

Organisational culture and employment equity implementation in a South African mine

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to describe cultural dimensions that are perceived to have an impact on the implementation of employment equity (EE) within the mining industry in South Africa.

To this end, the study is premised on a theoretical model of four (4) cultural dimensions. The cultural dimensions in this study are (1) individualism vs. collectivism, (2) power distance, (3) uncertainty avoidance, (4) masculinity vs. femininity.

A qualitative research methodology was employed with data collected through a semi-structured questionnaire applied to employees at Exxaro coal mine in Mpumalanga province. Exxaro coal mine was a case study from which the theoretical model of cultural dimensions was employed. Data gathered was synthesised into codes, these were then grouped in manageable themes from which analysis was drawn.

The results of the research indicated that it is not that easy to ascribe a single dimension to the prevalent culture that influences employment equity implementation. It is rather a combination of dominant dimensions that influence the organisational culture. However, at Exxaro, it was very evident that the masculine cultural dimension had a direct impact on the organisational culture towards gender transformation in the workplace. The study also concluded that the employment equity policy has also created job insecurity among most white employees. As a result of white male dominance in senior mining positions, employment equity implementation has been very slow because of the paradox that management find themselves in. Research also noted that organisations characterised by a high level of care (femininity) for their employees are most likely to be reciprocated by loyalty which promotes a positive climate for employment equity implementation.

DECLARATION

I, Teboho J. Sehloho, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Signed at

On the day of 2015.

DEDICATION

A special thanks to my wife, Linnah and my kids, Rethabile and Relebohile, for your continued love and support over the last two and half years. It is through your support and patience that I gained the strength to go on and complete this mammoth task. Thank you very much.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to describe the cultural dimensions that are perceived to have an impact on the implementation of employment equity (EE) within the mining industry in South Africa.

1.2 Context of the study

Statutory laws of the pre-1994 South Africa government promoted and supported discrimination of one race over others (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). These laws led to racial and economic imbalances in society and in the workplace (Allanson, Atkins, & Hinks, 2002). Although the race based discrimination laws have been abolished by the democratically elected government, marginalisation based on race, gender, sexuality, disability, etc. seems to persist in society and the workplace (Rabe & Rugunanan, 2012; Seekings, 2008).

The South African constitution seeks to eliminate the legacies of the pre-1994 South Africa government by promoting and protecting the rights and freedom of all its citizens to afford them human dignity (Letseka, 2012). A number of significant law reforms meant to give effect to the rights and freedoms ascribed in the South African constitution, as well as to redress the injustices of the past, have been passed since 1994 (Stone & Erasmus, 2012).

The promulgation of the Labour Relations Act in 1996, was one of the first efforts of the democratically elected government aimed at promoting economic development, social justice, labour peace and democracy in the workplace (Republic of South Africa, 1995). In 1997, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act was promulgated to give effect to the right to fair labour practices and to comply with the International Labour Organisation, of which South Africa is a member (Republic of South Africa, 1997). This was followed by the Employment Equity Act in 1999 (amended in 2004), the purpose of which was to

promote equal opportunity and fair treatment in the workplace as well as to ensure equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels (Republic of South Africa, 1998). Non-compliance to the Employment Equity Act may result in legal sanctions of employers. Firms therefore are said to be responsive to the regulatory framework because failure to do so puts organisation and managers at risk (Jain, Horwitz, & Wilkin, 2012). However, Jain et al. (2012) further assert that financial penalties imposed by government may be viewed as low by employers and weaken the motivation to comply.

The concept of an Employment Equity Act is not peculiar to South Africa, some of its roots may be traced in countries like Canada and the United States of America. In their earlier studies of the effectiveness of the Employment Equity program in Canada, Kesper (2001) stated that effective enforcements, increasing probability of a penalty if found guilty of violation of the Act, as well as setting specific goals, results in improved effectiveness of the Act. This view is against the backdrop of an improved, but slow, rate of transformation in the workplace and equal representation for marginalised categories of employees (Department of Labour, 2014).

In terms of the Employment Equity Act, employers are required to define employment equity targets and plans to achieve transformation targets. These plans are reviewed annually by the relevant government departments in the respective industries, with the Department of Labour providing an oversight role.

Despite the legislation on employment equity, most black people are recruited at low levels while whites are largely recruited at top management and middle management levels (Jain et al., 2012). Although some progress has been made in promoting racial and gender representation at higher levels of management, progress has been slow (Selby & Sutherland, 2006). Some employers cannot differentiate between making the working environment a humane place for all, and implementing employment equity. Implementation of programmes such as child care, paid leave to attend family obligations, workplace harassment workshops, etc. are certainly important building blocks in creating a climate conducive to implementing employment equity, but are not in themselves measures of employment equity (Falkenberg & Boland, 1997).

Challenges in realising transformative progress in the workplace representation are significant. Falkenberg and Boland (1997) argue that it is important to first understand the forces that sustain discrimination in the workplace in order to find effective ways of addressing them. Integration of employment equity processes and procedure into the organisational culture and climate is one of the areas underestimated by management (Nienaber, 2007).

The South African mining sector represents a significant economic driver for the country. However, recent employment equity statistics in the sector, suggest sluggish progress in the transformation of the workforce profile since the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act in 1996.

Table 1: Mining sector workforce profile (Commission for Employment Equity, 2014)

Mining	Male				Female				Foreign nationals		Total
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Male	Female	
Top Management level	17,4%	2,0%	2,2%	60,8%	4,9%	0,6%	1,2%	6,3%	4,2%	0,5%	100,0%
Top Management level with disability	21,1%	0,0%	0,0%	68,4%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	10,5%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Senior management level	15,7%	2,4%	3,5%	61,0%	3,5%	0,6%	1,1%	8,0%	3,7%	0,4%	100,0%
Senior management level with disability	14,8%	3,7%	0,0%	63,0%	1,9%	0,0%	0,0%	14,8%	1,9%	0,0%	100,0%

Table 1 above illustrates national demographics of the Economically Active Population in the mining sector by population group and gender for senior and top management occupational levels as surveyed by the Commission for employment equity in over a period of ten year from 2003 to 2013.

The Commission report highlights a sector that is still dominated by white males (see Table 1), with very slow progress on the development of women across all races to senior and top management positions.

Employment equity is a regulatory force that attempts to institutionalise norms and standards in the workplace to address disparities based on race, gender and disabilities (Jain et al., 2012). However, such an envisaged culture of diversity in the workplace is complicated by suspicion and lack of trust among racial groups (Dube & Ngulube, 2012; Seekings, 2008). While employment equity is perceived by some whites as reverse-racism, and equally so by some blacks and whites as tokenism, others refer to

employment equity as a quota system (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). These views, whether real or not, have created mistrust between employers and employees (Maharaj & Oortlepp, 2003). It can therefore be argued that culture plays a prominent role in promoting workplace transformation. Perhaps the pertinent question is whether the existing organisational culture in mining is supportive or obstructive towards the implementation of employment equity.

There are two divergent views in developing an understanding of culture; the functional view which sees culture as having a causal link to organisational performance and a much broader view of culture from a context perspective in which social events, behaviour and institutions are important considerations (Gajendran, Brewer, Dainty, & Runeson, 2012). However, organisational homogeneity posited by the functional view is difficult to achieve due to societal paradoxes. Steffens, Terjesen, and Davidsson (2012)'s study suggests organisational performance is improved by team diversity. Critiques of the functional view allude to the fact that it views any deviation from the accepted norm as something that must be fixed and not embraced (Gajendran et al., 2012). It is clear that the Employment Equity Act is a proponent of a non-functional culture, which promotes diversity and inclusivity.

This study seeks to investigate the prevailing culture in the mining sector and its impact on the implementation of employment equity. In the quest to understand the effect of culture in the implementation of employment equity in the workplace, the Hofstede (2011) model was adopted in guiding the research. Of the six cultural dimensions i.e. individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity, long term vs. short term orientation, indulgence vs. restraint only the first four were studied. The exclusion of long term vs. short term orientation, indulgence vs. restraint from the study is because there is less data about these dimensions, hence their reliability can cast some doubts (Hofstede, 2011).

