
As a field of study, Human Resource Development (HRD) has continued to undergo enrichment process since inception (few decades ago) covering multiple dimensions including training and development, educational attainment, workforce skills and population health among other arrays of employment policies which can help facilitate organisations with workforce and set of appropriate skills/competences that are requisite in quickly dealing with and adapting to new work challenges. In continuing this enrichment process, this current paper incorporates the interface of managerial capture: a fundamental of managerialism which can disable or make HRD hard to progress as well as the legitimisation strategies used by employers to normalise managerial capture of HRD – particularly in developing economies - such as Nigerian employment terrain that is embroiled in corporate-stakeholder conflict. Relying on thematic textual analysis (TTA) of interview data, the study identified and analysed four Leeuwen’s legitimisation strategies: authorisation, moralisation, mythopoesis, rationalisation, and added the fifth – managerialism, which petroleum sector employers rely on to managerially capture and legitimise HRD capture in Nigerian employment terrain.

Keywords: HRD, managerial capture, managerialism, legitimacy theory, legitimisation, Nigeria, employers, employees

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Introduction.

The objectives of this paper are to theorise retrogressive/regressive human resource development (HRD) (Prasad, 1967) using the interface of managerial capture (Pollit, 1990) and to identify the various legitimisation strategies (Leeuwen, 2007) used to make sense of how HRD can be disabled and legitimised (Swanson, Holton and Holton, 2001). HRD is viewed as a crucial subject yet undergoing different levels of challenges - especially in the developing countries where employment terrains and management of corporate-stakeholder relationship are rather non-participatory and largely embroiled in conflict (Geo-JaJa and Mangum, 2003; Van Rensburg, Steyn, Schneider and Lofstad, 2008; Achoui, 2009; Benjamin and David, 2012). As Mohamad (2005, p.3) noted, HRD is essentially “the story of human civilisation”, whereby societies are expected to make progress - provided they are able to develop and harness human resources. Those unable to do so “remained backward and oftentimes...dominated” by those who develop their human resources (Mohamad, 2005). While defining HRD concept in national and international contexts has remained largely confusing and elusive (McLean and McLean, 2001; Abdullah, 2009); Richard Swanson’s definition
provided a common ground: learning, which is viewed as a “process for developing and unleashing human expertise through training and development and organisation development for the purpose of improving performance” and of course wealth creation (Swanson, 1995, 2001). According to the former US Federal Reserve Board – Alan Greenspan, “a critical aspect of wealth creation in the US, and doubtless globally, is the level of knowledge and skill of the population” (McGregor, Tweed and Pech, 2004). The same principle applies to organisations that must employ competent workers regardless of their types or industries, due to the growing challenges brought about by the fast-paced, highly dynamic and amplifying global economy (Fogel, King and Shanker, 2007). Based on the account of American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), it was against this backdrop that estimated $160 billion was spent by the US organisations on training and development between 2008 and 2009 (Werner and DeSimone, 2011). Indeed, training and development (T & D) has been ranked as the most important aspect of HRD which human resource managers in large organisations have been dealing with, followed by recruitment and selection, productivity and quality, succession planning, employee job satisfaction, compensation, globalisation and diversity among others - respectively (Werner and DeSimone, 2011).

Despite the awareness and growth of HRD, concern remains that the practice is largely encountering retrogression (Swanson et al., 2001; Van Rensburg, Steyn, Schneider, and Loffstadt, 2008) due to what Power (1991) view as managerial capture – that originates from the fundamentals of managerialism, which is premised on management control and efficiency as opposed to effectiveness (Pollitt, 1990). Pollitt (1990) explains that managerial capture is imbedded in mainstream value and mode of universal thinking, which is rationalised within the ambit of assumption that management is a separate organisational institution that contributes in planning, measuring and implementing changes that are requisite for high productivity and organisational performance as well as contributes to national wealth and prosperity. The ratiocination that managerialism is a hybrid of control and efficiency as well as panders to the allure of transaction-cost economic assumption, propelling reduction in waste for the management and society at large - has been capitalised on by organisations and their agents, to entrench managerial agenda (Power, 1991; Terry, 1991). By extension, this has also resulted in systematic exploitation of wider stakeholders by managers and their principals (capitalists or employers of labour) in ways that has resulted in poor training and development of human resources (in an attempt to save cost and potentially limit employees’ empowerment (Prasad, 1967) – particularly in the developing economies (Omotola, 2008). These core elements of managerialism have come to underscore the ratiocination and legitimisation of the practices of modern businesses and corporations in developing regions such as Nigeria’s employment terrain (Adelakun, 2011; Olaniy and Okemakinde), where tangible forms of power differentials and centralised decision-making systems are viewed to systematically undermine employees’ progression and or sustains organisational intention to thwart HRD in general (Anaduaka, 2014; Otobo, 2016). Thus, to shed light on how organisations entrench and legitimises managerial capture of HRD, it becomes imperative to explore legitimacy theory and strategies of legitimisation - used to normalise and rationalise organisational behaviours and actions (Leeuwen, 2007).

