

CHAPTER SEVEN
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS:
WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND GENERAL ISSUES REGARDING
DEPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN MINING

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the second part of the empirical findings and shed light on the following three themes: *Infrastructure facilities*, *Physical ability* of women employed in core mining positions and *Health and safety in the workplace*. This chapter provides the third and final part of the empirical findings. The quantitative and qualitative data are presented in an integrated way on the following two themes that will be covered in this chapter: *Workplace relations* and *General issues regarding the deployment of women in mining*. For the theme *Workplace relations*, descriptive statistics, frequencies and factor analysis are presented and discussed. In addition, the findings of the qualitative inquiry (semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended sections of the questionnaire) are reported. The section *General issues regarding the deployment of women in mining* mainly entails findings derived from the qualitative inquiry as well as the open-ended sections of the questionnaire, which are reported on and discussed according to relevant themes and sub-themes.

7.2 WORKPLACE RELATIONS

The integration of women into the mining workforce has been accompanied with various challenges and has had many consequences, not only in terms of physical infrastructure that had to be adapted and upgraded, but also regarding workplace relations. Not only management faced unique challenges, but also male co-workers and the newly employed women in core mining positions. The following indicator statements have been identified, by means of a thorough literature study, to determine the perceptions of workplace relations within the mining companies included in the study:

- Men and women are treated equally in the workplace (in terms of promotion, bonuses, opportunities, etc.).
- Men and women are paid equal wages.

- Women feel accepted by their male co-workers.
- Women feel part of the work team.
- Women feel fairly treated by their male co-workers.
- Women feel fairly treated by management.
- Language is a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks.
- Sexual favouritism (in other words sexual favours for co-workers and management) is commonly practised in the mining company.
- Sexual harassment (for example threats, demands and bodily contact) is a general problem in the workplace.
- The mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace.
- The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace.
- The mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management.
- Women are satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace.

The section below presents and discusses the quantitative results and qualitative findings of the section *Workplace relations*.

7.2.1 Descriptive statistics and frequencies

It is evident from tables 7.2 (a–c) that the quantitative data obtained from the three mines included in the study yielded different results. However, agreement in the responses was found for some of the indicators.

The participants across all three mines reported positive responses for the following indicators:

- Men and women are paid equal wages.
- Women feel accepted by their male co-workers.
- Women feel part of the work team.

- Women feel fairly treated by their male co-workers.
- Women feel fairly treated by management.
- The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace.

These statements calculated a mean of above 2.5 across all three target groups of the three mines, indicating that compliance with these statements is satisfactory.

Negative responses were obtained from the majority of the participants across all three mines for the indicator on *Language*. It can be deducted that language is regarded as a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks at the mining companies included in the study. The mean calculated for this statement (reversed) is above 2.5 for almost all target groups across the three mines. As indicated in the Biographical section under 5.2 in Chapter Five, mines included in the study have a largely diversified workforce in terms of racial and cultural backgrounds and languages spoken. Although different dialects of Fanagolo are spoken at the three mines, language is still regarded as a main issue.

Discrepancies in the responses were reported for the following indicators:

The majority of the participants (all target groups) of the copper mine positively indicated that sexual favouritism is not commonly practised in the mining company and that sexual harassment is not regarded as a general problem in the workplace. This view was supported by the majority of the participants of the female and management target groups of the phosphate mine, but not by the male target group. Positive responses calculated a mean below 2.5 and because these statements are reversed, it does not point towards a problem area. A distressing observation is that 80% of the male and 61.9% of the female participants of the platinum mine reported that sexual favouritism and sexual harassment is a general problem in the workplace; these statements (reversed) calculated a mean of 2.5 and above.

Questions were included in the questionnaire to the female employees working in core mining positions to determine whether the participants had been approached for sex in the workplace in exchange for favours and whether they have ever been sexually harassed in the workplace. The responses to these questions were extremely positive across the mines, as only an insignificant percentage answered 'yes', as indicated in figures 7.1 and 7.2.

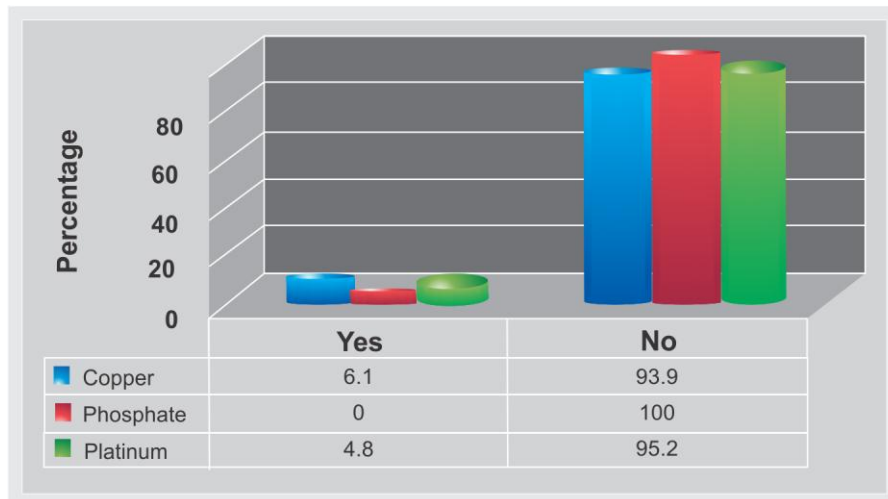


Figure 7.1: Have you ever been approached for sex in the workplace in exchange for favours?

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

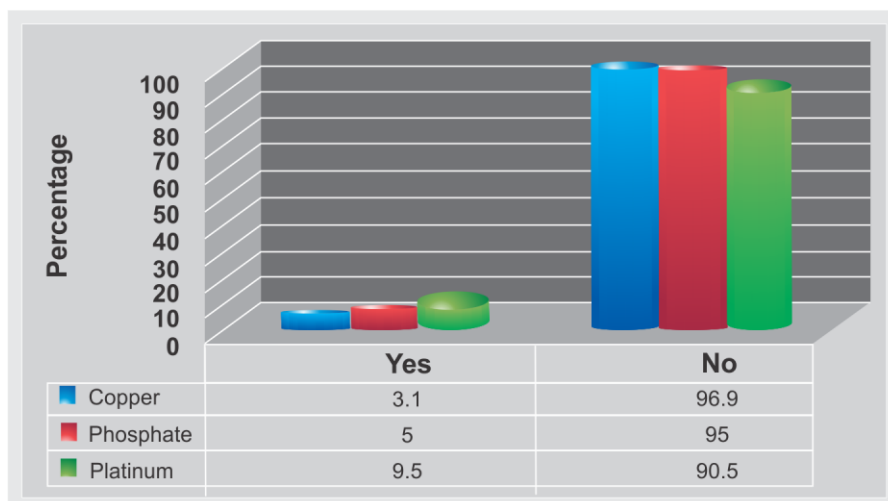


Figure 7.2: Have you ever been sexually harassed in the workplace?

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

Although the quantitative responses revealed only positive results, the literature review (Chapter Four under 4.2 and 4.4.6.1.3) as well as the qualitative enquiry indicates that sexual harassment and sexual favouritism remain major issues in the mining industry. Management of the different mining companies aim to minimise the occurrence of sexual

harassment by conducting regular training and education interventions on sexual harassment. Detailed concerns regarding sexual harassment are reported in 7.2.3.9.

Different views were obtained for the indicator *The mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace*. A vast majority of the participants (all target groups) of the copper mine reacted positively to this indicator. More than 60% of the male and female participants of the phosphate mine supported this opinion, while a split opinion was obtained from the majority of the management participants. The responses from the copper and phosphate mines were positive in the sense that on average, the participants are aware of committees that investigate sexual harassment issues in the mining companies. Furthermore, as mentioned above, a vast majority of the participants agreed to strongly agreed that *The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace*. It can therefore be assumed that employees of the copper and phosphate mines are satisfied with the way sexual harassment is addressed in the companies. However, this view was not supported by the male and female participants of the platinum mine. Although it is indicated by the majority of the participants (men and women working in core mining positions) of the platinum mine that *The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace*, a slight majority of the female participants (60%) and only 40% of the male participants reported that *The mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace*. The mean calculated at 2.4, indicating that compliance with this statement is none or very limited. The platinum mining company needs to establish a committee if one does not exist, or create awareness if there is in fact such a committee.

The majority of the participants (all target groups) of the copper and phosphate mines reported positive responses for the following two indicators:

The mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management and *Women are satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace*. This view was also supported by the majority of the male participants of the platinum mine, while slightly more than half of the female participants of the platinum mine thought that *The mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management* and only 35% indicated that they were *satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace*. These two statements calculated a mean of 2.4, indicating that compliance with this statement is none or very limited. The findings from the qualitative inquiry revealed the main concerns in this regard and are discussed in 7.2.3.10.

A question was also included in the questionnaire to determine whether the mining companies have any forums for women, for example committees or representation in trade unions. From Table 7.1 below it is clear that a vast majority of the participants of the copper and phosphate mines reacted positively to this question, while a slight majority of the participants of the platinum mine supported this view. The open-ended section of the questionnaire revealed that Women in Mining forums as well as trade union representation, although not visible, exist at the three mines. Specific issues regarding the functioning of Women in Mining forums at the mines included in the study are discussed under 7.2.3.10.1.

Table 7.1: Participants' perceptions regarding the existence of forums for women

Does the mining company have any forums for women, for example committees or representation in trade unions?		Male in core			Female in core			Management		
		Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure
1.	Copper mine	64.7	11.8	23.5	77.4	6.5	16.1	68.8	6.3	25.0
2.	Phosphate mine	82.4	5.9	11.8	84.2	5.3	10.5	100.0	0.0	0.0
3.	Platinum mine	56.3	12.5	31.3	60.0	15.0	25.0			
	Total	69.2	9.6	21.2	74.3	8.6	17.1	82.1	3.6	14.3

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

Table 7.2 (a): Participants' perceptions regarding workplace relations – copper mine

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core						Management					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
1.	Men and women are treated equally in the workplace (in terms of promotion, bonuses, opportunities, etc.)	5.9	11.8	70.6	11.8	2.88	0.69	12.5	18.8	53.1	15.6	2.72	0.89	0.0	12.5	56.3	31.3	3.19	0.66
2.	Men and women are paid equal wages	0.0	5.9	82.4	11.8	3.06	0.43	6.5	25.8	45.2	22.6	2.84	0.86	0.0	13.3	46.7	40.0	3.27	0.70
3.	I (women) feel accepted by my (their) male co-workers	0.0	17.6	64.7	17.6	3.00	0.61	3.0	24.2	48.5	24.2	2.94	0.79	0.0	25.0	50.0	25.0	3.00	0.73
4.	I (women) feel part of the work team	0.0	0.0	82.4	17.6	3.18	0.39	6.1	12.1	57.6	24.2	3.00	0.79	0.0	12.5	68.8	18.8	3.06	0.57
5.	I (women) feel fairly treated by my (their) male co-workers	0.0	5.9	82.4	11.8	3.06	0.43	12.5	15.6	50.0	21.9	2.81	0.93	0.0	12.5	68.8	18.8	3.06	0.57
6.	I (women) feel fairly treated by management	6.3	0.0	75.0	18.8	3.06	0.68	3.2	29.0	54.8	12.9	2.77	0.72	0.0	12.5	56.3	31.3	3.19	0.66
7. ®	Language is a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks	0.0	47.1	41.2	11.8	2.65	0.70	21.2	24.2	33.3	21.2	2.55	1.06	18.8	25.0	43.8	12.5	2.50	0.97

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core						Management					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
8.®	Sexual favouritism (in other words sexual favours for co-workers and management) is commonly practised in the mining company	17.6	41.2	35.3	5.9	2.29	0.85	26.7	30.0	23.3	20.0	2.37	1.09	50.0	43.8	6.3	0.0	1.56	0.63
9.®	Sexual harassment (for example threats, demands and bodily contact) is a general problem in the workplace	5.9	76.5	11.8	5.9	2.18	0.64	25.0	43.8	18.8	12.5	2.19	0.97	37.5	56.3	6.3	0.0	1.69	0.60
10.	The mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace	0.0	11.8	58.8	29.4	3.18	0.64	6.1	15.2	51.5	27.3	3.00	0.83	0.0	12.5	43.8	43.8	3.31	0.70
11.	The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace	0.0	5.9	58.8	35.3	3.29	0.59	6.1	18.2	60.6	15.2	2.85	0.76	0.0	0.0	56.3	43.8	3.44	0.51
12.	The mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management	0.0	11.8	52.9	35.3	3.24	0.66	6.5	22.6	54.8	16.1	2.81	0.79	0.0	0.0	56.3	43.8	3.44	0.51

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core						Management					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
13.	I am (women are) satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace	0.0	0.0	88.2	11.8	3.12	0.33	6.7	30.0	56.7	6.7	2.63	0.72	0.0	0.0	75.0	25.0	3.25	0.45

®	Reversed statement
	A vast majority of the participants (above 62.5%) reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Slightly more than half (51–62.5%) reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Half of the participants (50%) reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Less than half of the participants reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Mean scores of 2.5 and lower (2.5 and above for reversed statements) were regarded as 'low' and indicate that compliance with the specific statement is none or very limited.

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

Table 7.2 (b): Participants' perceptions regarding workplace relations – phosphate mine

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core						Management					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
1.	Men and women are treated equally in the workplace (in terms of promotion, bonuses, opportunities, etc.)	6.3	12.5	62.5	18.8	2.94	0.77	0.0	5.0	50.0	45.0	3.40	0.59	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	3.50	0.52
2.	Men and women are paid equal wages	0.0	8.3	66.7	25.0	3.17	0.58	0.0	0.0	60.0	40.0	3.40	0.50	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	3.67	0.49
3.	I (women) feel accepted by my (their) male co-workers	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	3.50	0.52	0.0	10.0	50.0	40.0	3.30	0.66	0.0	16.7	75.0	8.3	2.92	0.51
4.	I (women) feel part of the work team	0.0	6.3	62.5	31.3	3.25	0.58	0.0	0.0	61.9	38.1	3.38	0.49	0.0	8.3	83.3	8.3	3.00	0.43
5.	I (women) feel fairly treated by my (their) male co-workers	0.0	6.3	62.5	31.3	3.25	0.58	0.0	10.0	60.0	30.0	3.20	0.62	0.0	8.3	91.7	0.0	2.92	0.29
6.	I (women) feel fairly treated by management	0.0	6.3	62.5	31.3	3.25	0.58	0.0	9.5	61.9	28.6	3.19	0.60	0.0	9.1	90.9	0.0	2.91	0.30
7. ®	Language is a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks	14.3	28.6	28.6	28.6	2.71	1.07	5.0	5.0	60.0	30.0	3.15	0.75	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0	2.17	0.72

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core						Management					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
8. ®	Sexual favouritism (in other words sexual favours for co-workers and management) is commonly practiced in the mining company	14.3	14.3	64.3	7.1	2.64	0.84	20.0	60.0	20.0	0.0	2.00	0.65	18.2	81.8	0.0	0.0	1.82	0.40
9. ®	Sexual harassment (for example threats, demands and bodily contact) is a general problem in the workplace	12.5	37.5	37.5	12.5	2.50	0.89	25.0	45.0	15.0	15.0	2.20	1.01	16.7	75.0	0.0	8.3	2.00	0.74
10.	The mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace	0.0	37.5	50.0	12.5	2.75	0.68	5.0	10.0	70.0	15.0	2.95	0.69	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	2.50	0.52
11.	The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace	0.0	31.3	43.8	25.0	2.94	0.77	5.0	15.0	55.0	25.0	3.00	0.79	0.0	8.3	66.7	25.0	3.17	0.58
12.	The mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management	0.0	18.8	50.0	31.3	3.13	0.72	0.0	20.0	55.0	25.0	3.05	0.69	0.0	8.3	50.0	41.7	3.33	0.65

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core						Management					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
13.	I am (women are) satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace	6.7	13.3	60.0	20.0	2.93	0.79	10.0	15.0	55.0	20.0	2.85	0.88	0.0	0.0	100	0.0	3.00	0.00

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	Slightly more than half (51–62.5 %) reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Half of the participants (50%) reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Less than half of the participants reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Mean scores of 2.5 and lower (2.5 and above for reversed statements) were regarded as 'low' and indicate that compliance with the specific statement is none or very limited.