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 *Main problem*

To describe how Hofstede's cultural dimensions of individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity affect the implementation of employment equity in South Africa.

1.4 Significance of the study

It is hoped that this study will make a contribution towards understanding the cultural dimensions that impact the implementation of employment equity by considering these factors in the coal mining industry context. Nienaber (2007) contends that the work climate and culture are factors that need to be considered when integrating employment equity programmes into the organisation. The mining sector is still dominated by white people in senior posts and blacks in lower posts and few females across most levels (Commission for Employment Equity, 2014). Such an industry profile could create a climate and culture that discourages other employees from pursuing their career ambitions. By developing an understanding of an organisational culture and how it affects the implementation of employment equity, the study will provide guidance to human resource management on identifying and managing the cultural dimensions required to support employment equity implementation while alleviating negative cultural dynamics that could hinder the successful implementation of employment equity.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

This study only addresses cultural dimensions relating to individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity.

The study was conducted in the context of Exxaro Coal Mpumalanga (Pty) Ltd as a case study.

1.6 Definition of terms

Employment Equity (EE) refers to a comprehensive planning process by an employer to identify and remove discrimination through active recruitment, selection and training of women, previously disadvantaged individuals and the disabled and to ensure their appropriate representation throughout the organisation (Jain et al., 2012). In the South African context, this process includes the previously disadvantaged, inter alia, African people, Coloureds, Indians, and recently, also includes South African born Chinese people.

Organisational culture is a set of values, beliefs, basic assumptions and behaviour patterns that form the identity of the organisation and that determines how employees behave (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2014; Hofstede, 2011).

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made regarding the study:

- Participants in the study will openly share their experience and cultural perceptions of the organisation;
- Exclusion of the two dimensions, long term vs. short term orientation and indulgence vs. restraint from the study will not have a major impact of the overall assessment of cultural dimensions in this study.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section covers a review of the literature on organisational culture and its impact on the implementation of employment equity in the workplace. The section starts by providing a brief background on the Hofstede culture framework. The detailed literature discusses only four of six cultural dimensions of the Hofstede model, individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity; these four dimensions are closely related to issues pertaining to workplace inequalities which are addressed in the Employment Equity Act. The literature review concludes by making research propositions as the basis for the research study.

2.2 Background discussion

In the study of barriers to employment equity implementation and retention of blacks in management in South Africa, Booysen (2007) proposes that leadership and organisational culture are among the undetermined antecedents which can be barriers to implementation of employment equity in the organisation. Lack of leadership commitment to the process and lack of consequences thereof, creates an organisational culture that is apathetic to employment equity and perpetuates myths and misinformation about the objective of employment equity. There is a view that those responsible for implementing employment equity (EE) also feel threatened by the process they are supposed to lead and therefore, it is not surprising that EE implementation is either ignored or sabotaged (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). Most organisational cultures are not inclusive enough to accommodate diversity and support employment practices that seek to transform the workplace into a representative environment (Jain et al., 2012). This study seeks to describe the cultural dimensions that have an impact on the implementation of employment equity in the mining sector.

2.3 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture has attracted the attention of many researchers due to its impact on organisational performance. The study of organisational culture is primarily to gather key values, beliefs and norms that are embedded in the organisation and drive organisational behaviour (Rashid, Sambasivan, & Johari, 2003). It is believed that organisational culture is related to organisational strategy and performance. Strategy takes a long-term view of the organisation's sustainability, as well as external environmental factors to remain competitive. Regulatory forces seek to institutionalise norms and standards that are acceptable to society (Jain et al., 2012). Therefore, compliance to regulatory as well as other statutory requirements can be directly related to organisational culture. This implies that organisational culture could affect the success or failure in achieving organisational goals (Rashid et al., 2003).

In his study of forty nations to develop a commonly accepted description of culture, Hofstede (2011) postulated six dimensions, (1) individualism vs. collectivism, (2) power distance, (3) uncertainty avoidance, (4) masculinity vs. femininity, (5) long term vs. short term orientation and (6) indulgence vs. restraint. The study fundamentally assesses the degree to which each dimension influences a national culture and, by extension, organisational culture. For instance, individualism vs. collectivism assesses the extent to which a nation has individuals that have strong self-interest compared to a nation where the society is integrated. A nation on either side of the scale depicts unique cultural attributes, which will be discussed in this report. The earlier published Hofstede (1991) paper which started off with only four cultural dimensions is, however, not without criticism: the model is tautological because of its view of culture as static and unable to account for culture complexities (McSweeney, 2002; Signorini, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009). This critique remains valid even in the latest Hofstede (2011) paper which is an extension of the original research. The Hofstede model has been adapted and used effectively as a measure of culture variation over the years since the original model was developed in the 1980's (Cullen, Parboteeah, & Hoegl, 2004; Robertson & Fadil, 1999; Tran, Mahmood, Du, & Khrapavitski, 2011). Given that there is no model that is perfect, the Hofstede model is a well-researched and widely used model on cultural dimension which this study has adopted in an effort to develop an understanding of cultural variation on the implementation of employment equity.

2.3.1 Individualism vs. Collectivism

The notion of individualism as a cultural value, encourages self-interest and the achievement of personal goals rather than common interest of the group, by its nature individualism leads to egoism and competition (Cullen et al., 2004). Individualism can be thought as a motive for being distinctive (Becker et al., 2012). However, individuals are born into in-groups which create a sense of belonging from early stages of life and as individuals develop in society (Hofstede, 2011). People also enhance their distinctiveness within an in-group by discriminating against the out-group (Becker et al., 2012). Vignoles, Chryssochoou, and Breakwell (2000) argue that the motive to be distinctive is universal and can be attributed to three factors: difference, separateness and social position. By “difference” Vignoles et al. (2000) refer to value placed on attributes such as opinions and appearance while “separateness” refers to values placed on distance/space, i.e. privacy, independence and “social position” refers to friendship and social status. This cultural dimension exposes the dynamics of individual values as well as those of groups in an organisation. Such dynamism can be supportive or destructive of initiatives that seem to disturb the distinctiveness placed on either side of the individualism vs. collectivism continuum. Although at glance, collectivism can be seen as the opposite of individualism perhaps it more appropriate to consider these as different worldly views with salient differences (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Oyserman et al. (2002) suggest that collectivism focuses on a broader range of values and as a social way of being oriented to an in-group. In African culture, the concept of botho/Ubuntu promotes interdependence and communalism by acknowledging that “motho ke motho ka batho” (in seSotho language)/ “umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye (in isiZulu language) translated in English “I am because you are and you are because I am” (Mbigi & Maree, 1995).

2.3.1 Power distance

Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 2011). Societies generally have inequalities. It is the extent to which people in a society/organisation accept the

level of inequality that determine the culture value of the society (Tran et al., 2011). Societies that accept and expect low power distance, are more participative and democratic in decision making while societies that accept and expect high power distance, are characterised by hierarchical protocols and authoritarian rule (Hofstede, 2011). In an organisational context, the power distance between organisational leadership and employees determines the culture of the organisation. While causal relationships between leadership and performance are anecdotal, organisational culture can be empirically linked to organisational performance (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). It is therefore critical that the leadership type employed in the organisation builds and enhances an organisational culture that drives performance.