Legitimacy theory has been applied in numerous studies aimed at exploring organisational behaviours and practices (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), employment relations (Koca-Helvaci, 2015), human resource management (Francis, 2007) and human resource
development (Greenwood, 2012). While cognitive and normative rationale of legitimacy theory has remained the key focus of organisational analysis (Vaara & Tienari, 2008); the approach to interrogating organisational legitimacy has started gaining popularity in recent studies (Siltaoja & Onkila, 2013; Luyckx & Janssens, 2016). In “grammar of legitimisation” for instance, Leeuwen (1995) explores the inter-relationship between evaluative language and legitimisation strategies as Walmart defend itself against claim of labour rights violation, while in “organisational stance-taking and legitimacy”, Koca-Helvaci (2015) drew upon appraisal theory. Some writers have explored legitimacy from institutional perspective, which influences organisational norms, actions, beliefs and outcomes (Kaufman, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2008), while other approach legitimacy from the realm of social constructionism (Beaumont, Hunter & Sinclair, 1996). Nonetheless, Vaara, Tienari & Laurila (2006) maintained that there remains scarcity of research perspectives that can help shed light on political and strategic realm of legitimisation strategies. In this light, this current study complement existing studies on organisational behaviours and legitimacy through deepening scholarship on legitimisation strategies employed by organisations to rationalise and normalise their practices - especially in the developing countries such as Nigeria’s troubled employment terrain (Otobo, 2016; Ubeku, 1983). Nigeria’s employment sectors play an important role in organisational behaviours discourse (Wood, 2008), but it’s also relatively under-studied in this context (Budhwar & Debrah, 2004). However, this study focuses specifically on the petroleum sector employers to respond to the question of this research which is:

- What legitimisation strategies do employers use to managerially capture and legitimise HRD capture in Nigeria?

The above questions will be responded to by focusing on five key legitimisation strategies employed by organisations in Nigeria’s employment terrain to legitimise managerial capture of HRD. Leeuwen (1995) coined authorisation, moralisation, mythopoesis and rationalisation, which are the four original legitimisation strategies. However, in extending Leeuwen’s (1995) strategies, this study adds ‘managerialism’- adopted by corporations in legitimising HRM practices, which materialises in HRD capture. Underpinned by qualitatively-interpretive methodology, the study uses thematic textual analysis (TTA) to tease out strategies and patterns identified within data sets (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2014), in order to establish how HRD practice is strategically captured and legitimised. The remainder of the study’s structure includes: appropriating legitimacy theory, managerial capture and legitimisation of HRD, the socio-cultural, economic and employment context of Nigeria. This is followed by the conceptual framework, methodology and findings and conclusion.

**Appropriating Legitimacy Theory (LT)**

As Suchman (1995) and Mele & Schepers (2013) observed, legitimacy theory (LT) has been widely explored via numerous theoretical dimensions since mid-1970s. Dowling & Pfeffer’s (1975) and Binmore’s (1998) studies explored LT through investigating how corporate organisations adopt and apply social contract, in order to establish whether the manners in which they engage their multiple stakeholders are legitimate. Based on the setting of a ‘super-ordinate system’ and hyper-norms, which shapes organisational practices (Rowan & Meyer, 1977), organisations enjoy the privilege of legitimising their actions and inactions – as long as
they are seen to operate within the agreed benchmark of values and behaviours bound within such ‘super-ordinate system’ and hyper-norms (Parsons, 1960; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Campbell, 2000). Thus, these hyper-norms form the basis for judging whether organisational actions within social and institutional space are legitimate, fair and justified (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Freeman, 1984).

It is therefore essential that the link between legitimacy and HRD practice is established, which is consisted with Khan’s (2014, p.3) proposition that “social contract” should be defended by employment relations (ER), HRM and HRD practitioners. Importantly, Kochan (2005) had also noted that the views and interests of diverse stakeholders (including employees) should be balanced and incorporated, which has not been the case, hence, from the perspectives of stakeholders, organisational behaviours and practices (including HRM & HRD) have remained plagued by diminishing trust and legitimacy (Prasad, 1967; Swanson, 1995). With organisational practices continuously perceived to be falling short of delivering equitable and inclusive stakeholders promise that materialises in employees’ development, critics are increasingly calling for studies on ER (Francis, 2007), HRM (Legge, 1995) and by extension HRD (Short and Gray, 2018) confines to be expanded. Thus, in expanding the confines of HRD research and practice (Short and Gray, 2018), it becomes imperative to not just debate organisational behaviour practice such as ‘managerial capture’ from market-oriented context; but to also cover the social principles and norms, which makes organisational practices legitimate or illegitimate (Koca-Helvaci, 2015). In market-oriented or economic context of organisational practice, organisations prioritise and legitimise/rationalise cost minimisation and maximisation of shareholder’s value, which undermines Suchman’s (1995) normative legitimacy. This view has been reflected in numerous studies that have explored organisational legitimacy (Suchman 1995; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Binmore, 1998; Mele & Schepers, 2013; Koca-Helvaci, 2015). Specifically, Koca-Helvaci (2015) relied on the study of Warlmart to explore how legitimacy pans out in organisational setting. In the study, Warlmart painted a positive image of how it relates with its associates including that of a caring organisation which employs rather stringent regulations – in order to enhance the development of its associates (suppliers, employees) as well as improvement of their (poor) working conditions.

