

Nottingham Trent University

**Exploring the Relationships Between HCNs and Italian Expatriates
in Nigeria: A Social Exchange Perspective**

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Declaration

I, the researcher, certify that this thesis is my own work, and all contributions have been referenced accurately.

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Date: August 2019

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents; Baba, Alhaji Aliyu Bala Kuki and Mama, Hajiya Zainab Bala Kuki, who assisted and supported me throughout this doctorate journey. Thank you for providing a solid foundation from which I was able to explore global mobility in Nigeria. This thesis is also dedicated to my little brother, Yusuf Aliyu Bala Kuki, who was always there when I needed him, listening to my ramblings and offering advice and motivation – being the best adviser and motivator ever!

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Abstract

This study explores the relationships of host country nationals (HCNs) working with Italian expatriates in Nigeria from a social exchange perspective and is informed by Social Exchange Theory (SET). The study investigates the nature of the relationships between HCNs and Italian expatriates within B&S and B&P Construction Companies based in Nigeria and its consequent impact on the HCNs. The aim of this study is to identify the forms of exchanges that take place between HCNs and Italian expatriates, including the benefits derived and the challenges encountered by the HCNs as they interrelate with Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

The study is approached from a hermeneutic (interpretivist) phenomenology with a view to understanding and interpreting the meanings ascribed by the HCNs to their lived experiences of working with Italian expatriates in Nigeria. Accordingly, qualitative research data were gathered using semi-structured interviews.

The in-depth analysis of the findings reveals that the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates ranged from what the researcher referred to as a restricted to a cordial relations. The cordial relationships resulted in multiple and exclusive reciprocal exchanges of ideas, information, advice, technology, money, performance goods, and services. On the other hand, the restricted relationships resulted in unequal exchanges of ideas between the two parties researched. The resources exchanged resulted in enhanced skills and positive attitudes towards work for the HCNs. These findings offer a novel contribution to theory by expanding the current understanding of the key constructs of SET. More specifically, the findings show how the actors (the HCNs and Italian expatriates) engage in these two new types of exchange relationships which are labelled cordial and restricted exchange relationships. Through these relationships they exchange multiple intangible resources; information, advice, ideas, technology, and exclusive tangible resources; goods and services, money and performance. The outcomes of the exchange (enhanced skills and positive attitudes towards work) are highlighted, as are the implications for HCN-expatriate relations in a cross-cultural context.

With respect to contributing to professional practice, the findings of this study show that the outcome of the exchange impacts the HCNs in their careers due to the

multiple exchanges that take place, which result in increased knowledge that enhances the skills of the HCNs and improved their attitudes towards work. Hence the researcher argues that the HCNs have benefitted professionally from the relationship and this generally contributes to enhancing the talent of the HCNs in the construction industry in Nigeria. However, it was found that HCNs face challenges in the area of communication and personal development. To address these difficulties, three recommendations are offered to human resource management (HRM) practitioners in both companies (B&S and B&P) that will improve communication and the development of the HCNs and, in turn, foster a positive working relationship and exchanges of resources between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. These include: an increase in formal training and development interventions for HCNs, to further enhance knowledge and skills. Ensuring that staffing and the promotion criteria are equitable and fair, thus enabling more HCNs to progress into managerial positions. Finally, it is recommended that a forum is created and facilitated by human resource (HR) departments where HCNs can participate and discuss their relationships with the expatriates, in order to learn from each other in relation to fostering positive and enduring relationships.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher developed a conceptual model that depicts the dynamics of the relationship and social exchanges between the HCNs and expatriates in the work environment. By identifying the nature of the relationships between HCNs and expatriates, a more nuanced understanding is offered of the way in which the use of expatriate labour impacts on employees based in the host country. These insights fill a gap in the current body of research, thus offering a further contribution to academic knowledge in the field of international human resource management (IHRM).

Chapter 1: Background of this Study

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the rationale for the focus of this thesis is explored. More specifically, the background to the study is explained, the objectives and research questions are identified and the significance of the research in terms of the contribution to academic knowledge and professional practice is explained. The chapter also includes a brief overview of the research design for the empirical work underpinning this doctoral thesis.

Globalization has set the stage for the exchange of knowledge, economic resources, and technology. In addition, modern technology gives developing countries access to global best practices and expertise. As a result, opportunities have been created for professionals from different countries with the required knowledge and skills to move across international borders and accept international assignments (Krishnaveni and Arthi, 2015). Over the past few decades, the increase in the number of expatriates dispatched to the overseas market has resulted in the growth of expatriate communities (Lee and Qomariyah, 2015). To date, international assignments as a subject of scholarly investigation, continue to be explored from different perspectives in the light of emerging theoretical models of expatriation. It was noted that a recurrent theme in expatriation studies investigated in the past 40 years revolves around the cultural adjustment of expatriates (Kraimer, Bolino and Mead, 2016; Dabic, Loureiro and Harvey, 2015). These studies have revealed the complex and challenging nature of cultural adjustment issues in relation to work that the expatriates perceived they face (Abur, K'Obonyo and Omamo, 2015); the factors affecting successful expatriate adjustment (Heirsmac, Agwu, Agumadu and Ohaegbu, 2015); the processes involved in the cultural adjustment of expatriates (Sarkiunaite and Rocke, 2015); and the impact of expatriates on local managerial capacity development in the workplace (Samuel and Adeniyi, 2015), among others. The main foci of these studies were on information adequacy, local capacity development, and challenges of expatriation in specific contexts such as NGOs and oil and gas sectors in African countries. To the researcher, these reflected the complexity of the cultural adjustment process as influenced by individual perceptions and mediating factors

such as differences in culture, language, and work experience. This signaled the need for further knowledge that would contribute to understanding the dynamics of cultural adjustment. This motivated the researcher to consider the factors that influenced the cultural adjustment of the expatriates and the support provided by the HCNs to the expatriates. This became the subjects of the first two independent investigations conducted by the researcher, respectively, in the context of the construction industry in Nigeria and referred to in this study as Document Three and Document Four. The third investigation, which is the subject of this study examined the benefits derived by the HCNs in working with the Italian expatriates in the same industry context.

The first study, Document Three explored more deeply the key factors in the cultural adjustment of Italian expatriates in Nigeria. Expatriates are employees who are working outside their home countries for business purposes (Harzing and Pinnington, 2011). Italian expatriates were specifically chosen for this study as Italian firms dominated the building and construction industry in Nigeria. This is on account of the country's reliance on expatriate labour in certain sectors due to skill shortages (Mwamba 2008; Fajana, 2009; Pitan and Adedeji, 2012; Abiodun and Segbenu, 2017). Document Three largely focused on Italian expatriates living and working in Nigeria who are parent country nationals (PCN) citizens of the country where the organisation is headquartered (Wayne, 2010). This study was carried out using a qualitative approach. One of the highlights of the study is the finding that the provision of information and social support by the HCNs enabled the Italian expatriates to carry out their tasks more effectively and facilitated their cultural adjustment more easily. This underscored the significant influence of HCNs on the cultural adjustment of the Italian expatriates. HCNs are citizens of a country who work in the locally situated branch of an international organisation or company (Wayne, 2010). They are considered to be one of the most important groups of people who are crucial to the adjustment of expatriates during their international assignments (Arman and Aycan, 2013).

The results of this initial investigation and the knowledge gap relating to the influence of HCNs on expatriate adjustment further motivated the researcher to conduct a second study, Document Four that focused on the perceptions of HCNs on cultural distance and the social support which they provided to the expatriates. Document

Four was anchored on the theoretical premises of social support advanced by Black, Mendenhall and Oddous' (1991) framework of cross-cultural adjustment. The findings demonstrated that the HCNs freely provided information and support to the expatriates and that cultural distance was not perceived to be a hindrance in working with the expatriates. Whilst Document Three was a qualitative expatriate-centric study, Document Four was an HCN-centric quantitative study. One limitation of the quantitative study was the low response rate from one of the construction companies hence the researcher felt that an in-depth study using a qualitative approach was needed.

Document Three and Four differed in terms of focus and methodology but both documents were interrelated. Document Three informed the direction of Document Four which in turn, extended the findings of the former. In Document Three, the findings showed the Italian expatriates perceived that their cultural adjustment was facilitated by the information and social support which they received from the HCNs. This was accordingly affirmed in Document Four as it was found that indeed the HCNs willingly provided social and information support to the Italian expatriates. The knowledge that they provided was not only specific to work but to the greater sphere of social life as well. This indicated that socialisation and formal meetings were facilitated in the workplace by the information provided by the HCNs. This made the adjustment and adaptation of the expatriates easier. The results support the findings of Vance, Vaiman and Andersen (2009) that HCNs assisted in socialisation by offering social support, friendship and unique knowledge to expatriates. The findings however differed from that of Bonache, Langinier and Zarraga-Oberty (2016) which showed that the socialisation of expatriates with HCNs and the adjustment of expatriates were adversely affected when HCNs display negative stereotyping of expatriates. Stangor (2009) referred to stereotypes as the characteristics or qualities that are attributed to individuals in a social group. These qualities differentiate members of a social group from other groups.

Collectively, the findings in Documents Three and Four indicated the existence of some forms of long-standing social interaction or relationship that have taken place between the Italian expatriates and the HCNs. This stimulated the emergence of new ideas and assumptions that served as the basis upon which this thesis was developed.

The first assumption is that the relationship between the Italian expatriates and HCNs was not solely facilitated by social support and the exchange of information but can also involve some forms of social exchange. According to Jayasekera (2014), social support for the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates can have behavioural outcomes such as reciprocity and trust that can further influence the relationship. The second assumption is that the relationship between the Italian expatriates and HCNs should bring about perceivable benefits, impacts or challenges. SET can address the impact and benefits of relationships (Nicks, 2016). Hence, social exchange can help provide an understanding in relation to what the different parties in the exchange (expatriates and HCNs) gain from the interaction with each other. The third assumption is that one of the motives of international assignments is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills in the host unit (Edstrom and Galbraith, 1977; Kamoche, 1997; Vance, Vaiman, Andersen and Gale, 2014). A survey by Global Assignment Policies and Practices (2018) revealed that 21% of the participants from different industries show interest in knowledge transfer to host location. According to the Global Mobility Trends Survey (2015), 28% of companies send expatriates to transfer managerial skills, 21% are sent to transfer technical skills while 7% are sent for technology transfer. This is a relevant piece of information on the potential benefits of social exchange.

Based on these assumptions, the researcher conceptualised that the success of the expatriates' assignments in Nigeria can be gauged in terms of the benefits derived by the HCNs and the Nigerian society such as boosting productivity and thereby the economy. Moreover, it had also been observed that there are very few studies that directly investigated the impact of how expatriates' adjustment affected HCNs (Shay and Baack, 2004; Takeuchi, 2010; Vance et al., 2014; Samuel and Adeniyi, 2015). Most of the studies carried out recently investigated the influence of HCNs on expatriates (Toh and DeNisi, 2003; 2005; 2007; Rizwan, Riaz, Saboor and Khan, 2011; Arman and Aycan 2013; Mahajan and Toh, 2014; Van Bakel, Van Oudenhoven and Gerritsen, 2017). Mahajan and Toh (2014) specifically emphasised the need to focus on the HCNs working directly with expatriates in international assignments for a better understanding of the consequences of expatriation. Thus, this study explores the nature of the relationships between HCNs and Italian expatriates in Nigeria and its consequent impact on the HCNs.

Based on these premises, the researcher shifted the focus of this thesis to the forms of exchanges that took place and the benefits derived as well as challenges encountered by the HCNs as they interrelated with the Italian expatriates. As explained earlier, this study is anchored on the theoretical premises of SET that emerged out of the work of Homans (1958) and later developed by Emerson (1962; 1976) and Blau (1964, 2017). The theory offers a deeper insight into the confluence of conditions that provide a better understanding of social relationships applicable to the workplace (Rousseau, 1989; Cole, Schaninger and Harris, 2002; Guest, 2004; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Wikhamn, 2012). In this regard, pertinent literature was reviewed and critically evaluated which provided a foundation for the theoretical framework of the study.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

In the light of the foregoing considerations, the researcher aims to explore the forms of social exchange in the relationship of the Italian expatriates and HCNs and analyse the consequences of their relationship in terms of the challenges encountered as well as the benefits derived by the HCNs. The study also aims to contribute new knowledge that will help bridge the gap in the understanding of the nature of the relationship between expatriates and HCNs. In this regard, the study contributes knowledge to IHRM and expatriate management that will promote the advancement of career development of HCNs. The study further expands SET by providing empirical evidence on micro and meso level social exchanges between expatriates and HCNs. Based on these aims, the study set the following objectives:

1. To explore the nature of the relationship between the Italian expatriates and the HCNs in the workplace.
2. To analyse the forms of social exchange that take place between the Italian expatriates and HCNs with whom they work.
3. To critically evaluate the perceived benefits for HCNs of establishing and maintaining such positive reciprocal relationships.
4. To critically evaluate the perceived challenges for HCNs of working with Italian expatriates in the Italian construction companies.

5. To identify how HR professionals in the host country can foster positive employment relationships between expatriates and HCNs.

1.2.1 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, answers are sought to the following questions:

1. How do HCNs perceive and describe the nature of their relationships with the Italian expatriates in the workplace?
2. What forms of social exchanges are perceived by the HCNs to be taking place with the Italian expatriates with whom they work?
3. What are the perceived benefits for the HCNs of establishing and maintaining such reciprocal relationships?
4. What are the perceived challenges for the HCNs in working with the Italians in the Italian companies?

1.3 Research Importance and Contribution

Studies designed to explore the relationship between expatriates and HCNs have been undertaken in the past (Florkowski and Fogel, 1999; Liu and Shaffer, 2005; Toh and DeNisi, 2007; Hsu, 2012; Van Bakel, Gerritsen and Van Oudenhoven, 2011; Reiche, 2013; Van Bakel, Van Oudenhoven and Gerritsen, 2015; Van Bakel et al., 2017; Van Bakel, 2018) that have contributed knowledge on the influence of culture and social support to the effectiveness of international assignments. These studies, however, were mostly confined to industrialised countries. Nigeria was specifically chosen by the researcher as limited research on the subject had been carried out in this geographic context. Such studies focused on expatriation in relation to leadership (Ngozi, 2007); training (Okpara and Kabongo, 2011); compensation (Eboh, 2013); knowledge management (Samuel and Adeniyi, 2015); personality, gender and adjustment issues (Heirsmac, 2015; Heirsmac and Agwu, 2015; Okpara, 2016; 2017); and taxation (Global Mobility Service, 2018). These studies were all approached from a positivist perspective, which indicates a methodological gap. Thus, the researcher found it crucial to adopt an in-depth approach in understanding the interaction and relationships between HCNs and expatriates from a different geographical context and

methodological perspective. Furthermore, the study is also a response to abounding calls for more research into the impact of expatriates on HCNs (Takeuchi, 2010; Vance et al., 2014; Van Bakel, 2018). This indicates the existence of a conceptual gap. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to enriching the regional data on global mobility and social exchange research and helps bridge the methodological and contextual gap.

Overall, the study highlights the extent to which HCNs interact and build relationships with Italian expatriates and in particular, the impact on the HCNs in Nigeria. It is assumed that working with expatriates instills the HCNs with skills and knowledge that can be used to further develop local talent in Nigeria. Thus the findings contribute to professional practice by assisting local companies and foreign companies in skill development within the construction industry in Nigeria and talent management amongst Nigerian HR practitioners. The findings can also assist international human resource (IHR) professionals in organisations to plan and implement cross-cultural activities for both the expatriates and the HCNs to further sustain positive working relationships.

1.4 Overview of Research Design

The current study is approached from an interpretivist stance since the foci of analysis are the lived experiences of the HCNs which serve as the primary source of data. Interpretivism deals with the assumption that there are multiple interpretations of social realities, which exist among different people in different societies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Accordingly, the researcher adopted social constructionism as the philosophical framework of the study. Social constructionism is based on the assumption that knowledge is subjective and there are multiple realities, which are constructed when humans try to make sense of their environment (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012). The methodology is anchored on hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology which was operationalised using the hermeneutic circle of reading, writing and interpreting in a thorough manner as its analytic strategies (Gadamer, 1975/2013). Hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology is a method that elicits the deeper meanings of a phenomena held by people which provides insights in to how meaning is constructed in the social context (Heidegger,

1927/2011). This method is compatible with the intent of the researcher on analysing the life and world experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994); comprehending the essence of what the participants experienced (Creswell, 1998); and to draw out new insights and meanings from these experiences (Cohen, Khan and Steeves, 2000). Therefore, the researcher employed the social constructionist and the hermeneutic approach to explore, understand and interpret the meanings of the HCNs working experiences with the Italian expatriates in Nigeria, since the main objectives of the hermeneutic (interpretivist) approach are to understand and interpret the social phenomena as they are lived by the people involved (Van Manen, 1997). Furthermore, the research approach chosen for this study appropriately fits the nature of the stated research questions and the perspectives through which these were investigated.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter briefly describes the focus of this study, outlining the background of the inquiry, the objectives and research questions, the significance of the study, its contribution to academic knowledge and professional practice and a brief overview of the research design.

This study addresses the need to explore the forms of exchanges that take place and the derived benefits, as well as challenges encountered by the HCNs as they interrelate with the Italian expatriates in Nigeria. The study is largely informed by the theoretical premises of SET, offering a deeper insight into the conditions that provide a better understanding of social relationships between expatriates and HCNs in the workplace. The following chapter presents the literature review that critically examines SET as the theoretical foundation for the exploration of the forms of social exchanges in the relationship of the Italian expatriates and HCNs, as well as benefits derived and challenges faced by the HCNs in working with the Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature reviewed in relation to the research problem investigated. As stated in the previous chapter, the study is designed to explore the forms of social exchange in the relationship between Italian expatriates and HCNs and analyse the consequences of their relationship in terms of the challenges encountered as well as the benefits derived by the HCNs. The findings of the study contribute new knowledge on the nature and dynamics of social exchange between the expatriates and the HCNs. To achieve this aim, the theoretical field that explains the exchanges in the relationships between the expatriates and the HCNs and the factors affecting their exchange relationships is explored in this study. This is essential in understanding the benefits that the HCNs perceived in their relationships with the expatriates. The review also provides the pertinent information used in the development of the study's conceptual framework and the identification of the research gap.

Accordingly, the chapter is organised into several parts. Firstly, the origins of SET; the elements of exchange (i.e. resources, distributive justice, reciprocity and trust); and the development of the SET, i.e. social and economic exchange, psychological contract and power relations, are explored by this study. In the next part, the researcher discusses SET in the context of international assignments, which is followed by an examination of the resources exchanged between HCNs and expatriates and the factors that influence these exchanges between HCNs and expatriates. Finally, the last part of the chapter sees the researcher consider gaps in existing research, as well as a description of the theoretical framework.

2.2 Social Exchange Perspective: Origin of SET

Although SET emerged out of the work of Homans (1958) it was later developed by Blau (1964, 2017) and Emerson (1962; 1976). More recently, other researchers (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell, Cropanzano and Quisenberry, 2012; Ali, 2013; Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels and Hall, 2017; Alcover, Rico, Turnley and Bolino, 2017; Sabatelli, Lee and Ripoll-Nunez, 2018) have contributed to the concept

so as to understand the behaviour of people as they exchange valued resources in a social setting. Resources in this case refer to either tangible resources (e.g. money, goods and services) or intangible resources (e.g. information or knowledge); of course, both can prevail. These authors argued that actors engage in social exchange relationships in order to obtain resources such as information, goods and services, which are central to the fundamental idea of SET. All actors in the relationships are required to contribute to the exchange of resources (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964, 2017). Actors can either be individuals or groups, hence in the context of this study, the actors refer to the expatriates and the HCNs involved in the relationships. The other fundamental aspects of SET which are all explored in connection to social exchange in this section, include long-term relationships, distributive justice, reciprocity and trust (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964, 2017; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2012; Ali, 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Alcover et al., 2017; Heizmann, Fee and Gray, 2018).

2.3 The Elements of Exchange

As previously mentioned, SET traces its origin from the work of Sociologist George Homans in 1958. Homan's main study was concerned with the processes of social behaviour rooted in exchange. His main interest was on how behaviour resulted from mutual support. He described that the behaviour of people created through interaction is the result of a two-way mutually strengthening relationship between two individuals. In this case, relationship refers to the interaction that takes place between two or more parties that are committed to each other (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995).

Homans (1961, p.13) claimed that social behaviour can be seen 'as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons'. In this regard, tangible exchange pertains to the exchange of concrete materials such as goods, services, and money whilst intangible exchange refers to symbolic exchange such as exchange of information or knowledge. He argues that reward and cost influence the process of the exchange. Individuals receive the reward when they exchange goods, services, money and information with their exchange partners. On the other hand, individuals incur costs as a result of the services, goods and information, which they in return provide to their exchange partners.

Homans (1958) further explained behaviour in terms of reward and punishment. Behaviour that is rewarded will be repeated and individuals respond emotionally to reward systems. In other words, individuals who provide tangible or intangible activities in a relationship are motivated by the expectation or anticipation that their counterpart will respond positively as a consequence of their behaviour. This leads to exchange, but conversely, individuals in the relationship might become de-motivated when they do not receive, that is from their perspective, a fair share from the individuals with whom they interact.

2.3.1 Fair Exchange: Distributive Justice

Fair exchange in relation to distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness in the allocation of resources (Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005). Homans (1961) explained that fairness exists in the exchange when the perceived cost that individuals incur is proportional to the perceived rewards which they get in return. This notion of fairness was further developed by Adams (1965). According to Adams (1965), distributive justice deals with equity. When seen in the context of exchange theory, equity is the equal value of the inputs and outputs of the actors involved in the exchange. Individuals in an exchange relationship therefore, experience inequity or distributive injustice if they do not receive proportional resources in their relationship. Adams (1965) claimed that the reactions to perceived inequity or unfairness within the exchange relationship can include loss of motivation, dissatisfaction and distress. However, distress can have a positive effect, stimulating individuals to restore fairness by improving their inputs and outputs or the inputs and outputs of the other individuals in the exchange relationship (Adams, 1965).

From the organisational justice perspective on the other hand, scholars such as Cropanzano and Greenberg (1997) found that perceived distributive justice influenced workers' satisfaction with the benefits they receive and their work performance. However, individual differences can affect the perception of distributive justice in the workplace. Hofmans (2012) found in his study that individuals who do not place much emphasis on performance tend to be more sensitive to equity when distributing resources. Their sensitivity to equity allows them to equally distribute resources in the workplace compared to individuals who tend to emphasise performance. This shows

that individuals react differently when distributing resources and benefitting from such distribution. Other scholars such as Scher and Heise (1993) and Barclay, Skarlicki and Pugh (2005) criticised this form of justice for placing too much emphasis on the individuals and neglecting emotions and interactions, which formed the basis of justice and fairness. They argued that emotions, which arise through interaction, influence the way individuals interpret fairness or justice. For example, Homans (1958) claimed that individuals might react angrily when they perceived that they have been under-rewarded or might feel guilty when perceived they have been over-rewarded. Thus, individuals who feel guilty or angry during an exchange situation might perceive the exchange as unjust. However, this all depends on how individuals perceive reward during an exchange. Homans (1958) stated clearly that what is received should be perceived to be equivalent to what is returned. It can be noted that all the aforementioned elements of social exchanges are based on perceptions and hence largely differ from person to person.

Within the workplace, Blau (1964, 2017) suggested the need for balance in the contribution of an individual with those of other team members. He argued that the balance in an exchange relationship is very important and lack of it may negatively affect the process of exchange. This is because an individual who performs an action to another party in an exchange relationship expects the action to be reciprocated.

This element of exchange discussed in the foregoing is referred to as reciprocity which will be addressed in greater detail in the next section.

2.3.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is regarded as one of the fundamental ideas of the SET. This is because reciprocity is the core concept upon which many of the exchange rules of SET are built. Homans (1958) described reciprocity as a form of exchange between two or more parties where returns are expected over time to balance the exchange. According to Gouldner (1960), this form of exchange depends on the perceived value of the resources received. Resources involve things that are transacted among people. Foa and Foa (1980) presented six types of resources exchanged in a relationship: goods, status, services, money, love and information. These were further categorised into two dimensions: The first dimension is particularism versus universalism which deals with

how the value of a resource is affected by the people exchanging it. Money and love are the resources that fall under this category. Money is considered less particularistic in the sense that it maintains a constant value which allows it to be universally exchanged in monetary transactions among different people. However, when it comes to love people tend to select the people they want to exchange their affection with, thus love is considered to be a more particularistic resource compared to money.

The second dimension is concreteness versus symbolism which deals with the tangibility of resources. Goods and services are the resources that fall under this category since these are both tangible resources that can be exchanged. Status and information on the other hand, are less concrete and less visible, hence fall under the classification of intangible resources.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) extended Foa and Foa's (1980) resource theory within the organisational context. They differentiated between resources based on economic and socioemotional outcomes. They classified the concrete and universal resources such as money and goods as economic outcomes. Money and goods are tangible and can be exchanged within a short period of time. In contrast, they associated particularistic and symbolic resources such as love and status with socioemotional outcomes. Love and status are connected to an individual's social needs thus exchanged in a more open manner. One of the shortcomings of the resource theory pointed out by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) was that little had been uncovered regarding the norms underlying the exchange of each resource within the organisational perspective. Thus, it would be useful to gain an understanding of how exchange rules for each resource would affect the exchange relationships in organisations. Despite this limitation, the strength of the resource theory is that it shows the plausibility and the range of different resources being exchanged in a relationship. Consequently, this has stimulated the researcher's interest in exploring the symbolic exchanges of information such as knowledge, skills, suggestions and ideas, as these types of resources potentially produce symbolic benefits from the exchange (Foa and Foa, 1980).

Resources that are perceived to be highly valuable may create in the receiver the obligation to reciprocate. There are two forms of reciprocity explained by Gouldner

(1960): homeomorphic reciprocity whereby the resources exchanged are identical and heteromorphic reciprocity whereby the resources exchanged are different but perceived to have equivalent value. Maintaining the balance is difficult yet very crucial in the exchange. When one party gives less or more or nothing in return in an exchange relationship then reciprocity does not happen which may lead to unequal exchange (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964, 2017). Although, the rule of reciprocity morally maintains that obligation is created when one-actor benefits from another actor, it nevertheless places the obligation on individuals to reciprocate only when they are able. As a result, individuals may mostly relate with individuals who they think might reciprocate and relate less with individuals who they assume will not benefit them much (Gouldner, 1960). This might affect the ones who are less capable of reciprocating back as people will not be interested in building relationships with them. A study by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) showed that individuals with high perception of exchange maintain stronger relationships than individuals with low perception of exchange. According to the authors, this is because individuals with high orientation to exchange, care more about the need to return favours and obligations than individuals with low orientation to exchange.

Cook, Molm and Yamagishi (1993) criticised this norm of reciprocal exchange. They argue that there is potential for substantial risk and uncertainty under this type of exchange, as actors are not aware of when or how the other party will reciprocate. Blau (1964, 2017) however, perceives that such uncertainty and risk contribute to the growth of commitment in the exchange. From the social exchange perspective, commitment has been defined by Cook and Emerson (1978) as a mutual bond that requires individuals to repeatedly engage in exchange with the same actors. There is commitment when actors frequently engage in exchange in a relationship. This will enable actors to build relationships that will allow them to be committed to one another (Molm, Takahashi and Peterson, 2000). However, since reciprocity in this context does not involve any form of agreement or negotiated terms for the exchange, it will therefore require more time and trust for reciprocal exchange to take place. Trust is regarded as an important element of reciprocal exchange.

2.3.3 Trust

Robinson (1996) referred to trust as the perception or belief held by an individual relative to the behaviour of another individual. McAllister (1995) distinguished trust into two dimensions, cognitive and affective trust. Cognitive trust deals with the assessment of a person's integrity, competence and reliability. Newman, Kiazad, Miao and Cooper (2014) found cognitive trust to play a vital role in the exchange relationships of followers and leaders. Affective trust on the other hand deals with the socio-emotional exchanges such as care, consideration and concern (Colquitt, LaPine, Pocco, Zapata and Rich, 2012). Dirks and Ferrin (2002) extended these dimensions of trust within the workplace. He categorised trust based on two perspectives, which are character-based and relationship-based. Character-based relationships deal with trust-related issues that are based on character. For example, the character of the executives in the senior management level of an organisation is considered relevant to the junior managers in the lower management levels. This is because senior management executives make decisions that can directly impact on salaries, work conditions and even promotions of the junior managers in the lower management levels. Thus, the junior managers in the lower management levels draw conclusions based on the willingness or trustworthiness of senior management executives as these significantly affect them.

The relationship-based perspective on the other hand, deals with the nature of the relationship between managers and their employees focusing on how the employees perceive the impact of their relationship with their managers. For example, the obligations and the flow of exchanges between managers and employees can build trust. Mejia, Aday, Phelan and Yi (2016) further developed this from the international assignment perspective. They conducted a survey of Western expatriate hotel managers and Chinese subordinate employees using the Chinese value of reciprocity known as *renqing* and the Chinese value of relationship known as *guanxi* to understand conflict avoidance and social support. The study revealed that the willingness of Chinese HCNs to support the Western expatriates is closely related to the Chinese societal values of *guanxi* (relationship), *renqing* (reciprocity) and trust. Thus, for the Western expatriates to receive information from their subordinates that will benefit them, they must understand and adopt the Chinese societal norms such as

accepting a conflict avoidance style relationship (*guanxi*) and reciprocity (*renqing*). This will help them to establish relationships based on trust and respect with their subordinates, and such relationships will enable the subordinates to provide social support that will benefit the expatriates. The researchers called on future researchers to test these Chinese norms; *guanxi* (relationship) and *renqing* (reciprocity) on a larger sample to enhance or expand the model.

The preceding discussion indicates that exchange relationships are established based on trust, thus trust is regarded as an important element in exchanges, which is further discussed in relation to the development of the SET.

2.4 Development of SET

This section presents social and economic exchanges (Blau, 1964, 2017; Zafirovski, 2005; Clark and Mills, 2012); psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Alcover et al., 2017; Pate and Scullion, 2018); and power differentials (Emerson, 1962; 1976; Blau, 1964, 2017), as other fundamental aspects of SET that were perceived to have contributed towards the development of the theory.

2.4.1 Social and Economic Exchanges

Blau (1964, 2017) contributed to the development of the SET by explaining social and economic exchanges taking place between actors from a theoretical perspective. He claimed that social exchanges are based on feelings of trust and obligation therefore require time to take place. Such types of exchanges produced benefits to individuals involved in the exchange. The individuals providing the benefits expect such benefits to be returned if there is a need to. However, the expected benefits returned must not be the exact same value of what was received. Benefits are defined as the valuable or useful things that one party decides to give to another party in a relationship (Clark and Mills, 2012). Examples of such include, information, services, encouraging someone to achieve their goal, compliments, support and many others.

Economic exchanges differ from social exchanges as these are forms of transactions such as money and other products exchanged for the exact same value as received (Blau, 1964, 2017). Accordingly, such types of exchange in relationships are generally short-term small transactions that require a minimum amount of trust because they are

less risky. Zafirovski (2005) however, critiqued this form of exchange because he claimed that economic exchange is governed by economic principles that qualify exchanges as forms of market transactions. This therefore would suggest that SET is required to adopt or rely on economic concepts such as cost, reward, and profit rather than sociological ideas, in which the theory was rooted. Zafirovsk (2005) further argued that since SET is claimed to have been developed from sociology and exchanges are not entirely economic, then exchanges can also be viewed from the societal perspective since they are embedded in social interactions taking place in the society. Homans (1958) however, claimed that all social and economic exchange strategies are based on economic principles. For example, as discussed earlier, he explains the different forms of exchange resulting from social processes based on applied economic concepts such as reward, cost and distributive justice.

It was noted that SET emerged from the field of sociology, during the early period of inception but the main motive of SET was economical which came in the form of transactions rather than sociological in the form of relationships. As such, SET was viewed as a strategy to maximise individual self-interest rather than accounting for trust-based relationships between two actors (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964). In the context of the work environment, Blau (1964) held the sociological perspective that the relationship between employer and employee or individual and other group members were built on a subjective cost-benefit exchange. Although he applied social concepts such as trust and personal obligations to explain exchanges, he nevertheless referred to both social and economic exchanges as forms of transactions as these were based on a subjective cost-benefit exchange.

The foregoing suggests that the early conceptualisation of SET placed more emphasis on economic interest rather than on social motives. Blau (1994) later expanded the theory by considering other social motives that could influence the exchange apart from economic interest. This shifted the interest of other researchers to explore social exchanges in relationships (Cropanzano and Rupp, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2012; Clark and Mills, 2012; Van Knippenberg, Van Prooijen and Sleebos, 2015). Clark and Mills, 2012) claimed that social exchanges are forms of relationships because most of the exchanges taking place are in the form of benefits and not in the form of monetary value. Individuals in such exchange relationships provide information, services,

encouragement, support, assistance etc. which can be beneficial to the receiver. This supports the assumption that they will receive something of benefit in return. In the context of organisations, Van Pnippenberg et al. (2015) explained that individual exchange relationships are connected to individual differences because they found that employees who perceived themselves collectively are unlikely to base their relationship with other employees on social exchange. This is because social exchange relationships are most likely based on self-interest and group-oriented collectivist employees are more concerned with the collective interest of all rather than the personal benefit they receive from a relationship. On the contrary, employees who perceived themselves as independent are more likely to base their relationship with other employees on social exchange because they are more concerned with the personal benefit they receive in a relationship.

Regardless of social or economic motives, different interpretations of exchanges and relationships exist, as a result of numerous theoretical ambiguities regarding the nature of social exchanges (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Cropanzano et al., 2017). The view of the researcher of the present study, is that regardless of whether SET adopts sociological ideas or economic principles, the relevance of the theory is that it suggests and accounts for different forms of exchange relationships that might occur in the workplace which is consistent with the aims of the study. Thus, the researcher has pursued further understanding of the nature and dynamics of social exchange relationships that occur at workplace.

According to Blau (1964, 2017), the nature of the exchanges depends on how the actor understands and interprets the exchange relationships. However, researchers such as Liden, Sparrow and Wayne (1997); Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005); and Cropanzano et al. (2017) pointed out that not much had been done to understand the process and rules of such exchanges. Thus, very little is known about the rules employed and the processes through which such exchanges take place as the fundamental ideas governing the theory are not well identified and integrated entirely. As such, numerous studies were not able to capture all the fundamental concepts comprising the theory and how the exchanges took place. This shows a gap in the academic body of knowledge. In this regard, the researcher identified an opportunity for this present study to make an important contribution to the theory.

2.4.2 Psychological Contract

From the psychological contract perspective, researchers had provided a more nuanced picture of the process of social exchange between different parties in the workplace (Rousseau, 1989; Cole et al., 2002; Guest, 2004; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Wikhamn, 2012; Alcover et al., 2017; Pate and Scullion, 2018; Davis and Van der Heijden, 2018). The psychological contract is defined by Guest (2004) as a two-way equal exchange that takes place between the employer and the employee. The contract is created when the employer and employee perceive the obligation to reciprocate. Thus, exchange happens when employers provide the necessary tools or support to their employees and in return, the employees feel obliged to achieve their organisational goals and fulfill their contractual obligations. However, one of the limitations of this type of employment contract is that the contracts are hardly and explicitly discussed and agreed upon equally between the employers and employees. This may subject many employees to be under the authority of their employers who may at times control the work environment since they make most of the decisions regarding the work conditions, salaries and benefits without always clearly negotiating with the employees (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006).

However, scholars such as Blau (1964, 2017) and Molm (2003) suggested the notion of negotiated exchanges that can take place between actors. Negotiated exchanges refer to agreements, which are based upon the conditions of the relationships between two parties (Molm, 2003). Such exchanges are less risky since they are based on agreements that assure the mutual reciprocation of the parties involved. This led to the emergence of idiosyncratic employment agreements (I-deals) that enable the opportunity for employees to individually negotiate certain aspects of their employment such as salaries and wages, working hours, travel expenses and career development with their employers (Rousseau, 2005). I-deals are personalised actual work agreements negotiated between employees and their employers (Rousseau, Ho and Greenberg, 2006; Liao, Wayne and Rousseau, 2014). These negotiated agreements benefit the interests of both parties as it can be used as an effective tool for the employers to attract and retain their employees, whilst for the employees it can be used as a tool that will further motivate them to work in the organisation (Liao et al., 2014; Davis and Van der Heijden, 2018).

I-deals show just one among the many kinds of agreements that can be forged between employer and employee arising out of negotiated exchanges. Regardless of agreements, the point is that relationships comprise of multiple actors thus, scholars such as Marks (2001); Cullinane and Dunson (2006); Kumarika Perera, Yin Teng Chew and Nielsen (2016); Alcover et al. (2017); and Pate and Scullion (2018) maintained that employees engaged in multiple psychological contracts with other employees within the organisation. For example, employees can maintain exchange relationships with line managers, senior managers, HR managers as well as other coworkers in the organisation. From the expatriates' perspective, Kumarika Perera et al. (2016) indicated that expatriates engaged in contract relationships with their host and parent company thus, maintaining more or less even multiple psychological contracts. They constructed a model of expatriate failure from a dual approach in which they assumed that expatriates maintained a dual relationship with both the parent and the host company. Thus, they theorised that expatriates may engage in psychological contracting with both parties that can give rise to multiple relations. Since the expatriates had to fulfil their obligations to both the parent and the subsidiary companies then it is expected that both the parent and subsidiary company also had to sufficiently fulfil their obligations to the expatriates to ensure success. Failure to fulfil the obligations can affect the expatriate and the business. For example, violation of the contract can lead to loss of trust between the expatriate and the organisation which in turn could affect the work engagement of the expatriate in the organisation. Kumarika et al. (2016) called on future researchers to test the validity of the constructs and further investigate and refine the model. Hence the relationship between the expatriates, the parent and the subsidiary company should be examined to better understand expatriate success.

Pate and Scullion (2018) also applied the psychological contract to explore the multiple employment relationships of flexpatriates or employees who are sent outside their home country for a short-term project assignment (Mayerhofer, Hartmann and Herbert, 2004). Pate and Scullion (2018) used different approaches derived from the literature of global staffing and psychological contract to offer insights into both flexpatriates and their employers. As a result, they were able to shed more light on the implication of flexpatriates' psychological contract isolation, the impact of line managers on the psychological contracts of flexpatriates and the implications of lack

of involvement of HR managers with flexpatriates. Thus, they called on future researchers to investigate the implications of HR practices such as recruitment on flexpatriates' contracts. One of the strengths of the study was that the researchers were able to provide further insight into how employers shaped the psychological contracts of their employees. Another contribution of the study was that the researchers were able to provide a better understanding of flexpatriates' multiple psychological contracts. On the negative side however, the lack of studies on flexpatriates posed a limitation to the study as it affected the interpretation of the subject by the researchers.

The concept of psychological contract integrates both the personal and the professional aspects of the key actors who are involved in the relationship and puts premium on value in exchange whether these are economic or social in nature. It also contributes to a better understanding of social relationships since it explains conditions under which exchanges take place. However, failure to adhere to the agreements of the contract can ruin the relationship between the employer and the employee to the extent that the factors leading to the formation of the agreement such as trust, relationship and reciprocal exchange are affected. This can lead to feelings of disloyalty and distress on the part of the party that perceived that the agreement has been violated (Rousseau, 1989). The work of Tekleab and Taylor (2003), which examined the perceptions of employees on the violation of the psychological contract by employers, further revealed that both the employer and the employee respond negatively to perceived contract violations.

The psychological contract is closely related with SET as both account for exchanges from an obligatory perspective. However, both differ in the manner that obligations take place. In SET, obligations are established as a result of benefits received (Blau, 1964, 2017). In the psychological contract however, obligations result from perceived promises to perform an action (Rousseau, 1989).

2.4.3 Power Relations in SET

Emerson (1962; 1976) contributed to the empirical development of the SET as a framework from a sociological perspective. Unlike Blau (1964, 2017) who saw social exchange as a theory, Emerson (1962) viewed social exchange as a framework that

can be used to explain the movement of resources among actors. He also viewed reciprocity as the main element upon which exchange relationships take place; however, the continuity of these exchanges between actors depends on power balance in the relationship. His contribution to SET revolves around power and dependency in the exchanges of resources among actors. Emerson (1962) defined power in relation to dependence in an exchange relationship. The power X has over Y in a relationship is as a result of the dependence of Y on X for resources. Thus, he argued that power differentials among the parties involved in the relationship can affect the exchange to the point that the relationships manage to survive based on interdependence. Young-Ybarra and Wiersema (1999) further developed this and argued that there is a tendency of emerging dependency when resources are provided by few suppliers. For example, X may be receiving services from Y and other suppliers whilst Y on the other hand receives services from X only. This shows that Y will be dependent on X as it has no other alternative supply for services. This can therefore affect the balance in an exchange relationship because one party benefits more than the other. In balanced exchanges, win-win, can only take place in relationships when the actors involved in the exchange equally depend on each other for resources (Cook and Yamagishi, 1992).

One of the shortcomings of this account of power in relationships is that the less powerful actors might try to reduce their dependency on the powerful actors by looking for alternative relations for valued resources (Cook and Rice, 2003). The actors with less power were found to be highly trustworthy actors by Schilke, Reimann and Cook (2015) thus, were motivated to look for other powerful exchange partners who are as trustworthy to ease the issue of their dependency. However, Schilke et al. (2015) found that powerful actors placed less trust in the exchange relationship because they have other alternative exchange partners. This indicates that the powerful actors were more likely to engage in multiple psychological contracts. A limitation of this account is that it is not applicable to all cultures because people vary in their perception of power-distance and invariably in ways that they trust and accept power imbalances.