2.3.1 *Uncertainty Avoidance*

The uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension describes the ambiguous tolerance/stress level which characterises a nation or organization (Hofstede, 2011). Organisations with high uncertainty avoidance are resistant to change and tend to be uncomfortable with challenging the status quo, such organisations are susceptible to corruption (DiRienzo, Das, Cort, & Burbridge, 2007). On the other hand, due to their desire to control the situation, low uncertainty avoidance nations are more tolerant of ambiguity and change (Im, Hong, & Kang, 2011). Van den Steen (2010) argues that some leaders tend to prefer organisational homogeneity as opposed to diversity, because they fundamentally believe that people that think like them will make better decisions. Furthermore, diversity brings about possibilities of unpredictable outcomes and events. Employment equity is a form of diversity which has a potential of bringing about uncertainty in organisations. The degree to which employees in an organisation are tolerant to uncertainty and ambiguity will thus influence the norms and standards of an organisation in the midst of change.

2.3.2 *Masculinity versus femininity*

This particular cultural dimension considers value system disparities based on the masculinity/femininity of a society (Hofstede, 2011). The masculine society is dominated by the need to achieve, while the feminine society is more caring for others (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Masculinity and femininity can also be closely associated with a social

hierarchy based on gender and sexual orientation (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, this cultural dimension creates a stereotypical classification in society which breeds inequalities. Acker (2006) defines such inequalities as disparities in power and control of goals and resources in an organisation. Acker (2006) further argues that even when such segregation is reduced, by allowing women in previously male dominated roles, real transformation does not occur, instead there is a reconfiguration of duties. In such reconfiguration, men and women generally perform different duties in accordance with the cultural classification based on masculinity and femininity attributes.

2.4 Employment Equity

Employment Equity refers to a concerted effort by the employer to create equal playing fields for all people irrespective of their gender, race, sexuality, disability or any form of differentiating factors (Jain et al., 2012). In the South African context, this process includes required leadership to create a participatory environment to redress the injustices of the past and embracing power of diversity.

2.4.1 Transformation

At the centre of Employment Equity Act is transformation of the workplace. Transformation is generally a fundamental change of shape, form or structure (Kuepers, 2011). It is not surprising that transformation comes with emotive effects which mostly come with resistance at a personal and organisational level. Jain et al. (2012) indicated that most organisational cultures are not inclusive enough to transform the workplace into a representative environment. At an organisational level, transformation entails an evolving change of traditions, norms and procedures (Kuepers, 2011). South Africa has sought to transform the workplace through legislation such as the Employment Equity Act.

2.4.2 Diversity

Diversity is an overall encompassing concept of grouping individuals from a variety of backgrounds and characteristics while being able to minimise intergroup dynamics

between majority and minority groups (Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). Diversity shuns discrimination, promotes heterogeneity and embraces equal opportunities for all (Badat, 2010). Diversity is a complex phenomenon; Zanoni et al. (2010) assert that although diversity improves knowledge, little is known about the link between identities and competencies that can enable a decision on the optimal mix of diverse groups. The link between diversity and performance is also not conclusive primarily due to significant contextual factors (McMahon, 2011). However, diversity promotes creativity by allowing team members to capitalise on the strength of individual differences (Shin, Kim, Lee, & Bian, 2012).

On the other hand, employment equity takes cognisance of the fact that certain categories of employees were historically treated as second class citizens and had to dance to the tune dictated by the employer resulting in human indignities, thus the Act attempts to create a labour market that is non-discriminatory and socially equitable (Burger & Jafta, 2010). While employment equity is regulated by South African law, diversity is a voluntary process that hinges on understanding practices leading to inequalities (Kumari, 2012). It is the acceptance of the existence of inequalities that cultivates diversity. However, diversity is not only about emphasis on equal opportunities but in recent times of organisational exposure to global competition, diversity of competencies can also be a source of competitive advantage (McMahon, 2011)

2.4.3 Leadership

Leaders have a significant influence on beliefs that characterise an organisation, especially those that inhibit performance (Kotter, 2008). Leadership is about setting a clear goal to be achieved as a collective (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). Unclear goals could lead to organisational goal ambiguity which allows leeway for interpretation and makes the evaluation and achievement of organisational goals difficult (Chun & Rainey, 2005). Clarity of goals is important in leading the organisation on a clearly defined route such as workplace transformation, especially when employees are encouraged to participate in the setting and achievement of organisational goals.

2.4.4 Recruitment and Promotion

The promulgation of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 was to enforce transformation on organisations that would not empower a sufficient number of previously disadvantaged people (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). This view suggests that most organisations would rather have continued with the status quo of employment inequalities as a standard norm and practice. Example of the value of collectivism and the in-group can also be found in recruitment processes. Kahn (2012) refers to information asymmetry in the labour market and that it is rare that recruitment decisions are made solely on objective data, rather they are influenced by political, cultural and social forces. Employment decisions are made, based on a strong close network of who knows who as long as the candidate is recommended by a trusted source in the network (Baker-Doyle, 2010). This form of recruitment and promotion practice, although accepted if done transparently for strategic reasons such as head hunting, breeds discrimination, particularly on race, since most decision makers in top management in the mining sector are white. Van den Steen (2010) refers to this process as sorting, whereby a member of the organisation sorts candidates from one of their own.

It is sometimes difficult for organisations to implement changes because the organisational culture is based on company history that spans many years, the long-held values such as preferential recruitment may be perceived differently by a more diverse top management team (Rashid et al., 2003).

Recruitment as a process of talent acquisition to meet organisation operational requirements is not always enough. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggest that organisations should combine external recruitment and skills development to achieve organisational effectiveness. The primary objective of skill development is to nurture and develop talented individuals for potential succession planning within the organisation (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). The South African government as the largest employer has initiated a number of skills development programmes such as ASGISA (Accelerated Skills and Growth initiative), JIPSA (Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition), and SETAs (Sector Training Authorities) focusing to developing priority skills. These programmes happen within the backdrop of fast tracking employment equity. On the supply side, the completion rate of engineering degrees by black students is less than

half of the white counterparts which adversely affect employment equity progress in the various sectors (Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007).

2.4.5 Employee Participation

There is great value in encouraging employee participation in employee related matters, primarily because it increases sensitivity of social and economic impacts, and increases awareness and understanding of the applicable plans (Ivanova, Rolfe, Lockie, & Timmer, 2007). On the other hand, participation also creates an understanding of perceptions of affected parties regarding proposed interventions and helps to resolve potential conflict and enables reaching a consensus (Del Furia & Wallace-Jones, 2000). Sustained employment equity change depends on active participation by employees, at all levels including organised labour (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). Implementation of interventions that affect employees may not be entirely a decision made by top management only.

2.5 Research Propositions

1. The cultural dimension of power distance affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because of hierarchical protocols between management and staff
2. The cultural dimension of individualism vs. collectivism affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because certain groups or individuals seek to be unique
3. The cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because organisations tend to be uncomfortable with changing the status quo
4. The cultural dimension of masculinity vs. femininity affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because of gender stereotypes.

2.6 Conclusion of literature review

The literature review asserts that the implementation of socio-economic interventions in the workplace are not antagonistic to the cultural dynamics in the organisation. Culture is an expansive phenomenon which ranges from the way we place value on ourselves, our relationships, leadership style and gender influence. Culture is an antecedent that can support or hinder interventions in the workplace. Recognising the prevailing culture in an organisation is critical in determining how best to implement changes, particularly as they relate to changing embedded organisational practices and behaviour.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research methodology / paradigm

This study used a qualitative methodology in order to gather the required data in response to the research question. The study invokes descriptive research in describing the cultural factors that impact the implementation of the Employment Equity Act in the mining industry. A qualitative research method was relevant in this study because it sought to provide an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social (cultural) element of participants, their experiences and perspective (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Due to the need to understand the social world of the participants, this research method is best suited for gathering data. The study used a series of in-depth interviews as well as a review of the latest employment equity statistical report. Interview questions were open-ended and a level of flexibility was applied during the interview in order to gather relevant information. This view of interview flexibility is supported by Ritchie et al. (2013), who recognised that some research phenomena, such as culture, may be delicate, therefore the researcher needs to carefully frame questions or make observations if needed, to allow participants to respond appropriately to the delicacy of their perceptions.

