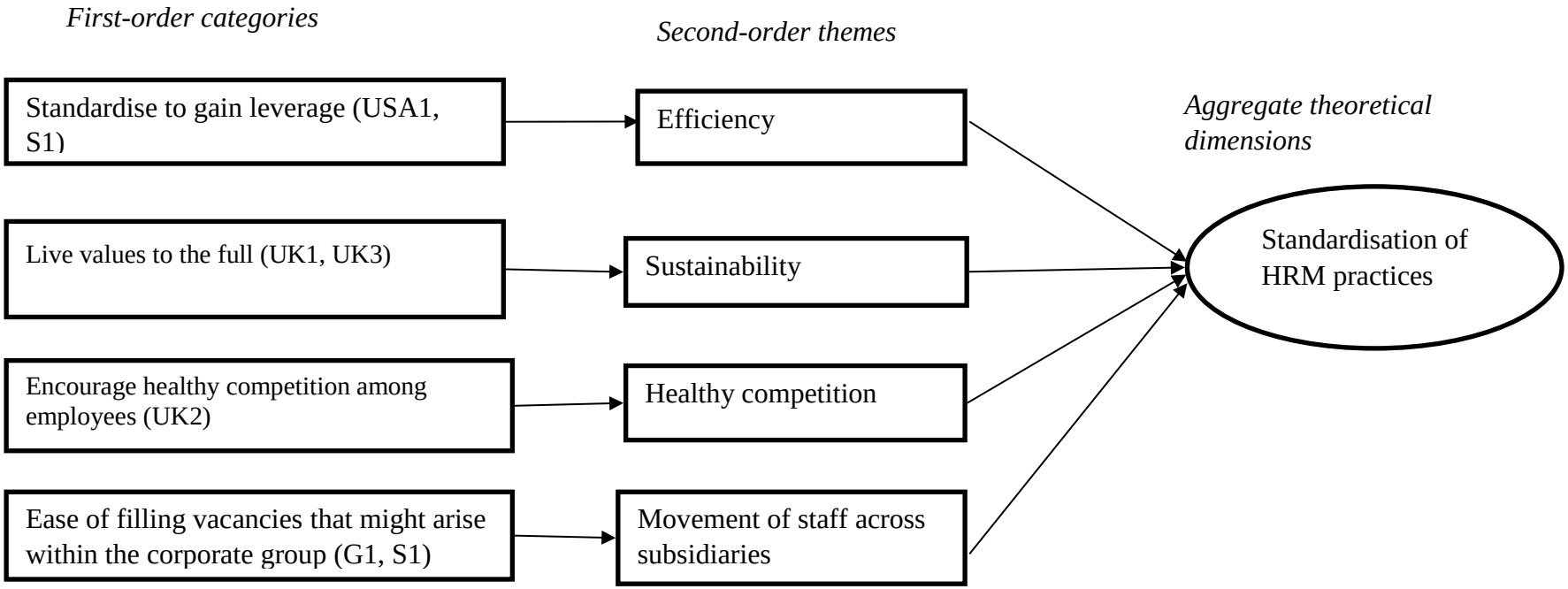

Figure 5.4: Data structure on why HRM practices are standardised

5.2.2.1 Why HRM practices are standardised

Table 5.17 presents the main drivers of why HRM practices are standardised. These are efficiency, sustainability, healthy competition among employees and ease of movement of staff across roles.

Table 5.17: Why HRM practices are standardised

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Efficiency and competition								
Leverage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustainability								
Strong Corporate values	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transfer across roles								
Ready talent pool			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

5.2.2.1.1 Efficiency and competition

Subsidiaries standardise their HRM practices to achieve efficiency. Standardisation helps to increase operational efficiencies "*by identifying, cutting and keeping tab on operational expenses" (F1 website sources).* Subsidiaries engage agency workers and contract workers as part of cost cutting measures and to achieve operational efficiency.

Work practices in the host context might have also be deemed to be ineffective. For instance an employee of F1 explains that before acquisition "*we were doing the conventional way of practices and procedures. You sit down and a customer will come, you will not bother yourself calling a customer to come for a loan because whether a customer comes or not, at the end of the month you will be paid. But these days, your performance is used to judge you" (MakiF1-Emp).* Transferred HRM practices are believed to be sources of concerted effort, efficiency and competitive advantage for subsidiaries.

A thorough analysis of and in-depth understanding of the local context help USA1 standardise its HRM practices because *"if you just go ahead and standardize, you will not be able to meet those challenges that you cannot standardise" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).* Subsidiaries are able to standardise their HRM practices more effectively, once they know the local context.

5.2.2.1.2 Sustainability

Also, according to some of the participants, corporate HQ values serve as the bedrock for sustainable businesses in all companies. An employee in UK3 observes that "*the basic things in UK3 are our values. Our values are respect, service, integrity, excellence and stewardship" (MayaUK3-Emp).* Documentary sources corroborate this assertion, stating that the company's values *"are fundamental to UK3 long-term success and represent the set of standards under which all of us at UK3 will work…we know that only a business driven by strong values can deliver strong sustainable returns" (UK3 web sources).*These values are universal and are communicated through company flyers and websites, with the intention of promoting a corporate mind-set. MNE values determine how the goals of subsidiaries are achieved. The Marketing Manager of UK1 explains "*we don't have people that are not pulling their weight staying in this company for two, three years. No, you will be out. So everybody strives to uphold the company values" (AbaB1-HR Mger).* MNEs use corporate values to communicate their goals and the appropriate conducts for the compliance of employees in subsidiaries.

In pursuance of maintaining viable businesses, subsidiaries transplant HRM practices they believe are core and are sources of competitive advantage. Explaining the experience of implementing performance management in the subsidiary, the HR Manager of UK2 reveals that

> *The unions realise that, from the beginning there are people who will do a good job and others can't do a good one and they expect to share the same thing with you. If you do that, you are not making the environment very competitive, you are not ensuring that there is positive competition among people. In that way productivity suffers (IsaUK2-HR Mger).*

Subsidiaries standardise HRM practices to ensure fairness and productivity.

5.2.2.1.3 Transfer of staff between roles

Also, as shown in Table 5.14, subsidiaries UK1, UK2, UK3, G1 and S1 standardise their HRM practices to "*ensure that within the group everybody stays on the same knowledge level so that if they need to move you around within roles or move you to a different station you are capable*" (EtoG1-Emp). Western MNEs transfer their HRM practices to the Ghanaian context towards ensuring consistency in the management of employees globally in terms of corporate work processes, systems and procedures to facilitate the movement of staff across roles.

Table 5.18 also presents data that supports why and how HRM practices are standardised in subsidiaries.

Table 5.18: Supporting data for each second-order theme on why and how HRM practices are standardised

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Why HRM practices are standardised
Transfer across role	"Absolutely it is similar because of the cross fertilization we don't have to go too much off the mark. If you train somebody on different software and a position becomes vacant say in South Africa and you have to deploy the person to South Africa, the person should not find it difficult to execute a similar role. So they are more similar" (RobertiS1-HR Mger).
Imposition	"Here, you have the strategy of the investor, his culture is this is the way I implement my practices. You either fit in or you drop out" (RoyS1-Emp).
	How HRM practices are standardised
Sensitisation	"Whatever it is, try to sensitise people through active engagement, and frequent dialogue with our stakeholders and carefully evaluating their feedback enable us adjust our approach for success…you can do a sample survey to find out whether it would be accepted, so in doing that, sometimes you get some feedback. You just have to be smart to know what you want to pick and know how to vary it as long as the main objective wouldn't be affected" (MarvinUK1-HR Mger).

5.2.2.2 How HRM practices are standardised

Subsidiaries of western MNEs usually implement HRM practices that fit with their HQ corporate strategic plans. The HR Manager of USA1 for instance explains that

> *We have a five year strategic plan at the global level and then every region looks at that five year strategic plan and comes up with how we fit into that. So every region has a strategic map which is the plan that helps us to stay aligned. When it comes to HR, we look at the regional strategy and decide as region, how HR fits in, what do we need from an HR perspective to be able to achieve that (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).*

Some other mechanisms that subsidiaries adopt to standardise their HRM practices include: sensitisation of unions and employees; control and audit of HRM practices; assimilation of employees into the corporate culture through induction and other trainings; and forceful implementation. Figure 5.5 shows the data structure of how HRM practices are standardised. Second order themes are generated by grouping first order categories that convey similar meanings.

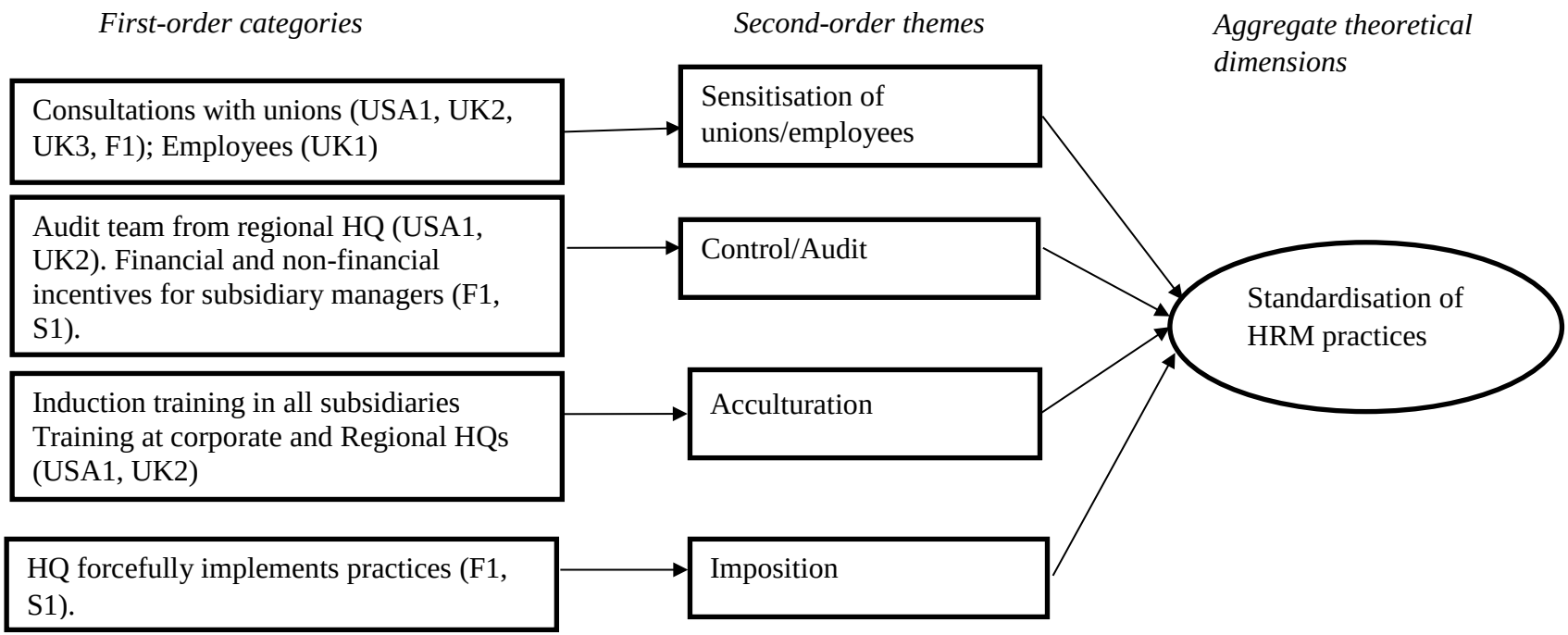

Figure 5.5: Data structure on how HRM practices are standardised.

Table 5.19 shows the various approaches that subsidiaries use in standardising their HRM practices, namely sensitisation of employees, control/audit and acculturation.

Table 5.19: How HRM practices are standardised

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Sensitisation								
i. Dialogue with employees			✓				✓	
ii. Speak with the unions	✓			✓	✓	✓		
iii. Training/workshops	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Control/Audit				✓				
i. Visits from Regional HQ				✓				
ii. Compliance with HQ						✓		
iii. Updates to HQ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iv. Rewards	✓			✓	✓			
Socialisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
i. Induction of new staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Communication with HQ	✓					✓		
iii. Assessment on HQ values			✓		✓		✓	
Imposition						✓		✓
Forceful application						✓		✓

5.2.2.2.1 Sensitisation of employees through unions/committees

Sensitisation of employees through both active dialogue and evaluation of feedback from unions and employees is vital to the implementation of transferred HRM practices. Workshops are also rolled out to sensitise the unions. The HR Director for UK2 discloses that

> *Before we start rolling out some of these practices, we run several workshops to sensitise employees, take them through the concepts, how it will be done and they understand. Explain to them that it has nothing to do with probably victimising or getting rid of employees and they will not suffer any diminishing conditions of services, it is not meant to witch hunt people (TurayUK2-HR Director).*

In the implementation of performance management systems in the subsidiaries, employees resisted the target-setting for individual employees and insisted on group-based performance without targets. However, after speaking to the unions and committees and having them *"trained, they understood that oh, well, it will help all of us because they realised that from the beginning there are people who will do a good job and others can't do a good job and they expect to share the same thing with you" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).*

Sensitisation of subsidiary employees through trainings, workshops facilitate the standardisation of performance management, rewards management, diversity management, employee communication and participation and work and life balance practices. Subsidiary employees endorse the values of corporate HQ by accepting performance management based on individual achievement, rewards based on achievement of targets, women occupying top management positions who hitherto were largely marginalised, and the implementation of shifts systems. It is most likely that employees in the host context would have preferred to work more hours to gain overtime allowances but through sensitisation, workers see the benefits of taking time off.

5.2.2.2.2 Control/Audit of HRM practices

Subsidiary HRM practices are audited to ensure alignment with global corporate strategies. In the British firm UK2, for instance, the HR Manager explains that

> *Personnel from the Regional Headquarters come here to do HRM audit, to check whether we are doing what is required of us in terms of best practices or we are not. They rate us from 1 to 4, one being the least and 4 being the highest. So every country is audited. Every year, the scoring comes and you will know whether you are doing well or you are not doing well (IsaUK2-HR Mger).*

In addition to auditing HRM practices, the French bank F1, which has no regional headquarters in Africa, has a compliance office in Paris which directly monitors their HRM practices. Subsidiaries are required to provide periodic updates of their HRM practices through meetings, emails, seminars and conferences to both the regional and global HQs. Expatriates, former inpatriates and HCN managers play a crucial in the transfer of recruitment and selection; training and development; performance management; rewards management; diversity management; work and life balance and employee communication and participation.

Expatriates facilitate the transfer of HRM practices through monitoring and control to ensure that HRM practices of subsidiaries align with corporate HQ mission and vision. Additionally,

expatriates understand corporate HQ policies, practices, mission and vision better than HCN managers. As a result, they are in a position to share the knowledge, skills and abilities with HCN managers in order to develop and improve HRM practices and strategies of subsidiaries. Expatriate managers also serve as trainers and supervisors using corporate HQ policy documents and handbooks as guidelines.

Former inpatriates also play a crucial role in aligning and shaping subsidiary HRM practices in line with HQ practices because of their previous work experience at corporate HQ. Former inpatriates have learned HQ corporate culture, vision and mission though time spent at HQ. Through improving their knowledge of HQ contextual information they develop skills and abilities to align HRM practices of subsidiaries with those of HQ. In contrast, HCN managers and employees are usually motivated financially (with bonuses and career advancement opportunities) to accept transferred practices.

5.2.2.2.3 Socialisation

Subsidiaries embark on a socialisation process that allows new employees to acquire the values and norms of the corporate HQs. New employees are introduced to the group concerning "*what we stand for as a company that is our mission, where we intend to go, our vision for the company…you see, one thing about UK3 is that you are brainwashed immediately you get into it. So you have to think like the business…to be frank with you, sometimes somebody will say this doesn't make sense but the business way it makes a business sense. You are trained to think the UK3 way" (MayaUK3-Emp)*. Training indoctrinates employees to accept corporate values and culture. All subsidiaries engage socialisation by communicating corporate HQ values through workshops and training sessions. As a result of socialisation, subsidiaries endorse the values of HQ and accept the standardisation of training and development; performance management; diversity management; work and life balance and employee communication and participation practices. It is through socialisation that subsidiary employees appreciate each other's differences, despite their diverse backgrounds, and to create a work environment of inclusiveness.

Additionally, corporate HQs standardise their HRM practices through communication. According to the HR Manager of the American mining company USA1, *Communication with HQ is seamless. So we are very much aligned and the channels of communication we do calls, we do video conferencing, we do face to face. It is really like I am working with somebody who*

is in Ghana" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger). Frequent interactions between HQs and subsidiaries enhance the monitoring role of HQs in the implementation of HRM practices. HQ is in the position to know the state of affairs of HRM practices and to dictate the pace of implementation accordingly. Subsidiary managers can also use the opportunity to clarify HQ expectations of the subsidiary and implementation procedures of HRM practices.

Moreover, to ensure that performance behaviours are aligned with HQ, employees are partially assessed on how well they are able to achieve the financial results using corporate values. The Marketing Manager explains that when UK1 was rolling out its values:

> *There were lots of trainings for us to know which behaviours exhibit courage, which behaviours exhibit accountability, networking. So everybody knows the behaviours that are good, the behaviours that are not good. So training is rolled throughout so that everybody has the same understanding. If you don't exhibit these values then we cannot work with you (AbaUK1-Mketing Mger).*

Subsidiaries UK1, UK3 and G1 partially use corporate values to evaluate their employees (see Table 5.15). Employees are converted to the corporate HQ realm.