The aforementioned demonstrates the conceptualisation of power based on dependencies in relationships. Emerson (1962) claimed that dependence in

relationships can occur in different forms of power. There exist different bases of power. French and Raven (1959) distinguished between five forms of power. These five bases of power are; reward power, occurs when X perceived that Y has the ability to reward her; expert power, occurs when X perceived that that Y has some superior knowledge or credible information in a specific area; legitimate power, occurs when X perceived that Y has the absolute right to prescribe her behaviour; coercive power, occurs when X perceived that Y has the ability to punish her; referent power, occurs based on X's identification with Y. French and Raven (1959) attempted to differentiate the bases of the power with the assumption that each type of power leads to a different influence. On the other hand, Emerson's power dependence relationship theory explains influences between actors, how the differences in power results from actor's dependency on other actors for resources.

Homans (1958) and Blau (1964, 2017) also viewed power as an important component in the exchange of resources. Although both explained power in terms of control, Blau (1964) viewed power and exchange as separate. He defined power as all the influences together with those exercised in exchange relationships that force one party to impose its will on the other party to exact compliance. Homans (1974), on the other hand, regarded power as a type of exchange whereby one party receives less than the other in the exchange. He claimed that actors with less power benefit more from the relationship than high power actors. Consider a situation where X is more powerful than Y. If Y depends on the benefits provided by X, the dependency will cause X to control Y. Thus, the party with more power will receive less benefit from the relationship but will have more control over the relationship. One of the advantages of viewing power as exchange is that it highlights the essence of power as relational (Baldwin, 1978). However, one of the shortcomings of this view is that not much exchange will take place in power imbalance relationships as one party benefits more than the other in the relationship (Molms, 1989). This is because the more balanced the power, the better the distribution of exchanges taking place.

Homans (1958), French and Raven (1959), Emerson (1962) and Blau (1964) all explored exchanges in power relationships at a micro level specifically, looking at individuals and small groups hence one of the criticisms pointed out is that the SET fails to look at power imbalances at an institutional level or from a social structural

perspective (Zafirovski, 2005). Specifically, the theory only takes account of exchanges in relations to power, personal relations, reciprocity, and trust at a micro level. Coleman (1988) criticised both Homan and Blau for applying SET at a micro level limiting the exchange of resources only between individuals and small groups. In looking at exchanges only from one perspective, they failed to recognise the interchange of resources between social systems such as cultural, political and economic systems, as well as social structures such as institutions. This provides a deeper understanding of the connection between micro and macro exchanges and the types of exchanges taking place between the two levels. However, Blau (1994) himself later admitted that macro level exchanges should be investigated. He claimed though that micro level exchanges provide the basis of understanding the macro exchanges. In a review of the literature on SET undertaken by Cropanzano et al. (2017), they were able to pinpoint the issues that limited the effectiveness of the theory. They argued that some of the social exchange constructs overlapped with each other and researchers had failed to differentiate between negative and positive value of these constructs thus leading to inexplicit explanations of behaviour. These issues all occurred in the one-dimensional framework of the theory as well. Cropanzano et al. (2017) suggested an additional dimension, which will help social exchange researchers look at exchanges from a two-dimensional perspective. Alcover et al. (2017) also advocated a multiple foci exchange relationship approach, one that contributes to more structured constructs of social exchange, which further contributes to a better understanding of exchanges between two parties.

In the context of this study, the researcher views exchanges both from a micro-level, meso-level and macro-level perspective. This is due to the researcher's interest in investigating exchanges between the two parties in the organisation, which in turn are expected to benefit the expatriates, the HCNs, the construction industry and the Nigerian economy.

To summarise, the fundamental ideas of SET (reciprocity, resources, obligation, distributive justice, social and economic exchanges, trust and power) have contributed immensely to the understanding of resource exchanges that take place between actors in social relationships. However, little has been done to empirically test these ideas in their entirety due to their wide scope. To make it easier for researchers working with

these concepts, Ali (2013) divided the ideas that comprise SET into three groups. The first group involves the factors that lead to the establishment of the exchange. Resources such as goods, services and information are the factors that motivate actors to engage in exchange relationships. The second group involves the characteristics of the exchange such as reciprocity, obligations, relationships, contracts and social exchanges. Finally, the third group involves concepts used in the management of the exchange such as trust and power. Thus, the researcher of this current study found this classification of concepts to be noteworthy as these define what is exchanged. Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to comprehend how the concepts can be applied in exploring the relationship and exchanges between the expatriates and HCNs.

The tenets of reciprocity and support make the SET compatible with this present research. Plus the notion of power differential will further enable the researcher to understand the relationships and social exchanges taking place. Although a limitation of the theory is that it encompasses a wide range of exchange factors, a strength is that it allows for investigations of these factors within specific contexts. A further strength of the theory is that it enables the researcher to critically evaluate the nature of the benefits derived in each exchange situation. Thus, SET offers a useful theoretical framing which allows for an in-depth investigation into the nature of the social exchange between HCNs and Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

2.5 Social Exchange from the International Assignment Perspective

The broad applicability of SET means that it has been used to underpin a number of studies, such as organisational justice (Konovsky, 2000; Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler and Schminke, 2001); organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski and Rhoades, 2002; Van Bakel et al., 2017); leadership (Liden et al., 1997; Cropanzano et al., 2017); networks (Au and Fukuda, 2002; Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve and Tsai, 2004); and psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989; Cole et al., 2002; Guest, 2004; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Wikhamn, 2012; Alcover et al., 2017; Pate and Scullion, 2018; Davis and Van der Heijden, 2018). Notably, many of these studies focused on the exchange of resources between two or more parties and very little had been uncovered on the applicability of

SET in the context of IHRM. This is also indicative of the existence of a gap in the academic body of knowledge.

From the leader-member exchange (LMX) perspective, Kraimer, Wayne, and Jaworski (2001) conducted a survey that investigated supervisor and employee's interpersonal exchange relationships. They found LMX, which is an exchange between leaders and other members of the organisation (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), to be negatively related to adjustment although it positively facilitated performance. This was supported by Liden, Wayne and Sparrows' (2000) study on job interpersonal relationships and work outcomes where they found that LMX contributed significantly to organisational commitment and performance. Chen (2010) further investigated social exchanges and expatriate adjustment and found that organisational justice, defined as perceived fairness in the organisation (Greenberg, 1990), positively influenced social exchange which in turn had a significant impact on expatriate adjustment. Accordingly, expatriates perceived the existence of LMX in the host company when there is fairness in the selection, training and performance evaluation process. This made expatriates perceive that their contracts had been fulfilled and this positively contributed to their adjustment. Thus, justice in the organisation contributed to LMX, which further enhanced the expatriates' adjustment in the foreign country.

All the surveys adopted cross-sectional designs that prevented them from assessing causality. Thus, Liden et al. (2000) and Kraimer et al. (2001) recommended that longitudinal studies need to be carried out by future researchers to further determine or predict causal issues from the studies. Kraimer et al. (2001) also recommended that future studies investigate other support systems and exchanges from subordinates or other individuals outside the organisation's perspectives. Therefore, investigating exchanges from the expatriates and HCNs' perspective will add to and enrich the existing knowledge in this area.

The foregoing studies reviewed were carried out from a positivist perspective where the use of structured methodology that focused on quantification limited the investigation to seek patterns and causality in the exchange relationships. This highlights another a methodological gap with respect to qualitative research.

Therefore, investigating these relationships from the HCNs' lived experiences using an interpretivist approach will significantly place this study in the social context and contribute a deeper understanding of the impact of these relationships on the HCN and the organisation as well.

2.6 Resources Exchanged Between the HCNs and the Expatriates

Based on the previous discussion, in this literature review the researcher assumes that relationships are influenced by social exchange and vice versa and that the expatriates and the HCNs working together contribute to such an exchange. This is because the relationship and interaction between the expatriates and the HCNs denote a form of engagement where multiple exchanges of benefits can take place. On the negative side however, failure of one actor to reciprocate the benefit received can adversely affect the other actor and the process of the exchange. As Aselage and Eisenberger (2003) indicate, exchanges between two parties in a relationship become well established if both parties involved are willing to share resources with each other.

In the light of the above mentioned, the researcher further assumes that multiple exchanges of information such as knowledge, skills, suggestions and ideas took place in the study context since the Italians interacted with other Nigerians outside of work as well. It was found in both Documents Three and Four that the Italian expatriates reported that they did not only have a good relationship with the HCNs but with the local people too, both providing them with support and information regarding work and other social aspects of life in Nigeria. Therefore, the researcher is interested in finding out whether the expatriates reciprocated this support by providing other valued resources that benefited HCNs working with them, specifically their skills and career development.

2.7 Factors that Influence the Exchange Relationships Between the HCNs and the Expatriates

One of the factors that can influence the exchange relationship of HCNs and the expatriates is cultural values. Differences in cultural values can create misconceptions that can negatively affect interaction and relationships (Harrison, Price and Bell, 1998). This is because values determine the nature of relationships among individuals

in multicultural settings (Ravlin, Thomas and Ilsev, 2000) and influence the processes of social relationships (Blau, 1964). Values were described by Hofstede (1984) as conscious and unconscious feelings in human behaviour which sometimes differ even among members of the same cultural group. Values are regarded as one of the key aspects of the African culture that links the African diaspora. Shared values are expressed in terms of neighbourliness, hospitality, reciprocity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining the community with justice in Africa (Nussbaum, 2003). Nigerians are group-oriented as Nigeria is a collectivist society (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). It appears that this collectivism is not exclusive to the HCN in-group as some of the expatriates interviewed in Document Three revealed that the Nigerians socially supported them through such kinds of shared values in the form of friendship, assistance and shared information. The expatriates noted this too which contributed to their perceived successful adjustment in the Nigerian society. Shared values as discussed by Blau (1964, 2017) contribute to bonding of individuals in the society that creates feelings of attraction. Blau (1964, 2017) referred to attraction as the tendency of being interested in other individuals for the purpose of reward. He explained further that individuals are attracted to one another when they expect that associating with each other can be rewarding. Social attraction therefore enables individuals to form relationships from which they will benefit. Thus, social attraction instigates the processes of social exchange. The nature of the exchange depends on the relationship. Since the interviews in Document Three revealed that the Italians perceived to have interacted well with the locals, this will therefore enhance exchanges of information among them, which will benefit the expatriates, the HCNs and the organisation.

However, ethnocentric behaviour can limit the exchanges between the expatriates and the HCNs. Ethnocentric behavior has been defined by Axelrod and Hammond (2003, p.3) as 'cooperation with members of one's own group, and noncooperation toward members of other groups'. A high degree of ethnocentric behaviour results in identification with one's own group and discrimination towards people on the outside (Perreault and Bourhis, 1999). Thus, both the expatriates and the HCNs with a high degree of ethnocentric behaviour can influence the relationship taking place between the expatriates and the HCNs. Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black and Ferzandi

(2006) pointed out that expatriates with ethnocentric behaviours found it difficult to relate and work with the HCNs. In a study of HCNs' ethnocentrism and expatriate work adjustment, Templer (2010) found a negative relationship between expatriates' work adjustment and the HCN subordinates' ethnocentric behaviour. This is because when HCNs are ethnocentric, the expatriates will find it difficult to relate and work with them. Florkowski and Fogel (1999) pointed out that for successful working relationships to occur, the HCNs must display positive behaviour and attitude towards the expatriates. The HCNs' behaviour and attitude towards the expatriates depends on certain expectations that the HCNs place on the expatriates (Zeira, 1979). For example, some HCNs might anticipate expatriates to relate and work based on the host country's culture. The inability of the expatriates to understand and abide by the host country culture can therefore make the HCNs display ethnocentric behaviour towards the expatriates.

Cultural norms and values can affect the ability of the HCNs to be open to the expatriates. For instance, Harrison and Michailova (2011) found in their study that female western expatriates working in the United Arab Emirates mostly sought support from their expatriate community because of the cultural values and norms that prevented them from interacting with the Emiratis. Therefore, expatriates will find it difficult to interact and build exchange relationships with the local people who are ethnocentric in nature. Varma, Pichler and Budhwar (2011) found in their study that HCNs tend to relate more with expatriates who were perceived to share similar values than the expatriates who were perceived to share different values. A study conducted by Peltokorpi (2007) also showed how differences in cultural values affected the interaction of Japanese and Nordic expatriates in Japan. The findings from Document Three on ethnocentrism revealed that only one expatriate was ethnocentric whilst the findings from Document Four on ethnocentrism indicated the neutrality of the HCNs as they cooperated with the expatriates due to the absence of resistance to work with their foreign colleagues. The HCNs neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea that they are ethnocentric but rather they were more accommodating in their stance towards the Italian expatriates. Hence, it is noteworthy to consider how this finding may have a potential effect on the relationship between the Italians and the HCNs and limit the exchanges of resources (information) among them. This led the researcher to

also investigate the benefits derived by the HCNs in their exchange relations with the Italian expatriates.

The organisational environment is another factor that can also influence exchange relationships taking place between expatriates and the local people. Farh, Bartol, Shapiro and Shin (2010) pointed out that expatriates limited their interaction and the amount of support they received from the local people if their organisations provided them with adequate information about the host country. On the contrary, the findings from Document Three revealed that the expatriates received adequate support from their organisation and colleagues but still found the need to interact and depend on the local people for information about the culture, work and host country. A study by Shen (2010) also revealed that expatriates limited the support they sought from the local people when they have a large expatriate community in the host country. The expatriates interviewed in Document Three mentioned that the expatriate community was large, and they provided support to each other. However, they considered that the support from local people contributed more to their adjustment. This can contribute to exchanges between the expatriates and the HCNs. From these exchanges, the researcher assumed the plausibility that expatriates might have reciprocated by sharing important resources with the HCNs in the form of information that will benefit the HCNs and the organisation. This motivated the researcher to further investigate how the expatriates reciprocated, and the resources exchanged thereof.

The relationship of the HCNs and Italian expatriates in Nigeria seen in the light of the foregoing theoretical concepts and findings indicated that a form of mutuality had been established between these key actors over time as a consequence of their adaptation to relating and working with each other. This type of mutuality invariably involved some form of exchange between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. Thus, SET is a useful focal theory for this study as it helps to account for the dynamic nature of the exchange relationships between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates and highlights how this impacts on the career development of HCNs.

2.8 Research Gap

A review of the literature on expatriate adjustment on international assignment revealed that there is a dearth of studies that directly investigated the impact of

expatriates on the HCNs. Takeuchi (2010) critically reviewed the expatriate adjustment literature from multiple perspective with a view to understanding expatriate adjustment from a holistic frame. Accordingly, he found only one study (Shay and Baack, 2004) on the impact of expatriate adjustment on HCNs. This study reported that expatriates' work adjustment was significantly related to HCNs' organisational commitment and performance. A more recent study by Samuel and Adeniyi (2015) on expatriates and their local counterparts in the workplace reveals a positive relationship between expatriate managers and local managerial capacity development in Nigeria which significantly impact the performance of the organisation. This showed that both the organisation and HCNs can benefit from the expatriates. Takeuchi therefore called for future researchers to address this gap as most of the studies carried out recently investigated the influence of HCNs on expatriates. Such studies include the works of Toh and DeNisi (2003; 2005; 2007); Rizwan et al. (2011); Arman and Aycan (2013); Mahajan and Toh (2014); and Van Bakel, et al. (2017). More recent studies by Vance et al. (2014) and Van Bakel (2018) also called for future studies to address this gap.

Furthermore, a review of the literature regarding the relationship between expatriates and HCNs showed that most of the studies carried out from this perspective focused on how relationships between expatriates and the local people contributed to the performance and effectiveness of the expatriates (Johnson, Kristof-Brown, Van Vianen, De Pater and Klein, 2003; Liu and Shaffer, 2005; Farh et al., 2010; Van Bakel et al., 2011; Van Bakel et al., 2017). These studies did not explore the consequences of these relationships for the organisation and the local people. Not much attention has been given to this area in the literature on international assignments even though the effects of such relationships benefit both the HCNs and the organisation. Wang and Varma (2018) examined the relationship of expatriates with HCNs and found that the interaction between the two actors is important to the effectiveness of their work. A study by Hsu (2012) also revealed how such relationships benefit the expatriates and HCNs. She conducted a survey on the transfer of knowledge between expatriates and HCNs and the influences of personal qualities on the relationship of expatriates and HCNs. She found that cultural intelligence (CQ) was important for both expatriates and HCNs. From the expatriates' perspective, she argued that it enabled them to assimilate with the HCNs easily when

it came to achieving organisational goals. On the other hand, the HCNs did not use their CQ to achieve their organisational goals, but rather CQ enabled them to overcome the cultural differences when interacting with expatriates. Some studies indicate though that CQ can also be used to achieve organisational goals (Ng, Van Dyne and Ang, 2012). In terms of networking, Hsu (2012) found that networking was positively correlated with some of the relationship qualities between expatriates and HCNs. In terms of knowledge transfer, Hsu found two factors namely, shared vision and the number of interactions to be significantly important for knowledge transfer. She claimed that HCNs accessed expatriates' knowledge through shared vision and the number of interactions with each other. One of the strengths of Hsu's (2012) study is that data was collected from the perspective of both expatriates and HCNs unlike other studies that focused only on the former's perspective. The small sample size as well as low response rate however, posed a limitation to her study. As part of her recommendation, Hsu (2012) called on more researchers to test her model further by using a larger sample.

Considering these findings, the researcher provides insights into the benefits gained and challenges faced by HCNs in their relationships with Italian expatriates in the work environment. This involves bridging the conceptual, substantive, theoretical, methodological, and contextual gaps in the literature. The lack of studies that investigated the impact of the relationship of expatriates on the HCNs in the work environment is indicative of the existence of a conceptual gap. Parallel to this is the paucity of content provided by research to date that explicitly deals with the consequences of interactions and relationships between HCNs and expatriates. This constitutes a substantive gap in the literature. The findings of this study provide new and fresh insights that adds to and enriches the existing data on expatriation and SET, thereby contributing new knowledge to help bridge the conceptual and substantive gaps, respectively. The findings are also of potential benefit to international HR practitioners, international labour authorities, local companies, foreign companies, and the construction industry as discussed in the next chapter of this study.

The review of literature on SET shows the existence of a gap in the academic body of knowledge. As discussed earlier, researchers such as Liden et al. (1997); Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005); and Cropanzano et al. (2017) pointed out that very little is

known about the rules employed and the processes through which exchanges take place as the fundamental ideas governing the SET are not well identified or defined and integrated entirely. As such, numerous studies were not able to capture all the fundamental concepts comprising the theory and how the exchanges took place. The researcher of this study also found very little had been uncovered in relation to the applicability of SET in the context of the relationships between expatriates and HCNs (Liden et al., 2000; Kraimer et al., 2001; Mejia et al., 2016). In this regard, the researcher identified an opportunity for this present study to make an important contribution to the theory.

As stated previously, most of studies undertaken on expatriates and HCNs adopted a positivist approach (Florkowski and Fogel, 1999; Hsu, 2012; Arman and Aycan, 2013; Reiche, 2013; Mahajan and Toh, 2014; Bonache et al., 2015; Van Bakel et al., 2017) and most studies on SET also adopted a positivist approach (Mills and Clark, 1982; Organ, 1990; Liden et al., 2000; Kraimer et al., 2001; Chen 2010; Ali 2013; Van Pnippenberg et al., 2015; Cropanzano et al., 2017). No study found in the literature reviewed by the researcher had adopted the interpretivist or hermeneutic approach. This indicates that previous researchers had more preference for the use of a quantitative method in investigating expatriation and expatriate relationships. This is a clear indication of a methodological gap. The design and implementation of a qualitative methodology used in this study helps bridge the methodological gap. The hermeneutic approach is well suited in portraying the exchanges in the relationships.

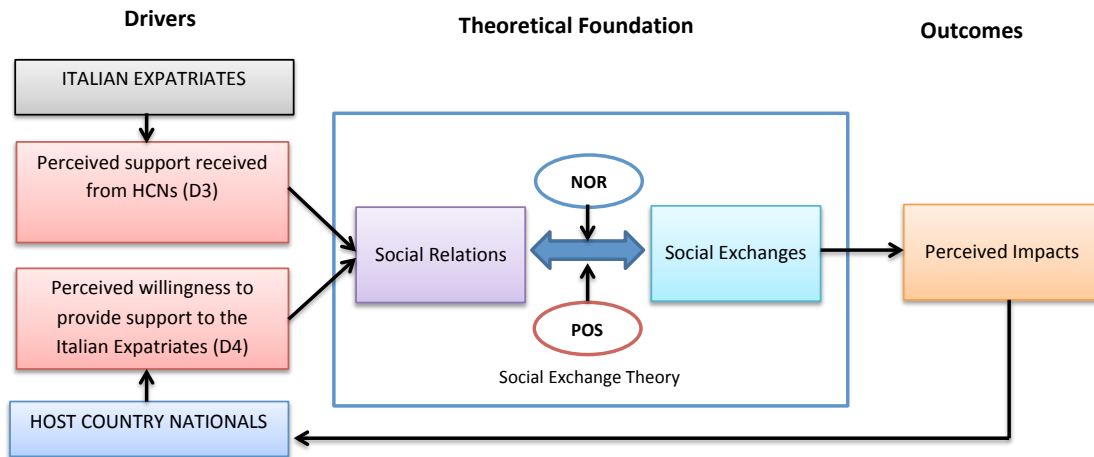
Lastly, most of the research reviewed was undertaken in the context of the Western world with very few studies undertaken in the local context of Nigeria, hence constituting a contextual gap. The researcher found very few studies that explored expatriation in Nigeria. Such studies focused on expatriation in relation to leadership (Ngozi, 2007); training (Okpara and Kabongo, 2011); compensation (Eboh, 2013); knowledge management (Samuel and Adeniyi, 2015); personality, gender and adjustment issues (Heirsmac, 2015; Heirsmac and Agwu, 2015; Okpara, 2016; 2017); and taxation (Global Mobility Service, 2018). All these studies were approached from a positivist perspective, which also indicates a methodological gap. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to enriching the regional data on expatriation and social exchange research and helps bridge the contextual, and methodological gap.

In view of the preceding discussion, this present research generates significant knowledge on the benefits derived and the challenges faced by the HCNs from their relationships with the expatriates. This contributes to expanding the existing knowledge on the management of both HCNs and expatriates. Consequently, this provides baseline information for international HR practices relating to formal training and development of both HCNs and expatriates, staffing and promotion criteria for both HCNs and expatriates.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The researcher chose to anchor the investigation in SET as it provides a useful starting point to investigate the forms of social exchange between the Italian expatriates and HCNs and the benefits derived as well as challenges encountered as they interrelate with each other in the organisation. First, the assumptions underpinning SET are that all actors in the network contribute to the exchange. This establishes the sustained flow of tangible or intangible resources between and among actors because of their mutual expectations thereby creating a norm of reciprocity (Coyle-Shapiro and Shore, 2007). The existence of a norm of reciprocity (NOR) was established in Documents Three and Four as the findings collectively indicated the reciprocal flow of information between the Italian expatriates and HCNs. Second, the theory is useful in helping to explain the behaviour of actors in the process, therefore it is more tenable in explaining outcomes of exchange established by perceived organisational support (POS) and affective commitment. POS develops through multiple interactions between actors involved (Stamper and Johlke, 2003). This was also established in Documents Three and Four as the collective findings revealed that that there was adequate organisational support given to the Italian expatriates that was complemented by the social and information support willingly extended to them by the HCNs. Overall, the findings of Documents Three and Four imply the existence of a NOR and POS making SET a compatible and encompassing theory in accounting not only for the social exchange in the relationship of the Italian expatriates and HCNs but also in explaining the outcomes of such relationships. Based on these premises, the conceptual framework of Document Five is shown in the following figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher Generated

2.9.1 Document Three: D3; Document Four: D4; Document Five:D5

The framework shows that the concept of Document Five (D5) was informed by the findings of Document Three (D3) and Document Four (D4), respectively. In theoretical terms, the relationship of the Italian expatriates and HCNs is shaped by the perceived support received by Italian expatriates from HCNs and the willingness of the HCNs to provide support to the Italian expatriates. Based on SET, relationships can be mediated by the NOR and POS both of which have been established in Documents Three and Four.

2.10 Conclusion

This literature review discussed SET as the theoretical anchor of the study by pointing out its relevance in accounting for social relationships in the workplace. Accordingly, the review put emphasis on the development of SET (i.e. social and economic exchange, psychological contract and power relations) and the elements of exchange (i.e. resources, distributive justice, reciprocity and trust) within the organisation. These fundamental ideas of SET (reciprocity, resources, obligation, distributive justice, social and economic exchanges, trust and power) have contributed immensely to the understanding of resource exchanges that take place between actors in social relationships.

This was followed by the discussion of SET in the context of international assignments, which centered on the resources exchanged between HCNs and expatriates and the factors that influence exchange between HCNs and expatriates. Thus, SET provides a useful starting point to investigate the forms of social exchange between the Italian expatriates and HCNs and the benefits derived as well as challenges encountered as they interrelate with each other in the organisation.

The final aspect of this chapter identified the contextual, conceptual, substantive, and methodological gaps in the literature and described the theoretical framework. The findings of the study contribute to enriching the regional data on the management of expatriates and HCNs and helps bridge the contextual gap, substantive and methodological gap. Furthermore, the findings of this study contribute new knowledge on the nature and dynamics of social exchange between the expatriates and the HCNs and the benefits derived and the challenges faced by the HCNs from their relationships with the expatriates. The review also provides the pertinent information used in the development of the study's conceptual framework. The next chapter presents the research context of this study.

Chapter 3: Research Context

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the details of the research context in terms of construction companies in Nigeria that participated in the study as well as expatriation and talent shortages in Nigeria.

As previously mentioned, very little has been done by way of research regarding the relationship of expatriates and HCNs in the context of Nigeria. This is indicative of a contextual gap. As such, the findings of this study help contribute to enriching the regional data on expatriation and social exchange research. This study is undertaken in the context of the construction industry in Nigeria in response to the identified research gaps. The choice of the research context also allowed the advantage of data collection because of the researcher's familiarity with the geographic context and the industry itself as she herself works in an engineering company. The Nigerian Construction and Civil Engineering sector is a very large industry that plays a very significant role in the development of the economy. Due to its size, it attracts quite a number of foreign companies. For the purpose of this study, two Italian construction companies agreed to participate in the study. The first company is referred to in this study by its pseudonym, B&P Company Ltd. This company has more than 50 years experience in the construction industry in Nigeria (B&P Construction, 2012). The second company referred to in this study, which goes by the pseudonym, B&S Construction Company, which has been operating in Nigeria since the 1960s (B&S Construction, 2009). There is facility of access to these Italian companies as the researcher's company in Nigeria conducts business with these Italian firms.

3.2 The Construction Industry in Nigeria and Expatriation

Construction companies need people with the right talent to achieve their organisational goals and objectives and the construction companies in Nigeria are no exception. This is on account of the nature of the industry that specialises in producing physical structures thereby requiring the expertise of highly skilled workers such as engineers, architects and qualified technicians and medium skilled workers including blue-collar skilled workers to work on the construction sites (Fellini, Ferro

and Fullin, 2007). Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) described talent as the ability of individuals to use their competencies (skills, knowledge, values for the job) to the maximum extent to contribute within their work place. There is a continuing shortage of global technical and managerial skills in developing countries (PricewaterhouseCoopers survey, 2012; European Development Finance Institutions, 2016). Nigeria is regarded as an underdeveloped country despite the abundance of natural and human resources (Ahunwan, 2002; African Development Bank Group Report, 2011). An underdeveloped country, according to Fernando (2011), refers to a country that has insufficient capital with respect to its human capital and natural resources. From an economic perspective, Fernando (2011) viewed it simply as a country that is economically poor. In the case of Nigeria, it has the largest economy in Africa (Oxford Business Group Report, 2015) but at the same time is faced with challenges in the areas of infrastructure and sustainable economic development. There is a poor transportation system, telecommunication, power and water supply (African Development Bank Group Report, 2011). The poor infrastructure might be attributed to weak technology and poor maintenance.

The Nigerian economy is heavily dependent on agriculture and oil and gas for its revenues (African Development Bank Group Report, 2011). As estimated by Oxford Business Group Report (2015), Nigeria was supposed to have experienced a GDP growth of 5.5% in 2015. However, the country did not experience such growth as reported by the PricewaterhouseCoopers survey (2016). Accordingly, the country only experienced a growth of 2.7% by the end of 2015. The GDP continued to grow at a slower pace in 2016 and 2017 according to the World Economic and Financial Survey, (2017) conducted by the International Monetary Fund. This indicated that the country experienced a much slower growth of -1.5% in 2016 and predicted a growth of 0.8% in 2017. The slow growth potentially contributes to the level of poverty in the country, which has given rise to conditions such as corruption, mismanagement of resources, unemployment and bad leadership, which have all contributed to the underdevelopment of the country (Judith, Eja, Eko and Josephat, 2011). Ahunwan (2002) also stated that the country is still underdeveloped as a result of issues relating to economic and political structures as well as the attitude of the Nigerians. It is claimed Nigerians have lazy attitudes to work (Abudu, 1986; Achebe, 1983; Ajiboye, 2013). These factors may all contribute to the reason why the country still depends on

foreign firms and expatriation for the development of the construction sector of the country. The presence of foreign companies in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon. As far back as the colonial days, the construction and maintenance of Nigerian infrastructure had been undertaken by foreign entities (Federation of Construction Industry, 2011).

3.3 The Construction Industry and Talent in Nigeria

To build and sustain the construction sector therefore, Nigeria will continue to depend on highly skilled engineers, architects, trade workers, IT staff and technicians. According to the Global Mobility Trends Survey (2015), there is an increasing mobility of talent on assignments in the engineering sector. Nevertheless, certain jobs in architecture, engineering and IT are considered among the most difficult jobs to fill by employers in the American regions and Asia Pacific as indicated in the Talent Shortage Survey carried out by Manpower Group Survey (2015). However, this is considered as a less critical issue in Italy, which records the least difficulties in filling such positions (Manpower Group Survey, 2015). Thus, employing these skilled Italian workers to Nigeria can help train the HCNs working in the construction sector as the country has an oversupply of labour, yet talent is scarce (Fajana, 2009). The Nigerian government and other employers in the country embrace new ideas, skills and technology; however, they lack training on how to utilise these new ideas and technology which forces different organisations to employ expatriates to handle these new ideas and technology (Fajana, 2009). Finding highly skilled labour can be challenging in Nigeria. Therefore, Mwamba (2008) and Abiodun and Segbenu (2017) claimed that many companies in Nigeria seek to bring experienced people from different countries to work with and train the local labour force. This is because having the right talent is the most critical factor for business growth (PricewaterhouseCoopers' Talent Mobility 2020 Survey, 2011).

As talent is scarce in Nigeria, it is even more vital that local employees benefit in terms of knowledge and technology transfers. Working with the expatriates will benefit the HCNs with learning experiences, skills and knowledge that can be used to further develop local talent. This will be beneficial to the organisation as well, especially in addressing the issue of talent shortages in Nigeria. Thus, the findings

from this study contributes to professional practice in two ways: (1) talent management amongst Nigerian HR practitioners and (2) skill development within the construction industry. The impact is at micro-level (contributing to the HCN), meso-level (contributing to the organisation) and macro-level (contributing to strengthening the economy through skills growth).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research context, which includes the construction industry in Nigeria and the two construction companies that participated in the study. The relevance of expatriation and shortages of talent in the construction industry in Nigeria was also discussed to support the rationale for conducting the study in the construction industry. The subsequent chapter presents the methodology used in this study, which includes the description of the methods used, philosophical assumptions underpinning the methods employed and the justification for adopting the methods in the study.

Chapter 4: Methodological Considerations and Rationale for Study Design

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the details of the methodology used in this study which were introduced in chapter one. The chapter includes the description of the methods used, philosophical assumptions of the methods employed and the rationale for adopting the methods in the study. The chapter also presents the research design of the study.

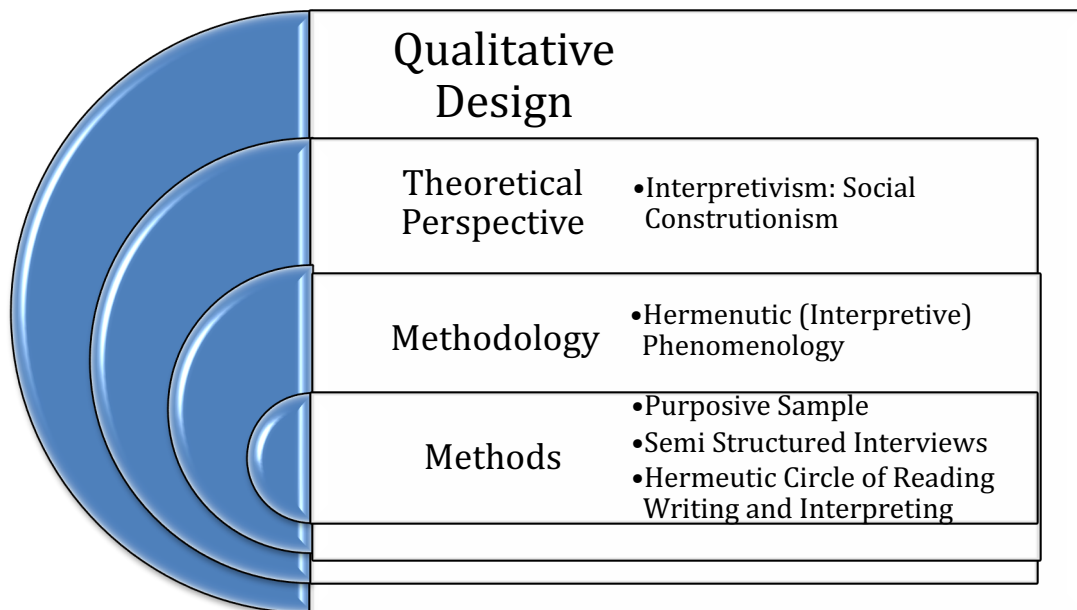
4.2 Research Method

As an interpretivist study, this research used a qualitative method of research because firstly, it is a more suitable method in explicating the answers to the research questions in a holistic manner, hence it is compatible with the exploratory nature of the study (Kalu and Bwalya, 2017). Secondly, there are no studies found that have explored the theme of the study from an interpretive perspective in the context of Nigeria. As discussed in the previous chapter, the few studies found on Nigeria relating to the research topic were mostly approached from a positivist perspective. One of the shortcomings of positivism is that it limits the investigation only to the quantifiable aspects of the phenomenon; hence it does not delve into the deeper meanings of social relations and interactions. Lastly, in order to understand the relationships of the expatriates and the HCNs, the researcher had to rely on the lived experiences of the HCNs in order to come up with an understanding of the meanings ascribed by the HCNs to these experiences. Based on the chosen methodology, the study aligns itself with the paradigm of interpretivism often referred to as constructionism (Fisher, 2010). In this study, the researcher assumed that the HCNs socially constructed their experiences and relationships with the expatriates through interaction in a social context. This assumption justifies why the study adopted an inter-subjective stance to explore the relationships between the HCNs and the expatriates in Nigeria.

Overall, the research paradigm of the study was anchored on social constructionism which included approaches such as phenomenology (Creswell, 1998) coupled with the use of interviews as the technique of gathering the research data. Hence the researcher adopted the hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology as the research

methodology. As a research methodology, hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology is concerned with interpretation of textual narratives. Since there are no specific methods prescribed for doing hermeneutic (interpretive) analysis (Van Manen, 1997), this study anchored its method on the hermeneutic circle of interpretation (Heidegger, 1927/2011), which involves reading, writing and interpreting the text in a thorough manner (Gadamer, 1975/2013). For the selection of participants, a purposeful sampling strategy was employed. Purposive sampling is a strategy that relies on the judgment of the researcher when selecting the people, cases or organisations to be studied (Mason, 2013). The semi-structured interview was used in conjunction with this strategy in collecting the research data in this study. The semi-structured interview included a list of organised questions that ensured the similarity of areas covered and the consistency in the interview delivery with each HCN in this study. Figure 4.1 shows the summary of the qualitative design of this study.

Figure 4.1 Qualitative Design



Source: Researcher Generated

4.3 Research Philosophy

This section describes the philosophical assumptions and the principles that underpinned the research methods used in the study.

4.4 Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is rooted in the notion that reality and knowledge are constructed through social interaction among people. It focuses on the conversations that mediate the process of socialization. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued, that everyday reality is socially constructed through socialization. In essence viewing the relationship between HCNs and the Italian expatriates as a process of socialization is a constructionist perspective. The constructionist perspective was found relevant to this research because the perceptions of the HCNs in relation to their experiences of working with expatriates were seen as social constructions that emerged out of their relationships with the Italian expatriates. Thus, the findings of the study were considered as products of social construction. The researcher perceived that focusing on interaction and experiences was an open way of creating and expressing new realities. Hence adopting the constructionist perspective allowed the researcher of this study to go beyond the scientific ways of generating knowledge. This can promote the construction of theoretical and practical theories (Gergen, 1978) that can be of benefit to organizations.

From a theoretical perspective, social constructionism according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) assumes that knowledge is multiple and is constructed when humans try to make sense of their environment. They further stated that research in this area should be more focused on the way individuals interact with one another to understand the various meanings and constructions that people place upon their experience. The assumption of the researcher that the expatriates shared and exchanged resources with the HCNs through interacting and building relationships led her to adopt the social constructionist perspective. Burr (2015) views social constructionism as the way individuals perceive, create and interpret their environment. She pointed out that individuals interpreted their environment by sharing their experiences with one another through culture and language. She saw language as an expression of action and that individuals socially construct their world by interacting and talking to other people. Social constructionists are, therefore, interested in the ways of how relationships are developed and maintained through interaction and the meanings attached to such interactions. In this regard, social constructionism is compatible with the purpose of this study as it enabled the researcher to understand the meanings and

benefits attached by the HCNs to their relationship with the Italian expatriates. The ideas, experiences, and performances that individuals use to make sense of something are products of human interaction that is sustained through collective consensus among individuals on the reality of the phenomena (Searle, 1995). Social constructionism provides a theoretical lens for visualising the creation of meaning and the meanings attached by individuals to their experiences.

4.5 Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology is the method of analysis adopted in this study because it is more compatible with the approach of the study. Phenomenology has been conceptualised as a philosophy as well as an approach in qualitative research (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). As a philosophical movement, it traces its origin in the social sciences to the work of Edmund Husserl (Husserl, 1913/1982). According to Husserl's philosophy, phenomenology focuses on the subjectivity of reality reflecting more on the essence of understanding the way humans perceived themselves and their society (Husserl, 1913/1982). His philosophy of interpretation was built on the transcendental phenomenological approach whereby interpretation and understanding of a phenomenon are guided by 'epoche', which means to stay away from all biases, beliefs, and judgments to focus on the interpretation of an individual's experience (Husserl, 1913/1982). It is only when individuals set aside their preconceived beliefs and ideas that they will be able to describe and determine the essence of other individual's experiences. This however, was a challenge for the researcher to do and is addressed in the next section.

Heidegger, who was one of Husserl's students, went further to elaborate on the work of Husserl moving away from philosophical phenomenology and focusing more on the interpretive or hermeneutic aspect of phenomenology (Heidegger, 1927/2011). As an approach, Heidegger saw phenomenology as concerned with the lived experiences of individuals. Hermeneutics on the other hand originally meant the study of sacred text such as the Bible (Willis, 2007). However, over the years, hermeneutics has gone beyond the interpretations of the biblical text to focus more on understanding and interpreting social phenomena, hence research in this perspective is interpretive in nature (Willis, 2007). The interconnection of hermeneutics with phenomenology is

that the explication and interpretation of experiences can be given meaning by reading the written narratives that describe these experiences.

Heidegger (1927/2011) contributed to the foundation of this research methodology. He viewed hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodological approach aimed at the interpretation of phenomena to understand meanings. He saw interpretation as a process that is important to understanding. This process is achieved through a hermeneutic circle of shifting back and forth between the parts of an experience and the whole of the experience to understand the text. Meanings are derived from text or words based on how individuals interpret their experiences. He emphasised that experiences emerged as a result of the interpretations of individuals. Even though Heidegger (1927/2011) did not provide a detailed method for hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological research, his ideas on interpretation, and understanding contributed towards the development of the hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological approach (Gadamer, 1975/2013; Cohen, 1987; Lavery, 2003).

Another scholar who contributed to the further development of the hermeneutic approach is Gadamer (1975/2013). He built on Heidegger's ideology as he also saw language as important to understanding and that understanding takes place whilst interpreting. He saw understanding and interpretation as processes that went hand in hand. Thus, interpretation is derived from understanding. Gadamer's (1975/2013) idea behind this approach was to go beyond the narratives of the participants. The interpreter is expected to assign meanings to these narratives through the process of interpretation. This can be achieved through a hermeneutic circle of reading, writing and interpreting (Gadamer, 1975/2013).