3.2 Research Design

This study described the culture phenomenon in the mining industry and how it impacts on the socio-economic transformation agenda through the Employment Equity Act. Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested that such a study design is best suited using a qualitative case study design. Baxter and Jack (2008) further explained that the philosophical background underpinning the case study design is an appreciation of the subjective human creation of meaning, even though this view does not reject the notion of objectivity. Case study design is even more relevant in this study as it also helps to uncover, not only the content of study, but also the contextual conditions because of its relevance to the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The study adopted a descriptive type case study as it assists in describing a phenomenon in a real life context (Yin, 2003).

3.3 Population and Sample

3.3.1 Population

The target population is a case study of one of South Africa's largest coal mines, Exxaro Coal Mpumalanga (Pty) Ltd.

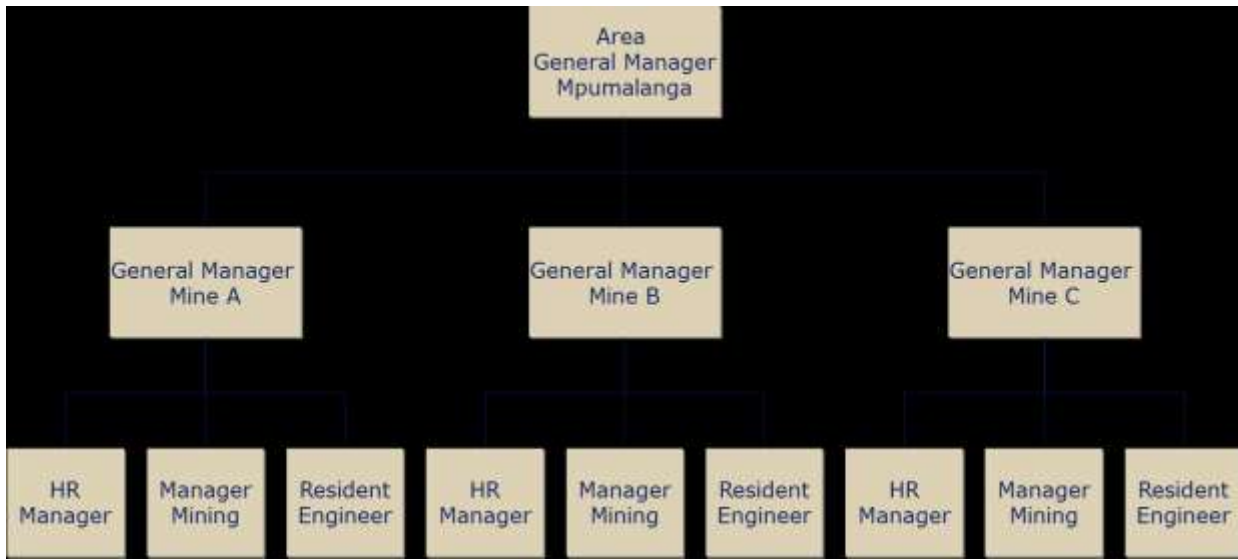


Figure 1: Exxaro Coal Mpumalanga (Pty) Ltd's organisational structure, Source (Exxaro Resources Limited, 2013)

Exxaro is one of the largest South Africa-based diversified resources groups, with interests in the coal, titanium dioxide, ferrous metals and energy markets and has current business interests in South Africa, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Inner Mongolia and Australia (Exxaro Resources Limited, 2013). The company is the second-largest coal producer in South Africa and is listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange. Most of the mines in South Africa have their head offices in foreign countries and are led by executives from outside South Africa. Exarro is one of the few locally based mines led by South Africans. This mine presents an opportunity to understand the culture prevailing in a South African owned mine.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

Exxaro employees responsible for the implementation of Employment Equity plans and those affected by the implementation of these plans at various levels were used for data sampling. These include top management, senior management, union representatives and non-management staff. With the exception of top management staff, who are based at the head office in Pretoria, all other staff sampled were those who are based in the Mpumalanga area. Since the purpose of this research was to describe the cultural aspect of the business, only respondents who had been in the employ of Exxaro for more than three years were considered. The population was stratified by level and function, and individuals were selected purposively, resulting in the sample seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Survey sample used for interviews

Level	No. Males	No. Females	Business Function	Total Sampled
Senior Manager	2	0	Human Capital	2
Senior Management	3	0	Business Unit Heads	3
Union Representatives	1	0	Shop Steward	1
Middle management	0	4	Safety, HR	4
Non-management staff	3	0	All	3
Total Interviews	9	4	Across all business units	13

This sample gave a cross-section of views about the effect of culture on the implementation of Employment Equity across all levels from top management to non-management staff. The interview selection process considered the employment history factor, as a result employees who have been with the organisation for at least 3 years were considered. The researcher attempted to have a fair spread of gender representation within the sample across all levels.

3.4 The research instrument

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted using the interview guide provided in Appendix A. Although a face-to-face interview enhances the value of social cues such as non-verbal expressions, Wengraf (2001) cautions on the need for the interviewer to be listening to the informant's responses in order to understand their message, while at the same time ensuring that all questions get responded to in the level of detail necessary. The interviewer requested permission to record the discussion. To optimise the time and effective use of the research instrument, planning and preparing for the interview was also done. All questions were based on the cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2011) described in the literature review.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

Interviews were pre-arranged with the mine general managers and a brief overview of the meeting objectives was provided. The brief also included a request for the general manager to provide Employment Equity plans with quantitative data and progress to date. All management interviews took place in the respective manager's offices at Matla mine near Witbank. Union representatives and non-management staff interviews took place in meeting rooms chosen for their convenience and privacy. The interviewer also requested permission to record the interview to assist with note taking and to optimise comprehensive data gathered for analysis. Recorded information remains confidential and for use by the interviewer only. All interviewees were assured anonymity.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Data gathered was synthesised into codes, these were then grouped into manageable themes from which analysis was drawn. To accomplish this, the study followed the data analysis process suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), i.e. noting patterns, themes in data gathered using colour coding, making contrasts and comparisons to improve understanding. Classification of data is an integral part of data analysis as it lays a foundation upon which interpretation and explanation are based (Dey, 2003).

3.7 Limitations of the study

- This study only focused on four of the six cultural dimensions of the Hofstede model; the other two dimensions excluded do not directly relate to the study phenomenon of employment equity in the workplace
- The case study was limited to only Exxaro Coal Mpumalanga (Pty) Ltd, other mines might be operating under different conditions;
- There is only one Human Capital executive, this is the only source of information with respect to implementation of Employment Equity from top management;
- Success of this study depended on participants volunteering to openly share information.
- Although it is common in case studies to include triangulated data, this was not done in this case because the study is exploratory and it was considered inappropriate to test the findings through a quantitative element.

3.8 Validity and reliability

3.8.1 *External validity*

External validity is defined as the extent to which the study can be generalised to a different context or setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interview questions were based on the literature review on the measures of culture dimensions in the context of employment equity. Since this case study research is only based on three of the coal mines in Exxaro Coal Mpumalanga (Pty) Ltd, the results cannot be generalised outside of the mines that

were investigated, and it would be recommended that the research approach adopted at the three mines, be replicated at another coal mine to understand and strengthen the validity and usefulness of the data gathered. This would also assist Exxaro Resources in confirming the dependability of the data gathered and to develop the requisite programme to address challenges and leverage on successes experienced in implementing Employment Equity plans at its mines.

3.8.2 *Internal validity*

Internal validity is used to determine the degree to which the construct accounts for the variance found in the sample or the extent to which the results can be explained by the research construct (Kayes, 2005). This study strived to ensure internal validity by any variations during interviews. Caution was also taken against researcher effects with regards to the elimination of fear of expression, particularly from non-management and white people. The meeting set up was at the convenience of the participants and confidentiality and anonymity was assured and emphasised.

