




# Assessing scope and nature of human capital management practised by Zimbabwe's gold mining sector

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**Orientation:** The article focuses on corporate social responsibility in the area of human resources management practised in Zimbabwe's gold mining sector.

**Research purpose:** This study aimed to assess socially responsible human resources management practised by Zimbabwe's gold mining sector. The study also determines which among the five governance systems; local private, government-owned, listed on Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, multinational not listed and listed on foreign stock exchanges leads in this regard.

**Motivation for the study:** Mining industries are usually labour-intensive. Corporate social responsibility and human resources management are indispensable components of mining companies.

**Research approach/ design and method:** The study uses a multiple case study design with a population of 35 large-scale gold mining companies that are members of both Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe and Mine Industry Pension Fund. Twenty-three companies participated in the study. The study uses mixed methods approach using a questionnaire and structured interviews to collect quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. Kruskal-Wallis rank test was used to test the differences in the governance structures' performances.

**Main findings:** The results indicate that gold mining companies exercise socially responsible human resources management and the listed on foreign stock exchanges have the highest index signifying best performance, followed by government-owned.

**Practical/managerial implications:** The corporates can improve their social responsibility in human resources management by using the balanced scorecard to assess their own performances. The regulation prescribes most human resources management issues in the mining sector. Managers can benefit from the perceptions of the workers concerning how other governance structures implement socially responsible human resources management.

**Contribution value-add:** This study contributes to the previous literature on socially responsible human resources management by illuminating the possible role played by governance structure in corporate social responsibility adoption. Theoretical perspectives of the firm, which are shareholder, stakeholder and societal, cannot act alone to explain the complex phenomenon of structure-conduct-performance in assessing the nature of socially responsible human resources management. Therefore, future research must combine the principles of these perspectives with concepts of the legal environment, board structure and managerial attitudes as determinants of the nature and scope of socially responsible human resources management.

**Keywords:** gold mining sector; corporate social responsibility; modified balanced scorecard; governance structure; socially responsible human resources management.

## Introduction

Mining drives economic development worldwide (Pedro et al., 2017; Sankey, 2018). For Zimbabwe, the mining sector is the centrepiece of the country's economic recovery and growth. It is responsible for generating growth spurts across sectors, contributing 13% to fiscal revenue and is responsible for more than 50% of foreign direct investment in Zimbabwe (Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe, 2017). The sector's contribution to economic development compares favourably with experiences within the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region (Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe, 2017).

Mining has different impacts on the biophysical environment, social environment and economic environment Pedro et al. (2017) and is a dangerous operation, Mancini and Sala (2018) therefore mineworkers' health and safety are essential in every mining setup (International Organization for Standardization, 2018, Naveed & Ali, 2021). In return, mining industries should benefit society (Lindman, Ranängen, & Kauppila, 2020). Some of the benefits to society that mining brings include employment creation and improvements in their employees' standard of living during the mine's operation phase (Mancini & Sala, 2018; Reinecke & Ansari, 2016). While making profit, the mining sector should focus on human wellness and development (Lindman et al., 2020; Yakovleva, Kotilainen, & Toivakka, 2017). According to Vintro and Commanjuncosa (2010), whose criteria for human resources management this article uses, the best practices on human resources management include training capacity, creating high-security levels by providing a safe environment, collective bargaining, providing retirement and medical assurance plans, and win-win resolutions of conflictive situations. According to Cantele (2017), a comprehensive corporate social responsibility programme should go beyond paying attention to profitability and environmental protection and encompass societal needs and expectations, including good employee corporation relations (ECR) and social protection.

Mining industries are usually labour-intensive (Guliwe, 2019) and require corporate social responsibility and human resources management as indispensable components of organisational leadership (Herrera & Heras-Rosas, 2020). The social involvement of workers in the company's management focuses on building the right relationships with employees, respecting their rights and involving them in business management (Herera et al., 2020). Of late, the relationship between corporate social responsibility and measurable performance has attracted attention (Asiaei & Bontis, 2019; Pisani, Kourula, Kolk, & Meijer, 2017). For this article corporate social responsibility towards employees is referred to as socially responsible human resources management (Zhao & Zhou, 2021).

The framework for analysing the socially responsible human resources management Zhao and Zhou (2021) performance of the corporates in this article is the Structure-Conduct-Performance (SCP) paradigm initially developed by Edward Mason in the 1930s. The SCP paradigm assumes a causal relationship between market structure, conduct and performance (Lelissa & Kuhil, 2018). In this article, structure refers to how the corporate is governed. The corporates' conduct (i.e. behaviour) includes the socially responsible human resources management practices in the areas of ECR and social protection. The performance refers to how the company is implementing its human resources management systems, whether it is shareholder in perspective, valuing shareholders mostly, or stakeholder in approach considering other stakeholders or being societal, conscious of international expectations. Governance systems establish the rules that shape organisational actions and a corporate is defined by

its governance structure (Klein, Mahoney, McGahan, & Pitelis, 2019). The selected governance structures are as follows: private limited, listed on Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, listed on foreign stock exchanges, government-owned and multinational companies with parent companies abroad but not listed.