Managerial capture and legitimisation of HRD
Managerialism gave birth to managerial capture. Based on the philosophy of transaction-cost economics, agency theory and public choice principles, managerialism – fundamental organisational practice – assumes that employers (capitalists) retain the position of rational entities and are therefore driven by economic self-interest and competition (Knights & Roberts, 1983). As Buchanan (1978) explain, this philosophical assumption provides that employers and their agents (managers) are rational and self-interested entities who customarily advance and maximises their parochially-defined interests. For Terry (1998), managerialism celebrates efficiency including cost and resource saving (Pollitt, 1990), while relegating ‘effectiveness’ including employees interests (development, wellbeing, voice) to the backburner (Parker, 2002). Furthermore, Klikauer (2013) view that managerialism oftentimes not only parallels with neo-liberalism; but also aligns society and organisations in a hierarchical and
undemocratic manners, whereby subordinates (e.g. non-managers, employees) have little or no voice in organisational decision-making processes that matter in their lives. Consequently, organisational actions such as cruelty, inequality and lack of stakeholder (employees) voice (including poor training and development) among others become the norm (Parker, 2002). Thus, as Mueller & Carter (2005, p. 370) suggest, managing and developing human resource can be viewed as management strategy as well as a global “managerialism” – to be more encompassing. This explains the basis of managerial capture (of human resource development - HRD) (Prasad, 1967; Hirschman, 1970). According to Power (1991), managerial capture entails processes of managerialism adopted by organisational management, which makes it near impossible for stakeholder (such as employees) to have inputs in decisional making processes - that concern their development and overall wellbeing (Swanson, 1995). As O’Dwyer (2003) opined, managerial capture manifests through the use of structured engagement approach as well as the legitimisation and rationalisation of unequal power relations between superiors (management) and subordinates (employees) in HRM practices and by extension HRD affairs (Swanson et al., 2001). In this direction, Preston (2001) summarise managerial capture to be consistent with organisational strategic prerogative aimed at saving cost and maximising shareholder’s value (at the expense of stakeholder) – through streamlining decision-making process and affording managers greater autonomy and power over subordinates (ordinary workers) (Rubery, Keizer & Grimshaw, 2016). Extant literature (Fajana, 2009; Otobo, 2016) found this managerial philosophy to be located in Nigeria’s employment terrain, where power differentiation and centralised decision-making mechanism makes it difficult for stakeholders to voice their interest and need for human development – HRD (Geo-JaJa and Mangum, 2003).

According to Ashforth & Gibbs (1990) and Suchman (1995), by legitimising corporate actions, organisational behaviours appear to be given the stamp of societal license and approval to maintain the status quo. Leeuwen (2007) define legitimacy as the fundamentals of deciding what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, which is a way of demonstrating that organisations are conforming to ethical standards, code of conduct and social norms, hence, their actions and inactions can be justified and legitimised (Waeras & Ihlen, 2009). Thus, issues pertaining to certain organisational (and social) practices such as lack of (or poor) employees’ development (or HRD) (Swanton et al., 2001) and other extensions (engagement, voice, wellbeing) implicated in managerial capture can be justified or rationalised – based on the norms and value accepted in a specific cultural space (Suchman, 1995). As Suchman (1995) implies, corporations make reference to actions that appear to be adopting global and national codes of conduct relating to labour and employment relations practices, to legitimise their actions including behaviours towards stakeholders – particularly with respect to employees and human resource development (Prasad, 1967; Swanson, 1995). This phenomenon is replete in Nigeria, where corporations rely on demonstrating adherence to global and Nigerian employment regulations codes of conduct, which help to legitimise their actions and behaviours toward employees that materialise in managerial capture of HRD (Okpu, 2016). With regards to managerial capture, ILO (2005) and Otobo (2016) observed that Nigerian employers usually give an impression of acting within the realm of ER and labour standards such as Global Employment and Labour Act and Nigerian Employment and Labour Act among others, but yet manage to thwart employees call for more participatory decisional inputs, better work condition and overall
This contention is largely viewed to be fuelled and fostered by the socio-cultural, economic and employment context of the country (Otobo, 2016).

The socio-cultural, economic and employment context of Nigeria

A country with enormous reserves of natural and human resources should automatically be one of the greatest in the world, but sadly, Idemudia (2010) expressed that the opposite is the case with Nigeria. In explaining this paradox, Ahiauzu (1989) found that since privatisation of majority of Nigeria’s key organisations, the country’s employment terrain has increasingly weakened its economic prospect while adding to the social crisis, which is caused by the disproportionate power afforded to employers (in labour and employment matters) by the government. The continual support of employers by the government over employees in employment relations disputes and the exclusion of trade union in the formulation of employment policies are well documented, which makes it difficult implementing stakeholder-focused policies including in particular those that prioritise workers’ wellbeing and development (Obadina, 1999; Iyayi, 2009). This situation forms the basis of current Nigeria’s economic and employment environment, resulting in rise in foreign direct investment (FDI) across many industries including the petroleum sector (Oyelere, 2014), which is the focus of this study.

The origin of the Nigerian petroleum sector is traceable to the 1908 and 1924 Oil and Mineral Acts established by the British government (Obi, 2010; Idemudia, 2010), which acceded monopoly of the sector’s activities to the colonial states (Ariweriokuma, 2009). Following her independence from Britain, the trend had continued via the enactment of Petroleum Decree 1969 and Land Use Act 1978, which upheld the right of oil monopoly and its related revenue to the Nigerian government – in collaboration with its multinationals partners (Shell, BP, Elf, Chevron and Texaco) (Obi, 2010; Idemudia, 2010). While the sector’s historic challenges (including socio-political conflicts, environmental degradation, scramble for power by the multinationals, stakeholder’s disengagement) are well documented; its key unions: PENGASSE and NUPPENG have significantly declined in both membership and relevance in recent times (Erapi, 2011), which explains the growing marginalisation and exclusion of employees in decitional input across the sector (Ariweriokuma, 2009). In large, economic challenges (high inflation, low per capital income, huge physical deficit) and lack of welfare systems had continued to characterise Nigeria up until 2016 when the country entered recession (BBC, 2016), while unequal power distribution between employers and employees as well as poor development of employees resulting from cost-leadership drive remains the order of the day (Anaduaka, 2014; Okpu, 2016).