3.8.3 *Reliability*

Reliability is a measure of the consistency of the instrument across various conditions (Kayes, 2005). In their analysis on strategies to verify reliability and validity in research, Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2008) emphasise the need to improve the vigour and trustworthiness of the study by peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, persistent observation and also the need for the researcher to be responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances. To improve the quality of the interview and questions, an MBA peer review was conducted to assess the clarity of questions and the data being gathered. Interview questions were linked to the theoretical construct on the four dimensions of culture model postulated by (Hofstede, 2011). Interview sessions were extended beyond one session where necessary.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results gathered from the interviews conducted during the research process. The study was conducted at Exxaro Coal mine based in Mpumalanga province. A total of thirteen respondents were interviewed using the interview guide in Appendix A.

4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Respondents interviewed were a combination of black and white, male and female, from senior management to shop floor workers in the organisation. Respondents at senior management were predominantly male. In fact, two thirds of the population interviewed were males, which also reflected the demographic profiles in the organisation. The majority of respondents were in their late thirties and most of them had between 4 years and 30 years of service with Exxaro. There was only one respondent with a disability in the study population.

Table 3: Overview profile of respondents

RESPONDENT	LEVEL	GENDER	AGE GROUP	YEARS OF SERVICE	RACE
2x Senior Manager Human Capital	Senior Management	M	30-50	5- 10	Black
2x Senior Management Business Unit Head	Senior Management	M	30 - 40	5 - 10	Black
1x Senior Management Business Head	Senior Management	M	30 - 40	5 - 10	White
Union Representative	Union Representative	M	40 - 50	20 - 30	Black

RESPONDENT	LEVEL	GENDER	AGE GROUP	YEARS OF SERVICE	RACE
2x Middle Management	Management	F	30 - 50	5 - 30	White
2X Middle Management	Management	F	34	5 - 30	Black
3x Operators**	Shop floor workers	M	40 - 50	10 - 30	Black

** Non-management staff

4.3 Employment Equity Progress

Table 4: Exxaro Matla Coal : Workforce as at 28 February 2015

Occupational Levels	Male				Female				Foreign Nationals		Total
	A	C	I	W	A	C	I	W	Male	Female	
Snr Management	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management D	48	4	10	77	10	0	0	13	1	0	163
Skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen, and superintendents C	590	14	6	387	112	4	3	76	14	0	1206
Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making	1569	0	0	65	164	0	0	0	98	0	1896
Unskilled and defined decision making	305	0	0	27	88	2	0	1	2	0	425
TOTAL PERMANENT	2514	18	16	562	374	6	3	90	115	0	3698

Table 5: Exxaro Matla Coal: EE Gap Analysis on achievement of planned targets for 2015

Category	Current 28 Feb 2015	Planned Target 1 Aug 2014 - 24 Feb 2015	Gap	Reasons for targets not met
Top Management (F)	-	-	-	-
Snr Management (E)	0.05%	40%	-39.95%	Pending of approval of external advert at Matla
Middle management/ Professionally qualified (D)	2.60%	40%	-37.4%	Ongoing to fill the positions with EE candidates
Skilled Technical (C)	22.60%	40%	-17.4%	Ongoing to fill the vacant positions
Semi skilled (B)	49.00%	40%	-	Target met
Disabled	0.80%	2%	-1.2%	Not met
Black women	13.50%	10%	-	Target met

Table 6: Exxaro Matla Coal: Promotions period 1 Aug 2014 – 28 Feb 2015

Grading	No. Male Employees				No. Female Employees				No. Foreign Nationals		Total
	A	C	I	W	A	C	I	W	Male	Female	
Top management (Paterson F)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Snr Management (Paterson E)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional & MID management (Paterson D)	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Skilled Paterson C	7	0	0	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	14
Semi-skilled (Paterson B)	41	0	0	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	52
Unskilled (Paterson A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	51	2	0	9	7	1	0	1	0	0	72

Table 4 and 5 above illustrate an immense gap in employment equity progress from senior (-40%) to middle management (-18%). On table 6, little progress was made on black males promotions to management level (Paterson D as per Table 6 above), although females were only from skilled labourers and below.

For each dimension investigated, a variety of themes were identified, and these are articulated under each heading.

4.4 The cultural dimension of power distance and its effect on the implementation of employment equity initiatives

4.4.1 *Communication gap*

Respondents expressed a lack of consistent communication and consultation between management and unions as one of the challenges facing the organisation. One HR Practitioner respondent explained that there was a *“clear and straight forward”* employment equity plan for the respective business units. He further explained that there is an employment equity forum whereby management, staff and unions discuss organisational plans with regards to transformation in the workplace. On the other hand, union representative respondents expressed disappointment that management does not take their view seriously and that they *“do their own thing”* when it comes to employment equity. He explained that the unions have been calling for a plan on top management transformation and that has not been done. At least two respondents including a senior manager expressed a *“lack of clear policy and direction”* when it comes to employment equity for the organisation. Some respondents had a different view: they described how *“management goes out of their way to communicate employment equity plans”*. One non-management respondent said that they were *“confused”* on what employment equity means for them as they don’t understand it. One of the non-management respondents spoke of their fear of losing their jobs because it is said *“that people with no skills and qualification will lose their jobs.”* when employment equity is implemented. There was one respondent who also expressed frustration because there are no communication platforms in the organisation to discuss employment equity. One respondent argued that *“we have our management and the union, we get feedback on what is decided.”*

4.4.2 Transparency in recruitment process

Respondents noted that there was no visible recruitment for EE candidates in the organisation. Most respondents explained that while they acknowledge and accept that skills and qualifications are equally important for recruitment, there were no visible posts reserved for EE candidates. One respondent summed this view up by saying *“I have not seen a job advert which specifically indicated that the post is for EE candidates only, all job opportunities are open for everyone to apply.”* One senior management respondent has a different view on EE recruitment, *“With regards to hiring within my division my opinion has weight in employing the right person based on skills and qualification.”* The respondent further explained that any other recruitment criteria applied would not necessarily be his decision but rather the application of organisation’s policy. One respondent also made mention that he heard of the divisional employment equity plans but that’s all he’s heard. One respondent highlighted a concern that sometimes they get to know that someone has been appointed even though *“no adverts were posted internally.”* He further explained that management claims that they *“cannot find EE suitable candidates”* for the job, if they are *“open”* then we can help find suitable candidates for them.

4.4.3 Relationship of Trust

Most respondents firmly highlighted the historical background of Apartheid and how black people were denied career opportunities in the organisation because of their race. Almost all respondents were hopeful and optimistic that there will be harmony in workplace for people of all races. Trustworthiness is about having credibility and dependability qualities, at least two respondents expressed trust as a key barrier in the implementation of employment equity in the organisation. These respondents felt that they could not trust management because in their view they could not be depended upon. Most respondents felt that there is no credibility in management because there was no genuine drive towards implementing employment equity in the organisation. Some respondents said they were not convinced that everybody believes in the need for change. As a result, employees are not entirely open in the communication forums about how they really feel. Most of communication is conveyed through the unions who become employee’s mouth piece. One respondent noted the difference in management,

staff and union: *“management is not open, unions are not negotiating in good faith, and workers are not updated about progress and management intentions”*. Another respondent believes that if there was an opportunity to have an honest debate on employment equity with management, *“chances of achieving cohesion and commitment towards the achievement of targets would be compromised.”* One respondent pointed out, *“the company has a long history from the days of Iscor which supported Apartheid and some managers still need to change with the times.”*

4.4.4 Leadership

By his own admission, one senior management respondent elaborated that his role is to manage the day to day operations and meet his targets. When it comes to employment equity, he indicated that the organisation has targets but his priority is to have people with relevant skills meet production targets. Some respondents expressed lack of clear direction on *“what, when and how”* the organisation plans to transform the organisation especially at critical positions at senior level. One respondent expressed a lack of confidence in the organisational leadership to bring about effective employment equity implementations.