## Literature review

Traditionally organisations account for only those items that can be reduced to monetary value. It has been challenging to convert social practices and performance into financial values and more difficult when the assessment is extended to the sphere of human resources management (Mansour, 2017). Building upon the three named perspectives, this article uses the balanced scorecard to assess how different governance structures influence the scope and nature of socially responsible human resource management within Zimbabwe's gold mining sector and business governance theories to predict their performance. The nature of socially responsible human resources management Zhao and Zhou (2021) according to the SCP paradigm depends on the guiding philosophy of the corporates' governance structure. This article uses three dominant perspectives, namely shareholder, stakeholder and societal perspectives, which are theories that determine and shape the nature of a business' corporate social responsibility.

## The shareholder perspective

The shareholder perspective is important as a view which describes the way in which corporates are guided by this perspective practise what Zhao and Zhou (2021) call socially responsible human resources management. The shareholder perspective as popularised by Friedman (1970) suggests that the only commercial activity of businesses is to maximise wealth for the shareholder legally and leave socially responsible activities to the governments. Shareholders' wealth maximisation has been described as a process that increases the shareholder capital gains, so as to bring the highest possible return to shareholders (Denis, 2016; Wang & Wu, 2020).

The corporates which are governed by the shareholder perspective emphasise profit maximisation and accordingly the governance proposes that the business concern should only consider the decisions that maximise the shareholders' wealth (Khan & Hussanie, 2018). As a result, such corporates guided by the shareholder approach have room to maximise profit at the employees' expense because corporates will hire and retain employees whose expected value to the corporate is equal to or greater than the cost of employing them, as long as there are no other employees who will do an equivalent job for less compensation (Denis, 2016).

Shareholder wealth maximisation view holds it that higher compensation can reduce the portion of the value created by the corporate and reduce the economic benefits created from human capital resources (Barney, 2018; Morris, Alvarez, Barney, & Molloy, 2017). Again, there is a belief that training

investment dilutes shareholders wealth when proper needs assessment which is one of the phases of any training is not properly carried out (Dwomoh, Boachie, & Kwarteng, 2017). These assertions from literature lead to the prediction that those governance structures in the gold mining sector with a shareholder perspective as the guiding philosophy engage less in socially responsible human resources management. The stakeholder perspective, on the other hand, agrees with the shareholder on creating wealth responsibly and legally but differs on points of emphasis. While shareholder perspective primarily focuses on economic return, stakeholder perspective has interests that go beyond narrow economic gain (McGahan, 2020).

### Stakeholder perspective

Stakeholder perspective propounded by Freeman (2020) suggests that corporates' decision on how to engage with the employees is a negotiated outcome involving the management, employees and shareholders.

Barney (2018) acknowledges that the generation of firm profits requires that stakeholders, besides shareholders be considered of which employees are top of the list of these stakeholders. Thus, within the stakeholder perspective, the employees are a vital stakeholder. The stakeholder approach, by default, has a platform for engaging in dialogue through collective bargaining (Mamabolo & Myres, 2020). Therefore the prediction is that governance structures that have stakeholder perspective as a dominant philosophy practise socially responsible human resources management. Barrena-Martinez, López-Fernández and Romero-Fernández (2019) say that the integration of the social demands of workers into corporate social responsibility practices can improve their well-being and motivation and add overall stakeholder value.

While stakeholder perspective considers both internal and external stakeholders, the societal perspective has additional stakeholders which are the international stakeholders.

### The societal perspective

The societal perspective suggests that besides adhering to national rules and regulations guiding human resources management, corporates must contend with the global framework of rules and regulations (Monteiro, Aibar-Guzmán, Garrido-Ruso, & Aibar-Guzmán, 2021; Parsa, Roper, Muller-Camen, & Szigetvari, 2018). The societal aspect is important for this study because multinational companies which are both listed on foreign exchanges and those not listed are important actors in the global business arena (Luo & Tung, 2018). According to Edman (2016) there is negative stereotyping of multinational companies by global stakeholders that are inherent in their nature of being foreign and this compels the multinational companies to act responsibly in their corporate social responsibility performance. Parsa et al. (2018) say that because of international expectations, training capacity, employer-employee relationship, remuneration and other

**TABLE 1:** Corporate governance systems and predicted performance.

Theoretical governance system	Company categories predicted to conform to the model	Predicted performance in socially responsible human resources management
Shareholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local private companies</li> <li>Government-owned companies</li> </ul>	Shareholder primacy and wealth maximisation
Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange</li> </ul>	Pay attention to stakeholder demands
Societal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies listed in foreign stock exchanges</li> <li>Multinational companies not listed but with headquarters abroad</li> </ul>	Integrate and support socially responsible practices within business organisations in different global locations

