The dynamics of workplace relationships among expatriates and host country nationals in international development organisations


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The dynamics of workplace relationships among expatriates and host country nationals in international development organisations

Abstract

Purpose- This paper aims to explore the dynamics of workplace relationships between expatriates and host country nationals (HCNs) in International Development Organisations (IDO}s through the lens of the social comparison theory. These relationships are likely influenced by the way HRM practices are implemented among individuals from both groups.

Design/methodology/approach- We used an inductive approach and analysed qualitative data from ten expatriates and twenty host country nationals employed by five IDOs in Nigeria, a risk-prone context.

Findings- Our findings demonstrate that both expatriates and HCNs perceive that the HRM practices implemented by IDOs are more favourable to expatriates. This leads to further social comparisons between members of both groups, affecting their workplace interactions.

Practical Implications- The way expatriates and HCNs perceive and act towards these differential practices matters for the operations of IDOs. As such, we recommend that IDO management may consider acknowledging diversity in their workforce, enact inclusive practices, and make deliberate investments on learning opportunities and maximise the continued investments in expatriate use.

Originality/Value- This study contributes to expatriation literature by clarifying the extent to which the enactment of differential HRM practices in a risk-prone context can exacerbate upward social comparisons and significantly influence working relationships. We explore this outside the context of multinational enterprises, focusing on IDOs that play a valuable role in local societies.

Keywords: International Development Organisations; Expatriates, Host Country Nationals (HCNs), Social Comparison, Human Resource Management Practices, Workplace relationships
Introduction

International Development Organisations (IDO) aim to bring development and reduce inequalities in less developed host nations (United Nations, 2003). Although IDOs and MNEs share some similarities in managing their international workforces (Tarique and Schuler, 2018) and host country nationals (HCNs), the main difference between the two lies in the fact that IDOs are non-profit driven, using their revenue to respond to social needs, amongst other differences (Brewster and Cerdin, 2017).

In this study, we focus on IDOs with operations in Nigeria, a high-risk country, currently ranked among the top ten recipients of gross official development assistance (ODA) (OECD, 2019). Nigeria's current ranking in the global terrorism index indicates trends and patterns of terrorist activities (Institute for Economics and Peace-IEP, 2019), placing IDO workers in frequent danger. Furthermore, Nigeria’s labour market is saturated, volatile, and does not always firmly enforce labour standards due to the quest for attracting foreign direct
investment (FDI) (Okafor, 2011; Ogundare and Elijah, 2011). Consequently, IDOs can potentially implement exploitative human resource management (HRM) practices among their diverse workforces due to weak institutions (Okafor, 2011).

We focus on HRM practices implemented by IDOs, including rewards and staffing practices. However, we pay particular attention to welfare-oriented practices to address potential safety and security concerns, especially for expatriates (Fee and McGrath Champ, 2017; Willie and Fast, 2013). While the work of IDOs is often driven to deploy workers to dangerous locations responding to crises, IDOs are not the only organisations with country offices or subsidiaries in risk-prone countries. MNEs tend to avoid countries with high instability (Bénassy-Quéré, Coupet and Mayer, 2007), but many still have operations in risk-prone contexts, with important implications for their workforce, and bringing specific HRM concerns as highlighted by Bader (2015) and Bader, Schuster and Dickmann (2019). We build upon this body of research and further explore the specificities of managing people in high-risk contexts within the IDO sector.

Furthermore, we are interested in the fact that, like MNEs, IDOs have a diverse workforce, composed by a mix of expatriates (assigned or self-initiated) (McNulty and Brewster, 2017) and host-country nationals. Previous research that discusses the role of HRM
on certain outcomes, are mostly unidimensional. For example, there is evidence of a compensation advantage favouring expatriates (Bonache, Sanchez and Zarraga-Oberty, 2009), which can lead to HCNs’ negative attitudes towards expatriates (Leonardelli and Toh, 2011; Leung, Wang, and Hon, 2011). However, there is a lack of comparative empirical research focusing on these two groups of employees in the IDO context, which is important given the challenges of working in risk-prone contexts and dealing with societal demands. We aim to explore expatriate’s and HCN’s experiences related to implemented HRM practices among the two groups in light of the social comparison theory.

Our contributions are twofold. First, we contribute to the ongoing debate on expatriate-HCN interactions (e.g., van Bakel, 2019; Varma et al., 2012) and offer a comprehensive assessment that clarifies the role of HRM practices affecting the perceptions and relationship between expatriates and HCNs. Second, we go beyond the MNE-centric focus in international business (IB) and international human resource management (IHRM) by including IDOs’ HCNs and expatriates to contribute to extant IHRM literature (e.g., Toh and DeNisi, 2003; Leung, Lin, and Gee, 2014; Oltra, Bonache, and Brewster, 2013; Bonache and Zarraga-Oberty, 2017; Kang and Shen, 2017). We use an exploratory approach to investigate
and understand these comparison dynamics triggered by potential differences in the overall implementation of HRM practices on both groups.

**HRM practices in a risk-prone context**

When MNEs operate in high-risk contexts, their IHRM departments often take precautions associated with minimising risks for their expatriates in international assignments, namely housing them in compounds, not allowing them free movement, or providing them bodyguards and chauffeurs (Bader, Schuster and Dickmann, 2019). The compensation and the social support expatriates receive from the organisation and from co-workers in high-risk countries is crucial for them to develop favourable work attitudes (Bader, 2015). Bader et al., (2019) designed the Situation-Response-Outcome framework for HRM in high-risk contexts, considering factors at macro-, meso- and micro-levels. In this study, we are particularly interested in how HRM practices are implemented (meso-level) and on the work relationships between different groups of workers (micro-level) in IDOs.