4.5 The cultural dimension of individualism vs. collectivism and its effect on the implementation of employment equity initiatives

4.5.1 Workplace Support

Almost all respondents were appreciative of the organisation’s support provided on and off duty. As a result respondents also reported a low employee turnover rate in the organisation. The support system provided by the organisation also led to one respondent expressing the feeling that even though there are challenges in implementing employment equity, *“It’s just a matter of time before we get the employment equity changes right”*. Besides benefits provided by the company such as housing allowance, transportation to work, respondents also indicated that there are social sport clubs aimed at advancing transformation and social coherence. There are also Professional in

Training “PIT” for the advancement of black talent and the skills development forum to advance succession planning as explicated by Lewis and Heckman (2006).

4.5.2 Skills development and career growth

Generally, respondents were in agreement that skills development forms an integral part of advancing employment equity. However, one respondent cautioned against the use of skills development as an *“excuse for slow down advancement of previously disadvantaged individuals”*. On a personal level, respondents believed that skills development programmes helps with confidence, job enrichment and potential for promotion. One responded noted *“if people are given an opportunity to go and study for something, and get encouragement to do so they will succeed.”* The HR respondent also referred to section 20 of the employment equity act that requires an organisation to provide development opportunities *“within reasonable time”* to enable employees the ability to do the job.

4.5.3 Employee’s values

In so far as the seriousness of personal opinions is taken in the organisation, there were mixed reactions from respondents. At least two respondents concurred that although their opinion in the organisation counts, it’s only when they are conveyed through the union. Two other respondents also believed that their opinions in the organisation count, *“employment equity forum exists and whatever issues are raised, the company goes out of its way to address them.”* Two other respondents expressed a different view, *“how can they take my opinion seriously when there is no seriousness in the employment equity process”*.

A number of respondents also placed family support as a key foundation for their success and motivation for working hard. One responded stated that *“values of togetherness are important foundation to assist in fitting into social and organisational structures”*.

The following quotes, obtained from respondents express the value of family and selfless is a motive for doing their jobs:

“I want to provide for my family, while contributing to a meaningful cause in which my skills and abilities are needed.”

“Work for my family and serve internal customers”

“I’m passionate about what I do, I am in the people domain and enjoy serving others”

“My drive stems from both the need to look after my kids and family and also from the satisfaction I get in solving difficult problems and assisting employees and management wherever I can in order to obtain maximum productivity.”

4.5.4 Discrimination vs. Bias

Although most respondents equated discrimination to an unfair, unjust and unwelcomed conduct, two respondents had a more elaborate take on the issue. The one respondent explained that discrimination can be fair or unfair, fair discrimination can be *“good and healthy when it promotes a culture of high performance”*. The respondent explained that reward differential between top performers and poor performers is an example of *“good and healthy”* discrimination. The other respondent also made his argument along same line differentiating between *“what is superior from mediocrity.”* However both respondents cautioned that discrimination based on race, language, gender, disability etc. was an unacceptable form of discrimination. Most respondents did not indicate having experienced any form of unfair discrimination. Some however, did express doubt that management had the willingness to transform the historical imbalances of the past which were based on racial and gender discrimination. Instead of experiencing discrimination, one respondent expressed incidences of biased based on race. He said *“There are double standards for black and white bereavement. Management does not put same effort for black bereavement as it does for whites.”* Another respondent commented that during bereavement, black people would make a donation to the black family of the deceased and even visit the family as a sign of *“botho /Ubuntu”* described by Mbigi and Maree (1995). The same does not apply when a white person has passed. The respondent further explained that *“we want to show that we care but we don’t know how as we don’t want to offend other cultures at the same time.”*

The cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because organisations tend to be uncomfortable to change the status quo

4.5.5 Job Insecurity

There were mixed reactions towards the impact of employment equity on the organisation. One respondent said he was indifferent to the impact of employment equity because *“I have the right qualification, skills and experience to excel in my career.”* While another respondent said *“it has boosted my assurance for a job.”* One respondent was concerned about limited growth opportunities for blacks in senior positions, *“It’s sad, very sad hearing my seniors being told that they are not ready for next level that means my growth is also limited.”* Another respondent commented that he would be insecure if the employment equity implementation was *“unpredictable and unfair”*, *“so far I have not been affected.”* Another respondent also expressed concern over unfairness, she commented *“I might not get promotion or something similar based on not being an EE candidate although I might work very hard and feel that I deserve it more than the successful candidate.”* In support of claims made by other respondents that job adverts are never clearly indicated that they are reserved for EE candidates, by his admission, the HR respondent commented that applicants feel unfairly treated when *“they apply and do not get position that they qualify for, without understanding reasoning that the position was reserved for EE candidate.”*

4.5.6 Compliance as a numbers game

Most respondents felt that employment equity is not embraced by management as an integral part of business to bring about change which also supports the view by Van den Steen (2010) on organisations that prefer homogeneity and not embracing diversity. One respondent commented that the entire process is purely to *“appease the department of minerals.”* The one senior management respondent explained that *“the company has fair policies and rules regarding employment equity which are in line with government targets without being too aggressive.”* Two HR respondents expressed the need and priority of *“meeting EE plans/targets.”* The non –management respondent explained that

employment equity implementation would give them hope only if it was “truly” implemented.

4.5.7 Pace of transformation

The slow pace of transformation in the organisation has created a lot of anxiety and lack of confidence in management. The majority of respondents have expressed frustration with slow pace of change. Union representative respondent explained that *“as workers we are worried that if employment equity is not implemented faster, it means whites will continually occupy positions and blacks not given a chance.”* One senior management respondent expressed concern that *most of key decisions on employment equity are taken by whites in senior positions which “creates conflict of interest, which is why implementation is so slow and not happening at the top.”* Two non-management respondents equally expressed the view that implementation is slow.

4.6 The cultural dimension of masculinity vs. femininity and its effect on the implementation of employment equity initiatives

4.6.1 Employees wellness and working conditions

One of the key operational priorities in mining is said to be minimizing injuries and fatalities. All respondents highlighted safety as the first priority within the organisation. They felt that management makes every effort to ensure their safety in the workplace is maintained. Respondents also indicated that every employee is expected to follow safety rules and regulations. Even union representative respondent concur that *“management is doing their part to ensure safety and wellbeing of employees because most of them are breadwinners in their families.”*

In further support of employee wellness, respondents indicated that they have access to *“great medical services”*. HR respondent commented that employees are also not allowed longer hours than prescribed by law.

Almost all respondents felt that the organisation treats them *“very very well.”* Two respondents said they were very humbled because at some stage the organisation had

to retrench but they opted not to retrench. One respondent commented *“I think comparing to other companies, our company really go above and beyond of what is expected of it to treat its employees fairly.”*

4.6.2 Women in mining

This is one area where all respondents agreed that there is little to no transformation in the employment of women in the workplace. One non-management respondent summed it up by saying *“I would give the organisation 2 out of 10 when it comes to gender representation in the workplace.”* The union representative respondent commented *“in the shafts there are no female promotions.”* He further argued that *“It seems management does not trust female employees because they have the necessary skills but management is undermining their qualifications.”* The one respondent expressed shock at the poor state of female advancement in key positions such as engineering, production and middle management.

At least three male respondents were not in support of women in mining. The one respondent commented *“Female are free flowing, open but easy to manipulate”*. He further expressed that they are *“disadvantaged”* because when they fall pregnant they lose out on 18 months of work. The other male respondent commented that *“females tend to be soft and negotiable, soft management areas like HR, Finance etc. are preferable for females.”* One HR respondent also commented and said *“It’s difficult to work with woman in mining, some jobs are difficult. No issues with males”*

4.7 Summary of results

The cultural dimensions factors impacting on the implementation of employment equity as highlighted by respondents are summarised in the themes presented in Table 7, which presents emerging themes from data gathered from interviews which was synthesised into manageable codes to improve understanding. The themes are grouped in accordance with the research proposition from which they emanate. The table illustrated respondents view with respect to these themes.