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

Table 7.2 (c): Participants' perceptions regarding workplace relations – platinum mine

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
1.	Men and women are treated equally in the workplace (in terms of promotion, bonuses, opportunities, etc.)	25.0	25.0	37.5	12.5	2.38	1.02	19.0	28.6	38.1	14.3	2.48	0.98
2.	Men and women are paid equal wages	0.0	6.7	53.3	40.0	3.33	0.62	4.8	19.0	57.1	19.0	2.90	0.77
3.	I (women) feel accepted by my (their) male co-workers	0.0	13.3	73.3	13.3	3.00	0.53	9.5	14.3	57.1	19.0	2.86	0.85
4.	I (women) feel part of the work team	6.7	6.7	66.7	20.0	3.00	0.76	4.8	14.3	61.9	19.0	2.95	0.74
5.	I (women) feel fairly treated by my (their) male co-workers	0.0	6.7	60.0	33.3	3.27	0.59	5.0	35.0	45.0	15.0	2.70	0.80
6.	I (women) feel fairly treated by management	6.7	6.7	66.7	20.0	3.00	0.76	5.0	30.0	60.0	5.0	2.65	0.67
7. ®	Language is a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks	13.3	33.3	26.7	26.7	2.67	1.05	4.8	14.3	81.0	0.0	2.76	0.54
8. ®	Sexual favouritism (in other words sexual favours for co-workers and management) is commonly practiced in the mining company	6.7	13.3	40.0	40.0	3.13	0.92	19.0	19.0	52.4	9.5	2.52	0.93
9. ®	Sexual harassment (for example threats, demands and bodily contact) is a general problem in the workplace	6.7	26.7	20.0	46.7	3.07	1.03	14.3	14.3	61.9	9.5	2.67	0.86
10.	The mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace	20.0	40.0	20.0	20.0	2.40	1.06	25.0	15.0	50.0	10.0	2.45	0.99

Workplace relations		Male in core						Female in core					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
11.	The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace	7.1	21.4	57.1	14.3	2.79	0.80	9.5	19.0	57.1	14.3	2.76	0.83
12.	The mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management	13.3	20.0	46.7	20.0	2.73	0.96	25.0	20.0	45.0	10.0	2.40	0.99
13.	I am (women are) satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace	7.1	35.7	35.7	21.4	2.71	0.91	30.0	35.0	30.0	5.0	2.10	0.91

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	Less than half of the participants reacted positively by indicating 3 (partially) and 4 (completely). The opposite applies to reversed statements.
	Mean scores of 2.5 and lower (2.5 and above for reversed statements) were regarded as 'low' and indicate that compliance with the specific statement is none or very limited.

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

The results of the factor analysis are presented and discussed in the following section.

7.2.2 Factor analysis

A factor analysis was conducted on the 13 statements listed in the questionnaire. The results of the KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity are presented in Table 7.3 (a).

Table 7.3 (a): KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity

KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity		Value
KMO		0.748
P-value of Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-sq	534.028
	df	78
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

The KMO measured 0.748 and indicates that the sample size is adequate for factor analysis. The p-value of Bartlett's test of sphericity returned a value smaller than 0.05, suggesting that the correlation between statements is sufficient for factor analysis (Field, 2005:652). The results for the factor analysis are reported in Table 7.3 (b).

Table 7.3 (b): Pattern matrix^a

Workplace relations						
No.	Question statement	Factor 1 Employment relations	Factor 2 Complaints – handling procedures	Factor 3 Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism	Factor 4 Language	Communalities
H2	Men and women are paid equal wages	0.753				0.641
H1	Men and women are treated equally in the workplace (in terms of promotion, bonuses, opportunities, etc.)	0.751				0.619

Workplace relations						
No.	Question statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
		Employment relations	Complaints – handling procedures	Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism	Language	Communalities
H4	I feel part of the work team	0.729				0.798
H5	I feel fairly treated by my male co-workers	0.691				0.598
H6	I feel fairly treated by management	0.683				0.644
H3	I feel accepted by my male co-workers	0.665				0.684
H11	The mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace		-0.829			0.691
H10	The mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace		-0.819			0.750
H12	The mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management		-0.704			0.647
H13	I am satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace		-0.616			0.588
H9®	Sexual harassment (for example threats, demands and bodily contact) is a general problem in the workplace			0.864		0.764
H8®	Sexual favouritism (in other words sexual favours for co-workers and management) is commonly practised in the mining company			0.778		0.723

Workplace relations						
No.	Question statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
		Employment relations	Complaints – handling procedures	Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism	Language	Communalities
H7®	Language is a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks				-0.718	0.676
	Cronbach's alpha	0.83	0.77	0.69		
	Factor mean	3.00	2.84	2.44	2.74	
	Factor standard deviation	0.55	0.63	0.82	0.89	

® Reversed statement

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

Four factors were extracted by Kaiser's criteria (Field, 2005:652) that explain 67.86% of the total variance, in the section on *Workplace relations*. The statements all loaded above 0.6 on the four identified factors.

7.2.2.1 Factor 1: *Employment relations*

Questions H1, H2, H3, H4 ,H5 and H6 loaded on Factor 1, *Employment relations*. All questions loaded satisfactorily with a factor loading of above 0.6. The communalities for these statements are above 0.5.

The factor mean calculated at 3.00, which indicates a tendency to agree with the statements contained in the factor. It could thus be deducted that on average, the participants agreed that men and women are treated equally in the workplace (in terms of promotion, bonuses, opportunities, etc.), men and women are paid equal wages, women feel accepted by their male co-workers, women feel part of the work team, women feel fairly treated by their male co-workers and women feel fairly treated by management. It could be deducted that management of the mines attempt to treat all employees, regardless of gender, equally; however, the qualitative inquiry revealed some loopholes.

Furthermore, since the introduction of women into the core business of mining in 2004, attitudes towards women have begun to change, as on average, the women indicated that they feel reasonably accepted in the male-dominated mining workplace. These results are also enforced by the findings of the qualitative inquiry (see 7.2.3.2).

The factor shows good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83, which is above the required 0.7, and shows high reliability and internal consistency.

7.2.2.2 *Factor 2: Complaints-handling procedures*

Questions H10, H11, H12 and H13 loaded on Factor 2, *Complaints-handling procedures*. Questions H10 and H11 loaded heavily on the factor with a factor loading of above 0.8. Questions H12 and H13 loaded satisfactorily with a factor loading of above 0.6. The communalities for these statements are above 0.5.

The factor mean calculated at 2.84, which indicates a tendency to agree with the statements contained in the factor. Therefore, on average, the participants tended to agree that the mining company has a committee that investigates sexual harassment issues in the workplace, the mining company effectively addresses sexual harassment in the workplace, the mining company has an effective channel for women to voice their concerns to management and the participants are satisfied with the way in which management handles the concerns of women in the workplace. However, it must be noted that the qualitative inquiry revealed some deficiencies in this regard, which are discussed in 7.2.3.10.

The *Complaints-handling procedures* factor has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.77, which is above the required 0.7, and shows high reliability and internal consistency.

7.2.2.3 *Factor 3: Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism*

Questions H8 and H9 loaded on Factor 3, *Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism*. Both questions loaded heavily with a factor loading of above 0.7. The communalities for these statements are above 0.7.

The factor mean calculated at 2.44 and because both statements are reversed, this does not point towards a problem area. However, it must be noted that sexual harassment and sexual favouritism remain major issues in the mining industry, as suggested by the literature review and revealed by the qualitative inquiry. This is discussed further in 7.2.3.8 and 7.2.3.9.

The *Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism* factor has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.69, which could be regarded as an acceptable reliability (Field, 2009:675).

7.2.2.4 Factor 4: Language

Only one question loaded on Factor 4, *Language*. This statement has a factor loading of 0.718. The factor mean calculated at 2.74, and because the statement is reversed, it does point towards a problem area. It could be deducted that on average, the participants agreed that language is a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks. As already indicated in Chapter Five under 5.2.2.7, the mines included in the study consist of a largely diversified workforce and employees speak various languages. Although different dialects of Fanakalo are spoken at the mines, language still remains a major issue in the mining workplace.

7.2.2.5 Factor correlation matrix

The Pearson correlations between the extracted factors for the section *Workplace relations* are reported in Table 7.3 (c) below.

Table 7.3 (c): Factor correlation matrix

No.	Factors: Workplace relations	1	2	3	4
1.	Factor 1: Employment relations	1.000	-0.201	0.004	-0.117
2.	Factor 2: Complaints-handling procedures	-0.201	1.000	0.145	-0.029
3.	Factor 3: Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism	0.004	0.145	1.000	-0.016
4.	Factor 4: Language	-0.117	-0.029	-0.016	1.000

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

All factors have a correlation coefficient smaller than 0.3, indicating that there is a small correlation between the four factors. Each factor contains indicator statements regarding specific aspects that could have an effect on workplace relations.

7.2.2.6 Comparison of the three target groups of the different mines regarding Workplace relations

The descriptive statistics together with effect sizes of the different target groups regarding the section *Workplace relations* are reported in Table 7.3 (d) below. Because an availability sample was used, p-values are not relevant and differences between means were examined for practical significance with effect sizes.

Table 7.3 (d): Comparison of the three target groups of the different mines regarding Workplace relations

Factor	Mine	Men		Women		Management		Effect sizes	
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Women vs Men	Women vs Management
Factor 1: Employment relations	Phosphate	3.23	0.40	3.31	0.48	3.16	0.32	-0.16	-0.32
	Copper	3.05	0.42	2.85	0.62	3.13	0.57	0.32	0.44
	Platinum	2.94	0.49	2.74	0.58			0.34	
Factor 2: Complaints-handling procedures	Phosphate	2.94	0.59	2.96	0.55	2.99	0.35	-0.04	0.04
	Copper	3.21	0.44	2.83	0.59	3.36	0.50	0.64	0.90
	Platinum	2.66	0.55	2.45	0.77			0.26	
Factor 3: Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism	Phosphate	2.56	0.73	2.10	0.70	2.00	0.74	0.64	-0.14
	Copper	2.24	0.64	2.27	0.92	1.63	0.56	-0.03	-0.70
	Platinum	3.10	0.76	2.58	0.78			0.66	
Factor 4: Language	Phosphate	2.71	1.07	3.15	0.75	2.17	0.72	-0.41	-1.32
	Copper	2.65	0.70	2.55	1.06	2.50	0.97	0.10	-0.04
	Platinum	2.69	1.01	2.75	0.55			-0.06	

(a) small effect: $d=0.2$, (b) medium effect: $d=0.5$ and (c) large effect: $d=0.8$

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

From Table 7.3 (d) it follows that the effect sizes of the different target groups for all three mines for the *Employment relations* factor yielded a d-value smaller than 0.5, indicating that the difference between the means of the different target groups is not practically significant. However, the d-value of the female versus management target groups of the copper mine shows that the difference between the means of the different target groups for the *Employment relations* factor has a medium effect. Therefore, on average, the management target group of the copper mine is more in agreement with *Employment relations* than the female target group.

The effect sizes of the target groups of the phosphate mine as well as the female versus male target groups of the platinum mine for the *Complaints-handling procedures* factor indicate that the difference between the means of the different target groups is not practically significant, as the d-values calculated below 0.5. Furthermore, the d-value of the female versus male target groups of the copper mine shows that the difference between the means of the different target groups for the *Complaints-handling procedures* factor has a medium effect. A large effect is evident from the female versus management target groups of the copper mine, as the d-value for this factor calculated at 0.9. It can be derived that that on average, the participants of the male and management target groups of the copper mine are more in agreement with the indicator statements contained in the factor than the female target group themselves.

The effect sizes of the female versus management target groups of the phosphate mine as well as the female versus male target groups of the copper mine for the *Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism* factor yielded a d-value smaller than 0.2, indicating that the difference between the means of the different target groups is not practically significant. Furthermore, the d-values of the female versus male target groups of the phosphate as well as the platinum mine show that the difference between the means of the different target groups for this factor has a medium effect. It can be derived that that on average, the participants of the male target groups of the phosphate and platinum mine are more in agreement with *Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism* than the female target group themselves. Therefore, more participants of the male target group believed that *Sexual favouritism is commonly practised in the mining companies* and that *Sexual harassment is a general problem in the workplace* than the women themselves. A large effect is evident from the female versus management target groups of the copper mine, as the d-value for this factor calculated at 0.7, indicating that more participants of the management target group disagreed with the factor and the statements contained in the factor than the women themselves.

The d-values of the target groups of the copper and platinum mines for the *Language* factor indicate that the difference between the means of the different target groups is not practically significant. Furthermore, a medium effect for this factor is evident from the d-value of the female versus male target groups of the phosphate mine. The effect size of the female versus management target groups of the phosphate mine shows a large effect, as the d-value calculated at 1.32. It is evident from the means in Table 7.4 (d) that disagreement exists between the three target groups of the phosphate mine. The participants of the female target group agreed more than the participants of the male and management target group that language is a problem in the workplace.

The next section presents the findings of the qualitative inquiry.

7.2.3 Perceptions and major concerns regarding workplace relations

The section below highlights perceptions and main concerns regarding workplace relations according to the qualitative findings obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions as well as the open-ended sections of the questionnaire.

7.2.3.1 *Equality in the workplace*

As indicated in Chapter Three, equality is high on the agenda of the democratic regime. Government introduced various acts to remove discriminative practices of the past and to regulate equality in society as well as in the workplace (see Chapter Three under 3.2). Despite the intention of government to eradicate inequalities in society and the workplace, several forms of inequality still exist. Although the quantitative responses yielded only positive results, the findings of the qualitative inquiry revealed some of the persistent inequalities. From the interviews and focus group discussions it was detected that the participants in this study do not feel equally treated in the workplace in terms of bonuses, promotions and development and employment opportunities. The female and male participants responded differently with regard to this subject. The following main concerns were highlighted:

7.2.3.1.1 *Bonuses and promotions*

The male and female participants reported that they do not feel equally treated in terms of bonuses and promotions. On the one hand, the female participants were of the opinion that preference was given to male employees in terms of consideration for bonuses or

promotions. According to them, the main reason for this is the perception that still exists that 'mining is not a place for a woman'. On the other hand, the male participants indicated that women are fast-tracked in mining companies and therefore it is much easier for them to qualify for bonuses and promotions. The male participants also voiced the opinion that sexual favouritism often plays a role in the promotion of women. Sexual favouritism is discussed further in 7.2.3.8.