We expand research conducted in the context of MNEs in high-risk countries, by focusing on IDOs – international organisations where risks tend to be exacerbated due to their
social and humanitarian nature (Brewster and Cerdin, 2017). IDO workers are exposed to increased risk (Fee and McGrath-Champ, 2017), such as the possibility of being killed, getting wounded, or being kidnapped during fieldwork (Stoddard, Harmer, and Hughes, 2014). In such a context, the role of HRM is to implement welfare-oriented practices to address potential safety and security concerns, especially for expatriates (Fee and McGrath Champ, 2017; Willie and Fast, 2013). While expatriates’ safety and security are critical (Fee, McGrath, and Liu, 2013), HRM practices should however not be limited to well-being of a expatriates, given the fact that HCNs are also exposed to similar welfare challenges. Such an approach could lead to cynicism towards expatriates often categorised as the favoured group (Al Ariss, 2014). Moreover, HCNs are important stakeholders with the role of hosting expatriates and enabling expatriate adjustment (Vance, Andersen, Vaiman and Gale, 2014).

Enacting inclusive managerial practices is likely to provide the opportunity to engage in learning opportunities and maximise their return on investment on expatriates (Fee and Michailova, 2020).

International development organisation’s diverse workforce composition includes a mix of expatriates (assigned or self-initiated) (McNulty and Brewster, 2017) and HCNs, as earlier indicated. However, the latter group have frequently remained outside the scope of IHRM
scholarship and practice (Takeuchi, 2010) even though they interact with expatriates through work. Scholarly discussions on the relationships between expatriates and HCNs focused on expatriate-centric outcomes (Takeuchi, 2010; Freeman, 1984), HCNs’ role in supporting expatriates (e.g., Pitcher, Varma and Budhwar, 2012; Varma et al., 2011; 2012) or enabling expatriate effectiveness (Bruning, Sonpar and Wang, 2012). While HCNs work under similar working conditions, have similar relationships with expatriates, and exert significant influence on expatriates, the IHRM literature typically overlooks them (Takeuchi, 2010). Yet there is limited empirical work that has been done to explore these dynamics further (e.g., van Bakel, 2019).

Considering the social agenda of IDOs, it is important to understand the impact of HRM practices implemented on and perceived by both expatriates and HCNs, which can have an impact of expatriate-HCN interactions at work. Fostering fruitful interactions amongst both groups of workers can lead to more positive outcomes (Fee and Gray, 2020).

However, when there is perceived inequity in HRM practices implementation, it can lead to negative outcomes. This can potentially also impede the socio-economic objectives of IDOs (Eyben, 2004). Expatriates and HCNs may collaborate in other IDO projects in the future. The quality of these relationships can play a role in the success of these projects.
Social Comparison between Expatriates and HCNs

We use the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) as the theoretical basis for this study. This theory is useful to enable us to understand how people categorise themselves and others into specific in-groups and out-groups at work. These perceptions can be triggered through differential practices implemented by IDOs and perceived by their workers. Social comparison theory can guide in characterising expatriate-HCN interactions and identifying potential sources of conflict likely affecting the attainment of IDO’s goals in the host region.

Social comparison (Festinger, 1954) explains the way information gathered about one or more people is used comparatively in making self-evaluations (Wood, 1996). The idea behind these comparisons is that there is a “target” and a “comparer”. The “target” is a referent, or the person being “compared”, and the “comparer” is the person that notices differences or similarities from information gathered regarding the target on some specific dimension, which often triggers behavioural reactions by the comparer (Gerber, Wheeler and Suls, 2018). These dimensions can be linked to differences in the implementation of HRM practices and to how these practices are perceived by employees (expatriates and HCNs) working within an organisation (e.g., IDOs).
Overall, there are three patterns through which social comparison processes happen. First through a desire to affiliate with others; second, through a desire for information about others; and third, for explicit self-appraisal comparatively to others (Taylor and Lobel, 1989).

Work requires interaction between expatriates and HCNs to achieve organisational goals, which generates some form of affiliation between members of the two groups. The information-gathering process commences from employees’ perceptions of HRM practices implementation. People categorise themselves and others into specific in-groups and out-groups at work, which can be triggered through differential practices implemented by IDOs.

When workers perceive these differences in HRM practices implementation, they are likely to engage in social categorisations through upward and downward social comparisons.

Afterwards, individuals’ self-appraisal outcomes become apparent based on a comparison selection made by each group (Gerber et al., 2017). A comparison selection refers to the choice made by the comparer towards what is considered a desirable basis for making such comparisons with the target or referent. This comparative selection can be, upward (Collins, 2000) and/or downward (Wills, 1981) on a social comparison scale. Upward comparison refers to a positive standard (i.e., better-off), and downward comparison refers to a negative standard (i.e., worse-off). Therefore, a comparer can make a comparison selection...
towards what is most desirable to them (i.e., a better-off/positive or worse-off/negative standard on the social comparison baseline). What is considered desirable is decided by the comparer.