Table 7 : Summary of themed responses from interviews

Emerging Themes	No. Respondents had a contribution on each theme		
Themes pertaining to Research Proposition 1			
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Communication gap	2	6	0
Transparency in recruitment	2	5	0
Relationship of trust	2	4	0
Leadership	2	3	0
Themes pertaining to Research Proposition 2			
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Workplace support	8	0	0
Skills development and career growth	8	0	1
Employee's values	7	0	0
Discrimination vs. Biased	4	4	0
Themes pertaining to Research Proposition 3			
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Job insecurity	7	3	1
Compliance as a numbers game	3	5	1
Pace of transformation	1	8	0
Themes pertaining to Research Proposition 4			
	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Employee wellness and working conditions	9	0	0
Women in mining	0	10	0

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 The cultural dimension of power distance

5.1.1 *Communication gap*

Results obtained from the interviews reveal gaps between management plans and staff awareness with regards to employment equity. HR respondents expressed the existence and execution of a *“clear and straight forward”* employment equity plan. Non-management respondents on the other hand showed limited understanding on the basics of what employment equity means and how it affects them. This information gap between management and non-management is can be attributed to what Hofstede (2011) refers to as high power distance. The observed information disparity also exists within the management level, as one senior management respondent explained that there is no *“clear policy and direction”* on employment equity. It is therefore also inferred that since unions are the link between management and staff *“we get feedback on what is decided”*, this link is not effective in bridging the information gap between management and staff.

5.1.1 *Transparency in recruitment process*

It would appear that there is limited visibility with regards to the recruitment and appointment of individuals to job posts in the organisation. Some respondents commented that some appointments are not necessarily advertised internally to provide staff with an opportunity to submit their applications or to refer potential candidates. The general sentiment implied by respondents is that there are forces as suggested by Kahn (2012) that influence decision making in recruitment. These forces may be political, social or otherwise. Most respondents submitted that they are not aware of the organisation’s employment equity plans.

5.1.1 Relationship of Trust

Results from interviews conducted, suggest that historical racial tensions that plugged the organisation and the country in the past still persist in the organisation. This notion is reaffirmed by comments that *“the company has a long history from the days of Iscor which supported Apartheid and some managers still need to change with the times.”* This creates a culture of mistrust which slows the pace of the culture of diversity (Dube & Ngulube, 2012; Seekings, 2008). Respondents expressed a view that suggests that management cannot be trusted to implement change. Their view is reinforced by their belief that some managers have carried the history of the company with them and have not embraced employment equity therefore they *“still need to change with the times.”* Reference to literature suggests that the organisation expects a low power distance and hence a more democratic/participative type of leadership in the advancement of employment equity.

5.1.2 Leadership

The one common observation from the interviews, is the respondent's belief that the organisation does not provide decisive leadership. One respondent also suggested this in saying that there has not been *“aggressive”* implementation of employment equity in the organisation. It assumed that the respondent meant that decisions are carefully measured before implementation, from this position it is deduced that other factors other than the employment equity plan influence execution of policy. Respondents also commented about a lack of clear strategy to achieve the goals set out in the organisational employment equity plans. Trust issues heightened previously also implies that the participative type of leadership which is seemingly advocated by respondents is compromised.

5.2 The cultural dimension of individualism vs collectivism

5.2.1 Workplace Support

Respondents commented on the organisations' great effort in making its employees feel values and appreciated. Respondents indicated that the organisation provides professional support such as training, succession planning for black individuals in the form of Professionals in Training "*PIT*". More over respondents also mentioned that the housing and transport allowance are some of the services provided by the organisation. It can be surmised from the organisations actions and respondents comments of hope "*it's just a matter of time*" that the culture of togetherness is harnessed and embraced by all also signals the values of "Botho/Ubuntu" as postulated by (Mbigi & Maree, 1995).

5.2.1 Skills development and career growth

Most respondents were in agreement that skills development is an important building block in workplace transformation. Given respondents comments on the historical imbalances which denied other races opportunity to growth and learn, it can be surmised that skills development is imperative to workplace transformation. One respondent however was critical of the skills development if it was to be used as a tactic to delay the promotion of black people. It would appear that the respondent is essentially suggesting that not all black people need to go through the skills development process as a precondition for promotion because it is possible that some had already acquired the requisite education and skills. Fundamentally, it can be deduced that skills development and career growth is about individuals and their desire to be distinctive and successful in their careers (Becker et al., 2012).

5.2.1 Employee's values

Respondents articulated very personal meanings of the value they placed on having a family support structure. It appears that most respondents are fulfilled and driven by the desire to take care of their families. This collectivism approach is also demonstrated by their acceptance of unions as their mouth piece through which their collective voice is heard. The difference comes from respondents that do not trust that management has

any interest in transformation. This group however did not necessarily object to union representation but were rather critical of management desire to transform. Given that transformation is meant to bring about overall change to the organisation, we deduce that this group of respondents do embrace diversity for the goodness of everyone.

5.2.1 Discrimination vs. Bias

Most respondents were of the view that there are almost no recorded incidences of racial and/or gender discrimination occurrences in the organisation. However the desire of separateness as describes by Vignoles et al. (2000) was expressed in the form of bias or favouritism. In conducting the interviews, specifically questions related to women in mining, the researcher also found a number of expressions that seem to contradict the absence of discrimination. Three respondents were critical on women in mining because they are *“soft and easy to manipulate”, “get pregnant”* and *“better suited for soft roles such as HR, Finance etc.”* The general view of these respondents was that women do not belong in mining because it’s a tough environment which also supports Acker (2006)’s view on women discrimination in the workplace.

5.3 The cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance

5.3.1 Job Insecurity

It was worth noting that respondents who expressed a sense of insecurity were all white including a white female, while respondents that were indifferent or felt secure were black. Most of the respondents showed an understanding of the rationale behind employment equity and workplace diversity. The concern shown by insecure respondents stems from the uncertainty of the fairness that will be applied in implementation. It did not appear from the interviews that employment equity implementation had affected them thus far but they expressed a fair amount to tolerance to the pending changes *“as long as it is done fairly.”*

5.3.1 *Compliance as a numbers game*

The general feeling expressed by most respondents was that the organisation has not fully embraced employment equity as an integral part of the organisation. Neither HR respondents nor senior management respondents provided the confidence that employment equity implementation is at the centre of organisational strategy. Their frame of reference was specifically focused on the plans and targets and the drive to achieve these targets. Policies and rules on employment equity appears to be in place but lack of “*too aggressive*” implementation seems to slow down the process and in the process employees have gradually started losing confidence in management’s desire to implement policies.

5.3.1 *Pace of transformation*

The organisation is dominated by white males in senior positions. Respondent comments suggests that implementation of employment equity plans has been very slow. The challenge faced by the organisation is that management may be affected or even threatened by the anticipated employment equity plans. It can be surmised that the current management seems to be facing a paradox which is slowing down the implementation of employment equity in the organisation. This situation also affirms (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010) observation that leaders who are threatened by the policy that they are supposed to drive tend to be unwilling or even sabotage such plans.

5.4 The cultural dimension of masculinity vs. femininity and its effect on the implementation of employment equity initiatives

5.4.1 *Employees wellness and working conditions*

All respondents interviewed agreed that the organisation has shown exceptional interest in the wellbeing of its employees by providing them with a safe working environment and access to essential services such as medical and transport services. Moreover, respondents seem to be fully aware and appreciative of the organisation’s decision not to retrench when all indications were that they would be job losses. It can be deduced that in spite of the need to achieve financial goals, the organisation prioritised its compassion

and care for its employees above its financial interest. de Mooij and Hofstede (2011) ascribe such organisations as having a feminine oriented drive by the need to care as opposed to a masculine orientation which is driven by the need to achieve.