4.6 Applying the Hermeneutic Interpretive Phenomenological Approach in this Study

This approach is not aimed at offering explanations but rather it is interested in understanding the phenomena in terms of how individuals interpret their experiences. Gadamer (1975/2013) explained that this approach was not focused on verifying truth but rather a process of how individuals interpret and understand the world. Hence the role of the researcher is to tell the story of the participants using their own voices. As

an expatriate herself, the researcher of this study is interested in understanding the HCNs' views on expatriates in Nigeria. Thus, the hermeneutic approach provided the opportunity for the researcher to hear the voices of the HCNs in their everyday experiences of working with the Italian expatriates in Nigeria. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach provided a lens to explore and understand individual's everyday experiences of existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011). The methodology that has been chosen is compatible with the research questions of the study and the perspectives through which they were addressed. Therefore, the researcher employed the hermeneutic approach to explore and understand the meanings of the experiences and challenges of HCNs working with Italian expatriates on international assignments in Nigeria.

By adopting this approach, the researcher was able to have a deeper understanding of the data. This is because this philosophical stance assumes that individuals are part of the world in which they live and cannot be separable from this world (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Thus, interpretation and understanding of a phenomenon are guided by pre-existing knowledge of the phenomenon. Unlike Husserl (1913/1982) who believed that individuals must stay away from all preconceived beliefs and ideas in order to interpret other individual's experiences, Heidegger advanced that interpretation and understanding are rarely achieved from a purely neutral stance. Heidegger saw interpretation as being part of the individual's experiences of being in the world acknowledging all the pre-existing knowledge available to them. This is because it is not possible for individuals to separate their experiences from other individual's experiences because individuals find themselves in the same world as other individuals in the circumstances of experiences. Heidegger suggests that individuals taking this approach need to be aware of all their biases, beliefs, and judgments and make a conscious effort to bracket them before interpretation. The researcher of this study adopted this approach as she herself cannot separate her ideas and experiences of working with different expatriates in the construction company as well as her beliefs and preconceived knowledge of Document Three and Document Four. Thus, the researcher made explicit her understanding, experiences and presumptions throughout the entire research process (Heidegger, 1927/2011). This addressed the issue of reflexivity in this study.

4.7 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an 'attempt to identify, do something about and acknowledge the limitations of the research' (Shacklock and Smyth, 1998, p.7). Thus, reflexivity deals with the researcher's role in the study. The researcher of this study exercised reflexivity by being constantly conscious of the research process and maintaining openness and clarity in implementing the chosen methodology. In doing so the researcher had to openly reveal the rationale for adopting a qualitative methodology throughout the process of this research.

The research topic and the researcher's role in conducting this study were shaped by her personal experience of working and adjusting as an expatriate in the UAE. This led the researcher to reflect on how the Italian expatriates conduct business in Nigeria and adjusted to living and working in a country (Nigeria) that has a totally different set of languages compared to the Italian language. Thus, the research topic initially originated from the researcher's personal experience of living and working in a foreign country. This positioned the role of the researcher of this study as an insider. An insider researcher is a researcher who has some knowledge linked with the topic of research (Hellawell, 2006). This calls the attention of the researcher to be aware of her experiences, beliefs and presumptions throughout the entire research process.

According to the social constructionist design, when one is analysing an event he becomes part of it through the meaning he assigns to it (Burr, 2015). Thus, researcher's experience, understanding, and assumptions are important in conducting the study. Researchers adopting hermeneutic phenomenology are encouraged to be open to experience and be self-reflective (Heidegger, 1927/2011; Van Manen, 1997) as the researcher becomes part of the process of assigning meanings to the narratives (Gubrium and Hostein, 2000; Bur, 2015). This calls the attention of the researcher to disclose her personal biases. Based on these requisites, interpreting and assigning meanings to the data collected in the analysis of this study required the researcher of this study to become consciously aware of her experiences of working with expatriates in the UAE and the assumptions reflected in Document Three and Four. The researcher is aware that acknowledging and accepting this pre-existing personal knowledge could affect her understanding and the interpretations of the HCNs'

experiences of working with the expatriates (Guba, 1990). The researcher sees her role as that of an interpreter, thereby reflecting subjectivity (Guba, 1990). As an interpreter, the researcher aimed to understand and interpret the multiple experiences of the HCNs in working with the Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

This section outlined the rationale for adopting the social constructionist stance, the hermeneutic phenomenological approach and reflexivity. Social constructionism promotes the understanding of social relationships through the meanings that the participants placed on their experiences in the relationships. From this perspective, the deeper exploration of the relationships acknowledged the subjective experiences of the HCNs working with the Italian expatriates. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach facilitated the understanding and interpretation of these subjective views of the HCNs in the study. The following section outlines this study's research design.

4.8 Research Design

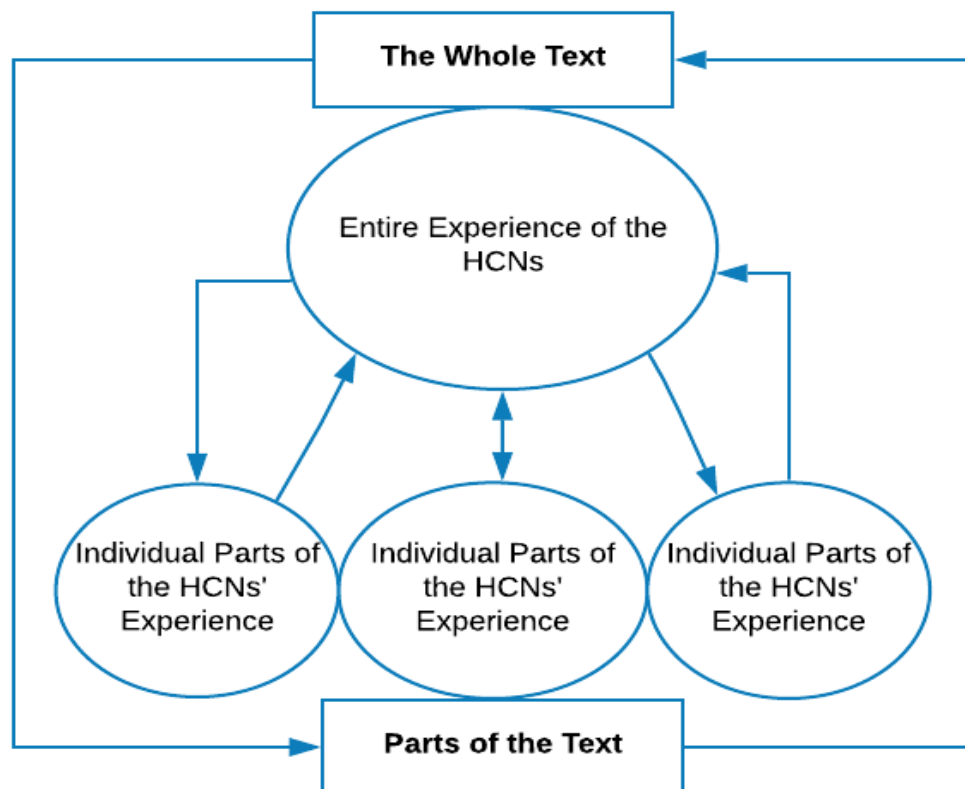
This section presents the hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation of the experiences of the HCNs as guided by Heidegger (1927/2011) and Gadamer's (1975/2013) hermeneutic circle of reading, writing and interpreting. Hermeneutic phenomenology was also considered in the context of the study participants, sampling technique used, the process of data collection and the analysis. Another element of research presented in this section is the consideration of ethical principles in the study.

4.9 Using the Hermeneutic Circle in the Interpretation of the Narratives in the Study

The hermeneutic circle provided a framework for understanding the narratives of the HCNs. The researcher adopted the hermeneutic circle to interpret the working experiences of the HCNs with the expatriates. The hermeneutic circle involves a circular process of understanding and interpretation. The circle begins with the constant shifting back and forth from part to whole; the part consisting of sections of the text while the whole consists of the full text, each explaining one another (Heidegger, 1927/2011). At this point, it must be pointed out that the narrative served as the proxy of experience. This means that the narratives represented the written

form of the experiences of the participants. Hermeneutics posit that parts make up the whole and that the parts can only be understood in the context of the whole (Heidegger, 1927/2011). In short, to understand the parts, the researcher first must understand the whole. In the context of this study, this means that the meanings ascribed by the HCNs to a particular phenomenon (parts) can only be understood in the context of how these relate to their whole experience of the phenomenon (whole). This technique of understanding and interpretation entailed a continuous back and forth reading of the narratives from parts to whole and back. This is illustrated in the following figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 The Hermeneutic Circle of Interpretation



Source: Researcher Generated

As mentioned earlier, the transcript of the interview is in itself the narrative. When all of the individual narratives were put together then a grand narrative emerged. In this context, the individual narratives are the parts that constitute the grand narrative or the whole. There is no systematic structure that guides this circular technique of moving

between the parts and the whole in order to understand and interpret the text thus, Gadamer (1975/2013) suggested the cycle of reading, writing and interpreting in order to easily produce meanings from the text. This process was applied in this study. To understand the content and meaning of experience, the researcher engaged in cyclical reading from parts to whole and back until meaning started to emerge. Gadamer (1975/2013) also emphasised the need for the researcher to engage in a dialogue with the text of the study to produce meanings through circular reading, writing and interpreting. This approach is both pragmatic and analytic. In this way, it allowed the researcher to tell the participants' story more clearly. To support the interpretation, the researcher had to be sensitive to the concepts in the literature in order to be grounded in reading and interpreting the data collected. There was also no pre-conceived criterion to evaluate this process of reading, writing and interpreting, however, Golden-Biddle and Locke (1993) proposed three criteria, which included authenticity, plausibility, and criticality for assessing the quality of qualitative studies. These criteria had been used to evaluate this phenomenological study.

4.9.1 Authenticity

In constructionist design, authenticity deals with being genuine to the fieldwork. To be authentic, the text has to portray the first-hand experience of the researcher with the fieldwork. The text also has to convey that the researcher understood the experiences of participants according to their constructions of it (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993). The researcher ensured the authenticity of this study by making explicit the research methods used in the study as well as her understanding and interpretations of the narratives of the HCNs in the study. The researcher also acknowledged a series of ethical principles while carrying out the study. These principles included: protecting the privacy and anonymity of the participants (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019); protecting the participants' information and maintaining confidentiality of information (Bell et al., 2019); causing no physical or emotional harm to the participants and non-exposure of the participants to risk (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Bell et al., 2019); obtaining informed consent of the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Bell et al., 2019); and finally, duly informing the participants of the nature and purpose of the study and non-exploitation of any of the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Bell et al., 2019).

4.9.2 Plausibility

Plausibility is concerned with how the study made sense to other readers. To achieve this, the findings have to be convincing to the reader (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993). The researcher maintained plausibility by ensuring a certain degree of fit between the problem, the data collected and the manner of interpretation and the contributions of the findings of the study. Plausibility was also established through the ongoing feedback received from the three supervisors of the study.

4.9.3 Criticality

Finally, criticality focused on how the study activates the readers to reconsider their assumptions (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993). Part of being critical in a qualitative study is the acceptance of the subjective nature of the process and also the disclosure of the embedded roles of the researcher (Shocklock and Smyth, 1998). Criticality was attained through the multiple narratives produced by the HCNs that could provoke readers to think about the different types of relationships and exchanges found to be taking place between expatriates and HCNs in Africa. Attention should not only be paid to subjectivity but reflexivity which is concerned with how the process of carrying out the research was openly addressed (Shacklock and Smyth, 1998). Thus, criticality also involves the disclosure of the embedded roles of the researcher. Criticality was therefore also achieved in this study through the researcher's reflexivity which involves conscious reflecting on the process of carrying out the study.

4.10 The Study Sample

The following discussion describes the study sample in terms of the selection of the participants, sampling technique used, sample size and data collection.

4.10.1 Sampling and Selection of Participants

Sampling involves selecting a proportion of the population for a study. The selection of participants in this qualitative study was based on the HCNs' experiences of working with Italian expatriates in Nigeria. In hermeneutic phenomenological research, participants are selected based on their lived experiences. They are also expected to be diverse enough from one another to improve the chance of collecting

unique experiences. In this regard, the researcher decided to select the HCNs from two different companies who had worked with the Italian expatriates for a period of about 5 years to more than 20 years. The sample was selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the sample reflects the demographic attributes of the population in terms of gender, age, and ethnicity. Purposive sampling is also known by other names such as judgmental sampling or non-probability sampling wherein the researcher decides on who is to be included in the sample based on the nature of the research problem investigated (Saunders et al., 2009). Purposive sampling refers to the selection of the units (e.g. people, cases/organisations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied based on their significance to the research questions and the study (Mason, 2013). This is because the main concern of such sampling is on a particular characteristic of a population that is of interest, which will best enable the researcher to answer the research questions (Easterby Smith et al., 2012). The drawback of this technique is that selection bias might occur and this can affect the representativeness of the population. To overcome the selection bias, the participants were selected on the basis of the criteria set for the sampling, which is the length of experience in working with the Italian expatriates. Based on this criterion, senior level and middle-level HCNs who had worked with the Italians for a period of about 5 years to more than 20 years were selected.

To increase the representativeness of the sample, participants were selected from the two companies that participated in the study reported in Documents Three and Four. This also ensured data access as these companies were willing to further participate in this study. The researcher called the first company by a pseudonym, B&P Company Ltd. This company has more than 50 years of experience in the construction industry in Nigeria (B&P Construction, 2012). The second company that participated in this study was assigned the pseudonym, B&S Construction Company. This company has been operating in Nigeria since the late 1960s and is one among the companies famous for construction in the country (B&S Construction, 2009). Access to these companies was not a problem as the researcher's company conducts business with these Italian companies in Nigeria. Access was further granted to the researcher after contacting the companies and explaining the purpose of data collection at the final stage of the study as data had already been collected twice from the two companies for Document Three and Document Four.

With regards to the size of the sample, Mason (2013) stated that small samples fit well with qualitative studies as long as the sample provides access to enough data to address the research questions. Silverman (2019) also claimed that rather than size the aim was to gather an authentic understanding of people's experiences in qualitative research. In hermeneutic phenomenological studies, Laverly (2003) cited that the size of the sample varied according to the nature of the study. The researcher contacted the HR department of both companies and the HR managers arranged meeting on behalf of the researcher with some of the HCNs working in the top and middle management of the two companies. The researcher introduced herself as a research student and explained the focus of the study to the HCNs and reassured them that there was no wrong or right answer but rather what the researcher was interested in knowing was their experiences and views. She assured the participants that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. The researcher explained to them that participation was entirely on a voluntary basis. Many of the HCNs were concerned with their privacy. The researcher reassured them that anonymity would be completely maintained. She explained to the HCNs that both the companies and the participants would be given pseudonyms in the analysis process and the presentation of findings. Upon learning this, most agreed to participate in the study.

A total of 21 participants were recruited to participate in the study. The reason behind concluding the recruitment of the participants at 21 was linked to data saturation. As the number of interviews reached 21, nothing new was being revealed by the participants hence the researcher decided to terminate the interviews at this number. The issue of the attainment of data saturation in qualitative research has been debated by researchers; for Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) and Mason (2013), data saturation is reached when nothing new is derived from the data about the problem investigated. For Fusch and Lawrence (2015) there are different methods to reach data saturation this is because studies adopt different research methods. Therefore, what is saturation for one study is not enough for another study based on the research design. The application of the hermeneutic phenomenological method in this study contributed to the exploration of questions that led to data saturation early in the study. However, the constructionist stance adopted in the study promoted the exploration of multiple realities from the experiences of the participants engaging in the study. Thus, the decision as to when data saturation is achieved was one of the

challenges the researcher faced in the study. Therefore, when no new data was revealed, the researcher assumed the saturation point had been met. Multiple realities are emergent in the data hence the researcher had to pore over the narratives to explore the multiple realities revealed in the narrated experiences of the 21 participants.

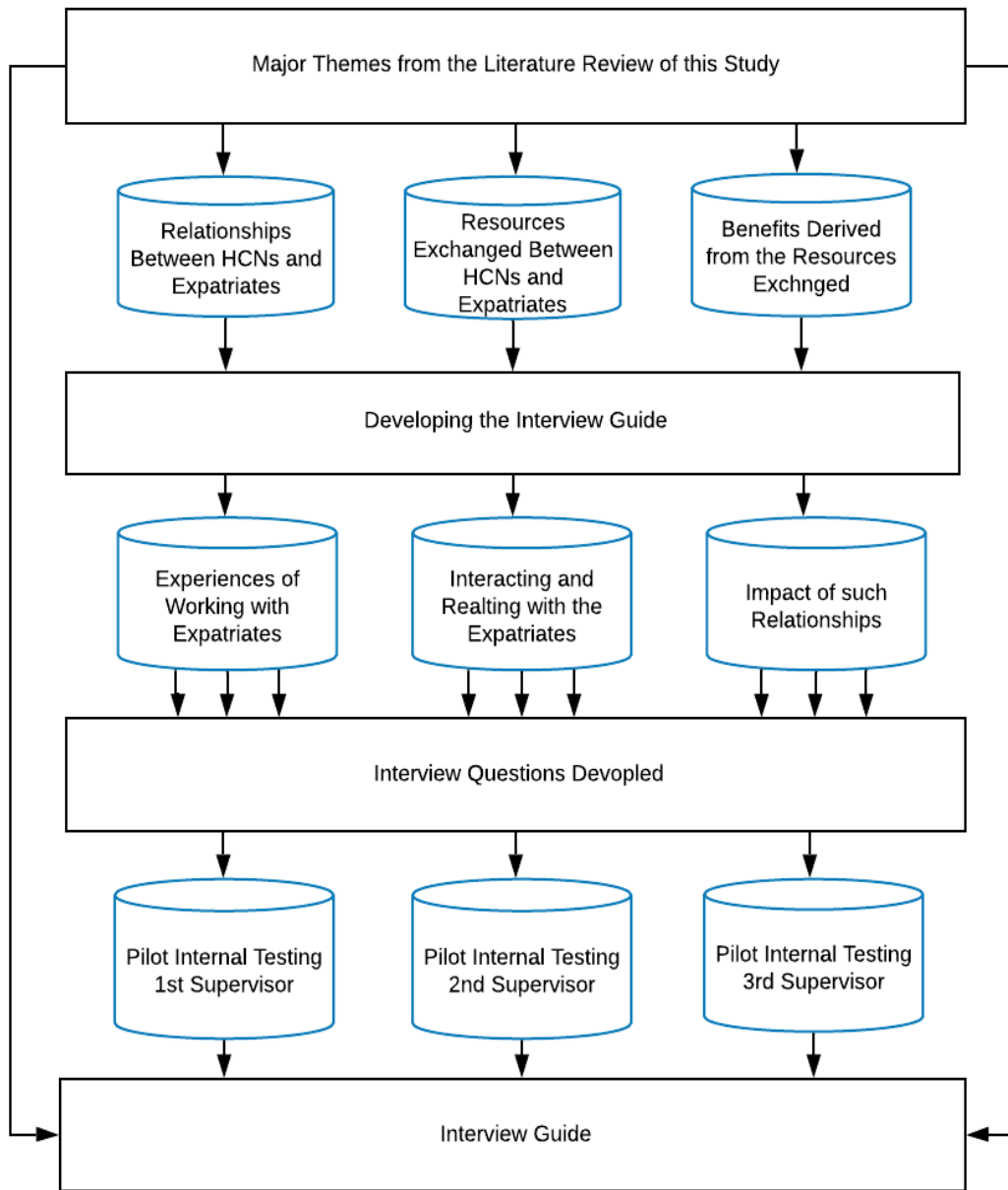
4.10.2 Data Collection

The interview was used as a strategy for data collection in this study because it is by talking to the HCNs that the researcher was able to draw out how they interpreted their environment and how their relationships were developed and maintained. This makes the strategy consistent with Burr's (2015) social constructionist approach. The interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees allowed the researcher to construct and reconstruct meaningful knowledge about what he or she was interested in finding out (Mason, 2013).

The interview is also compatible with the hermeneutic (interpretive) approach used in the study. This is because interviews served as a logical way of exploring the work experiences of the HCNs working with the Italian expatriates. More specifically, the study applied a semi-structured interview approach. The semi-structured interview is perceived to be a qualitative data collection method that is appropriate for collecting information on participants' perspectives of a topic or issues that are meaningful to them (Barriball and While, 1994; Bell et al., 2019). Thus, it is suitable for exploring the HCNs perceived experiences of working with expatriates in Nigeria. In designing semi-structured interviews, researchers need to create a checklist often referred to as topic guide which involves a list of topics or questions that serve as a loose structure for the questions (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Bell et al., 2019). Accordingly, the researcher of this study prepared an interview guide that included a list of questions that were designed to address the study's research questions. The interview guide was structured according to the logic of these questions (see Appendix 4 for the interview guide). The questions were based on a certain level of previous knowledge on the topic area and from the extensive literature review of the topic (Barriball and While, 1994).

The guide was further modified after internally testing the interview questions, which included involving other researchers in the study to evaluate the appropriateness and structure of the interview questions (Barriball and While, 1994). To pilot test the research instrument, the initial interview guide was subjected to critical evaluation by all the three supervisors involved in the study. The feedback from the evaluation of the supervisors provided further direction to the researcher which led to the final refinement of the interview guide that was eventually used in the study. Prior to commencing interviews, another pilot test was also undertaken with one of the HR managers at B&S in Abuja, Nigeria. One of the importance of pre-testing the interview guide is to detect possible flaws in the research instrument (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002; Bell et al., 2019). The rationale for conducting this pilot test was to further ensure the appropriateness of the interview guide by specifically pre-testing the questions with one of the HCNs. The researcher found this useful as it revealed that the questions in the interview guide can serve as an appropriate means of eliciting the perceived experiences of the HCNs working with expatriates in Nigeria. However, the researcher learned during this pilot testing that further questions can be asked during the interview to seek further explanation or clarification such as ‘can you expand on this...’ or what do you mean when you say...’. The method of asking the questions was flexible according to the flow of the conversation from one interview to the other (Saunders et al., 2009). The following figure 4.3 shows how the interview guide was developed.

Figure 4.3 Development of Interview Guide



Source: Researcher Generated

While conducting the interviews, the researcher found it difficult to fully detach herself from the participants' views even though the researcher self-consciously tried to be aware of the fact that she is an expatriate and her preconceived knowledge of Document Three and Document Four about the Italian expatriates can influence the participants' views on their relationships with the Italian expatriates. This shows the reflexivity of the researcher which addressed the issue of criticality in this study. The

researcher established an atmosphere of openness to enable the HCNs to freely narrate their experiences without feeling judged by the researcher. This was beneficial to the researcher as many of the HCNs informed the researcher after the interviews that they felt free and open to narrate their working experiences, which was something they were not used to because their organisations never gave them the opportunity to freely express their views regarding the expatriates. One of the participants claimed that for thirteen years she had no one she felt comfortable to share her working relationship with the Italians with, as the HR department of the company and labour union leaders have not been open enough regarding issues concerning the expatriates. Two participants from the other company mentioned during the interviews that if only the HR practitioners and labour union leaders would cooperate and listen to them in the way that the researcher did then the issues they are facing with expatriates would be readily solved. This feedback from the participants revealed the relevance of creating an open atmosphere where participants are allowed to express their views and experiences freely without been judged or challenged. These interviews with the HCNs allowed the participants' view to be more authentic, thus addressing the authenticity of the data collected.

A total of 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted in the two case organizations, all interviews were audiotaped having obtained written informed consent from all participants. The duration of which ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes per interview. Ten interviews were conducted at B&S in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria and eleven interviews were conducted at B&P in the Kaduna State of Nigeria. However, one of the interviews was discarded by the researcher as the interviewee did not share any relevant data regarding the problem investigated by the researcher. This might be attributed to the fact that he only relates with the Italians when they are travelling within Nigeria, as he is in charge of the transportation of the expatriates within Nigeria. Thus a total of 20 interviews were utilised for the data analysis. Table 4.1 shows the profile of the HCNs that participated in the study.

Table 4.1 Profile of the Research Participants

No	Pseudonyms of the Participants	Gender	Qualification	Organisation	Job Title	Service Area	Tenure	Length of Service	Date of Interview
1	Frank	Male	BSc Business	B&S	Manager	Management	Permanent	20	3/10/17
2	Faith	Female	MSc Quantity Surveying	B&S	Senior Quantity Surveyor	Site	Permanent	11	4/10/17
3	Kabir	Male	Diploma Business	B&S	Manager	Management	Permanent	30	4/10/17
4	Ann	Female	HND, ACIS	B&S	Senior Secretary	Management	Permanent	17	4/10/17
5	Isaac	Male	BSc Business	B&S	Consultant	Management	Permanent	25	5/10/17
6	Harry	Male	MSc Business	B&S	Accountant	Management	Permanent	20	5/10/17
7	Ezekiel	Male	Certificate	B&S	Headman	Site	Permanent	30	5/10/17
8	Nabas	Male	Certificate	B&S	Headman	Site	Permanent	30	6/10/17
9	Christopher	Male	Certificate	B&S	Foreman	Site	Permanent	27	6/10/17
10	Awal	Male	MSc Building	B&S	Senior Quantity Surveyor	Site	Permanent	6	6/10/17
11	Steve	Male	Diploma Business	B&P	Insurance Officer	Management	Permanent	35	10/10/17
12	Kareem	Male	HND Accounting	B&P	Accountant	Management	Permanent	6	10/10/17
13	Chally	Male	BSc Civil Engineering	B&P	Civil Engineer	Site	Permanent	7	10/10/17
14	Joshua	Male	Certificate	B&P	Electrician	Site	Contractual	19	11/10/17
15	Abdallah	Male	OND Public Relations	B&P	Payroll Officer	Management	Contractual	15	11/10/17
16	Michael	Male	Certificate	B&P	Mechanical Employee	Site	Permanent	25	12/10/17
17	Emeka	Male	BSc Accounting	B&P	Senior Accountant	Management	Permanent	20	12/10/17
18	Joseph	Male	HND Accounting	B&P	Accountant	Management	Permanent	5	12/10/17
19	Kayo	Male	Post Graduate Int. Relations	B&P	Procurement Officer	Site	Permanent	5	13/10/17
20	Fatima	Female	MBA	B&P	Personnel Manager	Management	Permanent	13	17/10/17

Source: Researcher Generated

Table 4.1 shows that ten of the HCNs interviewed currently work in B&S Construction Company in Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, while the other ten work in B&P Construction Company in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Three of the participants are women and the rest are men. It can be gleaned from the table that most of the participants have a length of service in their respective companies spanning more than ten years with only five of the participants having lengths of service for the duration of fewer than ten years. This enhanced the collection of rich data as the participants all had long term working experiences with the Italians. Almost all of the participants have permanent tenure with their respective companies except for two who work on a contractual basis. In terms of service area, twelve of the participants were with company management whilst eight were assigned to the various construction sites. It can also be noted that the job titles of the participants were as diverse as their educational qualifications. All these factors contributed to the collection of unique experiences of the HCNs in working with the Italian expatriates.

4.11 Research Ethics

Ethical issues in this qualitative study were addressed by ensuring the following:

4.11.1 Negotiating Access

This is considered as crucial in any research (Saunders et al., 2009; Fisher, 2010). Accordingly, the researcher met, discussed and sought access from the two construction companies. The researcher ensured that all the people involved in the study in the construction companies understood the purpose of the study and methods to be used and that participation was entirely on a voluntary basis.

4.11.2 Ethical Approval from the University Research Ethics Committee

The researcher has filled and submitted an ethical form at the Nottingham Trent University, which was approved by the ethics committee to carry out the study.

4.11.3 Informed Consent

The researcher gave consent forms to the HCNs involved in the study, which were completed and returned back to the researcher before collecting the data. These consent forms included the procedure by which the HCNs were able to decide

whether they would participate in the study, as participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time during or after the interview without giving any reason (see Appendix 3). At the beginning of each interview, the researcher reminded the participants their right to withdraw from the study at any given time.

4.11.4 The Issue of Confidentiality, Anonymity and Privacy

Another ethical consideration involves confidentiality and anonymity (Bell et al., 2019). This was achieved by assigning pseudonyms to companies and the participants involved in the study. The privacy of the participant has to be maintained as a result of the sensitive data often collected and analysed in qualitative research (Nagy and Patricia, 2011). Thus, the researcher ensured that the privacy of the HCNs interviewed was protected. To ensure confidentiality in terms of data, all the information collected and the data gathered from the participants were stored in a file accessible only to the researcher using a password-activated laptop, which was securely held by the researcher. The files will be disposed off accordingly upon the completion of the study. The following section presents the process of data analysis of this study.

4.12 The Process of Data Analysis

In this section, the process involved in the analysis of the data collected in this study is presented. This includes the transcription of the interviews and the use of the hermeneutic circle of reading, writing and interpreting to analyse, code, categorise and identify the themes of the study. Two coding approaches were employed in the study: manual and digital coding which enabled the researcher to manage the data and also make explicit the process of analysis of the data in the study.

4.13 Data Processing and Interpretation

The aim of the constructionist framework used in the study is to translate the transcribed narratives of the HCNs into a coherent discourse based on the language used by the participants. The constructionist framework adopts the view that language is both interactional and symbolic. From this perspective, the dynamics of language and meaning become established in the narratives of the HCNs, as their views were expressed verbally which were quoted in the analysis to give a clear picture of their experiences of working with the Italian expatriates. The biographic details about the

participants and the location where they work are also included in the data analysis to provide a background of the history of the participants to the readers and also help support the analysis to understand how the views of the participants might have been influenced by their life experiences. This is consistent with the constructionist framework which asserts that the background and social location of participants help shape their experiences (Burr, 2015).

The strategy employed in the interpretation of data represents the hermeneutic circle of reading, writing and interpreting (Gadamer, 1975/2013). This aim of using the circle of reading, writing, and interpreting is to reach depth of understanding of the narratives of the HCNs. Individual accounts of the experiences of the HCNs (parts) were interwoven into a descriptive narrative (whole) whose texture is reflective of the responses given by the interviewees. It is from this descriptive narrative (whole) that individual experiences (parts) were read again and given meaning using the phenomenological method. Hence, in this study, hermeneutic phenomenology is located at the intersection of the activities of shifting from parts to whole and back to parts (Heidegger, 1927/2011), while reading, writing, and interpreting (Gadamer, 1975/2013). The specific processes employed in reading and writing which involved coding, categorisation, and connecting the data to uncover the hidden meanings that made up the themes and sub-themes. This was a challenging and time-consuming task for the researcher to read, code, categorise and identify the themes and subthemes from the 20 transcripts. This is an issue that has been discussed by qualitative researchers such as Mason (2013) and Silverman (2019) in social qualitative research. Qualitative studies take a much longer time to produce because data analysis is undertaken gradually and thoroughly in order to understand and interpret the findings (Berg, 2001; Green et al., 2007; Mason, 2013). However, Berg (2001) also views this as one of the strengths of qualitative analysis as certain assumptions and phases must be established and clarified during data analysis. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the hermeneutic interpretation of the data.

Table 4.2 The Strategy Employed in the Interpretation of Data in this Study

Stages of Analysis	Data Analysis: Hermeneutic Reading, Writing and Interpreting			
Stage One	Transcribing the Data: The interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed using the transcribe wreally application by the researcher.	Familiarisation with the Data: Listening to and reading the transcripts repeatedly assisted the researcher to be more immersed in the data.	Data Reduction: Rereading the transcripts several times enabled the researcher to highlight the significant parts of the data.	Hermeneutic Reading
Stage Two	Manual Coding: This allowed keywords and phrases to be identified and labeled from the previous highlighted parts of the narratives of all 20 HCNs.	Categorization, and Connection: The labeled in-vivo codes were analysed to find similarities and later regrouped into conceptual categories based on their common properties.	Theme Identification: The themes emerged from the categorised in-vivo codes.	Writing
Stage Three	NVivo 10: A data management software was utilise to further explore the themes based on the responses of the participants	Themes and Sub Theme: The sub themes emerged from the organised coded nodes in NVivo which were later arranged systematically to support the themes	Structural Analysis: The themes and subthemes identified from the analysis represented the researchers' interpretation of the narratives of the participants	Interpretation

Source: Researcher Generated

4.13.1 Stage One Analysis: Transcribing and Familiarisation with the Data

This was the first stage in the process of the data analysis in this study. It involved transcribing the data by the researcher and also making sense of the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts several times which enabled the researcher to start highlighting the significant parts of the data. The interviews were audiotaped and later

transcribed using the ‘transcribe wreally’ application (<https://transcribe.wreally.com>). The researcher uploaded all the recorded interviews into the application, which provided a single screen that assisted the researcher to listen to the audio and type the written text at the same time. The researcher had to listen to the audio, repeatedly, to make sure that the transcripts were captured accurately. This method of listening and transcribing was challenging and at the same time beneficial to the researcher. Seidman (1998) considered this as one of the limitations of transcribing interview tapes. However, he pointed out that it can also benefit researchers as they become more involved with the content of the interviews. At this stage, the role of the researcher was to capture accurately the ‘voice’ of the participants consistent with the phenomenological tradition. This shows the reflexivity of the researcher which addressed the issue of criticality in the study. Listening to and reading and re-reading the transcripts repeatedly assisted the researcher to be more immersed in the data. This helped the researcher to develop a tentative impression of the HCNs’ overall working experiences with the Italian expatriates in Nigeria as revealed by the whole data.

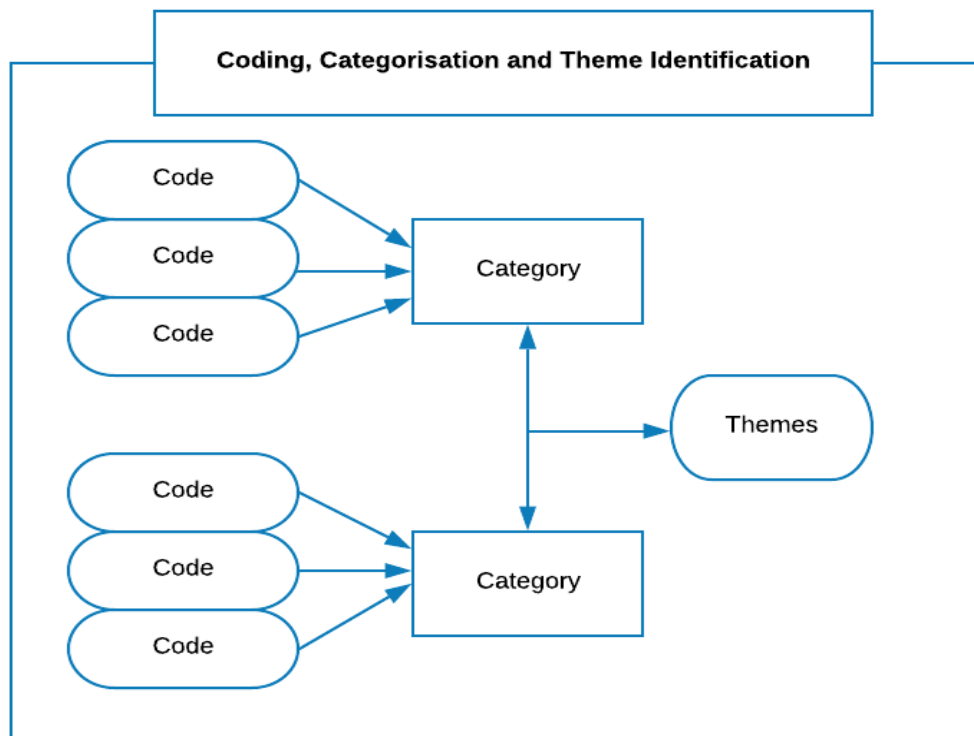
4.13.1.1 Hermeneutic Reading

Gadamer (1975/2013) maintains that reading the text contributes the highest to understanding. The researcher re-read each transcript several times focusing on understanding what the text revealed about the multiple experiences of the HCNs working with Italian expatriates. Hermeneutic reading established the relationship of parts to the whole after which an understanding of the parts was gained by understanding the whole, thereby constituting a circle. At this point, the researcher highlighted the parts of the HCNs experiences that she perceived to be important in the relationships of the HCNs with the Italian expatriates. The forms of exchanges, the benefits gained and the challenges of working with the Italian expatriates became more emergent as she re-read the transcripts over and over. Thus, this simplified the process of coding the data for the researcher. However, it is important at this stage for the researcher to acknowledge her role of perceiving what is significant in the transcripts. This perception is the result of the researcher’s residual knowledge of Document Three and Four, which had the potential to influence the research process at this stage. This addressed the issue of reflexivity in the study.

4.13.2 Stage Two Analysis: Manual Coding, Categorisation and Connection

The next stage of data analysis in this study was coding. In qualitative research, a code is a word or phrase assigned to symbolically represent certain aspects, or features, of data (Saldana, 2009). In-vivo coding was employed in the study because the researcher was interested in capturing the experiences of the participant. In-vivo coding involves the direct coding from the participants' narratives (Saldana, 2009). Thus, in-vivo coding enabled the researcher to code the words, or phrases, that the participants used to describe their working experiences. This process was done manually as the method allowed the researcher to code, shifting from whole to parts, where individual experiences were read and coded to give meaning to experience as lived (see Appendix 1 for manual coding sheet). Keywords and phrases were identified and labeled from the previous highlighted parts of the narratives of all 20 HCNs. The labeled codes were later grouped into distinctive ideas. As the codes for new concepts were created, these were compared with new codes that keep emerging. The in-vivo codes were later arranged systematically in a manner that they conveyed meaning (Grbich, 2007). The codes were later analysed to find the similarities and then they were grouped into conceptual categories based on their common properties (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). This process allowed data to be sorted, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation (Grbich, 2007). This also allowed the researcher to draw out abstractions from the concrete codes as shown in the following figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Coding, Categorisation and Theme Identification



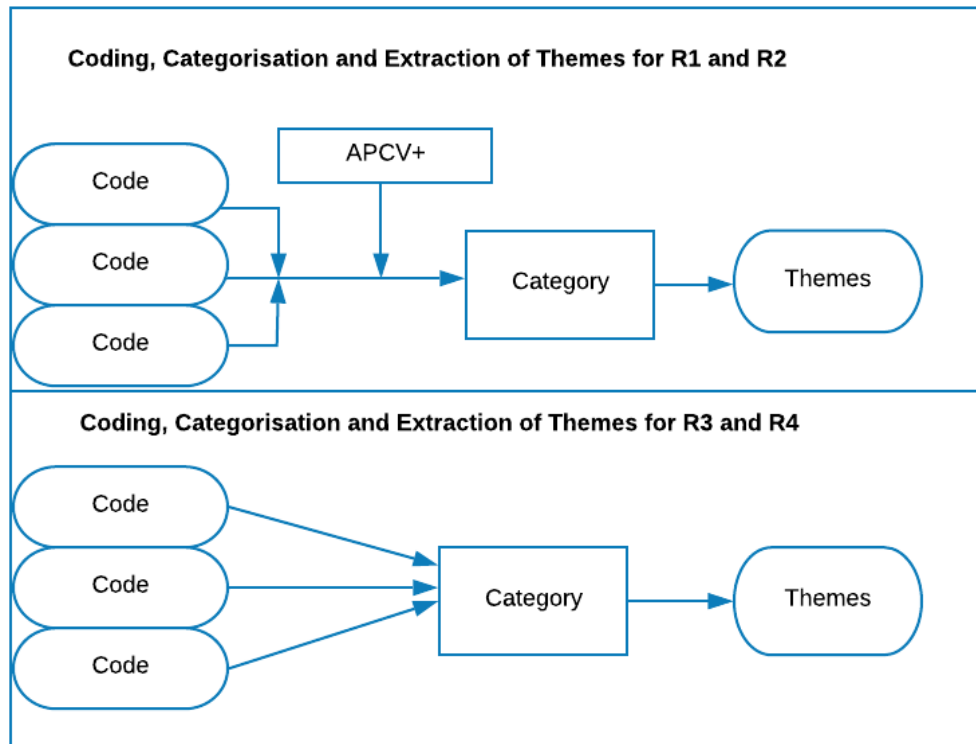
Source: Researcher Generated

To further have a basis of meaningfully extracting the categories for the data pertinent to RQ1 and RQ2, the in-vivo codes were extracted and categorised according to the content analysis suggested by Baker (2002) based on the means-ends model. Accordingly, she suggests using the APCV+ elements to aid in eliciting categories or themes where A = attributes, P = process, C = consequences, V = values, and + = others (see Appendix 1 for manual coding sheet). From these, the categorised codes were thematically matched. Two themes emerged from the data pertinent to RQ1, which is related to the nature of relationships between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. Three themes emerged from the data pertinent to RQ2, which is related to the forms of exchanges taking place between HCNs and the Italian expatriates.