The perceptions of the implementation of HRM practices in IDOs can trigger comparison selections towards a better-off (positive standard) or worse-off (negative standard). Although people would likely make comparison selections toward a positive standard (Collins, 2000) on some dimension, they can make comparison selections downwards toward a negative standard, in a process of restoring their self-esteem that was originally threatened (Wills, 1981)

Grounded on these theorisations, we explore the differences in the implementation of HRM practices among IDOs’ expatriates and HCNs as two separate groups who collect information about each other based on how implemented HRM practices are beneficial or detrimental to them. Goethals and Darley (1977) suggest that people prefer to choose similar others in making social comparisons (for example, nationality, work experiences, and qualifications). However, although expatriates and HCNs may be different in some ways, they are members of the same organisation and can potentially make social comparisons regardless of attributes they may have in common. These can trigger different outcomes.
Despite previous arguments that IDOs have limited resources to invest in HRM practices (Brewster and Cerdin, 2017) and that some practices linked to safety and security concerns are mostly focused on expatriates (e.g., Fee and McGrath-Champ, 2017), a deeper understanding of HRM practices is needed as well as how expatriates and HCNs perceive them. It is relevant to focus on both groups of employees, as social comparison mechanisms can influence their attitudes and behaviours. Due to their need to work together, the success of the IDO may depend on the quality of the relationships between members of both groups. Accordingly, we pose two research questions:

RQ1: How do expatriates and HCNs perceive the differences in the implementation of HRM practices in IDOs?

RQ2: How do expatriates and HCNs compare themselves to each other and how do such comparisons influence their working relationships?

Methods

Inductive qualitative research design:

The study takes an exploratory approach to address RQ1 and RQ2. This approach is useful because our research phenomenon and context are under-explored. It also offers the opportunity to discover new realities, nuances, and granularity about expatriates and HCNs’ construction of their own experiences regarding the enactment of practices that can influence
their interactions with each other, rather than opting for an affirmation seeking approach of pre-existing concepts used in quantitative research (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2012). It is also linked to the interpretive nature and novelty of our study (Dixon, Day, and Brewster, 2014). This approach has an interactive and open-ended nature which would provide a voice for participants so we do not miss out on new concepts that can emerge from our data. Hence presenting evidence in more systematic ways (Gioia, et al., 2012) through “how” and “why” questions (Doz, 2011). Although qualitative research has been criticised to be devoid of transferability—an aspect of trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), the effect of non-verbal cues attributed to quantitative study was overcome by the utilisation of semi-structured face-to-face interviews (Bolderston, 2012) and focused group discussion (FGD) in one case. Moreover, the use of guided interview scripts helped to maintain consistency across all represented interviewees.

We targeted ten expatriates and 20 HCNs from five IDOs (given pseudonyms IDO1 to IDO5) and relied on triangulated responses from these respondents to obtain a fair representation in our data analysis.

<insert Table (iii) and (iv) about here>
**Interviews:**

Data was collected during the summer of 2019. Initial contact was made with key individuals in respective IDOs via email for access. A snowballing technique was applied to gain further access to additional participants. Most interviews took place on the IDOs’ premises, but others were done outside of workplaces, as some respondents preferred their lunchtimes to attend the interview. Interview guides including predetermined open questions (Azungah, 2018) were utilised. This technique was valuable in directing conversation flow, giving the interviewees more flexibility to express their views while keeping the research objective focused (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young, 2018). It also allowed participants to shape their own stories. Final interview guides for expatriates and HCNs covered four main topics. These include some questions about participants’ basic demographics, participants’ perceptions about HRM practices, participants’ perceptions about their counterparts’ job roles, and participants’ perceptions of working within a risky context.

While a focused group discussion consisting of two participants is considered small, there was a specific case where the opportunity arose to have two people who work closely together to explain some processes in more detail. These two participants also wanted to speak together, and the interviewer was able to witness the interaction between members of
the two groups of employees (i.e., expatriate and HCN). Data were collected from two different cities: Abuja and Jos, in Nigeria.

Profile of participants

Interviewees were between 26-38 years old. They had high education levels: four had bachelor’s degrees, thirteen with master’s degrees, three with PhDs, and two with Post Graduate Diplomas. In terms of years of experience within the sector (either less or more than 5 years), IDO 1 expatriates had more experience when compared to HCN colleagues. Whereas there was a good proportion in terms of years of experience for both groups of employees in IDO2. Years of experience working within the sector can also influence the way specific roles are allocated to expatriates (Lazarova et al., 2021).

Data Analysis

Data were originally coded based on the way expatriates and HCNs perceived HRM practices implementation, and on the social comparisons, they established as an outcome. Interview transcripts generated from recorded interviews were filed using OneDrive directories. This was supplemented with the Nvivo 12 software to account for the thematic analysis techniques used (Braun and Clark, 2012). To support textual analysis, we continued
to engage in memo writing to help reduce bias and promote independence (Gibbs, 2018). The continued use of open, axial, and selective coding was maintained (Charmaz, 2014).

Open coding commenced soon after interview recordings were transcribed- breaking textual data into discrete parts and keeping interview protocol aligned with emerging themes. Axial coding was maintained to draw connections between codes and selective coding helped to link codes from analysis to further capture the essence of the research. Utilising information from both our main database and the use of Nvivo 12 software, interview transcripts were analysed and presented by first including selected quotes, which were further separated based on identified themes using MS word document (please see Table vi and vii).

Adopting emergent, interpretive approaches and an iterative process, themes were scrutinised, developed, and redefined (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Freeman and Lindsay, 2012). This enabled accentuating and aligning emerging themes with theoretical concepts. Various data checks were done, through regular meetings with the authors to enhance data validity (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and trustworthiness criteria in general (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).
Results

Overview:

Research results (see Table vi and vii) are presented in three sections. The first section presents the perceptions held by expatriates and HCNs regarding role allocation mechanisms and pay and reward practices. The subsequent section presents the expatriates’ and HCNs’ perceptions of safety-oriented practices. The third section presents the social comparison outcome resulting from perceived preferences attributed to expatriates in the enactment of specific HRM practices, followed by implications.

Results showed differences in the way HRM practices are implemented on and perceived by expatriates and HCNs in response to RQ1. We show how these led to social comparison selections made by expatriates and HCNs and how this influences their working relationships (RQ2).