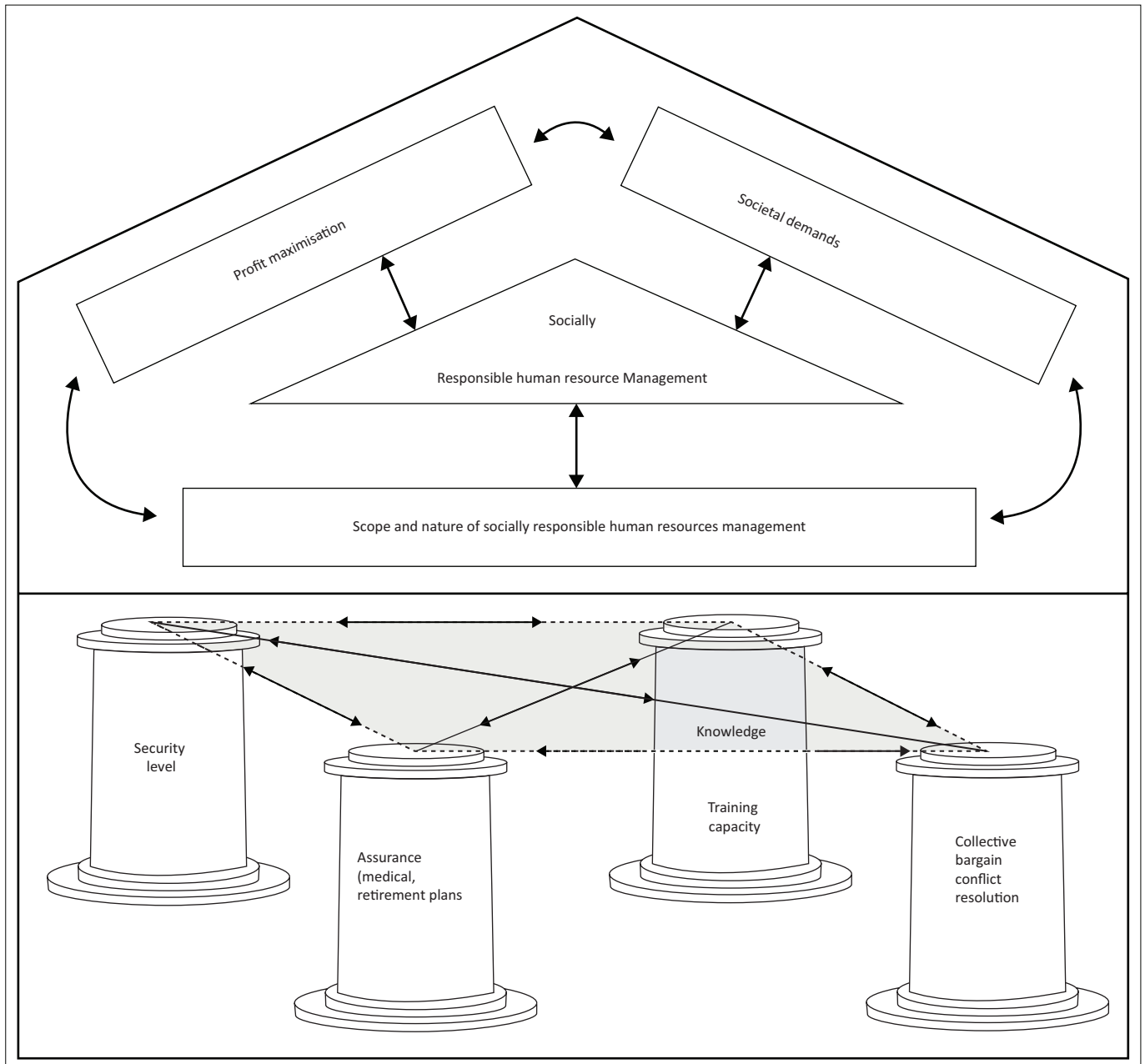
benefits are measured using global standards and tend to be of high quality, especially in the multinational corporates operating in developing countries. Given these views, predictions about how the different governance systems are expected to perform can be made. Table 1 summarises the various governance systems and the predicted performance given their governance structure as proposed by literature.

Table 1 summarises the predicted performance of the named five governance systems given their assumed structures and expected performance and conduct as described in literature. The modified balanced scorecard is then used for the assessment of the actual performance. According to Tabatabaei, Omran, Hashemi and Sedaghat (2017), socially responsible human resources management is intangible. It is therefore not feasible to determine quantitative values expressed quantitatively as well as in monetary units. In this regard, the modified balanced scorecard seems to be the tool to measure socially responsible human resources management practices. Figure 1 shows the critical aspects of socially responsible human resources management.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for socially responsible human resources management with four pillars supporting sound corporate social responsibility. Security-level, shows workers need employment stability which Failla, Melillo and Reichstein (2017) say is an important pillar of human capital needs. Medical assurance and retirement plans aspects make up ECR assessment. On the pillar of medical assurance and retirement plans, Osborne and Hammoud (2017) cite health and safety at work which are essential factors for responsible human resources management practices. Cantele (2017) says that overlooking health and hygiene factors threatens employees' physical and mental health. Training capacity and collective bargaining and conflict resolution assess social protection. Osborne and Hammoud (2017), suggest that employees need training and resources to work well. Cantele (2017) says that the organisation's social responsibility practices towards employees increase employee engagement and satisfaction, thereby leading to positive performance.