MNEs also employ attractive financial and non-financial rewards contingent on performance. Tying financial incentives to performance can enhance the standardisation of HRM practices at the subsidiaries. There are equally attractive career prospects for employees and managers to work in other roles and other subsidiaries. The HR Manager at USA1 explained that *"if you stay long in a role, it means that you are a slow starter or maybe you are not too good."* Thus, managers are incentivised with attractive monetary and non-monetary benefits to standardise HRM practices. HCN managers and employees endeavoured to live the values as expected by corporate HQ thus signalling corporate HQ's ethnocentric approach to the implementation of subsidiary HRM practices.

5.2.2.2.4 Imposition

In addition to sensitisation, acculturation and control mechanisms, Western subsidiaries also impose their own rewards management and performance management practices particularly at managerial levels as these practices are regarded non-negotiable in order to ensure prudent financial management of subsidiaries and to remain competitive. An employee of S1 explains that when S1 was acquired

> *some of the staff and senior management had cars allocated to them, now the policy of S1 is that they do not give cars to employees and therefore they have to retrieve the vehicles or sell it to you. We do not believe in giving you a car. The employees were not*

involved in this decision. We said no, for the culture we had from the previous company, a car is given by the company and maintained. They said no but we also said, we don't understand this. (RalfS1-Emp).

Management forcefully transplanted western HRM practices in subsidiaries. A manager at F1 stated that *"before the acquisition, senior managers were given cars driven by chauffeurs but all these privileges have ceased while other banks still have the practice in place. …From January to date, there is high turnover. Twelve core corporate staff have resigned from January to date (JoF1-Mger).* Senior managers using corporate cars for their official assignments are symbols of prestige and authority and thus withdrawal of these privileges diminishes the perception of their authority within the local context.

In sum, western subsidiaries standardise their HRM practices through training and workshops, monitoring and control from both the corporate and regional HQs, assessing employees on corporate values and seamless communication with global corporate HQs.

5.3 Localisation of HRM practices

The host country cultural and institutional forces such as the influence of traditional leaders as land owners, presence of unions in subsidiaries, community agitations in catchment areas of the subsidiaries, politicians and the appointment of host country nationals in key positions relating to the implementation of HRM practices result in localisation of some HRM practices. Figure 5.6 shows data on localisation of HRM practices.

5.3.1 Recruitment and selection: The role of informal institutions

The recruitment and selection practices in relation to localisation are depicted in Table 5.20.

Table 5.20: Recruitment and selection: The role of informal institutions in hiring

		USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
<u>The role of informal institutions</u>									
i.	Job adverts in communities	✓							
ii.	Community post	✓							
iii.	Role of chiefs/leaders	✓							
iv.	Apprenticeship trainees	✓							
v.	Particularism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Evidence from the interviews suggests that informal institutions play a crucial role in the implementation of the hiring process, particularly in the extractive industry of the American company USA1. USA1 has developed what the company termed as "*our local, local policy*" for recruitment and selection at the mining sites. Local, local because the Regional HQ is in Ghana and there are mining sites as well. The mining sites are referred to as local, local.

The HR Manager explains that through the local, local policy, "*We have a certain quota that we have agreed with the communities that at every point in time, a certain percentage of our workforce will be from the communities that we are working within. Different communities, different sizes have different quotas and different agreements" (Biyar USA1-HR Mger).* The chiefs and their communities have given their land which serves partly as their source of livelihood to the mining company for the extraction of minerals. In exchange for the valuable resources extracted from the land of which the chiefs are stewards, USA1 has to employ members of the mining communities who might have lost their source of livelihood from farming on those lands.

Consequently, USA1 has built a community post that liaises with the mining communities.

> *We cannot be tracking that quota from a regional perspective. We would have to do that from a site perspective so the site HR group make sure they are tracking that. They make sure that when they are recruiting, they are checking to see that the person is from the community. We have our staff working in the post in the community. There are forms in this office where by an individual recruited within the quota system of a particular community will have to complete a form which has to be validated by the chief or opinion leader that the person is from the community (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).*

Also, USA1 has put up notice boards within the mining catchment areas where job vacancies are usually posted. *"There are company notice boards in all communities within the mining catchment area and adverts are usually placed on these notice boards" (GeoUSA1-Emp).* The mining communities are rural areas in Ghana with high illiteracy, lack of newspapers and internet facilities. Thus, mounting of notice boards is probably a pragmatic way in reaching out to the communities and announcing job vacancies. It also brings transparency into the recruitment process such that no particular community can accuse management of not publicising job openings or giving favours to some communities to the neglect of others. Table 5.21 illustrates data that supports localisation of recruitment and selection practices.

Table 5.21: Supporting data for each second-order theme on localisation of recruitment and selection practices

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Recruitment and selection: Informal institutions
Influence of traditional authorities	"Traditional authorities also influence recruitment. You know in Ghana, every land belongs to a chief and then when mining is done, you take the chief's land and then you work on it. The Chief has an influence because you are working on his land. If the chief says 'I have somebody who needs employment' if you don't employ that person, the chief will give you a hell of trouble" (JonaUSA1-Emp).
Particularism	"The big men in the company those who have links with them can also get employed and some too through government ministers. For instance, a person gets the advert and sees that the position advertised is a highly competitive one, the person sees a minister who has an influence to help him/her secure the job" (GonaUSA1-Emp).

USA1 has also instituted a three year certified apprenticeship training programme and it enrols young persons in the mining communities to build their skills at the company's expense. These trained personnel then serve as a reserve talent pool that the company can employ from, as and when the need arises. "*When there is a vacancy, they just call you, they no more advertise" (GonaUSA1-Emp).* The youth in the mining communities lack the requisite skills and probably only a few of them have acquired primary or secondary education. Providing them with apprenticeship training is perhaps the best approach for meeting the employment quota systems signed with the chiefs. Therefore, for the youth in these mining rural communities, there is the need to provide them with apprenticeship training. Documentary sources revealed that in 2012, 26 electrical and mechanical apprentices graduated from the training programme. With the acquisition of the skills, they can equally seek jobs in other companies since they are not bonded to serve USA1. The apprenticeship programme promotes community goodwill for USA1.

Particularism is practiced in the subsidiaries, such that some employees are hired based on technical "know who" instead of technical "know-how". Instances that illustrate particularism include "*Favouritism still exists "(JoF1-Mger)*; "*people come in and tell you they don't know anybody here but when they get on board, you realise that they know people. So definitely*

somebody might have influenced their employment" (BelG1-Emp); "you know it is a human institution, you can't be so sure" (MayaUK3-Emp).

A shareholder of UK3 wrote *"many highly qualified staff have been denied roles in favour of unqualified cronies of top Managers and Directors" (Ghanaweb sources).* Another employee states *"every organisation has that aspect" (WesehUK3-Emp).* Cronyism also exists with the popular saying "you scratch my back and I will scratch yours." Persons in responsible positions may help relatives of their colleagues secure jobs in their work places and also expect the same to apply to them. An employee at USA1 explained that some job candidates secure employment "*through the big men in the company, those who have links with them and some too through government ministers" (GonaUSA1).* Government ministers are influential in matters relating to acquisition and renewal of licenses by MNEs to operate and comply with environmental laws such as pollution. It is likely that a government minister who is in a position to influence any of these outcomes for a subsidiary can equally secure job opportunities in subsidiaries for cronies and relatives.

5.3.2 Training and development: Based on need and favouritism

Table 5.22 shows the major themes on localisation of training and development, namely power distance and cronyism, prejudice in selecting trainees and employee-centred training in subsidiaries.

Table 5.22: Training and development: based on need and favouritism

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Power distance and cronyism								
i. Managers identify needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Favouritism	✓	✓						✓
Prejudice in selecting trainees	✓	✓		✓				✓
Employee-centred training								
i. Coaching and mentoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Training in groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
iii. On the job training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.3.2.1 Power distance and cronyism

Employee training and development are accessed not only based on needs assessments but also on favouritism. The power distance that characterises the cultural and institutional context provides management with a paternalistic role to determine the training needs of employees. In the French bank F1, for instance, management draws up training programmes and nominates employees to attend, based on their work schedules. As a result, not all employees have the opportunity to be trained during the course of a year. An employee of S1 explains that training depends on your rank and your responsibilities. *"If management believes that your role does not require any training, you are not trained" (RalfS1-Emp).* Management has the prerogative to determine who should be trained rather than according to the needs of the job. Similarly, a participant at the American mining company states that

> *It is my head of department who identifies my training needs. You don't choose the type of training you need because they (heads of departments) know the training that is suitable and nominate you to go for the training. It is the manager who identifies the training because he knows the type of training that will help his/her department" (GonaUSA1-Emp).*

The HR Manager for the British firm UK2, emphasises that *"the functional head and the manager know the employee too well and they know which areas the employee needs training in" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).* The employee basically depends on the paternal instructions of the manager who decides on the type of training to be conducted for the employee.

As a result of the power distance, managers often prefer to give training opportunities to their favourite employees. A participant explains that

> *If you are not in the good books of your manager, you will not be chosen for training. For the expatriates they are fair in their choices and employees are selected for training depending upon their competencies and potential. For the Ghanaians, only few are sincere and will select persons for training based on their competencies" (GeoUSA1-Emp).*

Thus cronyism seems to characterise the process of selecting employees for training.

5.3.2.2 Prejudice in selecting trainees

In addition to favouritism, some subsidiaries focus their training and development efforts only on employees directly linked with revenue generation. For instance, in the American courier licensee USA2, the HR Manager described how she was refused training, for the reason that she has already learnt all that in school. She points out, "*Not everybody gets the opportunity to*

be trained because normally our focus is on front desk/customer service. HR and accounting personnel are not given opportunity to be trained because management believes that they are not core to the business" (MulkaUSA2-HR Mger). In the British beverage manufacturer UK2, similar views are expressed that "*most of these trainings are usually done for the sales department because they bring the money. So they (Management) are always interested in them" (FloraUK2-Emp).*

Employees who contribute more to the competitive advantage of the subsidiary are usually provided with more opportunities to be trained. This probably confirms the assertions of an interviewee that "*Ghanaian indigenous companies want to use you but not to impart knowledge. When you do that the company suffers because the companies are not ready to invest in their employees. In the local companies, you get people with big titles but they are not doing anything*" (IsaUK2-HR Mger). Prejudice in selecting trainees can break down team spirit and cooperation with a resultant sub-optimisation of the subsidiary's performance. Table 5.23 illustrates data that supports localisation of training and development.

Table 5.23: Supporting data for each second-order theme on localisation of training and development practices

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Training and development: Need and favouritism
Selective patronage	"If you are not in the good books of your manager, you will not be chosen for training. For the expatriates, they are fair in their choices and employees are selected for training depending upon their competencies and potential. For the Ghanaians, only few are sincere and will select persons for training based on their competencies" (GeoUSA1-Emp).
Prejudice in the selection employees for training	"There are some employees who do not get opportunity to be trained within a year. Normally, we want to please our clients, so our focus is usually on the customer service and front desk people. For instance, there was a professional course in accounting advertised in the Ghanaian dailies. I nominated the guy who does the payroll, and the CEO said 'this one is a professional course and he had done in school already" (MulkaUSA2-HR Mger).
People centred approaches to training and development	"When you are identified as a talent, you are assigned a coach or mentor. It is the mentor's job to ensure that you get the right frame of mind" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).

5.3.2.3 Employee-centred training

Subsidiaries also adopt employee-centred approaches such as coaching and mentoring to train and develop their workforce. New employees are usually matched to relatively experienced persons to understudy. Also, when an employee is identified as *"a talent, he/she is assigned a coach or mentor. It is the mentor's job to ensure that the employee gets the right frame of mind" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).* The mentor assumes a paternalistic role and establishes a personalised relationship with the mentee, offering support often times beyond official duties. Coaching and mentoring add a personal touch to training programmes provision of immediate feedback. They are usually tailored to the individual employee needs.

On-the-job training is also largely applied in all subsidiaries which is regarded as a suitable approach in the Ghanaian context where illiteracy is high particularly in the rural communities. The HR Director of UK2 pointed out *"We believe in on the job training. When we say manufacturing, no lecture can make you understand" (TuraryUK2-HR Director).* Employees can acquire the necessary skills through experiential learning. The HR Manager of USA1 reveals *"we have our own trainers who we make sure we invest in to learn more, gain more insight…who go to the field and do on the job training…and develop people to be able to work the way that the business would benefit the most" (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).* Training courses are tailored to meet local needs using local trainers.

5.3.3 Performance management: Performance targets are for superiors

Table 5.24 illustrates the various elements of performance management in the subsidiaries, namely employees are auxiliaries and collectivism.

Table 5.24: Performance management: Performance targets are for managers

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Employees are auxiliaries								
i. Managers' targets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
ii. Arbitrary assessments	✓	✓						
Collectivism								
i. Helping others succeed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Remedial actions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.3.3.1 Employees are auxiliaries

Employees of subsidiaries see performance management to be the sole prerogative of supervisors and managers. The performance targets, according to employees, belong to managers and the role of employees is to help managers achieve these targets. Employees are therefore auxiliaries. In the British alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage firm UK2, an employee explains that *"Our boss brings whatever her superior has asked her to do and she comes to discuss with us and we also suggest how we can help her achieve those goals" (FloraUK2-Emp).* The HR Manager corroborates this assertion stating, *"What your boss agrees with his/her superior to do, he/she brings it to his/her direct reports to see how they can support him/her achieve the goals. If you fail, your boss fails" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).* Table 5.25 presents data backing localisation of performance management.

Table 5.25: Supporting data for each second-order theme on localisation of performance management and rewards management practices

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Performance management: Targets for superiors
Supportive role of employees	"So what your boss agrees with his/her superior to do, he/she brings it to direct reports to see how they can support him/her achieve the goals. If you fail, your boss fails" (AbiUK2-Emp).
Collectivism	"We look at how you help others to be successful in their jobs" (FramG1-HR Mger).

It is assumed that since performance targets belong to managers, they alone know the criteria for assessment and this often leads to arbitrary evaluations. This is often done in subsidiaries USA1 and USA2. For instance, an employee in USA1 states that *"the managers and the supervisors have their own way of assessing employees. They know the criteria, so at the end of the year or mid-year, they come out pointing out that you have won a prize or you have been promoted due to your performance" (CharlieUSA2-Emp).* It is assumed that managers have monopoly over knowledge.

5.3.3.2 Collectivist orientation to work

The findings suggest that employees are assessed on how well they collaborate with each other towards achieving their targets. Subsidiaries use certain key terms to denote this teamwork such as "*respect*", "*team spirit*" and "*cooperation.*" The HR Manager for the German courier G1 concludes that *"We look at how you help others to be successful in their jobs" (FramG1-*

HR Mger). As a result of the collectivist nature, employees are expected to help each other succeed in their tasks.

5.3.4 Rewards management: Benevolence

In Table 5.26, the components of rewards in the subsidiaries are explained, namely, caring organisation and identification.

Table 5.26: Rewards management: Benevolence

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Caring organisation								
i. Salary indexed to US dollar	✓							
ii. Free lunch/subsidised lunch	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iii. School fees	✓		✓	✓				
iv. 13th Month cheque	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
v. Compassionate bonus			✓					
vi. Christmas chicken	✓							✓
Identification								
i. Company products			✓	✓				
ii. Cronyism	✓	✓			✓			✓
iii. Selective patronage	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓

Rewards management in subsidiaries can be termed benevolent and one may even consider subsidiaries as members of the extended family systems of employees. These benevolent reward schemes are reflected in the caring nature of subsidiaries, with employees identifying themselves as members of the corporate family and to a limited extent selective patronage to some organisational employees.

5.3.4.1 Caring organisations

In the American subsidiary USA1, salaries of employees are indexed to the USA dollar to cushion employees against hardships and loss of purchasing power arising from the volatility of the Ghanaian cedi. USA1 also provides free lunch for its employees. However, in the other subsidiaries, except USA2, lunch is provided at subsidised rates to employees. For instance,

there is a canteen for staff where food is highly subsidised at UK2. A coupon is twenty Ghana cedis or about US$6.00 for the whole month. Management adopts a paternalistic approach to rewards management by creating a caring environment in exchange for employee loyalty and commitment.

Additionally, subsidiaries USA1, UK1 and UK2 award scholarships to children of employees attending school, through the payment of the school fees. UK2 pays the school fees of children of Directors. However, USA1 does not discriminate and pays the school fees of children of employees and managers up to the tertiary level. Subsidiary employees at USA1, UK1, UK2, F1 and G1 receive a 13th month cheque. An employee of USA1 explains that *"every year around November, you are paid an extra salary in addition to your November salary" (GonaUSA1-Emp).* In UK2, employees get double pay in December every year. In addition to the 13th month cheque, employees are paid a compassionate bonus at UK1. This bonus arises from employees' inability to meet the 100% performance target but their efforts are rewarded to commensurate their level of performance.

Also, during Christmas every year, the American mining company USA1 and the Swiss oil company S1 give their employees Christmas chicken. The HR Manager of USA1 explains

> *We have something we call Christmas chicken. They (HQ) don't have Christmas chicken in Denver. Christmas chicken is a gift that we usually give out to our employees at Christmas time. From a traditional perspective, you know in the olden days, people used to say I am going to have a huge bowl of chicken soup at Christmas (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).*

The caring nature of subsidiaries extends to the non-working lives of their employees to include what is eaten at Christmas. Employees and managers become a corporate family. Table 5.27 presents data backing localisation of rewards management.