The viewpoints of some of the female participants are illustrated in the following comments:

"Women are not equally treated in terms of employment and promotion." Superintendent Internal Audit (Female – copper mine)

"You are considered for the interviews, but at the end of the day you will be surprised that there is no woman who has been given the position. It is only men, always." Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

The viewpoints of some of the male participants are noted in the following comments:

"We do understand the company is now under pressure from the government. They must hire the ladies. But now, when they reach the mine, they don't come here and say we have been employed here and then you must work from here to here. Then we going to check maybe we can give you some promotion. Everything comes so easily for them." Rail maintenance (Male – platinum mine)

"I mean if you are both generals you are going to get the same salary. If you are supervisors, whether you are a man or a woman it is going to be the same salaries. But in terms of bonuses we are not treated the same." Construction gang: Supervisor (Male – platinum mine)

"For example, we are five people in our working place, so we make six with her, but maybe after six months she can find a promotion. We are here three generals who are awaiting promotion, but when she comes she will get the promotion. So we don't know what is happening. The men get angry, because we work hard too." Winch operator (Male – platinum mine)

“They say come to my house. They talk about this situation. This lady says I want promotion. That man maybe says, for example, you do it for me for one, two, three and I will give you promotion. Give me your cell number, I’ll call you. And then she gets the promotion. She is working a soft job, get a promotion. Me, I work hard and I don’t get a promotion.” Development crew (Male – platinum mine)

7.2.3.1.2 Quota appointments

According to the male participants, women are often appointed in core mining positions because of the 10% requirement of the Mining Charter, and not because they meet the requirements of the job. This view is also supported by literature, which suggests that women who are employed on the mines in terms of the Charter run the risk of being seen as ‘quotas’ and are therefore not being taken seriously (see Chapter Four under 4.4.1). When women are appointed in these positions and do not have the ability and capability (physical strength and stamina) to do their jobs well, men often have to assist while the women watch. This leads to frustration and a negative attitude towards women. These points are illustrated by the following comments:

“Even the position, it is a women situation, if she fails, she fails. They cannot say because that section is only men, there is no woman, we take this woman even if she is not qualified. That will cause a problem, like tomorrow they employ the woman, she has got no experience and doesn’t know the job. So meaning I am going to do all the jobs, even the jobs that were supposed to be done by her and she just get the salary at the end of the month. I’m struggling while she’s living a better life. You see, it is not right.” Lab attendant (Male – phosphate mine)

“The main painful one is that at the end of the month we are going to get the same salary while I did the job for her because our strength is not equal.” Team leader: Haulage maintenance (Male – platinum mine)

“When they get pay for this job, they must do the job.” Service crew (Male – platinum mine)

7.2.3.1.3 Racism

According to the black participants of the platinum mine, equal treatment in terms of race does not take place in the mining company. They voiced the opinion that black women are often appointed in ‘tough mining jobs’, while white women are considered for positions

that require light duty or are appointed in office positions at the surface. The following responses illustrate this point:

“No white women are employed underground”. Rowlands shaft (Female – platinum mine)

“You won’t see the white women working underground. They don’t work like us. They just come in and take their samples, for example the geologist, and within two hours she is out.” Production supervisor (Male – platinum mine)

“Here in our shaft, really they don’t care about us. Women in mining, it doesn’t work for us. I don’t know which women they are referring to, but black empowerment, especially women, really, it’s not happening. Because, now if you look around, in our shaft, there is no labourer like a white labourer, a white lady ... not to say we are judging them, but the thing is we have to be equal. We have to be treated equally.” Cleaner (Female – platinum mine)

The above-mentioned views are also supported by black feminist theory, which suggests that black women often suffer triple oppression and disadvantages because they are black, because they are women and because they are working class (see Chapter Two under 2.3.1.3.1).

7.2.3.1.4 Development

The female participants of the platinum mine voiced serious concerns regarding equal development opportunities. According to them, no transparency exists within the mining company in terms of development. They feel unfairly treated because it seems that some women are progressing faster than others in the mining company. Some participants also voiced the opinion that the mining company tends to employ external people rather than developing their own personnel. These points are illustrated by the following responses:

“I mean I came here as an artisan and I found these ladies and all the ladies that I found here, they are still where I found them. So even myself, I’m scared. You get appointed in a place where there is no movement. So you yourself, you are also going to get stuck. My friends out there who are finished with their artisans, like me, on the same company, they’ve got e-mail addresses, they are doing courses like project management and everything. The courses are being paid for, they are given one day in a month to go to

attend those courses, they are moving. I'm just standing, I'm stuck." Service crew (Female – platinum mine)

"Some ladies get developed in the company. We don't know what they are using, why this lady is given the opportunity to attend that course, but why me, not given the opportunity. We don't know this strategy, how does it work, because we are all employees, everything is supposed to be transparent." Cleaner (Female – platinum mine)

"The other thing that really hurts us, people are busy coming, new people from other shafts. They take somebody from outside to be developed here. Where us, we are here, and they don't develop us." Cleaner (Female – platinum mine)

The Mining Charter as well as the requirements of the SLP obliged mining companies to develop and implement a comprehensive human resource development programme that includes a career progression (path) plan for each employee (RSA, 2010a:10; RSA, 2010b:8). Also see Chapter Three under 3.2.3.6.

From the above it is clear that although great progress has been made regarding achieving equality in the total labour force of South Africa, disparities and some forms of discrimination still exist. As suggested in the literature, not only legislation is needed, but also a fundamental change in attitude towards women and employment in order to successfully and effectively eradicate discrimination in the workplace (Stead & Watson, 2010:120).

7.2.3.2 Acceptance of women in the workplace

From the interviews and focus group discussions held with the participants from all target groups, it became clear that resistance against women in the male-dominated mining environment still exists, however to a lesser degree. Stereotypes, such as 'mining is not a place for women', are still present. As one of the participants of the management target group indicated: *"It is still a cultural and perception issue"* (Superintendent Internal Audit (Female – copper mine)). The participants indicated that initially, when women were introduced in the core business of mining, men and women were afraid of each other. Men were afraid of getting too close to women; they were afraid of getting blamed for sexual harassment. Women, on the other hand, were afraid of men and the male-dominated mining workplace. However, as time went by and male and female workers became used to each other and women received the chance to prove themselves by

showing their willingness and capability to do their work, resistance against women tended to decrease. Despite this, male employees are still struggling with issues related to women, such as pregnancy, physical capability, attitude and family responsibilities. The following quotations provide an indication of the female participants' opinions of how they are being accepted by male employees in the workplace:

"When I started my career at the mining company, the males told me that I'm not going to make it in the man's world." Development dispatch (Female – copper mine)

"Some male employees underestimate women, but most of them are positive about women in the workplace." Instrument technician (Female – copper mine)

"When I was employed, the men did not believe in me. After a while, when the men saw that I can do my job well, I felt accepted." Electrician (Female – copper mine)

"When I started my work at the mine, the men always tell me that mining is not a place for a woman, but now they don't say that because they see that I can do the job. At the beginning I felt less accepted, but right now I feel more accepted." Fitter and turner (Female – copper mine)

"Initially, men don't accept women in the workplace. When they see you dress up, you do your hair and then they say, 'this one, we don't think she is going to work'. Once you are in the plant, then they see a different person." Lab attendant (Female – phosphate mine)

"Fifteen years ago, when I started my career in the mining industry, much more resistance against women were experienced than nowadays. Resistance against women in the industry has definitely decreased, but there are still areas where resistance is experienced. I think the areas where much resistance are experienced are the areas where there is currently, or previous bad experiences with women and their issues. But when there are women who really pull their weight and work hard, this resistance is increasingly decreased. Senior manager: Production (Female – phosphate mine)

"Yes, they accept us, but underground we get a tough time because some of the men they say it's 'fifty-fifty'. You must work for yourself. Everything you have to do you must do on your own." General: Haulage maintenance (Female – platinum mine)

“We are not accepted by our male co-workers. They treat us badly and undermine us. For us apprentices our male supervisors at the plant they send a bad report to our training officers saying we can’t work, so that when we qualify we don’t get jobs here at the mine.”
Apprentice (Female – copper mine)

The viewpoints of the male participants in terms of the acceptance of women in the workplace are noted in the following comments:

“At the early stages when women were employed, men discriminated against women, but with time men changed their minds.” *Instrument technician (Male – copper mine)*

“For women to be accepted in the workplace they must be extra-ordinary.” *Instrument technician (Male – copper mine)*

“There are still stereotypes around, but I think we are 90% there. Personally I don’t see a problem with the integration of females into the workforce.” *Production superintendant (Male – phosphate mine)*

One of the mines really bought in to the concept of women in mining by appointing a man in a senior management position as the patron of the Women in Mining Forum. This shows a serious commitment to women in mining on the side of management and eased some of the old stereotypes, as illustrated in the following response:

“I think with the establishment of the Women in Mining Forum, we have done a lot of work. I think our biggest plus-point for us as a company is that the highest authority in the division is the patron of that forum and it shows the high level of senior management commitment to that. And I think that in itself has eased some of these old stereotypes, because he [patron] came out very vocal in support for women in mining. He puts a lot of emphasis on women in mining activities.” *Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)*

7.2.3.3 Discrimination

Some female participants indicated that they still experience severe discrimination by their male co-workers. Some male co-workers still believe that mining is not a place for women and that women belong at home. The male co-workers are often outspoken and the female workers often feel degraded and humiliated by remarks and comments made by

them, especially when referring to women's ability and capability of performing mine work. The perception still exists that women cannot do what men can do in the mining environment; women constantly have to prove themselves. The female participants also indicated that they experience a negative attitude from men when they have to fulfil family responsibilities, such as taking care of sick children. Men often think that women use their family responsibilities as an excuse to avoid work responsibilities. In addition, the female participants reported that they often feel unwanted at the mining companies. They often feel that they are appointed in positions due to the requirements of legislation and not because of their abilities. The following comments illustrate the type of discrimination that female workers experience in the mining industry:

"Ja, they discriminate. Like men, especially when they come to the diesel bay, they like 'I want diesel'. Other ones will go there and put the pipe on the machine and the LHD, the pipe is very heavy. Other ones will tell you 'no, you must do it, you are the diesel attendant'. Then you must go up on the LHD and put the pipe on the machine ... They will tell you, you are supposed to bake cakes at home or be with your mother, they are just going to put you down." Diesel bay attendant (Female – platinum mine)

"They make bad comments. They will say 'just look at that woman she nominated herself'. Sometimes they say 'do this' and then you feel that this work is hard, you can't do it. Then they laugh at you. They tell you '50/50, you said you wanted to come and work here, so let's do it'. So even if you feel no, this is too much you just drag yourself to show them that you can do that. Learner rock breaker (Female – platinum mine)

"They will just tell you 'there are no women here, we are only men, so if you want to work on the mine you must know you are not a woman when you work underground, you are a man'. We are proving ourselves as women every day. Even though you feel you are tired." Learner rock breaker (Female – platinum mine)

"Men don't trust women for operation. Even if you do something good, they don't say anything." Lab supervisor (Female – copper mine)

"When you say 'I have a problem with my kid', they will say 'women, see, that is why I don't want a woman in the workplace.'" Lab attendant (Female – phosphate mine)

“Most of the supervisors, when they hear that a woman is coming to their plant, they complain ‘she will be taking maternity leave, a woman whatever, they don’t have strength like men’.” Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

“We are facing discrimination. When we apply for jobs, they don’t want us actually. We are just there for the statistics, because the department of labour is behind them now. They don’t develop us. They only want women to work in the offices, but for production, they don’t really want us.” Lab attendant (Female – phosphate mine)

7.2.3.4 Negative attitude from male co-workers

Although it became clear that women feel more accepted by their male co-workers nowadays, they still experience a negative attitude from some of them. The female participants often feel undermined by their male co-workers. It was indicated that some men are willing to assist their female counterparts, while others are unwilling and would rather watch them suffer than be of assistance. Women want to prove themselves and often neglect their bodies to do their jobs well. The following quotations provide an indication of the participants’ opinions regarding women’s experiences of their male co-workers’ attitudes towards them:

“In the beginning I was one of the first four ladies to work here, they were undermining us, they were saying, ‘no, women cannot work, this is a man’s job’. It is a man’s job, because it is really hard labour. But we are trying. Sometimes it is not easy, but we are really doing our best, and the treatment is like, ‘you said you want to work, so work’. If we have to lift something with the men, he’s got more power than me, but I have to lift it with him and it has to be the same, fifty-fifty.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

“Especially they say, ‘you said you want to work, so work’. And sometimes you want to prove to them I can do it, but at the end you are very tired. We are really trying, really we are pushing very hard.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

The literature suggests that social closure often occurs when men or women enter an occupation, job or work setting that has been previously dominated by the other sex. Men in predominantly male jobs often perceive women as a threat to their power and status and therefore may be motivated to drive them out. This resistance can range from attempts to make women uncomfortable or to refuse assistance and support to more

serious expressions of hostility and harassment, such as sexual harassment (Wharton, 2006:179).

7.2.3.5 Underestimation of women in leadership positions

It was evident from the interviews and focus group discussions held with the participants that the male employees do not readily accept women in leadership positions. The women in leadership/management positions often feel that their abilities to lead and manage are underestimated. It was also indicated that the men do not readily take instructions from female employees, due to their traditional and cultural background. Furthermore, the concern was raised that women are often appointed in leadership positions but do not necessarily have the skills and capabilities to be appointed in these positions. It is felt that women cannot stand their ground, and this often leads to men overruling women. The following comments illustrate these points:

“Male employees often discriminate against women when they are in leadership positions.” Instrument technician (Male – copper mine)

“It is not easy for men to accept instructions from a black lady.” Geologist (Female – copper mine)

Women are often undermined when employed in a supervisory role.” Chairperson: Women in Mining Forum (Female – copper mine)

“People don’t think that women are capable to fulfil management positions. Women are employed in supervisory positions, but not a single woman in management positions.” Geologist (Female – copper mine)

“If holding the same management positions than men, women are not taken seriously and male employees don’t respect women enough.” Electromechanical engineer (Female – copper mine)

“In certain instances, for example, the black employees, specifically the male old guy, he will not take instructions from a female employee. We find we have to intervene a bit and tell them ‘you know what this is your superior, you have to take instructions’.” Production superintendant (Male – phosphate mine)

“One thing, I think, that women are struggling a lot with is ‘assertiveness’, especially when it comes to more senior positions. Men easily overrule women if they find it difficult to stand their ground. We often experience it when women are appointed as supervisors and superintendents, and when they have to manage a lot of men. When women do not have the necessary abilities and expertise to fill those positions, they should not be appointed in those positions.” Senior manager: Production (Female – phosphate mine)

7.2.3.6 Treatment with respect

The female participants voiced the opinion that they still need to be treated with respect even though they are working side by side with men in the hazardous, tough working environment, as noted in the following comments:

“Women want to be treated like women.” Electrician (Female – copper mine)

“I would like the mining company to make sure that women are well treated. That’s the first thing. I would like women to be treated in a very gentle way.” Dump truck operator (Female – copper mine)

“Management and males must be aware of the fact that I’m a woman and should treat me accordingly.” Electrician (Female – copper mine)

“Every employee should be treated with respect regardless of whether they are male or female.” Locomotive driver (Female – phosphate mine)

“Our co-workers must bear in mind that we are not their girlfriends. They must respect us as their co-workers and give us a chance to do work on our own, without them feeling pity for us, as [if] we are disabled.” Operator (Female – phosphate mine)