## Research methodology

The research design used is the case study design, using the large scale gold mining sector in Zimbabwe. The study makes use of multiple cases.



Mgt, management.

**FIGURE 1:** Critical aspects assessed in the socially responsible human resources management.

## Research objectives and problem statement

Given the sector's significance to the country's economic development, this study seeks to establish the corporate social responsibility performance in the area of human resources management by large-scale gold mining companies given their different governance structure and predicted conduct and performance.

## General objectives

The purpose of the study is to assess the scope and nature of human resources management practised by Zimbabwe's gold mining sector. In addition, the study aims to determine which among the five governance systems operating in Zimbabwe's gold mining sector leads the industry in human

resources management in a socially responsible way. These five governance systems are the local private, listed on the Zimbabwe Stock, listed in foreign stock exchanges, government-owned companies and multinational companies with parent companies abroad but not listed. The study also aims to determine which among the companies identified by governance systems perform best.

## Specific objectives

The study adopted an assessment based on Vintro and Comanjuncosa's (2010) concept to measure Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) factors. In particular, for this study, the scale contains six items of socially responsible human resource management. These six items include security level, training capacity, collective bargaining, retirement

plans, medical assurance and occurrence or non-occurrence of a violent or conflictive situation. The items are observed under two factors: ECR and social protection. The study borrows from the CSR performance measures developed by Vintro and Comnjuncosa (2010) and then uses the balanced scorecard framework to assess the extent of CSR performance.

## Research approach

The study employed a mixed-methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative research philosophical underpinnings (Almeida, 2018). Qualitative data was collected using structured interviews with several respondents including mineworkers union representatives, community leaders, managers and other workers. Additional interviews were carried out seeking clarification on emerging issues needing further explanations. The quantitative survey used a self designed questionnaire administered electronically with the help of a research assistant. The questionnaire solicited for knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of employees on given corporate social responsibility indicators, thus giving subjective information which when analysed result in subjective measurements. These subjective measurements consist of knowledge, attitudes and perceptions and depend on managers' and other employees' perceptions of how well their corporate entity performs and then they are statistically analysed. Objective measurements section of the questionnaire collected accounting information which is the information on the ground as recorded in the formal records of the mining companies. Combining the perceptions and official records mitigated the objective and subjective measurements' weaknesses (Singh, Darwish, & Potočnik, 2016). The main weaknesses of subjective measurements are the biases inherent in perceptions (Singh et al., 2016). The main weakness of the objective measurements is that the nature of accounting information is sensitive and highly confidential and hence susceptible to inconsistencies. Pisani et al. (2017) in their systematic review of corporate social responsibility research found that, there are difficulties in gathering quantitative data on corporate social responsibility research in developing countries.

## Subjective measurements of companies' social responsibility

The subjective measures of companies' socially responsible human resources management composed of two broad categories: social protection and ECR. Social protection sought employees' perceptions of companies' practices. The Cronbach's alpha test was used to test the instrument's reliability. According to Taber (2018), Cronbach's alpha test reflects the validity or the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure. The Cronbach's alpha test shows the reliability, which is the extent to which a measuring instrument, can be expected to give the same measured outcome should the process be repeated elsewhere (Taber, 2018). A five-point Likert scale that ranged from 'strongly disagrees' to 'strongly agree' was used for the

questions. The weighting of the responses where they indicated extent to which they agree with the statements on CSR processes and practices where: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. A mean score with a cut-off point of 0.5 was subsequently computed using the following formula  $\frac{\sum_i^n X_i}{n}$   $X_i$  responds to a given Likert statement by respondent, and  $n$  is the number of statements for each of the corporate environment responsibility indicators. This resulted in three distinct categories, namely, a high level of social protection and ECR (2–0.5), medium level of social protection and ECR (0.51––0.5) and a low level of social protection and ECR (–0.51––2).

The three categories were treated as follows: low level was 1, medium level was 2 and high level was 3.

These subjective values of  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$  were then combined with objective measures to come up with the CSR indices, as shown in the formulas and algorithms provided in the following section.

## Research strategy

This research evaluates the gold mining sector's socially responsible human resources management performance in Zimbabwe using the modified balanced scorecard. The study used gold mining companies categorised by size and the governance systems among private companies. Companies listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, companies listed in foreign stock exchanges, government-owned and multinational companies not listed in any stock exchange but with parent companies abroad were also evaluated. The process included place-based ethnographic observation of mining corporates, a survey, and socio-economic and political analysis across the selected multiple cases of gold mines. Most socially responsible human resources management research has mostly been carried out more from the managerial perspective only at the exclusion of other workers (Tabatabaei et al., 2017; Xiao, Cooke, Xu, & Bian, 2020). This research included both management and other workers. The sample of corporates who participated in the study was selected from large-scale gold mining companies who are members of both the Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe and the Mines Industry Pension Fund which at the time of the research were 35.