Table 5.27: Supporting data for each second-order theme on localisation of rewards management

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Rewards management: Benevolence
Caring organisations	"There are benefits like school allowances and scholarships for kids of employees" (AbaUK1-Mketing Mger).
Identification	"It has become an industry practice, where you give some token to employees as Christmas hampers. So you give them like a bag of rice, some oil and some chicken each. HQ doesn't see why management should do that because the employees are paid. So HQ expects that you take your salary. You decide how many bags of rice you want to buy" (RobertiS1-HR Mger).
Selective patronage to subordinates	"If you are in the good books of your manager, fine. He can recommend you for promotion, otherwise, you can perform, you can do your best, but you will never get promoted" (GonaUSA1-Emp).

Furthermore, subsidiaries espouse the cultural and institutional values of the host context in terms of offering funeral grants to bereaved employees or grants to employees having weddings and outdooring (a Ghanaian ceremony where a new born child is officially given his/her name, and meets their wider family and community). These are regarded important occasions in the lives of employees in Ghana and be it funerals, weddings. Outdooring, the subsidiaries usually send delegates to represent them. The HR Manager for the German courier G1 explains:

> *In Europe, you cannot give funeral grants. Their culture does not imbibe that. But here in Ghana, an employee loses a relative, she/he expects to see all his colleagues coming to sympathise with him in the funeral. So you need to organise your team to go and sympathise with a team member and all this comes with cost. These are things that sometimes are peculiar to the environment in which you find yourself. You do not do some of these things then, it is interpreted to mean that you do not care about the people (FramG1-HR Mger).*

Employees thus share the joys and sorrows of their colleagues like members of a family.

5.3.4.2 Identification

The identity of employees as members of a corporate family is further enhanced with the provision of free company products at the end of each month at UK1 and UK2. An employee of UK2 notes that the provision of company products mitigates the cost of living somewhat since they do not have to buy these products from their salaries. He states, "*Every month, they (management) give us provisions to curtail the problems that we go through for the whole*

month" (OsuaUK1-Emp). Managers in subsidiaries assume paternalistic roles by being involved in the personal lives of employees, which can lead to employees internalising the values and goals of corporate HQs.

Despite the paternalistic and caring nature of subsidiaries to their employees, evidence in USA1, USA2 and S1 seems to indicate that there is selective patronage to employees. Documentary evidence suggests that some employees have worked up to twenty years of dedicated services at UK3 without any promotion. A shareholder wrote, *"I have no problem if a qualified friend or relation of a manager or director is employed as best fit for a role. I am against the deliberate practice of cronyism in an international bank because it affects the fortunes of UK3 and of shareholders" (Ghanaweb sources).* Employees also reveal that one needs to be in the *"good books"* of a manager to be recommended for promotion. Selective patronage prevails when HCNs are occupying decision-making roles, particularly in relationship to HRM practices, since they are more likely to be committed to the values and norms of the host context.

5.3.5 Diversity management: Respect for individual differences

Subsidiaries embrace a work environment that recognises and supports individual differences through an inclusive work environment, with opportunities for individual employees to contribute. Table 5.28 illustrates the aspects of diversity management relating to localisation, namely inclusiveness and opportunities to contribute.

Table 5.28: Diversity management: Respect for individual differences

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Inclusiveness								
i. Employees are a family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Varied background	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunities to contribute								
i. Value worker contribution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ii. Share experiences	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iii. Training on inclusiveness	✓				✓		✓	

5.3.5.1 Inclusiveness

All subsidiaries have adopted a work environment of inclusion and employees see themselves as members of a large family. An employee in the British firm UK1 suggests that "*Much as we are different, you hardly see it here. We have created a culture that does not notice differences and to see each other as Ghanaians. We don't even see people in terms of colour or gender. There are women engineers in the production department and women driving our small sales vans*" (AbiUK1-Emp). Women in production departments and driving of sales vans were previously male-dominated occupations in Ghana. Table 5.29 presents data backing localisation of diversity management.

Table 5.29: Supporting data for each second-order theme on localisation of diversity management

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Diversity management: Respect for differences
Inclusiveness	"We are like a family, we live like a family. Anytime you come in as a new recruit, you are told that we are like a family here. Differences do not affect us. We have our morning devotion and we have these Muslims coming over and we all pray together" (MulkaUSA2-HR Mger).
Opportunities for individual's contributions	"We see diversity management as an opportunity for people to showcase their talents. We have colleagues working in South Africa, Cote D'Ivoire and Zambia. We build synergies and share experiences with other countries on what we do best, on what we know" (RobertiS1-HR Mger).

The HR Manager of the American courier licensee expressed a similar view that "*We are like a family. Anytime you come in as a new recruit, you are told that we are like a family here. Differences do not affect us. I remember when I was employed, twice a week, we have our morning devotion and we have these Muslims coming over and we all pray together*" *(MulkaUSA1-HR Mger).* The notion of family is deeply rooted in the mind-set of employees and managers. At F1, an employee states that "*when you move from your house to the bank, you are a family because we spend more time in the bank than in our various homes. When you go home, how many minutes/hours do we spend before going to bed? So, we are a family, no matter the differences. We argue even at home so when it happens, you just have to let things go and you move on because it is in the interest of you the individual and the bank as well*" *(SofiF1-Emp).*

5.3.5.2 Opportunities for individual contribution

Subsidiaries give opportunities to individual employees to show their talent. Employees are usually reminded of the goals of the subsidiary. The Marketing Manager of UK1 observes,

> *Whatever way you are, we say work in a team, be a team player. You can be the quiet type, but what we are saying is that, you are supposed to contribute. So we respect and we give room for everybody's unique behaviour or character (AbaUK1-Mketing Mger).*

The features of individuals and groups are endorsed in the work environment. Individual employees can pursue their personal goals alongside the common group goals, provided the former do not hinder the achievement of the latter. The individual employee is expected to contribute to the fulfilment of the group goals.

5.3.6 Work-life balance: Paternalistic work settings

Table 5.30 shows the components of work and life balance programmes, namely socialisation activities and wellness initiatives. Work and life balance programmes in the western context include flexible work initiatives which are not common in Ghana. Instead, subsidiaries have created paternalistic work cultures aimed at promoting the happiness of employees. They have implemented wellness activities in order to support and integrate the work and personal lives of employees. Socialisation activities, such as fun games, celebration of employee birthdays and weddings, refreshment and relaxation at club house, and excursions, are implemented in subsidiaries.

Table 5.30: Work-life balance: Work and happiness

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Socialisation activities								
i. Organising games	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ii. Birthdays, weddings, parties			✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓	
iii. Club house in subsidiary		✓	✓		✓		✓	
iv. Excursions								
Wellness initiatives								
Healthcare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.3.6.1 Socialisation activities

Table 5.30 indicates that all subsidiaries organise social activities and wellbeing initiatives to foster networking and cohesion among employees. A family work environment is created and managers develop close relationships with employees. With the exception of USA2 and S1, all subsidiaries organise team spirit games. For instance in the case of the British and the French banks UK3 and F1, games are organised annually in the northern and southern sectors of the country with the aim of bringing employees, their families and friends together to share and have fun while building team spirit. Also, according to the Marketing Manager of UK1, "*birthdays, for instance, are now major events. Before the birthday, everybody will start announcing it up, that there is a birthday. If you do not know and you don't bring anything, then don't step in the office. It is not compulsory. Some people will bring food, others drink, others will bring toffees but you have to bring something*" (AbaUK1-Mketing Mger). Managers assume paternalistic role by being caring, supportive and involved in non-work lives of employees.

Furthermore, the British beverage manufacturer UK2 and the bank UK3 have club houses. However, unlike UK3 club house where drinks are sold at subsidised prices to employees, an employee reveals that at UK2, "*employees can converge after work at 4:30pm and drinks are served freely to staff. Staff therefore meet to chat, relax and entertain themselves*" (AbiUK2-Emp). Also as part of relaxation activities, some companies such as USA2, UK1, UK3, and G1 organise excursions. Employees return to work refreshed, with increased levels of vitality. Table 5.31 presents data backing localisation of work and life balance practices.

Table 5.31: Supporting data for each second-order theme on work-life balance

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Work and life balance: Wellness initiatives
Paternalistic culture	"We try to organise excursions during public holidays. Sometimes, every other quarter, we meet together and have fun" (RoeA-Emp). "Employees also meet at our club house after close of work to relax and chat over free drinks" (AbiUK2-Emp).
Socialisation	"At the end of the month, particularly the last Friday of the month, when we have done all our sales and we know that we have hit our target for the month, we call something NCNC: no contribution, no chop. We would contribute to fry yam, chips, khebabs, buy drinks (IsaUK2-HR Mger).

5.3.6.2 Wellbeing initiatives

The paternalistic role of care and support for employees extends to the provision of healthcare systems to promote the wellness of employees. Some subsidiaries have selected hospitals that employees and their families can attend except USA2 which has an insurance cover limited to only employees. The HR manager explains that *"The company pays medical bills of employees. At first, it was for the employee and two of his children who are less than 18 years of age but Africa, people started abusing the system by bringing in their cousins, those who are not their children to benefit from the facility to the detriment of the company and the family was taken off"* (*MulkaUSA2-HR Mger).* Employees attribute these wellbeing initiatives to the paternalistic and benevolent nature of management.

5.3.7 Employee communication and participation: Employee involvement

Western subsidiaries have certain practices in place to involve employees and to solicit organisational members' ideas and perspectives in the day-to-day functioning of their enterprises. Managers' openness and willingness to listen to employees determine how effective these mechanisms are in a high power context such as Ghana. In Table 5.32 below, I illustrate the various mechanisms that subsidiaries use to promote employee participation namely strong involvement and weak involvement.

Table 5.32: Employee communication and participation: Employee involvement

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Strong involvement								
Unionised workforce	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Weak involvement								
i. Non-unionised workforce		✓	✓				✓	✓
ii. Authoritative managers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iii. Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iv. Language differences						✓		✓

5.3.7.1 Strong involvement

Unions represent employees in USA1, UK2, UK3 and F1. Unions serve as the mouth of employees and negotiate for better conditions. Union representatives are members of various committees such as the disciplinary committees to protect their members from unfair dismissal. According to HR Manager of UK2, the unions *"are seen by employees as their fathers" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).* The presence of unions serves as a buffer for individual employees from authoritarian managers. HQ control and coordination of HRM practices are more likely to diminish in unionised subsidiaries than in non-unionised subsidiaries. The imposition of home-centric HRM practices on unionised subsidiaries is likely to be resisted and negotiated. The HR Manager of UK2 explains that when *"the company is introducing new things, we speak with all the unions because they are seen by their people as their 'fathers' sort of. Thus, telling them this is how the company is moving on. Unions are an anchor between management and employees" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).*

Management shares information and solicits suggestions from employees through their unions. Employees also have the opportunity to ask questions on issues of concern.

5.3.7.2 Weak involvement

There is weak involvement of employees in non-unionised work environments which is exacerbated by the authoritarian nature of some HCN managers. An employee of S1 explains that *"we have a general manager who is very authoritative, doesn't care about other people's views, suggestions. She is on top and does what she wants to do, nobody challenges him/her and that is the order of the day" (RalfS1-Emp).* There is power distance between employees and managers and decision-making is centralised. Subordinates are usually instructed on what to do under such circumstances. Table 5.33 presents data that supports localisation of employee communication and participation.

Table 5.33: Supporting data for each second-order theme on localisation of employee communication and participation

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Employee communication and participation: Employee involvement
Mitigation of power distance	"The unions are regarded as social partners in relation to issues affecting staff and monthly interactions are held with the unions to share ideas" (AlbertoF1-HR Mger).
Barriers to employee involvement	"If a leader or an elderly person does something wrong, you don't say it, it is always difficult when dealing with adults or leaders or managers who are wrong. It is difficult to talk about them because the person is elderly or manager above you, you are expected to respect them. Our society is such that you are expected to respect your seniors or people in authority" (JonaUSA1-Emp).

Language differences also arise in terms of the cultural dissimilarities and are likely to limit employee communication and participation. Some terms that expatriates might use seem to be offensive to subsidiary employees. For instance at S1, an employee explains that

> *What I would want them to do is to organise fora for us to discuss and understand what our culture is, to agree on a base line because in our culture if I tell you "don't be stupid" in our culture is an insult so we need to understand some type of words that should not be used in our environment because of our culture and we will also understand them (expatriates) that, not greeting you and passing by should not be interpreted to mean being arrogant. We need to dialogue and agree on some common platform when it comes to individual different cultures (RalfS1-Emp).*

Inappropriate use of certain words in the host contexts can make employees lose face and can lead to total withdrawal. Also, the age of employees may also serve as hindrance to employees' participation. An employee explains that

> *When an elderly person does something wrong, you don't say it, it is always difficult when dealing with adults or leaders or managers who are wrong. It is difficult to talk about them because the person is an elderly person or manager above you and they expect you to respect them. Our society is such that you are expected to respect your seniors or people in authority (JonaUSA1-Emp).*

Respect for age is characteristic in the host context and younger employees may not be comfortable to argue or point out mistakes of older employees, as it is assumed that age correlates with experience.

5.3.8 Summary of localisation of HRM practices

Evidence from the analysis indicates that HRM practices in subsidiaries are localised to varying levels. Localisation of recruitment and selection practices is more pronounced in the American extractive subsidiary USA1 where management comes into direct contact with traditional authorities, chiefs and opinion leaders. Traditional authorities exert enormous influence in the localisation of HRM practices more specifically in a situation involving the lease of land. Local indigenous people of the mining communities are provided with skills and employment opportunities by the subsidiary in exchange for lease of land.

Nepotism and cronyism also exist in all subsidiaries. An employee bluntly stated, "*With regards to influencing the employment of relations and cronies, every organisation has that aspect. Relationships exist and this contributes to people not being accountable because they know 'big people.' (WesehUK3-Emp).* It is the prevalence rate that might vary from one subsidiary to another. Influencing the employment of kith and kin is regarded as fulfilment of one's duty to members of an in-group in the Ghanaian collectivist context.

The paternalistic nature of the Ghanaian cultural and institutional context makes managers provide a nurturing role for employees in some subsidiaries. Managers provide coaching and mentoring to employees. On the other hand, the power distant nature of managers leads to selective patronage by selecting favourites for promotion, training and development.

The power distance and paternal nature of the cultural and institutional context have influenced the perception of performance management. Employees see their performance targets to belong to their managers. This perception is common among employees in USA1, USA2, UK1, UK2, UK3 and S1. Also, the power distance nature leads to arbitrarily determined assessments of employee performance in USA1 and USA2. The collectivist nature of the host context probably makes subsidiaries assess employees on how well they are cooperative and exhibited team spirit.

A family work environment is created in subsidiaries where managers role extend beyond official boundaries to support employees. USA1 has indexed salaries of employees to cushion them against loss of purchasing power arising from fluctuation of the Ghanaian currency. Christmas chicken is given to employees at USA1 and S1. School fees of children of employees are paid at USA1 and UK1, while that of Directors are paid at UK2.

Employee communication and participation is stronger in subsidiaries with union presence than in non-unionised work environments. In a power distant context such as Ghana, decision-making is centralised and employees find it difficult to communicate face-to-face with management. Union representatives serve as an anchor between managers and employees. Despite the multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic nature of the Ghanaian context, the efforts of past and current governments to foster the spirit of national integration through regional and gender balance recruitment into the public sector have helped create a sense of national identity of 'Ghanaianness." This has been reflected in subsidiaries where employees and managers see themselves as a large family with opportunities for individuals to share their experience and to contribute. Work and life balance initiatives have taken the form of socialisation and wellness programmes. Employees, managers and their families go on excursions and have fun games. Family and community life are regarded very essential in the Ghanaian context.

5.4 Why and how HRM practices are localised

Western subsidiaries in Ghana localise their HRM practices due to the presence of labour unions or committees, agitations from mining communities, the need to gain legitimacy, and employment of HCNs in key positions who are likely to be committed to host context values and norms and acceptance in the local context. These drivers for localisation of HRM practices are the second-order themes illustrated in Figure 5.6. The second order themes that drive localisation of HRM practices are formed by identifying links among first order categories and clustering them to separate themes.