For RQ3, and RQ4 the response of participants gave more direct and straightforward responses hence the in-vivo codes were not expanded further but were directly categorised and from which the themes were extracted. Accordingly, two themes emerged from the data pertinent to RQ3, which related to the benefits that HCNs perceive to gain from working with the Italian expatriates. Finally, from the data

pertinent to RQ4, two themes were also developed in relations to the challenges the HCNs faced in working with the Italian expatriates. The foregoing process of coding is shown in the following figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Coding Used According to Research Questions



Source: Researcher Generated

4.13.3 Stage Three Analysis: NVivo Structural Interpretation

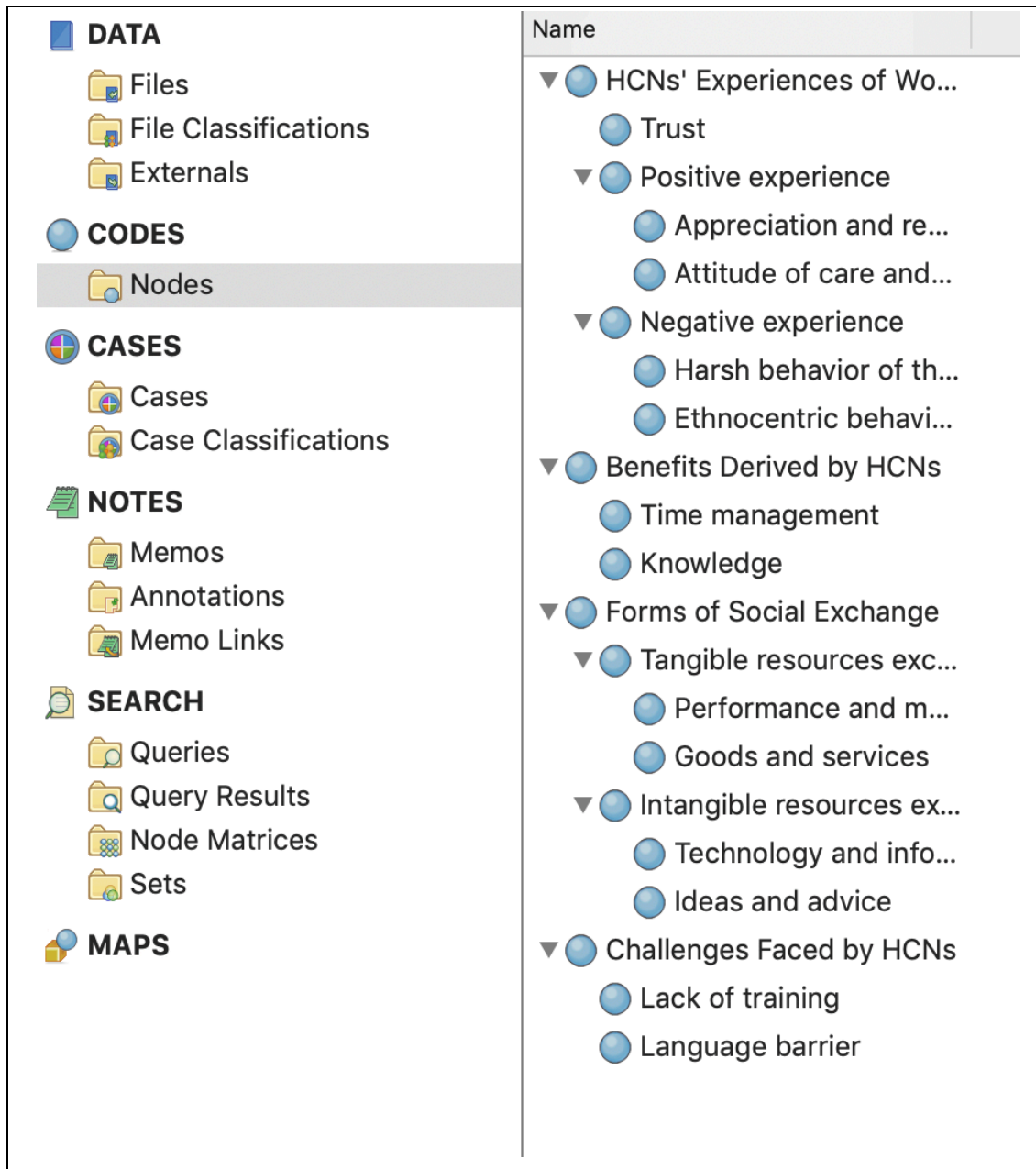
The last stage of data analysis in this study was the structural analysis. The focus of the analysis was to conduct a thematic structural analysis in order to develop themes that provided depth of understanding of the relationships of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. The previous stage of interpretation revealed the themes for this study. The researcher explored the narratives to see if further interpretations could be extracted related to the themes. This was done in consideration of the fact that interpretation involves a continuous circle of reading, writing and interpreting (Gadamer, 1975/2013) to produce meaning from the narratives. Accordingly, the analysis was iterated digitally in order to connect more with the narratives to unveil depth of meanings attached to the themes that would facilitate the presentation of the findings.

Digital coding was adopted at this phase to further organise the data systematically to answer the research questions. NVivo 10, a software application designed to aid qualitative data analyses (Roberts and Wilson, 2002; Zamawe, 2015), was utilised to further explore and organise the narratives and the themes based on the responses of the participants. One of the strengths of NVivo is that it works well with different qualitative research designs and data analysis methods such as phenomenology (Zamawe, 2015). The drawback of using NVivo was that the researcher spent a considerable amount of time to familiarise herself with the software. This is because researchers need to invest time and energy to learn how to work with qualitative data analysis software. Rodik and Primorac (2015) found in their study of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, learning time and effort to be the most prominent perceived obstacles early career sociologists in Croatia face in working with data analysis software.

Digital coding of data began by creating four main nodes, which permitted the classification of the narratives of the 20 participants. The researcher viewed the nodes in NVivo like containers that enabled the researcher to gather related information in one place to easily search for more meanings. These nodes were labeled: HCNs experiences of working with Italians, forms of exchanges, benefits gained, and challenges faced in the working relationships. These coded nodes are related to the research questions from the onset. This emerged from the fact that the interview questions were constructed to answer the various research questions, and the coded nodes, on the other hand, were created based on the interview guide.

The coded nodes namely, HCNs' experiences of working with Italians, forms of exchanges, benefits gained, and challenges faced enhanced the drawing of sub-themes as they had already organised discussions into common categories. Thus, the themes (whole) and the subthemes (parts) reflected what the researcher viewed as in-depth meanings that enabled the researcher to answer the research questions investigated. Figures 4.6 shows a sample of digital coded nodes in NVivo.

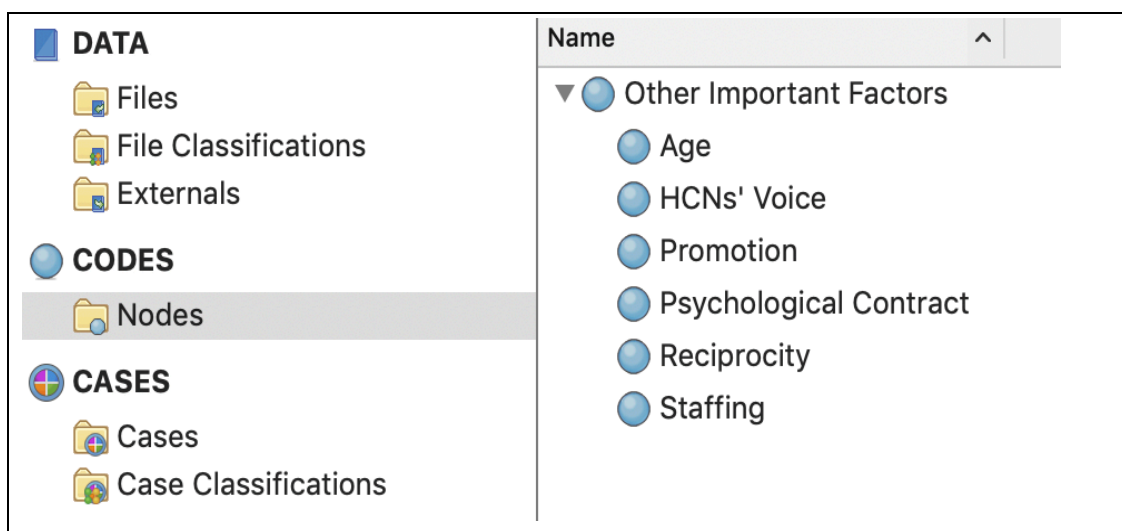
Figure 4.6 Sample of the Coded Nodes in NVivo Based on the Research Questions



Source: Researcher Generated

An additional node was also created labeled 'other important factors'. This allowed the coding of other relevant factors that influence the relationship of the HCNs with the Italian expatriates which enhanced the depth of the analysis. Figure 4.7 shows a sample of the other important coded nodes.

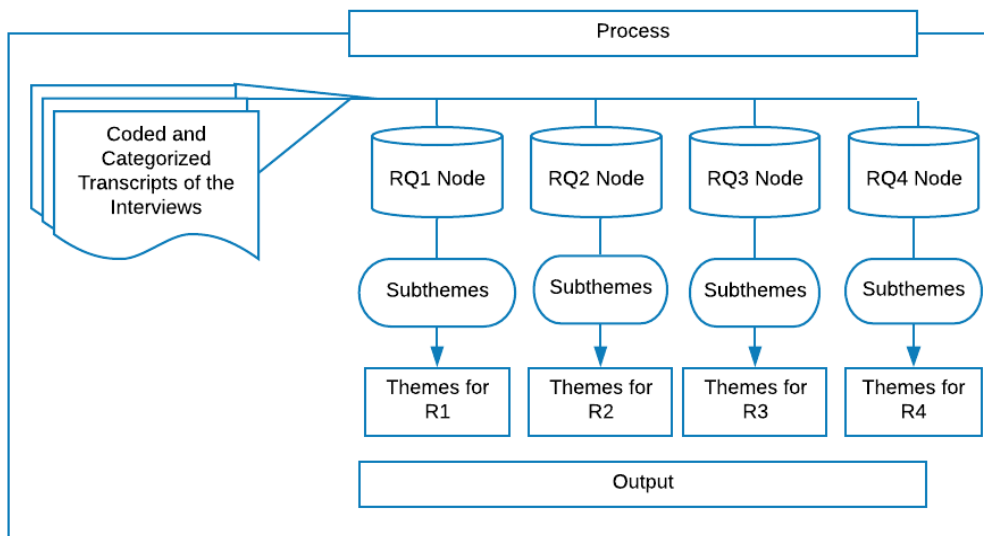
Figure 4.7 Sample of Other Important Coded Nodes in NVivo



Source: Researcher Generated

After creating the four main nodes, the researcher explored further what the text revealed about each of the nodes. In this regard, the researcher engaged in a circle of reading and writing back and forth from the transcript (whole) to the manual coding sheet (parts) to select and code relevant statements expressed by the respondents. These relevant statements included direct quotations of the participants regarding what the text revealed of each node. The purpose of this was for the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the themes in order to write the analysis and answer the research question. In the process of making sense of the selected statements coded, the researcher had to review and restructure the coded statements in order to come up with child nodes. The child nodes include words and phrases that best reflect the meaning attached to the statements coded in each node. These words and phrases were later arranged, grouped and labeled as subthemes that gave meaning to each node that represented each of the themes identified in the manual coding. The following figure 4.8 shows the processing of the coded nodes.

Figure 4.8 Processing of Coded Nodes Based on the Research Questions



Source: Researcher Generated

The coded nodes of ‘HCNs’ experiences of working with the Italian expatriates’ were divided to represent positive and negative experiences of the HCNs. Accordingly, the positive experience node produced two subthemes and the negative experience node produced one subtheme.

The coded nodes of ‘forms of exchanges’ were divided to represent intangible and tangible resource exchanges. The intangible resources node produced four subthemes and the tangible resource node produced two subthemes.

The coded nodes of ‘benefits gained’ and ‘challenges faced’ each produced two subthemes, respectively. Table 4.3 presents the themes and the subthemes of this study.

Table 4.3 The Themes and Subthemes Presented

The Themes and Subthemes		
RQ1. The Nature of the Relationship of the HCNs with the Italian Expatriates		
<p>Theme: Cordial Relationship</p> <p>Subthemes: Trust Positive attitude of some of the Italians; attitude of care and greetings, appreciation and respect</p>	<p>Theme: Restricted Relationship</p> <p>Subtheme: Negative attitude of some of the Italians; ethnocentric behavior of the Italians, harsh behavior of the Italians</p>	
RQ2. Forms of Social Exchanges Perceived by the HCNs to be Taking Place with the Italian Expatriates		
<p>Theme: Multiple Exchange</p> <p>Subthemes: Intangible resources; information, advice, ideas and technology</p>	<p>Theme: Unequal Exchange</p> <p>Subtheme: Intangible resources; ideas</p>	<p>Theme: Exclusive Exchange</p> <p>Subthemes: Tangible resources; goods and services, money and performance</p>
RQ3. Perceived Benefits Derived by HCNs from the Reciprocal Relationships with the Italians.		
<p>Theme: Enhanced Skills</p> <p>Subtheme: Knowledge</p>	<p>Theme: Positive Attitude Towards Work</p> <p>Subtheme: Time management</p>	
RQ4. Perceived Challenges for HCNs in working in the Italians companies		
<p>Theme: Communication</p> <p>Subtheme: Language barrier</p>	<p>Theme: Personal Development</p> <p>Subtheme: Lack of training</p>	

Source: Researcher Generated

The themes and subthemes identified from the analysis represented the researcher's interpretation of the narratives of the participants. The interpretive analysis reflected Heidegger's (1927/2011) hermeneutic phenomenology that meanings are derived from the narratives of the participants that lived the experience. From the hermeneutic circle perspective, the researcher's understanding was shaped by the interpretive process. As Laverly (2003) explained, new understanding is developed as the researcher interacts with the narratives.

4.14 Conclusion

In this chapter, the philosophical framework of social constructionism was explained and justified as the paradigm that guided this study. The methodology was anchored in hermeneutic phenomenology, drawing upon the hermeneutic circle as the method of data analysis in the study. The rationale for adopting the methods was also presented. The research design which includes the sampling technique, data collection methods employed, the profile of the study participants and the consideration of ethical principles in the study were also discussed. All these made explicit the experience of the researcher in the fieldwork thus, addressed the issue of authenticity of the study.

This chapter also presented the process of data analysis and interpretation. The three stages of analysis were made explicit to demonstrate the process of interpretation which involved shifting from parts to whole and back to parts while reading, writing and interpreting. Manual and digital coding were also discussed to make explicit how the themes and subthemes were derived from the narratives. The following chapter presents the findings from the analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the salient findings of the results of the interviews that were derived through the hermeneutic circle of reading, writing and interpreting (Gadamer, 1975/2013), and the application of the phenomenological method. The subsequent themes were derived from the circular reading of the interview transcripts from parts to the whole and from the whole back to each part. This is a process of making sense by understanding the meaning of the answers given by the participants in the context of the whole narrative created by them.

5.2 The Themes and Subthemes that Emerged from the Findings of the Study

Nine themes that address the research questions are discussed in this chapter. The themes, namely, cordial relationships and restricted relationships relate to the nature of the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. The themes, multiple exchange, unequal exchange, and exclusive exchange reflect the forms of exchanges taking place between HCNs and the Italian expatriates. The themes, enhanced skills and positive attitude towards work relate to the benefits HCNs gained from working with the Italian expatriates. Finally, the themes, communication and personal development revealed the challenges HCNs faced in working with Italian expatriates. The thematic representations of the findings of the study are herewith discussed.

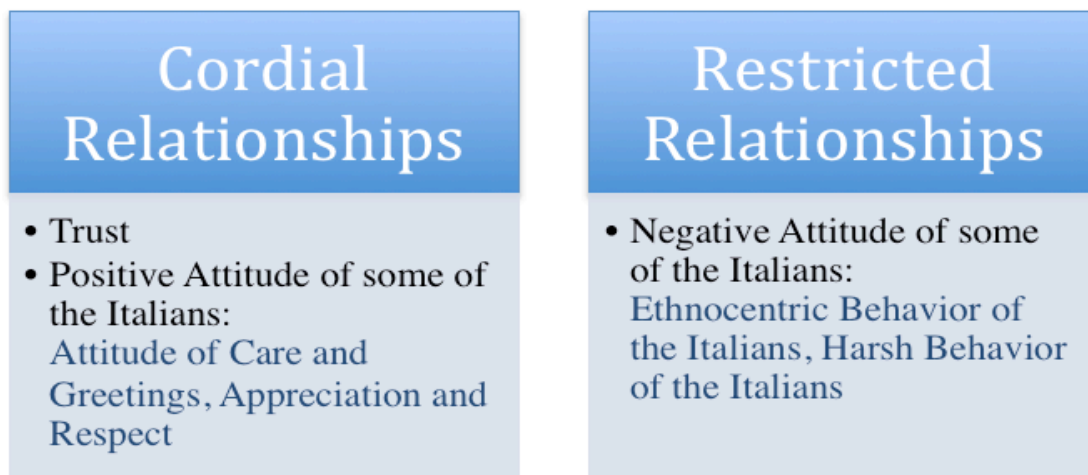
5.3 The Nature of the Relationship Between the HCNs and the Italian Expatriates

The majority of the participants perceived that their relationship with the Italian expatriates was cordial while some perceived that their relationship was restricted (see Figure 5.1). The Cambridge English Dictionary defines cordial as friendly but formal and polite. Based on the perceived findings on the working relationships of the HCNs with the Italian expatriates, the researcher of this study, describes a cordial relationship as a type of formal caring, friendly relationship that take place between employees in the organisation as a result of perceived trust, and positive attitudes of

some of the employees. On the other hand, the researcher of this study describes restricted relationship as non-friendly types of formal relationships between employees in the organisation as a result of the perceived negative attitudes of some employees.

Figure 5.1 shows two themes and three subthemes that describe the nature of the relationship of the HCNs with the Italian expatriates. The first theme, cordial relationships was seen by the HCNs in the context of two subthemes, the perceived trust and the positive attitude of the Italians which included the attitude of care and greeting, appreciation and respect. These were found to be the key factors that contribute towards building and maintaining cordial working relationships between the two parties. The second theme, restricted relationships, was viewed by the HCNs in the light of the subtheme which pertained to the perceived negative attitude of the Italians, which included ethnocentrism and harshness. These attitudes served as a constraint that led to the restricted relationship between some of the HCNs and some of the Italians.

Figure 5.1 The Nature of the Relationship Between the HCNs and the Italian Expatriates



Source: Researcher Generated

5.3.1 Theme A. Cordial Relationships

The following sections explicate the perceived cordial relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates based on trust and the positive attitude of some of the Italians.

5.3.2 Cordial Relationships: Trust?

Trust is regarded as essential in maintaining stable relationships as both parties will have confidence in each other to fulfil their obligations to one another (Blau, 1964, 2017). Most of the HCNs from the two companies described their perceived relationship with the Italians from the lens of trust. One of the HCNs, Kabir, a manager in his fifties who has been interacting with the Italians for more than thirty years, stated that his relationship with the Italians in B&P was built on trust. He believed that the Italian management trusted him so much because of his more than thirty years of service with the company that earned him the trust of the Italians:

‘Most of the Italians working with me now met me here, that trust is there, they respect me so much because I was here before them. We have a good relationship, they believe in me and I trust them, we are like a family. The managing director is a very hardworking Italian, I have a very good relationship with him, he appreciates us and if there is anything wrong he says sorry. The general manager on the other hand is a very knowledgeable person, he shares a lot with us, I report to him - we interact very well and I have a very good relationship with him.’

All this shows that Kabir perceives that he interacts well with the Italians which resulted in a cordial relationship because of the trust that exists between them. Relationships (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995) and trust (Dekker, 2004) emerge out of the interactions that take place between two committed parties.

Similarly, another HCN, Kayo, who is in his thirties and one of the procurement officers who has worked in the oil and gas department of B&P for five years now also described a relationship which he perceives is based on trust. Kayo believed that a high degree of trust was established between him and the Italian expatriates. Based on

his experience in working with the Italians, he observed that the Italians easily trusted the HCNs. This was further confirmed by Kareem an Accountant in his thirties who has been in charge of the expatriates' green card in B&P for six years. Kareem employed a comparison to elaborate his point, comparing the Italians with the Pakistanis working for the company:

‘You see the Pakistanis working with us here, they do not believe and trust easily when it comes to working but the Italians can trust a Nigerian easily.’

It can seem that Kareem's statement borders on generalisation and stereotyping. Stereotypes are qualities that are attributed to individuals in a social group, which differentiate members of a social group from other groups (Stangor, 2009). Kareem's experience as one of the personnel in charge of the green cards of the expatriates for six years puts him in the best position to observe the different behaviours of the expatriates working in the company. Hence his statement is in the context of his lived experience within the company. However, Christopher, in his fifties a foreman in the carpentry workshop of B&S for twenty-seven years observed that trust does not come easily when working with some of the Italians, as the HCNs have to perform well in their work to earn the trust of the Italians. The HCNs have to give their best in work and deliver the expected results and performance in order to earn the trust of the Italians. This might be because trust can emerge out of the fulfilment of the obligations between employers and employees which, in turn is largely based on performance (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Colquitt et al., 2012). Christopher explained that:

‘Italians do not joke with work, they know their work and they do it. If the HCNs work anyhow and do not deliver their best there will be a problem between the Italians and the HCNs and this will affect their relationship.’

It is evident that the Italian standard of work is used as a yardstick by the Italian expatriates to measure the performance of the HCNs which in turn acts as an essential factor in discriminating who among the workers can be trusted or not. In this case, trust is built on the ability of the HCNs to reliably perform well within their area of

work. This shows cognitive based trust which deals with the competence and reliability of a person (Colquitt et al., 2012) thus, trust depends on performance. The better the performance the more chances of generating trust which enhances the relationship between the parties. This leads to a circular relationship where good performance leads to trust, which in turn engenders other good performance. This was confirmed by Abdallah, one of the payroll officers at B&P who is in his forties. He stated that trust is one of the reasons why the Italians have enjoyed working with him. He had demonstrated that in his fifteen years of service, none of the Italian expatriates had a reason to give him a verbal warning or written warning. He perceives that he has earned the confidence of the Italians by showing that he is ready to deliver his best, regardless of the situation. This could indicate a character-based relationship that was built on trust (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Colquitt et al., 2012). Abdallah perceives that the Italians have confidence and trust in him which could have contributed to a strong cordial relationship between them.

For Kayo, trust is also character based. He gave an example of a report about him that reached the management and in particular the managing director. The plant manager readily came to his defense even without consulting him to find out about the issue. It was only after the issue was resolved that the plant manager told him what had happened and how he had defended Kayo. As a result, Kayo feels so comfortable and relaxed working with the Italians and as long as he gives his best at work, he is confident that similar issues involving him would be taken care of by the Italians because they perceive him to be a trustworthy person. This shows evidence of the establishment of a positive psychological contract being developed and maintained by both parties. The psychological contract is defined as a two-way equal exchange that takes place between employers and employees (Rousseau, 1989; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Pate and Scullion, 2018; Alcover, et al., 2017). When the employers display trustworthiness by showing care, fairness, and honesty to the employees, the employees themselves reciprocate the trust shown by the employers (Korsgaard, Brodt and Whitener, 2002) which fosters employee work engagement (Davis and Van der Heijden, 2018).

This explains why Kayo reciprocates the trust shown by the Italians towards him. It should be noted that Kayo is a procurement officer and his office deals with supplier

contracts that involve significant amounts of cash. As such, his office is potentially susceptible to bribes that could be offered by suppliers. In short, he could easily use his position to take bribes that could be offered by suppliers to eventually enrich himself. Kayo, however, stated that he does not want to betray the trust that the Italians have in him, hence he refrains from indulging in such kind of thoughts because of the trust he perceives to have been established with the Italians. He recalled that an issue of mistrust happened in the company and he was consulted about it which is not normally the case. Protocol dictates that the Italians are to consult only the Nigerian managers who are specifically designated to report directly to the MD, but because his Italian managers trusted him, he was involved in the investigation. This mutual trust established the strong cordial relationship between him and his Italian managers. This shows an example of a character-based relationship that is built on trust-related issues that are based on the character of the persons involved (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Colquitt et al., 2012). The relevance of trust is caught in the following quote in which Kayo further outlines how management calls the HCNs when dealing with certain issues:

‘You see my Italian managers can send for me or ask me to see them in their office or the meeting room if they need me because some of them are my bosses but rather they come to my office to discuss what they need to discuss with me. They are nice to me, I feel I need to do what I am supposed to do concerning work because they have been good to me. I just need to do it so that they will not be angry because they have been nice and I feel like I have to maintain that relationship. When you have a good relationship you will not want the relationship to be affected.’

This reveals that good relationships lead to exchanges. Thus the researcher of this study found that the cordial relationships resulted in social exchanges where relationships between employer and employee are perceived to be built on a cost-benefit exchange in the workplace (Blau 1964, 2017; Shore, Bommer, Rao and Seo, 2009; Cropanzano, Dasborough and Weiss, 2017). Some employees see their relationship with their employers as more than the normal employment contract as these employees base their relationships on trust and obligations (Blau, 1964, 2017)

which results in high-quality relationships that are characterised by consideration and care shown to each other (Dirks and Ferrin 2002; Colquitt et al., 2012). Thus, employees who feel that their employers show care and consideration to them will also likely reciprocate. This could account for why Kayo felt the need to reciprocate the care and trust shown to him by the Italians. Reciprocity as an appropriate return of any benefit received has been noted to be an age-long practice by Africans (Egwemi and Ochim, 2016), hence it is not far-fetched that showing trust to an African would result in reciprocity.

A further analysis shows that a psychological contract was created between Kayo and the Italians. As discussed in the literature review of this study, a psychological contract takes place when the employer and the employee perceive the obligation to reciprocate (Guest, 2004; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Alcover et al., 2017). The Italians had shown care and support for Kayo, which made Kayo feel happy and obliged to reciprocate the positive behaviours and treatment of him by the Italians in order to sustain their relationship.

Chally in his thirties, a civil engineer from B&P, also acknowledged that the nature of his relationship with the Italians he is working with daily in the site is similarly based on trust. Chally has been working for B&P since 2010 when he graduated from the University. He claimed that the Italians understood and trusted their workers so much. Similarly, Faith in her forties, a senior quantity surveyor working with the Italian expatriates for more than ten years now in B&P also added that the Italians can trust the HCNs with matters that they do not even expect or think about. In this case, it is up to the HCNs to live up to the trust and make sure that they maintain the trust to ensure a good working relationship with the Italian expatriates.

The ability of the expatriates to interact and build relationships with HCNs depends on the amount of time spent on the assignment (Sparrow, 2009). Most of the HCNs in both B&S and B&P have been working in their respective companies for more than ten years which exposed them to work with the Italians for a considerable time. The Italian expatriates interviewed in B&S and B&P in Document Three had lived and worked with the HCNs in Nigeria for more than 18 years. This suggests that some extent of significant interaction had taken place through the years which could have

served as the foundation of medium and long-term relationships. Trust in medium-term relationships is based on behavioural expectations that result from interaction whilst trust in long-term relationships results from personal knowledge of shared values (Levin, Whitener and Cross, 2006). As shown previously, the findings revealed that trust resulted from behaviour expectations as well as shared values. According to Dirks and Ferrin (2002) relationships based on trust depend on how the individual perceives the nature and impact of the relationship with the other individual. For example, Mejia et al. (2016) found that in order for Western expatriates to receive social support and information from their subordinates they had to establish relationships based on trust.

The aforementioned all confirm the findings of the study that trust is a foundation of the cordial relationship in so far as the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates are concerned. Thus the researcher of this study suggests that the establishment of trust between expatriates and HCNs can lead to the development of enduring cordial working relationships.

5.3.3 Cordial Relationships: Positive Attitude of Some of the Italians?

Ajzen (2005) defined attitude as a negative and positive tendency to respond to things, people and events. Accordingly, the researcher of this study perceives the Italian expatriates' attitude towards the HCNs as the Italians' tendency to respond positively or negatively towards the HCNs. The majority of the HCNs in B&P and B&S claimed that some of the Italians responded positively in their working relationship with them and consequently this made working with Italians easier. Furthermore, it helped the HCNs maintain a positive attitude towards work.

Harry, a senior accountant from B&S, who is in his forties and has been relating and interacting with the Italians for twenty years observed that many of the Italians liked to tell jokes which are perceived by the HCNs as a good way of relating with each other. He perceived that the demeanor of the expatriates, such as joking and having fun with the HCNs, shows that the Italians want to bring the HCNs close to them so that they can all work together harmoniously. This kind of friendly interaction could have led to the perception of some HCNs that their relationship with the Italians is one that is likened to a big family. Wang and Varma (2018) argue that frequent

interpersonal interaction will enable expatriates and HCNs to strengthen their relationships with each other which reduces negative stereotyping. Harry recalled that:

‘We interact - even we meet outside sometimes to discuss, joke, have fun and they even give you a pet name and so on, a very open relationship. The ones that do not act well when they do something that they feel is not actually right they apologise.’

The reference to pet names cited by Harry suggests that the Italians are comfortable in relating with the HCNs. It had been noted that Italians give pet names to family members and friends as an expression of their warmth and affection (Donati, 2015). The pet names are hence seen as terms of endearment used by the Italians to show their friendliness to the HCNs.

Similarly, Abdallah from the other company B&P, also indicated that some of the Italians are very open people and this has contributed to the establishment of a very open relationship with the HCNs in the company. He narrated:

‘At times we all meet up and crack jokes, discuss politics, what is happening in the Nigerian government, we even discuss about our families together. We interact a lot outside work. All of us will gather in one place to just discuss. It is a very open relationship.’

Chally from the same company B&P, also confirmed that the Italians are very open and interacted freely with the HCNs in the company. He claimed that the HCNs experienced more freedom to work in the company compared to indigenous companies. As a result, he enjoys working with them because it is a good experience:

‘Ah, I will tell you I have a very good Italian manager. I have a very open and good relationship with him. Apart from work even if I have personal issues I discuss with him and he assists me. Even our Director too, I have a very good relationship with him.’

As discussed in Document Three, Africans have a traditional culture of shared values such as hospitality, compassion, reciprocity, and harmony (Nussbaum, 2003). This

makes the Nigerians very open with each other in the workplace. Thus, this could account for the reason why some of the Italians interviewed in Document Three found the Nigerian culture open to jokes in the workplace even in the Nigerian Ministries. Hence the open culture of the HCNs and the positive attitude of the Italians made it easy for them to often engage in non-work small talk. Small talk often referred to as social talk are conversations regarding non-work issues (Holmes, 2000). Such a conversation could be about weather, politics, weekend activities or social gatherings that employees engage with one another (Tsang, 2008). Small talk according to Holmes (2000) serve as a means of establishing and maintaining effective open working relationships. Thus, it can be seen how small talk had enabled the HCNs and the Italians to interact and create open friendly working relationships in their respective companies.

Accordingly, the frequency of contact between the HCNs and Italian expatriates can result in the accrual of social capital. From the international assignment perspective, social capital has been conceptualised in terms of contact opportunities such as friends, colleagues, and mentors with whom the expatriates interact and build relationships (Liu and Shaffer, 2005). The more frequent the contact, the greater the opportunities to benefit from the interaction (Van Bakel et al., 2015). One of the benefits derived from such relationships built between the Italians and the HCNs is the sharing of resources. This will be discussed in the next section of the analysis which focuses on forms of social exchanges.

5.3.4 Cordial Relationships: The Attitude of Care and Greeting?

The attitude of care was one of the subthemes mentioned by some of the HCNs in both B&S and B&P. These HCNs indicated that some of the Italians have this attitude of care and greeting everyone in the morning regardless of their position in the company. The HCNs are sensitive to this as one of the elements of politeness in the Nigerian community. It is used for various types of greetings such as daily greetings, greeting the elderly, greeting for loss of property through robbery and also greetings on special occasions such as trip departures or arrivals, for pilgrimage and during festivals (Olaniyi, 2017). This attitude of care and greeting has contributed to their interaction and also helped the HCNs maintain an open relationship with the Italians as narrated by some of the HCNs.

Ann, one of the senior secretaries in her forties who has handled all projects and contracts in the administration department of B&S for the last seventeen years maintained that the Italians are good to work with because they show that they care for their workers. She explained that they have listening ears to both personal and work issues, which made the relationship between her and the Italians a friendly one. Kareem from B&P further confirmed that the Italians displayed this attitude of care through greetings:

‘Working with them is so sweet. In the morning they greet everyone even before you greet them. My Italian boss passes through my office in the morning to ask how I am doing today.’

Kayo, in the same company B&P, also stated the same thing. Kayo feels that it is his responsibility as a subordinate to greet his boss in the morning but there are times when his boss greets him first and, on these occasions, Kayo feels appreciated and valued by his boss. He observed that this made interaction with each other easier which contributed towards an open relationship:

‘The kind of relationship I have with them especially the ones I work closely with, I mean Italians, is not a boss and master relationship. I will give you instances. I remember one of our project managers, early in the morning he comes to the workshop to give work instructions because he supervises work outside, on how things should be arranged for those working outside, so when he comes he passes through my office without me even seeing him coming, he stops by my office to greet me. It is quite an amazing experience.’

Greetings are conversational routines that result out of politeness in the process of interaction (Laver, 1981). It is common for people to exchange greetings at the initial stage of interaction. This is because interaction in the initial or final stage involves conversational routines that are often used to understand the status of the hearer (Laver, 1981). The perception that the Italians always liked to greet the HCNs first shows that the Italians perceived no difference between them and the HCNs when it comes to exchanging greetings. During these instances a lesser power differential is demonstrated by some of the Italians and some of the HCNs even though the majority

of the Italians are in higher positions than the HCNs. Thus, a smaller power difference made it easier for the HCNs and the Italians to exchange greetings, which is considered crucial in the establishment and maintenance of open relationships between actors (Wei, 2010).

5.3.5 Cordial Relationships: Respect and Appreciation?

Blau (1964, 2017) defined respect as a favourable judgment of an individual's capabilities. This is because the capabilities of an individual command the respect of others. In the workplace, the capability of an individual is reflected in his productivity or performance which is of value to the company. When workers are recognised for their performance, they tend to generate the respect of other individuals whether they are peers or superiors. Some of the HCNs in B&S and B&P pointed out that the attitude of the Italians, in relation to respect and appreciation, contributes to the establishment of open relationships with them. Kayo recalled an experience of how an Italian boss valued and appreciated him:

‘I have another Italian boss that calls me around 10pm in the night. I will come and do the work. I can stay in the office until 11pm and as soon as I am done I call him and he says Thank You! You know one major thing is gratitude and appreciation outside your salary, somebody does something and you appreciate, there is a way it gives you relief of mind and you feel happy with yourself and also feel like you are adding value to work and you feel recognised.’

It can be noted that Kayo gave more weight to the appreciation that he received by rendering extra hours of work beyond the usual office hours rather than being called to work out of his working hours. On one hand, this is a gesture of commitment. On the other hand, it indicates that being appreciated has a greater value in his relationship with the boss.

Kareem, also from the same company B&P, added that no matter what the nature of HCNs' jobs is in the company, the Italians value and appreciate them for what they do in the company. He gave an example of the gardeners, cleaners and drivers and how the Italians respected them and valued their contribution to the company:

‘Our gardeners and common cleaners here that we Nigerians overlook, for the Italians they value them.’

Kareem observed that the good relationship between the Italians with the gardeners, drivers, cleaners and other junior HCNs stemmed from their respect for what these employees do, which contributed value to the work environment.

This was further confirmed by another HCN from B&S as well as two other HCNs from B&P. Harry, accountant in B&S, explained that the respect shown by the Italians to the HCNs contributes to the open and nice relationship that they are currently having. He stated:

‘The Italians respect everyone in the company and are so concerned with the workers' profession, as a result, they regard everyone according to his work. They are really nice people to work with.’

Michael who is in his fifties, a B&P employee who works with the Italians in the body (mechanical) workshop fixing cars on a daily basis for the past twenty years affirmed that the Italians respected the HCNs they are working with in the workshop. He gave an example of the Italians working in the Body workshop:

‘They treat us well, they respect us and we respect them back as well. If there is work we interact with them together. If you respect yourself here everyone will respect you. Respect is something important here.’

Respecting a person means looking up to his capabilities (Blau, 1964, 2017). In which case, both the HCNs and the Italians look up to each other because of their individual skills that command the respect of the other. Similarly, Emeka, also in his fifties and a senior accountant working with the Italians for more than twenty years in B&P, also stressed the importance of respect and working with the Italians. He recalled what had happened between him and an Italian in his department:

‘An Italian called me and asked me if I knew what I was doing by leaving the office exactly at the closing time while they themselves the Italians have not closed the department. The Italian advised me that

even though it is closing time, for the purpose of respect I should always wait for the Italians so that we can close together.’

Emeka explained that he later understood that these principles and rules that are not included in his employment contract bound him and the Italians. This is indicative of the establishment of a psychological contract as defined above, which takes place when the employer and the employee perceive the obligation to reciprocate (Guest, 2004; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Alcover et al., 2017; Davis and Van der Heijden, 2018). The limitations of this type of employment contract is that the contract is very implicit and hardly discussed and agreed upon formally by the employers and employees. At a later time, however, the status of Emeka’s working hours were discussed with the Italians. This shows a shift towards an idiosyncratic agreement (i-deals) between Emeka and the Italians. The literature explains that i-deals are work agreements regarding salaries, wages, working hours and travel expenses that are negotiated between employers and employees (Rousseau et al., 2006). It can be shown in this case that the Italians negotiated with Emeka and reached an agreement for him to work overtime even though it is not included in his employment contract. Emeka further stated that it was a burden for him to work overtime but out of respect for the Italians he had agreed to give his time for the development of the organisation. As a result, Emeka stated that this had contributed to a cordial working relationship between him and the Italians. Liao et al. (2014) pointed out that i-deals benefit both parties.

5.3.6 Theme B. Restricted Relationships

This section shows that some of the HCNs viewed their relationship with some of the Italian expatriates to be restricted on account of the Italian expatriates’ negative attitudes, ethnocentric, and harsh behaviours perceived by the HCNs.

5.3.7 Restricted Relationships: Negative Attitude of Some of the Italian Expatriates?

While more of the HCNs stated that they had cordial relationships with the Italian expatriates, some of the HCNs believed that the Italians responded negatively in their working relationships, hence this limited or affected their working relationship.

Steve, who is in his sixties and one of the insurance officers who has been working in the admin department with the Italians in B&P for more than thirty-five years, believed that the attitude of some of the Italians affected his working relationship with them:

‘You know that the company belongs to them (Italians), you cannot give instruction, you can only receive instructions from them. Whatever instructions they give I carry out unless I do not have the necessary tools to carry out the task. They do as they like, if you are stubborn, you will not enjoy working with them, but they cooperate with us to ensure that work goes on.’

Similarly, Ezekiel, who is also in his sixties and one of the heads of the steel and carpentry workshop in B&S, also stated that his relationship with some of the Italians for more than thirty years is not very open, as the HCNs only received work instructions from the Italians. This reveals that the interaction is formal in the sense that the relationship is based solely on work. It further reveals that the working relationship itself is dominated by the Italians, which shows that there is a power difference between some of the Italians and some of the HCNs. As pointed out by Homans (1961, 1974), Blau (1964, 2017) and Nunkoo (2016) the actors with more power impose their will on the actors with less power in a relationship. Thus, as owners of the business, the Italians have legitimate power because this is a type of power that comes along with roles given, cultural values or specific positions attained (French and Raven, 1959) Thus, this legitimate power gives the Italians the ability to control everything which makes it difficult for some of the HCNs to have an open relationship with them.

5.3.8 Restricted Relationships: The Ethnocentric Behaviour of Some of the Italians?

Ethnocentrism is defined as ‘the view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything and all others are scaled and rated, in reference to one’s group’ (Sumner, 1906, p.13). Some of the HCNs perceived that the Italians displayed ethnocentric behaviour. This affirms a similar finding in Document Three and Four where the ethnocentric behaviour of the Italian expatriates was manifested in their in-

group orientation or the cooperation with members of one's own group, and non-cooperation toward members of other groups (Axelrod and Hammond, 2003).

Fatima, one of the personnel managers who has been working in B&P for fourteen years, expressed her working experience with the Italians in relation to their ethnocentric attitude. Fatima who is in her fifties claimed that she brought in her experience from the banking industry but the Italians had never given her the chance to put her experience into practice as she observed that some of the Italians acted as if they knew better than the HCNs in a superior way:

‘I do not know why we Nigerians are looked down upon because all these expats coming in believe that these bloody Nigerians are not intelligent, we are seen as a bunch of criminals, they look down on us. Already the Italians came in with this attitude they do not feel you and they are the same. This will be very difficult to break, even if you are to break it will take time and collective efforts because this their attitude they do it to individually, for example for me they will show it to me differently and for John my colleague they will show it to him differently. Some will not tolerate, they will fire back, some will just take it and move. Honestly, we have a problem. And there is this mentality or should I say the truth where is the work? In Nigeria, the unemployed are all over. So workers are afraid, we have a limit. Because if you try to really raise your voice so high the next thing is for you to be given a laid off letter, what can you do, it is there in the employment contract, they can sack you without any reason, so you have a limit.’

This reveals that some of the Italians displayed an ethnocentric attitude and used coercive power against the HCNs. Coercive power exists when an actor perceives the ability of another actor to mete a punishment on him or her for not doing what the actor wants (French and Raven, 1959; Simpson, Farrell, Orina and Rothman, 2015). The Italians used this type of power to control and manage the HCNs, which affected the working relationship between the two parties. Expatriates with ethnocentric attitudes find it difficult to maintain a good working relationship with the HCNs

(Shaffer et al., 2006). Hence Fatima found it difficult to interact and maintain an open working relationship with the ethnocentric Italians who dictate and control the work environment. This shows that, just like Steve and Ezekiel, Fatima is experiencing a superiority and power difference with the Italians which affected their interaction and restricted her relationship with the Italians.