## Data collection method

This research proposes the use of a modified balanced scorecard as initially propounded by Kaplan and Norton (1992) to assess the performance of different mine types in undertaking corporate social responsibility in conjunction with Vintro and Comanjuncosa's (2010) concept to measure CSR factors. In particular, the scale contains six items or modified balanced scorecard perspectives namely, Security Level (SL), Training Capacity (TC), Collective Bargaining (CB) observed under the factor ECR. The factor Social Protection (SP) contains Retirement

Plans (RP), Medical Assurance and occurrence or non-occurrence of a Violent Conflictive situation (VC) as the observed scale items. Quantitative data was collected electronically using Census Survey Entry (CSEntry) software using electronic tablets and the questionnaire was administered with the help of a research assistant. Structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data and additional interviews were carried out to seek clarification on issues arising.

## Participants

At the time of the study, the target population consisted of 35 large-scale gold mining companies that were members of both the Chamber of Mines in Zimbabwe and Mines Industry Pension Fund. Out of the 35 mining companies, 23 participated (representing 66% of the target population). There was no limit to the number of respondents completing the questionnaires from the participating mines. All mining companies employees were eligible respondents; however only those provided by the mining companies willing to participate. Local private companies had six participating mining companies and a total of 34 respondents from this category. Mining companies listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange also had six participating companies and a total of 34 respondents. There were five companies listed in foreign stock exchanges participating with a total of 46 respondents. Government-owned had two participating mining companies with 30 respondents. Multinational companies not listed had four companies participating and 32 respondents. Employees from the 23 mining companies were the respondents to the questionnaire and there were 206 respondents who completed the questionnaires. All the 206 questionnaires were collected as they were administered personally, however from these 206 completed questionnaires only 176 were appropriately completed and subsequently used.

## Data analysis and discussion

### Objective measures of employee corporation relations

The algorithms and formulas used to calculate the mining sector's performance on employee corporation indices were adapted from Vintro and Comanjuncosa (2010). These indices assess the mining companies' practices on the ground.

### Employee/corporation relations formulas

Security Level (SL):

$$SL = 1 - \frac{\text{Number of accidents}}{\text{Number of workers}} \quad [\text{Eqn 1}]$$

Training and Capacity (TC):

$$TC = \frac{\text{Real average training hours per worker}}{\text{Average training hours planned per worker}} \quad [\text{Eqn 2}]$$

Collective Bargaining (CB):

$$CB = \frac{\text{Number of workers receiving collective bargaining}}{\text{Total number of workers}} \quad [\text{Eqn 3}]$$

An index for ECR would be determined using the following formula:  $ECR = \alpha_1 SL + \beta_1 TC + \gamma_1 CB$ , where the  $\alpha_1$ ,  $\beta_1$  and  $\gamma_1$  are values based on subjective assessments and SL, TC and CB are objective measures for security level, training capacity and collective bargaining, respectively, that were obtained using the formulas as shown above. The index reflects the companies' CSR efforts towards providing training capacity, security level, and an environment suitable for collective bargaining. The next aspect is social protection, the formulas and algorithms used to calculate social protection indices using objective measures.

### Social protection formulas

Retirement Plans (RP) supported by the corporation:

$$RP = \frac{\text{number of workers receiving retirement plans}}{\text{Total number of workers}} \quad [\text{Eqn 4}]$$

Medical Aid (MA) supported by the corporation:

$$MA = \frac{\text{number of workers receiving medical plans}}{\text{Total number of workers}} \quad [\text{Eqn 5}]$$

Prevention of Conflictive Situations (VC):

$$VC = 1 - \frac{\text{Number of violent incidents}}{\text{total number of workers}} \quad [\text{Eqn 6}]$$

The social protection index is determined using the following formula: Social protection (SP) =  $\alpha_2 RP + \beta_2 MA + \gamma_2 VC$ , where  $\alpha_2$ ,  $\beta_2$  and  $\gamma_2$  are calculated values based on subjective measures. Retirement Plans (RP), MA, and VC's objective measures are retirement plans, medical assurance occurrence of confrontational situation, respectively. The human resources index would be the sum of employee corporation indices. This index reflects the overall CSR effort towards these internal stakeholders. According to Vintro and Comanjuncosa (2010), the higher the index, the better the CSR effort or practice.