7.2.3.7 Isolation

Mining is production-driven and depends highly on reaching production targets; therefore mining teams are compiled to ensure the highest productivity and consist mainly of men. It is often found that only one or two women work together with 10 to 15 men in a team. Women often feel isolated in the male-dominated mining environment; they feel uncomfortable and unsafe in the presence of so many men. Management have to consider this aspect and aim to appoint more than one woman in a specific team, especially when working night shifts. The following comments were made in this regard:

"I think just because there are less women and more men, you feel alone. Because sometimes you feel that the men they are sitting there talking and you are alone, you can't just go there sitting alone. It's something that discourages women to work there. There are no other women around." Fitter and turner (Female – copper mine)

"The mining company must employ more women. Women will not be that alone and will not feel so uncomfortable in the presence of males." Fitter and turner (Female – copper mine)

"More women need to be employed and then they can stand together." Dump truck operator (Female – copper mine)

It would be nice if there was just another woman working side by side with you." Multi-skill operator (Female – copper mine)

"You could see it with the number of women on shift. On my shift I'm the only woman among 15 men. Each shift there is only one or two women. You can see that there is a problem." Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

7.2.3.8 Sexual favouritism

Although discrepancies were evident in the quantitative results (see 7.2.1), it was clearly indicated in the focus group discussions as well as the interviews that sexual favouritism occurs at the mines. The male participants of the platinum mine were outspoken and indicated that some female co-workers 'fall in love' with their supervisors to easily get promotions. It is also suggested that the problem is exacerbated by shift work and working overtime at night. This contributes towards the negative attitude from male employees towards women employed in core mining positions. The female participants, although not so outspoken, indicated that they are aware of sexual favouritism incidents. The following quotations provide an indication of the participants' opinions regarding the occurrence of sexual favouritism at the mines included in the study:

Viewpoints of female participants working in core mining positions:

"It sometime happens, I have heard of a lady that slept with a supervisor to get work in the mine." Electrician (Female – copper mine)

“That one is happening, but it will depend how you behave yourself. I am here to work, I am not here to sell my body.” General worker (Female – platinum mine)

“Ja, it does happen. Like they won’t do it where everybody is looking, but you see that something is going on here and that person will be favoured. But all the promotions that person will get because you know that she did 1, 2, 3... And it is not nice for other women who are working with that lady, because you know you are not going anywhere because you don’t want to sleep with that guy. It’s not nice at all.” Learner rock breaker (Female – platinum mine)

“Ja, you have to have connections, so I think that is why some women end up sleeping with some people, so that they can get somewhere. And sometimes if the man wants to sleep with you and you go like ‘no, I don’t want to do that with you’, you will be treated badly. You will hate coming to work every day, because that person will make sure that you feel it and you suffer.” Team worker (Female – platinum mine)

Viewpoints of male participants working in core mining positions:

“And then the worst part, most of the time the ladies, they quickly fall in love with our bosses which makes our jobs so tired. Most of the time you can realise that after a while the lady has been appointed she will have some position above ourselves. It is not fair, we have been here for almost nine years, but someone who just arrived now she is on a top position.” General: Haulage maintenance (Male – platinum mine)

“Sometimes these women come openly willingly to those supervisors, in order to give them these jobs or quick promotions.” Team leader: Haulage maintenance (Male – platinum mine)

“At first, it was not that quick to be seen, but for now since we’ve noticed that it has been happening we are aware of it. She makes as if she is writing or faxes. How many times on a day she goes there with a miner. He is the one that will recommend her for promotion.” Rail maintenance (Male – platinum mine)

“That one, we don’t have proof, but we heard rumours. I’m just giving an example, if a lady is maybe hired today, after 6 months she is something else. We just hear rumours that she gave that guy what, what, what. They slept together ... Women, they are capable of doing that.” Electrical assistant (Male – platinum mine)

“I said cancel overtime for women. Women must not work overtime, because overtime works in the night. So that is a problem.” Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

“For them it is easy to get promotion, because they fall in love with the official and they get promotion. I’ve been working 10 years, but no promotion.” Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

“Let me put it straight: If the woman works a tough job and then falls in love with a supervisor, you know what is going to happen? She is going to work a light duty now. But not all of them, some of them. Because she is such a beauty, I don’t want her to get a scratch.” Mining clerk (Male – platinum mine)

7.2.3.9 Sexual harassment

As indicated in Chapter Two under 2.4.3.5, sexual harassment occurs in every kind of work setting, but some settings are more prone to sexual harassment than others. A strong predictor of sexual harassment is a work setting with a high male-to-female ratio, such as the mining industry. Therefore, women working in a male-dominated workplace such as mining are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:128; Martin, cited in Anderson & Taylor, 2006:503; Wharton, 2005:188). The participants of all three mines included in the study confirmed that sexual harassment is seen as a serious offence and that training and education take place regularly at the mines. Newly recruited employees undergo training sessions on sexual harassment during induction courses. The companies also engage in regular awareness campaigns for sexual harassment and the procedures to follow if sexual harassment occurs. Despite these attempts, sexual harassment remains an issue and incidents do occur. The following main concerns regarding sexual harassment were raised:

7.2.3.9.1 Afraid to report sexual harassment attempts

Although the majority of the female participants indicated that they know exactly what procedure to follow if sexually harassed, there are still women who do not know their rights and who are still afraid of reporting sexual harassment attempts or incidents. The following reasons were put forward for why women often remain silent: They are afraid of losing their jobs at the mine, they do not want to put their male co-workers in a ‘bad’ position and they do not find it easy to lodge complaints of harassment with male supervisors. The female participants indicated that they would prefer to lodge complaints

and report sexual harassment incidents to a female representative or supervisor. The following comments were made in this regard:

“Women don’t know their rights. They don’t know if they may report it.” Superintendent Internal Audit (Female – copper mine)

“... but then there’s also the process of you going to report it, maybe someone is going to lose his job because of just a small word. You have to think about this guy. If you are going to report this, he will lose his job. What about his family? He also struggled to get a job. Even if you tell him you don’t like this, it’s not just going to end here. He is just going to say, “If I can get you”. Then there are certain jobs we do at night and after work you need to shower. You have to walk to the shower and if someone says, “If I can get you” then when you are showering you can imagine that. The security doesn’t walk around there, so he can get in and rape you. He can get arrested, but at the end of the day you will feel bad.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

“They organised people for a presentation on harassment. If you are not comfortable about some of the things, you must speak up, not be silent. Because of the thing, women here are afraid to speak up.” Diesel bay attendant (Female – platinum mine)

“If they can teach women about this harassment so that those women feel they can talk, and not to be silent, because there are the other ones, those who are experiencing that thing and they just keep quiet about it. If maybe they can get a woman who can represent women it’s going to be very easy.” Loco-operator (Female – platinum mine)

7.2.3.9.2 Verbal sexual harassment

Verbal sexual harassment is regarded as a serious issue and occurs on a regular basis. Verbal forms of sexual harassment include unwelcome innuendoes, suggestions and hints, sexual advances, comments with sexual overtones, sex-related jokes or insults or unwelcome graphic comments about a person’s body made in his or her presence or directed towards him or her, unwelcome and inappropriate enquiries about a person’s sex life, and unwelcome whistling directed at a person or group of persons (Pons & Deale, 2010:ch. 20, p. 16). Due to the nature of the mining industry as a male-dominated workplace, men are used to communicating in certain ways and often use “*bad language*” when carrying out heavy tasks. Female co-workers often feel offended by the way men communicate and by the type of language they use. Furthermore, it was indicated by the female participants that they are “*called names*” and that they are exposed to “*unwelcome*

verbal comments”, especially when they are being transported in packed cages. The following quotations illustrate these points:

“Verbal sexual harassment happens almost every day.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

“Men often called me ‘baby’ or ‘sweetheart’. They feel that they can call me anything.” Electrician (Female – copper mine)

“You know what, we as black people, some of them don’t feel it’s harassment. Like men, they think it’s just the way we live. The language they use, even if you try to stop them from calling you names, they just continue and it just feels so uncomfortable.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

“Sexual harassment is there. It is happening almost every day. We are almost used to the language, but there are times when you feel like you are fed-up with this ...” Operator (Female – copper mine)

“Some men can make you feel so small, like maybe you are in the cage, they call you names. I’m a bit fat, so you find that some men call you names and you don’t like it. They call me dudla. Dudla is big person. Some tell you that ‘you are fat, you are wasting our time, let me pass’. So not all men are accepting that women are working on the mine. Some things that they say, they think they are funny and you can see that this person doesn’t know he can lose his job. They think sexual harassment is just touching a person, they don’t know if you insult a person it is sexual harassment, so they have still a lot to learn.” Learner rock breaker (Female – platinum mine)

“There are some complaints of sexual harassment, but some of the complaints are also questionable. Complaints often relate to communication. Men are used to communicating in certain ways and also use bad language that offends women.” Chairperson: Women in Mining Forum (Female – copper mine)

“Some form of harassment will always be part of the workplace, but we as management will not tolerate any sexual harassment. If management do not act decisively against it, you will never really get rid of it. It also depends on the behaviour of the woman. She must also act decisively, in other words if it looks like the guys want to tell dirty jokes, she must say ‘no’ beforehand. But I also feel that if you want to work in the mining industry, you should not be faint-hearted. Sometimes men use bad language when they are struggling

doing a job. They do not mean to talk badly.” Senior manager: Production (Female – phosphate mine)

7.2.3.9.3 Night shift

It is reported that working the night shift contributes towards the occurrence of sexual harassment incidents. Women do not feel at ease and safe when working with so many men during the night. Male co-workers often take advantage of these circumstances and scare women with their verbal offensive comments, as noted in the following comment:

“To be honest, we are sexually harassed. They take advantage of us, because we are women and we are working at night with them. It is very uncomfortable. Let me just stop right there, because it is very uncomfortable. But what can you do, because it is a small place.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

7.2.3.9.4 Packed cages

Women working underground are exposed to sexual harassment, verbally and physically, while being transported from the surface to the workplace underground and vice versa. The cages in which workers are transported are normally packed to maximum capacity. Physical contact is inevitable; employees’ are obliged to press against each other. Furthermore, women are exposed to unwelcome and offensive verbal comments made by their male co-workers, as indicated above in 7.2.3.9.2. The following comments were made in this regard:

“The cage, they must do something about the cage, because they say the cage can take 50 people up, 50 down, but you find that the cage down have got more than 100 people in there ... And they will press you, not even your foot is down there, you are up there, because something is lifting you up from this side and this side and this side, and they know it’s women. And if you complain they will just say ‘our wives are at home, what are you doing here? You say you want to work, so work.” Diesel bay attendant (Female – platinum mine)

“In the cage, they will push us like this and you can’t even breathe and the man is after you, you can feel his whole body pressing against you. Then they say like ‘what are you doing here at the mine?’, ‘my woman is at home, you are here at the mine’.” General worker (Female – platinum mine)

“Our training centres, they are teaching us about sexual harassment. When you work with the ladies, you have to treat her like your sister. When you see her, just think that we are family, don’t look at her in another way. But we are not the same, because when they are teaching us I can listen and then I can take that she’s my sister. I can respect her, and then other people they don’t do that, we are not the same. For this shaft, we are using the cage. There are too many people in the cage. The big one takes 80 people down, 80 people up. The small one takes 35 people. But these girls who are working there, they don’t count, they can put maybe 100 into the cage. Some men take advantage and push against the ladies.” Development crew (Male – platinum mine)

7.2.3.10 Handling of women’s concerns

Although the quantitative responses of the copper and phosphate mines were positive (see 7.2.1), the following points were highlighted with regard to the handling of women’s concerns:

7.2.3.10.1 Women in Mining Forum

From the interviews and focus group discussions it can be detected that Women in Mining forums exist and are functioning at all three mines included in the study. However, the following concerns were raised:

- Although meetings are scheduled and do take place, the participants indicated that they have a problem with the time when meetings are scheduled. On the one hand, women find it difficult to attend meetings due to the fact that employees are obliged to work shifts and are not available to attend meetings. On the other hand, some female employees cannot attend meetings because they are often scheduled after shifts, and women need to go home and take care of their family responsibilities.
- The functioning of Women in Mining forums is also indicated as a problem. One of the mines included in the study makes use of presenters to address certain relevant topics during the Women in Mining meetings. The female employees indicated that they prefer to raise and discuss important issues during these meetings rather than listen to presentations.
- The female participants from two of the mines indicated that although they are given a chance to raise and discuss their issues at meetings, it takes too long before the issues are addressed.
- A need exists for the Women in Mining forum to be more visible and to be promoted.

The following quotations express the views of some female participants regarding the functioning of the Women in Mining forums at the mines:

“The Women in Mining Forum is not visible and must be promoted.” Rock mechanic (Female – copper mine)

“I never attend the Women in Mining Forum meeting because I’m working shifts.” Development dispatch (Female – copper mine)

“I’ve never attended it, because most of the times when they convene a meeting, I am working night shift and it is very difficult for me to wake up and come to that, but what I’ve heard is that they don’t give women chance to give their complaints, they bring a person from outside to motivate women.” Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

“They should let us raise our issues, for example, what is happening in our plants, what do we exactly want, are we happy.” Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

“I only attend because I am at work. I don’t want to. I attend just to push time. They just bring us people, maybe a doctor or someone, who talks about illnesses only. We don’t talk about skills development or anything like that and the complaints that we have.” Lab assistant (Female – phosphate mine)

“They call a meeting for 2 o’clock or 3 o’clock; they must have the meeting in the morning with us, not after shift. Many of us then can’t attend the meeting and then they say we, women are like this or that. Me myself I can’t attend a meeting. I must be at home when my kids come from school they must get something to eat.” General worker (Female – platinum mine)

“We do talk about issues when we are in meetings arranged by the Women in Mining Forum, but the problem is that we just see the changes after a long time. For example, we’ve once talked about the fact that we are not safe when working night shifts and going to the bus stop. I was also once attacked going to the bus stop during night shift. It was discussed on the Women in Mining Forum that transport should be arranged for females working night shift. But since then, I think it was last year, it was not arranged. The possibility of a crèche was also discussed. There are lots of issues that are raised during

the Women in Mining meetings, but the process, it takes time.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

7.2.3.10.2 Female representatives

In terms of the handling of women’s concerns, a need was identified for an approachable and loyal female representative at each shaft to whom female employees can lodge their complaints or with whom they can discuss specific issues and who will treat the information confidential. Women find it difficult to discuss their issues with men in management positions, such as supervisors and health and safety officers; they prefer to discuss their issues with women. The following quotations give an indication of women’s opinions regarding the handling of women’s concerns:

“We want a representative from this shaft, someone who is going to be in this shaft. Someone who we will see every day. If it is X, we must go to X every day. And I asked for it. I actually went and asked for it. So but we haven’t heard any answers.” Dozer operator (Female – platinum mine)

“I’m not going to be political now. In this shaft we have the problem that we have the safety officer, but we don’t have any women who represents us in there. So whatever issues we have as women, like if I’m pregnant, I cannot go to a male person and explain my situation to him. So that’s a problem.” Diesel bay attendant (Female – platinum mine)

“As we said, we don’t even know where to go. If you go to this person she will tell you this if you go to another person, she will tell you that. So it’s like different information, different stories. We don’t have a straight person that if I have a problem you go to X, X will say okay, I deal with pregnant people, these are the steps that you need to follow, after your maternity, you come back for three months on surface because you are still breastfeeding. We don’t have anyone to discuss our issues with.” Pecker operator (Female – platinum mine)

“There is a women structure, but, although we do have someone who represents us in our shaft, she is far from us. If we can get someone that will be here in the shaft that can link us to the communication and can represent us out there or speak to the manager if we have a problem or if we want to be developed, then we know they will help you.” Diesel bay attendant (Female – platinum mine)

7.2.3.10.3 *A lack of support systems for women in mining*

Women often feel neglected in the workplace. The participants indicated that they are not heard and that their complaints are not taken seriously. A need was indicated for an effective support system and complaints-handling procedure. The following quotations expressed women's opinions in this regard:

"They are often afraid to view their opinions, they fear to be dismissed." Superintendent Internal Audit (Female – copper mine)

"When lodging complaints, women are not taken seriously." Electromechanical engineer (Female – copper mine)

7.2.4 Conclusion

From the quantitative results on the section *Workplace relations*, it can be deduced that on average, the female participants feel reasonably accepted in the male-dominated mining workplace, they feel part of the work team and they are fairly treated by their male co-workers and management. Despite these positive results, sexual favouritism and sexual harassment remain major issues in the mining workplace (as also revealed by the qualitative inquiry), which effects should not be underestimated and which should not be neglected. Although a large number of the female participants of the copper and phosphate mines are satisfied with the way women's concerns are handled in the workplace, it was not the case with the female participants' of the platinum mine. The findings from the qualitative inquiry revealed specific concerns in this regard. Furthermore, the qualitative findings revealed further concerns regarding inequalities in terms of bonuses and promotions, appointments and development opportunities. Although it is indicated that women feel reasonably accepted in the mining workplace, it became evident through the qualitative inquiry that women are still subjected to discrimination, often experience a negative attitude from their male co-workers, are often not treated with the necessary respect, women in leadership positions are often underestimated and they often feel isolated in the male-dominated workplace.