5.4.2 Women in mining

Based on the respondents' expressions of shock and disappointment at the lack of gender transformation in the organisation, the researcher is led to believe the males still largely dominate the mining sector and there is insufficient drive to transform the industry. This inference is also observed in the organisational employment equity statistics wherein there is no women representation at top management and senior management. The gender parity as described by Acker (2006) is also elucidated from a very masculine thinking that certain jobs are only reserved for males *"females tend to be soft and negotiable, soft management areas like HR, Finance etc. are preferable for females."* Comments made by some male respondents bordered on chauvinism. We deduce that the organisation has a long way ahead to realise gender representation partly because of the masculinity attached to the mining industry.

5.5 Conclusions

From the above discussion, it can be observed that Hofstede's cultural dimensions of individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity vs. femininity are perceived to have an impact on the implementation of employment equity in workplace. It was also noted that it is not easy to ascribe a single dimension to the prevalent culture that influence employment equity implementation. It is rather a combination of dominant dimensions that influence the organisational culture. In some of cases however, it is easier to directly observe the association of a specific cultural dimensions and how that directly impacts the implementation of employment equity. At Exxaro, it was very evident that the masculine cultural dimension has a direct impact of the organisational approach towards gender transformation in the workplace. The paradox came with the organisations' feminine cultural dimension of immeasurable care and support provided to employees. It was also noted that hesitancy in the implementation of policy possibly due to unpredictable outcomes also led to a slow pace of transformation. The power distance between management and staff is soured by lack

of trust, transparency, communication gap and indecisive leadership. This has led to a hierarchical organisation even though management is making efforts to make it a participative organisation. The researcher observed a growing of need to be unique which is mostly driven by career ambition.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The main research problem statement together with related research propositions guided this research process, which aimed to describe how cultural dimensions impact on the implementation of employment equity in South Africa.

The research considered the findings on the cultural dimensions of individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity vs. femininity cultural dimension which is premised on Hofstede's theoretical framework.

Suggestions for future research will be presented in the final section of this chapter. These suggestions are based on the delimitations of the study as identified in Chapter 1.

6.2 Conclusions of the study

This study was conducted with the intention of responding to the following propositions:

1. The cultural dimension of power distance affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because of hierarchical protocols between management and staff
2. The cultural dimension of individualism vs. collectivism affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because certain groups or individuals seek to be unique
3. The cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because organisations tend to be uncomfortable to change the status quo
4. The cultural dimension of masculinity vs. femininity affects the implementation of employment equity initiatives because of gender stereotypes.

6.2.1 *Research proposition 1: Cultural dimension of Power distance*

The extent to which information is shared within the organisation can be directly associated with the level of organisational inequalities. In this organisation, senior management tended to have the knowledge power while lower level staff are not fully informed. Such knowledge power distance creates mistrust between management and staff. As a result, in the context of policy implementation such as employment equity, staff become critical of management initiatives and tend not to give them their full support. On the other hand, knowledge centred only within management also creates an environment where staff formulate their own interpretation of organisational policies. Therefore, knowledge inequalities create a barrier for implementation of employment equity plans.

6.2.2 *Research proposition 2: Cultural dimension of individualism vs collectivism*

Learning and personal career development demonstrated that the people who attend these workshops are driven by the need to occupy an acceptable level of success in the society. Although such development is motivated by self-interest, the benefits can be realised by the collective in the organisation. Learning and development that is conducted internally within organisations positively affects the overall individual and organisational morale because there is a level of predictability with respect to individuals groomed for EE roles in the organisation. Other beneficiaries of employees' development are employee's dependents and/or family. Organisations that promote learning inevitably create a climate conducive for employment equity implementation.

6.2.3 *Research proposition 3: Cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance*

Employment equity policy has created job insecurity among most white employees. In industries such as mining which are dominated by white males, employment equity implementation tends to be very slow. This is primarily because white males find themselves in a situation where they need to drive a process that affects their own job security. As result employment equity remains a fallacy that is slow paced to meet minimum requirements in order for the organisation to be compliant to the law. To avoid

uncertainties, EE recruitment is also compromised because diversity is not embraced and encouraged.

6.2.4 *Research proposition 4: Cultural dimension of masculinity vs femininity*

Organisations characterised by a high level of care for their employees are most likely to be reciprocated by loyalty. Employees in such organisations are most likely to be productive and performance based because they feel indebted to the organisation. When there are organisational inadequacies such as employment equity implementation not being effective, employees tend to be more patient and optimistic that change will ultimately happen.

The mining industry has significant gaps with respect to organisational gender representation. In spite of initiatives such as women in mining which attempts to develop, encourage and transform the industry, there remains a significant shortage of women across all levels in mining organisation. Once again, male domination in this industry which is also characterised by chauvinistic mentality also fuels barriers of entry for females in the industry.

6.3 Recommendations

The cultural dimensions postulated by Hofstede (2011) revealed that a feminine cultural dimension such as a caring organisation as well individualistic attributes such as learning and growth contribute positively to a climate conducive for the implementation of employment equity. It is therefore recommended that the mining organisation creates a supportive and caring environment for employees in order to facilitate the implementation of employment equity policy.

Mining organisations should strive to close the information gap between management and staff. In as much as management in organisations believe that they are doing enough to communicate and share information with staff and at times through third parties such as unions, sometimes that on its own is not enough. Mining organisations must conduct regular feedback session to evaluate effectiveness of their communication

strategies and develop interventions to improve communication because open and effective communication is critical to the success of employment equity.

Chauvinism is a barrier to gender diversity in mining which should be eradicated to foster employment equity. Educational forums directed at males should be established to create awareness of women as equals to men in the mining industry.

Job insecurity among white males who also happen to be key decision makers, including issues affecting employment equity, puts management in a paradoxical situation. To facilitate employment equity implementation, management must be absolved of decisions impacted by employment equity and an independent EE committee must be established to make all employment equity related decision. This committee must report directly to the CEO.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

This research was limited to developing an understanding of cultural dimensions that have an impact on implementation of employment equity. Unexplored issues emanating from this research include issues on leadership, women in mining and employee wellness. Suggested areas for future research could include:

- Leadership paradox in the implementation of employment equity in mining
- Barriers of entry for women in mining organisations
- Impact of employee wellness on implementation of employment equity in mining

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APPENDIX A

Research Instrument

Interview Questions

Part 1: Demographics

Gender	Race	Age/Age group	Disabilities?	Length of service	Home Language

Part 2 : Proposition based questions

Background

1. What is your understanding of employment equity
 - a. Probe for understanding of “equity” vs “equality”
2. What is your understanding of “transformation”?
3. How important is employment equity in your company?
4. What would the company do if their employment equity processes was “good”?
5. How do you see skills development playing a part in employment equity?

Individualism vs collectivism dimension

6. How much value does your company place on your personal opinion with regards to employment equity?
7. What kind of social/professional groups exists in your company? How do they advance or detract implementation of employment equity?
8. What is your view on family values?
9. Tell me what happens in situations when there is bereavement at work?

10. What are your ambitions for working/what drives you to do the job you do?

Power distance dimension

11. How would you describe the relationship between management/leadership and staff in the process of implementing employment equity?

12. How are decisions taken in your company to provide equitable employment opportunities?

13. What do you think your management expects of you and what do you expect of your management?

14. What do you understand by discrimination vs lack of discrimination?

15. What avenues do you have of communicating with your CEO?

Uncertainty avoidance

16. How does the uncertainty of employment equity implementation make you feeling?

17. Why is it necessary to transform the workplace (or is it not necessary)?

18. What is your views on rules/policies regarding implementation of employment equity?

19. Describe how employment equity has affected your job security

20. How do you feel about employment equity and transformation?

Masculinity vs femininity dimension

21. How has your company done in the promotion of females to senior positions?

22. What are the differences between males and females in senior management with regards to how they manage employees? Which approach is preferable?

23. What does it take to succeed in your company if you're male vs. female?

24. How would you describe the way the company treats its employees?

25. In your view, what is the company stance when it comes to family/work balance?

Employment Equity in general (Context)

26. In your opinion how successful has employment equity implementation been in your company?