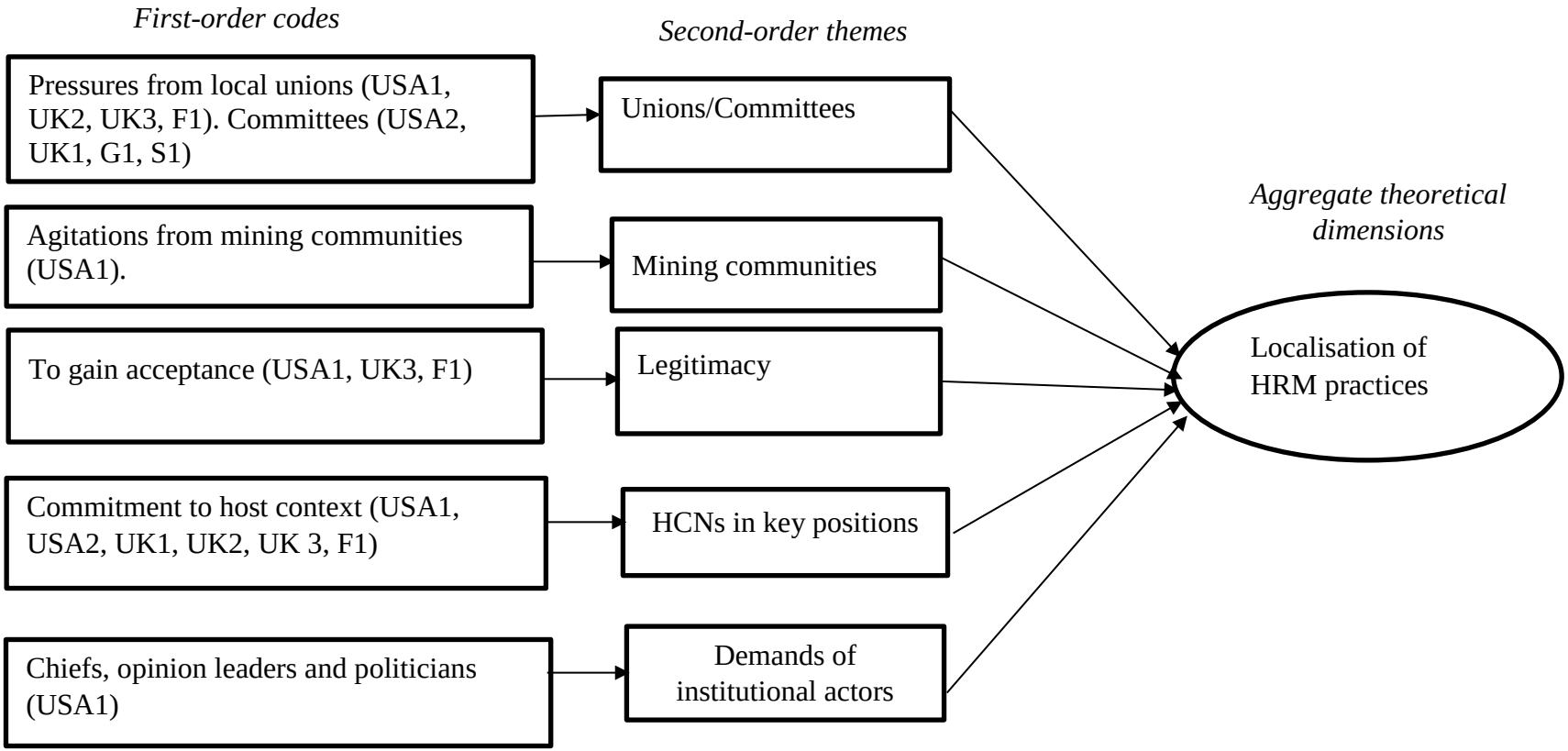

Figure 5.6: Data structure for why HRM practices are localised.

5.4.1 Why HRM practices are localised

The issues explaining why HRM practices are localised are shown in Table 5.34, namely unions, committees, and agitations in mining communities, HCNs in key positions, and chiefs and opinion leaders. Unions in firms USA1, UK2, UK3, and F1 and committees in the other four firms sometimes resist, negotiate and agree on how HRM practices are to be implemented.

Table 5.34: Why HRM practices are localised

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
Unions	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Committees		✓	✓				✓	✓
Agitations in mining communities	✓							
HCNs in key positions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chiefs and opinion leaders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.4.1.1 Unions and committees

There have been reported incidences of "*dismissal of union leaders over agitations for improved conditions of services*" (WesehUK3-Emp) in some subsidiaries such as UK3. Also, the employee committee at S1 resisted the practice that sought to deprive qualified staff of official vehicles. An employee explained that *"We said no, no, no, for us, the culture we had from the previous company was, a car is given by the company and maintained. They said no but we said no, we don't understand this" (RalfS1-Emp).* Employees also initially resisted the practice of individual performance targets.

5.4.1.2 Agitations from mining communities

Also, sometimes there are agitations from the mining communities for more employment opportunities for the indigenous people. The community members sometimes "*feel that most of their lands have been taken away from them so they should be given priority when it comes to employment" (GonaUSA1-Emp).* Members of the communities therefore seek the attention of management of USA1 through demonstrations. Subsidiaries also localise their HRM practices to gain legitimacy in the local context. Failure to conform to local norms is often

interpreted "*to mean that you do not care about people*" (FramG1-HR Mger). Thus, subsidiaries contribute in monetary terms and send delegations to the homes of bereaved employees or to weddings and naming ceremonies. Naming ceremony of the birth of a child is usually a joyous and important occasion for the parents and their community which is usually carried out with much celebration. Table 5.35 shows supporting data for each second order theme on why and how HRM practices are localised.

Table 5.35: Supporting data for each second-order theme on why and how HRM practices are localised.

Second-order themes	First-order codes
	Why HRM practices are localised
Resistance of unions	"The bi-yearly appraisals, we said no, we are not used to this but you cannot resist. You know, you either stay and adjust or jump out. Most people jumped out. You know every human being will want a very relaxed environment but where you have tight rules, you know, I have to appraise you on a bi-yearly basis. If you get an organisation where they will pay you same without these processes you will prefer to be there, you don't want headaches, you know" (RalfS1-Emp).
	How HRM practices are localised
Consultation	"Before anything is implemented, we have a prior discussion with the unions, sell it to them for them to buy into it. The unions also go to discuss with their people. So nothing is pushed down anybody's throat" (IsaUK2-HR Mger).

5.4.1.3 Host country nationals in key positions

Employment of HCNs in key positions of subsidiaries contributes to localisation of HRM practices. HCNs occupy key positions in subsidiaries, including Managing Director, Regional Vice President of HR, HR Director and HR Managers. HCNs are knowledgeable and familiar with the cultural and institutional contexts and are likely to choose HRM practices that are considered appropriate to the context. Being in a better position to build local ties, HCNs can discuss, negotiate and strategically respond to the demands of institutional actors such as chiefs, politicians and opinion leaders. HCNs are likely to be committed to implementing HRM practices that conform to the norms and values of the host context. They have in-depth knowledge of the context and they have grown and lived with socio-cultural and institutional norms. Indeed, they are immersed in the culture and can interpret actions that are appropriate to the setting.

5.4.1.4 Chiefs and opinion leaders

Important personalities such as high profile ministers of government, prominent chiefs and staff in senior management positions do have an influence on the localisation of recruitment and selection, training and development practices in western subsidiaries in Ghana. Subsidiaries have to localise their HRM practices in order to gain access to the land to extract the minerals. The chiefs also demand a quota of employment opportunities. As a result of high illiteracy associated with rural Ghana, apprenticeship training programmes are mounted to up-skill the rural people before being absorbed by the mining subsidiary. In addition to HCNs being in key positions, the presence of unions and committees also facilitate the localisation of HRM practices. Consultations and negotiations are usually held with union members and collective bargaining agreements signed.

5.4.2 How HRM practices are localised

Figure 5.8 illustrates data on how HRM practices are localised in western subsidiaries, namely HCNs in key positions, presence of unions, committees and consultations between management and employees, benchmarking HRM practices by imitating successful local firms. These drivers of how HRM practices are localised are the second order themes drawn from the first order categories.

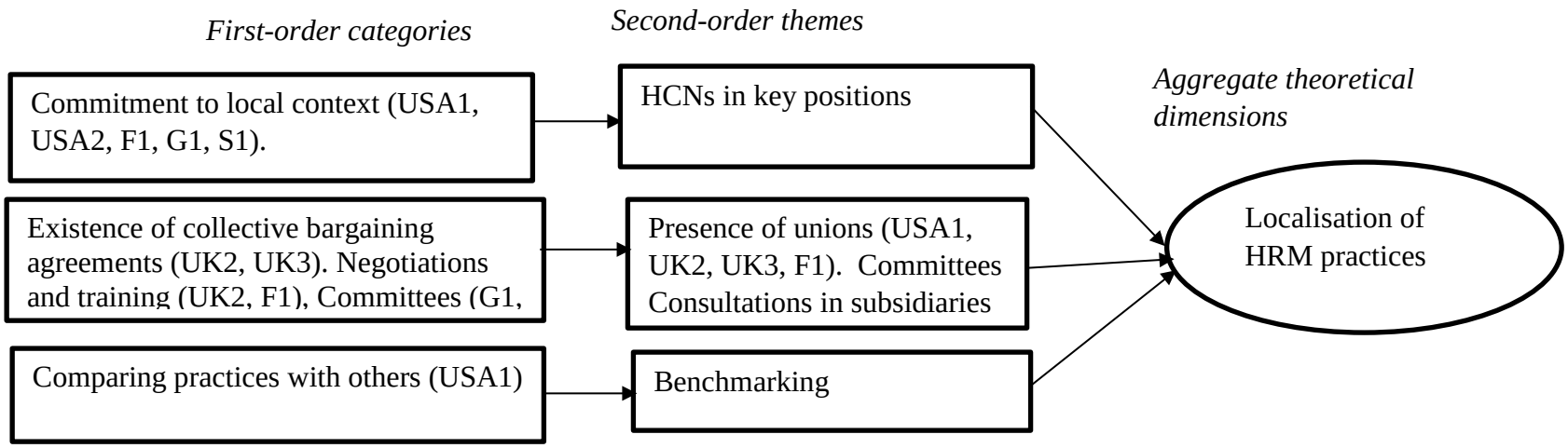

Figure 5.7: Data structure for how HRM practices are localised

Table 5.36 illustrates how HRM practices are localised in each of the subsidiaries.

Table 5.36: How HRM practices are localised

	USA1	USA2	UK1	UK2	UK3	F1	G1	S1
The role of HCNs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Commitment to context	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unions	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Committees		✓	✓				✓	✓
Consultations/negotiations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mining communities	✓							
Quota agreements	✓							
Benchmarking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.4.2.1 The role of Host country nationals

HCNs know the expectations of stakeholders including employees and the communities. Subsidiary managers are therefore in position to engage representatives of employees in reviewing HRM practices. The HR Manager of G1 where staff are not unionised clarifies the localisation process, indicating that *"Looking at the global strategy, I prepare a draft and then form a consortium of staff as well as management. We go through the draft and where they think something needs to be changed, we discuss, negotiate and if it is accepted, it is then forwarded to our sub-regional office for approval" (FramG1-HR Mger).* Localisation of HRM practices is also achieved through "*active and frequent dialogue with employees and carefully evaluating their feedback makes it possible to adjust our approach for success" (MarvinUK1-HR Mger*).

HCNs are familiar and knowledgeable of the Ghanaian cultural and institutional specificities and as a result play a crucial role in adapting Western HRM practices to suit the local idiosyncrasies. They are instrumental in re-contextualising transferred HRM practices because of their commitment to the local context leading to the localisation of recruitment and selection;

training and development; rewards management; performance management; and employee communication and participation. The shared expectations of paternalism, age, power distance and selective patronage influence subsidiaries' imitation of practices of local firms.

5.4.2.2 Pressure of and negotiations with Unions and committees

Unions and committees have a strong influence in the localisation of recruitment and selection, rewards management, performance management and employee communication and participation practices. Pressure from unions and committees often lead to negotiations with subsidiary management occasioning the adoption of HRM practices similar to those of local firms in the Ghanaian context. For instance, unions may insist that a job vacancy be filled with an internal candidate when probably a better candidate could have been recruited externally.

Additionally, subsidiary managers hold consultations with union/committee leaders who are representatives of employees with regards to the implementation of HRM practices. The HR Manager of UK2 explains that "*when the company is introducing new things, we speak with all the unions because they are seen by their people as their 'fathers' sort of. Thus, telling them this is how the company is moving on. Unions are an anchor between management and employees"* (IsaUK2-HR Mger). Similarly an employee of G1 states that "*we have the employee task force committee, a representative from each department where from time to time we sit together to deliberate on HR issues affecting employees such as employee welfare and once we are sure that there is something we need to alert management, we convene a meeting and discuss with management*" (EtoG1-Emp). Thus consultations between management and unions/committees play an influential role on how HRM practices are localised in the subsidiaries.

5.4.2.3 Chiefs and traditional leaders

The American firm USA1 has "*agreed with the mining communities that at every point in time a certain percentage of the workforce will be from the communities (BiyarUSA1-HR Mger).* As a result, recruitment and selection are localised to cater for the employment needs of the communities. The pressure for local legitimacy is particularly high in western subsidiaries in the extractive industry that deal directly with informal institutional actors such as chiefs and opinion leaders.

Western subsidiaries are able to acquire resources (such as land) from the chiefs and traditional leaders through consultations and negotiations in exchange for employment opportunities. As a result, the chiefs and traditional leaders exercise some influence on the localisation of recruitment and selection, as well as training and development practices through apprenticeship programmes which upskill the illiterate and unemployed persons within their communities.

5.4.2.4 Benchmarking

Western subsidiaries in Ghana also imitate each other in the application of HRM practices within the local context. The HR Manager of the British manufacturing firm of household consumables UK1 states that

> *When we have meetings with other companies, we ask them how they do their recruitment, training and so on. We also do a lot of research, we do our research about what other people are doing, find out what is broken in our system, how can we fix it, who is succeeding in that space right now, can we go and talk to them*" *(MarvinUK1-HR Mger).*

Subsidiaries of Western MNEs also benchmark recruitment and selection; training and development; performance management; diversity management; work and life balance and employee communication and participation practices by imitating HRM practices of local firms deemed successful, effective and efficient.

In conclusion, HCNs in key positions are responsible for the administration of western subsidiaries which are institutionally and normatively distant from the host nation, tend to conform to local institutions by emphasising local values, norms and beliefs. They adapt HRM practices to varying degrees to suit the local context. The pressure for local legitimacy is particularly high in western subsidiaries in the extractive industry that deal directly with informal institutional actors such as chiefs and opinion leaders. Managing these opposing forces of localisation and requirements to standardise HRM practices from HQ necessitates negotiations between management and employees to achieve an MNE's strategic business goals for the subsidiaries. In the following chapter, Chapter 6, the findings are discussed.

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusions

This chapter discusses the research findings presented in chapter five in light of relevant literature and using institutional theory as a lens. HRM practices of western subsidiaries in Ghana reflect different levels of ethnocentrism and polycentrism. The chapter elaborates on why and how western MNEs seek to standardise HRM practices in their subsidiaries due to having strong belief in the supremacy of their own HRM practices over local practices. The chapter also explains that despite strong drivers for subsidiaries to adopt HQ practices, they are responsive to the local context by implementing HRM practices that are deemed appropriate and fitting to the host country's cultural and institutional context (Kostova, 1997; Kostova & Zaheer, 1998), resulting in the standardisation and localisation of HRM practices.

Figure 6.1 below is a modified version of the conceptual model Figure 3.1 which was presented in chapter three. The modified conceptual model of Western subsidiaries' HRM practices is based on the findings of the current research. As shown in Figure 6.1, the findings reveal the reasons why Western MNEs may standardise or localise their HRM practices. Consistent with institutional theory, there is pressure on subsidiaries to adopt parent MNE's HRM practices to gain internal legitimacy while concurrently conforming to host country's practices to achieve external legitimacy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Kostova & Roth, 2002; Scott, 1995). The findings confirm previous research that HRM practices of subsidiaries of Western MNEs are shaped to "varying extents by different forces" (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994: 248), with some practices being more sensitive to the host country cultural and institutional influences whilst others are demined by corporate HQ practices (Myloni et al., 2004). Figure 6.1 shows which HRM practices are standardised and localised and why and how that occurs and the resultant interplay of ethnocentrism and polycentrism. The opposing forces of ethnocentrism and polycentrism bring about standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries of Western MNEs. In the following sections I discuss in detail why and how HRM practices are standardised and localised (as depicted in Figure 6.1).