The following section presents the results and findings regarding some general issues accompanying the deployment of women in core mining positions.

7.3 GENERAL ISSUES REGARDING THE DEPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN CORE MINING POSITIONS

In this section, a more general approach was taken to evaluate specific issues that may have an impact on the deployment of women in the mining industry. Firstly, attention is given to personal issues of women employed in core mining positions. Secondly, main problems encountered by male employees with the deployment of women in core mining positions are highlighted. Thirdly, key challenges of management are revealed and discussed. Fourthly, aspects that inhibit the participation of women in the industry are pointed out, and lastly, perceptions of the male and management participants regarding the benefits of women employed in core mining positions are revealed.

7.3.1 Personal issues of women employed in core mining positions

Additional questions were included in the questionnaire and interview schedule to women employed in core mining positions to determine:

- possible reasons for why women select a career in mining;
- the impact of mine work on family life; and
- main problems women encounter in the mining environment.

The answers to these questions are provided below, as derived from the interviews and focus group discussions conducted with the participants as well as the open-ended sections of the questionnaire.

7.3.1.1 *Selecting mining as a career*

Different views were obtained for why women choose a career in mining. On the one hand, the participants indicated that it is not about career choice as such, but about an opportunity for employment. The current unemployment rate⁷ of South Africa is 25.6%

⁷ Since 1998, Statistics South Africa (Posel *et al.*, 2013) has adopted a 'strict' measure of unemployment as the official measure for South Africa. The unemployed are those people within the economically active population who:

(a) did not work during the seven days prior to the interview;

(b) want to work and are available to start work within a week of the interview; and

(calculated in the second quarter of 2013) (Greve, 2013). The requirement of the Mining Charter to include more women in the core business of mining broadened employment opportunities for women and therefore contributes to decreasing poverty in South Africa. Furthermore, the participants indicated that the mining industry is a challenging environment providing challenging opportunities for women to pursue a career in the mining industry. However, some female participants expressed their concerns about the mining environment as a healthy and safe workplace and indicated that they do not see a career in mining as a long-term vision. The female participants working in core mining positions mentioned the following reasons as the main driving forces for selecting mining as an occupation: poverty, replacement of family members, employment opportunity and qualifications obtained through education. The following quotations provide an indication of the participants' opinions regarding the reasons for selecting mining as an occupation:

“You know what, to be quite frank and honest, with the high unemployment rate and job scarcity in South Africa, it is not about career choice, it is about employment. Eventually for some people it becomes a career, but most of the people, it is about seeking employment. So it is not even about getting into the core, it is only the professionally qualified people that go to varsity and study geology or engineering or things like that who had a determined vision of what they are going to do. That is a different ball game. That is a directed career vision. If you look at operation level, it is about employment.” Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

“I was unemployed, was desperate for work and need the money.” Attendant lab assistant (Female – phosphate mine)

“It is the only job that was available at that moment and we were suffering. There is no other option. There is no job outside.” General worker (Female – platinum mine)

“It is to change our life. Get a better job. So we can support our family. Because everybody is looking for the good life.” Cleaner (Female – platinum mine)

(c) have taken active steps to look for work or to start some form of self-employment in the four weeks prior to the interview.

Therefore, the official rate of unemployment excludes all individuals who report that they do want to work but have not taken active steps to search for work in the previous month (Posel *et al.*, 2013).

“Basically it was not one’s decision that one day you will be working at a mine. It’s because the opportunity is here for employment, you just come in so that you can get something to eat every day.” Team worker (Female – platinum mine)

“It starts as poverty, then you join the company and you have a dream, and you have to follow that dream. You want to be a success one day, it’s like a chain. It goes like that.” Service crew (Female – platinum mine)

“... you grow up around the mining environment, so everyone is working on the mine and you know once you finish school, the only option you will have is mining. The mine doesn’t have all these requirements. At least you got Standard 8 and you know you are going to get employed.” General worker (Female – platinum mine)

“Actually my future plans were not to work at the mine, but the opportunity just came and I decided to just grab it and to see if maybe I will make it in the mine and maybe achieve something. Right now I am busy studying Health and Safety, hoping that I will grow in the industry. I’m studying privately and am not being sponsored by the mine.” Pecker operator (Female – platinum mine)

“I came here to replace my father. He was working underground and got TB, then he was sick a long time, and then he was medically boarded.” General: Haulage maintenance (Female – platinum mine)

“I have the technical skills to work at the mine.” Rock mechanic (Female – copper mine)

I studied BSc Honours Geology.” Geologist (Female – copper mine)

“I studied electrical engineering.” Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

“I studied to be an artisan and want to be employed at the mine.” Instrument technician (Female – copper mine)

“I wanted to study engineering. I didn’t want to do mining, I didn’t want to do chemical engineering, I didn’t want to do civil engineering, so metallurgist is what I chose, so I ended up doing metallurgy and obviously when you do metallurgy you end up in the mines.” Multi-skill operator (Female – copper mine)

From the above it is clear that women often select a career in mining not because they pursue a career in mining, but because it provides an employment opportunity to provide for their families and thereby eradicate poverty. Furthermore, professional women pursue a career in mining due to formal qualifications obtained and the challenging opportunities provided by the industry.

7.3.1.2 *Impact of mine work on family life*

From the literature review it is clear that the family as a gendered institution plays an important role in shaping many aspects of women's and men's work as well as their family lives (Wharton, 2006:82). Over the years, the participation of women in the labour force has increased and women are employed in various positions, from top management positions to the lowest positions such as cleaners and tea and coffee ladies. In most societies, the primary responsibility for raising and caring for children still rests with women. Therefore, women entering the workplace are often caught in a 'double bind', meaning that they have to do two jobs at once. Women coming from work have to do a 'second shift' at home where they take care of the home and the physical and psychological needs of their family (also see Chapter Two under 2.4.3.1). Women working in the mining environment face unique challenges in terms of family impact.

A question was included in the questionnaire to the female employees working in core mining positions to determine whether their work at the mine has an impact on their family lives. According to Figure 7.3 below, it is evident that a significant number of participants (copper mine: 40%; phosphate mine: 77.8%; platinum mine: 40.6%) positively indicated that their work at the mine does have an impact on their family lives. This is also reinforced by the findings derived from the qualitative enquiry. From the focus group discussions and interviews with the women working in core mining positions, specific challenges were identified in terms of family impact, which are discussed below:

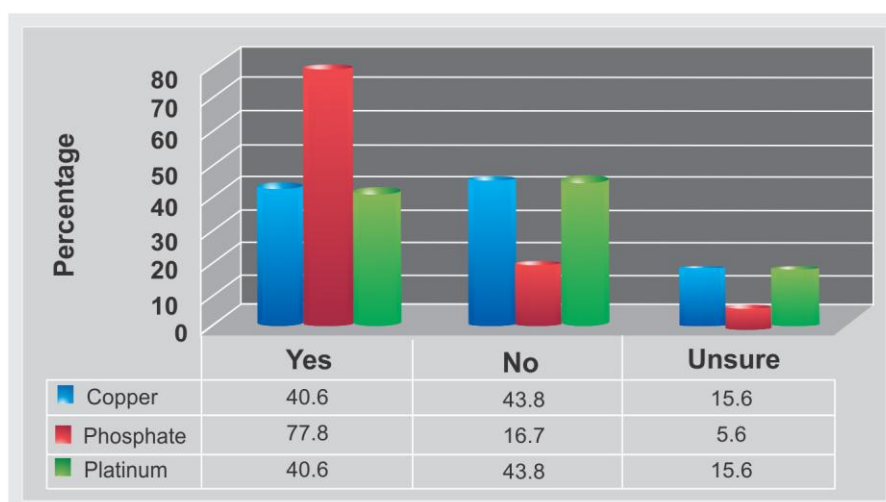


Figure 7.3: Viewpoints of women working in core mining activities on the impact of their work on their family life

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

7.3.1.2.1 Shift work

In general, working in the core business of mining requires shift work. Mining remains a process and works on a cycle that needs to be completed within a 24-hour period. The 24-hour cycle is normally divided into three shifts: morning, afternoon and night, consisting of eight hours each. The beginning and starting time of the shifts differ from mine to mine. The majority of the female participants interviewed indicated that they are obliged to work shifts. In addition, a significant number of the female participants working in core mining positions (copper mine: 35.3 %; phosphate mine: 81%; platinum mine: 33.3%) that completed the surveys reported that they work shifts. From the interviews and focus group discussions as well as qualitative data derived from the surveys it became clear that the majority of the women are affected by shift work – married women slightly more so than unmarried women. Every shift cycle presents its own unique challenges to the family. The main problem encountered by women is that they do not have enough time to take care of their family responsibilities, especially taking care of their children. When working early morning shifts, women are not available to take care of their children and prepare them for school. When working afternoon shifts, women are not available to assist children with their after-school activities and homework and to cook and prepare them for bed. Working the night shift implies that women are not available during the night as well as during the

day, because they have to catch up on sleep. The following quotations are an indication of women's opinion regarding shift work and the impact thereof on their family life:

"It's difficult to support my children if they are ill, because I'm working shifts." Development dispatch (Female – copper mine)

"I've got the child, one. It's also a bit difficult because you don't spend time with her. Like now, she went to school and when I get home she is sleeping. In the morning she goes to school, so I'll only see her when I'm off. And you have to get a stay-in nanny and it's also difficult to trust someone to spend time with your child." Operator (Female – copper mine)

"Working afternoon shift does affect some of the ladies somehow. It's during the afternoon, when you come to work you don't get to see the kids and when you come home, you get home around 22:00 the kids are sleeping and then tomorrow morning they prepare themselves to go to school, you don't see them. It's like you spend the whole week without seeing the kids." Lab assistant (Female – copper mine)

"Morning shift is a long stretch if you are alone and don't have anyone to look after the kids. If you do afternoon shifts you can prepare everything for them, so that your husband, when he comes back, he just sits with the children, then go to bed and everything. It's much simpler." Dump truck operator (Female – copper mine)

"I'm a mother of three children including a three-month-old child, so working shifts, it's draining me. I don't get a chance to see my kids. Especially the first-borne in Grade 5. When I'm working the afternoon shift, I don't see her for the whole week, for the whole seven days that I'm working. When I'm going to work she will be on her way back home and when I knock off I reach home at 23:00/23:30 and she's asleep. I do not even see her. In the morning she's going to school. It does really have a great impact on me. I don't even get to see my three-month-old daughter; I'm always at work when she needs me the most." Electrician (Female – copper mine)

"Morning shift starts at 05:00 until 13:00, afternoon shift starts at 13:00 until 21:00 and night shifts start at 21:00 until 05:00. When working morning shifts you don't have time to prepare the kids for school. When working afternoon shifts you don't have time to see the kids and help them with their homework. At least night shift is better, but only if you have got somebody to look after the kids while you are gone." Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

“But you know when you are desperate, when you need a job, you don’t think of working shifts and the implications thereof. At the interview they tell you, you are going to work shifts and you tell them it is not going to be a problem.” Attendant: Bush pumps and fitters (Female – phosphate mine)

“I am working shifts and my husband is also working shifts. You have to find someone to stay with the child whilst you are at work. Sometimes all of us are working night shifts. There is no-one at home and you have to find someone to stay with the baby.” Operator operations (Female – phosphate mine)

“When you’re working morning shift and afternoon shift it is nice, because you can see your family at night and also in the morning and you can do things. So night shift is not convenient actually.” Diesel bay attendant (Female – platinum mine)

“I left the kids behind, I haven’t prepared them to go to school. I wake up at 03:00. I travel maybe at 04:00. 05:00 I must be here at the mine. What about my kids? Who’s giving them a bath or taking them to school? I left the kids behind, I haven’t prepared them to go to school. I can’t afford to buy a car at R4 000. And they don’t want to give us houses.” General worker (Female – platinum mine)

7.3.1.2.2 Working after hours

Mining is highly dependent on production targets; therefore it is essential for all mining operations to run smoothly. In order to fulfil this requirement, it is often required from mining personnel, such as electricians and engineers, to be available during off-hours in case of breakdowns and emergencies. This also has an impact on family life, as indicated by the following quotes:

“Every second week I must be on standby during night shift. I get call-outs approximately three times a week. I must then go underground. It does impact on my family life.” Rock mechanic (Female – copper mine)

“I’m on standby every nine weeks for 24 hours and must be available in the middle of the night – this has an impact on my family life.” Senior geologist (Female – copper mine)

7.3.1.2.3 *Physical impact*

Work in the mining sector is associated with difficult working conditions, especially underground. Mining is considered one of the most physically demanding occupations (Schutte, 2011:11). The nature of mine work is hazardous and many jobs require a high degree of physical strength and endurance. Mine work requires, among other things, the ability to carry heavy objects and to work outside, underground and in confined spaces, often in hot conditions, for extended periods of time (Wynn, 2001:34). The participants indicated that the physical, hard work definitely has an impact on their family life. They are often too tired to fulfil their family responsibilities as well as their marital responsibilities. The following comments illustrate these points:

“The work is physical. It makes me tired. There’s no time for my husband or my kids.”
Operator (Female – copper mine)

“Since I’m working in a physical environment I get very tired after work. I don’t have time for my kids. I’m working over the weekends, no time for my husband. I just don’t have time for my family. My personal life after work, it’s just work even at home.” Operator (Female – copper mine)

“Even if you live with your kids it is hard, because you work hard underground, you come out from underground, you’re tired, you don’t have time to take care of your kids or your house or whatever. You just want to go to bed, you don’t have time to relax or maybe look after your kids the way you are supposed to.” Learner rock breaker (Female – platinum mine)

“At home she gets tired and it becomes a problem in the family. Maybe the husband is not working on the mine, he is a clerk and the woman is working on the mine. So they are not doing what they are supposed to do at home.” Production supervisor (Male – platinum mine)

7.3.1.2.4 *Male-dominated workplace*

The mining workplace is a male-dominated environment and although companies are pressured by legislation to increase their female workforce, the numbers of female employees working in the core business of mining are still in the minority – in most mines still less than 10%. This also has a distinctive impact on the family and more specifically on marriages. Some husbands find it difficult to accept that their wives are working side by

side with a great number of men. Husbands also have their own perceptions and cultural issues about the mining workplace. On the other hand, women find it difficult to cope with and handle the pressure and challenges of the mining environment and to try to 'please' their husbands. At work, they constantly have to prove themselves to gain acceptance from their male co-workers. At home, they have to fulfil their family responsibilities, taking care of the home, husband and children – each with its own unique demands. It was also found that when husbands are employed at the mines, and are aware of the challenges of the mining workplace, it is much easier for them to accept that their wives are working at the mine. The following quotations provide an indication of women's opinions regarding the impact of the male-dominated mining workplace on family life:

"At first, my husband, he was fighting with me for working at the mine, but after that he saw I'm for myself at the mine. I'm not here for the men. But you don't discuss this and that at home, about the men at work, with your husband. When I get at home I just shut my mouth." General worker (Female – platinum mine)

"Most of the males think women are there for men, not for the job. Because they think that mining is a place for a man only, not women." Fitter and turner (Female – copper mine)

"Men who do not work at the mine, maybe they work at the village, they do not feel comfortable if their wives are working here at the mine with so many men." Plant operator (Male – phosphate mine)

"At least the husband understands the mine environment. They know the situation." Learner rock breaker (Female – platinum mine)

Although the mining industry opened up many employment opportunities for women, mine work as such has a definite impact on family life, as indicated above. Woman who want to pursue a career in mining need to balance their work life and their family life. On the other hand, management of mining companies need to be aware of these impacts and need to educate and support women in order to ensure the sustainable employment of women in the industry. Work-life balance strategies such as flexible working arrangements, entitlements to paid or unpaid leave and assistance with the care of children (for example offering childcare facilities or a paid allowance) could assist employees in balancing their work life and home life (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004:85; Lorber, 2010:35). Also see Chapter Two under 2.4.3.1.