Socio-culturally, Otobo (2016) view Nigeria as a collectivist society, with a traditional system of superior-subordinate relationship as well as respect for superior, authority, wealth and hierarchy. This socio-cultural approach shapes the political and institutional structure (Ahiauzu, 1989), which celebrates the capture or marginalisation of stakeholder’s voice and decisional input in both social and employment debates. Customarily, employees recognise managers as authority figures and therefore would not challenge their decision on what is write
or wrong in employment-related matters – even where their interest such as welfare and developmental needs are trampled upon (Trompenaars, 1993). According to Umar and Hassan (2014), Nigeria’s culture is heavily shaped on high power distance and paternalism, which according to Ting-Toomey (1988) celebrates servant-master relationship. This contention resonates with Fajan’s (2009) political leadership view in Nigeria, which is built on leaders-followers silos, disempowerment and lack of stakeholder input. In Nigeria’s employment terrain, this socio-cultural landscape materializes in managerial capture, which privileges the interest of employers of labour over employees (Otobo, 2016), which in the broader context disables employees voice and prospect of development in general (Okpu, 2016; Oruh et al., 2018). Most importantly, as this study proposes, this context of socio-cultural dynamic normalises and legitimises organisational practices such as managerial capture of HRD in Nigeria (Benjamin and David, 2012; Anaduaka, 2014), which forms the conceptual basis of the study.

Conceptual framework

According to Donaldson & Dunfee (1994), normative and strategic approaches are the two main perspectives through which legitimacy has been considered. The former (normative or institutional legitimacy) involves rationalising or justifying organisational action by making reference to ‘super-ordinate system’ and hyper-norms (Parsons, 1960), which are influenced by values, culture and beliefs assumed acceptable in a given social space (Suchman, 1995). Given the above context, legitimacy may therefore reside within the purview of institutionalisation, whereby stakeholder’s approval is required to give organisational actions moral and ethical justification (Schepers, 2013). In contrast, the later (strategic legitimacy) preoccupies with resource-based view and corporate orientations, which is predominantly concerned with achieving organisational parochial self-interests and financial targets. For the purpose of this current study, the above materialises in lopsided strategies of employer-employee relationship (Kaufman, 2011) and instrumental management of human resource, which undermines employees’ development and overall wellbeing (Koca-Helvaci, 2015). Thus, in line with Khan’s (2014) supposition, the justification to legitimise certain practices such as (for instance) organisational procedures for making decisions on employees’ training and development and promotion, is premised on managerial-oriented narrative that prioritises performance, cost saving, control, authority deference and organisational legitimacy amongst other processes of managerialism, which materialise in managerial capture of HRD (Swanson et al, 2001). The above undermines what Francis (2007) describes as normative legitimacy and moral approach to employment strategies.

However, if alternative approach to HRD must be brought to bear in developing regions such as Nigeria’s employment terrain, it becomes imperative to apprehend the mechanism of managerial capture, which thematic textual analysis (TTA) can help to tease out. TTA allows data analysts to locate themes and pattern that inhere (within text corpuses) in organisational discourse (Braun and Clarke, 2006) regarding (in particular) corporate strategies of HRM practices including cost leadership, control, dominance, poor training and development and foremost – disabling of subordinates’ decisional inputs, which Koca-Helvaci (2015) believe can help trigger a rethinking in strategies of engaging and developing employees for organisational legitimacy. While writers such as Vaara, et al. (2006) and Peled-Elhanan (2010) have employed various techniques to explore processes of legitimisation; Leeuwen’s (1995)
linguistic analysis was more profound – particularly with his invention of “grammar of legitimisation” (Leeuwen, 2007), which incorporates four legitimisation strategies. In addition to Leeuwen’s (2007) strategies of legitimacy (authorisation, moralisation, mythopoesis and rationalisation), this study will add managerialism making a total of five strategies that will be identified and analysed herein. These strategies will be presented in turn beginning with authorisation strategies.

- **Authorisation**: As Leeuwen (1995, 2007) explained, strategy of authorisation alludes to power of custom, tradition, law and person with authority. Thus, authorisation strategy is the process of legitimising certain actions by referencing sources, entities or individual with esteemed authority.

- **Moralisation**: Leeuwen (1995) explained strategy of moralisation as a process of legitimising certain actions and behaviours based on accepted norms and values within specific social space. Thus, moralisation strategy (which is more about rightness) provides moral basis for action. This strategy is achieved through evaluation (or measurement of value using semantic) and contrast (or comparison).

- **Mythopoesis**: Leeuwen (1995) described mythopoesis as a process of gaining legitimacy of actions through story-telling (or narratives). Mythopoesis relies on two types of narratives: moral (which gives certain action approval) and cautionary (which warns of consequences if required change is not heeded) (McConnell, 1982; Leeuwen, 2007).

- **Rationalisation**: Leeuwen (1995) explained rationalisation as a process of achieving legitimacy of action through referencing cognitive validity. It relies on logos-oriented justification, which alludes to values and norms that are recognised within certain social space (Green, 2004). According to Vaara et al. (2006), corporate settings celebrate efficiency and goals using rationalisation strategy. This strategy also celebrates action and instrumental mechanics, which highlight specific functions, actions and the associated reasons or purposes. Using rationalisation strategy, Hajek & Samec (2017) observed that organisation presents and links reason with justification of action, hence, by making persuasive sense, managers tend to achieve rationality- likewise managerial practice, which becomes acceptable, institutionalised and normalised (Leeuwen, 1995, 2007).