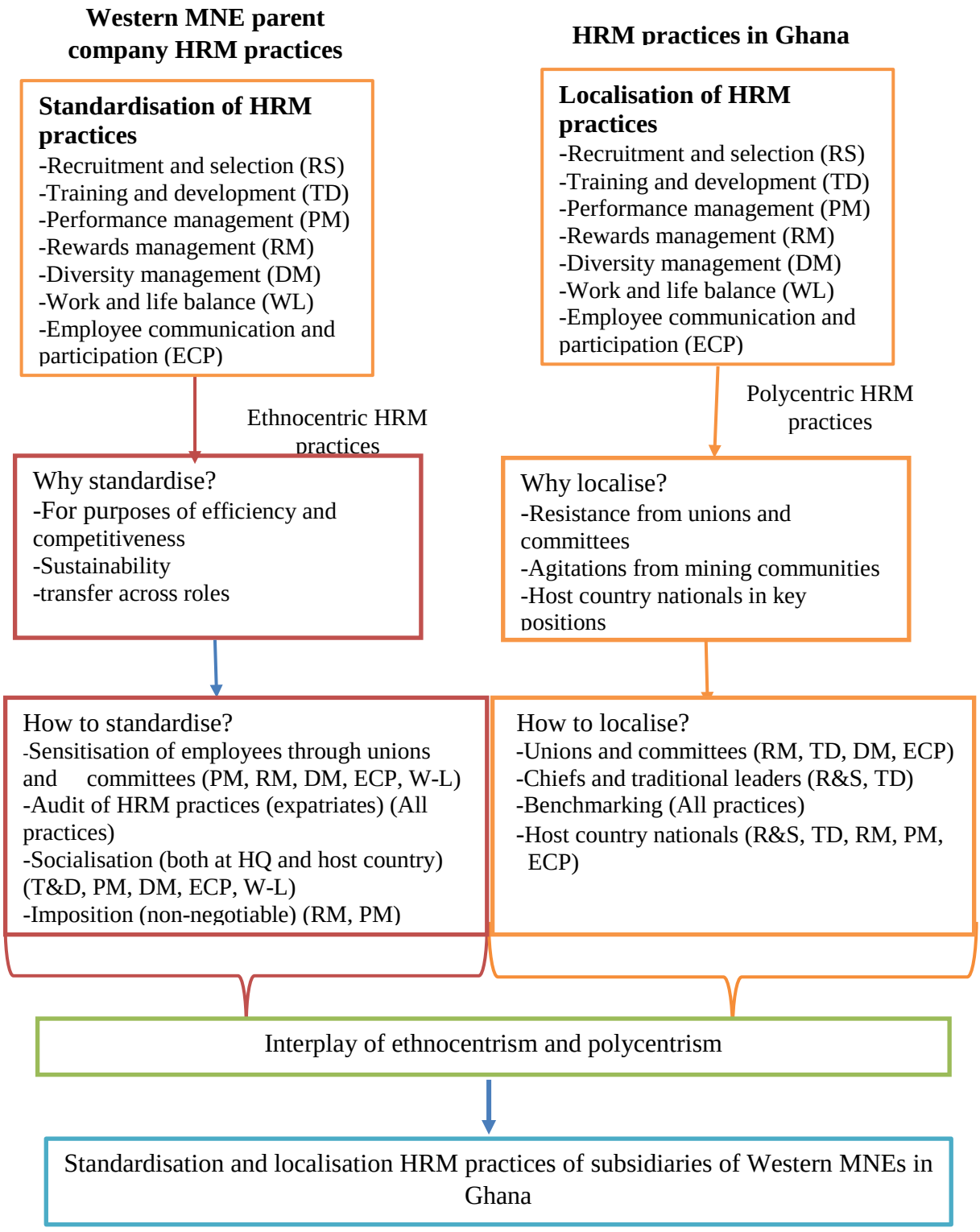

Figure 6.1: HRM practices in subsidiaries of Western MNEs in Ghana

6.1 Ethnocentric HRM practices

The findings indicate that Western MNEs are not "passive pawns, adapting willingly to institutional expectations" (Tempel & Walgenbach, 2007: 10) but instead are "rational, and self-interested actors with stable preferences" (Jackson & Deeg, 2008: 545), despite being constrained by institutional and cultural rules of the game (North, 1990). Western MNEs succeed in transferring their preferred HRM practices to Ghana in order to achieve corporate strategic goals, irrespective of the cultural and institutional challenges. They have relatively standardised HRM practices which are embedded in western values in their subsidiaries and as such can be regarded as adopting an ethnocentric approach. An ethnocentric strategy refers to the replication of HRM practices that are consistent with the assumptions, beliefs, expectations and values of the cultural and institutional environments of an MNE's home country (Myloni et al., 2004; Muller 1998). The beliefs hold that western countries are more advanced technologically and economically than Ghana, coupled with a postcolonial perception of the "inferiority of African administrative systems" (Kiggundu, 1991: 34) which provide the rationale for utilising practices transferred from HQ and which reflecting an ethnocentric ethos. Western MNEs standardise their HRM practices in Ghana for the principal purposes of efficiency and effectiveness, sustainability and transfer of staff between roles and between different countries.

6.1.1 Efficiency and competitiveness

Subsidiaries use recruitment and selection practices that are relevant to task performance, by filling vacancies with high-performing employees assessed for appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies. They offer wage premiums to attract and retain talented employees and also carry out poaching and headhunting of competitors' talent pools. The Ghanaian job market lacks experienced, professional, technical and managerial staff, largely due to the mismatch between the needs of industry and the skills graduates acquire from tertiary institutions (Osabutey & Debrah, 2012; Osabutey, 2013). The shortage of skills in the host context to meet the efficiency expectations of MNEs leads to competitive hiring strategies. Current employees who have demonstrated potential and, who are regarded as star performers, are also recruited to fill existing vacancies. Agency and contract workers are also employed as part of cost-cutting strategies in the face of stiff competition (Purcell & Purcell, 1998) in line with corporate business objectives. The findings support earlier research that MNEs transfer practices for

purposes of synergy, efficiency (Kostova, 1999) and probably to avoid the duplication of effort and time by experimenting with unfamiliar practices (Geary *et al.,* 2017). This is contrary to Amoako-Agyei's (2009) argument that Ghanaian workers usually prefer permanent guaranteed jobs because they prefer certainty over uncertainty that characterises subsidiary employment practices. Accordingly, subsidiaries use recruitment and selection processes and strategies that are developed and validated at corporate HQs and which have proven to be successful. These procedures are usually spelt out in HQ policy manuals.

With regards to training and development, the findings suggest that subsidiaries are investing heavily in training and development programmes based on needs analysis. Corporate HQ uses induction training to socialise new employees to corporate culture. Employees learn new developments through training and development in order to address their performance gaps. Corporate HQ ensures that subsidiary employees learn and acquire the values, beliefs and behaviours necessary to carry out their work assignments in line with corporate HQ expectations. Training needs are determined from employee performance outcomes. Furthermore, some of the content of training and development practices of subsidiaries emanate from corporate HQs with limited or no input from the local context (see Mamman *et al.,* 2009; Michailova & Hollinshead, 2011) to specify the type of competencies required for certain tasks. These findings support earlier research that subsidiaries use training and development to improve employees' skills, knowledge and abilities in order to work effectively and to compete favourably with their competitors (Boselie *et al.,* 2005; Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994; Zheng *et al.,* 2007). Training and development content are derived from corporate HQ manuals and are regarded as superior to, and more effective than those of host country practices which are based on favouritism and selective patronage.

Additionally, the findings provide evidence that performance management practices reflect a country of origin bias (Mamman *et al.,* 2009). Performance management practices focus on individual task performance. Individual performance is acknowledged and compensated. Performance management is instrumental in identifying individual weaknesses in task performance in order to put in place corrective action which is essential in career planning and development. This finding supports past research that performance management serves as the basis for organisational resources to be distributed to business units and employees (Aguinis, 2013, Evans *et al.,* 2011) and to enhance subsidiary efficient and effective performance. The content and processes of performance management practices are derived from corporate HQ.

Nevertheless, unlike previous research which has shown that subsidiary managers have made adjustments to employee evaluations because the performance management criteria were considered too high for the host context, and in order to maintain group harmony (see Yahiaoui, 2015), some employees in this current research complained of targets being too high but nonetheless accepted the individual nature of the assessment. The findings are also contrary to the notion that employees in collectivist contexts usually prefer to be assessed in groups (Aycan, 2005; Satorius *et al.,* 2011). Aycan (2005) observed that positive feedback for individual employee performance could spark jealousy and bitterness in collectivist cultures and as a result disrupt group disharmony. However, employees regarded the individual-based assessment as fair, transparent and objective, unlike the host context practices which tend to be ad hoc and subjective (as has been previously suggested by Debrah, 2001; Ohemeng, 2009). A possible explanation for the findings is that employees in the Ghanaian context might not necessarily be opposed to individual target-based performance management practices, provided that the criteria are seen to be transparent and objective. It is when performance management criteria are not explicit, with much discretion given to management to assess employees that resistance to individual performance management arises, probably due to suspicion that some employees will be favoured to the disadvantage of others. The findings further support Gyekye's (1988: 31–32) assertion that African societies exhibit features of both individualism and collectivism, which he describes as amphibious in order "to avoid the excesses of the two exaggerated systems." It may therefore be a misjudgement to categorise individuals within a particular country as individualist or collectivist, because people have different opinions, values, interpretations and attitudes that are not stagnant (Baskerville, 2003; McSweeney, 2002), which suggests that individualism and collectivism are on a continuum meaning values change over time. Another possible explanation for this finding is that the high costs of living associated with urbanisation promote individualism in the cities unlike in the rural areas where collectivism is readily practiced.

The findings also reveal that rewards management practices align with MNE corporate HQ practices. An employee either receives an increment in pay or a high bonus based on the achievement of targets. The individual-based assessment is usually regarded as fair, transparent, and objective, devoid of discriminatory practices that can create tensions in the work environment and affect the work and financial outcomes of a subsidiary. This finding

concurs with the findings of Tayeb (1998) that financial compensation of subsidiaries is a control mechanism to monitor financial operations of affiliates in line with corporate strategic goals. Employees of subsidiaries are also in a position to understand what is expected of them and to compare their performance to clearly defined criteria, unlike the host context practices which tend to be based on favouritism and subjectivity (Debrah, 2001; Ohemeng, 2009).

In line with past research, subsidiaries standardise work-life balance programmes that include paternity leave, flex-time and shifts to allow some time off (see Nickson *et al.,* 2004) in order to improve quality of work and life. Organisations introduce work-life balance programmes to enable them to retain skilled workers, reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, efficiency and financial performance. This finding supports previous studies that work-life balance programmes enable employees to focus better at work, reduce conflict and turnover in the work place and improve their physical and mental well-being (Alegre & Pasamar, 2017; Cegarra-Navarro *et al.,* 2016). Work-life balance programmes are intended to brand subsidiaries as welcoming and suitable places to work and to differentiate these work-places from their competitors. Paternity leave, flex-time and shifts are a rarity in the Ghanaian context and are obviously derived from the corporate HQs of the subsidiaries.

However, contrary to the findings of Kamoche and Newenham-Kahindi (2012: 2868) where local employees complained about CitiBank's social activities such as swimming, walking, jogging and other sports as they considered them to be for children and an "intrusion into their private lives", employees in the current study supported and participated in these work/life balance programmes. This could be attributed to publicised health education programmes in the Ghanaian media and health talks organised (for the general populace) by professional bodies such as the Ghana Health Service. Another possible explanation behind this finding is the rapid urbanisation of the cities and the influence of western media. For instance, it is common to see on the cities' roads at weekends various keep-fit clubs engaged in physical exercise.

The findings also illustrate corporate HQ efforts to implement diversity management practices through the recruitment of HCNs in key positions, the use of English language as the medium of communication and acceptance of employees from different backgrounds (e.g. ethnicities, religion). For instance, it is common to see some employees in the public sector in Ghana speaking their ethnic languages that are not understood by others. This can lead to exclusion

of others who do not understand these languages and thereby undermine collective performance. Speaking a common language in subsidiaries can help unify the workforce and ensure that employees work as a team towards the attainment of corporate objectives. Implementation of diversity management practices in the Ghanaian context is aimed at integrating the various skills, experience and knowledge of employees and to access the diverse customer base that these employees represent. MNEs intend to leverage the diverse perspectives that employees from different backgrounds bring to work (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Diversity management practices are part of MNE corporate HQ policies and practices.

Employee communication and participation practices are equally standardised to a certain degree. Some subsidiaries avoid trade unions and collective bargaining agreements with employees. Muller (1998) argues that western MNEs usually have a unitarist perspective and are anti-unions both in their home countries and in their subsidiaries. Employees are seen to belong to a single team with common goals and values with no barriers to communication. In a power distance context such as Ghana, a non-unionised work environment is likely to limit employees' participation because workers fear individually expressing their views or dissent. Employees would prefer to do that in a group; most preferably through unions. As a result, there is likely to be limited resistance to transferred practices in non-unionised work places. Western MNEs prefer giving information directly to employees unmediated through unions (Croucher *et al.*, 2014). Communicating directly with employees is meant to provide opportunities for workers to speak up on matters concerning HRM practices without fear of individually focused reprisal. It is anticipated that participation will also grant employees the opportunity to be involved in decision-making procedures and to exercise some level of influence on issues in the subsidiaries (Michailova, 2002). Participation can probably increase the level of innovativeness and initiation on the part of employees in subsidiaries. Employee communication and participation practices reflect the relatively low power distance, and the egalitarian nature of the cultural and institutional contexts of Western MNEs. Subsidiaries convene regular meetings with employees through town hall fora and also conduct attitude surveys to assess their practices. These communication channels serve as grounds for concrete decision-making (Muratbekova-Touron, 2008). However, Abugre (2013) explains that employees in Ghana find it difficult to communicate directly with their superiors because most managers consider employees with divergent views to be nonconformist. Open fora are likely to be less effective in high power contexts because managers are less receptive to divergent

opinions and employees are equally afraid to speak their minds to management. At best, these fora serve as sources of dissemination of information by management rather than reflecting participatory decision-making.

6.1.2 Sustainability and transfer across roles

The values of Western MNEs' HQs serve as signposts and shape subsidiaries' HRM practices. These values are intended to cultivate a corporate mind-set and serve as the foundation for sustainable business to deliver profitable business returns. This finding supports past research that MNEs communicate a set of values intended to guide the actions and behaviours of their subsidiaries (Grogaard & Colman, 2016) and to ensure that employees in these subsidiaries 'live the values' of corporate HQs (Belizon *et al.,* 2016; Grogaard & Colman, 2016) to ensure consistency in their operations (Kostova, 1999).

Additionally, Western MNEs often transfer HRM practices that reflect their core competencies and that are deemed to be sources of competitive advantage. Thus implementing HRM practices in an internally consistent manner within an MNE is likely to enhance organisational performance and gain competitive advantage. MNEs strive to maintain consistency in the implementation of their HRM practices, which facilitates the transfer of employees between roles and to work in subsidiaries situated in other countries. These findings confirm Kostova's (1999) argument that MNEs transfer their practices for purposes of synergy, efficiency and effectiveness. I discuss next in what respect and how subsidiaries of Western MMEs standardise their HRM practices through sensitisation of unions and committees, use of expatriates, former inpatriates and HCN managers, socialisation and imposition.

6.1.3 Sensitisation of unions and committees

The findings reveal that performance management, rewards management, diversity management, employee communication and participation and work and life balance programmes are standardised to varying degrees through the sensitisation of unions and employees' representatives. Employee unions serve as the mouthpiece of workers and are regarded as social partners in subsidiaries. Unions represent the interests of employees and before any of these practices are implemented, union representatives are consulted, training sessions and workshops are rolled out and the concepts explained to them. Union members, in turn, explain the key concepts and benefits underlying the rationale for the implementation of

these practices. It can therefore be argued that despite the confrontational nature of labour unions with regards to the implementation of foreign HRM practices (see Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994), standardisation of HRM practices is facilitated through education and sensitisation involving unions and committees.

6.1.4 Presence of Expatriates, former inpatriates and HCNs

The presence of expatriates, former inpatriates and HCN managers facilitates the standardisation of recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, rewards management, diversity management, work and life balance and employee communication and participation to varying levels in subsidiaries. Expatriates and regional executives are in a position to share knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) with HCNs, develop and improve subsidiaries' HRM processes and strategies e.g. information, communication and technology (ICT) and learning through informal interactions. Expatriates and regional executives also serve as trainers and supervisors. These findings concur with previous research that expatriates serve as role models by displaying the right corporate HQ values and behaviours (Hetrick, 2002).

Harvey *et al.* (2000), argue that former inpatriates are usually instrumental in providing input to the development of HRM practices in subsidiaries and are therefore in a better position to advise and support transferred practices. Giving opportunities to employees and managers from subsidiaries to work in corporate HQ and other subsidiaries exposes them to MNE corporate-wide goals and structures as well as the diversified nature of the MNE. Employees learn more about how their individual roles and that of their subsidiary fit into the corporate structure (O'Donnell, 2000). Employees might recognise and accept other cultural values than their own and as a result minimise any stereotyping within the MNE. Kynighou (2014) points out that corporate HQs often use in-patriates strategically to transfer corporate HRM practices.

Additionally, HCN managers tend to support standardisation of HRM practices, probably based on incentives and career advancement prospects that they can gain upon consistent achievement of performance targets. HRM practices are audited and HCN managers are assessed based on the achievement of targets in the subsidiary. In a similar study, Siebers et al. (2014), observed that corporate HQs motivated HCN managers financially and with career advancement opportunities to accept and support transferred practices. Another possible reason why HCN managers support the transfer of HRM practices is the education they have received

both from African and Western business schools using western content (Adeleye & Anibaba, 2014). Accordingly, HCN managers espouse western values.

6.1.5 Socialisation and imposition of practices

Socialisation is another mechanism Western MNEs use to standardise training and development, performance management, diversity management, employee communication and participation, and work and life balance. Socialisation is done in both HQs and host country. Subsidiary employees learn the appropriate values, behaviours and perspectives necessary to carry out their day-to-day assignments consistent with HQ strategic goals. Employees internalise the values of HQ's training and development to accept transferred HRM practices. Also, the findings illustrate corporate HQ efforts to implement diversity management practices through recruitment and selection practices to include HCNs in key management positions, use of English language as the medium of communication and the employment of women and physically challenged persons to improve their career advancement opportunities. For instance, women constitute a large pool of unexploited talent in the Ghanaian society and yet have been largely marginalised. Many professions such as engineering, driving sales vans and working in production departments are also male-dominated. Women can be creative and innovative in generating business ideas to meet the special needs of this section of the population and to subsidiaries' businesses generally. MNEs intend to leverage the diverse perspectives that employees from different backgrounds bring to work (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Diversity management provides subsidiaries with access to diverse markets with heterogeneous preferences and demands. MNEs communicate a set of values meant to guide subsidiary actions and behaviours of subsidiaries in line with corporate expectations (see Grogaard & Colman, 2016; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1991; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Nonetheless, certain practices such as rewards management and performance management are regarded as non-negotiable and are imposed on subsidiaries. The implementation of these practices are more pronounced at managerial levels. Rewards management and performance management are meant to ensure prudent use of financial resources and to deliver strong financial returns in line with HQ strategic goals (see Tayeb, 1998).