7.3.1.3 Main problems encountered by women in the mining environment

From the interviews and focus group discussions held with the female participants working in core mining positions as well as the data obtained from the open-ended sections of the questionnaire, the issues tabled below were identified as main problems encountered by women in the mining environment. These issues have already been reflected on throughout chapters Five to Seven.

Table 7.4: Main problems encountered by women in the mining environment

No.	Gender issues	Description and reference
1.	Perceptions	Although female participation in the mining workforce has increased, mining is still a male-dominated environment. The perception among many men and women, in and outside the industry, still exists that women do not belong at the mine. This hinders women's participation in the mining industry. Also refer to 7.2.3.2.
2.	Shift work	Working shifts is regarded as a main problem, especially for married women; it has a significant impact on their family life. Refer to 7.3.1.2.1 for a thorough discussion of the impact of shift work.
3.	Physical capability	Many jobs in mining require a high degree of physical strength and endurance (Wynn, 2001:34). Women often experience undue physiological strain when performing strenuous physically demanding tasks for long periods of time (George <i>et al.</i> , 2004:34). <i>"Mine work is too physical"</i> and <i>"Women's bodies are not made for the hard work of mining"</i> are some of the comments made by the female participants working in the core business of the mines. Also refer to 6.3.3.3, which discusses women's perceptions and major concerns regarding the physical ability of women.
4.	Working conditions	Mine work is associated with difficult working conditions, such as extreme heat and dust. Women working at mines are exposed to these conditions on a daily basis. Also refer to 6.4.3.3 for a discussion of dust.
5.	Lack of training	The female participants indicated that their training needs are not cater for. Refer to 5.4.3.3 for a discussion of training issues and needs of women working in core mining positions.
6.	Development opportunities	Development opportunities in the mining companies are not clear and transparent. Women feel uncertain about career pathways to follow to progress within the companies. A need was indicated for clear development plans, not only for professional women, but also for general mine workers. Refer to 5.4.3.5 and 7.2.3.1.4 for a discussion of development needs of women working in core mining positions.

No.	Gender issues	Description and reference
7.	Poor leadership	A lack of leadership and mentorship and a need for adequate mentors and coaches were indicated. Refer to 5.4.3.4 and 5.4.3.5 for a discussion of leadership and mentorship needs.
8.	Discrimination	Discrimination against women's physical capabilities still exists in the mining companies. The perception still exists that women cannot do what men can do in the mining workplace. Women often feel that they are appointed in positions due to the requirements of legislation and not because of their abilities. Refer to 7.2.3.3 for a discussion of discrimination.
10.	Racism	Black female participants regard racism as a main problem in the mining companies. According to the participants, white and black women are not treated equally in the workplace. Refer to 5.3.2.4.4 and 7.2.3.1.3 for a discussion of racism.
11.	Isolation	Women often feel isolated in the male-dominated mining environment. It is often found that only one or two women work together with 10 to 15 men in a team. Also refer to 7.2.3.7.
12.	Sexual harassment	Although mining companies are outspoken about sexual harassment and indicated that sexual harassment is not tolerated in the workplace, incidents still occur. Refer to 7.2.3.9 for a discussion of sexual harassment.
13.	Treatment with respect	Although women work side by side with men in the 'tough' mining environment, they indicated that they still need to be treated with respect (also see 7.2.3.6).
14.	Negative attitude from male co-workers	Although it became clear that women feel more accepted by their male co-workers nowadays, some still experience a negative attitude from some male counterparts (see 7.2.3.4).
15.	Underestimation of women in leadership positions	Women in leadership/management positions often feel undermined by their male co-workers; they feel that their abilities to lead and manage are underestimated (also see 7.2.3.5).
16.	Pregnancy	Pregnancy remains a major issue in the mining workplace, not only for management, but also for women working in core mining positions. Also see 6.4.3.2 for a discussion of pregnancy issues and needs.
17.	A lack of support systems for women in mining	Women often feel neglected in the workplace. A need was indicated for an effective support system and complaints-handling procedure. Refer to 7.2.3.10 for a discussion of the handling of women's concerns.
18.	PPE designed for women	Although great progress had been made at some mining companies to provide women with PPE that is designed for women, PPE deficiencies still exist. Refer to 6.4.3.1 for a thorough discussion of PPE issues.

No.	Gender issues	Description and reference
19.	Adequate change houses and ablution facilities'	Although the mines included in the study have made great progress with regard to the provision of change houses and ablution facilities for women employed in core positions, facilities are not sufficient. Refer to 6.2.3.1 for a discussion of change houses and ablution facilities deficiencies and limitations.
20.	Housing facilities	A need for adequate housing facilities was detected. Also see 6.2.3.4 for a discussion of housing needs.

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

Management need to consider these identified issues to ensure the sustainable participation and involvement of women in the core business of the mining industry. The conceptual framework developed through this study can be implemented and used by mining companies to address the above-mentioned issues (see Chapter Eight).

7.3.2 Main problems encountered by male employees with the deployment of women in core mining positions

A question was included in the questionnaire to the male employees working in core mining positions to determine whether the mining companies experienced specific problems with the deployment of women in core mining positions. The quantitative responses of the three mines revealed great uncertainties in this regard, as indicated in Figure 7.4 below. The findings of the qualitative inquiry presented specific problems encountered by the male co-workers with the deployment of women in core mining positions; these are discussed below.

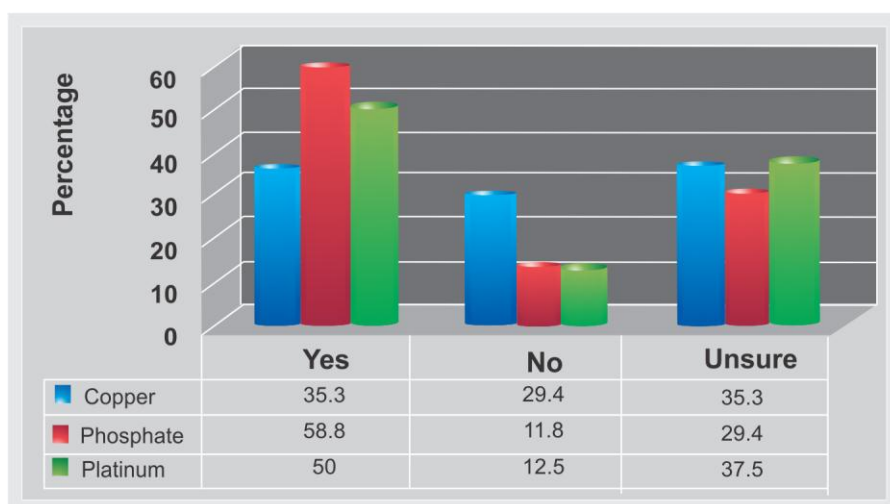


Figure 7.4: Viewpoints of male research participants on specific problems with having women at the mine

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

7.3.2.1 Mining is not a place for women

As already indicated in this chapter, many men hold and support the view of “*mining is not a place for women*” and that “*women belong at home*” where they can take care of the household and children. They regard the mining workplace as too hazardous and unsafe for women. Many male participants still believe that women should rather be employed in ‘soft’ office positions if they want to work and earn money. Some participants also questioned the intention of the DMR to employ women in core mining positions. According to them, people working at the DMR are not necessarily familiar with the hazardous working environment of mines. It was also indicated that they feel that women are only working at the mines for the sake of money, and not to pursue a career in mining. Some men were very outspoken on this topic, as noted in the following comments of a few male participants:

“In my opinion I don’t need any woman in the mine. They are better working in the office, HR department, all those work. Not underground, because even the slightest thing can injure a woman because underground is not like surface. Everything is a hazard there. I know that’s our moms and sisters, but I don’t think they deserve to work underground.”
Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

“The woman must stay at home with child. The one thing that I know, once she comes working at the mine, she can’t survive here at the mine, because people of the mine, I know. They don’t respect the wife, because even if they know that woman she is married, they take chances with her.” Winch operator (Male – platinum mine)

“Most of the women are here for money, they are not here for duty. Five per cent, they can do the job.” Electrical assistant (Male – platinum mine)

“For the government, I think they just see things on the TV, but most of them they have never gone underground. They must go and see for themselves how are things there. Last year we had an accident of a woman dying underground. The lady was the loco-operator, as we were told, her body was cut into pieces, the head was there, the body was there.” Team leader: Haulage maintenance (Male – platinum mine)

“What I’m saying is just the mine to reconsider and think when they bringing women here. My advice to women is to go to school and learn to be administrators, not to work underground. The mine environment is not for them.” Supervisor: Production (Male – platinum mine)

“The law, our President wants women to be employed in the mine, especially underground. Especially that work we think men can do it ... Maybe for them it is good, because they have never been underground. They don’t know anything about underground.” Mining clerk (Male – platinum mine)

7.3.2.2 Attitude

Although men have begun to accept women in the mining workplace to a certain extent, several male participants complained about women’s attitude in the workplace. The following concerns were raised:

- Although men and women are appointed in similar jobs and receive equal salaries, some women are of the opinion that men have to do the hard work in the workplace, as they are used to do at home. Men, on the other hand, believe that men and women are employed on an equal basis (‘fifty-fifty’), they receive equal pay, and therefore the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’ must be applied.
- Male employees, more specifically older men, often feel offended by the way they are treated by their female co-workers. Traditionally, black men are used to being

treated with respect. Elderly men indicated that they still want to be treated with respect at the workplace.

- According to some male participants, some women do not take their work at the mine seriously; they are lazy, do not want to work and are often late for meetings.
- Some male participants indicated that women are provocative in the way they dress and act. Men often feel offended and if they react, they run the risk of losing their jobs and of being accused of sexual harassment. This places enormous pressure on male employees.

The following quotations express the opinions of some male participants regarding problems they encounter with women's attitude at work:

"Women still have the mentality that men have to do the hard work as at home, for example women expect of men to carry the tools in the workplace." Instrument technician (Male – copper mine)

"The way I grew up, in my culture, we as blacks, a woman is always respecting a man. Now we are working with them, we are the same. They must think of us that we are men and they must treat us like the way they treat their men at home, the respect they give their husbands, they must treat us in that way." Lab attendant (Male – phosphate mine)

"Actually women use their educational background as a tool to undermine the 'madalas' (elderly people), because they think they are better than them and they have the same knowledge than the elderly men. Some women don't respect their elders. According to our culture we are used to respect our elders, even if you are a man. A woman must respect her elders too." Attendant flotation (Male – phosphate mine)

"Male co-workers accept the women, depending on their attitude. It depends on the behaviour of the woman. That lazy woman, she will always be late, even in the safety meeting or whatever. When she comes there in the meeting she is busy painting her nails, doing something funny, I've seen the woman works like that in the mine. Some men like that, but the majority of us, we don't like it. Because you do work for somebody while she is earning the very same amount that you are earning ... That's why every time we men are angry about that." Mining clerk (Male – platinum mine)

“Here at our shaft there are ladies ... You’ll find them changing in front of the change house, wearing their nice skirts and everything you know ... They attract us to them, that is the main basic problem we got here. And we don’t have many women here and men are men, you see, so if women are few and guys are many, the four of us can fall in love with one lady.” Electrical assistant (Male – platinum mine)

“My opinion is that all the women who are working on the mine have to receive training to change their attitudes, their minds, their behaviours, to tell them how to work with a man.” Mining clerk (Male – platinum mine)

“The other thing, they used to arrive so late at the job. You can’t do anything to her. When we ask ‘why are you so late?’ They say ‘I am late because of this and this’. There are always some excuses. Even when they go to the toilet, they take a long time.” Team leader: Haulage maintenance (Male – platinum mine)

“Some of the women when they came for the job interview, they agree that they can do the job, but when they come underground, they change their attitude. We have this problem with one woman. She was employed as a winch operator. Then she said I can’t do it, pulling the ropes of the winch, they are too hard for me, the job is too tough for me. Then the woman asks the supervisor to change her position to a loco-driver because she said that ‘I don’t want to be cheap labour because my money is going to go down’. Then the senior supervisor agreed. She goes to the training centre to be trained as a loco-driver. Back at the shaft, she drives the loco-machine for a week, then she was crying about the womb, saying when the locum moves, it shakes her womb, she needs another job. Then the senior supervisor goes back to us and said ‘I’m having problems with the same woman, the woman is complaining about the womb’. So I say ai, that’s a problem that one.” Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

7.3.2.3 Misuse of sexual harassment

According to the male participants, women often misuse sexual harassment to manipulate men in the workplace, as noted in the following comments:

“Some women have this attitude. I’m working, nobody can touch me, nobody can do me nothing. You touch her, you harass her. If she doesn’t like you, you harass her. Slight mistake, you’re gone in mining. And the company is going to follow the procedure of the

mine. Even the woman can touch me, I can't say the woman has harassed me. Let me touch her, I've harassed her." Electrical assistant (Male – platinum mine)

"This thing of harassment, they must keep off their minds when they are on duty. Because you are chasing another man, you don't know what this man is going to eat at home and maybe you are chasing a man who is working for 20 years for the mine. The lady was employed six months ago. You touch her, there is a problem. So, how can you work with somebody like that? And you run the risk of losing your job then." Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

7.3.2.4 Positive experiences

Although a large number of the male participants believe that women do not belong in the core business of mining, some are not unwilling to admit and recognise the positive contributions that women make to the industry. Furthermore, most men are not unwilling to work with women at the mine; they admit that women can make a meaningful difference in the industry. Attitudes towards women working in core mining have started to change; male employees even express respect for women that are willing and able to perform mine work. The following comments were made in this regard:

"With time, women proved men's perception that women do not belong at the mine wrong." Instrument technician (Male – copper mine)

"We have one women working at our shift. She does her job well. She gives everything for her work. If she struggles, she seeks assistance." Plant operator (Male – phosphate mine)

"Mining is a good career choice for a woman. They are also people and they seek the opportunities. They also want to learn, they also want the opportunities that men have. We must give women the chance." Plant operator (Male – phosphate mine)

"There are women who have skills, there are women who don't have skills. There are women who are willing to work, there are women who are not willing to work." Mining clerk (Male – platinum mine)

"There are different kinds of women. There are good women; you can see this woman is here to work. We have this woman, she was driving a loco like a man. I even asked her

'hey mamma, why are you working like a man?' She said to me 'I've got children at home, I'm here for work'." Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

"There are definitely opportunities for women in the mine. We have the other lady. She is a learner shaft supervisor. She is going to be a shaft supervisor very soon. So she is pursuing her career. And she is not failing. So if she is not failing, then I think she can do the work. The other lady at the other shaft, she is an electrician, and at another shaft we have the lady, she is a rigger. You know the rigger? It is the trade for the people who are lifting and moving the heavy equipment. She is working there. She is the main, she is the driver and she is managing." Electrical foreman (Male – platinum mine)

"I was employed with a woman at another mine. We were employed like multi-task, we did all the jobs. And that mamma, even the rock drill operator, she drilled the machine, I don't know what she is doing now. She was drilling the machine next to me. She didn't even have any assistant to hold the jumper, she was working like a man. Even the men were asking 'did this lady eat something before she came to work?' There are women who are working, there are women who are not willing to work." Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

Although perceptions have started to change and more men accept women in the mining workplace, there are still some that are of the opinion that women do not belong at the mine. As time goes by and women prove that they take their work at the mine seriously, they will prove these negative attitudes towards women in mining wrong. The above-mentioned aspects should not be neglected and should be communicated to employees during induction training and diversity workshops. This could create a mutual understanding between both genders for each other's problems in the workplace. Also see Chapter Four under 4.4.6.4.