Likewise, Kabir from the other company B&S also added that the attitude of some of the Italians, especially the new ones, affected their working relationships with the HCNs. He recalled a new Italian that he shared an office with recently. Kabir travelled and when he came back, he found out that the Italian had allocated most of the office space to himself as he became the boss in the office for no reason. Kabir felt very bad knowing that he had more working experience than the Italian but he decided to deal with the situation in a different way. He narrated:

‘He wants to be the boss, I will let him be the boss. When our task for the day arrives at our office, he suggests how he wants it to be done, we then do exactly like he says without adding my input or experience, as time went by he realise what I was doing and by that time complaints have already started coming from the General Manager (GM) about the reports we turn in. The GM was like Kabir you know how we work, why are you submitting all these reports like this, I tell him, this is how my boss said I should do it. He was later sacked and he then told everyone in the office that I was the reason he was sacked. If he had kept his ego aside and come down to work with me, I would have shown him the way things were done here easily.’

This also reveals the ethnocentric behaviour of some of the Italians as well as differences in status hierarchies. The Italian showed that he is better than the HCN because he is an Italian and the HCN is a Nigerian, thus, he felt more superior even though the HCN had more experience than him. This affected their relationship to the extent that the HCN withheld his local knowledge which affected work and cost the Italian his job. Peltokorpi (2006) similarly found that the differences in status hierarchies prevented Japanese employees in sharing ideas and information with Nordic expatriates in Japan.

Frank, who is in his fifties and one of the managers working in the HR department of B&S for more than twenty years, also stated that he received complaints from the Nigerian staff regarding the negative behaviour that some of the Italians displayed towards the HCNs during work. He recalled that there were cases of assaults on the HCNs by the Italians in the past. Frank, however, noted that the managing director is an action man and he immediately investigates such incidents. If the managing director finds out that the expatriate was guilty of what he was accused of then the managing director immediately gives that expatriate 48 hours to leave Nigeria. The action of the managing director is an exercise of his managerial and administrative control function aimed at restoring order within the company. This also shows managerial control of workers emotions. Emotion feeling has been defined as a phase of neurobiological activity that is felt by humans (Izard, 2009). The emotions workers display during work play an important role in an organisation thus workers are required to manage their emotions. Emotions can be managed through emotional labour. Haman and Putnam (2008, p.62) describe emotion labour as ‘when individuals consciously alter their emotional state to satisfy workplace prescriptions’. They perceived that some managers may reward employees by promoting or increasing their salaries if they display positive emotions at the workplace. Similarly, employees who fail to display proper emotions at work are punished through negative performance evaluations or even firing them. This could explain why the expatriates who assault the HCNs are terminated by the managing director in B&S.

5.3.9 Restricted Relationships: The Harsh Behaviour of Some of the Italians?

Some of the HCNs in both B&S and B&P perceived that there are some Italians who act harshly towards them. These HCNs perceived that this negative attitude displayed by some of the Italians could be attributed to the perception that some of the Italians tend to be bossy, thus, making it difficult to interact with some of them in the management positions as narrated by some of the HCNs.

Ezekiel from the carpentry workshop of B&S indicated that the harsh attitude of the Italians affected the HCNs and this restricted their working relationship in the carpentry department of the company. He explained:

‘That is why as soon as the new masters arrive from Italy, we study them to understand how to work with them. If you have a harsh master, you will not even be able to interact and discuss with him very well.’

Ezekiel’s use of the term master is seen more in the context of respect for employees in the top management roles rather than in a colonial sense. As earlier explained, the companies that participated in this study are Italian owned hence most if not all of the managerial positions are occupied by the Italians which gives them legitimate power and it is common for Nigerians to refer to employees in top managerial positions as masters.

Nabas, who is in his fifties and one of the heads of the mechanical workshop of B&S, also explained how the attitude of the Italians influenced their relationship with the HCNs:

‘Well, I will tell you the truth these Italians some of them are harsh while some of them are very good to work with. For example, some that worked with us here before are not harsh but wants the job to be done. And in the area of healthcare, they are very conscious to see that one is fit for the job. They are open to us and we also are happy working with them so we deliver the best which makes them happy with us. So with some of them, we are just like brothers working together but with some of them, we do not enjoy working with them they are harsh to us, any little thing that happens they will report you to the higher authority in the management. And this affects the relationship we have with them.’

Abdallah from B&P also pointed out that some of the Italians are a bit harsh when relating with the workers, but he later observed that this is their normal way of communicating:

‘One thing I observed about the Italians is that some of them at times are a bit harsh. And if one does not actually understand them well one will think they are harsh by nature. I mean when they are talking they try to raise their voice. If you do not understand that it is their nature,

you will think that they are angry. But actually, they are not angry this is just their way of communicating. Once you get to know them, you ignore this and do your job as I think it is their normal way of life.'

This supports the perceived view of Gannon and Pillai (2010) that Italians speak emotionally with rhythm when expressing their ideas and feelings as they are more interested in captivating and engaging their listeners rather than explaining their ideas in detail. They emphasise this emotionally by manipulating their tonal quality, changing their pitch, and increasing the volume of their speech. This could explain why some of the HCNs interpreted the attitude of some Italians to be harsh by nature. This can be linked to the absence of emotional labour which requires individuals to control and manage their emotions. Cropanzano, Dasborough and Weiss (2017) claimed that exchange relationships were developed out of affective interactions between leaders and members. Thus emotional labour will enable the Italians to align their emotions with the values of their organisations which will help them control the display of inappropriate behaviour towards the HCNs.

However, not all HCNs view the Italian way of communicating as harsh. Fatima, as a personnel manager in B&P, ironically explained that the harsh attitude is not displayed by the Italians in some departments as she observed that the HCNs working in the yard have a very open relationship with the Italians:

'There was a day I was standing in front of my office and I saw the site manager came to meet the workers in the site, the way they are joking, teasing each other and laughing means that there they do interact maybe because day in day out they work together.'

This shows that interaction takes place more in the yard in B&P. This might be attributed to the physical nature of work in the yard and site that forces them to work together unlike other departments in management where HCNs work separately. Hence this might be the factor that limits interaction in some departments.

To address the issue of interaction, the researcher of this study perceives that involving more HCNs at the management level will improve the working relationships with the Italians. The findings indicate that the staffing of the companies

were made up of fewer Nigerians at the management level. This might be because the majority of the Nigerians are quantity surveyors, engineers, and technicians who work in the yard and site. According to the HR managers of both B&P and B&S, the majority of the HCNs in the companies work on the site. Bringing more Nigerians at the management level by HR will, therefore, improve interaction and further strengthen the working relationship between the two parties. For example, Fatima explained:

‘There is this position that was meant for locals, the admin manager but ever since I joined this company it is the Italians that are holding that position. Maybe if only that position was given to the right person all these issues of interaction and communication might not have come up. Because the local handling that position will be our strength. He will protect the interest of the locals. Maybe that is why it was designed that way that the position should be held by a local.’

Fatima believed that the admin managers’ position was taken away from the HCNs. As discussed in Document Two, it was common for the HCNs to feel that expatriates are sometimes taking away positions that are meant for the HCNs (Reiche, 2013). Fatima might have perceived the Italians as outsiders to the position hence reduced her effectiveness in interaction and building a relationship with them.

It was further argued that more HCNs need to be promoted in order to bring in more Nigerians at the management level. Based on the findings of this study, promotion is seen as not only a mechanism used for rewarding efforts but a tool that enables workers to move from one position to a higher one, which gives them a chance to advance their career. The findings from B&S show that it takes time for HCNs to be promoted in the company. Faith, a senior quantity surveyor explains that it takes a long time for HCNs to be promoted to management team:

‘I was fortunate to be in the management team in my first five years here which has never been. You have to work for 10 to 15 years before you get to the management team.’

Awal, in his thirties, a quantity surveyor, who has been working in B&S for eight years now confirmed that it takes time to be promoted in B&S. He recalled that although he was a senior quantity surveyor in the previous Italian company he worked, he was employed as an intermediate staff in B&S and it took time for the management to assess him and his performance before he was promoted to a senior quantity surveyor in the company. Saporta and Farjoun (2003) found that the more workers promoted in an organisation the less likely they are to leave the organisation. Thus promotion can serve as a mechanism to retain workers.

On the other hand, the findings from B&P show that Italians get promoted more than the HCNs in the company. Steve cited an example:

‘Look at promotion for example, the Italians are promoted but the locals are not regularly promoted even after working for so long with them.’

The perceived unfairness regarding promotion can affect the performance and job satisfaction of the HCNs. This is because promotion can significantly impact the performance and job satisfaction of workers in the workplace (Khan, Nawaz, Aleem and Hamed, 2012; Zeeshan and Ahmad, 2017). Pfeffer (2005) claims promotion from within can provide an incentive for workers to perform well. Kosteas (2010) found that promotion increases job satisfaction hence can be used by employers to fulfil workers’ needs to make them more satisfied with their work.

Other HCNs in the company also confirmed the lack of promotion for HCNs. Instead the HCNs only get an increment in salary for good performance. Fatima explains:

‘There is nothing like promotion here, for all these years I have been a manager. The only thing is just an increment in salary.’

Michael from the same company added:

‘Here they put you through work but promotion is not there, however if you are hardworking it reflects on your salary. For example my salary has been increased about three times because of my

performance. You see by now I am suppose to be senior staff because of my performance.'

An increment in salary without a change in position and responsibilities can affect the status of the HCNs. Status is as a rank or position given to an individual or of a group of individuals by others (Robbins and Judge, 2011). Thus a status promotion includes a change in position and responsibilities. Saporta and Farjoun (2003) found that status promotion reduces the chance of managers and professionals' turnover.

The issue of promotion of the HCNs in B&P can be linked to good leadership. Michael believed that management is not keen on promoting HCNs who deserve to be promoted:

'Before we had a chief engineer, who is an Italian that observes and recommends workers for promotion, and if that does not happen, he suggests management increase the salary of workers that perform very well.'

This also shows that HCNs in B&P need managers who can observe, support and recommend the HCNs for promotion in B&P.

The forgoing claims all apparently point to the issue of power difference in both companies. The Italians being the more powerful actors use their legitimate power to control the staffing and promotion of workers in both companies. This calls for fair and equitable HR practices relating to staffing and promotion in both companies. This would contribute to professional practice since the perceived fairness in staffing and promotion by both the HCNs and the Italian expatriates can improve interaction between them which will promote more positive working relationships between the two parties.

Based on the preceding discussion, the researcher of this study perceives that the nature of the relationship of some of the HCNs with the Italian expatriates was restricted because of the limited interaction and the perceived negative attitudes displayed by some of the Italians. This can, however, occur on a case-by-case basis depending on the behaviour of the Italians who work with the HCNs. The limited

interaction can affect the formation of social capital in the form of relationships and resources exchanged between some of the Italian expatriates and some of the HCNs. This is because social interaction is one of the basic components of social capital (Liu, and Shaffer, 2005). Studies show that individuals create social capital by interacting over a long period of time (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Liu and Shaffer, 2005; Claus, Maletz, Casoinic and Pierson, 2015). From the international assignment perspective, Van Bakel et al. (2017) found that expatriates in contact with HCNs increase their social capital which enhances the social support they receive from the HCNs than those who are not in contact with the HCNs. From the nature and quality of interaction of some of the HCNs and some of the Italians, it can be perceived that social capital in the form of relationships maintained and resources exchanged are not sustained between some of the Italian expatriates and the HCNs which will be further discussed in the next section.

5.4 Forms of Social Exchanges Between the HCNs and the Italian Expatriates

This section presents the different forms of social exchanges that occurred between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. Figure 5.2 outlines the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data which portray such exchanges. Accordingly, the exchanges involve multiple exchanges of intangible resources (information, advice, ideas and technology) unequal exchanges of intangible resources (ideas) and exclusive exchanges of tangible resources (goods and services, money and performance).

Figure 5.2 Forms of Social Exchanges Perceived by the HCNs to be Taking Place with the Italian Expatriates



Source: Researcher Generated

5.4.1 Theme A. Multiple Exchange of Intangible Resources

The intangible resources exchanged in this case involved information, ideas, advice and technology regarding work. As discussed in the literature review of this study resources such as information, ideas and advice, are less concrete hence are exchanged symbolically (Foa and Foa, 1980; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). About half of the HCNs mentioned that they engage in symbolic exchanges of information, advice, and ideas regarding work and personal life with the Italians in both B&S and B&P Company.

Frank, from the HR department of B&S, explained how the Italians exchanged information and ideas regarding work with the HCNs, especially the ones that work in the site. Frank explained that the Italians cannot do the work alone, so they definitely had to share information and knowledge with the HCNs:

‘What I mean here is that the drawings for the construction are with the Italians, the Nigerian headmen and their workers do not see the drawings and sketches, so the Italians have to share information and ideas on how they want things to be done, if not work will not go on as they are not aware of the master plan. It is not that the Nigerians are not knowledgeable, they are, but they have to be told exactly how it should be done before they will be able to construct it. It is not that the

Italians are claiming that they know it all, they sometimes share the drawings with some Nigerians.’

Ezekiel from the steel and carpentry workshop of B&S confirmed that the Italians share new ideas about work with them in the site:

‘Ok, we get the ideas from the Italians, if something new comes out, they bring the drawings and show us how to make the new ones. So based on the drawings we ask questions and then when we fully understand we make the new ones.’

In return, the HCNs claimed that they also shared information with the Italians. Frank gave an example of how the HCNs reciprocate by sharing information regarding the security of the country with them:

‘We share a lot with them especially us that are in heavily populated areas, there are things we hear and pass the information to them especially on the security of the country. We tell them what to do - do not go this way around this time - do not follow there - it is not safe and so on.’

The foregoing indicates a reciprocal flow of information and ideas between some of the HCNs and some of the Italian expatriates. This shows a two-way balanced exchange that enabled both actors to provide information support to each other. The Italians provide information regarding work to the HCNs whilst the HCNs provide general information about the host country to the Italians. Toh and Srinivas (2012) found that the HCNs’ trust towards the expatriates plays an important role in the HCNs willingness to share information with expatriates. As outlined above, this study shows that the HCNs trusted the Italian expatriates. Hence, they felt comfortable in providing information that will assist the Italians to work in Nigeria.

The researcher of this study perceives the foregoing as social networks, created between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates which allowed them to exchange resources. Liu and Shaffer (2005) defined social networks as a set of a relationships among individuals. The outcome of network relationships results in either benefits or

constraints that people may utilise or may not utilise. Claus et al. (2015) found that a large network provides international assignees with more opportunity to interact and exchange different resources. The more frequent the contact between the international assignee and the HCNs the better the chance of bonding, that results in the sharing of resources such as information. The researcher of this study found that cordial networks created by the Italian expatriates and the HCNs allowed them to connect, socialise and support each other. This provided them with the opportunity of exchanging ideas and information with one another which benefitted them both.

Another exchange the HCNs and the Italians engage in is the advice which they provide to each other. The majority of the HCNs interviewed claimed that some of the Italians and the HCNs advise each other on matters involving work and personal life which they believed had benefitted them both. Kabir from B&S stated that he enjoyed the experience and cited an instance with the managing director:

‘When I have any work, family issues or anything bothering me I go and discuss with the managing director and he gives me good advice and I do that to him as well.’

Similarly, Harry from the same company B&S also mentioned that some of the Italians in management approached him for assistance on certain things:

‘If they do not understand something they come to me and I take my time to explain to them until they get it, others also come can you guide me on this please... Even the general manager sends for me if he needs me to show him something or even an advice regarding my area of specialisation.’

Harry further mentioned that the Italians reciprocate by advising and sharing their work experiences in different places with the HCNs:

‘In the process of interaction, they share with us their experiences of working in different places, they advise us based on their previous experiences. For example, some might tell us when they were working

in so and so country this was the way we were approaching so and so issue.’

Isaac who is in his fifties and now a tax consultant in B&S also claimed that he now offers advice on tax-related issues to the Italians as he was recently promoted to a tax consultant because of his twenty years experience of working in the company. This was unlike before when the Italians had to fly in a tax consultant from Lagos to Abuja to advise them on tax-related issues in Nigeria. He narrated:

‘I advise and update them on tax clearance certificate (TCC) which is the identity of the company that shows the company has settled all liabilities for the past 12 months, so without the TCC they cannot tender for the new project in Nigeria, this is how important TCC is. They do not joke with this, without it no project will be given to them in Nigeria.’

Isaac later mentioned that the Italians did not directly provide advice to him but he observed that the Italians mostly provided advice and shared ideas in terms of construction with the HCNs in the company:

‘Majority of the Italians, managing director, general manager and the other supervisors are engineers, architects, quantity surveyors. They advise and share a lot of ideas regarding construction with the workers in the technical department.’

Awal, a quantity surveyor from B&S, confirmed that reciprocal exchanges of ideas regarding work took place between the Italian engineers, architects and quantity surveyors with the Nigerian counterparts. The reciprocal exchange of ideas is not exclusive only to co-workers or counterparts on the same level but rather is open and cut across positions. He explained that exchanges took place between the two parties because:

‘If you are operating in Nigeria there are certain rules that you must follow as a professional in line with the regulatory body. So most of the Italian expatriates are willing to learn the rules and principles that they do not understand about the country from the Nigerian employees

and in return the Italians teach the HCNs what they do not know generally regarding work.’

This shows one of the advantages of HCNs in a multinational company, which is the familiarity with the rules, principles and work practices in the host country (Reiche and Harzing, 2008). Thus, the HCNs exchange information on the appropriate work behaviours in the host country with technical and managerial ideas regarding work with the Italians. Some of the HCNs, on the other hand, revealed that they both advised each other regarding work and personal issues. This indicates that they both provide emotional support to each other that helps lessen negative work experiences. Another resource exchange by some of the HCNs and the Italians is technology. Awal claimed to share the quantity survey software that he used in his previous Italian organisation and in return some of the Italians also shared with him the software they brought from their previous organisations. Likewise, Chally exchanged engineering software with some of the Italian engineers and Emeka exchanged accounting software with some Italian accountants in his department.

These exchanges of information, ideas, advice, and software packages indicated that multiple symbolic exchanges took place between the Italians and the HCNs. This exchange shows that the Italians and the HCNs engaged in reciprocity, and the similarity of the resources exchanged here shows that homeomorphic reciprocity took place. Gouldner (1960) and Cropanzano et al. (2017) pointed out that homeomorphic reciprocity involves the exchange of similar resources. This also shows that fair exchanges took place as the resources received were exactly the resources that were reciprocated back (Homans, 1961, 1974; Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005).

The findings so far suggest the exchange of multiple symbolic resources in two of the companies extend the exchange theory from the social capital perspective. From an organisational business perspective, social capital is viewed by Burt (1992) as a general contact through which friends or colleagues receive opportunities to use their financial and human capital. The researcher observes that the nature of interaction and contact found in the previous section between some of the HCNs and some of the Italians allowed them to exchange information, ideas, advice and software packages between each other. This supports the main benefit of social exchange which is the

sharing of resources between actors (Blau, 1964, 2017; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2012; Ali, 2013) through different networks of relationships (Presutti, Boari and Fratocchio, 2007; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Alcover, et al., 2017). This is advantageous for both parties who not only learn from each other but improves their professional practice as well.

5.4.2 Theme B. Unequal Exchange of Intangible Resources

In the preceding section, some of the HCNs claimed that equal exchanges took place between them and Italians. Other HCNs in both B&P and B&S, however, mentioned that some Italians were not open to taking ideas from the HCNs and this has resulted in unequal exchanges between the two parties. Unequal exchanges in this instance took place as a result of some of the Italians not being willing to receive ideas, suggestions, and recommendations from the HCNs, whilst the HCNs are open to ideas and suggestions from them.

Kabir from B&S recounted how some of the Italians shared ideas regarding work with the HCNs and how some of the Italians also took ideas concerning the practical aspect of construction from the HCNs indirectly:

‘You see some of the projects we get here we do not know it all, every project we get is different, The General Manager is always there to guide us on what to do and how to do it and how to go about it. GM also shares ideas and information that do not only concern work but even something that the one can take home.’

However, Kabir revealed that some of the Italians in the company were not really open to receiving ideas from the HCNs directly thus he decided to leave whatever he knows and just follow whatever was suggested by the management. Whilst many of the Italians are not open to taking recommendations and suggestions regarding work from the HCNs directly, he observed that the Italians take ideas from the HCNs indirectly:

‘You see when they come, they may not know everything about the practical aspect of the job but the good ones will now cool down as if they are playing but actually they are learning before you know it they

know everything about the job. You see we have one old Nigerian man in the workshop he is not that educated but has good experience in what he does, so most of them will just keep quiet and learn about the practical aspect of work from him, even the managing director respects him so much because of his experience.’

Likewise, Joshua one of the electricians, who has been working in B&P for nineteen years and is in his forties, claimed that the Italians shared ideas on how to work with marines and crushers (machines designed to crush rocks into small pieces) with him and he also shared ideas on how to fix electronics with the Italians. However, Joshua indicated that some Italians found it difficult to take ideas from him and the other HCNs directly in the workshop and site:

‘The Italians taught me how to work with marines and crushers but the Italians did not know how to fix and repair air conditions, fridge and other practical things that I had learned in my previous workplace before joining B&P. So I shared with them ideas on the practical aspect of the job but they will not take it directly until they battle with the problem for days then they will come back to you when they try and try and did not get it right.’

Some of the HCNs who work on the site and in the workshop all confirmed that it is not easy for them to share their ideas directly with some of the Italians working on the site as some Italians were not open to receiving ideas from them.

Fatima from B&P claimed that she had tried to share her working experiences from the banking sector with the Italians but they had never entertained any of her ideas:

‘I had tried to make suggestions and recommendations for more meetings to be held regarding work between the Italians and the Nigerians but the Italians have never listened or taken any of my ideas for thirteen years.’

Christopher from the carpentry workshop of B&S revealed that it was sometimes difficult to exchange ideas with the Italians because some Italians do not directly take

ideas from the HCNs. This can be attributed to the structure of power within the organisations and also the ethnocentric behaviour of some of the Italian expatriates. As discussed earlier, the Italian employees have more power over the HCNs and also some of the Italians displayed ethnocentric behaviour towards the HCNs. Hence the ethnocentric behaviour and the legitimate power vested in the Italian expatriates makes them feel superior and not take ideas from the HCNs. Christopher narrated:

‘Highest you can try to do is be diplomatic and make it as if the idea is coming from one of them. If he says no then there is nothing you can do, you just have to follow his own way until you arrive at the desired result. And also if the Italian expats make a mistake because no one is above mistake, you cannot tell or show them directly, you have to look for a way that they can see it themselves.’

Similarly, Faith, a quantity surveyor from the same company also stated that the Italians find it difficult to take ideas from the HCNs directly:

‘For me most of the times I do not just offer my advice or suggestions directly. I bend things especially working with the general manager, I say oh sorry Mr. Paul if you look at it this way, I think it is better, he then listens and accepts.’

On the other hand, Michael from the body workshop in B&P does not even bother to share his ideas regarding work with the Italians:

‘No, I do not share my ideas with them. If it is regarding my task then I put my own ideas into practice, but to the Italians, I am afraid to suggest my own ideas because they might think, I am trying to show I know too much, so I keep to myself.’

The foregoing reveals that there is a barrier to sharing ideas between some Italians and some HCNs. Other than the ethnocentric behaviour and differences in hierarchical position within the companies, the researcher of this study perceives that this barrier might be attributed to the age difference between many of the Italians and the HCNs. This is evident from an earlier investigation done in Document Three,

which pointed out that all the Italian expatriates interviewed in B&S and B&P had almost reached retirement age. This was also affirmed by some of the HCNs from both companies who mentioned during the interviews about the long years spent by the Italian expatriates in the two companies.

Faith from B&S, claimed that there is an age gap between her and the Italians as most of the Italians in her department are in their sixties and seventies while she is in her forties. She believed that the age gap served as a challenge for her to share her ideas with the Italians:

‘Sometimes when you are working with somebody as old as your father you cannot confront him and tell him, hey there - this is not correct! This is what I am facing now the general manager is in his late 60s just like my father, so it is a little bit difficult to correct them when they are wrong but sometimes I say it and he will be like OK Faith if this is your view I will take it then.’

Kayo, in his thirties from B&P, saw age as a barrier that restricted the flow of ideas between some Italians and some HCNs. Kayo revealed that the majority of the Italians in the company are old and this contributed to their old fashioned ways of doing things:

‘There is every tendency for someone who is old and worked for so many years to believe that there is only one way of looking at things but someone who is young and fresh from the university thinks that there are different ways of doing things.’

This reveals that although the young employees learn from the old employees, there are some new things that the young employees bring to the organisation but some Italians are not open to taking new ideas from the younger employees because of their old working mentality. The researcher of this study perceives this to be linked to the notions of cliques and cabals of Burns (1955). Cliques occur among older employees who sometimes develop work values that are contrary to the dominant values of the organisation, whilst cabals occur among younger employees whose interest may be in compliance with the dominant values of the organisation. There is a tendency that

some older Italian expatriates have developed values that are not consistent with the dominant values in their organisations. Hence, they are not interested in the new ideas some of the younger employees have brought to the organisation.

Apart from age, the researcher of this study also found out that the organisational environment is another factor that influenced the exchange of ideas between the Italians and the HCNs. The organisational environment can influence the interaction, which can affect the exchange of ideas between the expatriates and the local people (Farh et al., 2010; Shen, 2010). As found in Document Three the organisational environment consisted of a large Italian expatriate community whereby the expatriates shared their ideas among themselves and supported each other, thus, some of them do not bother to receive work ideas from the HCNs. This could also be because many expatriates remain in what Van Bakel et al. (2017) and Van Bakel (2018) referred to as an expatriate bubble which makes them shy away from HCNs and rely heavily on co-nationals and other expatriates for support (Johnson et al., 2003).

On the other hand, unequal exchanges also occurred because the Italians refused to share their ideas with the HCNs. Fatima from B&P claimed that majority of the Italians found it difficult to share their work ideas with her. Likewise, Faith from B&S claimed that there were Italian quantity surveyors that she worked with for two years who refused to exchange anything regarding work with her. She recalled:

‘I remember a time when I asked them to guide me on the program of work because at that time I was new and had no clue on how the program of work was prepared. One of the Italians told me to go and learn it myself as he himself learned it the hard way. I had to go and pay someone outside the company to teach me.’

This also indicates the absence of exchange as some of the Italians refused to share their ideas with some of the HCNs. Aselage and Eisenberger (2003) indicated that exchanges between two parties in a relationship becomes well established if both parties involved are willing to share resources with each other. As previously discussed in the literature review of this study, there is a need for balance in the contribution of an individual with those of the other team members within the

workplace. This is because the balance in an exchange relationship is very important and lack of it may negatively affect the process of exchange relationships (Blau, 1964, 2017; Adams, 1965). The researcher of this study perceives that the lack of balance might be interpreted as evidence of the unequal exchanges of ideas between some of the HCNs and some of the Italians.

5.4.3 Theme C. Exclusive Exchange of Tangible Resources

Some of the HCNs from B&S and B&P mentioned that they exchanged tangible resources such as goods, services performance and money with the Italians. As previously shown in the literature review of this study, goods, services, and money are considered as concrete resources and thus can be exchanged between the Italians and the HCNs within a short period of time. Mitchell et al. (2012) pointed out that the time at which an exchange of resources takes place shows how valuable the actors involved in the exchange perceive their relationship with each other.

Kareem from B&S narrated that the Italians and the HCNs engaged in the tangible exchange of goods and services with each other. Kareem explained that whenever the Italians go on leave they were so nice that they even bought gifts for the HCNs when they returned from their trips:

‘Look at this watch I am wearing, an Italian gave it to me as a gift when he came back from vacation. And not only me, they give even to some of my Nigerian colleagues. Some of my colleagues receive shoes, some belt and so on.’

Kareem further explained that the Nigerians, on the other hand, did not give gifts to the Italians in return but they rendered services to them. This could be the result of the Italian expatriates earning more money compared to the HCNs as mentioned by the majority of the HCNs interviewed. In 2013 Eboh reported in Vanguard Nigeria that expatriate oil workers in Nigeria are the highest paid expatriates in Africa. While in 2015, Roberts reported in the Telegraph UK, that the highest number of top earning expatriates work in Nigeria. Hence the HCNs perceived the services rendered to be sufficiently reciprocal to the gift received from the Italians. Kareem gave an example of the services he himself rendered to the Italians:

‘For example, if an Italian is sick with Malaria, I help him get the Malaria drugs here in Nigeria. And also at the weekends if they need to get something personally and do not know where to get it in Nigeria, I take my time to go with them to show them where to get it. Sometimes, if I am getting something for myself, I call and ask if some of them need it too.’

The foregoing reveals a different form of exchange where different resources are exchanged between the HCNs and the Italians. Thus, the researcher categorised this form of exchange as exclusive as the resources provided were different from the resources returned in exchange. This extends SET by focusing on the role of volition in the relationship. Since the HCNs cannot reciprocate by way of material or monetary gifts then they reciprocate in terms of their willingness to do something good for the Italian expatriates.

Another form of exclusive exchange taking place in both companies is the informal exchange of money with performance. Abdallah from B&P claimed that his Italian manager sometimes gave him money when he delivered his work perfectly. The Italians like the job to be done perfectly and this makes them happy so they try to give the HCNs something in return:

‘My Italian manager here, when he gives you a task and you deliver it perfectly sometimes he even gives you something from his pocket and says thank you.’

Likewise, Michael also from the same company B&P confirmed that sometimes he engaged in such kind of exchange because when he worked very hard it was reflected in his salary:

‘For example, the accountant has called me about three times and told me that the Italians have instructed the management to increase my salary because of my performance.’

Nabas, from B&S, also had a similar experience of exchange with the Italians. He stated that whenever he delivered a task perfectly, the managing director reciprocated back by giving him something in return for the job well done:

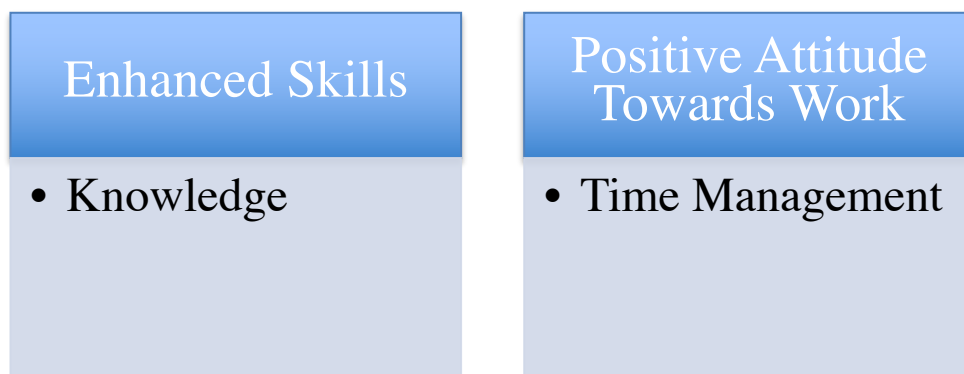
‘Sometimes the managing director will say this is a good job you have done come to my office when I go, he gives me an envelope. This is motivation.’

The foregoing indicates a psychological contract between some of the HCNs and the management during the exchanges. It also reveals that some HCNs and some Italians engaged in heteromorphic reciprocity whereby the resources exchanged are different but perceived to be similar in value (Gouldner, 1960). This also indicates an exclusive form of exchange whereby the resources provided are different from the resources returned. Although the intention of the Italians was to provide monetary incentives for doing the job well, it also had the same result as an exclusive exchange because some of the HCNs strived to do a perfect job to the delight and benefit of the Italians.

5.5 Perceived Benefits Derived by the HCNs from their Reciprocal Relationships with the Italian Expatriates.

This section describes the benefits derived by the HCNs from the reciprocal relationship that they experienced with the Italian expatriates. Figure 5.3 reveals the themes that show the benefits derived from the reciprocal relationship of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. These themes included enhanced skills with the subtheme knowledge and positive attitudes towards work with the subtheme time management on the part of the HCNs.

Figure 5.3 Perceived Benefits Derived by the HCNs from their Reciprocal Relationships with the Italian Expatriates.



Source: Researcher Generated

5.5.1 Theme A. Enhanced Skills: Knowledge?

As revealed previously, the HCNs engaged in exchange relationships with the Italians and some of the resources exchanged were ideas, information, and guidance. These ideas, information, and guidance collectively constituted knowledge that somehow produced a benefit to both the HCNs and the Italians in their various fields of work. This is because exchanges are expected to produce a benefit to the actors involved (Blau, 1964, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2012).

Kohug and Zander (1992) categorised knowledge into two types: information and know-how. Information deals with knowledge that is transferred through symbols and facts whilst know-how deals with enhanced skills or expertise. It was found in this research that the symbols and the facts that the HCNs learned from the Italians contributed to the enhancement of their skills. Some of the HCNs indicated that the Italians have impacted them with information knowledge that greatly improved their know-how knowledge in their fields of work and they also believed that some of the Italians have benefited from the HCNs in one way or the other. These exchanges took place through interaction between the HCNs and the Italians. This shows that knowledge was exchanged at the individual level whereby one person transfers knowledge to another in the organisation (Wilkesmann, Fischer and Wilkesmann, 2009).

Frank from B&S felt that he benefitted from the Italians who had taught him things that he did not learn at university which he found relevant to his job. He believed that some of the Italians were more technically experienced compared to the Nigerians because many of them have worked in different companies abroad, thus, had acquired a lot of technical knowledge. Sharing this knowledge with the HCNs was a way of helping the HCNs to achieve their task perfectly. Therefore, most of them tend to impart the knowledge that they have learned to the benefit of the HCNs. Expatriates are increasingly perceived as employees that transfer knowledge in multinational organisations (Harzing, Pudelko and Reiche, 2016; Shin, Hasse and Schotter, 2017). Isaac, also from B&S Company confirmed that the Italians are needed in Nigeria because of their technical knowledge. This means that the Nigerians can benefit from the technical knowledge that the Italians brought in with them:

‘Some of our Nigerian technicians after working for some time they decide to leave here, for example I know three people working in the technical department that left here after learning technically from the Italians. They told me that the knowledge that they acquired here they can use it to make more money to become consultants than to stay and be working here. Also, I remember a worker who insists he must leave after learning so much from the Italians, the management now told him to stay with them on contract but he refuses. He wanted to go and open his own workshop.’

Ezekiel from B&S confirmed that the HCNs benefitted from the Italians technically within the field of steel and carpentry. He recounted that if something new came out in Italy they brought the drawings and showed the HCNs how to make it in Nigeria. As a result, he noticed that his skills began to improve because of the new knowledge provided by the Italians:

‘Something that one has not done before is asked to do it here. For me, that is why anywhere I go to Nigeria I can do anything you give me concerning my work because I have done it before here.’

Technical competence is one of the values subsidiaries gained from expatriates (Reiche and Harzing, 2008). The foregoing all shows that some HCNs have gained technical knowledge from the Italians that had improved their technical skills. However, Frank from B&S pointed out that some of the Italians also benefitted from the HCNs in the workshop because not all the Italians posted to Nigeria are knowledgeable in the practical aspect of work. Thus, some of the Italians who lack practical skills learn indirectly from the Nigerians whilst in some cases, others left immediately because they cannot cope with the fact that the Nigerians had more practical knowledge than them. This shows a two-way knowledge sharing between them which indicates that reciprocity took place.

Joshua from B&P also confirmed that some of the Italians benefitted from the HCNs by learning the practical aspect of work from them:

‘Let me give you an example, if they bring an Italian to the Electric workshop and he is not an electrician, as soon as he comes he starts learning from us gradually, within a short period of time he knows all that we are doing, and he is learning indirectly from us, the Italian boss will prepare a book in Italian language concerning the work we do, so at work he reads everything theoretically and then he observes us and learns the practical aspect from us.’

Harry from the accounting department of B&S, however, claimed that it is the HCNs that benefitted practically from the Italians. He indicated that sometimes the HCNs needed the guidance of the Italians regarding practical aspects of work. The Italians liked to share knowledge that is why most of the Italians he had worked with over the years impacted him so much on the practical aspects of accounting:

‘Accounting, it is a matter of practical - not just the theory. I may be looking at the concept of it theoretically but in practice, there are some small changes you need to look at. So the Italians are there to guide you. From there I keep on learning and learning and I have become so good at what I do in accounting now. So, skill wise I have obtained more knowledge of which if I happen to leave here tomorrow it will benefit me and I will be better off than what I was doing before. So it means I have gained a lot. I really have learned a lot from this company and I am still acquiring more.’

In the case of Harry, his skills in accounting had been developed positively which had impacted his career. On the other hand, Harry believed that the Italians also benefit from the HCNs as there were certain things that the Italians do during work which he corrected and they too learn from it.

The researcher of this study found that both the HCNs and the Italians benefitted from each other. However, some of the HCNs claimed that the HCNs benefitted more from the Italians because some of the Italians had more experience than the HCNs in some areas. Some of the Italians had dynamic knowledge in several aspects of work as a result of their experience in working with different big organisations compared to the HCNs. Hence when it comes to the technical and managerial aspect of work, the

Italians are in a position to educate the HCNs on things that they do not understand. This shows that knowledge is shared at an inter-organisational level whereby knowledge is transferred from one organisation to another (Wilkesmann et al., 2009).

Likewise, Chally from the engineering department of B&P believed that one thing about the Italians in B&P is that they liked to impart knowledge while teaching the HCNs what they needed to know. In a way, their openness and ability to pass knowledge had greatly impacted the growth of the organisation. He went further to explain the type of knowledge he acquired in relating with the Italians and how this improved his skills in engineering:

‘Ok let me cite an instance for you. Like I told you I am a senior engineer here and civil engineering here we have about four aspects of it. I am in charge of material and testing. I carry out the test of all the materials we use, to know if it will be good for the job so I learned how to use most of the equipment and materials and also how to carry out the test from the Italians. Therefore, in terms of my engineering skills, I can match with any civil engineer outside because of the opportunity of working with updated equipment, machines and materials brought in by the Italians from Italy.’

Chally believed that his engineering skills improved as a result of working with modern machinery. In the same way, Michael from the same company B&P also felt that he benefitted from the machines and tools that the Italians brought in from Italy because they are not available in Nigeria:

‘I have improved a lot and I feel I have the skills it takes to manufacture a car now because of the opportunity of working with updated machines and tools which none of the Italians taught me how to work with. Believe me, I figured everything out myself and even teach the other workers working under me. So the next thing I want to do when I leave here is to be in a place where we can start manufacturing Nigerian cars.’

Unlike Chally who relied on the Italians to teach him how to operate the machinery, Michael figured out how to work with the machine on his own and also taught the other workers how to work with the machines. This is because he claimed that it was easier for him to figure out things by himself than rely on someone to teach him. Hence, he felt like he did not benefit directly from the Italians, but rather from their updated machines and tools in the company. This could indicate that the level of self-reliance of a technical worker in the workplace can influence the exchanges taking place between the worker and the other workers.

On the other hand, Nabas from the other company, B&S, claimed that he did not use the updated machines a lot, but rather the Italians guided him to manually use his hands and imagination to creatively produce different types and colors of paint. Thus his artistic skills had improved a lot as a result of the encouragement and support he received from the Italians. He stated that:

‘When I got employed in the company, one of the Italians checked my credentials and kept on pushing me to try out things that I was not even employed to do. At that time I informed him that I was not employed to do so and so but the Italian said to me just do it! It is within your field. And as time went by I noticed that my artistic skills got better and better. I then realised a big difference in my artistic skills compared to when I was working without support and encouragement in my previous company.’

The foregoing shows that some HCNs’ skills in engineering and design had been greatly impacted as a result of encouragement and support as well as the opportunity of working with updated machines brought in by the Italians. This indicates some of the HCNs have benefitted from the support and encouragement received from the Italians. When employees receive high levels of support from their managers, supervisors, and coworkers they reciprocate by showing more commitment to the organisation (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Commitment according to Cook and Emerson (1978) is a mutual bond that makes individuals repeatedly engage in an exchange with the same actors. The findings of this study reveal that the HCNs show more

commitment through displaying a positive attitude towards work and punctuality which will be discussed in the next section.

Likewise, it was also found that the Italians also benefitted from the HCNs. Chally mentioned that he taught the majority of the Italians how to work with AutoCAD (Computer Aided Design Software) which he is good at. He found the Italians very open to learning AutoCAD from him. In all these cases, the exchanges had benefitted both the HCNs and the Italians.

Awal from B&S, also claimed that the HCNs and the Italians benefitted from each other when it came to knowledge in the Quantity Survey department. He stated that he benefitted generally in some areas of quantity surveying (QS) and technology from the Italians:

‘They impacted me in areas of organising stuff, for example setting up a system, what I mean by this is that maybe a file system. I found their filing system better than ours in Nigeria so I have adopted it. I also developed my software skill in Auto Cad and Microsoft Project from the Italians so in terms of skills I think my skills have improved in the area of QS and Technology.’

Faith, from B&S, also confirmed that she had benefitted a lot in the area of QS from working hand-in-hand with some Italians as some of them possessed adequate knowledge in construction and interpretation of drawings which they imparted to her. As a result, she felt that her skills in interpreting drawings and design had improved so much to the point that when she leaves B&S she can open her own firm:

‘If I leave here now, believe me, I will not work with any company again I will just open my own firm. I have gained a lot of skills working with some of the Italians especially managing director and general manager they really helped build up my career and the few other Italians before they finally went back to Italy.’

In a similar manner, Awal also claimed that that the Italians had benefitted from the HCNs in the Quantity Survey department. He believed that he himself has impacted

the Italians in the core areas of the commercial aspects of quantity surveying as he has more knowledge than them in that area:

‘I am a professional and registered with NIPOS and also a member so I have more knowledge in that area. I handle most of the projects and activities that relate to that area then I explain to them, like cost report it has to be done here by a quantity surveyor in reference to Nigerian standards and I also write contract letters and back it up with the form of contract that is used in Nigeria and explain to them it is like you open more for their understanding, so this particular core area I think I am more knowledgeable than them because I handle everything there.’