Perception of Role allocation mechanisms, pay & reward practices held by expatriates and HCNs

Role allocation practices form the basis upon which pay, and reward practices are also implemented. In IDOs, expatriates are typically required for higher management positions, implying higher pay (Aid Leap, 2016). This can potentially trigger some reactions from HCNs
especially since host countries have progressively improved economically and socially. Their employees now have the prerequisites, i.e., becoming more skilled and experienced, to be allocated higher-level positions like expatriates (Toh and DeNisi, 2003). Expatriates and HCNs perceived roles as discriminatory practices disfavouring HCNs and favouring expatriates- meaning a relatively large pay gap and inequality (see HCN 10 and HCN 8 quotes). Most HCNs felt disgruntled about these practices, although fewer participants including some expatriates, found this a fair practice.

“...an expatriate intern takes home more than I do, 10 times over, and if I were to judge I would say it's unfair” (HCN 10)

Or

“Pay is an issue. The international staff are paid ridiculously higher compared to national staff.” (HCN 8)

Furthermore, expatriates tended to give fewer details when asked questions related to pay. Doing so might mean sharing sensitive information or that they earn more indeed which justifies the existence of differences. While expatriates in IDOs tend to downplay these benefits, and potential for career progression, they emphasize gaining international experience
in addition to their contribution towards social justice and taking up leadership roles, which brings us to role allocation practices.

Expatriates in IDOs occupied more senior managerial positions relative to HCNs, which is a common practice for most organisations. However, justifications provided for this practice is that HCNs are perceived as unfit to occupy those positions, while demographic descriptions of participants (e.g., experience) and responses from interviewees suggested otherwise. The organisational criteria set in IDO 2 for this condition are based on lack of knowledge of the language spoken (see quotation by Expatriate 6) in the headquarters of that IDO, or restrictive Nigerian labour laws. IDO 2 engaged in role discriminatory practices much more than IDO 1, and in some instances, reserved specific roles for their expatriate staff (see the quotation from HCN 12 below). Conversely, IDO 1 HCNs did not react in the same way, as demographics show that their expatriates had more years of experience on the job or working within the sector and seemed more qualified for roles allocated comparatively to HCNs.

“(…) going up the ladder, for specific positions, you just have to know the language our fund givers speak.” (English language is not sufficient). (Expatriate 6)
“(…) probably two years ago, an expatriate came in as an intern and within the next 6 months is being represented as an Advisor and you would remain a Junior Advisor (…) an intern who was fresh from school becomes a boss to one having 10 years’ work experience and begins to lead the team.” (HCN 12)

The working language of IDO 2 in Nigeria is English, understood worldwide. Thus, it might be fair to suggest that HCNs who are qualified based on educational qualification and years of technical experience, can be allocated roles held by expatriates if the English language was not considered insufficient and translation resources are available. Hence, saving IDO operational costs.

 Preferential implementation of role allocation and pay practices towards expatriates have led to HCNs realising these differences. Hence triggering feelings of being exploited and neglected as “second class citizens” (e.g., HCN 5 from IDO 1). While it is acknowledged that the expatriates deserve to be rewarded for being foreigners in an unfamiliar host country, HCNs contribute to IDOs’ goals and expect to be treated fairly.

Perceptions of security mechanisms and other institutional support

For safety-oriented measures to protect staff (see table v), we focused our analysis on expatriates and HCNs’ vulnerability to risk and what organisational measures and practices
are put in place to protect IDO staff. We further analysed how these practices are
implemented and perceived by both groups.

<Insert table (v) here>

Apparently, expatriates received additional protection compared to HCNs due to the
expectation that HCNs are within their locality and would be more familiar with the context
(Peters, 2016) or that they do not necessarily cross borders (Vance, et al., 2014). HCNs’
perceptions about such theoretical rationale differ. While most research participants lived in
the capital city of Nigeria (Abuja) and may seem less exposed to extreme security threats
such as attacks by Boko haram prominent in the North-Eastern parts of Nigeria, they are
vulnerable to these attacks including threats of being kidnapped and ransom being demanded,
herdsmen attack, robbery, and road accidents, when they travel on missions. Other risks
found in the capital city of Abuja include taxi scams, banditry (including violence during
political elections and demonstrations by the Shi’ite Islamic movement), and “police
harassment” especially for females (suggested by HCN 13).

There is also an indication that HCNs’ vulnerability to risk increases because they
work for international organisations. Some participants suggested that because of HCNs’
association with expatriates perceived as “wealthy people” (e.g., Expat 1) or as those who
“carry price tags” (e.g., Expat 4, Expat 1, Expat 10; HCN 16), HCNs (including their family
members) become more susceptible to kidnapping. It is possible for kidnappers to abduct
family members of IDOs’ HCNs as a ploy to demand random money.

“(…) when you work for an organisation like this, you are very attractive to them.
They can pick you up and demand for ransom.” (HCN 9)

In Abuja city, expatriates seemed less exposed to other risks such as taxi scams, as
they received more logistical support and do not require to commute a great distance to work
compared to HCNs. Expatriates mostly live in highbrow areas, while “nationals can’t afford
to live in Abuja because it’s too expensive, so they have to live further in the outskirts, and it
takes them longer to get to the office (…)” (Expat 7). Expatriates are offered accommodation
privileges and live in well-guarded, fenced, and protected houses. They are also “(…) paid
security allowances” (HCN 7), which HCNs are not entitled to. This is tied to the type of
contract (international staff versus national staff) during onboarding. Apparently, due to the
high cost of renting a place in highbrow areas, where their expatriate colleagues live, most
HCNs working in Abuja city cannot afford to live in those locations. Due to this, they
typically live on the outskirts, requiring substantial commute to and from work each day.
What is worse, those with specific contracts do not have access to car parking privileges, which puts them at the risk of theft experienced by HCN 15.