In the next section, I discuss the research question: Do subsidiaries of western MNEs localise their HRM practices in Ghana? Why and how? Localisation of HRM practices of western

subsidiaries is associated with polycentrism and the next section discusses why, what and how HRM practices are localised.

6.2 Polycentric HRM practices

Localisation is related to polycentrism where the beliefs, norms, values and assumptions of the host country become prevalent over ethnocentric practices that mirror parent country HRM practices (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1969; Perlmutter, 1969). The findings show that Western MNEs are responsive to the local context by adopting HRM practices deemed appropriate to the institutional context in order to gain legitimacy (Kostova *et al.,* 2008; Lazarova *et al.,* 2017). In the first part of this section I answer the research question: Do subsidiaries of western MNEs localise their HRM practices in Ghana? Why and how? The findings reveal that subsidiary HRM practices are localised due to pressure from unions and committees, agitations from mining communities, chiefs and traditional leaders, host country nationals in key positions and benchmarking HRM practices that mirror HRM practices of successful local firms. The normative institutional rules act as myths that subsidiaries assimilate in order to gain acceptance, get access to resources and enhance survival prospects (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

The findings indicate that unions and committees exert a strong influence on subsidiary HRM practices. Unions resist performance management based on individuals and contingency rewards causing subsidiaries to adopt practices similar to local firms. As a result of pressure from unions, subsidiaries opt for consultations and negotiations aimed at achieving communal goals. For instance, giving funeral grants and payment of school fees for children of employees form part of reward management practices that largely reflect local practices.

Additionally, there are agitations from members of communities in rural areas demanding that priority be given to them in terms of employment opportunities because the land which served as their source of livelihood is leased to the MNE subsidiaries. The chiefs who are custodians of the land in these rural areas even more vociferously demand employment quotas to be given to their constituents. Accordingly, subsidiary mangers also hold consultations and negotiations with local stakeholders. Consequently, job vacancies are advertised in the rural areas and job candidates validated by the chiefs and traditional leaders to ensure that they are from the communities. Thus, recruitment and selection, training and development in terms of apprenticeship training programmes are implemented to upskill the rural people who are largely illiterate. Chiefs and traditional leaders wield enough influence in the localisation of

HRM practices, particularly if subsidiaries are sited in rural areas in Ghana where informal institutions are particularly strong (Zoogah *et al.,* 2015). Acquaah (2007) observed that chiefs and traditional leaders in Ghana have considerable influence in providing access to valuable resources and information. The findings are consistent with North (1999) who argue that in the absence of strong formal institutions, informal institutions such as norms, cultural beliefs and unwritten rules of behaviour usually form the basis for social contracts and shaping an organisation's practices. Informal institutions serve to reduce uncertainty and provide "constancy to managers and firms (Peng (2014: 104).

Also, HCN managers are key instruments in the localisation of HRM practices. HCN managers are expected to implement HRM practices in subsidiaries to correspond to the expectations of local stakeholders. They are regarded as carriers of the host country's culture and institutions (Kostova & Roth, 2002; Scott, 1983) and the cultural characteristics of the host context in terms of collectivism, and give preferential treatment to members of an in-group and power distance tend to influence HRM practices in subsidiaries. Kostova and Roth (2002) note that subsidiary practices are subject to the influences of employees' beliefs which are largely shaped by the institutional context of the firm. Recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, rewards management, employee communication and participation practices are localised due to the presence of HCNs in key positions. Tribalism and people who speak the same language as members of in-group influence recruitment and selection. Favouritism and selective patronage influence training and development, performance management and rewards management whilst power distance influence employee communication and participation because HCN managers are often authoritative. This is consistent with extant literature that HCNs are likely to be committed to the host country and are responsive to local cultural and institutional demands which provide legitimacy for the subsidiaries (Michailova *et al.,* 2016). This assertion also agrees with Mamman et al., (2009: 4) who conclude that "even if MNCs adopt an ethnocentric policy, local managers would modify the system anyway." HCN managers tend to emphasize local values, norms and beliefs (Mamman et al., 2009) and are likely to adapt HRM practices to suit their local context.

Subsidiaries also tend to benchmark all their HRM practices by replicating successful HRM practices implemented by local firms. This finding supports earlier studies that foreign subsidiaries mirror HRM practices derived from local firms considered efficient and effective in realizing desirable financial outcomes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Farndale & Paauwe,

2007; Martin & Beaumont, 1998). Benchmarking provides subsidiaries with an opportunity to imitate local HRM practices deemed successful. The findings further suggest that MNEs imitate local HRM practices probably as a way of coping with environmental uncertainties (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) particularly in Ghana where Kuada (1994) notes that employee commitment tends to be short-term with high labour turnover among technical and managerial staff who migrate to foreign countries in search for greener pastures. The next section answers the research question: Does the Ghanaian institutional context influence standardisation and localisation of HRM practices? Why and how? The findings reveal key distinctive cultural and institutional factors of the Ghanaian context namely paternalism, high power distance, importance of chiefs and traditional leaders and the notion of family extending to organisations posing as barriers to standardisation and instead support localisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries of Western MNEs.

6.2.1 Paternalism

The findings reveal that contrary to the expectations of corporate HQ, where non-performing employees are usually redeployed with such roles typically outsourced, this category of employees has kept their jobs in alignment with the paternalistic culture with the Ghanaian maxim "*yetease nti na metease* I live because we live" (Oppong & Gold, 2016: 352). Supervisors and managers tend to behave with paternal responsibility towards employees (Amoako-Agyei, 2009). Gyekye and Salminen (2005: 45) explained that the paternalistic managerial style in Ghana's work environment developed its strength from the traditional belief that top management is responsible for the welfare of employees. Managers are involved in the social life of employees such as weddings, outdooring ceremonies and bereavement.

Another possible reason for keeping non-performing employees in their positions may be linked to Amoako-Agyei's (2009: 335) observation that the African manager will not usually dismiss an employee outright for non-performance, because "socially and financially, the communal consequences may be far greater and longer-lasting than the act itself", particularly where an employee was hired because of the influence of a respected member of a society. Outright dismissal might incur retaliatory responses, particularly if the subsidiary is dependent on resources held by relatives of the dismissed employee. Thus, familial ties play an important role (Gardner, 2011) and serve to a large extent as the basis for social contracts.

Moreover, in Africa, recruitment and selection decisions are usually associated with nepotism and are not task-centred. In a study of French subsidiaries in Tunisia, Yahiaoui (2015) observed that subsidiary managers complemented recruitment and selection with *wasta* based on interpersonal relations/nepotism. In Ghana, Debrah (2001) and Akuoko (2008) observed that recruitment and selection are likely to be based on tribalism and that personal contacts play significant roles in securing jobs for members of an in-group. Job applicants belonging to the same in-group with as subsidiary managers are likely to have comparative advantage in the selection process. Employment of relatives is seen as an 'obligation' in fulfilling one's duties to members of the in-group. A person may risk being ostracised and vilified for not fulfilling this role. For example people may say "he/she only helps outsiders to the neglect of his/her own people."

The findings further indicate that training and development practices were based on selective patronage. Aycan (2005) observed that decisions on who will participate in training in non-western contexts depends on employees cultivating good relationships with management, particularly for very attractive training such as overseas training programmes. Kuada (1994) points out Ghanaian managers provide extra opportunities for subordinates for whom they have affection. Subordinates in turn preoccupy themselves to become likeable rather than relying on their own competence. Managers are assumed to be experts and are expected to provide direction and instructions. Employees do not resist management authority and are required to show respect and deference in return for support (Aycan et al., 2000; Jackson, 2016). It is considered rude for employees to argue with their superiors. Subsidiary managers provide advice to employees on personal and work matters which may be considered interfering from a western perspective (Amoako-Agyei, 2009). Many organisations in Ghana are unable to invest in their employees due to lack of resources. As a result, few opportunities exist for employees to undergo training. Additionally, career planning is largely ignored in Ghanaian organisations (Debrah, 2001; Haybatollahi & Ayim, 2015).

6.2.2 High power distance

Additionally the findings suggest that performance management practices are localised due to the power distance in the host context. Performance management is based on the belief that there is low power distance between a superior and a subordinate which makes it possible for both to sit down and discuss performance goals. However, in high power distance context such

as Ghana, this can be problematic with subordinates serving as instruction takers. Organisations are characterised by high hierarchies with centralised decision-making. Employees are expected to show deference to their superiors in return for their superiors' support. HCN managers are likely to give high ratings to the performance of their favourite employees. This finding concurs with Debrah (2001) who argues that the Ghanaian culture has undermined performance management practices by introducing elements of subjectivity, which suggest that performance ratings can be based on managers' and supervisors' liking for subordinates. Ohemeng (2009) also notes that performance management practices in the public sector in Ghana are ineffective due to lack of incentives and sanctions. This finding is similar to a study of 190 supervisors in the USA, and 113 supervisors in India by Varma, Pichler and Srinivas (2005) who found that Indian supervisors inflated the ratings of low performers based on affective relationships. Thus performance management that relies on participatory processes of target setting, review and appraisal may not be effective in high power distance cultures.

Furthermore, Mmieh et al. (2011) observed that employees in Ghana fear to discuss face-to-face with their superiors about their performance shortcomings since this might be misinterpreted to mean ineptness. Also, employees tend to lose face when managers discuss their performance shortcomings openly as it is considered an embarrassment (Amoako-Agyei, 2009) and it may affect morale, particularly among employees performing below expectation.

The findings indicate that HCN managers are selective in their patronage to subordinates with regards to rewards management without any resistance. As a result of the power distance, employees are afraid of management reprisals. Thus, the result of employees' unwillingness to speak up against management selective patronage (Gyekye & Salminen, 2015) is further exacerbated by the lack of direct communication between corporate HQ and employees. This gives management much discretion to promote localisation of the HRM practices. Mellahi and Collings (2010: 146) revealed that talents working in subsidiaries in collectivist cultures might not willingly "report their frustrations and may censor any misgivings they may have about the way subsidiary managers manage their talents, even when doing so would improve the performance of the subsidiary and MNE as whole." Thus subordinates tend to grumble to themselves and complain to their close associates.

Subsidiary managers recommend subordinates who are in their "good books" for promotion. These findings are consistent with earlier research by Debrah (2001) who observes that

decisions concerning promotions and rewards in Ghana are often subjective and sometimes based on kinship instead of merit. Aycan (2005: 1104) points out that wages and salaries in non-western contexts usually reflect the subjective evaluations of managers "who reserve the right to assign differential salaries to employees recruited for the same job." To support this assertion, Hu, Hsu, Lee, and Chu (2007), in a comparative study of Taiwan-USA managers' reward decisions, found that Taiwanese managers, unlike their USA counterparts, allocated rewards based on interpersonal relationships.

Also, there are differences in views of managers and employees in respect to diversity management. The interviews with management on diversity management suggest work environments that embrace differing opinions and views about work, hence inclusivity. Employees disagree with these views, pointing out that managers/superiors are often authoritative and tend to do what they want. Thus, the findings from the interviews of managers are in line with what Van Maanen (1979:542) described as "appearances that informants strive to maintain (enhance) in the eyes of the fieldworker" which Alvesson (2003: 28) termed "impression management tactics" and "identity work." Further probing of individual employees coupled with my personal experience working under Ghanaian managers and evidence from the extant literature (Abugre, 2013; Kuada, 1994) support the narratives of the employees that HCN managers often tend to be authoritative and that decision-making in organisations is not entirely based on inclusivity. Furthermore, Croucher *et al*. (2014) argue that the hierarchical nature of African companies might impede communication within organisations, if local managers maintain these hierarchical views and perceive the sharing of information as a dilution of their power.

The findings further suggest that subsidiary managers are authoritative which impedes participatory decision-making. It is most likely that subsidiary managers from MNE parent countries will be less dictatorial and imposing. This finding resonates with Aryee (2004) that while decision-making in traditional Ghanaian settings is by consensus, it is largely lacking in organisational life. A possible explanation for this difference in behaviour between work and non-work life may be attributable to resources and power given to a manager at the work place whereas power and resources are vested in the communities in the latter. Accordingly, subordinates are preoccupied with implementing management decisions whilst continuously crosschecking with management in the course of their work performance to avoid making mistakes (Aryee, 2004). These arguments corroborate with Aycan et al. (2000) who point out

that while some managers may seek opinions of subordinates, participatory decision-making does not usually occur in power-distance context.

The research highlights differing views expressed by employees and managers with regards to employee communication and participation. While managers argue that employees participate in the day-to-decision making processes in subsidiaries, employees state that they are only instruction takers. Thus open door policies, open and frank discussions between supervisors and their subordinates, institutionalisation of speak-up policies and the purported freedom for subordinates to express their views on decisions affecting them can be largely ineffective due to the authoritative nature of HCN managers. In a case study of western subsidiaries transferring their home-based practices to China including mechanisms for communication such as open door policies, Siebers et al. (2015: 566) explained that these procedures are likely to fail as far as subsidiary managers "remain subject to the exigencies of the local culture."

6.2.3 Importance of chiefs and traditional leaders

The influence of the host context where both ethnic and national identification co-exist is a feature that is associated with the dual governance system where customary and national laws co-occur (Acquaah, 2007; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2015). These are characteristics peculiar to the host context and differ from the western context of the MNE parent companies.

The findings provide evidence to support the notion that MNEs modify their recruitment and selection practices to suit the local context by advertising job vacancies on notice boards mounted within the jurisdictions of the local chiefs in the various mining communities. Quota agreements are signed with chiefs and traditional leaders on the number of indigenous people to be employed from the communities. Job applicants have to be validated by the chief or traditional leader of a mining community to ensure that they are from the community. The validation assures the MNE of the reliability and trustworthiness of job applicants and further serves as a background check on job applicants.

Contrary to nepotism, cronyism and tribalism which constitute an indirect influence on the HRM practices such as recruitment and selection because they are usually carried out behind the scenes, the influence of the chiefs and traditional leaders on recruitment and selection practices of subsidiaries is significant and publicly visible. Pache and Santos (2010) observed that MNEs comply with the demands of institutional actors - such as the chiefs in this instance

– in order to gain access to valuable resources such as the land and licence to operate in host contexts. These informal institutions are particularly strong in Ghana and in many other African countries (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015; Zoogah *et al.*, 2015). Peng (2014: 95) explains that informal institutions serve to regulate the behaviour of individuals and firms. As a result western MNEs might not be able to transplant their HRM practices wholesale into this type of normative environment, if they want to gain acceptance and access to resources. Using objective recruitment and selection criteria such as posting job vacancies in the national daily newspapers and writing aptitude tests might not apply so well in this context. Responding to the demands of institutional actors, such as chiefs, leads to the localisation of HRM practices.

The findings further suggest that in order to meet the employment quota systems demanded by the chiefs, training and development practices are localised to meet the needs of the rural population which is largely illiterate in some of the areas where subsidiaries are located. MNEs institutionalise apprenticeship training programmes to develop local skills using local Ghanaian trainers. The apprenticeship programmes are established as technical pipelines to guarantee access to skilled and trained mechanical and electrical specialists to assist operational requirements. The programmes thus create job opportunities for local community members through skill enhancement and training to meet staffing needs of subsidiaries.

The chiefs and traditional leaders have also influenced the setting-up of Development Foundations for their communities, one of the aims of which is human resource development. All these developments promote legitimacy and goodwill for subsidiaries within the host communities. The institutionalisation of these programmes in consultation with the chiefs and community leaders demonstrates the powerful nature of the informal institutions in rural settings in Ghana, thus preventing the imposition of ethnocentric HRM practices.

The findings also show that the influential roles of chiefs and traditional leaders cut across all sectors from extractive industries to beverage and banking industries. Through the networks that they have established with the business communities, they are able to secure job opportunities for their constituents. Chiefs are also influential in mediations between their communities and MNEs in times of crises where community members agitate and protest against the MNEs by demanding for more employment opportunities. The findings show that MNEs institutionalise conflict and grievance resolution forums comprising traditional authorities, local and regional government officials, community groups and non-governmental

organisations to discuss, make decisions and set priorities for development within host communities. This finding supports earlier research by Acquaah (2007) and Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2015) that traditional leaders and local chiefs act as arbitrators and judges in settling disputes.

6.2.4 The notion of family extending to organisations

This research supports the view that employees and managers consider themselves as members of a large extended family and they both expect subsidiaries to support their welfare and that of their families. Ghanaians place much value on the extended family system, which is characterised by the reciprocal exchange of both material and emotional support (Gyekye, 2014). Employees and managers regard subsidiaries as an extension of the family, with some implications for the employment relationship. Thus, just as individuals expect to receive material and emotional support from extended family members, similar treatment is expected from the organisation, such as absence from work in times of bereavement, financial assistance and emotional support (Aryee, 2004). Subsidiaries' welfare activities include financing wholly or partly the health needs, education for children, and support during bereavement, weddings and outdooring. Failure to provide these facilities for employees is interpreted to mean management is inconsiderate. These findings corroborate the findings of a case study of a western subsidiary in Mozambique by Sartorius et al. (2011) where the employees felt management was insensitive to the welfare of their families such as health, education and rent and, as a result, embarked on an industrial action.