Similarly, Faith claimed that the Italians had benefitted from her guidance in the area of commercial aspects of projects:

‘Anything on the commercial aspect of any project, the general manager comes to me, Faith this is your field, what do you think about it, we discuss and I guide them on how it should be.’

In the area of technology, on the other hand, Emeka from B&P asserted that his information technology skills had improved as a result of the knowledge he received on information communication technology (ICT) from the Italians. He claimed that the accounting software that they are using was brought in by the Italians from the parent company in Italy:

‘When I went to school ICT wasn't what it is today, now the expats carried me along with ease into the new ways of doing things and this helped me improve in the ways I do things. When I join this company I was working and recording manually and some of them came and show me how to do it digitally. I personally feel that this has impacted my career because when I go to association meeting for accountants, I noticed that I am not very far from them digitally.’

Likewise, Abdallah from the same company also felt that his skills in technology had improved:

‘When I started work, I had no knowledge of computer. We did not learn computer in school. As time goes on while working here, I almost became a master in working with computers. I am now an expert in technology to the point that I am invited as a resource person that delivers lectures on the things that I have learned here regarding technology to other workers and even students in learning centers and universities.’

The researcher perceives from the foregoing that learning takes place through exchanges. Muthusamy and Whites’ (2005) study on learning and exchanges indicated that social exchanges between actors positively influence interfirm learning. They pointed out that effective learning can take place through interaction that determines exchanges between actors. Thus, the researcher of this study perceives that learning took place through the interaction between some of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates which made the exchanges of technology between them possible. The learning resulted from the knowledge of technology shared by the Italians with the HCNs during the exchange. However the knowledge gained by the HCNs here can result in the acquisition of expert power. This form of power can be attained by individuals based on their expertise or skills in a specific area (French and Raven, 1959), which can command the respect of others (Blau, 1964, 2017) and can result in leadership roles. Hence this explains why the HCN is more often invited as a resource person in learning institutions.

The findings also show that a technology spillover occurs from the foreign subsidiaries to the local institutions. According to O’Donnell and Blumentritt (1999), HCNs of a subsidiary learn technological and managerial practices which they pass on to other local employees in the host country. The researcher of this study found that some HCNs and some Italians both benefitted from each other in the area of QS and technology. The HCNs asserted that their skills had improved in these two areas. However, two HCNs from B&P believed that they did not benefit from the knowledge of the Italians that improved their skills. Steve explained that he is working with them just to earn a living, but he did not gain anything from them whilst Fatima narrated:

‘As a personnel manager what have I gained by working with them. I have not gained anything from working with them. I came in with my own working experience that I try to share and put a bed here because it is lacking but they are not willing to give me that opportunity.’

This shows that a minority of HCNs did not benefit from their relationship with the Italians. The researcher of this study perceives that this could be attributed to the restricted relationship and the unequal exchanges some of the HCNs have with the Italians discussed in the previous sections.

5.5.2 Theme B. Positive Attitude Towards Work: Time Management?

Time is seen as a valuable resource that is available to everyone (Olaniyi, 1998). Yet, time is one of the insufficient resources if not managed well in organisations (Ojo and Olaniyan, 2008). Thus, time management is considered relevant to reduce inefficiency in organisations. Almost all the HCNs in B&P and B&S pointed out that the Italians incorporated time management when it came to working whilst the Nigerians found it very difficult to keep to time. This is because Africans and Nigerians, in particular, are not so good at time management (Oke, 2004; Mamman, 2013; Anthony, 2015). This might be the reason why many Nigerians developed the habit of coming to work late or not being time conscious which affects the effectiveness of the worker as well as the productivity of the organisation (Okoye and Obi, 2014). Eilam and Aharon (2003) view time management as a way of consciously controlling and monitoring time spent on activities to enhance effectiveness and productivity. In a deeper sense, Olaniyi (1998) asserts that it is not only about controlling or monitoring time but rather how people organise their activities within the time available to them.

Eilam and Aharon's (2003) study revealed that time management is a skill that can be learned. The majority of the HCNs revealed that the Italians hardly come to work or meetings late, they were always punctual. Thus, as a result of working for a very long period of time with the Italians, a majority of the HCNs from both companies claimed that they had learned to organise themselves and their tasks within the time available to them. This made them become more punctual and efficient in their organisations and as a result, developed positive working attitudes. This shows that they have benefitted in their relationships with the Italians.

Isaac from B&S thought that he had learned to be more punctual as a result of relating and working with the Italians for more than twenty years:

‘Some of us that have worked with the Italians for so many years have also adapted to their way of work. For example, before 7 am we are already here and stay until closing time. For example, in my area, I am the only one leaving for work very early while the other Nigerians leave for work very late because they work in Nigerian parastatal. So you see I have learned to be punctual.’

This also indicates that learning takes place through relating and interacting with the Italian expatriates. When seen along a time continuum, the learning is reinforced to the point that it is internalised and practiced. One of the limitations of SET is the emphasis on initial contact between two actors up to the time that the relationship is formed (Cropanzano et al., 2017). It should be noted that it is not the first time for the HCNs in this present study to encounter the Italian expatriates. Rather, they have already been interacting with the Italians for many years which implies that enough time had lapsed for learning to take place.

Similarly, Nabas from the same company, B&S, added that he also learned to be punctual in work from the Italians, as it is very rare for an Italian to be seen coming to work late, they are always punctual. He narrated:

‘I wake up at 3:30 am to prepare myself to work because I live very far from the company about one and the half hour drive every day in the morning and the same in the evening. In my thirty years of working for this company I arrive to work at 7 am and work starts at 7:30 am. I have never been late even for once. If all the Italians I work with arrive at the workshop at 7 am I see no reason why I should be late. I believe all this is attributed to leadership by example.’

This indicates ethical leadership whereby leaders display appropriate conduct through personal actions and show the relevance of such conduct to followers (Brown, Trevino and Harrison, 2005). Newman et al. (2014) found such kinds of leadership to influence followers to perceive their leaders as reliable and competent, which results

in the development of good relations with the leaders and in return prompts followers to reciprocate leaders' good behaviour.

The preceding findings indicate that some of the HCNs reciprocated the good behaviour displayed by the Italian expatriates. This shows that ethical leadership also leads to learning in the workplace. When ethical leaders engage in appropriate behaviour (e.g. honesty, openness, fairness) followers identify and emulate the appropriate behaviours (Brown et al., 2005). Thus, this might also explain how some of the HCNs learned to be punctual from their expatriate leaders.

Likewise, from the other Company, B&P, Abdallah claimed that one thing that he had benefitted from as a result of relating and working with the Italians was punctuality. He observed that he had become more punctual even before he joined B&P Company:

‘I arrive to work at 6:50 am every day, I developed this habit of coming to work early from the Italians in my former Italian company and I try to maintain it in this Italian company.’

On the other hand, Emeka stated that he struggled with time management when he first joined B&P Company, however, gradually he observed how the Italians managed their time and as a result, he became time conscious as well and tried to avoid anything that would prevent him from not being on time:

‘When I first joined this company it was difficult for me to adjust to time because in my previous workplace one can arrive at the office at 9 am or 10 am. But as time went by I learned to wake up at 5:30 am so that I can be in the office at 7 am. When I discuss this with some of my Nigerian friends they laugh at me and inform me that at 7 am they are still sleeping because in their workplaces they can arrive the office at 9 am or 10 am which is okay.’

The foregoing shows that Isaac, Nabas, Abdallah and Emekas' attitudes towards time had changed. The attitude of tardiness displayed by Nigerians might be attributed to the fact that Africans lack the discipline for time, which manifests in every aspect of their lives (Oke, 2004).

Another area in relation to time where the attitudes of the HCNs had improved was doing the right thing at the right time. Harry from B&S stated that he had learned from the Italians to work when it is work time compared to what he was used to before - the Nigerian system of visiting other offices to chat with colleagues during work hours:

‘I have adopted that system, once I enter the office I start work, when it is time for a meeting, I attend the meeting and then back to my office to continue with my work. I just do not go to any office anyhow, because I have adopted the system and I can say almost all of us working in the admin have adopted this system, we do not move around anyhow during working hours like the way other Nigerians do in other places.’

This is common in most government ministries in Africa, where workers gather in one place to discuss their personal affairs during office hours (Anthony, 2015). Some even do other personal activities during working hours. Abdallah from B&P witnessed this situation in the high court of justice in Nigeria when he went to the high court to complete an affidavit. He met the workers breaking melons in the office and they had to stop for a while to do his affidavit and as soon as they were done doing his affidavit, they went back to breaking their melons even before he left the court office. According to Harry, the majority of the HCNs in B&S had adopted the Italians structured way of working which enabled them to carry out their official duties effectively and efficiently within the time available to them.

Ann from the same company also confirmed that time is very important in B&S, thus, she observed that she had become time conscious and effective in her administrative duties as a result of learning from the Italians to plan work according to the time available:

‘They like work to be done immediately. Something that is suppose to be finished in two days, will be done today to make sure that another thing comes up tomorrow.’

Similarly, in the other company, B&P, Kayo observed that time is very important in the company, thus he learned to work with more time consciously. As a result, his mindset towards work had improved, in that, what needs to be done today, cannot wait until tomorrow:

‘We have to work overtime sometimes because we cannot leave the task until tomorrow. But in some Nigerian companies, they may say OK leave it tomorrow you will continue. But here the Italians will say no we have to finish it up no matter how long it will take and what it will cost as the management will pay.’

This also shows that the HCNs have learned to have a more structured way of carrying out their task in the organisation compared to the less structured Nigerian system of working.

However, two of the HCNs from the same company, B&P, mentioned that the time pressure that the Italians imposed on them affected them a lot. Joseph, an accountant in his forties, who has been working for more than five years in B&P explained that the pressure the Italians put on him regarding the speed at which work should be done in the Accounting department affected him negatively:

‘I feel stressed all the time, too much pressure put on me and also despite how fast they want things to be done they shouldn't be any mistake, if not it would bounce back on you.’

This shows a restricted relationship whereby the Italians tend to put too much pressure on workers that led to issues of stress among some of the HCNs. Stress is one of the issues associated with poor time management (Macan, Shahani, Dipboye and Philips, 1990). However, it was revealed by the majority of the HCNs that the Italian companies organise and plan their work activities in an effective manner compared to the less structured Nigerian companies. This makes work easier and reduces stress. The majority of the HCNs in both companies indicated that despite the speed that the Italians work, they still take their time to deliver all their projects perfectly. This shows that they plan their task according to their time effectively which can reduce stress. Kareem from B&P believed that he had learned to plan his

time according to his work and this enabled him to deliver his task efficiently. He felt that this had improved his way of thinking unlike before. He now takes his time to observe and think before he executes a task:

‘Now I take my time to look at the task, observe very well before I do it because they do not like too many mistakes. This has helped me in my career so much because as an accountant I have to take my time and be careful before I execute any task.’

Nabas, from B&S also stated that he had learned from the Italians how to manage time and deliver the task perfectly:

‘The Italians do not like to rush a task if it is a task that will take two hours, they make sure that within that two hours they finished it as expected or as the demand may be they meet up to the standard that is needed. Some of us Nigerians have learned to work that way but some of us just want to do it in a hurry of which at the end of it all it becomes a problem.’

On the other hand, Emeka, from B&P recalled that he quarreled with the Italians a lot over the speed of work when they had too many projects as it affected his own personal time. But he now understands that it is the nature of work in construction that made the Italians force the HCNs to work overtime to get the work completed perfectly. This is indicative of the exercise of coercive power, which gives the Italians the ability to control the HCNs:

‘They may say, please give us this report in one hour time, but normally even two hours is not enough to get the report ready. And if I try to explain to them they will not listen, what I have learned over the years is to just sit and do it, if they see you working on it they sometimes understand that it is not your fault, it is just that the work in construction is time-consuming.’

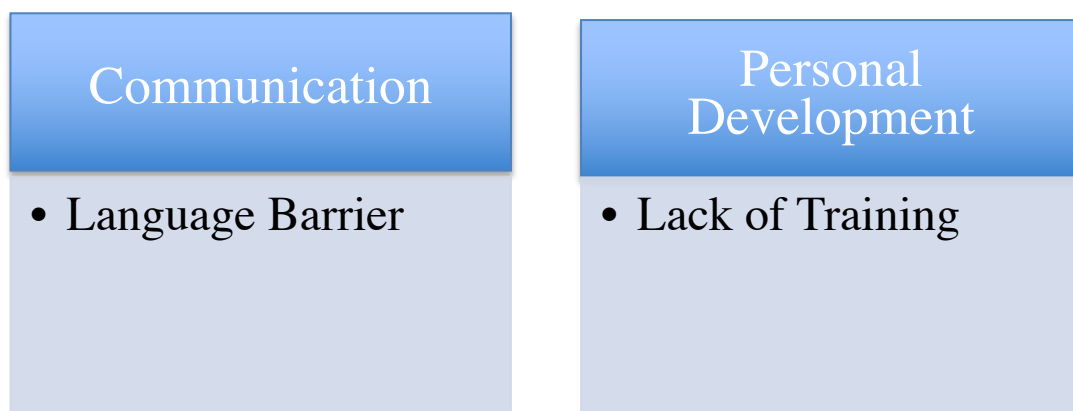
The foregoing all indicates that the HCNs had learned from the Italians how to manage their time to work effectively. This will help some of the HCNs manage the

stress that results from the nature of work in construction. The researcher of this study, therefore, found that the HCNs had benefitted positively in terms of their attitude towards work, which might ultimately reduce the country's reliance on foreign expatriates due to skill shortages (Mwamba 2008; Fajana, 2009; Pitan and Adedeji, 2012; Abiodun and Segbenu, 2017). Since the HCNs have learned to work better this can also immensely contribute to the completion of projects within the required time, as one of the criticisms surrounding the construction industry in Nigeria is the inability to deliver projects on time (Aibunu and Jagboro, 2002; Aibunu and Odeyinka, 2006; Adekunle and Ajibola, 2015).

5.6 Perceived Challenges for the HCNs in Working in the Italian Companies

From the previous sections, the HCNs perceived that working with the Italian expatriates can be both beneficial and challenging. Knowing the challenges in working with the Italian expatriates can contribute insights on how to further improve working relationships between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates within the companies. Accordingly, this section describes the challenges perceived by the HCNs in working with Italian companies. Figure 5.4 shows two themes, communication with the subtheme language and personal development with the subtheme training as the underlying perceived challenges HCNs are facing working with the Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

Figure 5.4 Perceived Challenges for the HCNs in Working in the Italian Companies



Source: Researcher Generated

5.6.1 Theme A. Communication: Language Barrier?

The findings from this study indicate that in B&S and B&P, the language barrier is perceived to be the most challenging issue when working with the Italians expatriates in both B&P and B&S. From a cross-cultural perspective, communication has been defined by Kim (2001) as the message exchange between individuals and the environment. More than half of the HCNs interviewed mentioned the issue of language as a barrier that affected their relationship with the Italians. Communication barriers affect the development of relationships between expatriates and HCNs (Van Bakel et al., 2015). The majority of the Italians communicate with each other in the Italian language which many of the HCNs do not understand because English is the lingua franca for business in Nigeria. The inability of the expatriates to adapt to the host country language is one of the limitations of the PCNs working in subsidiaries (Reiche and Harzing, 2008).

Abdallah from B&P narrated that one of the challenges he faced when he started working in the company was communicating with the Italians:

‘When I started work here communicating with the Italians was one of the difficulties I encountered because some of them are not very fluent in English. So if you are not very careful you will not understand them clearly.’

Kareem from B&P also added that communication is one of the problems he is facing in his relationship with the Italians. He explained that:

‘Sometimes you will not understand them. Sometimes some of them might even speak the Italian language to you that is why I now understand the Italian language a little.’

Isaac from B&S revealed that the majority of the Italians are taking English lessons to tackle the issue of communication which is affecting the HCNs in the company:

‘Many of them are not so fluent in English they have teachers teaching them English. For example, after their English lessons they try to

practice with us, some will be like this is what I have learned today, did I say it right, and if they got the sentence right we say yes if not we correct them.'

The foregoing all shows that some of the Italians had not adapted to speaking English in Nigeria. Kabir, from the same company, B&S, added that even in the meetings they spoke Italian among themselves:

'Sometimes you just stand up and want to leave but they tell you to stay behind they are just discussing in their language because one of them does not fully understand what is been discussed in the meeting.'

Faith, from the same company, B&S, describes a situation when she was in a meeting with about five Italians and suddenly all five of them switched to Italian with no permission and she felt left out. This happens almost every time the HCNs are in a meeting with them. Faith further explained that she just had to keep calm and watched them, but she was not happy because she did not understand what they were saying for that period and she felt that she was not part of the discussion:

'When you are in a meeting with them, you will have to wait for them to finish their discussion before you contribute, because they completely change the conversation to Italian and there is nothing you can do, I cannot contribute because I do not understand what they are saying. You might have it in mind that the part of the discussion where the language was changed is not meant for you, then why are you there. If you are not supposed to be there then why are you invited to the meeting? When I complain, the managing director will say I should go and learn Italian in a nice way.'

Similarly, Awal, also from B&S, faced the same language issues as Faith during meetings and he believed that it can affect the relationship, as sometimes the HCNs might get a wrong perception of what the Italians are discussing during meetings. He gave an example:

There was a time I was in a meeting with the managing director, Area manager and general manager, and my other Italian colleagues they forgot that I was the only Nigerian there so they started speaking in Italian. You might think they are speaking about you then you will say what preventive measure should I take, this might affect the working relationship but sometimes I say it is better if they are speaking about me in my presence but what if I am not there. I just kept quiet, so later the managing director was saying I have to go and learn Italian.'

The preceding findings indicate that the language barrier constrained some of the HCNs in relating with the Italian expatriates. The study of Welch, Welch, and Piekkari (2005) and Peltokorpi (2010) revealed that language differences created barriers to interaction in foreign companies. Hence this contributed to some of the HCNs feeling socially excluded in their home country because they do not understand the Italian language which is spoken more often in the companies than English. Faith and Awal from B&S reported that this affected their relationship with the Italians. Thus, Faith believes that teaching the HCNs basic Italian communication skills will help strengthen the relationship between some of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. Faith suggested:

'Teach all of us how to speak the Italian language because if we are in a meeting and the language is changed to Italian we will just be there looking at them, we do not feel comfortable until the language is changed back to the one we understand then we can make our own contribution.'

This again affirms that language served as a barrier to positive relationships. One of the limitations of HCNs in subsidiaries is miscommunication between the parent country nationals (PCN) and the HCNs (Reiche and Harzing, 2008). Teaching the HCNs the Italian language will help solve the issue of miscommunication between the Italians and the HCNs. For instance, Joshua from B&P revealed that the Italians sometimes take the advantage of the Italian language, which many of the HCNs do not understand to abuse the HCNs in the electrical workshop:

‘Sometimes we have to report some of them to the management, as they always use offensive words we do not understand during work, And when we complain they explain in a different way and say that it is not the HCNs they are abusing but rather they are using the Italian phrases to abuse something else. Sometimes if it is too much we take action, we report them to the union to warn them.’

To address this situation, the researcher of this study argues that the companies should provide Italian language training to the HCNs. This will strengthen the working relationship as both the Italians and the HCNs will understand each other and the HCNs will be able to contribute during meetings. The provision of company language training enhances communication flow in subsidiaries (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch, 1999). Furthermore, the researcher of this study perceives that providing Italian language training will help solve the problem of translation from Italian to English for the HCNs. The majority of the HCNs working on the site and workshops claimed that they need an Italian to translate for them when working with machines and materials that are in Italian.

Chally, from B&P, stated that the materials and the equipment used in the engineering department and site are in the Italian language which made it difficult for him to use without the Italians translating for him, especially the new machinery brought in from Italy:

‘I would have loved to learn how to speak Italian. This is because there are some materials that are brought by the Italians from Italy, which are in the Italian language. I cannot use without an Italian translator.’

Similarly, Joshua also experienced the same problem in the electrical workshop of the company. He claimed that the materials and machines used in his workshop had instructions in the Italian language and he had to rely on the Italians to translate these, especially the new materials and machines that just arrived from Italy. This shows that some of the HCNs depend on the Italian expatriates for translation of work materials. Emeka from B&P pointed out that translation itself from Italian to English is a problem as many of the Italians are not fluent in the English language:

‘They do not speak English fluently but as you begin to work with them you will understand what they are trying to say or communicate with you. Translation sometimes is a problem because if they want to translate something to you they might use the way it is in their own language then translate it directly to you, it is now left for you to comprehend what they are trying to tell you, this is the problem we are facing.’

Likewise, in the other company, B&S, Frank also revealed that they are facing problems with translation from Italian to English. However, he stated the Italian dictionaries installed in their phones have made translation a little bit easier. He narrated:

‘Most of them do not have a good command of English, they speak Italian to each other, we bear with them until they are able to understand English. Like I have a colleague now that is still learning English, he has an Italian dictionary in his phone if he finds it difficult to express himself he uses the dictionary to translate Italian to English, he then tells you what he wants. So this is helping a lot.’

Overall this would appear to suggest, that modern translation applications, and the Italians who are linguistically fluent in English, made it easier for the HCNs in terms of translating work materials in the Italian language to the English language. According to Welch et al. (2005) translation software, as well as competent fluent employees, are helpful means in resolving the issue of language differences in organisations.

This section indicates that language affects communication in both companies and could be a factor that inhibits social exchange. The researcher of this study perceives that this can affect the exchanges of resources taking place between the Italian expatriates and the HCNs. However, the findings show that reciprocity takes place between some of the HCNs and some of the Italian expatriates. It was found that the majority of the Italians are not fluent in English, the lingua franca spoken in Nigeria. Expatriates without strong host country language skills are perceived to be socially

excluded in the host country (Welch et al., 2005). Thus, some of the expatriates depend on the HCNs for translation in their daily interactions (Selmer and Lauring, 2015). This affirms the findings of this study that the HCNs serve as translators until the Italian expatriates learn to speak the English language. On the other hand, some of the Italian expatriates that have become fluent in English reciprocate by translating work materials in the Italian language to the English language to the HCN.

Based on the forgoing discussion on communication, the researcher of this study perceives that language barrier might have affected the voice of the HCNs in both companies. This is because the findings show that the HCNs cannot participate and contribute during meetings because of their inability to understand the Italian language or even work with materials and machines without the help of an Italian. Besides the language barrier, the findings also reveal that the HR departments of both companies are not organised in a way that HCNs can freely discuss their issues concerning work and their relationships with the Italians. This also indicates HCNs lacked a voice in both companies. Voice is regarded by Heller, Pusic, Strauss and Wilpert (1998) as a tool that enables workers to reduce their work frustration since it promotes the sharing of work issues with the management. Fatima from B&P believed that an open environment whereby the HCNs are free to discuss their issues concerning their relationship with the Italians will help strengthen communication:

‘For the first time I have a forum where I open up - because it is so sad and frustrating knowing that my name will not appear that is why I feel relaxed saying all these things to you, I have never come across an office whereby these things are happening. There is a problem with working relationship and the bulk of the fault falls on the Italians if only that there is that forum that we can all voice out and talk, we can do that why not.’

Likewise, from B&S, Awal believed that an open environment will enable the HCNs to freely discuss the problems affecting their relationship with the Italians:

‘And also the HR department is under the Nigerians they should allow people to come and open up their minds and say things that are bothering them regarding work and not when you complain to HR and

the next thing you hear is for the company to sack you, so we have to keep quiet no matter the situation. If HR is more standardised and organised we can all open up regarding work. For example, you gave me a consent form indicating that my name and my information will not be revealed, so if our HR can have something like this it will be good, but if not whatever they ask us regarding working relationship we just say good because people are afraid to be fired.'

This indicates that the HCNs do not feel free to discuss the issues concerning their working relationships with the Italians in their companies. Kabir from the same company B&S also confirmed that the HCNs cannot freely complain to the management about their relationship with the Italians as the management does not show any direct support to the HCNs if they have any problems with the Italians:

'Something can happen for instance during work, an Italian can bully you to do things his way, but for the sake of the company you cannot follow what he tells you to do, because if you follow his way you can make a serious mistake that will cost the company lots of money. But you can talk to the management to talk to him, And then the management will not support you directly, without boosting the Italian's pride and ego, so they will never tell you, you are right, they will just tell you to take it easy and gradually you will begin to understand how this people work.'

This all shows that some of the HCNs lacked a voice as their complaints were often ignored by HR. This could be attributed to the fact that both of the companies lack a structured approach towards HR practices relating to HCNs' participation in the companies. Participation is viewed as a mechanism that allows workers to influence the conditions under which they work (Heller et al., 1998). Some of the HCNs in both companies perceive that they are not listened to, and have no influence on working conditions and their relationship with the Italians. Thus, there is a need for a standardised HR department that maintains a common approach towards HR practices relating to HCNs and expatriates participation in both companies. This would contribute to professional practice since maintaining common HR practices relating to

workers' participation in both companies will give the HR practitioners a chance to be listened to and treat both the HCNs and expatriates in the same manner. This will improve communication and promote greater unity between the HCNs and the Italians, which can facilitate the exchange of resources between the two actors.

5.6.2 Theme B. Personal Development: Lack of Training?

Another problem facing the majority of the HCNs in both B&S and B&P is personal development. As expressed by the HCNs, personal development in terms of self growth and career goals remain a problem. Thus development here can be viewed in terms of activities that can result in personal growth of an individual. What the HCNs desire is a management system that will actively assist them in attaining their personal growth and career development. This can be achieved through formal training, which unfortunately is lacking in both of the Italian companies. It is highly evident from the findings that both companies do not provide sufficient formal training to the HCNs. Training is referred to as a systematic acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge for the purpose of individual and organisational development (Goldstein and Ford, 2002). The work of Kang, Shen and Xu (2015) revealed that multinational companies hardly offer adequate training to develop HCNs. Some of the HCNs in both B&S and B&P indicated that they had to update themselves personally in order to catch up with developments taking place globally, which will allow them to relate and work with the Italians and other expatriates coming from developed countries. The findings revealed that they had never been sent on outside training by the Italians even though the majority of them had been requesting it for many years. This shows a relational type of psychological contract that is not being fulfilled by the organisations. The relational psychological contract occurs in a long-term open employer-employee relationship which involves symbolic exchanges based on loyalty and trust (Rousseau, 1995). The HCNs perceived that the organisations should provide training to them because of their long-term service but the organisations have failed to fulfil the contract which can result in an unbalanced contract.

Joshua from B&P indicated that one of the problems he is facing in the Italian Company is that the Italians hardly send their workers on training courses:

‘I have to point out that we need training, look at the German construction company here, for example, I have a friend that works there, he has been sent to Germany for a course and when he came back he improved a lot, the management benefitted from that and even his colleagues he taught them what he learnt in the course.’

This shows the career development of HCNs by sending them on training to the headquarters. Dowling and Welch (2004) pointed out that HCNs should be included in multinationals development programmes. This can be done by transferring some of the HCNs to headquarters for training.

On the other hand, Michael from the same company B&P added that the French car manufacturing company in Nigeria had requested that the Italians send him on training with them but the Italians refused, thinking that if they train him he will not come back to the company. Michael recalled that:

‘I requested it but until now I am still waiting. I remember a time we bought a Peugeot from the French company, the car was involved in an accident, so they took it to the French factory, and we were given a high estimate, our chief engineer said it is too costly, so the car was returned back here, they now ask me if I can fix it as we do not have the tools to fix a Peugeot car but I created the tools I need to fix the car from the iron we have so much here in the yard. Some days later the French people heard that we fixed the car and sent someone here to ask who fixed the car, and he was told I was the one that fixed it. He then later went to our contract manager, an Italian and requested that they send me to the French company (a car manufacturing company in Nigeria) for training but my company refused, thinking that if they send me to the French people I will not return back to the Italians after the training.’

When seen in the context of exchange theory this can all be perceived as unfair exchange in the relationship. Greenberg and Colquitt (2005) defined fair exchange as perceived fairness in the allocation of resources. When individuals provide tangible or intangible activities in a relationship, they expect their counterpart to respond

positively as a consequence of their behaviour. This leads to fair exchange in a relationship. Michael went out of his way to provide services, which he expected the Italian contract manager to respond to positively by accepting the French company to train Michael which the contract manager refused. This indicated an unfair exchange in the working relationship.

This also shows unethical leadership whereby the contract manager used power in an inappropriate manner (House and Aditya, 1997) which affected the development of the HCN and the organisation. This shows that unethical leadership could affect exchanges taking place between managers and their subordinates. The preceding findings on the nature of relationships revealed some of the Italian managers as having more power over the HCNs in the companies hence have more control over the exchanges.

However, it was found that in B&S, the Italians invited professional trainers from the Industrial Training Fund to train the locals, but the company had stopped offering this training for locals anymore without any given reason. Thus some of the HCNs in the company perceived that this is now affecting them. For example, Nabas had been working for many years without any training to further develop him:

‘At all - I have been complaining and complaining, I am outspoken, the truth is the truth, no matter where you go white is white, this is where some organisations have been left behind. Like me now, I have been working with what I studied and my experience, no seminar no workshop and nothing.’

This also shows a lack of fairness perceived within the relationship. Reactions to unfairness perceived within a relationship can result in distress and dissatisfaction (Adams, 1965). This explains why Nabas has been complaining and complaining to the Italians for training.

On the other hand, Harry decided to train himself personally outside the company when he realised the company will not train him:

‘Yes in that area, in fact, some of us have been agitated because that is the essence of what we have here - what they call ITF (Industrial Training Fund). That area is for the organisation to support the staff to further develop themselves. For me when I noticed the organisation is not ready to send me to training I decided to do it on my own, because I realised that one day I will not be here, I might find myself somewhere so I will not wait for them, this is why I had to go take outside training and workshops on my own.’

This also shows a relational type of psychological contract that is not fulfilled by the organisation. The exchanges are perceived to happen when employees are more committed to their organisations and their employers feel the obligation to reward them by going beyond financial incentives to provide social support, such as job security and training which will enhance their personal and career development (Maguire, 2002). It is a relational contract in the sense that it is perceived to involve a long-term relationship whereby Harry perceived the need for employers to invest in the personal and career development of the HCNs. But when Harry realised that the organisation is not ready to fulfil the contract, he decided to invest in his personal and career development outside the company. This can affect his level of commitment to the organisation as unbalanced contracts can lead to lower levels of trust.

The picture that emerges shows that the Italian Companies do not provide adequate formal training for the personal development of the HCNs. This could be the result of the lack of a structured approach and practices towards training. Eriksson and Kobin (2007) found that in Swedish multinational companies, expatriates are provided with cross-cultural training, and language training whilst no specific training is provided to the HCNs. Likewise, Kang et al. (2015) found that South Korean multinational companies in China send expatriates back to headquarters for professional development and technical training whilst non-professional development training is provided to HCNs. This might be attributed to the fact that less attention has been given to HCNs’ training by foreign subsidiaries (Vance and Paik, 2005; Vance et al., 2009). This affected the personal development of the majority of the HCNs in their present companies. Hence bringing in new knowledge and know-how will further develop and update them in their fields of work which will enable them to grow both

personally and professionally and deliver their tasks perfectly. The majority of the HCNs indicated that the Italians expected the HCNs to perform their best in their areas of work as this served as a basis for smooth relationships in the workplace. In this regard, some of the HCNs believed that they needed to be kept up-to-date with technological developments in order to deliver the best performance. Therefore, it is argued that there is a need to improve HR practices specifically in the area of training and development of HCNs in both companies. This would contribute to professional practice and will improve the HCNs' ability to work and relate well with the Italians and even the other expatriates. Consequently, the exchanges of resources between the HCNs and the expatriates in the companies would be enhanced.

5.7 SET and the Findings

To understand SET is to look at it as a family of a conceptual model (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Understanding SET as a conceptual model allows room for further consideration and opportunity to offer new insights to expand the theory. Based on the literature review of this study, the researcher identified and organised the findings of this study around five basic concepts of SET (see Table 5.1) the actors involved in the exchange, the resources exchange, the types of exchange, the structure of exchange and the outcome of exchange.

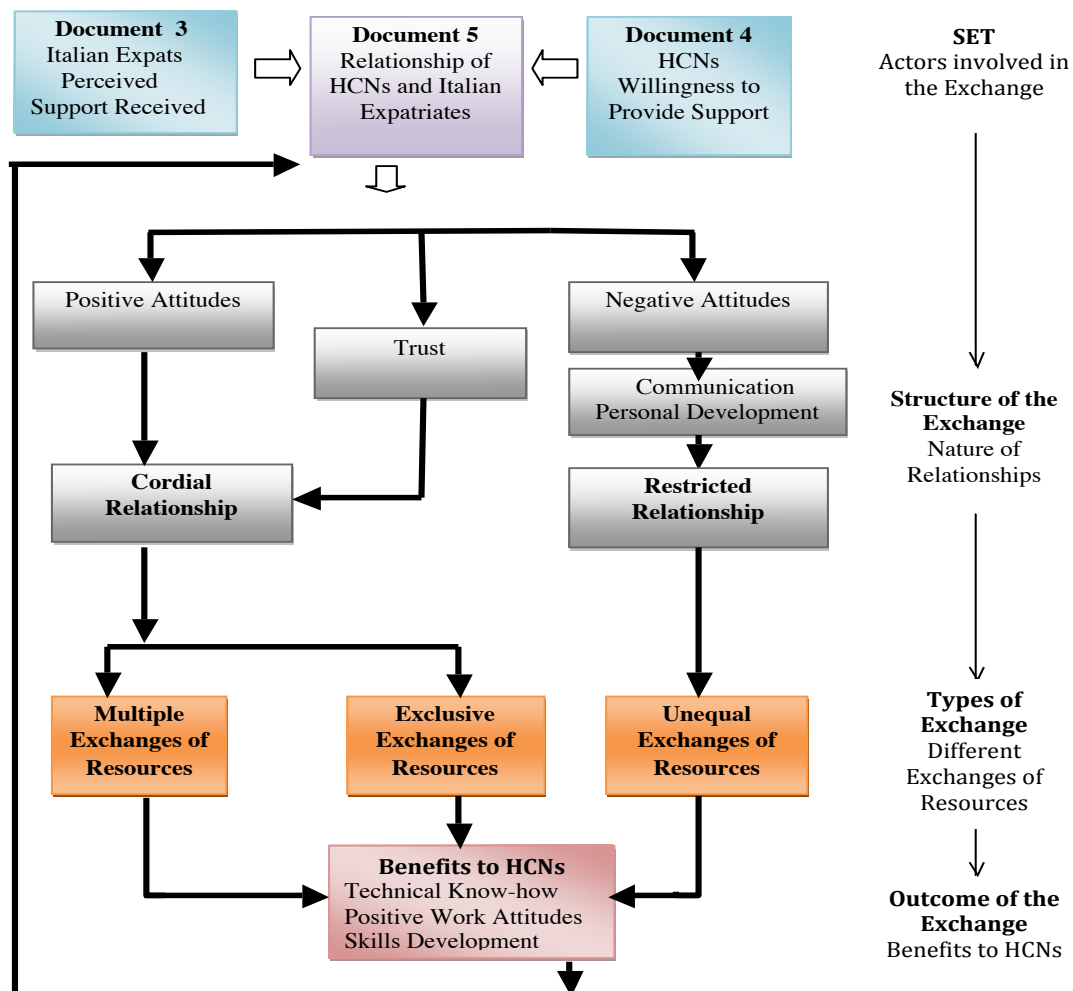
Table 5.1 The Basic Concepts of SET and the Findings of this Study

<p style="text-align: center;">Actors involved in Exchange</p> <p>Actors can be individuals, groups or institutions who exchange resources. The actors in this study are the Italian expatriates and the HCNs involved in exchange in the context of cross-cultural relations in the work setting.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Resources Exchange</p> <p>Resources involve things that are exchanged between actors. The resources found to be exchanged between the Italian expatriates and HCNs are: Intangible resources; information, advice, ideas, and technology. Tangible resources; goods and services, money and performance.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Types of Exchanges</p> <p>This involves the types of exchanges taking place between actors. The type of exchanges found to be taking place between the Italian expatriates and HCNs are: Multiple exchanges of intangible resources, exclusive exchanges of tangible resources and unequal exchanges of intangible resources.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Structure of Exchange</p> <p>The structure of the exchange describes the nature of the relationships among actors that facilitate or limit exchanges. Cordial relationships were found to facilitate multiple and exclusive exchanges of intangible and tangible resources whilst restricted relationships and other factors such as communication barriers and lack of personal development of the HCNs were found to limit the exchanges of intangible resources.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Outcome of Exchange</p> <p>The outcome of the exchange refers to the benefit the actors obtained from the exchange. The outcome of the exchanges between the Italian expatriates and the HCNs found benefitted the HCNs in terms of their skills and positive attitude towards work.</p>

Source: Researcher Generated

The findings provide empirical support for some of the constructs of SET such as perceived trust, actors who exchange, resources exchange, the structure and outcome of exchange (Blau, 1964, 2017; Molms, 1997; Colquitt et al., 2012; Cropanzano et al., 2017) specifically in the context of cross-cultural relations in the work setting. The findings also revealed some factors from the perspective of the actors that could help extend the constructs of SET which otherwise were not considered in its initial conceptualisation. In the context of this study, the factors that merit consideration in understanding the current findings include positive and negative attitudes of the expatriates and communication and personal development of the HCNs. These factors are considered drivers of relationships between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates which shaped the structure of the exchanges taking place between the two actors. Other factors found to extend the constructs of SET in this study are enhanced skills and a positive attitude towards work. These factors serve as the outcome of the exchanges that benefitted the HCNs. Based on the view of Cropanzano et al. (2017) that SET can be best understood as a family of conceptual models, the findings of this study are interlinked to provide a comprehensive view of the development of a novel emerging framework (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Interlinking the Findings of the Study



Source: Researcher Generated

5.8 Conclusion

The preceding sections portray the lived experiences of the interviewees as they themselves related to the researcher. Through hermeneutic reading and interpreting (Gadamer, 1975/2013), the researcher projected the voice of the participants in response to the questions investigated. As earlier stated, hermeneutic reading establishes the relationship of parts to the whole after which an understanding of the parts is gained by understanding the whole, thereby constituting a circle. This enabled the researcher to understand and interpret the meaning of the phenomenon of the relationships between the HCNs and the Italians. Several themes and subthemes were identified on the nature of relationships, forms of exchanges, challenges, and benefits in this chapter. These themes and subthemes were presented and interpreted in a

hermeneutic phenomenological manner focusing on depth of understanding of the meanings of the relationships.

Two themes explicated the nature of the relationships between the HCNs and the Italians. The meaning of cordial relationship was seen by the HCNs in the context of trust and the positive attitude of the Italians which included the attitude of care and greeting, appreciation and respect. These were found to be the key factors that contributed to building and maintaining cordial working relationships between the two parties. The restricted relationship was viewed by the HCNs in light of the consequences of the negative attitudes of the Italians which included ethnocentrism and harshness. These attitudes that served as a constraint led to the restricted relationship between some of the HCNs and some of the Italians.

With respect to the form of exchanges between the HCNs and the Italians, three forms of exchanges emerged from the experiences of the HCNs. The HCNs and Italians engaged in the multiple exchange of intangible resources such as information, advice, ideas, and technology. The HCNs and the Italians also engaged in an unequal exchange of intangible resource such as ideas. The multiple and unequal exchanges represent symbolic exchanges between the parties involved. Finally, the HCNs and Italians engaged in an exclusive exchange of tangible resources such as goods, services, money, and performance.

In terms of the benefits that the HCNs derived from their relationship with the Italians, two underlying benefits were identified: enhanced skills and positive attitude towards work. Enhanced skills as a benefit were the consequence of the knowledge which the HCNs gained from the Italians that resulted in the improvement of their skills in their fields of work. Positive attitude towards work was described in the context of time management which the HCNs learned as a result of working with the Italians over a long period of time. By learning how to manage their time, the HCNs were able to improve their attitudes toward work positively.

Regarding the challenges faced by the HCNs in working with the Italians, two predominant challenges emerged: communication and personal development. The communication challenge was largely due to the language barrier that constrained or

restricted the relationship between the HCNs and the Italians. The personal development challenge was marked by the lack of training provided to the HCNs in order for them to update themselves and upgrade their knowledge and skills to maintain good working relationships with the Italians.

Finally, the findings are interlinked for understanding the relationship of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates from the perspective of the social exchange. This becomes the basis for the formulation of a working model that could extend the family of conceptual models comprising SET. The following chapter discusses the findings of this study in relation to the research questions and presents the conceptual model constructed from the findings of the study.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings that support the answers to the research questions posed by this study. The discussion specifically focuses on the relationships and exchanges between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates in relation to SET (Blau, 1964, 2017; Cropanzano et al., 2017) from a social constructionist's perspective. In exploring the meanings attached to the HCNs' subjective experiences of working with the Italians, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How do HCNs perceive and describe the nature of their relationships with the Italian expatriates in the workplace?
2. What forms of social exchanges are perceived by the HCNs to be taking place with the Italian expatriates with whom they work?
3. What are the perceived benefits for the HCNs of establishing and maintaining such reciprocal relationships?
4. What are the perceived challenges for the HCNs in working with Italians in the Italian companies?

6.2 RQ1 How do HCNs Perceive and Describe the Nature of their Relationships with the Italian Expatriates in the Workplace?