### Ethical considerations

The research was approved by Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development Zimbabwe through a clearance which authorises the researcher to contact all government departments and quasi government departments. The Institutional Review Board at a large North-western public university approved the research. The individual interviews were conducted by the first author and then transcribed by both researcher and research assistant who were sworn to confidentiality. All participants for both quantitative and qualitative signed an informed consent form and these were kept by the researcher. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research process at any moment and that they could request that the information that they provided be discarded and excluded from the analysis. The participants were able to withdraw without providing any reason. They were also informed that they could skip any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering.

The North-West University Economics and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) approved the study as a minimal risk study NWU-O1367-19-A4.

## Research procedure

### The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for five items per indicator

Cronbach's alpha coefficient determined the reliability and internal consistency. The internal consistency in measurement refers to whether all measuring criteria measure the same construct or concept (Sharma, 2016). The reliability coefficients of the five items pertaining to each of the three socially responsible human resources management performance measures were determined. Sharma's (2016) thumb rules for interpreting the Cronbach's reliability coefficient are as follows:  $\alpha > 0.9$  = excellent;  $\alpha > 0.8$  = Good;  $\alpha > 0.7$  = Acceptable;  $\alpha > 0.6$  = Questionable;  $\alpha > 0.5$  = Poor and  $\alpha < 0.5$  = Unacceptable. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for five items per indicator are as follows: security Level = 0.908, excellent internal consistency; training capacity = 0.888, good internal consistency; collective bargaining = 0.951, excellent internal consistency; retirement plan = 0.904, excellent internal consistency; medical aid = 0.873, good internal consistency and collective situation = 0.728, acceptable internal consistency. These results show that the items measuring security level, collective bargaining and retirement plan have excellent internal consistency. Training capacity, social protection and medical aid have good reliability and internal consistency. Items measuring the collective situation have acceptable reliability and internal consistency.

## Empirical investigation

### Employee corporation relations

Employee corporation relations consists of security level, training capacity and collective bargaining practices as indicators. Table 2 shows the perceptions of employees concerning all aspects of ECR.

As shown in Table 2, the Pearson  $\chi^2$  has a  $p$ -value of 0.0000, 0.0005 and 0.0000 suggesting enough evidence to imply an

association between company ownership and the perceived security level, training capacity and collective bargaining.

### Security level

Security level focuses on perceptions of employees on whether their mining company has procedures to stop any form of discrimination in the workplace, promoting diversity in the workforce and at the same time encouraging whistle blowing. Table 2 shows that 97.83% of the employees who responded from the companies listed in foreign stock exchanges reported high-level security. Of all the employee respondents interviewed from mining companies listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, 76.47% reported a high-security level provided by their employer. Therefore, the listed mines have a high record in offering high-level security to their employees. On the other hand, 60% of the respondents interviewed from government-owned companies reported high-level security provided to their employees. About 68% of the respondents from not listed multinational companies and local private companies reported a high-security level. The researching team noted information displayed on information boards of one of the listed companies that indicated a decrease in work-related injuries, thus confirming the high-security level. An executive with one of the companies during a follow up interview revealed technological improvements and new equipment for ventilation and diffusion of harmful gases underground. He commented that this contributes to reducing danger to the mine workers, thereby increasing the security level.

### Training capacity

Socially responsible practices primarily focus on the workers in investment areas in human resources, empowerment through training within the company. The training capacity section assessed whether the companies funded capacity building by providing a budget for training, organising training and financing other capacity-building activities. Table 2 shows that 95.65% and 82.35% of the respondents from mines listed in the foreign stock exchange and mines listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, respectively, reported high-level training capacity offered to workers. Of all the respondents interviewed from not listed multinational

**TABLE 2:** Employee perceptions on security level, training capacity and collective bargaining.

Governance Structure-ownership type	% of respondents saying																	
	High CB		Medium CB		Low CB		High TC		Medium TC		Low TC		High SL		Medium SL		Low SL	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Local private limited company	22	64.71	4	11.76	8	23.53	23	67.65	5	14.71	6	17.65	23	67.65	2	5.88	9	26.47
Listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange	20	58.82	14	41.18	0	0	28	82.35	6	17.65	0	0	26	76.47	8	23.53	0	0
Listed in foreign stock exchange	43	93.48	1	2.17	2	4.35	44	95.65	2	4.35	0	0	45	97.83	1	2.17	0	0
Government-owned companies	19	63.33	4	13.33	7	23.33	19	63.33	5	16.67	6	20	18	60	3	10	9	30
Multinationals not listed	19	59.38	6	18.75	7	21.88	22	68.75	5	15.63	5	15.63	22	68.75	1	3.13	9	28.13
Total	123	63.89	29	16.48	24	13.64	136	77.27	23	13.07	17	9.66	134	76.14	15	8.52	27	15.34
	Pearson $\chi^2(8) = 37.7663$ Pr = 0.0000						Pearson $\chi^2(8) = 21.8104$ Pr = 0.0005						Pearson $\chi^2(8) = 35.789$ Pr = 0.0000					

CB, collective bargaining; SL, security level; TC, training capacity.

companies, 68.75% said high-level training was provided for the workers. The subjective measurements show that the lowest performers are government-owned companies (63.33% of the respondents reported a high level of training) followed by the local private companies at 67.65%. A key informant from one of the listed companies pointed out that to maintain ISO 14 000 certification and high standard, a lot of training has to be done. Therefore, the employees can see the action in training them.