“\textit{But for the national staff, they would travel for like one or even two hours in those areas, get stuck in traffic or even like getting there, there is no real public transport. They have to wait for a cab that takes them. This prolongs their journey home (…) I think a way of coming to the office, is a way more stressful for them which might affect their work.}” (Expat 7)

or

“I’d say the risk of even getting to your house is there because you don’t know the kind of transportation you are entering, and you don’t know the person who is carrying you.” (HCN 4).

Although HCNs might be entitled to some level of protection since they mostly travel with expatriates during missions, HCN 10 indicated less privilege of being picked up by an institutional vehicle from homes despite the commuting distance challenge between their homes to the office- which is often their point of departure to the field. This further exacerbates their exposure to internal city risks earlier highlighted. They can also get physically fatigued.
“(…) if we are going on an official trip, for the national person, drivers don’t go to their house to pick them up, but the expatriates are picked from their houses by drivers. You (the HCN) would be required to either come out to meet them up at a junction, where they would just pick you up if it’s on the way to the location. If not, you would be required to come to the office.” (HCN 10).

Another risk expatriates and HCNs are vulnerable to include car accidents which could lead to death or injuries that would require emergency access to health care facilities. Interestingly, IDO staff are categorised regarding the type of health insurance benefits they received, which HCN 9 in the following quote considered a disadvantage. This is associated with the type of contract they have with the IDOs.

“We have category A, B, C (…) But we are on category B, and we have limitations on the kinds of hospitals that we can use. For category A, hospitals are first class when you categorize the hospitals in terms of health facilities in Nigeria. So yeah, we are not in that category. So, it means there are some limitations we have in terms of healthcare.” (HCN 9).

What is even worse, access to health insurance benefits in some IDOs is non-existent for HCN consultant staff. Expatriates also have access to evacuation insurance benefits. They
have the privilege of being flown out of the country for things like the “dog bite” experienced by Expat 1, to access immunity against rabies infection. Some IDOs have a safe-haven/house which is a bullet-proof room offering a place of refuge for employees in the event of danger while at work. This safe-haven could be located in the nearest safest country to Nigeria.

However, HCN 14 suggests that priority was given to expatriates when such a need arose.

“But then at the same time, you would have to ask yourself, if things are so bad that you need to evacuate your international staff, why are you comfortable in leaving your national staff who are exposed to similar kinds of risks, and they are colleagues. Why are you comfortable leaving them (...) because it’s a safe house you are taking them to, you are not taking them to their home countries.” (HCN 14).

In sum, although there seems to be parity in the way expatriates and HCNs received travel advice and had access to armoured institutional vehicles and police escorts during missions (measures 2 and 5), differences were largely perceived in the implementation of other safety-oriented practices (see table v).

**Social comparison mechanisms between expatriates and HCNs**

Our findings here respond to RQ2, which is to understand how expatriates and HCNs compared themselves to each other and how this influences their working relations. Making
social comparisons can either be harmful or beneficial to interactions between expatriates and
HCNs in IDOs. Regarding comparison outcomes, we found that HCNs selected expatriates as
their referents and made upward social comparisons. Individuals who make upward social
comparisons consider those they compare themselves with, better-off based on set criteria
used for their assessment (Gerber et al., 2018). In this case, HCNs considered expatriates
better-off than themselves because of their perception that preferential HRM practices were
implemented on expatriates. Expatriates were clearly allocated favourable roles,
paid/rewarded higher, and received better safety-oriented practices. Although HCNs
categorised expatriates as being better-off, expatriates also believed they were better-off
indeed and in such instances were making downward social comparisons as indicated by

Expat 4.

“(…) expatriate colleagues come with the notion that they are superior or the notion that they
know everything (…) discriminating certain positions.” (Expatriate 4)

By contrast, HCNs felt relatively deprived because they were not allocated favourable roles-
were paid less and did not perceive parity in the implementation of safety-oriented practices
compared to expatriates. Therefore, they categorised themselves as being worse-off.
“(…) I could see so it gives some people some sense of superiority over others, which I feel is not healthy. (HCN 12)”

The implication of these upward and downward comparisons can trigger negative attitudes and behaviours. This is reflected when HCNs “retract back into shells” (e.g., HCN 12) exhibiting hesitance towards contributing meaningfully to the team’s progress. HCN 10 specifically mentioned that they demonstrated hesitance towards sharing knowledge with an expatriate intern who was brought in to gain some experience, intending to allocate a preferential higher role later. Yet that “expatriate earned ten times higher compared to HCN 10 who was providing the training and support” to intern. There were other negative outcomes such as high employee turnover as indicated by HCN 9 below:

“So, there is this high employee turnover and organisations are not ready to pay well. And it’s not only the pay but also the relationship with your people.” (HCN 9)

Other implications include the creation of toxic work environments when expatriates and HCNs begin questioning each other’s trust and exhibiting incivilities at work such as “resorting to exchange of words violently” in IDO 2 for example (quoted by HCN 12) between an expatriate manager and some other HCN team members. Stereotypical behaviours between members of both groups have also been exhibited. For safety-oriented
practices, HCN 7 has used comments such as “entitled big white man”. In trying to justify why HCNs seemed relatively deprived, Expat 7 mentions that “Nigerians have hierarchical fears (…) and are not as lucky and as privileged as they were to receive good education”.

HCN 12 also mentioned how some expatriates have considered HCNs to “lack quick-expression or do not go straight to the point”. These are all stereotypes that can be created due to a lack of trust which can be further exacerbated when differences are obvious.