The findings disclosed the relationships between HCNs and Italians as both cordial and restricted in nature. These findings are supported by the social constructionist's principles acknowledging how individuals socially construct their world through interaction (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Burr, 2015).

6.2.1 A. Cordial Relationship

From the social constructionist's stance, the phenomenological findings disclosed that the majority of the relationships of the HCNs with the Italians are cordial. This was revealed by more than half of the HCNs in both companies who perceived and interpreted their working relationships and everyday interaction with the Italians as

cordial. This disclosure by the HCNs confirmed the phenomenological findings from Document Three in which the Italian expatriates also disclosed that they interacted well with the HCNs. These repeated interactions described by the Italians and the HCNs can be seen as a factor that equipped both the Italians and the HCNs with clarity in their mental frame of reference (Grove and Toribiorn, 1985) regarding the behaviour of whom they are working with. Mental frame of reference refers to the values, attitude and knowledge that a person accumulates through experience which guides a person on certain type of behaviour (Grove and Toribiorn, 1985). As a result, both the Italians and the HCNs were able to develop predictable expectations about each others' behaviour that resulted in high trust relations between the two parties. The Italians described some of the HCNs' behaviour in relation to shared values of neighbourliness, hospitality, and greetings in Document Three. In this current study, the attitudes of the Italians, which manifested in positive behaviours were described as care, appreciation, respect, and greetings. This makes some of the HCNs' and Italians' experiences of working together, positive, open, non-conflictual and enjoyable. As a result, the relationship was marked by trust which helped contribute towards working experiences perceived as cordial.

Researchers such as Gouldner (1960), Serva, Fuller and Mayer (2005) and Gobel, Vogel and Weber (2013) generally consider trust as reciprocal. The truster and trustee rely on reciprocity of their actions when there is a high level of trust between them (Sward, 2016). The level of trust is reduced when actions are not reciprocated (Serva et al., 2005). Thus, the researcher of this study perceived trust to be a condition that enabled, or restricted, reciprocity in the exchange relationships of the Italian expatriates and the HCNs. The high trust relations that were identified in the findings contributed to reciprocity between the Italians and the HCNs. Some of the HCNs felt the need to reciprocate the trust, care, respect and appreciation displayed by the Italians to them. This is because managers may maintain high trust in employees who constantly fulfil their obligations (Gouldner, 1960). The findings reveal that the HCNs perceived that the Italians trusted them because they were allowed enough leeway to fulfil their tasks and obligations consistently. On the other hand, the HCNs trusted the Italians because of the care and honesty that they perceived the Italians displayed towards them.

However, it is argued that there are different characteristics of trust, including benevolence, ability, integrity, personality factors, openness and many others (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995; Bews and Uys, 2002). Accordingly, the findings presented in this work confirm that benevolence, ability, and openness are the significant dimensions of trust that contribute to the cordial relationships between the HCNs and the Italians.

In the case of benevolence, this deals with concern, fairness, and loyalty between the trustee and the trustor (Bews and Uys, 2002). The findings show that some HCNs perceive fairness, concern, and care in their relationships with the Italians, this made the HCNs willing to reciprocate the Italians' actions leading to open cordial relationships between them.

As for ability, this refers to the capability of the trustee to use his or her skills or competencies to positively influence the trustor (Mayer et al., 1995). The findings reveal that the HCNs perceived that the Italians influenced them positively on account of their abilities in both the technical and managerial levels. This helped enrich the HCNs' technical and managerial skills which made the Italians perceive that the HCNs are ready to deliver their tasks efficiently at any given time. This shows that the faith the HCNs have in the Italians' ability to influence them and the faith the Italians have in the ability of the HCNs to deliver their services consistently and efficiently, led to the development of cordial working relationships between the two parties.

Finally, in the case of openness, this deals with the flow of information between the trustee and trustor regarding the job (Bews and Uys, 2002). Accordingly, it was found that there is a smooth exchange of information regarding work between the HCNs and the Italians. This enabled them to maintain openness that resulted in cordial relationships.

Extending the relationships within the context of the organisation shows how trust, care, fairness, respect, skills and the flow of information subjectively inter-connects the HCNs and the Italians in their relationships. For Palmer (1997) relationships are about connectedness that exists between people. The ability to connect with each

other leads to many shared experiences in relationships, which in turn leads to better mutual understanding. The trust, care, respect and the flow of information enabled the HCNs and the Italians to connect with each other and work together for the purpose of creating and maintaining cordial relationships. This allowed them to achieve their organisational goals together. From this perspective, these cordial relationships of the HCNs and the Italians closely resemble communal relationships (Clark and Mills, 1993; Clark and Mills, 2012) in nature. Communal relationships are open and caring relationships that are based on the welfare of one another (Clark and Mills, 1993). According to Clark, Dubash and Mills (1998) this type of relationship is mutual in nature, thus, people in such relationships tend to react positively by helping each other. A deeper meaning attached to the nature of the relationships of some of the HCNs and the Italians results in greater levels of care, support, and understanding to help each other accomplish their organisational goals. Communal relationships are more likely to take place among family and friends (Clark et al., 1998). However, the researcher argues that communal relationships can exist among expatriates and HCNs who have worked together for a long time in subsidiaries because of the sustained connectedness existing between some of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates.

These findings contribute to the social exchange and global mobility literature by recognising trust, and positive attitudes manifested in the form of care, greetings, appreciation, and respect as factors that were perceived to facilitate interaction that resulted in cordial working relationships between Italian expatriates and HCNs. The findings support Wang and Varnas' (2018) observation that interpersonal interaction and support are vital in the formation and maintenance of positive working relationships between expatriates and HCNs. This is in line with the claim that exchange relationships between leaders and members resulted from affective interactions (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Furthermore, these findings extend SET from the social capital perspective. Studies show that individuals create social capital through social interaction (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Liu and Shaffer, 2005; Claus et al., 2015). Thus Van Bakel et al. (2017) found that the expatriates who are in contact with HCNs increase their social capital more than the ones that are not in contact with HCNs. The findings of this study extend the study of Van Bakel et al. (2017) as it shows that both the expatriates and the HCNs create and maintain social

capital. The findings from Document Three reveal that the Italian expatriates create and maintain social capital through interacting socially with the HCNs and the findings of Document Five also indicate that HCNs create social capital through relating positively with the Italian expatriates. This implies an increase in the social networks of both the Italian expatriates and the HCNs in Nigeria. The following section presents the second finding of RQ1 which is restricted relationship.

6.2.2 B. Restricted Relationship

The second phenomenological finding uncovered the restricted relationships between the HCNs and the Italians. From a social constructionist's perspective, few of the HCNs experienced a restricted form of relationship with the Italians. The recollection of their encounters with some Italians reveal that the negative attitude of the Italians in the form of ethnocentric behaviour and harsh behaviour with respect to acting severely towards the HCNs limited their interaction with some of the Italians. Shaffer et al. (2006) found that expatriates who display ethnocentric behaviours in the host country found it difficult to interact with the HCNs. The previous findings from Document Three on ethnocentrism revealed that only one Italian expatriate had ethnocentric behaviour whilst the rest did not express any form of ethnocentrism at all. In this study, however, four HCNs complained about the ethnocentric behaviour of the Italians and another four pointed out the harsh behaviours of the Italians which can be attributed to the perception that some of the Italians tend to be very harsh and bossy. The findings from Document Four on ethnocentrism indicated that HCNs did not display ethnocentric behaviours, rather they were more accommodating towards the Italians expatriates. This shows that it is only the Italians that displayed negative attitudes in the working relationships; thus a few of the HCNs claimed to have found it difficult to interact and work with some of these Italians. Overall, restricted relationships with some of the Italian expatriates were experienced by only a few HCNs.

The researcher sees this type of relationship as similar to Fiske's (1991) authority ranking relationships in the literature. Fiske (1991) viewed authority ranking relationships as relationships that are based on a lack of symmetry among people. Thus some actors might have more control and access to resources than other actors. Fiske claimed that the main attribute of such relationships is whether one is above or

below the other person in ranking. Such relationships predominately occur between people of different ranks. The findings on the perceived restricted relationship reveal that some Italians see themselves as authority figures above the level of the HCNs even though some of them might have less working experience compared to the HCNs. This makes them control some of the major aspects of interaction and work as claimed by some HCNs. Some of the Italians perceived themselves as superior to the point that some of the HCNs referred to them as masters.

The researcher sees the foregoing as an indication of the existence of a power difference between a few of the HCNs and some of the Italians. Hence the perceived power difference served as a barrier to interaction between these few HCNs and some of the Italian expatriates. In African cultures, power is determined by age, experience, and education (Grzeda and Assogbavi, 1999). This is because most African countries including Nigeria manifest high cultural distance which means that authority is based on hierarchy (Hofstede, 1991; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta, 2004). Power distance refers to the degree to which individuals that are less powerful in an organisation or institutions within a country accept power imbalances (Hofstede, 1991). In Italy, power is also linked to age, as older people are seen to be power holders who possess more advantages over the less powerful in the society (Hofstede, 1991). Thus, power is similarly vested in hierarchy in both cultures. This explains why some of the Italians perceived themselves as superior to the HCNs and exercise legitimate power because they occupy top positions. The findings reveal that with both companies being Italian, priority is giving to the Italians to occupy top positions, which gives them absolute power, control and the opportunity to act as leaders. Some of the HCNs were reluctant to accept this because they perceived that some of the HCNs were more deserving of the positions due to their advantage of having more working experience compared to some of the Italians. This limited the interaction between the HCNs and the Italians which contributed to a form of relationship that was based on power.

This finding extends the literature and thus makes a contribution to knowledge by recognising that negative behaviours manifested in the form of ethnocentric and harsh behaviour are factors that are perceived to limit the interaction and relationships of some of the Italian expatriates and the HCNs. This resulted in restricted relationships

whereby some of the HCNs find it difficult to maintain good working relationships with the Italian expatriates. This specifically extends the findings of Shaffer et al. (2006) that expatriates with ethnocentric attitudes find it difficult to maintain a good working relationship with the HCNs. In relation to SET, the findings show that social capital is not maintained between some of the Italian expatriates and the HCNs when a perceived power barrier exists. This implies that social networks can indeed be restricted by power as demonstrated in the case of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

The foregoing findings that address RQ1 extend the literature on relationships of the HCNs and the Italians expatriates at a micro level perspective by exploring the nature of the relationship of two different parties. The findings from Document Three reveal the Italians' positive learning and working relationships with the HCNs whilst the findings from Document Four and this current study reveal the HCNs' cordial and restricted working relationships with the Italians. Thus, the researcher argues that exploring the nature of the relationship from a dual perspective gave a clearer picture of the relationships and reveals the factors that potentially facilitates or limits the relationships of expatriates and HCNs in organisations. This implies that the dual perspective can lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between HCNs and expatriates in expatriation studies. The following section recommends how positive employment relationships between HCNs and Italian expatriates can be fostered.

6.2.3 C. Fostering Positive Employment Relationships: The Italian Expatriates

A productive relationship is not always given between expatriates and HCNs (Reiche, 2013). Even though the previous findings of this study showed that the majority of the HCNs in both B&S and B&P had cordial relationships with the Italians, some of the HCNs still believed that their relationship with the Italians could still be further improved in different ways. This is because the HCNs believed that relationships have no boundaries and their relationship with the Italians can go to any length. As previously shown, the ethnocentric and harsh behaviour of some Italians affected their interaction and relationship with some of the HCNs. Ethnocentrism is a negative attitude expressed in unconstructive behaviour, which is inward looking in the sense

that it fosters cooperation with one's own group but not with other groups perceived to be different (Axelrod and Hammond, 2003). It is also a case of out-group discrimination (Perreault and Bourhis, 1999). Such dysfunctional behaviours were commented on by some of the HCNs in both companies. Hence this accounted for the restricted relationships between some of the HCNs and the Italians. Thus, the researcher of this study recommends that during cultural assimilation training, expatriates in subsidiaries are encouraged to learn to display a more positive, friendly, and open attitude towards the HCNs, which will promote positive working relationships between the two parties. This can be achieved through emotional labour, which involves the management of one's emotions to satisfy work prescriptions (Haman and Putnam, 2008). From the social exchange perspective, Lawler and Thye (1999) stated that emotions can shape or modify the process of exchanges taking place between actors. This is because emotions can determine how individuals perceive each other during present and future interactions. Thus, within the social exchange context, Lawler and Thye (1999) claimed that emotions serve as a means of revealing the trustworthiness of the actors involved in an exchange. Heizmann et al. (2018) suggest that to improve two-way knowledge sharing between expatriates and HCNs, they have to show empathy towards each other. The researcher of this study therefore, recommends that expatriate cultural development training needs to centre around the notion of emotional labour. The next section presents the findings that address RQ2. Accordingly, the forms of exchanges perceived to be taking place in the cordial and restricted relationships established by the HCNs and the Italian expatriates are discussed.

6.3 RQ2 What Forms of Social Exchanges are Perceived by the HCNs to be Taking Place with the Italian Expatriates with Whom they Work?

Exchanges take place based on the nature of the relationships (Mills and Clarks, 1982; Clark and Mills, 2012). Thus, the aforementioned findings regarding the nature of the relationships make it easier to explore the forms of exchanges perceived to be taking place in the relationships. The findings relating to the forms of social exchanges disclosed three forms of exchanges from a micro and meso-level perspective: multiple exchanges, unequal exchanges, and exclusive exchanges. These findings are underpinned by social exchange theory.

6.3.1 A. Multiple Exchanges

The findings showed that multiple forms of exchanges took place between the HCNs and Italian expatriates. This form of exchange was interpreted as multiple because different types of resources such as information, ideas, advice, and technology were continuously exchanged by the HCNs and the Italians in the organisations. As illustrated and exemplified in the findings, these exchanges appeared to follow a similar pattern, where for example, a particular type of information was exchanged for another type of information by the same party. The same goes for all the other resources. This is similar to the exchange that happens between actors when the resources returned depend directly on the resources provided. This form of exchange is referred to as a restricted exchange in the literature (Eke, 1974; Yamagishi and Cook, 1993).

These multiple exchanges happened as a result of the trust, reciprocity and power balance that establish the cordial relationships. The SET literature points out that trust, reciprocity, and power played a fundamental role in social exchanges between actors (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964, 2017; Cropanzano et al., 2005; Colquitt, et al., 2012; Ali, 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2017). Thus, a high level of trust underpinned the reciprocal exchanges of multiple resources between the two parties. This is consistent with Blau's (1964, 2017) findings that social exchanges of resources such as information, compliments, and support are based on feelings of trust and obligations to reciprocate. These forms of exchange produce a benefit to the actors involved in the exchange, which will be discussed relative to RQ3 on the perceived benefits derived by HCNs from the exchange relationships with the Italian expatriates.

This finding sheds light on the power balance in the multiple exchanges that took place between the actors which indicates the absence of a power difference between the majority of the HCNs and some of the Italians in both companies. When power was perceived to be balanced between some of the HCNs and some of the Italians, then the occurrence of equal exchanges that importantly benefitted the HCNs, the expatriates, and their organisations could occur. This finding extends the literature on social exchanges and global mobility on both a micro-level by exposing the nature and types of resources exchanged between HCNs and Italian expatriates as well as a

meso-level benefitting the HCNs and the organisation and thus constitutes a further contribution to knowledge made by this study. The preceding section presents unequal exchanges as the second finding of RQ2.

6.3.2 B. Unequal Exchanges

The second form of exchange found was unequal exchanges of ideas. This form of exchange was interpreted as unequal because of the lack of balance in the exchange of ideas between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates in both organisations. It was found that some of the Italians share ideas regarding work with the HCNs but when the HCNs reciprocate, the Italians find it difficult to directly accept the ideas from the HCNs in both companies. The researcher of this study attributed this to power differences which is one of the elements of social exchange that affects the exchange of resources (Emerson, 1976; Blau, 1964, 2017; Homans, 1961, 1974; Heizmann et al., 2018). The previous finding on restricted relationships indicated the existence of power imbalance between a few HCNs and some of the Italians. These imbalances occurred because power was distributed unequally among a few of the HCNs and some of the Italians. Thus, the unequal distribution of power contributed to the unequal exchanges of ideas between the two actors. Emerson (1962) and Young-Ybarra and Wierseme (1999) found out in their studies that power differentials among actors in a relationship can affect the exchanges of resources between the actors in their organisations.

Extending this finding beyond the notions of power differences, the researcher sees that the issue of perceived lack of justice or unfairness does not fit the situation as the HCNs were willing to share information and ideas but some of the Italians were not keen to receive the ideas from the HCNs. This made some of the HCNs demotivated and unwilling to share their ideas with the Italians because of the negative response of some Italians in receiving ideas from them. In short, the tension between the willingness of the HCNs to share and the reluctance of the Italians to receive restricted the exchange. The following section presents exclusive exchanges as the third finding of RQ2.

6.3.3 C. Exclusive Exchanges

The final form of exchange that was perceived to take place reveals the exclusive exchanges of goods, services, money and performance by the HCNs and the Italians in their organisations. This form of exchange was interpreted as exclusive because of the nature of the resources found to be exchanged by the actors in the organisations. This kind of exchange reveals a generalised type of exchange whereby the resources returned do not depend directly on the resource provided (Eke, 1974; Yamagishi and Cook, 1993). Thus, the researcher sees it as an exclusive form of exchange as the performance of the HCNs and the services the HCNs render to the Italians do not directly depend on the goods and money provided by the Italians to them. This form of exchange requires less trust because of a low level of risk involved (Blau, 1964, 2017).

This exclusive exchange of goods, services, and money are consistent with Blau's (1964, 2017) economic exchanges in the literature, which are forms of transactions of resources such as money, goods and services exchanged within a short period of time. This form of exchange is influenced by reward and cost. The HCNs receive a reward when they receive goods and money from the Italians which are perceived to be based on the cost of services that they rendered to the Italians.

The foregoing findings that address RQ2 extend SET on the forms of exchanges taking place in organisations. The findings show that different forms of exchanges (multiple, unequal and exclusive) can take place between expatriates and HCNs based on the nature of relationships (cordial or restricted) between the parties involved. This implies that the forms of exchange taking place can be as diverse as the types of relationships that are in place within the company. The following discusses the perceived benefits derived by the HCNs from establishing and maintaining reciprocal relationships with the Italian expatriates, which addresses RQ3.

6.4 RQ3 What are the Perceived Benefits for the HCNs of Establishing and Maintaining such Reciprocal Relationships?

Benefits are viewed as elements of reciprocity in exchange relationships (Clark and Mills, 2012) which can be managed through a power balance in the relationship

(Homans, 1961, 1974; Blau, 1964, 2017). Actors with less power benefit more in relationships dominated by power as resources are more controlled by high power actors in such relationships (Homans, 1961, 1974; Blau, 1964, 2017). The findings from the restricted relationships portrayed some of the Italians as the powerful actors and the HCNs as the less powerful actors. Hence the HCNs benefitted more from the Italians as they depended more on the Italians for information, ideas and support for the work, which gave some of the Italians more control over the HCNs. So, in both companies, whilst the Italians have more control over operations and all other work activities as narrated by some of the HCNs in both companies, HCNs actually benefit more in terms of the resources they receive from the Italians in both companies.

The previous findings on exchanges showed that different types of resources were exchanged between the HCNs and the Italians. In this section, the researcher focused on the resources that benefitted the HCNs the most in their career. These resources are ideas, information, advice, and technology that provided knowledge, which benefitted the HCNs in terms of enhancing the skills and positive attitude towards work for some HCNs. This will positively influence their positions in the Nigerian labour market.

6.4.1 A. Enhanced Skills

The findings reveal that the HCNs have benefitted in terms of the knowledge that they have accrued through their relationships with the Italians. Studies show that exchange relationships positively influence individuals' attitudes towards knowledge sharing (Brock, Zmud, Kim and Lee, 2005; Cabrera, Collins and Salgado, 2006; Heizmann et al., 2018). Furthermore, the findings reveal that the highly structured nature of both companies facilitated the sharing of knowledge between the Italians and the HCNs. This is in contrast to Nigerian companies where some of the HCNs reveal that workers are reluctant to share what they know with other Nigerian workers as they fear this will negatively impact on their own promotional opportunities with other HCNs.

Where knowledge is shared, it is in the form of ideas, information, advice, and technology which enhances the managerial and technical skills of the HCNs. The HCNs perceive that the Italians are required in Nigeria because of their technical

know-how. Thus, sharing this technical knowledge enhances the technical skills of the HCNs. The findings also show that the managerial skills of the HCNs have improved as a result of relating and working with the Italians for a very long period of time. Thus, the enhanced managerial and technical skills impacted the HCNs positively in the construction industry. These all support the view that one of the motives of international assignments is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills in the host unit (Edstrom and Galbraith, 1977; Kamoche, 1997; Vance et al., 2014). The literature on skill requirements in Nigeria reveals that there is a shortage of technical skills and managerial skills in the Nigerian construction industry (Oseghale, Abiola-Falemu and Oseghale, 2015; Bilau, Ajagbe, Kigbu and Sholanke, 2015; Abiodun and Segbenu, 2017). The researcher sees that the findings of this study can address the issue of skill shortages in the construction industry in Nigeria by transferring expatriates with technical and managerial skills who are willing to share their knowledge with the Nigerian workers in the construction industry. As such this finding contributes to the understanding of how skill shortages within the Nigerian construction industry can be addressed. This extends the literature on skill development on a micro and meso-level contributing to professional practice on skill development for the HCNs within the Nigerian construction industry. It is also applicable on a macro level contributing to strengthening the economy through skill growth since skill development serves as one of the driving forces in boosting the economic development of a country (Ahamad, Sinha and Shastri, 2016). The following section presents the second finding of RQ3, which is positive attitude towards work.

6.4.2 B. Positive Attitude Towards Work

The findings show that the HCNs have learned the techniques to improve their time management from their social relations with the Italians, which has benefitted them positively in improving their attitude towards work. The researcher noted from the findings that some of the HCNs had moved away from the concept of Nigerian time to a more conscious concept of time. Nigerian time commonly referred to as African time is seen as the relaxed behaviour that Africans display towards time (Nnajifor, 2016). It has been argued by Anthony (2015) that the consequence of African time towards work results in the underdevelopment of Africa. As indicated in the literature,

Nigeria is still underdeveloped as a result of some of the attitudes of Nigerians towards work (Ahunwan, 2002; Ajiboye, 2013). Thus, for the development of the country to take place, this mentality of African time has to change. As a result of relating and working with the Italians, some HCNs had learned to be more time conscious in regards to work. This affirms that learning took place through interaction. This supports Muthusamy and Whites' (2005) view that effective learning can be determined through interaction which shapes exchanges between actors. Thus, time management learned from the Italians can be considered beneficial to the HCNs as it made them more effective and productive resulting in an increased performance for their organisations.

It is argued here that the findings in relation to RQ3 reveal that enhanced skills and a positive attitude towards work when combined together can enhance the talent of the HCNs. Talent involves the optimum ability to use skills and values on the job (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2012). Thus, the researcher perceives that the HCNs can use their enhanced talent to contribute to the construction industry. This will address the issue of local talent shortages in the country as identified in the literature of this study. This finding extends the literature on talent in Nigeria on a micro-level contributing to the talent of HCNs working in foreign companies in Nigeria and also on a meso-level contributing to professional practice on talent management among Nigerian HR practitioners in the construction industry.

Comparatively, the literature on SET mostly focuses on inputs and the process of exchange as opposed to the outcome of the exchange. The findings extend SET in relation to the nature of resources exchanged between expatriates and HCNs because it also shows that the outcome of the exchange can impact the HCNs in their career and their organisations. Hence the researcher of this study asserts that the HCNs have benefitted personally and professionally in their relationships with the expatriates. This supports the study of Hsu (2012) and Wang and Varma (2018) that such relationships do not only benefit the expatriates but the HCNs as well. Therefore, human resource development (HRD) activities such as training should be provided to further enhance the expatriates' global working skills in Africa since they positively impact the HCNs they are working with. The next section presents the findings that

address RQ4 specifically on the challenges faced by the HCNs working with Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

6.5 RQ4 What are the Perceived Challenges for the HCNs in Working with Italians in the Italian Companies?

Working and interacting with people from a different culture can sometimes be challenging because of cultural differences (Takeuchi, Tesluk, Yum and Lepak, 2005). In this study, the challenges faced by the HCNs involved communication and personal development.

6.5.1 A. Communication

From the social constructionist's stance, individuals interact and share their experiences through language (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012) which enables them to construct their relationships. The findings showed that the most challenging issue that the HCNs faced in their relationship with the Italians was the language barrier. The Italian language is more widely spoken in the two case organisations studied than English which is the official language in Nigeria. According to Dowling, Festing and Engle (2008), English is generally considered as the language of global business. It was introduced in Nigeria to facilitate cultural and linguistic unity. Hence it contributed immensely to the national integration of Nigeria as there are about 400 indigenous languages spoken by different ethnic groups in Nigeria (Imoke, 2006; Orimalade, 2006). Thus, disregarding the importance of speaking English shows a degree of ethnocentrism by the Italians. The majority of the HCNs do not understand or speak the Italian language. This made it difficult for some of them to communicate and interact with the Italians in meetings and other team-work. The findings also revealed that the instructions and markings on the machinery and other construction tools are all in the Italian language, which made it difficult for the Nigerian engineers, architects and quantity surveyors to operate without the help of the Italians.

Kim (2001) argued that communication serves as an important element that connects the expatriates to the host environment. Expatriates who are fluent in the host country language have a better relationship with HCNs in the host countries (Shaffer, Harrison and Gilley, 1999). It was found that the majority of the Italians in both companies are

not fluent in English, the official language of the country. This affected the interaction of some of the HCNs with the Italians. Hence the researcher of this study found the language barrier to have contributed to the restricted interactions revealed in the previous section. This supports the study of Van Bakel et al. (2015) which showed that communication barriers affected the quality of the relationship between the expatriates and the HCNs. From a social exchange perspective, the researcher of this study perceives that the restricted communication might have contributed to the unequal exchanges between a few HCNs and some Italians expatriates.

The findings on communication also reveal that the HR departments of both companies are not organised in a way that HCNs can freely communicate well with the Italians. The HCNs lacked a voice as their complaints were often ignored by HR. Hence the need for more HCNs' participation in both companies to improve communication. The following section presents personal development of the HCNs as the second finding relative to RQ4.

6.5.2 B. Personal Development

The findings reveal that a lack of training and promotion restricted the personal development of the majority of the HCNs in both companies. Personal development is seen in terms of self-growth and career goals of the HCNs. It was expected that the personal development of the HCNs and the expatriates would play a key role in the Italian companies because of their international operations. However, it was found that both Italian companies adopted an ethnocentric approach to the personal development of the HCNs. The findings show that the HCNs working in the Italian companies face challenges in personal development opportunities as the Italians do not send the locals to workshops, seminars, or training outside the company unlike the German construction company and the French car manufacturing company in Nigeria that offer training as reported by some of the HCNs. As a result, it was found that some of the HCNs had to personally attend training outside the companies to further update themselves for promotions and also to be able to compete with the Italians and other expatriates coming in from different parts of the world. It can be debated that even though the HCNs may be perceived to have benefitted in terms of their managerial and technical skills not much attention has been paid to nurturing and

developing the right people in the host country. Personal development here is seen as the increased ability for promotion or future job prospects (Dowling and Welch, 2004). As previously mentioned, informal learning took place between some of the HCNs and Italian expatriates, but as the HCNs were not sent on formal training or recognised through promotion, then they could not formally document their learning in the curriculum vitae. This implies that it made it harder for some of the HCNs to be promoted and the ones who are promoted only get salary raises but their titles were not changed. A pay increase without a title change can negatively affect the perceived status of the HCNs since promotion involves a status-based change (Pfeffer, 2005).

The foregoing findings of RQ4 on the challenges faced by the HCNs extends the literature on global mobility and SET regarding the importance of language and personal development as key resources in social exchange. The majority of studies on communication between expatriates and HCNs focus on the importance and benefits for the expatriates to learn the host country language (Shaffer et al., 1999; Kim, 2001). However, this current study shows the need for HCNs to also learn the parent company language for the purpose of interacting with the Italians. Likewise, studies focus on the development of expatriates rather than HCNs in the literature (Mahajan and Toh, 2014; Van Bakel et al., 2015; Bonache et al., 2016). Conversely, this current study shows the need to focus on the development of the HCNs for positive relationships with expatriates in the organisation. Therefore, more human resource development (HRD) activities such as formal language and technical training programmes are needed to be implemented for HCNs in both companies. The following section presents the factors that need to be taken into consideration to sustain positive employment relationships by human resource practitioners.

6.6 Recommendations for HRM Practitioners: Standardise HRM Practices

One of the core functions of HRM is the management and development of workers (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). HCNs working in the Italian companies in Nigeria can perceive fairness when practices relating to employee relations and development are standardised. Dickmann and Baruch (2011) maintain that standardising HR practices relating to employee development and career processes is likely to increase the perception of fairness in subsidiaries. Based on the research findings of this study, the

researcher of this study argues that a standardised approach to HRM that is consistent and fair specifically relating to training and development, staffing and promotion, and increased participation should be implemented in the HR department of both companies. This can positively address the issues concerning communication and personal development that the HCNs are facing in order to foster positive employment relationships. The goal of standardised HRM practices in multinational organisations is to be consistent, transparent and geographically align the workforce towards common management practices. These common practices foster a perceived feeling of fairness between expatriates and HCNs (Dowling et al., 2008). This can facilitate the flow of knowledge and information in the different branches of multinational organisations (Dickmann and Baruch, 2011). Thus, the researcher of this study suggests a standardised platform that maintains a common approach towards HR practices relating to training and development, staffing and promotion, and workers' participation. Based on this, three recommendations are made for HRM practitioners that will facilitate positive employment relationships, and, in turn, positive exchanges of resources between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. These include; an increase and access to formal training and development interventions for HCNs; ensure that staffing and the promotion criteria are equitable and fair, thus enabling more HCNs to progress into managerial positions and create a forum facilitated by HR departments where HCNs feel more able to participate and discuss their relationships with the expatriates. These three recommendations are presented and discussed below.

6.6.1 A. An Increase in Formal Training and Development for the HCNs

It is argued that to further improve the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates, there is a need to enhance HR practices relating to training and development of HCNs in both companies. This can be achieved by increasing formal training courses that would address the development needs of the HCNs to make them more effective in relating to the Italians and other expatriates. Formal training can be well planned, structured and long-term oriented. Thus, such training has a positive impact on performance since it produces long-term results (Goldstein and Ford, 2002; Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009). Vance and Paik (2005) recommended that training for HCNs should be specifically on the organisation's business strategy, managerial and

technical operations. If properly implemented, this will enhance and develop the HCNs' ability to work and relate well with the Italians and even the other expatriates. In return the HCNs might reciprocate this HR practice with high performance, since the skills, attitudes and knowledge learned from the training will be applied to the work environment to improve the performance of the workers (Goldstein and Ford, 2002). However, Aragon, Jimenez and Sanz-Valle (2014) found that training may not directly improve performance but has a significant impact on organisational learning, which in turn, leads to better performance. This can further contribute to the competitiveness and effectiveness of the companies. Therefore, both companies should move away from their ethnocentric practices relating to training, which are based on the assumption that certain types of training are not effective for the HCNs. The Italians perceive that technical and managerial knowledge and skills are the only factors the HCNs require to operate in the Italian construction company. Thus, the Italians are transferred from Italy to guide the HCNs along the managerial and technical aspects of work.

The findings showed that employee relations training was not provided to the HCNs. Such training is important to enable the HCNs and the expatriates to interact and work together harmoniously. For example, smooth interaction between the HCNs and the Italians in both companies can be facilitated if the HCNs are taught the Italian language which is the parent company language since it is more commonly spoken in the company compared to English. The findings show that formal English training is provided to the expatriates hence the HCNs should be afforded the same opportunity to learn the Italian language to improve their interaction with the Italians. HCNs that are fluent in the parent company language are more likely to be promoted to higher positions that require them to interact and communicate with expatriates and the parent company (Vance and Paik, 2005). This will further strengthen the exchanges of resources between the HCNs and the expatriates and reduce the possibility of demotivation and a lack of commitment on the part of the HCN. Thus, the researcher argues that HR professionals need to ensure that both HCNs and expatriates have equal access to formal training opportunities. Such training interventions should encompass sending the HCNs to outside training institutions and headquarters for brief training on business strategy, organisational culture and company objectives and

procedures. Opportunities for such personal development may increase the motivation and commitment of the HCNs, making them more willing to work with expatriates. It may also result in them being more receptive to knowledge transfer and sharing between themselves and the expatriates for the smooth operation of the organisation (Vance and Paik, 2005) since HR practices encourage the transfer and acquisition of knowledge within the organisation (Edvardsson, 2008; Chen and Huang, 2009).

6.6.2 B. Staffing and Promotional Opportunities for HCNs

It is further argued that there is a need to bring in more HCNs to the management level in both companies to improve their interaction and relationship with the Italian expatriates. This can be achieved through the implementation of consistent and fair HR practices relating to staffing and promotion in both companies. According to the HR managers of both companies, the majority of the HCNs in both companies work in the site. This is because the staffing of the companies constituted fewer Nigerians at management level. This shows ethnocentric staffing whereby the Italians occupy most of the management positions rather than staffing that focuses on the utilisation of management skills. This affects the promotion of the HCNs. Perceived fairness between the HCNs and the expatriates can be achieved through promotion since promotion offers a sense of justice in the workplace (Pfeffer, 2005). Thus, HR practices relating to promotion and staffing need to be consistent and fair. In this regard, a geocentric approach to staffing will be more appropriate in both companies whereby headquarters and subsidiaries will come together and form global staffing. Geocentric refers to a global approach taken by multinational companies for their operations for the purpose of making unique contributions (Dowling et al., 2008). The global approach advocates the inclusion of employees in the pool of potential applicants who can be selected for management positions in multinational companies. Thus, the researcher of this study suggests that adopting a geocentric approach will enable both companies to hire both Italians and HCNs for management positions for the purpose of utilising the best available management skills. The findings show that more HCNs need to occupy management level positions. This can be achieved through implementing fair promotional criteria in both companies. It was found earlier that the managerial and technical skills of the HCNs have improved. Therefore, the improved skills and fair promotional criteria can enhance the access of

HCNs to more promotional opportunities and in return the HCNs might reciprocate back with high performance since promotion from within encourages good performance (Pfeffer, 2005). This will foster support, cooperation and strengthen the relationship between the Italians and the HCNs, which will also strengthen the exchanges of resources between them.

6.6.3 C. Forum for HCNs' Participation

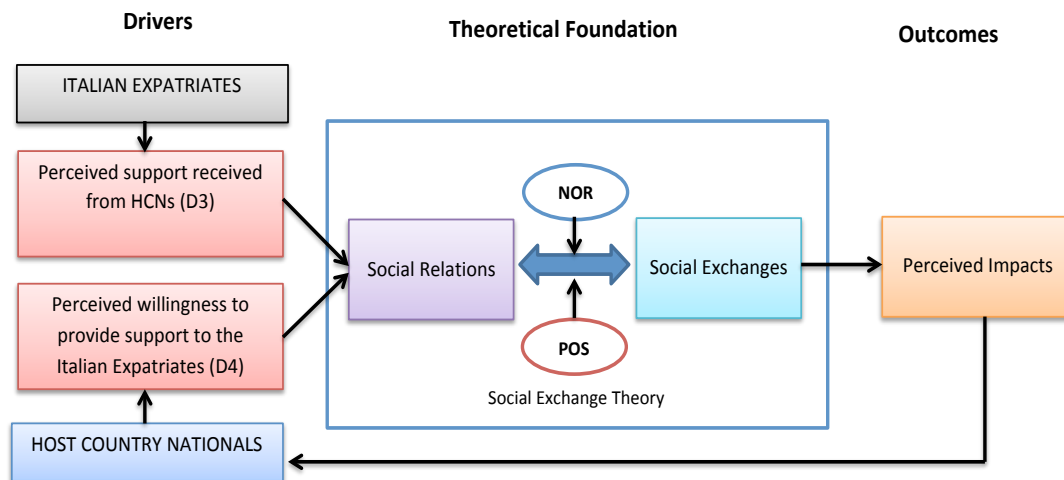
Finally, it is argued that to further enhance the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates, there is a need to maintain clear and consistent HR practices relating to the participation of the HCNs in both companies. This could help address the issues relating to communication between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. The findings reveal that the HCNs cannot freely discuss their issues concerning the Italian expatriates because their complaints were often ignored by HR. As such they lacked a voice to air their grievances. This shows a failure of their HR department to provide a platform for the participation of the HCNs. Participation provides a voice for workers and the voice contributes to their identification with their organisations (Heller et al., 1998). The workers voice is regarded as one of the aspects of high commitment (Baptiste, 2008). Commitment here is seen in terms of involvement and identification of workers in a specific organisation (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). The researcher of this study argues that when the HCNs identify and are more involved in their companies, they might be able to participate better in their companies. Thus, the researcher of this study suggests the institutionalisation of a forum which should be facilitated by HR department where HCNs can perceive to be more involved which will further contribute to their participation in both companies. The forum will help HR practitioners to listen to and address the issues of both HCNs and the Italians in the same manner in the organisations since participation improves communication (Heller et al., 1998). The findings show that the management of both companies gives more priority to the Italians. Therefore, moving away from the ethnocentric HR practices to more common HR practices will allow the HR departments of both companies to maintain consistent equal treatment of HCNs and expatriates. Thus, the creation of a forum facilitated by the HR department of both companies can contribute to improving the flow of communication that would allow the HCNs to feel more involved. This will enable them to participate and discuss their

working relationships with the Italian expatriates which will strengthen the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates and will also impact the exchange of resources between them. The HCNs can reciprocate this HR practice provided by being more committed to their companies. Guest (1987) argues that individuals that display high levels of commitment contribute more towards the development of the organisation. The next section presents the conceptual framework that was built from the findings of Document Three and Four. The framework and the findings of this document served as the building blocks for the construction of the conceptual model of this study, which will be presented and discussed in the next section.

6.7 The Findings and the Conceptual Framework

The findings support the theoretical foundation of the study shown in Figure 2.1 in which it is established that social relationships lead to social exchanges, which can lead to benefits for both HCNs and organisations within the construction sector, and may have wider applicability for the management of HCNs in other sectors. The building blocks of the framework were derived from the empirical findings of Document Three and Document Four. More specifically, Document Three established that the Italian expatriates perceived several forms of support from the HCNs. Document Four, on the other hand, established the willingness of the HCNs to provide support to the Italian expatriates. Due to the many years of interaction between the Italians and the HCNs in the work environment, it can be inferred that social relations between the two groups have already been in place. The nature of this relationship was seen through the lens of SET in Document Five. Accordingly, the findings for all the research questions are underpinned by SET. Moreover, the conceptualisation of the social relations revealed in the findings of Document Three and Four were assumed to be mediated by a norm of reciprocity (NOR) and perceived organisational support (POS) which led to different forms of social exchanges that impacted the HCNs.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher Generated

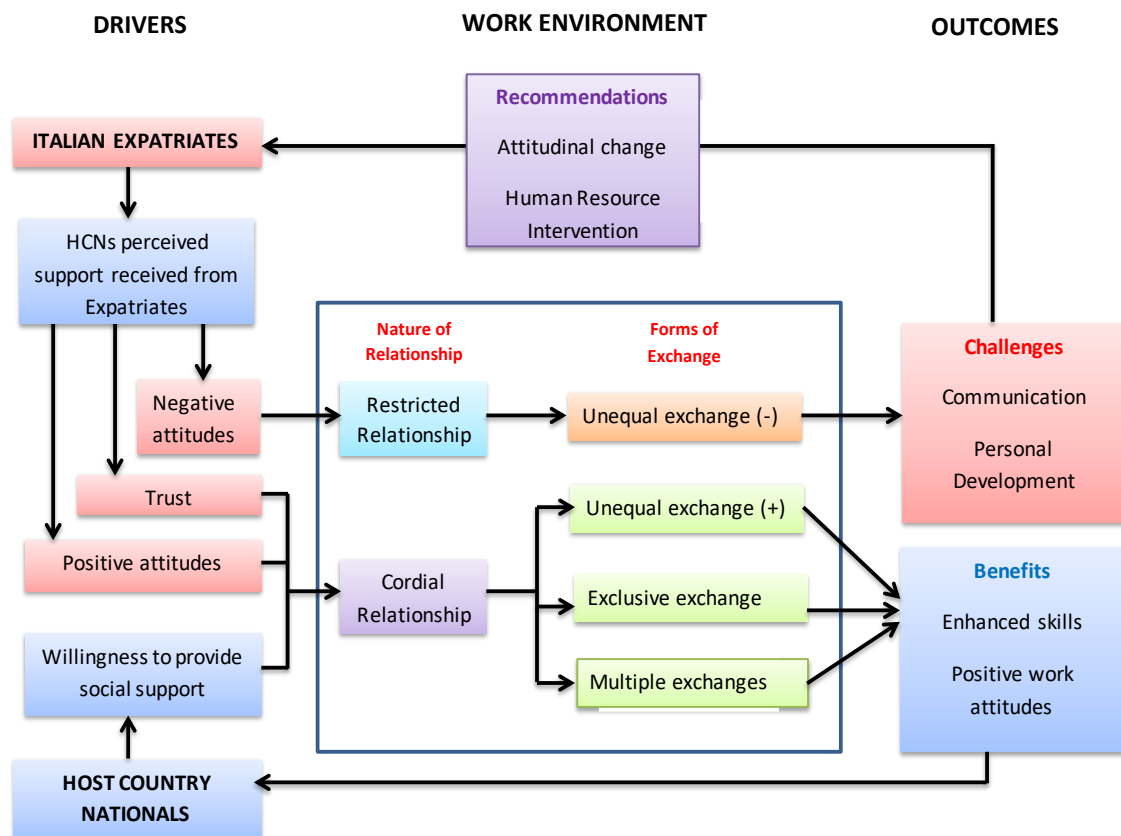
What had been explored were the subjective experiences of the HCNs in working with the Italians. Accordingly, these experiences explicated elements of the nature of the relationships with the Italians, whereby the majority of the HCNs perceived the relationship to be cordial, but a few of the HCNs perceived the nature of their relationship to be restricted. From this perspective, the forms of exchanges were identified in the study. The cordial and restricted relationships contributed to different forms of exchanges. The cordial relationships resulted in multiple and exclusive reciprocal exchanges of ideas, information, advice, technology, money, performance, goods, and services. On the other hand, the restricted exchanges resulted in unequal exchanges of ideas between the two parties researched. From this perspective, the impact of such exchanges was disclosed in the study. In terms of the implications for managerial practice the resources exchanged provide knowledge and know-how that enhanced the skills and the attitude of the HCNs towards work, which enhanced the talent of the HCNs in the construction industry.