- **Managerialism**: As a strategy, managerialism alludes to the assumption that management and its agents (managers) hold critical position for organisational survival (Power, 1991). Strategy of managerialism reduces employment relations practices to the assumption that employees are mainly recruited to achieve organisational goals and long-term sustainability, hence, the narrative gives primacy to cost minimisation and shareholder’s value maximisation (Hudson, 2012). Managerialist strategy of discourse not only endorse control, limited dialogue and market-type principles; but prioritises product and output over strategies and processes of input (Rubery et al., 2016), which often disable employees voice and involvement in decision making process that matters to their wellbeing and development (Armstrong, 2009).
Thus, as Fairclough (2014) educate, legitimisation begins with micro-level phenomena (such as the choice and use of language) – which shapes organisational strategy of discourse (meso-level phenomena) and the broader societal practices (the macro-level phenomena). Legitimisation strategy resides in vocabulary (Leeuwen, 2007) and by exploring the thematic and micro-level elements, Wodak & Meyer (2009) provides that the contradictions, complexities and ambiguities that easily go unnoticed in traditional approach to data analysis can be unmasked. Thus, through understanding texts which is broadly framed and shaped by organisations (Braun and Clarke, 2006), institutional and cultural dynamic of a given social environment (Fairclough, 1995), this study hopes to make sense of the strategies used by Nigerian petroleum sector employers to legitimise employee development capture – HRD capture.

Methodology
In this section, the research method, data source and analytical framework will be presented, which are the three key components of methodology used in this study.

Method
This study adopts qualitatively, interpretivist approach to research and data analysis, which according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) entails interpreting social reality using words. The study also considers human actuality as a consequence of social interaction and construction (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the study aims to deepen scholarship on managerial capture of HRD in Nigeria’s (petroleum) employment terrain - based on the diverse views of managerial and non-managerial employees, which supports multiple perception that parallels the philosophy of interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2012). Qualitative approach to research study has “a very practical side”, which deals with asking people (that matters within natural setting) open-ended questions, “in order to solve problems” (Patton, 2012, p. 89), hence the adoption of interview technique in this study. Following inductive approach (Creswell, 2013), theory will not be tested in this study, but data collected from interview informs the overall aim and objectives sought herein. In specific, 33 managerial and non-managerial staff participated in a semi-structured face-to-face interview – carried out between November and December 2018, each of which lasted between 25 and 40 minutes. Questions asked in the interview included: What does HRD entail in your company? Does your company have effective HRD policy? Does your HRD policies weaken or alleviate employees’ development? How does the socio-cultural environment impact your HRD policy on female and minority group? How do you rationalise the effectiveness of your HRD policy?

The interviews were digitally recorded and manually transcribed. Participants were reassured of the confidentiality of their participation and were thus encouraged to give their honest views. With the flexible nature of a semi-structured approach to interview, respondents are (both cautiously and uncourteously) able to let out their voice inflections as well as emotions and body language (Bryman, 2012), which are crucial in sensitive discourse such as legitimisation (Leeuwen, 2007) of HRD capture (Sansone et al., 2001). Saunders et al. (2012) describes a semi-structured interview as a useful and purposeful discursive mechanism between two individuals or more (the interviewer and the interviewee (s)), which enables the former to ask
further question (depending on the response of the later) and thereby potentially obtaining rich data that can be qualitatively analysed to deepen scholarship (Creswell, 2013).

Data source
As noted in preceding sections, data was gathered through a semi-structured, face-to-face interview with managerial and non-managerial staff selected from five petroleum firms in Nigeria, which Saunders et al. (2012) described as a qualitative methodological process. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, participants’ information and data were coded as can be seen in table 1 below, which is consistent with Bryman’s (2012) ethical conformity in qualitative research.

Table 1: Interview Brief
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description of participants</th>
<th>Gender/Sex</th>
<th>Background of education</th>
<th>Employment years</th>
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<td>MSc</td>
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**Total: 3**

**Total Managers: 11**

**Total OEs: 22**

**Min. yrs.: 4**

**Max. yrs.: 9**

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**Key Guides:**


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**Researchers (2019)**

**Analytical framework**
The analytical process involved manual transcription of data gathered from the interviews. This was followed by going back and forth data, in order to identify recurring themes (Creswell, 2013) bordering on organisational self-interest, managerialism, voice marginalisation, control, cost saving, shareholder profit maximisation, poor or lack of training and development, lack of promotion and slow work advancement, among other practices that materialise in managerial capture of HRD (Swanson et al., 2001). Using TTA framework (Braun and Clarke, 2006), the analysis uncovers (within the text corpuses) strategies and pattern that are used by operators in Nigerian petroleum sectors to capture employees’ development and legitimise HRD capture. Thus, the operationalisation of TTA in this study involves using themes and texts from data set (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2011) to reflect the cultural relationship between employers and employees in Nigeria, because TTA processes text patterns, which can help to uncover the cultural, economic, ideological and social contexts of human experience (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2014). According to Bryman and Bell (2015), this process of analysis aids the identification of themes within text corpuses that resonates with “thematic” way of “thinking”, whereby the meaning, context and text structure are given thorough examination (Dijk, 2008), which parallels what Lawton (2013) explained as “language in use”. Thus, through operationalising “language in use” Lawton (2013), the study aims to identify strategies of authorization, rationalisation, moralisation, mythopoesis and managerialism, that inhere in the lexical patterning made possible by TTA application (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2011), which can help to uncover how employees’ development (or HRD) is captured and legitimised-using strategies of legitimisation (Leeuwen, 2007). Having rigorously gone through the data, the above 5 legitimisation strategies were identified in the text corpuses, hence they became key subject of interrogation in the study.

Findings and discussion
The study relied on semantic analysis of themes, texts and lexes in data to arrive at findings and to drive discussion (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2014). Being a semantic-based study that prioritises function and meaning of text, the overall idea is to establish how themes and texts in data can be linked to practices that manifest in managerial capture and legitimisation of employees and HRD capture.