The findings further provide evidence that support Amoako-Agyei's (2009: 338) suggestion that foreign firms in Africa need to "take employee's family concerns seriously, listening carefully, and expressing interest and concern" if they want to succeed in such a context. She elaborates further that while western managers would usually focus on task performance, once they set foot in the business environment, Africans in general and more specifically Ghanaians would prefer to exchange family news by inquiring about each other's family and health. These are pertinent in the Ghanaian context and are summed up as "family ties, not organisational charts, are the ties that bind" (Amoako-Agyei, 2009: 339).

Western MNEs consider the host country's cultural rules of the game involving paternalism, high power distance, chiefs, traditional leaders and family extending to organisations to generate favouritism and nepotism with regards to HRM practices. Western MNEs regard

Ghana's cultural values as inefficient and ineffective, not financially competitive, nonaligned with corporate HQ goals and "seriously, undermine organisational performance" (Debrah, 2001: 196). They regard their own practices as best practices and financially competitive.

As a result of differences in expectations, norms and values associated with the implementation of HRM practices in host country and Western MNEs, an interplay of ethnocentrism and polycentrism evolves bringing about standardisation and localisation of HRM practices respectively. I discuss next the research question: How do western MNEs manage the interplay between standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in their subsidiaries in Ghana?

6.3 Interplay of standardisation and localisation of HRM practices

The findings reveal that Western MNEs seek to rely on corporate HRM practices that "reflect an ethnocentric ethos" (Siebers et al., 2015) because of the conviction that if they followed local practice the subsidiary would not be financially competitive with other organisations (Bjorkman & Budhwar, 2007) and would not align with the business strategy of the MNE's operations. Nevertheless, the findings show that subsidiaries are locally responsive by adopting practices that align with locally accepted practices and with the expectations of local stakeholders (Kostova *et al.*, 2008; Lazarova et al., 2017; Scott, 1987). The dual embeddedness of subsidiaries within Western MNEs and the host country leads to an interplay of standardisation and localisation of HRM practices. This interplay of standardisation and localisation is considered vital for the success and efficacy of subsidiaries (Laurent (1986) of Western MNEs operating in institutionally distant countries such as Ghana, with cultural and institutional specifics which pose significant challenges to transferred HRM practices**.** Thus, whilst Western MNEs engaged in forward diffusion of their preferred HRM practices because of the perceived advantages, HCNs, unions, chiefs and employees of the host context also have considerable interests and influence on how corporate policies translate into practices at the subsidiaries. Thus, the transfer to, and implementation of, HRM practices in subsidiaries becomes a contested and shifting process (Gamble & Hung, 2009), with host country institutional provisions partly shaping HRM practices (Kostova *et al.*, 2008; Scott, 1987).

The findings agree with previous research that HRM practices have varied degrees of standardisation and localisation (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994). As discussed in this chapter, because of the technological distance between Ghana and the parent countries of MNEs,

coupled with the latter's economic sophistication, the MNEs succeeded in imposing their ethnocentric practices such as succession planning, company portals for training and development, contingent rewards, employee participation and to a limited degree flexible work programmes. However, efforts to determine and control the implementation of HRM practices in subsidiaries are constrained by workers, HCNs, unions and traditional leaders who seek to protect their interests.

This study demonstrates that the cultural and institutional characteristics of the host context play significant roles in shaping the behaviours and management styles of HCNs. Thus, certain practices are localised due to the presence of HCN managers. For instance, subsidiary managers are likely to select their favourites to occupy strategic positions as part of the succession planning process. This assertion is supported by Kuada (1994) who stated that Ghanaian managers are usually selective in their patronage to subordinates by giving privileges and opportunities to employees deferential to them. This can affect all the other HRM practices, for instance training and development, employee communication and participation. This finding is consistent with the extant literature that HCNs are likely to be committed to the host country and as such are responsive to the local cultural and institutional demands which provide subsidiaries with legitimacy (Michailova et al., 2016). The findings further confirm the assertion by Tayeb, (2005: 102) that whether a subsidiary is an acquisition or greenfield, an MNE cannot easily eradicate "its host-country employees' cultural attitudes, values and beliefs from a distance and through rules and regulations."

The findings further show that local employees and unions have expected practices such as welfare services for employees and their families, including healthcare and bereavement leave which are characteristic of the collectivist and paternalistic Ghanaian context. This finding concurs with Scott (1983: 16) that "constituents all participate in and are carriers of the culture" while Kim and Gray (2005: 823) observe that "HRM deals with people who are the main carriers of the cultural values." It is the institutional context that gives meaning to HRM practices of subsidiaries through employees who are regarded as "carriers of institutions" (Kostova & Roth, 2002: 218). Thus employees seek to understand subsidiary HRM practices using an interpretive frame embedded in the local cultural and institutional context.

Additionally, the findings indicate that subsidiaries' efforts to promote HRM policies and practices that are objective and transparent, efficient and effective are constrained by the

institutional values embedded in the host country, namely paternalism, high power distance, chiefs and traditional leaders and the notion of family extending to organisations. For instance, employees find it difficult to voice out their frustrations concerning promotions and the selective support given to favourites of HCN Managers due to the power distance (Mellahi & Collings, 2010).

Chiefs and traditional leaders have great influence in the localisation of HRM practices because failure to accede to their demands may lead to denial of access to valuable resources (Acquaah, 200). In Ghana, chiefs and traditional leaders are custodians of the land (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001; Bubb, 2013) and are very influential in providing access to essential resources for business such as land to site their businesses. Collaboration and compromises between host context institutional actors and MNEs may lead to mutual fulfilment of their respective goals/objectives.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the transfer of HRM practices is not uniquely determined by the rational prescriptions of corporate HQs but instead fashioned by an interplay of interests. Transferred HRM practices are embedded in western norms and values which are inconsistent with those of the host context. This discrepancy potentially creates tension and puts at risk the normative 'guardrails' of the host context institutions. As a result, some of these HRM practices face opposition from host country institutional actors whose values are normatively distant from western countries. In order to gain legitimacy, MNEs have to localise certain practices. This argument is in line with Suchman (1995), who concludes that organisations gain legitimacy by implementing practices considered appropriate and consistent with host context norms, values, beliefs and definitions. Nonetheless, MNEs are not passive pawns (Temple & Walgenbach, 2007) but act strategically to achieve their goals, despite being constrained by normative institutions (Jackson, & Deeg, 2008; Mudambi & Navarra, 2002). It is for these reasons that the transfer of HRM practices is considered a contested terrain (Gamble & Hung, 2009). Thus, in order to make HRM practices legitimately acceptable within the host context, western MNEs employed key techniques including training and educating employees or union officials about the benefits to be derived from these practices and holding consultations with key stakeholders as revealed in the findings. Managers in subsidiaries seek the views and ideas of local stakeholders such as employees, chiefs and traditional leaders.

The interplay of standardisation and localisation of HRM practices may permit subsidiaries to take advantage of opportunities that stem from the local environment and still fulfil the MNEs' expectations of the subsidiary (Mudambi, 2011). Consultative decision-making with local institutional actors such as unions, HCNs, chiefs and traditional leaders is likely to result not only in more harmonious work environments and good standing of subsidiaries but also in the effectiveness and commitment of employees to the goals of the subsidiary. Thus, through these consultations and negotiations, Western MNEs can improve their understanding of the African business context and host country subsidiary employees can acquire new skills and knowledge from subsidiaries (Kamoche & Harvey, 2006).

The interplay of standardisation and localisation is therefore crucial for the types of "knowledge taken from internal and external sources" (Piscitello, 2011: 130) that underpin competitive advantage of MNEs. MNEs social interactions with actors in the local context can therefore improve knowledge within the subsidiary which is crucial to achieving competitive advantage within its location (Ambos et al., 2011). I argue that the Ghanaian context is therefore not a void into which Western MNEs can uni-directionally apply their HRM practices. Instead, transfer of these practices may be considered a symbiotic process of knowledge transfer through mutual interactions. I maintain further that in the complex and challenging cultural and institutional context of Ghana, interplay of localisation and standardisation of HRM practices is a better option for organisations than adopting a dichotomous approach of either standardisation or localisation.

6.4 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to find out the extent to which western MNEs rely on and replicate their corporate HQ HRM practices as key sources of competitive advantage in their subsidiaries in Ghana and to explore the degree to which the host context cultural and institutional factors may hinder the transfer of western HRM practices. Using institutional theory, I examined how the normative institutional distance influences standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana and the reasons behind it (institutional distance) having this influence. I employed exploratory and context-sensitive explanatory approaches to conduct my study. Context sensitive explanatory approaches provide insight into why/how MNE parent country HRM practices interact with the host context culture and informal institutions.

The findings demonstrate that Western MNEs engaged in ethnocentric transfer of HRM practices that reflect their core business values and competencies established at corporate HQs. These transferred practices are regarded as sources of efficiency and effectiveness. These findings resonate with previous research that Western MNEs transferred their HRM practices to Africa with perceived advantages of superiority, consistency and effectiveness (Kamoche & Newenham-Kahindi, 2012; Mellahi & Frynas, 2003).

At the same time, the local cultural and institutional factors create pressures for MNEs to decentralize decision-making about HRM issues in order to conform to, and become legitimate in, the local context, meaning that there is also some localisation of HRM practices. HCNs tend to emphasize local values, norms and beliefs (Mamman *et al*., 2009) and are likely to adapt HRM practices to suit their local context. Institutional and cultural values which include paternalism, collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, ethnicity, chieftaincy and traditional leadership, which are characteristic of the Ghanaian context, tend to constrain the implantation of western values. A dual approach evolves from the interplay of HRM practices derived from the local context and those of corporate HQ which are embedded in the MNE parent country values, necessitating negotiations and collaborations among the various actors, including MNEs' local and corporate management, employees, unions, local government representatives, chiefs and traditional leaders. This study therefore provides valuable insights into understanding the interplay of cultural and institutional forces within the host contexts and transferred practices from western MNE corporate HQs.

The findings from both interviews and documentary analysis supports previous research that HRM practices of MNE subsidiaries have different levels of standardisation and localisation (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994), with some practices being more sensitive to the host country cultural and institutional influences whilst others are more reflective of corporate HQ practices (Myloni et al., 2004). Successfully achieving a workable interplay provides western MNEs with benefits from improved work relationships in their subsidiaries and from local employees learning new skills and technologies. Local employees also acquire invaluable knowledge from a diverse multinational labour force. Thus, the interplay of standardisation and localisation contributes to mutual achievement of strategic goals of the subsidiary and that of local stakeholders.

In the next sections, I summarise the key findings in relation to the literature, and discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions, the possible practical implications, the limitations inherent in this current research and hence the future directions for later research.

6.4.1Theoretical contributions

Herein I discuss the contribution of this study to the scholarly conversation in IB and how it partly addresses the paucity of literature available on the transfer of HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana. I highlight through empirical case studies the range of distinct heterogeneous cultural and institutional features of Ghana that affect MNEs' strategic choices and practices.

This research provides a theoretical contribution in its combination of the features of both old and new institutionalisms to examine HRM practices of subsidiaries that reflect an ethnocentric culture alongside some compliance with the cultural and institutional context of the host country. Some previous studies focused narrowly on only new institutionalism with a deterministic view that focuses on compliance to external environments (Kostova, Roth & Dacin, 2008). My thesis adds to the institutional theory literature by elaborating on the cultural and institutional challenges that hinder the implementation of ethnocentric HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs. Kim and Gray (2005) argue that as employees are carriers of cultural values, the transfer of HRM practices to institutionally distant countries may be ineffective.

Contrary to the neo-institutionalists who view organisations as complying fully with host country's institutions, this study demonstrates that subsidiaries are not "passive pawns" (Tempel & Walgenbach, 2007: 10) but are actively engaged in the interpretation of norms according to their self-interest (Mudambi, & Navarra, 2002). Thus, by combining neo-institutionalism and the old institutionalism, this study reveals how MNEs are in some cases able to act according to their preferences, despite being constrained by institutional forces. Thus host country institutions are also partially shaped in line with the preferences of MNEs (Jackson & Deeg, 2008). The existing cultural and institutional forces of the host country interact with HRM practices that have been developed, nurtured and embedded in the norms and values of the home countries of western MNEs, thus influencing the meanings, interpretations and implementation (Anakwe, 2002) of HRM practices.

Additionally, as already discussed in chapter 1, Ghana is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country characterised by distinct cultural norms from western countries. Also, Ghana, like many African countries, is considered an institutional void due to weak educational institutions (Osabutey & Debrah, 2012), weak contract-enforcing mechanisms and inefficient transportation and communication networks. The presence of institutional voids usually lead to the formation of social contracts such as unwritten rules of behaviour, familial ties, social and moral norms (Gardner, 2011). Thus, by using institutional theory as my theoretical foundation due to its sensitivity to MNE home and host contexts, my study contributes to the scholarly conversation on contextualisation in IB research by providing a nuanced understanding of the ethnocentric practices of western MNEs and the conflicting polycentric institutional demands (Kraatz & Block, 2008; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Saka-Helmhout, Deeg, & Greenwood, 2016) imposed on subsidiaries, resulting in an interplay of localisation and standardisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries. In so doing, my research supports assertions of researchers (see Michailova, 2011; Poulis et al., 2013) that context cannot remain at the background in IB research but instead at the forefront to enhance understanding of the complex cultural and institutional settings of MNEs.

The research constitutes a current and relevant source of empirical information about HRM practices of foreign subsidiaries in Ghana. The findings could be applicable to other African settings exhibiting similar features to the host context. The findings support what Kvale (1996: 233) describes as analytical generalization that "involves a reasoned judgement about the extent to which the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another". My study therefore extends the scope of the existing literature in IB by incorporating knowledge of the transfer of HRM practices from this part of the world.

The study essentially provides fine-grained analysis of the individual HRM practices in subsidiaries of western MNEs, namely, recruitment and selection; training and development; performance management; rewards management; diversity management; work and life balance, employee communication and participation. The study explains why ethnocentric HRM practices cannot be fully implemented in the host context without modification and justifies why these practices are inappropriate under certain circumstances. For instance, recruitment and selection practices are more affected by informal institutional pressures from chiefs and opinion leaders. This study further demonstrates that within the same practice can be found both localisation and standardisation components, with localisation practices usually

skewed towards lower level employees. The research sheds light on the differences in cross-cultural management of people in the Ghanaian context. It highlights the important role of the chieftaincy establishment as an informal institution in the implementation of HRM practices in subsidiaries. It explains the duality of authority and mixed governance systems of the Ghanaian context, where national and ethnic institutions and policies are co-existing. It thus contributes to understanding institutional theory by emphasising thick descriptions of the Ghanaian cultural and institutional context which influence HRM practices in subsidiaries. Selecting Ghana as a novel research setting helps to extend the boundary conditions of institutional theory in IB to other cultural and institutional domains and how HRM practices are perceived, interpreted and legitimated in such contexts.

6.4.2 Methodological contributions

Much of the existent literature in IB has largely applied quantitative methodologies in their research (e.g. Mamman, Baydoun & Adeoye, 2009; Pudelko & Harzing, 2008; Rowsenzweig & Nohria, 1994). The IB literature is therefore skewed and Andersen and Skaates (2004) observe that only 10 per cent of articles in six IB journals applied qualitative methodology. Some scholars have also expressed concern about the over-reliance on quantitative methods for IB research (Cooke, 2009; Meyer, 2006; Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). Cooke (2009) observes that the preference of US-based journals for quantitative methods may be the contributing factor for this imbalance.

Consequently, some IB scholars have called for more methodological emphasis on qualitative writing (Birkinshaw, Brannen, & Tung, 2011; Meyer, 2006; Suddaby, 2010). This thesis utilises a qualitative approach of inquiry as a contribution towards filling this "methodological gap generated by the heavy reliance on quantitative methods" (Cooke 2009: 16). In so doing, this research extends the methodological literature on case studies in IB by combining context sensitivity and rigorous explanations into how and why western MNEs standardise or localise their HRM practices within the cultural and institutional contexts of Ghana. Also, I applied the interpretive sense-making approach (Welch et al. 2011) for the narratives, arguments and conversations of research participants with emphasis on contextualisation (Michailova, 2011; Whetten, 2009), utilising thick descriptions for the subjective experiences (Welch et al. 2011) of employees and managers in subsidiaries which also makes a contribution to the extant research. The research adds value in providing understanding of the contextual meanings of

HRM practices from the Ghanaian cultural and institutional perspectives, by using semi-structured interviews.

Moreover, research on HRM practices in subsidiaries of MNEs has generally employed not only quantitative approaches of inquiry but also focused on single respondents or senior management (e.g. Bjorkman, Fey & Park, 2007; Pudelko & Harzing, 2007; Kim & Gray, 2005). Gamble (2006: 331) observes that utilising only top management as sources of empirical data "neglects the voice of those at the receiving end", resulting in incomplete information. The use of a single respondent as a source of key information could lead to respondent bias in understanding differences between intended practices and actual practice. The use of multiple participants allows the researcher to cross-validate the information supplied by different sources (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2015). I conducted semi-structured interviews of managers and employees in eight western subsidiaries in Ghana and triangulated this with documentary analysis. This application of multiple sources of data – employees, managers and documents – increases credibility and provides a more holistic perspective on HRM practices in western subsidiaries in Ghana.