Although the foregoing suggests negative outcomes from upwards comparisons, especially from the HCNs’ perspectives, there were indications of upward social comparisons yielding to other beneficial outcomes reflected in HCNs’ self-enhancing behaviours. HCN 13 assumes that expatriates who are allocated favourable roles can act as mentors to them and “help in grooming them knowledge-wise”. Self-enhancing behaviours are valuable in improving the quality of workplace relationships between expatriates and HCNs; whilst also ensuring that the harmful impacts of upward social comparisons are minimised.

**Discussion**

Overall, our results highlight the differences in the perceptions of expatriates and HCNs regarding how HRM practices are implemented across sampled IDOs. Differences were found in specific practices such as role allocation (including pay/reward) and safety-
oriented practices. HCNs perceived that there were more favourable roles allocated to expatriates, leading to better pay and rewards attributed to them. These align with evidence from previous research on HCNs’ neglected status (e.g., Takeuchi, 2010). However, we find differences in safety-oriented practices which can further exacerbate the quality of relationships. Although it seems that the IDOs we studied take the right measures to protect expatriates and HCNs, it is evident that more significant investments were made in protecting expatriates compared to HCNs. These differences have the potential to further exacerbate the negative outcomes found from differences in role allocation practices and from paying HCNs lower wages, in line with their local economy. Such perceived differences triggered upward social comparison outcomes among HCNs. Aligned with the social categorisation theorists’ perspective (e.g., Kawakami & Dion 1993), IDO expatriates and HCNs became more aware of their group identities and engaged more in out-group social comparisons. This subsequently influenced the expatriates’ and HCNs’ attitudes and behaviours (Kawakami and Dion, 1993, van Bakel, 2019) such as demonstrating hesitance in contributing meaningfully to teams’ progress, hesitating to share knowledge, exhibiting incivilities, and stereotypical behaviours.
HCNs’ perception affirms this notion of “relative deprivation” (Runciman, 1966) when they began to compare themselves to expatriates. Their continued categorisation of expatriates as a main referent group. Hence, HCNs referenced expatriates as “better-off” and themselves as worse-off. This expands on knowledge, which suggests that assimilating upward can have positive or negative implications (Gerber et. al., 2018). Positive, in a way of triggering a better sense of self-worth and motivating HCNs to strive towards achieving these “better-off” positions themselves. Negative in a way that it negatively impacts their sense of self-worth especially when they see themselves as possessing similar attributes with their referents, such as having equitable years of work experience, similar qualifications, and capabilities; and yet are unable to find themselves in similar positions.

Conversely, for expatriates, the most salient HRM practices that most influenced their perceptions were practices linked to safety and security. Other interests include boosting their international experiences. Perhaps some elements of adjustment to the host country and getting to know the local culture. This is related to what we already know about expatriate management in literature suggesting that expatriates seek work experience and other global management skills for international assignments which are pre-requisites to obtaining the benefits that are associated with it such as attaining specific “executive suites” (Takeuchi,
Additionally, some IDO expatriates have a sense of devaluing rewards and seemed unwilling to divulge pay information. So far, we are yet to find evidence within the literature that aligns with this finding, except for the justifications that seem to be provided for the compensation advantage that expatriates have linked to working in difficult contexts with culture shock and career uncertainties (e.g., Dickman, Doherty, Mills and Brewster, 2008). Expatriates demonstrated interest in pursuing social justice, whilst taking up some leadership roles. Expatriates neither perceived relative deprivation nor wanted to engage in making comparison selection downwards, as that is considered a worse-off position. This also conforms with the notion that comparisons are generally upward, except in situations where self-esteem is threatened (Wills, 1981). Expatriates did not feel threatened as allocating more favourable roles gave them hegemony. Expatriates’ ability to witness the perceptions and reactions of HCNs and knowing that they are better-off indeed, increases their hegemony within these IDOs, hence influencing policies affecting both parties. This further leads to expatriate self-enhancing behaviours.

**Limitations and recommendations for future studies**

While our research brings novel findings of HRM implementation in IDOs and their effects on both expatriates and HCNs, it has limitations that should be acknowledged. First,
we focus on the context of IDOs in Nigeria, which may limit the generalisability of our
findings. Future research should explore how similar IDOs operate in other African countries
and other world regions such as Latin America and some parts of Asia as those may vary
considerably. Their economic and social advancement can potentially establish some
differences and similarities with our findings. The cultural and ethnic proximity of expatriates
and HCNs could also be explored with larger samples, to understand social comparison
mechanisms. Some of our limitations are associated with the IDO types targeted. However,
we believe this is a good representation of the main IDO types (as per Table ii).

Second, our research has not evaluated specific characteristics that facilitate or inhibit
interactions between expatriates and HCNs’ interactions, such as cultural distance, perceived
as an expression of similarities between both groups (van Bakel, 2019). Future research could
use a similarity-atraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) or what Fee et al., (2015, p.11) refer to as
“similarity-equality” to access how certain characteristics of expatriates and HCNs can
facilitate closeness and successful expatriate and HCN interactions. Additionally, IDOs
employ expatriates that originate from different nationalities that may not necessarily be the
same as the home country of the IDO headquarters (Lazarova et al, 2021). Although our
study identified some differences in nationalities of expatriates, it would be worth examining
how these differences can strengthen or weaken expat-HCN relationships. Future studies can therefore consider the diversity of IDO expatriate nationalities to understand whether this can influence HCN’s receptiveness to their network and vice versa.