- Authorisation
Respondents generally provided responses that showed good understanding of what HRD entails in general sense by highlighting key contemporary management practices including: “HRD is about making your employees to be more competent” (PFO-02), “training and developing workers to do the work right” (PFT-12), “developing your workforce and promoting them to the next level as required” (PFTH-16 ), “ensuring that workers are trained so that they can achieve work satisfaction” (PFF-26). While these responses are consistent with extant literature’s description of HRD (Werner and DeSimone, 2011), themes of text and lexes from data set also tend to point towards authorisations strategy (in HRD discourse), which Leeuwen (1995) explained as a process of achieving legitimacy by making reference to established authority. For instance, some participants noted that:
“this company is big and widely respected for its standards. Of course, we have been operating for many years and developing our workers, so the question of whether we have an HRD strategy should not even arise at all (PFFH-30).

“our company prioritises standards in practice, it ensures that what we do here is consistent with our policy and universal global standard for making sure that workers’ development is a priority” (PFO-01).

“policies and standards for developing workers is the same worldwide, this company operates at international level and would never deviate from such requirement” (PFF-24).

As can be drawn from the above excerpts, texts and lexes such as “big and widely... respected (PFFH-30), “standards in practice.... “universal global standard” (PFO-01), “worldwide” and “international level” (PFF-24) are chosen to give credibility to the organisations’ employment relations, HRM and HRD practices (Suchman, 1995). The above lexes and texts are connotative of authoritative reference to- for instance Nigeria’s labour Act and global standards including ILO’s HRM and developmental guideline (ILO, 2005), which is a strategy of referring to acceptable standards of managing relationship with employees. Thus, these texts and lexes helps to legitimise the way petroleum sector employers handle employee’s development (or HRD) through strategy of authorisation (Leeuwen., 1995, 2005). However, it is increasingly being suggested that international standards of workplace practices and benchmark for HRD are not being upheld in Nigeria, which explains the continuing agitations of workers across all sectors – albeit mostly in silence due to fear of consequences from the power that be (ILO, 2005, Otobo, 2016). Nigeria has high power-distance and respect culture (Umar and Hassan, 2014) that endorses unequal power distribution and deference for superiors (Hofstede, 1980), which makes it hard for employees to make demand from their employers regarding developmental needs (Benjamin and David, 2012; Adelakun, O.J., 2011). The above is supported by statements from some employees which includes: “we are just ordinary workers and cannot challenge what the authorities do” (PFO-04), “it is their company, so they make decision on everything including our future” (PFTH-19) and “we are not here to be developed but to survive” (PFT-13). All of these denotes of language power discourse, tone of suppression and lack of voice, which have the hallmarks of potential legitimacy of HRD (or employees’ development) capture (Swanson et al., 2001).

• Moralisation

According to Vaara & Tienari (2008), moralisation provides organisational actions and behaviours with moral basis. In the context of this study, petroleum sector employers make statements which show that their engagement strategy with employees (including training) are fair, ethical and of highest standards. For instance, according to some extracts:

“we have a lot of regards for our employees, it is right to show them respect especially in the ways we plan their future with this company” (PFT-09)

“the company prioritises human integrity and right, hence, fair work conditions and promotion is part of our key policy” (PFT-11)
“the level of training we provide in this company shows our commitment to ethical standards and need for employees’ development” (PFTH-17)

“you know humans being want to progress and develop, so, that is why people are happy here, because they get good pay and other extras” (PFF-25)

The use of lexes and texts such as “lot of regards…respect…. their future (PFT-09), “human integrity… fair work conditions… promotion” (PFT-11), “ethical standards… employees’ development (PFTH-17) and progress…develop… good pay (PFF-25) can be viewed as moralised expressions - superlatively designed to emphasise ethical obligation of duty to ensure that (Leeuwen, 2017) employees undergo development through the course of their employment (Okpu, 2016). The above choice of lexes and texts oftentimes represent hyperbole that makes clear exaggeration of actions (Sert, 2008) intended to showcase what Leeuwen (2007) described as organisational morality and accountability towards subordinates (employees), in order to disguise elements of managerial capture (Power, 1991) of employees’ development (Swanson et al., 2001). However, As Ubeku (1983) and Iyayi (2009) have covered, the issue of unaccountability and immorality from the side of corporations across Nigerian employment sectors has remained highly controversial, and the petroleum sector is not immune from these ills (Idemudia, 2010; Obi, 2010). Short sentences from employees support the above contention: “we are just numbers – not humans, the idea of development does not suffice here” (PFO-05), “employees do not really count…- they only labour and go home” (PFTH-18), “mild training is only possible when specific projects are rolled out” (PFF-27) and “training for long term expertise is hard to come-by unless you know somebody at the top” (PFFH-31). In line with Fajana and Shadare’s (2012) view that the state does not protect employees but supports the interests of employers, the above sentences raise moral and ethical questions (Leeuwen, 2007) regarding the HRD strategies of petroleum sector employers in Nigeria.

• Mythopoesis

Using narratives or story-telling such as testimonies to legitimise or normalise certain behaviours or actions is the functional strategy of mythopoesis (Leeuwen, 2007). Mythopoesis was employed in Peled-Elhanan’s (2010, p.191) empirical study of Finnish company to uncover how organisations showcase they are “socially responsible”. This legitimisation strategy loomed large in data analysed in this study. Such includes:

“recently work and labour inspectors visited our cites and gave the company a good bill for advancing HRD in the sector” (PFO-03)

This company is not just a market follower, the story of our caring relationship with employees is widely told (PFT-10)

Unlike what we’ve been hearing over the years regarding poor attention to employees’ wellbeing, we are among the top listed firms in the employers of the year survey last year” (PFFH-30)