6.4.3 Practical implications

The practical implications of this research point to the need for HQ executives in the parent country to carefully evaluate the institutional environment of the Ghanaian context before making decisions on the suitability of transfer of particular HRM practices. Prior experience gained in African contexts, including other developing countries, may not necessarily be transferrable to, and useful in, the Ghanaian context. Ghanaian HCNs may act as an invaluable conduit between the subsidiaries and senior HQ executives in explaining and making sense of the specificities of the host context which MNEs need to consider if they are to be successful in achieving their strategic business and HRM goals. HCNs can share their experiences with expatriates and HQ in conferences, meetings and training sessions at subsidiaries and during visits by HQ officials.

The findings demonstrated that westernised models of HRM practices simply cannot be directly replicated in the Ghanaian context and instead require modifications. Thus, PCNs need to be flexible, accommodating and willing to negotiate with local stakeholders in the implementation of HRM practices. Understanding the norms, values and beliefs valid in the local context can help western MNEs to adjust their practices to work more effectively.

Consultative decision-making with local chiefs/elders and employees is likely to result not only in more congenial work environments in the local community but also result in employees being more effective in combining local practice with introduced HRM practices. These negotiations and consultations can take place in chiefs' palaces and sometimes the chiefs may be invited to offices of subsidiaries.

This research can also assist foreign MNE managers to appreciate the interplay of localisation and standardisation of HRM practices. As already noted in chapter one, Ghana is a multicultural, multilinguistic and multi-ethnic society. Awareness of these differences "offers deeper insight into a new client base, and cross-cultural training…can guide businesspersons toward cultural sensitivity" (Amoako-Agyei, 2009: 331). Also, knowledge of these differences may assist MNEs to design appropriate HRM practices to capture certain market niches, e.g. as explained in the findings section under recruitment and selection, where Muslims were recruited as a strategy targeted at this segment of the population. It is also possible to "leverage the various ethnic backgrounds of the ownerships of local companies" which may result in an increase in "commercial reach" (Amoako-Agyei, 2009: 331) and ensure alignment with the intended business strategy for the subsidiary's operation.

Another practical contribution of this research is that it may also allow local Ghanaian companies to compare their HRM practices with those prevalent in western countries. Gyekye (2014: 181) argued, "it would be correct to say that there is no human culture that has remained the same ever since it was created, neither has there been a system of cultural values impervious to influences from outside and, thus, untouched by values from other cultures." Ghanaian companies may be in a position to learn and adapt certain foreign HRM practices to their organisations whilst there is also the possibility for foreign MNEs to learn from Ghanaian practices and transfer them to subsidiaries in other countries. For instance, I discovered during the interviews that there are certain practices that have been developed in some of the subsidiaries and copied by other subsidiaries in Southern Africa such as Lesotho and Swaziland. This is in reference to the use of national service personnel. The National Service Scheme of Ghana has as its mandate to provide newly qualified graduates from the country's tertiary institutions the opportunity to have practical exposure on the job, both in the public and private sectors as part of their civic responsibility to the state. These national service personnel work for a whole year in the subsidiaries, resulting in a reduction of the recruitment period because they are used to fill the pipeline.

The institutional specificities of the Ghanaian contexts that contribute to why and how HRM practices are localised have been unearthed. It takes cognisance of Napier and Vu's (1998: 46) revelation that although a significant number of practitioners in developing countries want help to conduct business and to learn from one another, unfortunately there is little academic research to assist their efforts. Access to good sources of information is limited. This research therefore serves as an invaluable source of information on the standardisation, localisation and interplay of HRM practices in Ghana and possibly to other African countries with similar cultural and institutional contexts.

6.4.4 Limitations and directions for future research

The research has some limitations that suggest grounds for future research. The methodological limitations pertaining to the study were discussed in chapter four of this thesis and include replicability, subjectivity, and generalisability. For instance, qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretations are subjective and liable to researcher's biases (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The researcher brings his/her values into the research process. Thus, in order to minimise bias, I triangulated interviews with documents in order to crosscheck and validate the evidence (as illustrated in chapter five).

It is acknowledged that a limitation of this study is that the sample size is relatively small and differed substantially between subsidiaries with the lowest being three and the highest seven participants respectively. Even though the difficulties of gaining access were explained in chapter four and the study involved very in-depth analysis, future research should endeavour to examine alternate approaches to achieve a larger sample.

Also a potential limitation of this research is the inherent retrospective bias of interviewees concerning past events (see York, Hargrave, & Pacheco, 2016). I sought to minimise these biases which may occur in cross-sectional data collection by triangulating interview data with documents, but future research might address this issue by examining individuals' perceptions across several points in time.

While the qualitative case study provided in-depth knowledge on how and why HRM practices are standardised or localised in subsidiaries of western MNEs in Ghana, adopting an ethnographic approach could probably yield greater insights into the processes of

standardisation and localisation of HRM practices. Furthermore, a longitudinal approach might provide a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between localisation and standardisation of HRM practices within the host context. Future research could adopt a longitudinal approach in order to provide more detailed knowledge on the changes taking place within these subsidiaries with regards to HRM practices and to establish a sequence of events detailing the processes of how standardisation and localisation of HRM practices develop in subsidiaries.

Extant literature on transfer of HRM practices often takes the subsidiary as a unit of analysis (e.g. Kamoche & Newenham-Kahindi, 2012; Gamble 2003). The transfer of HRM practices is nonetheless a multi-level phenomenon involving the focal subsidiaries, the MNE parent companies and the environment. An understanding of the transfer of HRM practices may be enhanced if examined in multiple contexts. The study confines itself to only one country without interviews from HQs of the various MNEs. Interviews with HQs could have yielded a better understanding of motives for integration of HRM practices. Future research should take a dyadic interview approach involving both subsidiaries and HQs that would generate broader understanding of the factors influencing standardisation and localisation of HRM practices in subsidiaries and thus improve the reliability of the findings.

Further, given the complexity and diversity of the African continent, future research may replicate and extend this research to different country contexts which may result in greater understanding of the inter-country differences in the continent. This would allow researchers and the international business community to gain a greater understanding of how the diverse and multi-layered cultures and institutions influence HRM practices of western MNEs. Such additional empirical studies are crucial as MNEs direct more FDI to the African context.

6.4.5 Summary

My thesis argues that in order to comprehensively appreciate the interplay of ethnocentric and polycentric HRM practices in western subsidiaries in Ghana, an analysis using institutional theory as a theoretical lens which is sensitive to cross-border contexts is required. Institutions are key in probing the crucial cultural challenges constraining the imposition of ethnocentric practices in western subsidiaries. The conceptual model I developed using institutional theory helps to explicate succinctly the key institutions that influence the transfer of ethnocentric

HRM practices and the countervailing polycentric practices in the host context, resulting in an interplay of localisation and standardisation.

Appendices

1 Appendix A: Participant (HR manager) information Sheet

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Participant Information Sheet

Chief Executive Officer or Human Resource Manager (or equivalent)

Project title: Human resource management practices in subsidiaries of western multinational companies in Ghana: The interplay of localisation and standardisation.

Name of Researcher: Theophilus Azungah (PhD Student).

Introduction

Mr. Theophilus Azungah is a Senior Lecturer of Bolgatanga Polytechnic, Ghana currently pursuing a PhD in International Business at the University of Auckland, New Zealand under the supervision of Prof. Snejina Michailova (main supervisor) and Prof. Kate Hutchings (co-supervisor).

Project description and invitation

My research is about human resource management (HRM) practices of foreign multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Ghana. The study focuses on the dual pressures of standardisation and localisation that MNEs face in the transfer of HRM practices in foreign subsidiaries. Standardisation is defined as the extent to which MNE subsidiary's HRM practices resemble those of parent company at headquarters whereas localisation refers to the extent to which subsidiaries behave and act as local firms in the host country (Myloni, Harzing & Mirza, 2004). HRM practices in MNEs are shaped by an interplay of these opposing forces. My research seeks to explore how foreign MNEs in Ghana manage the dynamic interplay between localisation and standardisation of HRM practices. The tension between these two opposing forces (standardisation versus localisation) is important for theoretical analysis that will lead to practical recommendations for industry to implement.

Project Procedures

The procedure involved in my research comprises of semi-structured interviews designed to last between 1 – 1.5 hours. My objective is to elicit responses from management and employees to a series of questions about current HRM practices in subsidiaries of foreign multinational companies in Ghana. The purpose is to find out how foreign multinational companies transfer their HRM practices to Ghana, how similar or different these practices may be from Ghana and

whether these practices are adapted to the local context. Participants will be given the opportunity to edit the transcripts within two weeks after receiving the transcripts. The information obtained during this interview will be used in my thesis, publications and conferences. I request your assurance that the employees' participation or non-participation in this study will not affect their employment status i the organisation.

Your company's name, your name, or any other information identify you or your organisation will not be in these publications but I will use pseudonyms in place of real names to keep information confidential. A Participant Information Sheet is included in the interview protocol.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use

The interviews will be recorded only with the consent of the interviewee and the data will be stored in a locked filing cupboard by the main supervisor, Prof. Snejina Michailova of the University of Auckland for a period of six years. The data will subsequently be destroyed in accordance with the University of Auckland standard measures for secure data destruction. All data stored electronically will be deleted from their sources. All audio recordings will also be deleted. The data will be transcribed by a transcriber who will sign a confidentiality agreement indicating that the content is not to be disclosed to or discussed with any other person except with the researcher.

Right to withdraw from participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. Therefore, participants can withdraw from the interview at any time and can with withdraw their data from the research up to 30th July, 2015.

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact:

The Chair

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
The University of Auckland, Research Office
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Phone: +649373-7599 extn. 87830/83761

Contact details for the researcher, supervisor and Head of Department are below in case there are any concerns about the interview:

Prof. Snejina Michailova (Supervisor)
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APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTE ON 09TH DECEMBER, 2014 FOR 3 YEARS. REFERENCE NUMBER 012809.

2 Appendix B: Interview sheet for subsidiary HR managers

Interview Sheet for subsidiary HR Managers

Interview Sheet

Subsidiary HR Manager (or equivalent)

Project title: Human resource management practices in subsidiaries of western multinational companies in Ghana: The interplay of localisation and standardisation.

Country: ---------- **Date----------**

Name of organisation: ----------

Interviewee's name: ---------- **Nationality: ----------**

Position: ----------

Part A

Introduction. Thank you for your time to contribute to this research. Let me briefly outline my role and the contribution of this interview to the research.

Purpose of this research. To find out how foreign MNEs transfer their HRM practices to their subsidiaries in Ghana and whether these practices are adapted to the local context. Moreover, whether there are any differences in the practices of the organisation in comparison with prevalent practices in Ghana.

Relevance of this research. This research seeks to close a gap in the knowledge of transfer practices in MNEs in Africa generally and Ghana specifically.

Personal relevance. I am a PhD candidate of the University of Auckland and this research is an essential part of the requirements for the PhD degree.

Voluntary participation. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. There is a consent form for you to sign indicating your voluntary participation.

Ethical considerations. The information obtained during this interview will be used in my thesis, publications and conference presentations. Your company's name, your name, and any other information to identify you or your organisation will not be included in these publications - I will use pseudonyms in place of real names.

If you so wish, I will share the final analysis, expected in 2015 with you. Meanwhile, you can contact me on my email: t.azungah@auckland.ac.nz

Part B

Subsidiary HR Manager (or equivalent)

Questions	Remarks
1. **Personal information:** Name, position, years working in this company, prior professional experience, education/qualifications, responsibilities	
2. **Parent company information:** location, activity, size, history, mission, vision, competitive advantage, number of countries in which the company is active.de.	
3. Subsidiary's operations in Ghana • When did the MNE establish its first subsidiary/joint venture in Ghana? • In what activities does it engage? what is the target market?, market share, size, structure, strategy, objectives.? • How did the subsidiary start its operations? (Greenfield?) • How many expatriates are there in the subsidiary? • Total number of employees?	
4. **Subsidiary – parent company relations** • What role does this subsidiary play in the overall MNE? • Is there alignment of subsidiary HRM practices with those of HQ • Providing resources to parent? Depending on parent? • What communication channels exist between the headquarters and the subsidiary?	
5. **Human resource policy** • What are the major challenges you have as an HR manager in this company? • Who has the responsibility for the development of HRM strategy and policy that is utilised in the Ghanaian subsidiary? • Who has authority for implementation of HRM practices and decisions at the subsidiary? • Can you described the mechanism of coordination of HRM policy and activities between the subsidiary and the parent company? • Does the parent company depend on the subsidiary for any vital resources? How? Why?	What do you think about standardisation of HRM practices? (how? Why?) What do you think about localisation of HRM practices? (How? Why?) Cultural influence? Premium placed on HRM practices?

• Does the subsidiary depend on the parent company for HR advice? How? Why? • Are there differences between HRM practices in Ghana and those of the parent country? • Do you believe that the parent country influences your HRM practices? How? In what respects? • Have the cultural practices of Ghana influenced your HRM practices? How? In what respects? • Is there any attempt to adapt your HRM practices to the cultural characteristics of Ghana? • Is there any conflict in the transfer of parent company HRM policies and practices to the Ghanaian context? How? In what respects? • How is such conflict resolved?	
• I am particularly interested to understand the extent to which HRM practices are standardised or localised to the Ghanaian context. These HRM practices that we are going to talk about are: recruitment and selection, training and development, rewards management, and performance management, diversity management, employee participation and communication and work-life balance. **Recruitment and selection** • Describe the methods used in recruitment and selection in the subsidiary. • Are your methods similar to the parent company? How? In what respects? • Are your recruitment and selection methods similar to that of local indigenous Ghanaian companies? How? In what respects?	What are the differences/similarities between Ghana and HQ in recruitment and selection? What are differences/similarities between Ghana and other subsidiaries?
6. **Training and development** • What is the role of training and development in your company? • Who designs the content of the training programme? • How is talent identified and developed? • Describe the methods used in training and development? • Is career planning undertaken in your company? • Is succession planning undertaken in your company?	What are the differences/similarities between Ghana and HQ in training and development? What are differences/similarities between Ghana and other subsidiaries?

• Are your training and development methods similar to the parent company? How? In what respects? • Are your training and development methods similar to that of local indigenous Ghanaian companies? How? In what respects?	
7. Rewards management • What are the components of pay used in the subsidiary? • Is pay based on equal pay for equal work? • Describe the methods of non-financial rewards in your company. • Are the rewards provided at the subsidiary similar to those used in the parent company? How? In what respects? • Are the rewards used in the subsidiary similar to that of local indigenous Ghanaian companies? How? In what respects?	What are the differences between Ghana and HQ in training and development? What are differences between Ghana and other subsidiaries?
8. Performance management • Describe the methods used in performance management in your subsidiary? • What type of informal performance management is undertaken in your organisation? • What methods are used in appraising your employees? • Are your performance management methods similar to that of the parent company? How? In what respects? • Are your performance management methods similar to that of local indigenous Ghanaian companies? How? In what respects?	What are the differences between Ghana and HQ in performance appraisal? What are differences between Ghana and other subsidiaries?
9. Employee communication and participation • What does employee participation mean in your subsidiary? • Can you provide specific examples of employee participation initiatives? • Are employees represented on your boards? • Is employee participation similar to that used in the parent company? How? In what respects? • Is employee participation similar to that used in local indigenous Ghanaian companies? How? In what respects? • What does employee communication mean in your subsidiary?	What are the differences between Ghana and HQ in relation to employee participation and communication? What are differences between Ghana and other subsidiaries?

• Can you provide specific examples of the channels of communication used in your subsidiary? • Is employee communication similar to that used in the parent company? How? In what respects? • What input do employees have in relation to development of HRM policy and practice in respect to recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management and rewards management?	
10. Work-life balance • What does the term work-life balance mean in your subsidiary? • Do you implement work-life balance programmes in your organisation? How? In what respects? • Are work-life balance programmes available for employees at all levels? If yes Why? If not why? • Are work-life balance practices similar to those used in the parent company? How? In what respects? • Are work-life balance practices similar to that used in local indigenous Ghanaian companies? How? In what respects?	What are the differences between Ghana and HQ in relation to work-life balance progammes? What are differences between Ghana and other subsidiaries?
11. Diversity management • What does diversity management mean in your subsidiary? • Do you practise diversity management in this company? How? • If this company has diversity management practices, have they been of benefit to you? How? • What efforts are made to help increase diversity in this company in areas such as recruitment and selection, training and development, career development, rewards management and performance management? • What efforts are made to help increase diversity in this company in areas such as employee participation and communication, work-life balance programmes?	What are the differences between Ghana and HQ in relation to diversity management? What are differences between Ghana and other subsidiaries?

• Are diversity management practices similar to those used in the parent company? How? In what respects? • Are diversity management practices similar to those used in local indigenous Ghanaian companies? How? In what respect? • If different what accounts for this?	
12. **Summing up** • Are employees involved in developing HRM policies and practices in areas such as recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development and rewards management? How? Explain? • Are employees involved in developing HRM policies and practices in areas such as diversity management, work-life balance and participation programmes? • Was there any type of resistance or problems encountered in the course of transfer of HRM practices? If yes, what? • If there were no problems in the transfer process, what facilitated the transfer process? How? • In the process of adaptation of practices, was there any conflict? If yes, how was it addressed/ who resolved it? • Are there any other aspects of HRM policy or practice that I have not asked about which you would like to discuss?	Size, age, mode of entry, dependence on local input? Why without any modification? Is it based on superior quality? How do determine this quality? Is it due to inability to adapt? What were the reactions of employees to these practices?

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