7.3.3 Key challenges for management of mining companies

The section below discusses the main problems and challenges encountered by management with the deployment of women in core mining positions.

7.3.3.1 Meeting of the 10% target

As already indicated, the Mining Charter required a 10% employment of women in core mining positions. The literature (see Chapter Four) shows that mining companies struggle to reach these employment targets. The section below provides the results for the three mines included in the study.

7.3.3.1.1 Copper mine

Based on the interviews conducted with management of the copper mine, it became clear that the mine is still struggling to reach the 10% female employment in core mining target, as required by the Mining Charter. Although the mine has not yet reached the target, management are committed to women in mining and have already done and is still doing everything possible to make the mining workplace conducive for women. Infrastructure facilities, such as change houses and ablution facilities, were built and are constantly in a process of upgrading in order to accommodate women. Although not all PPE needs have been addressed, some PPE was adapted to provide for the specific needs of women.

Women are employed in almost all mining operations, both underground and at the surface. They are working in all the process plants, fulfilling all kinds of positions, such as that of artisans, electricians and geologists. They operate heavy equipment such as tractors, loaders, backhoes and crushers. Women are sent to apprentice training centres to develop their skills and to empower them in order to perform their work responsibilities. A Women in Mining Forum exists, aimed at identifying and addressing issues in the workplace encountered by women employed in core mining positions. The following quotation is an illustration of the commitment of management towards women in mining:

“Our understanding as a business is that we are still working towards that target of 10%. You know anybody can put a quota, but I think the idea is to say, “do something about it”. And our point of view is we need to bring women into the mining environment, we need to make sure that we make the place conducive for them, we accommodate them, we make authorities available, we make them feel safe to work in the environment and to make it more exciting and get them energised to do the job. The only limitation I see for women working in the mining environment is when they are expecting a child. The rest is business as usual and there is no one who can convince me that a woman is weaker than a man, we have very strong women here who can carry anything. So we have tools and machines to help them pick up anything heavy and work with it, cranes and so forth. Manager: Employee relations (Male – copper mine)

Furthermore, the mine has an aim of sourcing local people. It has never had a migrant labour system. Since the mine was established, it has never had hostels. Family units have been established, consisting of a kitchen and a number of rooms, where individuals with their families can stay, as noted in the following comment:

“If you had a family, you would stay in a proper house that was specially designed for a family. In other words, you have a kitchen, a number of rooms, etc. It is seen as home, because the salaries are competitive, the conditions of employment are competitive and we are putting safety as a big priority for business.” Manager: Employee relations (Male – copper mine)

7.3.3.1.2 Phosphate mine

During the interviews held in 2011, management of the phosphate mine positively indicated that they will reach the 10% female employment in the ‘core activities’ target in the 2012 financial year. According to the production superintendent, *“the involvement, employment and integration of women into all mining activities have definitely improved significantly during the past five years”*. This is reinforced by the following statement of the human resource manager: *“If you look at our female recruiting of the last two years, it went through the roof. We try and seriously absorb females in the workplace”*. Women are employed in almost all mining operations as operators of heavy machinery, artisans, electricians, geologists, and other positions. According to the senior production manager, it is not an easy task to reach the target of 10% women employed in the core business of mining, and management faced various challenges. She commented as follows:

“On the one hand, there are challenges to get people to fill the ‘core’ positions and, on the other hand, it is a challenge to retain the women. Many of the ladies appointed in a position only work for a while and then realise ‘I cannot cope in this position’ and then quit. So it's very difficult to achieve the 10%” Senior manager: Production (Female – phosphate mine)

Although the mine had managed to reach the 10% women in core mining target, the challenge remain to sustainably maintain the target, as noted in the following comment:

“I think we are not at a point yet where we can say we are sustainable in terms of the 10% requirement of the Mining Charter. The organisation must achieve the 10% women in ‘core’ for at least three years in a row before you could say you are successful in the implementation of women in ‘core’ at your mining company.” Senior manager: Production (Female – phosphate mine)

Through interviews held with management of the phosphate mine, it became clear that management is committed to women in mining and have made a considerable effort to accommodate women in the core business of the mine. As with the copper mine, infrastructure facilities were built and upgraded to accommodate women in core activities. In addition, the mining company provides a 24-hour crèche facility. Furthermore, the mine really bought into the concept of women in mining by appointing a man in a senior management position as the patron of the Women in Mining Forum.

7.3.3.1.3 *Platinum mine*

According to the sustainable development report published by the platinum mine in 2012, women represented 8.15% of the workforce, with 5.11% women employed in core mining positions (2012:8).⁸ From the interviews with the men and women working in core mining positions, it became evident that women are employed in almost all mining operations as operators of heavy machinery, artisans, electricians, geologists and general mineworkers. The mining company has also upgraded ablution facilities and change houses to accommodate women working in core mining positions, although not sufficiently enough. Furthermore, the mining company has engaged in the following initiatives to facilitate the employment of women in core positions (2012:10):⁹

- Organised a recruitment drive and a mining skills programme specifically for women
- Provided a fitness programme to enhance the ability of potential female employees to pass the entrance fitness test
- Attended to the physical environment as well as the creation of policies to assist with the protection of women in the workplace.

7.3.3.2 *Main problems encountered by management with female employees in core mining positions*

Clearly contradictory to the responses of the male co-workers, the minority of the participants of the management target group reported that they experience specific problems with women at the mine. Interviews and focus group discussions held with the participants of the management target group as well as open-ended sections of the

⁸ The source is not fully referenced in order to protect the anonymity of the mining company.

⁹ The source is not fully referenced in order to protect the anonymity of the mining company.

questionnaire revealed various challenges that management faced and are still facing with the deployment of women in core mining positions; these are discussed below.

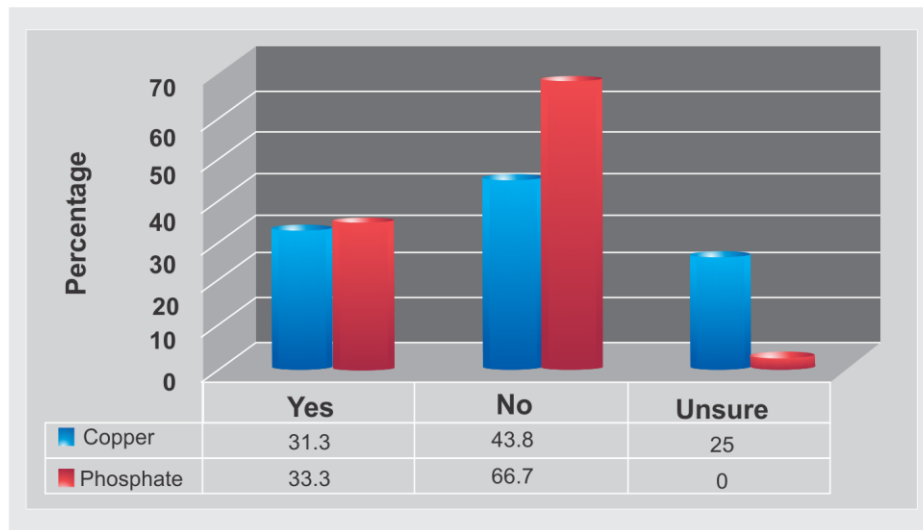


Figure 7.5: Viewpoints of management on specific problems with having women at the mine

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

7.3.3.2.1 Creating a conducive environment

Although mining companies have made great progress in terms of accommodating women within companies by creating facilities (change houses and ablution facilities) that are women-friendly, it still remains a key challenge to provide adequate facilities, specifically underground. The following comments were made in this regard:

“For me, the key challenge is to accommodate women within the company. You need to make sure that you provide for everything that will make women feel comfortable in the environment. You need to create a conducive environment.” Manager: Employee relations (Male – copper mine)

“We are continuously reviewing the infrastructure to make sure there is proper accommodation for females in the workplace, like change rooms facilities.” Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

7.3.3.2.2 *Integrating women into the stereotyped male-dominated workforce*

The integration of women into the stereotyped male-dominated workforce still remains a key challenge for mining companies. As highlighted in several instances in the empirical findings, a large number of the male employees still have a negative attitude towards women employed in core mining positions. Many of them still believe that *“mining is not a place for women”* and that *“they do not belong underground”*. On the other hand, the newly employed female employees have their own perceptions of the mining environment and bring several ‘new’ issues with them to the mine. Management of mining companies attempt to address these negative perceptions and attitudes by conducting regular diversity workshops. Diversity workshops create gender and diversity awareness and educate the workforce regarding the benefits of having a diverse workforce. Management’s commitment towards creating a diverse workforce is noted in the following comments:

“It is also important for leaders and teams to accept that it is important to be a diverse team of various genders, various races. You drive it as a form of diversity in order to show people that we do better as a diverse team. A team made of different genders, different races, including the disabled. You get a much stronger team. So we really need to train a lot around diversity issues and the challenges associated with diversity ... If there are activities we are doing, men and women must be seen to be participating. So that’s why even in our sporting activities, we make sure we have teams that are constituted of men and women.” Manager: Employee relations (Male – copper mine)

“We started in January (2010) with a gender-diversity workshop, only for females, to discuss and address issues in the workplace that are affected them. There are a lot of stereotypes that we as females also enforce, by saying we cannot do certain things. We go and do exactly what the stereotype says. During these workshops we try to create an awareness for these issues. Last year we put about 15 ladies through and there is also now [2011] one scheduled for another 20 ladies to go through it.” Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

7.3.3.2.3 *Women’s capability*

Women are often appointed in positions that they are not capable of fulfilling. This leads to frustration on the side of co-workers as well as their supervisors. The supervisors interviewed stressed that it is important that women employed in certain core positions

meet the requirements of such positions. They have to be physically fit and capable of doing their work. One of the supervisors suggests the following:

“Women must have the physical ability to be employed in a specific position – she must have the stamina, the endurance, her physical appearance must fit the requirements of the position and she must pass all the necessary selection criteria. In addition, the mining company has to conduct risk assessments before employing women in specific positions. The selection criteria must include the following: psychometric tests, a personal interview with the candidate and a practical examination. The selection committee must include the following personnel: medical doctor, human resource officer and a supervisor from the specific section the women will be employed in. The candidate must undergo intensive training and must be employed for a three-month test period. When recruiting women, advertisements must be widely placed in order to give all women, white and black, the opportunity to apply for positions in the mining company.” Supervisor (Male – copper mine)

The following quotations express some of the frustrations supervisors experience when women employed in core mining positions are incapable of doing the work that they are employed for:

“Supervisors getting frustrated if women are not capable of doing their work. If male employees are incapable of doing their work, they get fired, women not.” Supervisor (Male – copper mine)

“Women often intimidate their supervisors. They are not physically strong and fit enough to do their work that they are employed for. The male co-workers often have to assist women to for example lift a toolbox or carry and lift heavy material. The male co-workers are often negatively influenced and feel that if women are employed in these positions, such as boilermakers, they have to do their own work.” Medical doctor (Female – copper mine)

“Some of the male counterparts will say ‘she is fit to be a fitter and a turner, but now when she has to take the gearbox out, now she says I weigh 50 kg and the gearbox is 60 kg, I cannot lift up the gearbox. The male counterpart has to assist the female employee and sometimes they get aggrieved and say ‘no, I must help, but we are earning the same salary’. The perception then becomes the reality. That is one of the challenges in I think

the whole mining industry, because that is real-time things that are happening, unfortunately.” Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

“If they need to send women underground, they must be specific on the kind of job that women must do. If maybe they are not going to do the same job as the men, they should not be paid exactly the same salary. Given them these light jobs like maybe writing or maybe calculating, cleaning, ja, those kind of things, making sure that the store is clean and that it is ordered.” Supervisor: Production (Male – platinum mine)

7.3.3.2.4 Pregnancy

Pregnancy remains a major challenge for management; the implications are threefold: Firstly, mining companies suffer financial constraints due to the fact that women employed in certain core mining positions have to be replaced when they become pregnant because they cannot proceed with their work in the harsh mining environment. Secondly, management have to find another position that requires light duty to accommodate the pregnant woman for the duration of her pregnancy as well as for the time she will be on maternity leave (altogether approximately 12 months). Thirdly, mining companies are faced with unique challenges when woman do not disclose their pregnancies. If women do not disclose their pregnancies, it may have serious implications for the mining company, for the woman's health as well as the health of the unborn babies. If anything happens to the woman while she is pregnant and she has not disclosed her pregnancy, the company is liable, because the company did not provide alternative placement. The following reasons were put forward for why women do not disclose their pregnancies:

- Job security – women are afraid of losing their jobs
- Cultural beliefs – certain cultures do not allow women to disclose their pregnancies until they are approximately four months pregnant
- Fear of losing benefits and job opportunities, such as training.