### Collective bargaining

In this respect, the mining companies listed in the foreign stock exchange are the highest performers, with 93.48% of the respondents reporting high collective bargaining levels. The least performers are local mining companies listed in the stock exchange, not listed multinational mining companies and local private companies. An executive from one of the companies listed in the stock exchange commented that their collective bargaining system might not be that visible because the company already has an alternative system in place, which takes care of the pertinent issues proactively. One executive also pointed out that collective bargaining is deeply enshrined in the Labour Act with a Mineworkers' Union formed under the provisions of the Labour Act.

### Objective measures of resource use

Objective measures reflect what is on the ground, based on estimates obtained from the companies' accounting data. In this section, the results come from applying the social protection formulas given above. Table 3 shows the security level values, training capacity and collective bargaining computed using STATA, a statistics and data software package. The rule of thumb is, according to Vintro and Comanjuncosa (2010), the higher the index, the better the CSR performance. Table 3 collates ECR assessment.

Results in Table 3: the Pearson  $\chi^2$  has a  $p$ -value of 0.0001 for security level and 0.0003 for collective bargaining, suggesting that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between company ownership and the performance in establishing ECR. The best performers are the mining companies listed in the foreign stock exchange, followed by mining companies listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. Table 3 shows that the least performers are multinational companies unlisted and government-owned companies.

**TABLE 3:** Employee corporation relations.

Governance Structure, ownership type	Security level (SL)	Training capacity (TC)	Collective bargaining (CB)	$\alpha_1$ SL	$\beta_1$ TC	$\gamma_1$ CB	Employee corporation relations
Local private limited	0.93	0.91	1.00	17.42	17.61	18.68	53.70
Listed in Zimbabwe Stock Exchange	0.94	1.00	1.00	16.57	18.13	16.80	51.51
Listed in Foreign Stock Exchange	0.95	1.00	1.00	20.83	21.15	20.74	62.72
Government-owned	0.90	0.88	1.00	16.39	15.89	16.69	48.97
Multinational companies not listed	0.88	0.85	0.93	15.15	15.49	15.94	46.58
chi-squared	30.77	16.47	21.37	42.62	35.02	27.86	43.46
$p$ value	0.0001	0.0001	0.0003	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

CB, collective bargaining; SL, security level; TC, training capacity.

### Combining objective and subjective measures

A combination of objective and subjective measures were used to determine the indices and make inferences about the mining sector's performance on ECR. The results on ECR appear in Table 3. The subjective and objective measures to calculate the indices are shown in the formulas on Table 3. Employee corporation relations index was obtained using the formula  $ECR = \alpha_1 SL + \beta_1 TC + \gamma_1 CB$ . Table 3 summarises the assessment of ECR.

### Employee corporation relations index

As shown in Table 3, a  $p$ -value of 0.0001 shows enough evidence to suggest an association between company ownership and ECR. Companies listed in the foreign stock exchange seem to be doing better than the rest in all three aspects of ECR which are security level (with a score of 20.82), training capacity (with a score of 21.15) and collective bargaining (with a score of 20.73). Not listed multinational companies are the least performers in all three aspects of ECR.

### Social protection

This section evaluates corporate social responsibility in the area of social protection. The section assesses the retirement plans, medical assurances and whether violent or conflictive situations between the company management and the employees have occurred. Subjective measures are the first to be presented. Table 4 shows the subjective measures social protection.

### Employees' assessments of social protection

The mining companies are expected to put measures to protect their employees by availing retirement plans, medical aid plans and prevention of occurrence of violent conflictive situation. Table 4 presents employees assessments on these three indicators.

As shown in Table 4, the Pearson  $\chi^2$  has a  $p$ -value of 0.0000 for all three indicators. There is enough evidence to suggest an association between company ownership and the perceived provision of retirement plans, medical aid plans and prevention of the occurrence of violent conflictive situation. The results show that 79.41% of respondents from the locally listed mining companies rated the existing retirement plans highly.