Third, other factors such as gender and nationality (e.g., Varma et al., 2011) can be considered for future study. Gender and nationality are entwined, especially given Nigeria’s patriarchal culture that values men over women. There is the perception that women are inferior to men on the job market, resulting in unequal opportunities and rights (Bako and Syed, 2018). This increases the likelihood of pessimism towards a female expatriate supervising a Nigerian male HCN colleague, for example. Based on the similarity-attraction paradigm, future research can explore how such dissimilarities can exacerbate conflicts in the interactions between in-group and out-group members at work. Other attributes linked to nationality include accent and skin colour. From our findings, these attributes have been suggested by one of the HCN participants, as potential sources of conflict in their interaction with expatriate colleagues. It was suggested that expatriates with specific accents would make the same suggestion previously made by an HCN, but their suggestion would be considered more valuable. We did not reflect this in the main results section because it was not included in our interview protocol, and it was less emphasised by HCN participants in
general. Due to the general lack of emphasis on skin color and accent (attributes of nationality), this aspect was not further explored. We recommend that future research should examine the extent to which these two characteristics or attributes can further influence the attainment of “executive suites” (Takeuchi, 2010, p.1041) relative to HCNs and how this can be mitigated if it leads to negative consequences in their interpersonal relationships.

Lastly, we had a low sample of expatriates due to some safety and security concerns for one of the researchers during the data collection stage. It was difficult to travel to some remote areas within Nigeria and reach out to some of the respondents. To remain compliant with ethical standards, except for those working in safer parts of the country like Abuja, we were unable to access more expatriates on the ground. Due to these safety and security concerns, some IDOs were more restrictive than others in allowing access. This, therefore, provides room for future research with larger samples and increased budgets to account for safety and security concerns. While we have focused on IDO workers with regular paid contracts, future research could also consider the management of volunteers working in certain IDOs.
Practical Implications & Conclusion

The managerial implication for the foregoing is that, although IDO HCNs who feel relatively deprived (Runciman, 1966) can renegotiate their employment conditions, this may not necessarily be feasible in the short run due to the pervasiveness of ethnocentric pay practices by global players (Toh and DeNisi, 2003), partly justified by the competences that expatriates bring to their role (Lazarova et al., 2021). It may be relevant to communicate clearly on the competencies expatriates bring to explain status difference or pay gap between them and HCNs (Lazarova et al., 2021).

IDOs could focus on other practices such as safety-oriented practices likely to reduce the negative effect of status differences between group groups. Other practices might include HCNs given similar opportunities, such as engaging in short-term international assignments to gain the relevant developmental experiences offered to expatriates, rather than simply fulfilling staffing needs (Solomon, 1995). Moreover, if HCNs are allowed to spend some time abroad for training, it increases their learning opportunities and offers them a better sense of self-worth. They would also feel less relatively deprived and the use of expatriates as their referents because of differences in HRM practices enactment, may become less obvious (Toh
and DeNisi, 2003), or less of their concern. Expatriates’ efforts would also be more effective if their status difference with HCNs is minimised (Fee et al., 2015).

In our study, we discovered that HCNs, especially those who live in Abuja, cannot afford to live in highbrow areas where expats live. As they commute long distances to and from work, they are further exposed to risk and stress. Interactions between expatriates and HCNs may be negatively affected by these challenges. To solve this dilemma, IDOs can reduce these logistical challenges and pressures by re-examining expatriate and HCN living conditions and by introducing housing systems that are beneficial to the latter. Providing housing closer to work or adopting hybrid working arrangements would reduce commute times and improve quality of life for HCNs. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, hybrid work arrangements have become increasingly popular. To provide their workers with flexibility, IDOs can continue to offer the option of coming into the office only for team meetings and field trips. In this way, they are less vulnerable to risk and have fewer transportation costs to worry about. Furthermore, pay disparity can be minimised by harmonising positions so that pay scales correspond to tax systems and living costs in specific countries.

Triggers of stereotypical behaviours can be investigated by studying specific demographic characteristics such as nationality (Bonache, Langinier, and Zarraga-Oberty, 2011).
2015), often linked to culture. Hence how each group might be more culturally sensitive (Cyr and Schneider, 1996), can be promoted during induction training. This can influence perceptions about how employees see themselves in different roles, hence minimising conflicts that often seem to arise as a result.

Additionally, the implementation of HRM policies and practices that practically reflects inclusivity rather than what has been postulated rhetorically, should be prominent and have a positive effect on IDOs’ performance. This is important because corporate investments in diversity and inclusion programmes tend to be associated with favourable employee attitudes (Madera, Dawson, and Neal, 2018), with a potential implication for organisational performance too.

In conclusion, we argued that the perceptions of specific in-group members within sampled IDO workforce regarding the enactment of dissimilar HRM practices- giving preferences to specific out-group members mostly triggered more upward and less downward comparison outcomes. Our results inform not only researchers but also practitioners about some of the key aspects that can be accounted for in managing a blended workforce in IDOs. This is a relevant predictor of the performance. Although some HRM practices were more salient for each group, this is not to suggest that IDOs or other organisations, should solely be
focused on these salient practices for each group in such ways. Hence, IDOs’ collaborative participation to minimise the effects through a personal responsibility programme (Fee and McGrath Champ, 2017) advocated by the IDOs for expatriates can also be extended to HCNs in a more nuanced way.

We believe that the result from this study would be useful for HRM practitioners in the implementation of their HRM and related organisational practices in IDOs. Although individual needs differ, it is pertinent to acknowledge the relevance of individuals’ perceptions as this influences their awareness regarding the social comparisons which in turn reflects in their attitudes and behaviours. This then spills over reflecting on their quality of work in general, relating to wider organisational goals.