The appropriation of texts and lexes in the above short sentences such as “inspectors visited” (PFO-03), “the story of our caring…. widely told (PFT-10) and “employers of the year survey” (PFFH-30) are simply legitimisation strategies described by Vaara et al. (2006) as “expert
witness” or use of pre-existing testimonial from expert sources – intended to help foreground socially and ethically sanctioned organisational practice. Leeuwen (2007) view this practice as a fountain of logic, which is a strategy of masking practices such as poor approach to employees training and promotion for instance, which materialises in managerial capture of HRD (Swanson et al., 2001). According to Fajana (2019), high unemployment, weak regulatory framework on employment matters and high-power distance culture incubates non-inclusive employer-employee relationship, in which employees have no say in decision regarding their development (Umar and Hassan, 2014). The contention continues: “These organisations know the score in this country – nobody can challenge them to do the needful, not even the government cares” (PFO-06), “the so called investigators only come here to dine and wine with them” (PFTH-20), “there is nowhere to run to, all these firms treat employees just the same way- no training – no promotion” (PFF-28) and “if you claim to know too much- you get the boot” (PFO-07). The ramification of this approach to legitimising organisational activities goes beyond materialising in capture and legitimisation of HRD capture by petroleum sector employers – it is indeed widespread across all sectors in Nigeria (Otobo, 2016).

- **Rationalisation**

Data analysis in the study indicated a strategy of rationalisation which centres on efficiency driven by the logic of giving certain actions or behaviours stamp of legitimacy. Vaara et al. (2006) provided various approaches to rationalising actions or behaviours, however, this study approaches rationalisation strategy from the realm of “instrumental” rationality. According to Leeuwen (2007), this strategy centres on reaching organisational goals, purpose and long-term agenda through emphasising how certain actions will enable them to achieve such. In doing so, lexes and semantics such as purposive ‘so’ and ‘to’, ‘because’ and ‘in order to’ are often used, to achieve legitimacy of actions and inactions in organisational-employee relationship (Leech & Short, 2008). This view is supported in the excerpts below:

“we follow international standard in order to make the best of our employees, we also encourage them to stay away from intended strikes” (PFO-01)

“they are human, so they have needs, which the company is doing its best to facilitate, but they must remain loyal and committed” (PFT-09)

“because of the strong economic challenges, the company cannot rush things, effective development planning is crucial” (PFTH-16)

“It important that employees support organisational goals so that the organisation can support their needs” (PFF-24)

Texts such as “in order to make the best” (PFO-01), “so they have….to facilitate” (PFT-09), “so that” (PFF-24) are considered deontological terms- used to rationalise (Leech & Short, 2008) their strategies of HRM practices and to silence critics regarding their poor approach to employee’s development and overall HRD in the sector (Geo-JaJa and Mangum, 2003). Importantly, phrase such as “because of the strong economic challenges” (PFTH-16) represents a financialisation aspect of rationalisation strategy aimed at legitimising the non-
participatory dynamic of the companies’ employment relations practice – in which employees have no voice to demand the need for adequate training and promotion as deemed necessary (Vaara et al., 2006). Essentially, as Holst (2014) pinpointed, rationalisation strategy highlights the instrumental nature of companies in Nigeria who rely mainly on the economic situation of the country to continue their non-participatory and unfair employer-employee relationship and traditional practices that have plagued the country’s employment sectors for many decades (Otobo, 2016). According to some employees: “some staff are sent oversees for training, but not ordinary workers like me” (PFTH-21) and “they only select you for real quality training if you are highly connected” (PFT-14). Others noted: “it is expensive to send employees for oversea training, so they prefer not to” (PFFH-32) and “the company is cutting cost, so they make you do jobs you are hardly trained for” (PFO-08). Hence, rationalisation and legitimisation of organisational behaviour in this context is hinged on economic utility as well as stresses on goals and reasons of actions (Green, 2004).

Managerialism
The strategy of managerialism peddles the assumption that management and its agents (managers) hold key position for organisational survival (Greenwood et al., 2008) and furthermore, the process reduces employment relations practices to the view that employees are mainly recruited to achieve organisational goals and long-term sustainability, hence, the narrative gives primacy to cost minimisation and maximisation of shareholder’s value (Hudson, 2012). This strategy of legitimisation not only endorses the instrumentality of control, limited dialogue and market-type principles; but prioritises product and output over strategies and processes of input (Rubery et al, 2016), which according to Armstrong (2009) often disable employees voice and involvement in decision making process that matters to their wellbeing and development. Strategy of managerialism are denoted in the following excerpts:

“wheel of production must continue, otherwise organisations will seize to exist and so do employees” (PFT-10)

“Our duty as managers is to make employees understand that anti-organisational movement stifles productivity, which does not bring value to employees” (PFO-02).

“for there to be a need for employees, organisations must be striving, we try to make workers understand this” (PFF-25)

Employees here understand well the firms’ position on union activism, which is driven by pure selfish agenda and painting hard working firms in negative light (PFF-24).