From management's point of view, at all three mines, women are removed from working conditions that could affect their pregnancies as soon as they disclose their pregnancies. The following quotations illustrate the challenges management experience when women employed in core positions become pregnant:

“The big challenge that we are having, especially employing women in the core of the business, is that ladies get employed and after four months of engagement they become pregnant. This is a continuous challenge. We have to find an alternative place to accommodate them for the nine-month period. Alternatively, it also has a financial constraint on the company, because we have to engage someone in that position.”
Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

“Pregnancy is regarded as one of the major issues. When female employees disclosed their pregnancy, depending on their position, they are often replaced in another position where women can feel safe and more comfortable during their time of pregnancy. The implication is that the female employee can’t do her work for which she is initially employed for, for approximately seven months. Somebody else must be employed to do her work. She is also out of circulation for maternity leave – four months. Sometimes, the female employee will fall pregnant approximately seven months after she is back from maternity leave. The implication is that the female employee does one year’s work over a time-period of three years – this also has a financial implication for the mining company.”
Medical doctor (Female – copper mine)

“The challenge is on the production side of core mining. It is a financial constraint for the company because we are carrying two employees.” Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

“The thing is, if they are pregnant they can no longer go underground. They [the mine] have to keep them on the surface until they finish up the delivery and the maternity leave is over, then they can go back. It takes nine months [pregnancy] plus four months [maternity leave], that process. The company loses 13 months for it.” Team leader (Male – platinum mine)

“The big challenge that we have is that the females don’t immediately disclose that they are pregnant. They keep it secret. Maybe they haven’t disclosed it to their family. It is only when it becomes visible to the trainers or the supervisors that we realise that they are pregnant. Then we say ‘you look pregnant’ and then the woman feel offended. That is a challenge to a mining house, because of the risk area. The pregnant lady needs to be removed immediately and now they don’t disclose it. We had two cases where they continued working in high-risk areas and we only found out after four months that they were pregnant.” Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

“It’s difficult to address cultural belief, it’s the belief, you cannot change it, you need to respect it. But as I said, all we can do is sensitise the people about the risks.” Group human capital manager (Male – phosphate mine)

7.3.3.2.5 Cultural issues

Although women’s participation in the workforce has increased over the years, many cultures in South Africa still regard women as subordinate to men. Perceptions still exist that the main responsibility of taking care of the home and children rests with women. This creates many problems for working women. According to the participants from the management target group, women have to learn to balance their work and home life, as noted in the following comment:

“I think the major problems that women are experiencing are related to cultural issues. In the South African culture, women are still regarded as subordinate to men. For example if the woman’s baby is sick, her husband will not necessarily assist. Women are struggling to handle the pressure created by demands at work and at home. Women must learn to create a balance between who they are at work and who they are at home, a balance between a career, motherhood and the position of her husband. It’s not something that will happen today and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. It will take time and will happen over generations. Men have to get used to the idea that women have their own careers and that they (men) have to play a leading role in the household. Until then, women will continue struggling to find a balance between home and work and to be the boss at work and the slave at home.” Senior manager: Production (Female – phosphate mine)

7.3.3.2.6 Issues related to women

Management struggles with many issues related to women, which are not limited to race or to job level. According to the participants, the effect that women’s issues have on mining companies increased as the percentage of women in the mining industry increased. Furthermore, it is indicated that male co-workers become tired of issues accompanying the deployment of women. These issues include the following:

- Women become pregnant and go on maternity leave.
- Their children get ill and they are absent from work.
- During menstruation, women cannot fully pull their weight in the team.

- Their husbands do not want them to work night shifts because they become jealous if their wives work with other men.
- Women experience pressure from their husbands to start with a family because they now earn a salary.

7.3.3.2.7 *Attraction and retention of women in the mining industry*

As indicated in Chapter Four under 4.4.6.2, one of the challenges mining companies have to deal with is the retention of their female workforce, which includes its technical staff, such as geologists and mining engineers, as well as the production staff, the mineworkers. Different views were obtained from the female participants working in core mining activities and the participants from the management target group. Some participants held the opinion that not much is done by mining companies to attract and retain their female staff, while others reacted positively by reporting that mining companies are committed to women in mining and take specific measures to attract and retain their female staff. The following measures are taken by the companies to attract and retain female employees:

- **Women in mining structures**

At all three mines, women in mining structures, such as Women in Mining forums, have been created to inform female employees of relevant information as well as to provide a platform where women can discuss issues that they experience in the workplace.

- **Support systems – crèche**

One of the mines included in the study provides 24-hour crèche facilities to assist women with young children. The other two mines indicated that they are considering the option of providing crèche facilities. The following quotation provides a motivation for the crèche facility that is offered at the phosphate mine:

“One of our biggest intention mechanisms that we have seen over the last couple of years is the crèche that we have opened. That was one of our intention measures to keep women, so that they know while they are at work their children are taken care of. This is one of the big gaps that I have experienced at other mining companies. They don’t have special facilities for children. Our crèche facility is completely different. It runs 24 hours. It is always open, so if you are a female employee and you have to do night shift, your child

is taken care of while you are at work.” Human resource manager (Female – phosphate mine)

- **Infrastructure facilities**

Infrastructure facilities, such as change houses and toilets, were created and built to accommodate women employed in core mining positions. Although it is reported in this study that infrastructure facilities are not yet sufficient, the mining companies still have the intention to improve facilities for women employed in core mining positions.

- **Transport facilities**

Transport facilities are provided to assist employees to get to work and home, although not yet sufficiently so at all three mines included in the study.

- **Marketing**

Career exhibitions and Women in Mining roadshows are offered to attract women to the mining industry. Furthermore, mining companies conduct visits to schools and also invite schools to visit the mines.

- **Management buy-in**

Management of the mining companies show their commitment to women in mining by taking actions such as the following:

- Appraisals
- Visible proof of women employed from lowest levels to production managers
- Women’s Day celebrations
- Developing and implementing women’s policies, such as pregnancy and employment equity policies
- Providing PPE specifically designed for women
- Providing mentorship schemes
- Providing training and development programmes for women employed in core positions
- Providing bursary schemes
- Conducting research on women in mining issues.

Additional measures as suggested by Nel *et al.* (2011:225) could be implemented to retain female staff employed in core mining positions.

From the above it is evident that the deployment of women in core mining positions was and still is no easy task for management of mining companies. Although the research showed that mining companies are committed towards women in mining and are making a considerable effort to accommodate women in the core business of mining, they are still struggling to overcome some of the issues, such as the integration of women into the stereotyped male-dominated workforce, pregnancy, the physical ability and capability of women, cultural issues and the attraction and retention of women for the industry.

7.3.4 Main obstacles that inhibit the participation of women in the mining sector

A question was included in the questionnaire to determine the main obstacles that inhibit the participation of women in the mining sector. The following aspects were identified as main obstacles that hinder women from entering the sector:

- The perception of mining as a 'male-dominated' and 'harsh and dangerous' work environment
- The perception that mines favour men
- Husbands who do not want their wives to work at mines
- The remote places in which mines are located
- A lack of knowledge – careers in the mining industry are not promoted enough during school years; awareness is mostly created at universities, and most female students at universities have already decided on a career and are therefore lost to the mining industry
- The physical nature of work
- Confidence in physical strength and fitness
- Shift work
- Fears for sexual harassment
- Women not feeling adequately trained to work at mines
- Working conditions at mines

- Difficult working hours.

The above-mentioned aspects are also in line with the findings of the literature review (see Chapter Four under 4.2). Due to the nature of the mining workplace, some of the mentioned aspects are difficult to address. However, management of mining companies should take note of these findings and aim to address these aspects. The conceptual framework developed through this study aims to offer some solutions to these issues (see Chapter Eight).

7.3.5 Benefits to having women at the mine

A question was included in the questionnaire to the male employees working in core mining positions as well as to management to determine whether there are any benefits to having women at the mine. It is evident from the figures below that the responses of the different mines yielded different results. More than half of the participants of the phosphate mine (male: 52.9%; management: 66.7%) reacted positively to the question. This view was supported by more than 60% of the platinum mine, while negative responses were obtained from the participants of the copper mine, as less than half of the participants (male: 41.2%; management: 35.3%) indicated that there are benefits to having women at the mine.

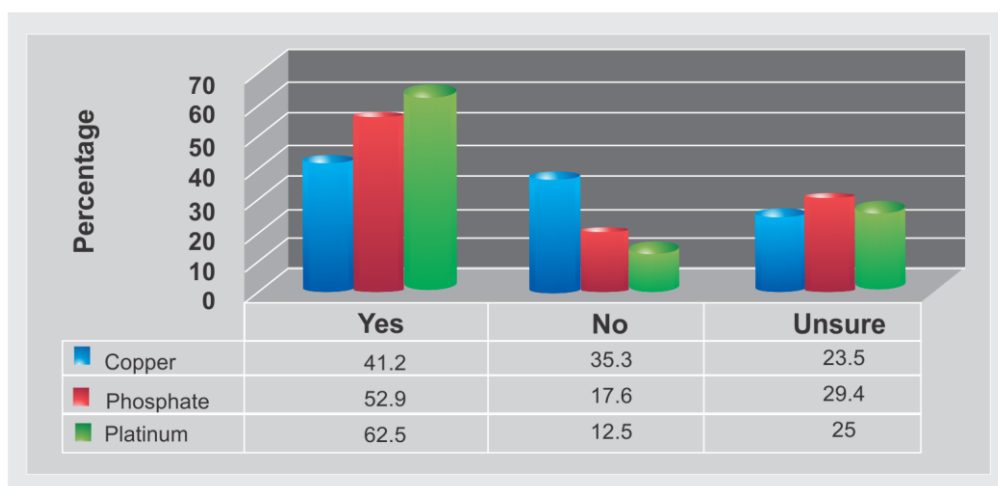


Figure 7.6: Viewpoints of male research participants on benefits to having women at the mine

Source: Constructed by author (2013)



Figure 7.7: Viewpoints of management on benefits to having women at the mine

Source: Constructed by author (2013)

The qualitative findings obtained through the interviews and focus group discussions as well as the open-ended sections of the questionnaire revealed that the deployment of women in core mining positions have the following benefits:

- Women work hard.
- Women are competitive; they are willing to compete to advance in the company.
- Female employees tend to be more stable and reliable.
- Women are careful and neat; they have good 'housekeeping' benefits.
- Women are meticulous and organised in their approach to work.
- Women bring incredible skills and a new approach to the workplace.
- Women soften the image of the mining environment – they lessen the aggressive image of the mining environment.
- It leads to the reduction of poverty and unemployment.
- It ensures compliance with equity legislation.
- Companies will continue to enjoy mining rights.
- Mining companies show a commitment towards Millennium Development Goal 3 by creating diversity and gender equality in the workforce.

The following quotations illustrate these points:

“Women work hard. Women are willing to compete, to climb the ladder.” Superintendent Internal Audit (Female – copper mine)

“Women are not ‘corrupt’.” Superintendent Internal Audit (Female – copper mine)

“Men are troublemakers. Women are more reliable.” Electrician (Female – copper mine)

“Women are stable people.” Superintendent Internal Audit (Female – copper mine)

“Women are more careful when driving machines and using equipment.” Instrument technician (Male – copper mine)

“Women are also neater in the workplace.” Electrician (Female – copper mine)

“Women, in general, are meticulous and organised in their approach to work.” Supervisor (Male – copper mine)

“You give them a tool, they look after that tool. You give them a machine, they look after it. So that element of care is even more pronounced in women. They really look after their machines, there are hardly any breakdowns.” Manager: Employee relations (Male – copper mine)

“Ja, according to my understanding women are more careful than men, according to safety. They are the best in good housekeeping, like to put everything in its place and to keep the workplace clean and neat.” Electrical foreman (Male – platinum mine)

“Women can bring to the workplace incredible skills and a new approach. For example insurance companies, until today women’s insurance is cheaper than men’s. This is so because the insurance companies know women are careful drivers and make fewer accidents. The manager will gladly appoint women because he knows women are safer drivers and will take care of their vehicles and machines”. Senior manager: Production (Female – phosphate mine)

“They have a huge role to contribute towards the success of the company and they also bring experience and knowledge to the business.” Supervisor (Male – copper mine)

Although this research revealed several negative aspects and challenges that accompanied the deployment of women in the core business of mining, time has already shown that management and male co-workers begin to 'see light at the end of the tunnel' by recognising the benefits and contributions that women already have and could have for the industry.

7.3.6 Conclusion

From the section above it is evident that the three target groups (women and men working in core mining positions and management of the respective mines) of this study faced and are still facing major challenges with regard to the deployment of women in core mining positions. An integrated approach and the involvement of all stakeholders (women and men working in core mining positions and management of the respective mines) are needed to address all these challenges and thereby contribute towards the sustainable employment and retention of women in the industry. Although challenges are experienced, it became evident through the research that perceptions have started to change as women take their positions at the mine seriously and prove the old perception of 'women do not belong at the mine' wrong.

7.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided the empirical findings on the following two themes: *Workplace relations* and *General issues regarding the deployment of women in mining*. The qualitative and quantitative data were presented in an integrated way according to relevant thematic issues. For the theme *Workplace relations*, descriptive statistics, frequencies and factor analysis were presented and discussed. In addition, the findings of the qualitative inquiry (semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended sections of the questionnaire) were reported. The section *General issues regarding the deployment of women in mining* entailed mainly findings derived from the qualitative inquiry as well as the open-ended sections of the questionnaire. These were presented and discussed according to relevant themes and sub-themes.

The quantitative responses of the section on *Workplace relations* revealed only positive results. Four factors were identified: the *Employment relations* factor, the *Complaints-handling procedures* factor, the *Sexual harassment and sexual favouritism* factor and the *Language* factor. All factors revealed positive results, with the exception of the *Language* factor. Due to the nature of the mining environment and the diverse workforces of mining

companies, the majority of the participants indicated that language is a communication barrier to the effective performance of daily tasks. Although the other factors revealed only positive results, it should be taken into account that the responses of the different mines yielded different results. Positive responses were reported from the majority of the participants of the copper and phosphate mines for almost all the indicators, but not from the majority of the participants of the platinum mine. Furthermore, the findings from the qualitative inquiry revealed specific concerns regarding equality in the workplace, the acceptance of women in the workplace, discrimination, negative attitudes of male co-workers, underestimation of women in leadership positions, treatment with respect, isolation, sexual favouritism, sexual harassment and the handling of women's concerns, which mining companies should be taken into account.

In the section *General issues regarding the deployment of women in core mining positions*, a more general approach was taken to evaluate specific issues that have an impact on the deployment of women in the mining industry. In the first section, attention was given to personal issues of women employed in core mining positions. Main reasons for why women select mining as a career were pointed out; these are poverty, replacement of family members, employment opportunities and qualifications obtained through education. Furthermore, the impact of mine work on the family was evaluated. Lastly, the main problems encountered by women in the mining environment were revealed. The second section focused on the main problems encountered by male employees regarding the deployment of women in core mining positions. Although perceptions have started to change and more men accept women in the mining workplace, it became evident through the research that specific problems are encountered by male employees regarding the deployment of women in the industry. Some men still believe that the mining work environment is too hazardous for women and that women do not belong at the mine. Furthermore, they experience problems with women's attitude and the tendency of some women to misuse 'sexual harassment'. The third section discussed the key challenges that management faced and are still facing with the deployment of women in core mining positions. Although the research showed that the mining companies are committed towards women in mining and made a considerable effort to accommodate women in the core business of mining, they are still struggling to overcome some of the issues, such as the integrating of women into the stereotyped male-dominated workforce, pregnancy, the physical ability and capability of women, cultural issues and the attraction and retention of women for the industry. The fourth section revealed certain aspects that inhibit the participation of women in the industry. The last

section listed the benefits and contributions women already add and could add to the industry.

The last chapter provides the conclusion of the research and presents the conceptual framework for the sustainable deployment of women in the core business of mining. Recommendations for the industry are also provided.