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Table i: *IDO classification based on aid channels*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aid Channel</th>
<th>First-level implementing partners</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilateral</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public sector</strong></td>
<td>Donor governments*-central state and local institutions.</td>
<td>Development Ministry (of DAC or non-DAC countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aid recipients-central, state, and local institutions</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance (e.g Canadian Ministry of Finance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs (e.g FCO now merged with DFID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-governmental</strong></td>
<td>Non-profit entities</td>
<td>Cooperatives; Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public-private</strong></td>
<td>Private actors; Bilateral/multilateral agencies</td>
<td>Development Finance Institutions; Challenge funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>partnerships</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>For-profit entities</td>
<td>Consultancies; Think tanks*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multilateral</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multilateral</strong></td>
<td>Inter-governmental Institutions</td>
<td>World Bank; UN; EU; ECOWAS; CGAIR research centres e.g IFPRI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: OECD, 2013*

*Note: Within donor governments, there is often more than one government body that can be an implementing partner with spending authorities held with central agencies. If budgetary authorities are formally transferred from central aid authorities to other public sector agencies, the channel will be determined by the latter’s first-level implementing partners.*

**Acronyms:** FCO—Foreign and Commonwealth Office; DAC—Development Assistant Committee; DFID - Department for International Development

### An Overview of Sampled IDO Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDOs</th>
<th>Bilateral</th>
<th>Multilateral</th>
<th>Nature of core activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDO1</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Financial services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO2</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diverse developmental areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Think tank Research-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Think Thank Research-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Emergency responses/humanitarian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table iii: Demographic profile of HCN Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDOs</th>
<th>Employee type</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Years of experience working in IDOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HCNs</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO1M</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO2B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO3M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO4M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO 5B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “< or >” Reflects the number of participants “greater or less than” in category size.

Acronyms: M and B connote IDO as either a Multilateral or Bilateral based on earlier classification shown in Table 1
M-Male; F-Female; Md-Married; S-Single; Expats-Expatriates; HCNs-Host country nationals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDOs</th>
<th>Employee type</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Years of experience working in IDOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO1M</td>
<td>3 (1 American, 1 British &amp; 1 Congolese)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO2B</td>
<td>5 (1 Spanish, 3 German &amp; 1 Bulgarian)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO3M</td>
<td>1 (British)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO4M</td>
<td>1 (Ivorian)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDO 5B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** “< or >” Reflects the number of participants “greater or less than” in category size.

Acronym: \( M \) and \( B \) connote IDO as either a Multilateral or Bilateral based on classification shown in Table 1

M-Male; F-Female; Md-Married; S-Single; Expats-Expatriates; HCNs-Host country nationals.
Table v: *Safety-oriented measures and perceived differences between expatriates and HCNs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Expatriates</th>
<th>HCNs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Logistical support</td>
<td>Live in highbrow areas and receive accommodation privileges</td>
<td>Mostly live in city outskirts due to high cost of living. Hence commute long distances to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Institutional vehicles with police escort</td>
<td>Offered to expatriates and HCNs on field trips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Health insurance coverage (Category A, B &amp; C)</td>
<td>Access to health insurance &amp; evacuation insurance</td>
<td>Less access due to health insurance categorisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expats are in category A meaning access to first-class hospitals</td>
<td>Are in lower categories with restricted access to health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evacuation insurance &amp; safe havens</td>
<td>Prioritised over HCNs during evacuation</td>
<td>Considered as second-class citizens during this practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regular updates and travel advise</td>
<td>Offered to expatriates and HCNs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Security Training</td>
<td>Offered additional layer of training (e.g., safe training specifically designed)</td>
<td>Offered training with no additional layer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Contract types</td>
<td>International contracts</td>
<td>Local contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Car parking privileges</td>
<td>Parking restrictions do not apply to them</td>
<td>Consultants (mostly HCNs) are restricted parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Time away from work (TAFW)</td>
<td>Offered one month off after working 3 months based on working in FGDs (Fragilities, Civil wars, and other things)</td>
<td>Do not have this privilege</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>UN passport ownership</td>
<td>Possession of UN passport and UN plate number</td>
<td>Not entitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research questions</td>
<td>Interview questions</td>
<td>Main Themes</td>
<td>Initial codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do expatriates and HCNs perceive the differences in the implementation of HRM practices in IDOs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Role allocation practices</td>
<td>Contract types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nature of HR practices implemented</td>
<td>Safety-oriented practices</td>
<td>Job title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived differences in Implementation of practices in both groups</td>
<td>Privileges</td>
<td>Job ranking/grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pay practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vulnerability in a risky context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Logistical support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health insurance cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Security training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TAFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evacuation Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel Advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutionalised vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do expatriates and HCNs compare</td>
<td>Upward and downward social</td>
<td>Parity</td>
<td>Some safety measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attributed more power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table vi: Coding of expatriates’ interviews
themselves to each other and how do such comparisons influence their working relationships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome of perceptions</th>
<th>Impact on working relationships</th>
<th>The notion of superiority toward HCNs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider selves better-off</td>
<td>Negative and positive outcomes</td>
<td>Self-enhancing behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical behaviours</td>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** TAFW (Time away from work); IE (International experience)

### Table vii: Coding of HCNs interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Main Themes</th>
<th>Initial codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do expatriates and HCNs perceive the differences in the implementation of HRM practices in IDOs?</td>
<td>Nature of HR practices implemented</td>
<td>Role allocation practices</td>
<td>Contract types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Job title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Job ranking/grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pay practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safety-oriented practices</td>
<td>Vulnerability in a risky context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Logistical support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health insurance cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Security training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evacuation Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel Advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do expatriates and HCNs compare themselves to each other and how do such comparisons influence their working relationships?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived differences in Implementation of practices in both groups</td>
<td>Privileges</td>
<td>Institutionalised vehicles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived inequity in pay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived role discrimination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relative deprivation</td>
<td>Less influential roles and lower placements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less protected</td>
<td></td>
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