Strategies of managerialism are captured through texts and lexes in the above extracts including “wheel of production” (PFT-10) and “anti-organisational movement.... stifles productivity” (PFO-02), which are designed to justify why managerial function is essential for long-term sustainability of the organisation as well as employees’ need of sustained employment (Greenwood et al., 2008). As further reflected: “for there to be ‘need for employees....
organisations must be striving” (PFF-25), which rationalises why employees should commit to supporting organisational goals (management objectives) or face the consequences – also known as “episode framing” (Iyengar, 1991). As identified in data, managerialist strategy of legitimisation also implicates analogue perspectives, whereby employees are forbidden to support or join “union activism” which management view to be obstructive to organisational success and driven only by “pure selfish... and negative” agenda (PFF-24). Indeed, managerialist establishments dread the activities of unionism – particularly due to what they consider as unions’ inflexible demand, outdated collectivism and sit-tight modes operands, which only hampers productivity and employer-employee relationship (Kaufman, 2015). This perception however contradicts Beckman’s (2009, p. 184) opinion, which found unions to be capable of “offering leadership, building broad alliances...” as well as influencing process of democratisation that can facilitate alternative platform for improved employee voice and decisional inputs in matters ranging from workers wellbeing to developmental needs (Swanson, 1995, 2001). With the strategy of managerialism noted in this case - which is premised on zero tolerance for unions, the work environment tends to both negate and impinge on social dialogue and balancing of power relationship between employer and employees, hence employees’ interests and wellbeing are relegated to the backburner, while managerial push for shareholder value maximisation entrenches. (Hirschman, 1970; Armstrong, 2009). The contention is further illuminated below: “We don’t want to be seen as working against the will of the firms (PFTH-22), “If you don’t want to enter the company’s black book, then stay away from unions” (PFT-15) and “two colleagues were fired few months ago for challenging the boss regarding unfair work condition (PFTH-23). Thus, strategies of managerialism represent the bedrock of employee voice marginalisation and disablement of conducive platform for social dialogue on employees’ wellbeing and development (Prasad, 1967; Hirschman, 1970; Armstrong, 2009), which materialises in managerial capture of HRD in workplace.

Summary and conclusions
The study began by acknowledging that HRD is increasingly undergoing enrichment process since inception few decades ago, due to the multiple dimensions (including training, educational attainment, workforce skills, population health among others) via which numerous research studies have been covering it (Swanson et al., 2001; Mohamad; 2005 Achoui, 2009). In order to continue the furtherance of this enrichment process, this current study incorporates the interface of managerial capture: a function of managerialism that disables or make HRD hard to progress as well as the legitimisation strategies used by employers to normalise managerial capture of HRD – particularly in developing employment terrain (Prasad, 1967) - such as Nigerian, which is embroiled in corporate-stakeholder conflict (Otobo, 2016). As demonstrated in the study, the used of TTA (which relies on themes and patterns of texts corpuses) made it possible to tease out strategies and patterns identified within data sets (Guest et al., 2011; Braun and Clarke, 2014) - relative to cultural, economic, ideological and social contexts of human experience and power struggle (Fairclough, 2014). This helped to establish how HRD practice is strategically captured and legitimised in Nigeria’s petroleum employment
terrain. This analytical approach responds to call for the confines of ER (Francis, 2007), HRM (Legge, 1995) and by extension HRD research and practice to be expanded for renewed consciousness (Short and Gray, 2018). In the main, using TTA of interview data, the authors identified and analysed four Leeuwen’s (2007) legitimisation strategies: authorisation, moralisation, mythopoesis, rationalisation, and added the fifth – managerialism, which petroleum sector employers apply to managerially capture and legitimise HRD capture in the study.

In part, the study concludes that strategies and processes adopted by petroleum sector employers in Nigeria are managerially structured to drive managerial-oriented ideologies, which is predominantly shareholder’s focus at the detriment of stakeholder such as employees (Otobo, 2016). This approach to organisational practice and behaviours is viewed as the bedrock of employee voice marginalisation and disablement of conducive platform for social dialogue regarding employees’ wellbeing and development need (Prasad, 1967; Hirschman, 1970; Armstrong, 2009), which creates and fosters managerial capture of HRD in workplace. As demonstrated in this study (of petroleum sector), the situation is found to be similar across Nigerian employment sectors (Otobo, 2016). Also, the analytical application of the five legitimisation strategies in this study showed that employees’ development and by extension HRD is managerially captured and at worse ultimately rationalised – thereby giving stamp of approval and legitimacy to organisational practices in Nigeria (Geo-JaJa and Mangum, 2003; Benjamin and David, 2012). Hence, it becomes imperative to rethink the appropriateness of HRD practice in Nigeria with specific reference to employees’ development – in a country where employer-employee relationship is under the shadow of managerial capture (Otobo, 2016).

By conducting this research, it is hoped that a number of contributions have been made to the extant literature. First, by incorporating the interface of managerial capture: a function of managerialism which can disable or make employees’ development hard to progress, the study has contributed to the development process of HRD. This approach is a response to critical rationality (Legge, 1995; Francis, 2007), which can help drive further studies in developing countries such as Nigeria (Budhwar & Debrah, 2004). Secondly, Leeuwen’s (2007) key four legitimisation strategies involves: authorisation, moralisation, mythopoesis and rationalisation, and by adding the fifth - managerialism, which petroleum sector employers apply to managerially capture and legitimise HRD capture in Nigerian employment terrain, this study has extended legitimisation strategies and thereby making contribution towards advancing legitimacy theory. Finally, by using the lens and practices of petroleum sector employers in Nigeria to uncover how managerial capture can disable HRD and the strategies employed by these firms to legitimise such practices – which is influenced by the cultural-environmental dynamic of the country (Hofstede, 1980), an empirical contribution has also been achieved in the study.
While this study has shown a number of potentials, it has also revealed some shortcoming. First, given the discursive nature involved in identifying strategies adopted by organisations to capture and legitimise HRD practices, which inheres in discourse, it becomes clear that perhaps a more critical analytical tool (such as critical discourse analysis - CDA) would have been ideal for the study. As opposed TTA which relies on themes and texts, CDA employs multiple dimensions that includes but not limited to themes of discourse, strategies of discourse and linguistic means of discourse, hence a multi-modal meaning making tools for analysing texts, discourse and speech among others (Wodak, 2001). Furthermore, it can be argued that the study is limited by sampling size, which consists of 33 respondents selected from five petroleum companies in Nigeria, hence, the study would have benefitted from involving other sectors as well as comparing data from other sources such as survey, government publication and independent documentary archives. Nonetheless, in line with Creswell’s (2013) support for qualitative methodology, the detailed and rigorous analytical process of the study can be said to have complemented these limitations.

References


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