Moving further, the challenges of working with Italians in Italian companies were identified. These challenges were in the area of communication and personal development. Finally, suggestions and recommendations were offered on how to foster a positive working relationship between the Italians and the HCNs. These

suggestions were divided into two. What the Italians and the HR management practitioners should consider. Accordingly, the Italians should improve their attitudes towards the HCNs through cultural awareness training. Furthermore, HR practices needs to be clear and consistent to provide equal access to training and development opportunities for HCNs and expatriates; a forum in HR where HCNs can discuss their relationships with the Italians; global staffing and a clear and transparent promotional criteria that gives access to promotion opportunities for HCNs.

Overall, the foregoing findings were used by the researcher as building blocks for the construction of a model shown in Figure 6.1 that depicts the dynamics of the relationship between the HCNs and expatriates in the work environment. Figure 6.1 is a reification of the conceptual model based on the findings of this study.

Figure 6.1 Conceptual Model: Dynamics of the Relationship Between HCNs and Italian Expatriates



Source: Researcher Generated

Based on the empirical findings of Document Five, the conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 was further refined to provide insights into the working relationships of HCNs and Italian expatriates from the social exchange perspective. The model (Figure 6.1) addresses the call for research on the relationship of HCNs and expatriates and how the relationships impact the HCNs (Takeuchi, 2010; Vance et al., 2014; Van Bakel, 2018). Studies on the relationships of HCNs and expatriates show the influence of HCNs on expatriates (Toh and DeNisi, 2003; 2005; 2007; Takeuchi, 2010; Arman and Aycan, 2013; Van Bakel et al., 2017). There is a dearth of studies on how expatriates impact HCNs as the literature shows that most of the studies carried out from this perspective focused on how relationships between expatriates and the local people contributed to the performance and effectiveness of the expatriates (Johnson, et al., 2003; Liu and Shaffer, 2005; Farh et al., 2010; Van Bakel et al., 2011; Van Bakel et al., 2017). Thus, the model (Figure 6.1) bridges the gap by providing insight into the relationships of the HCNs and Italian expatriates as cordial and restricted depending on the nature of the interaction. This supports the argument of Bonache et al. (2016) that interaction between HCNs and expatriates could positively strengthen or negatively affect the relationships between the HCNs and the expatriates.

The model (Figure 6.1) provides empirical support to some of the constructs of SET such as perceived trust, the actors who exchange, the resources exchange and the structure and outcome of the exchange (Blau, 1964, 2017; Molms, 1997; Colquitt et al., 2012; Cropanzano et al., 2017) in the context of cross-cultural relations in the work setting. Other factors that were found to expand the construct of SET are the positive and negative attitudes of the Italian expatriates. The positive attitudes include the attitude of care and greetings, respect and appreciation. These factors helped shape the working relationships between the HCNs and the expatriates as cordial. This contributed to exclusive exchanges of money and services, gifts and performance and multiple social exchanges of information, ideas, advice, and technology that benefitted the HCNs' skills and attitude to work. The negative attitudes include ethnocentric and harsh behaviours which restricted relationships of the HCNs with the Italian expatriates and this resulted in unequal exchanges of ideas. Based on the model, attitudes can contribute to or restrict the relationships and exchange of

resources. To increase the impact of the relationships on the HCNs, the researcher of this study recommends attitudinal change - Italian expatriates should improve their attitudes towards the HCNs. Thus, organisations who introduce expatriates to their workforce, provide the expatriates with appropriate cross-cultural awareness training.

The model (Figure 6.1) also provided insight into how communication barriers and personal development expanded SET. It was found that restricted communication and lack of personal development of the HCNs affected the relationships and exchanges of resources between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates. Thus, the researcher of this study recommends HR intervention and practices along the areas of training and development, to ensure that equal access to training and development opportunities for HCNs and expatriates are provided. Institutionalising a set of equitable staffing and promotion criteria would also ensure global staffing and access to promotion opportunities for HCNs. And finally creating a forum would give voice to the HCNs where they can participate and discuss matters pertinent to their relationships with the Italians expatriates.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the empirical findings in response to the research questions guiding this study have been explored. What has been surfaced from the phenomenological perspective are the subjective experiences of the HCNs working relationships with the Italian expatriates. This is depicted in the model of the study (Figure 6.1) which describes the dynamics of the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates.

The findings of the first research question show the subjective experiences of the majority of the HCNs' on the cordial nature of their relationships with the Italians and a few of the HCNs on the restricted nature of their relationship. Therefore, this generally points to the polarity in the nature of the relationship experienced by the HCNs. At any given time, an HCN in any of the two Italian companies either experiences a cordial or a restricted relationship with the Italian expatriates. Accordingly, the different forms of exchanges that could take place would depend on the nature of relationships experienced by the HCN.

The findings of the second research question show that the cordial relationships resulted in multiple and exclusive reciprocal exchanges of ideas, information, advice, technology, money, performance, goods, and services. On the other hand, the restricted exchanges resulted in unequal exchanges of ideas between the two parties researched. Therefore, the polarity in the nature of the relationship experienced by the HCNs resulted in a plurality of heterogeneous resource exchanges with the Italian expatriates.

The findings of the third research question show that the plural exchanges that took place resulted in increased knowledge, enhanced skills and improved working attitudes on the part of the HCNs which generally contributes to enhancing the talent of the HCNs in the construction industry. Therefore, it can be inferred that the plural exchange of heterogeneous resources can have multiple learning and development impacts on the HCNs.

Finally, the findings of the final research question exposed the challenges faced by the HCNs in working with Italians in Italian companies. These challenges were in the area of communication and personal development. Therefore, the challenges faced by the HCNs could generally constrain the growth potential in sustaining social networks and building social capital development. To this effect, suggestions and recommendations were offered on how to foster a positive working relationship between the Italians and the HCNs. The subsequent chapter concludes the study with the methodological reflections, the contribution of the study to research and practice and the recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for the management of both HCNs and expatriates workers are made. At this point, a recap of the aims and research questions of the study, reflection on methodology used, and contributions of the study are in order to put the recommendations and conclusions in the proper context.

7.2 The Aims and Research Questions

The researcher aimed to explore the forms of social exchange in the relationship of the Italian expatriates and HCNs and analyse the consequences of their relationship in terms of the benefits derived by the HCNs as well as the challenges encountered in working with the Italians in the Italian companies investigated. The study also aimed to contribute new knowledge that would help bridge the gap in understanding the nature of the relationship between expatriates and HCNs. Based on the aims of the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How do HCNs perceive and describe the nature of their relationships with the Italian expatriates in the workplace?
2. What forms of social exchanges are perceived by the HCNs to be taking place with the Italian expatriates with whom they work?
3. What are the perceived benefits for the HCNs of establishing and maintaining such reciprocal relationships?
4. What are the perceived challenges for the HCNs in working with the Italians in the Italian companies?

7.3 Reflections

The researcher synergised a suitable design for this study based on social constructionism as the philosophical framework and hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology as a research method. This was suitable for this study because

interpretivist phenomenological studies fitted well within a constructionist paradigm as it enabled the researcher to understand and interpret the multiple relationships and exchanges taking place between the HCNs and the Italians. As pointed out in the literature, most of the studies undertaken on expatriates and HCNs adopted a positivist approach (Florkowski and Fogel, 1999; Hsu, 2012; Arman and Aycan, 2013; Reiche, 2013; Mahajan and Toh, 2014; Bonache et al., 2016; Van Bakel et al., 2017). This is a clear indication of a methodological gap. Thus, the design and implementation of a qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to explore the lived experience of the HCNs in relation to their working relationships with the Italians and provide a methodological contribution to knowledge. This entailed the translation of the experiences of the HCNs into a coherent discourse. The hermeneutic approach aided in data analysis and the interpretation of the findings. The HCNs' experiences (part) were interwoven into a descriptive narrative (whole). From this perspective, the researcher engaged in constant reading by moving from the HCNs experience (part) to the descriptive narrative (whole) and back to the HCNs experiences (part) whilst filtering, categorising, and identifying the underlying themes in the narratives. In implementing the research process, the researcher acknowledges the usefulness of the methods used in the study in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of the relationships and exchanges through the circle of reading, writing and interpreting. Both social constructionism and hermeneutic phenomenology contributed to understanding the nature and impact of relationships from the lens of those who were actually engaged in the relationships. Hence, a deeper insight into the relationships as lived experiences provided added value to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon investigated.

However, the researcher acknowledges the methodological limitations of the qualitative approach used in the study as every methodological approach is prone to challenges (Creswell, 2009). Hermeneutic phenomenology is a research approach that has no specific steps or methods used (Van Manen, 1997), thus, it is considered an open method. This open method can only be used to understand and make sense of narratives and not to test a group of hypotheses. In this regard, this study was not able to address the issues such as objectivity, representativeness, and generalisation in the same manner that it is done in positivist research. Objectivity was not established in

terms of quantitative measurements because this study used a qualitative approach that focuses more on understanding the meanings the HCNs place upon their working relationships with the Italian expatriates. Objectivity is often associated with quantitative research that focuses on statistical analysis in order to measure, quantify or look for patterns (Saunders et al., 2009). In relation to representativeness, a large representative sample fits well with quantitative studies whilst a small sample works well with qualitative studies (Mason, 2013; Silverman, 2019). Thus, a sample of twenty HCNs was interviewed to gather enough data to address the research questions. As a hermeneutic interpretive study, the researcher aims to understand and interpret the experiences of the participants rather than offer explanations or verify truth or falsity. Although the applicability of the results to a wider population was not achieved, the participants were recruited from two different states in Nigeria. This reflects a geographical representation of experiences of working with Italian expatriates in the country. Yet the findings reflected similar experiences of relating and working with a group of the same nationality, the Italian expatriates. The methods used were not focused on achieving generalisation but rather the depth of understanding of the phenomenon investigated. The sample size of twenty participants does not represent the overall population of HCNs in the companies however it provided a source of in-depth data on the HCNs experiences of interacting and working with Italian expatriates in Nigeria.

Another limitation associated with the sample of the HCNs in this study is that the sample does not represent gender balance. In the study sample, seventeen of the participants are male and three are female. This reflects a gender imbalance in the number of females that participated in the study. The researcher found very few women working in either of the two Italian construction companies. This might be attributed to the fact that the construction business remains to be a male-dominated industry in Nigeria (Adeyemi, Ojo, Aina and Olanipekun, 2006; Akinsiku and Ajala, 2018; Odubiyi, 2018). Thus the few females interviewed represent the population of women in the industry.

7.4 Contribution to Theory and Practice

The study's contribution to theory and practice can be seen in terms of the design used,

the methodology employed, knowledge generated, and the model (Figure 6.1) that was constructed based on the findings of the study.

This study's design integrated knowledge in international assignments, SET, and social constructionism to explore and understand the exchange of resources in working relationships between HCNs and expatriates in the context of the construction industry in Nigeria. The study design also afforded the opportunity for understanding the benefits that such relationships and exchanges would have on the HCNs and the challenges they faced in interrelating with the expatriates.

The methodology employed in this study itself contributes to research by way of helping bridge the research gap and the methodological divide in expatriation research and in generating research protocols that operationalised hermeneutic phenomenology. It had been noted in Document Three and Document Four that there is a dearth of HCN-centric studies as the general literature in global mobility focuses on the experiences of expatriates in the host country. Most of these studies (Florkowski and Fogel, 1999; Hsu, 2012; Arman and Aycan, 2013; Reiche, 2013; Mahajan and Toh, 2014; Bonache et al., 2016; Van Bakel et al., 2017) were also conducted using the positivist approach, hence creating a methodological divide. This present study is HCN-centric and used a qualitative methodology, therefore, contributed to addressing the aforementioned gaps. Furthermore, the use of hermeneutic phenomenology also contributes to the methodological aspect of research in the sense that the protocols used by the researcher were self-designed. It has to be noted that hermeneutic phenomenology as a method is unstructured and does not prescribe a standard procedure to be employed. The well-thought through method used by the researcher is itself a novelty and hence contributes to operationalising hermeneutic phenomenology.

The review of the literature on the impact of expatriates on the HCNs in the work environment revealed that not many studies have been done along this theme. Thus, this study addressed the calls for research on the impact of expatriates on HCNs (Takeuchi, 2010; Vance et al., 2014; Van Bakel, 2018). This was carried out by adopting SET, one of the most effective means of understanding exchanges of resources in social relationships (Blau, 1964, 2017; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005;

Mitchell et al., 2012; Clark and Mills, 2012; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Alcover et al., 2017; Sabatelli et al., 2018). The review of the literature also indicates that very little had been uncovered on the applicability of SET in the context of the relationships between expatriates and HCNs (Liden et al., 2000; Kraimer et al., 2001; Mejia et al., 2016). This all indicates the existence of a conceptual and substantive gap. The findings of this study contribute to bridging such existing gaps through the generation of new knowledge that contributes to and extends existing knowledge in the literature of SET and global mobility. As shown in the previous chapter, the major contribution of this study lies in the present model (Figure 6.1) that was generated from the findings of the study which rationally depicts the antecedents and consequences of social exchange in an actual work environment. The present model (Figure 6.1) provided insight into how different forms of exchanges of resources (multiple, unequal and exclusive) took place between expatriates and HCNs based on the nature of their relationships. Consequently, the resources exchanged contributed to the effectiveness of the HCNs in the organisations. Previous studies show how relationships between expatriates and the HCNs contributed to the performance and effectiveness of the expatriates (Johnson et al., 2003; Liu and Shaffer, 2005; Farh et al., 2010; Van Bakel et al., 2011; Van Bakel et al., 2017).

The present model (Figure 6.1) highlighted the influence of some of the constructs of SET such as perceived trust, the actors who exchange, the resources exchange, the structure of the exchange and the outcome of the exchange (Blau, 1964, 2017; Molms, 1997; Colquitt et al., 2012; Cropanzano et al., 2017) in cross-cultural relations in the work setting. Other factors that were found to expand the construct of SET are perceived positive attitudes in the form of care and greetings, respect and appreciation and perceived negative attitudes in the form of ethnocentric and harsh behaviours. The perceived positive attitudes contributed in the formation of cordial positive relationships between the Italian expatriates and the HCNs that facilitated the structure of exchanges of resources between the two actors. The study showed that resources exchanged include information, ideas, advice, technology, goods and services, money and performance which enhanced the skills and attitude of the HCNs towards work. Thus, the researcher of this study argues that the enhanced skills and positive attitude towards work contributed to the enhancement of the HCNs' talent in the construction industry. This contributes to professional practices on skill

development within the construction industry and talent management among Nigerian HR practitioners. Furthermore, this study contributed in advancing the understanding of how the interaction between some of the HCNs and expatriates leads to relationships, which contribute to SET in the form of the structures and outcomes of exchanges that impacted the HCN's competencies which improved their talent in the construction industry.

On the other hand, the perceived negative attitudes in the form of ethnocentric and harsh behaviour expanded SET as these were found to restrict interaction between some of the HCNs and the Italian expatriates, which resulted in structuring the exchanges of resources between the actors as unequal. The researcher of this study, therefore, argues that the perceived negative attitudes of expatriates can restrict exchanges of resources between expatriates and HCNs in the workplace. Therefore, there is a need to generate a general awareness for the expatriates in the companies involved to improve their attitudes towards the HCNs. Thus, during cultural assimilation training, expatriates in subsidiaries should be encouraged to learn to practice emotional labour. Emotional labour involves individuals altering their emotions to satisfy work prescriptions (Haman and Putnam, 2008). This will enable both the expatriates and the HCNs to align their emotions with the values of their organisation, which will help them to display appropriate, positive and friendly attitudes towards each other. This will promote positive working relationships and can also shape the process of exchanges taking place between actors (Lawler and Thye, 1999).

The present model (Figure 6.1) also provided insight into how restricted communication, as a result of the language barrier between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates, extended the constructs of SET. The study of Van Bakel et al. (2015) showed that the communication barrier affected the quality of the relationship between expatriates and HCNs. This present study extends this finding as it found that communication barriers restrict the relationships of the HCNs with the Italian expatriates which limited the exchanges of resources between them. Communication barriers between the expatriates and HCNs can limit the social exchanges of resources in the workplace.

Finally, the present model (Figure 6.1) offers valuable insight to IHR practitioners on the relationships of expatriates with HCNs in Africa. Most research reviewed on the relationship between expatriates and HCNs earlier in the literature were undertaken in the context of the western world with very few studies undertaken in the local context of Nigeria ((Ngozi, 2007; Okpara and Kabongo, 2011; Eboh, 2013; Samuel and Adeniyi, 2015; Heirsmac, 2015; Heirsmac and Agwu, 2015; Okpara, 2016; 2017), hence the findings of the study can be used in Nigeria and other similar contexts to improve the working relationship between HCNs and expatriates. From a strategic perspective, the study can serve as an outsider assessment of the internal state of the relationship between HCNs and expatriates in Nigeria. As such, the study generates an awareness of the HCNs' views of their company and the expatriates that they work with in Nigeria. This can serve as strategic inputs in internal audits especially in planning and decision-making in the company as the findings also reflect on internal strengths and weaknesses of the foreign companies operating in Nigeria.

7.5 Recommendations for Practice IHRM

An implication of this study to IHR practitioners is the need for the HR department of both companies to maintain a standardised approach towards HR practices specifically relating to training and development, staffing and promotion of workers and participation and engagement of workers in the HR departments. This can be done by re-engineering these HR practices to make them more responsive to the needs of the company's human resources.

This present study highlighted the need for clear and consistent HR practices relating to training and development in both companies. The findings of this study specifically pointed to a lack of HRD activities such as employee relational training. For example, language training that is specifically designed for HCNs working with expatriates in subsidiaries. Studies focus on the HRD activities designed for the expatriates rather than HCNs in the literature (Mahajan and Toh, 2014; Van Bakel et al., 2015; Okpara, 2017). Thus, the researcher of this study recommends an increase in formal training in order to address the development needs of the HCNs to make them more effective in relating to the Italians and other expatriates. IHR practitioners should adopt best practices in learning and development to address these issues faced by the HCNs. It

was found that learning for the HCNs took place through interacting and relating with the Italian expatriates which facilitated the exchanges of different types of resources between them.

Another implication of this study in practice is the need for more HCNs to be promoted to management level. This will contribute to the retention of the HCNs in both companies since promotion is seen as a tool to retain workers in the workplace (Saporta and Farjoun, 2003; Pfeffer, 2005). The findings expose that the staffing of the companies constituted fewer Nigerians in the management level because the majority of the HCNs work in the site. This shows ethnocentric staffing whereby the Italians occupy most of the management positions rather than staffing that focuses on the utilisation of management skills. The researcher of this study therefore, recommends a global staffing approach which will enable each of the companies to hire both Italians and HCNs for management positions for the purpose of utilisation of management skills and increase access to promotional opportunities for HCNs. This can be achieved through the application of fair and transparent promotional criteria, which will increase the access of more HCNs to occupy management-level positions. This will contribute to the furtherance of positive relationships in the companies.

A final implication to practice is the need to maintain clear and consistent HR practices relating to the participation of the HCNs in both companies. What was revealed in both companies was the absence of a listening platform for the voice of the HCNs to be heard by the Italians and HR departments. This shows that both companies lacked a forum where HCNs can participate, and discuss their relationship in the HR department. The findings uncovered that the HR departments pay more attention to the Italians than the HCNs. Thus, maintaining a common approach towards practices regarding the management of both HCNs and Italians will foster a perceived feeling of fairness between expatriates and HCNs (Dowling et al., 2008). Therefore, the researcher of this study recommends a platform that promotes equal treatment of HCNs and the expatriates. This will enhance the participation of HCNs in the HR departments of both companies, which will improve the flow of communication and in turn strengthen the relationship between the HCNs and the Italian expatriates in both companies.

7.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Due to the limitations of the study, a number of interesting ideas that emerged from this investigation were not explored. The researcher, therefore, recommends these themes for other researchers to investigate:

A longitudinal study of the ethnocentric attitudes and harsh behaviour of the Italian expatriates and how these affect the HCNs will contribute to a deeper understanding and improvement of the HCN-expatriate relationship.

An in-depth study of the nature of skills and knowledge of expatriate labour in the construction industry to inform curriculum development in Nigerian universities to address the country's skills shortage.

A study on the extent of knowledge that Italian companies provide and the real effects of these on learning and development in the company needs to be quantified in order to ascertain the benefits of foreign companies operating in Nigeria.

Finally, the researcher is offering the model generated in this study (Figure 6.1) for further exploration of the applicability in other sectors and geographic locations.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter concludes this study with the methodological reflections, the contribution of the study to theory and practice and the recommendations for practice and future studies. Overall, the findings reveal the nature of the relationships between HCNs and expatriates within the case organization in Nigeria. They offer a greater understanding of the types of exchanges and the process through which the exchanges take place. In doing so, a contribution is made to the body of knowledge relating to Social Exchange Theory. Furthermore, a novel contribution is made to the field of expatriate studies by focusing on how the employment relationship is enacted from an HCN perspective. The recommendations made will enable the implementation of IHRM practices that account for the needs, capabilities and aspirations of HCNs, a previously overlooked aspect of expatriate studies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Examples of the Manual Raw Code

RQ 1 The Nature of the Relationships of the HCNs with the Italian Expatriates in the Workplace

To further have a basis of meaningfully extracting the categories for the data pertinent to this research question (RQ1) the in-vivo codes were extracted and categorized according to the content analysis suggested by Baker (2002) based on the means-ends model. Accordingly, she suggests using the APCV+ elements to aid in eliciting categories or themes where A = attributes, P = process, C = consequences, V = values, and + = others. From these, the categorized codes were thematically matched.

Name	Experiential Description (1)	Codes				Categories (6)	Themes (7)
		A (2)	P (3)	V (4)	C (5)		
Kayo	Not a boss-master relationship Italians are so nice to work with	Responsibilities determine the kind of relationship with the Italian expats	Consultative: they consult us on issues Teamwork Make decisions together with the Italian expats	There is trust and honesty	Refreshes the memory on things previously learned Willingness to work closer to each other because there is more in them that still can be learned. Inspiring, dedicated, and expositive	Trust	Cordial
Chally	Very positive, almost perfect	Openness and ability to pass knowledge Language not an obstacle. Italian expats explain till HCNs understand Help HCNs with personal needs Very good working conditions	Provides everything to execute tasks Given personal authority to solve problems	Trust No discrimination	Feeling of inclusion in decision making Like brothers in a team Freedom to work	Trust	Cordial

		No superior intimidation					
Isaac	Very good		Interaction does not distinguish between HCNs or Italian expats normal interaction		Learned to work well Enjoyable flow of work	Trust	Cordial
Abdallah	Open relationship	Italian expats are more interesting to work with Italian expats are my colleagues There is not much difference in working with Italian expats	Working openly together	Seriousness; commitment Similarity of work ethic	Committed to the job Collegiality	Trust	Cordial
Frank	Harmonious like a family	No barrier to interaction even during office hours	Make decisions collectively	Commitment	Nice and enjoyable Encouraging, motivating, and supportive	Trust	Cordial
Ann	Fair relationship	Language not a barrier for interaction Normal relations at work Results-oriented Relationship based on work		There is more commitment among the Italian expats	There is a lot that can be learned from the experiences of Italians	Positive attitude	Cordial
Harry	Open relations, good, very nice,	Italian expats concerned with your profession Power distance is not far because we can get access to them	Regard everyone according to his work Teamwork, work together collectively Sit with the Italian expats and come up with a decision They approach us	Respect, truth	Adopted to the system of work Friendly interaction like a family Superiority is almost zero	Positive attitude	Cordial

Emeka	Good relationship	A bit of a language barrier Difference in time perception: Complacency vs punctuality	Understanding what they communicate while working with the Italian expats Teamwork	Mutual respect Free of intimidation	Fulfilled & eventful	Positive attitude	Cordial
Kabir	Very good relations	Like a big family	Team work Team decision-making Italian expats appreciative of HCNs	Trust		Positive attitude	Cordial
Faith	Open relationship with many of the Italians	Does not sense much power difference Relationships are based on work	Team work Italian expats allow room for making suggestions and giving advice		Does not allow inferiority complex to get in the way	Positive attitude	Cordial
Joseph	Open relationship	Italian expats are open and willing to share ideas and info Work motivates interaction with Italian expats	Working hand in hand with Italian expats Involvement and being part of the decision-making			Positive attitude	Cordial
Kareem	Very good relations	Very organized stick to break times		Punctuality Respect for Nigerians regardless of position		Positive attitude	Cordial
Fatima	Not relating well with Italian expats	Interaction is needs-based Italian expats do not have a listening ear	Lack of involvement			Negative attitudes of some Italian expats	Restricted
Joshua	Nice one, relationships are good		New Italian expats mingle to learn from us They take time to solve a problem		Learned a lot from the Italian expats	Positive attitude	Cordial
Awal	Good to moderate depending on the individuals	There is surely power difference HCNs are part	Knowledge sharing They take the	Willingness of the Italian expats to learn	Morally okay	Positive attitude / negative attitudes of some Italian	Cordial/ Restricted

		of the company but not above the Italian expats Italian expats are open regarding the work done together	views of the Italian expats first then come back to you Teamwork			expats	
Nabas	Depends on the Italian I am working with. Good relations with some and not relating well with others.				We tap knowledge from the Italian expats and they tap knowledge from us but they do not admit it openly as they think they are more superior	Positive attitudes/negative attitude of some Italian expats	Cordial/Restricted
Steve	Boss to servant type of relationship	Interaction is needs-based	I do as the Italians say			Negative attitudes of some Italian expats	Restricted
Ezekiel	Good with some of the Italian expats and not relating well with others.	There is a power issue but there is nothing that can be done Depends on the types of master that we have	We study the Italians to understand how it is to work with them		Don't appear to know more than the Italian expats hide your ideas	Negative attitudes of some Italian expats	Restricted
Michael	Cautious	Self-respect will earn the respect of the Italian expats	Italian expats hardly take ideas from us		Keep things to oneself for fear of offending the Italian expats	Negative attitudes of some Italian expats	Restricted
Christopher	Not relating well with some of the Italian expats	Performance-based Have to use diplomacy in dealing with the Italian expats The Italians are more superior, they are on top	Serious at work and no joking. They make all the decisions	Trust The superiority of respect	Giving one's best to earn the trust of the Italian expats	Negative attitude of some Italian expats	Restricted

RQ2 Forms of Social Exchanges Perceived by the HCNs to be Taking Place with the Italian Expatriates

Name	Codes			Resources Exchanged		Forms of Exchanges
	Resources Provided to HCNs	Consequences	Outcome	Italian Expats	HCNs	
Emeka	Tech applications: accounting package Encouragement, support Knowledge sharing	Working digitally ICT skills Enrichment of experience	Career development	Information Knowledge Skills Support for work, job advancement	Information Knowledge Ideas	Multiple Exchange
Chally	Ideas Knowledge Technology		'Hotcake' in and outside	Information Knowledge Technology Job advancement Trust	Knowledge	Multiple Exchange
Isaac	Sharing of technical knowledge Use of accounting software Advice		With Knowledge gain some technicians can be consultants elsewhere	Information Knowledge Support for work Job advancement	Information Knowledge Advice	Multiple Exchange
Awal	QS software Knowledge sharing	Expertise in technology We learn from them, they learn from us		Information Knowledge Support for work Trust	Information Knowledge	Multiple Exchange
Faith	Gives lots of encouragement Knowledge sharing	Knowledge exchange, i.e., Knowledge for commercial advice	Commitment	Information Knowledge Support for work	Information Knowledge Expertise	Multiple Exchange
Harry	Knowledge and practical experience Advice	Benefits are reciprocal		Information knowledge Advice	Advice	Multiple Exchange
Frank	Encouragement, motivation, and support Sharing of ideas because they cannot do it alone We share info about the security of the country Adds value to the job		Commitment Adds value to the job	Information knowledge Support for work	Information knowledge	Multiple Exchange

Joseph	Mingling with the Italians makes us learn from them Italians also learn from our expertise and the practical side of doing things		Almost 50/50	Information & knowledge Support for work	Expertise Information	Multiple Exchange
Joshua	Info sharing Technology transfer	Confidence in using digital systems		Information and knowledge Technology	Information Knowledge Performance	Multiple Exchange
Kayo	Knowledge	Mutual benefits sustain relationships There is sense of belongingness	They are very nice and good and I need to do what I am supposed to do	Information & Knowledge Support for work Benefits	Information Ideas	Multiple Exchange
Ann	Teamwork			Support for work	Performance	Exclusive exchange
Christopher	Consultations on the planned work			Support for work	Performance	Exclusive exchange
Ezekiel	Conditions that will make Nigerians happy will make them work better such as incentives enjoyed by the Italian Expats Anything good for us is good	Benefitting equally at work		Support for work	Performance	Exclusive exchange
Nabas	Money	Exchange of Money with Performance		Money	Performance	Exclusive exchange
Kareem	Goods	Doing what is right	Honesty and trustworthiness	Goods Trust	Services	Exclusive exchange
Abdallah	Money Knowledge & skills in computers Suggestions and Recommendations Information sharing	Expertise in technology Exchange of Money with Performance	Trust and confidence	Information Knowledge Support for work Money	Information knowledge Performance	Exclusive exchange
Kabir	Ideas Advice	They share ideas and they take indirectly. Italian expats are fast learners Italian expats		Ideas		Unequal exchange

		benefit from HCNs but are not open about it because they are superior				
Fatima	Information Ideas				Ideas	Unequal exchange
Michael	Ideas Money		Respect	Money	Ideas Performance	Unequal / Exclusive exchange
Steve	The Italian expats benefit more than the HCN				Ideas Knowledge	Unequal exchange

RQ3 Perceived Benefits for the HCNs of Establishing and Maintaining Reciprocal Relationships with the Italian Expatriates

Name	Benefits		
	Codes	Category	Theme/Benefits
Emeka	Foreign company is tailored to structure	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
	Learn punctuality and discipline Time consciousness Work awareness and consciousness Don't let blame and responsibility stop you	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
Abdallah	Seminars and on the job learning	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
	Expertise in technology	Knowledge and skills	
	Learn about punctuality Seriousness of work Dedication Tolerance	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
Joseph	Learning practically from the Italians	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
	Value of hard work Punctuality and hard work	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
	Corporate dressing		

	Produce quality work Working fast and careful and produce quality work	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
	Knowledge and skills learned Computer literacy Self-improvement in knowledge and technology Diffusion of learning	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Chally	Using update equipment and machineries from Italy improved my engineering skills practically	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
	Learning new things in a practical or experiential way Improved work skills		
	Punctuality Very good working conditions Freedom to do work Feeling of inclusion	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
	“Hotcake” to other companies	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
5. Ann	I can work even without a supervisor	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
	Learned a lot of new ideas: knowledge on contracts and procedures of projects	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills

Christopher	Italian expats share new knowledge and information	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Ezekiel	Working with Italian expats makes one develop his thinking more Ways of thinking improved Most of the things we know were learned from the Italian expats. Less mistakes and more accuracy in working	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Kareem	Consultative approach of doing things	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
	Confidence in fixing problems The way to handle issues wisely and patiently	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
	Learn to manage work time from the Italians		
Faith	HcNs could now get into the management team Knowledge on interpretation of designs Skills gained can establish career outside the company	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Fatima	(No benefit)		
Harry	Became more time conscious Keep educating myself	Time management	Positive attitude towards work

	<p>Keep learning and pick up new things and ideas</p> <p>Improved skill set We learn from the process of interaction</p>	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Joshua	<p>Expanded my expertise to work on other things</p> <p>Learned from the practical side of experience</p> <p>Sharpened my skill set</p> <p>What I learned, I apply outside and it has benefitted my career</p>	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Kayo	<p>Mindset improved in relating to people</p> <p>Learn new ways of doing things</p> <p>Makes us happy and productive at work</p> <p>Challenges you to be faster and more proactive</p>	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills

Awal	Gain knowledge that I do not have such as organizing and setting up systems Thinking skills and IT skills have improved Ability to come up with ideas at work has improved	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Michael	Opportunity to use updated tools and machinery brought from Italy by the Italians sharpened my mechanical skills	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Nabas	I tap on the knowledge and experience of the Italian expats Punctuality	Knowledge and skills Time management	Enhanced skills Positive attitude towards work
Frank	We learn perseverance and patience and use time properly	Time management	Positive attitude towards work
Isaac	Technicians can further their careers and be consultants elsewhere Punctuality	Knowledge and skills Time management	Enhanced skills Positive attitude towards work
Kabir	Enriching work experience	Knowledge and skills	Enhanced skills
Steve	(No benefit)		

RQ4 Perceived Challenges for the HCNs in Working with the Italians in the Italian Companies

	Challenges		
Name	Codes	Category	Theme/Challenges
Emeka	A bit of a language barrier	Language	Communication

Abdallah	Communication barrier	Language	Communication
Joseph	Coping with work that is being pushed fast Work pressure	Training	Personal development
Chally	A bit of a language barrier in terms of working with machineries brought in from Italy	Language	Communication
Ann	No challenge identified)		
Christopher	If there is opportunity, HCNs can learn more	Training	Personal development
Ezekiel	Lack of access to trainings and seminars	Training	Personal development
Kareem	Communication barrier	Language	Communication
Faith	Italian expats use Italian language during meetings	Language	Communication
Fatima	They make the decisions alone without consultation Locals are just figureheads Feel underutilized; don't recognize work experience	Training	Personal development/ Communication
Harry	(No challenge identified)		
Joshua	Language barrier sometimes use abusive language among themselves Language barrier when working with machineries brought in from Italy	Language	Communication
	New Italian expats who are trained become bosses and it makes us feel bad	Training	Personal development
Kayo	Lack of provision of conditions necessary for development	Training	Personal development
Awal	Italian expats speak Italian most of the time which can lead to misperception	Language	Communication
Michael	We do not have people in the management that observe and see the workers that deserve to be promoted	Training	Personal development
Nabas	HCNs are not on the same level with Italian expats	Training	Personal development
Frank	Language barrier	Language	Communication

Isaac	Language barrier	Language	Communication
Kabir	Italian expats speak Italian during meetings	Language	Communication
Steve	HCNs are not on the same level with the Italian expats Italian expats solely make the decisions Italians expats get promoted faster	Training	Personal development

Appendix 2: Examples of the Digital Coded Nodes in NVivo

Coded Nodes in NVivo Based on the Research Questions

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by
HCNs' Experiences of Working with Italians			Feb 10, 2018 at 2:08:13 PM	Researcher
Trust	7	23	Feb 10, 2018 at 3:06:07 PM	Researcher
Positive experience	9	15	Feb 12, 2018 at 1:06:21 AM	Researcher
Appreciation and respect	8	19	Feb 10, 2018 at 3:28:07 PM	Researcher
Attitude of care and greetings	13	43	Feb 11, 2018 at 12:11:22 AM	Researcher
Negative experience	6	14	Feb 11, 2018 at 1:51:55 AM	Researcher
Harsh behavior of the Italians	6	14	Feb 12, 2018 at 2:11:54 PM	Researcher
Ethnocentric behavior of the Italians	6	12	Feb 10, 2018 at 11:20:36 PM	Researcher
Benefits Derived by HCNs			Feb 10, 2018 at 2:09:18 PM	Researcher
Time management	10	20	Feb 11, 2018 at 12:25:31 AM	Researcher
Knowledge	15	41	Feb 11, 2018 at 2:27:59 PM	Researcher
Forms of Social Exchange			Feb 10, 2018 at 2:09:35 PM	Researcher

Tangible resources exchanged			Feb 11, 2018 at 4:18:00 PM	Researcher
Performance and money	3	6	May 29, 2019 at 6:02:46 PM	Researcher
Goods and services	1	2	May 29, 2019 at 6:00:04 PM	Researcher
Intangible resources exchanged			Feb 11, 2018 at 2:44:11 PM	Researcher
Technology and information	6	9	Feb 13, 2018 at 3:13:44 PM	Researcher
Ideas and advice	7	13	Feb 10, 2018 at 2:08:57 PM	Researcher
Challenges Faced by HCNs			Feb 11, 2018 at 1:10:57 AM	Researcher
Lack of training	9	19	Feb 11, 2018 at 4:14:17 PM	Researcher
Language barrier	10	23	Feb 11, 2018 at 2:29:07 PM	Researcher

Other Important Coded Nodes in NVivo

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by
Other Important Factors			Feb 10, 2018 at 2:09:35 PM	Researcher
Staffing	6	10	Feb 11, 2018 at 2:29:07 PM	Researcher
Reciprocity	9	15	Feb 10, 2018 at 3:28:07 PM	Researcher
Psychological Contract	1	2	Feb 13, 2018 at 3:13:44 PM	Researcher
Promotion	8	16	Feb 11, 2018 at 1:10:57 AM	Researcher
HCNs' Voice	8	13	Feb 12, 2018 at 2:11:54 PM	Researcher
Age	2	4	Feb 11, 2018 at 4:18:00 PM	Researcher

Appendix 3: Consent Form

Nottingham Trent University

Research Title

**Exploring the Relationships Between HCNs and Italian Expatriates in Nigeria: A
Social Exchange Perspective**

Name of Researcher

Maryam Aliyu Bala Kuki

Please initial box

1. I confirm that the purpose of this study has been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during or after the interview without giving any reason.

3. I give permission for the interview to be digitally recorded by the researcher, and that all information obtained will be kept confidential and the data gathered for the study will be held securely and then disposed of upon the completion of the study.

4. I understand that my name will not appear in this study and nor will any other identifying information.

5. I agree to take part in this study.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Appendix 4: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Background Information of the Interviewees	
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
Age:	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 29
	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 – 39
	<input type="checkbox"/> 40 – 49
	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 – 59
	<input type="checkbox"/> 60 and above
Educational qualification:	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate
	<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma
	<input type="checkbox"/> Degree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Post graduate diploma
	<input type="checkbox"/> Masters
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others
Position at work:	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior
	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle
	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior
Service area:	<input type="checkbox"/> Management
	<input type="checkbox"/> Site
Length of service:	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 20 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 years and above
Tenure:	<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary
	<input type="checkbox"/> Contractual
	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent
No of years working with expatriates	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 20 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 years and above

Experiences of Working with the Expatriates

- How frequently do you work with Italian expatriates?
Daily, weekly, occasionally.
- How many days/months/years have you been doing this?
- What differences do you experience in working with them compared to your other Nigerian colleagues?
- Are there any similarities you came across between yourself and the expatriates in terms of:?
Attitude to work
Ways of working
Number of hours you work
- Are there any challenges you experienced by working together with the expatriates in terms of:?
Ways of working
Work values
Language
Working hours
- Did you work in a Nigerian company with only Nigerian employees before? If yes can you compare both working in a Nigerian company and Italian company and tell me your experience?
- How would you describe your whole working experience with the expatriates?

Interacting and Relating with the Expatriates

- How well do you relate and cooperate with the expatriates during office hours?

- Do you interact socially outside of work with expatriates?
- What drives you to interact with them?
- What stops you from interacting and relating to expatriates both during and outside of work?
- What factors helped you develop relations with expatriates at work?
- What factors worked as obstacles in developing relations with expatriates?
- Could you say something about the nature of the working relationship:?
The working atmosphere
The tasks you do together
Individual or group basis
Decision-making process
- Are your Italian colleagues at the same level, lower or higher than you in the hierarchy of the organisation?
- How open do you feel the Italian expatriates are in sharing ideas and information with you regarding work? And why do you think this is?
- Are they motivated to share their experience and knowledge gained while working in their country?
- How open are you in terms of sharing ideas and information with them regarding work? What factors influence your actions here?

Impacts of Such Relationships

- In what ways, if at all, has interacting and working with the Italians benefitted your career?

- Have you had any negative experiences working with expatriates? What and why? Also in what ways, if at all, has interacting and working with the Italians negatively affected your career? How and Why?
- Can you tell me some of the most important things you have encountered from working in a foreign firm?
- What kinds of skills and knowledge do you think have improved (if any) through your interactions with the expatriates?
- How has your interaction with expatriates impacted, if any, on your way of working?
- What are the most important lessons you have learned from your relationship with the Italians?
- Is there anything you could do to strengthen your relationship with the expatriates?
- Is there anything you think expatriates could undertake to strengthen the relationship?