**TABLE 4:** Retirement plan, medical assurance, conflictive situation.

Governance Structure-ownership type	% of respondents saying																	
	High RP		Medium RP		Low RP		High MA		Medium MA		Low MA		High VC		Medium VC		Low VC	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Local private limited company	14	41.18	10	29.41	10	29.41	22	64.71	4	11.76	8	23.53	3	8.82	11	32.35	20	58.82
Listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange	27	79.41	7	20.59	0	0	31	91.18	3	8.82	0	0	27	79.41	7	20.59	0	0
Listed in foreign stock exchange	32	69.57	14	30.43	0	0	44	95.65	1	2.17	1	2.17	18	39.13	10	21.74	18	39.13
Government-owned companies	19	63.33	0	0	11	36.67	17	56.67	7	23.33	6	20	20	66.67	9	30	1	3.33
Multinationals not listed	6	18.75	16	50.00	10	31.25	19	59.38	7	21.88	6	18.75	12	37.5	19	59.38	1	3.13
Total	98	55.68	47	26.7	31	17.61	133	75.57	22	12.5	21	11.93	80	45.45	56	31.82	40	22.73
	Pearson $\chi^2(8) = 56.1322$ Pr = 0.0000						Pearson $\chi^2(8) = 30.4278$ Pr = 0.0000						Pearson $\chi^2(8) = 76.0098$ Pr = 0.0000					

RP, Retirement Plan; MA, Medical Assurance; VC, Conflictive Situation.

Likewise, 69.57% of respondents from the mining companies listed in the foreign exchange rated the existing retirement plans highly. The least performers are the multinationals not listed and the local private companies using subjective measures. One key informant from a not listed multinational company commented that there are many changes in the management because of a seemingly new shareholding structure. Some top Chinese managers joined the company and suspended subscriptions to the Mine Industry Pension Fund.

### Employee's perception of companies' medical assurance practices

Mine employees are susceptible to safety threats. Thus, mine companies are expected to initiate measures to ensure employees' health and safety. One of these measures would be to put medical insurance policies that make medical attention available to workers and their families. As shown in Table 4, the Pearson  $X^2$  has a  $p$ -value of 0.0000, suggesting enough evidence to imply an association between company ownership and medical insurance provision. The subjectively calculated measurements indicate that the highest performers are companies listed in a foreign stock exchange, followed by mining companies listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, with 95.65% and 91.18% of the employers rating the provision of medical insurance as high. The lowest performers are the government-owned mining companies and not listed multinationals mining companies, with 56.67% and 59.38% of the respondents, respectively, saying the medical insurance plan is high. One key informant from the government-owned companies lamented that while the company is prepared to provide for medical insurance, the challenge is that the monthly employee contribution is too high to engage in packages that offer more benefits. Therefore, the employees end up with the basic benefit package, a low benefit package fully funded by the company.

### Employees' perception on prevention of occurrence of conflictive situations

Companies' ability to provide for dialogue reduces eruptive situations like strikes or sit-ins. The absence of conflictive

situations indicates that the companies are sensitive to their employees' economic and social needs. As shown in Table 4, the Pearson  $X^2$  has a  $p$ -value of 0.0000, suggesting that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between company ownership and the perceived sensitivity to conflict situations. Table 4 shows that companies listed in the Zimbabwe stock exchange are perceived to have high sensitivity to conflictive situations by 79.41 employees.

However a workers' union representative from companies listed in the foreign stock exchange said that the labour Act in Zimbabwe is against any violent or conflictive workplace situation. The union representative explained that before engaging in a collective job action like a strike, workers are expected to give a 14-day notice to their employment council, the Ministry of Labour and the employer. The employer is allowed to apply what is referred to as a 'show cause order' with the Ministry of Labour or the Labour Court to stop the industrial action. This 'show cause order' can be given by a Labour Court, President of the country or the Minister of Labour after application by the aggrieved party to show why a disposal order should not be made in relation to the industrial action. Given such a situation, the union representative lamented that it is not easy to embark on a legal strike. This long process contributes to a lack of sensitivity by employers towards any violent or conflictive situations. It is rare to have a legal strike and pointless to have an illegal one for it achieves nothing. The above elaboration partly explains why there are no violent conflictive situations in the gold mining sector.

### Objective measures of social protection

The objective measures of social protection refer to how the mine companies provide for social protection economically and socially. Table 5 shows the objective values of social protection. Table 5 also shows the results of combining objective measures and subjective measures as well as the composite index for social protection.

As shown in Table 5, the Pearson  $X^2$  has  $p$ -values of 0.0003 for both retirement plans and medical insurance and 0.0007

**TABLE 5:** Social protection.

Governance Structure-ownership type	Objective measures			subjective and objective measures combined			SP index
	Retirement plans	Medical assurance plans	Conflictive situation	$\alpha_2$ RP	$\beta_2$ MA	$\gamma_2$ VC	Social protection
Local Pvt. Ltd.	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	17.4706	19.2941	12.3235	49.0882
Listed in Zimbabwe Stock Exchange	0.9265	0.9265	0.9986	17.3235	17.9411	18.2690	53.5337
Listed in Foreign Stock Exchange	1.0000	1.0000	0.9994	20.6957	22.1304	14.9241	57.7502
Government-owned	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	16.8000	18.0333	19.0000	53.8333
Multi-national companies	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	14.5313	17.78125	16.875	49.1875
chi-squared	21.371	21.371	19.341	27.339	37.719	46.204	19.167
<i>p</i> -value	0.0003	0.0003	0.0007	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

RP, Retirement Plan; MA, Medical Assurance; VC, Conflictive Situation; SP, social protection; Pvt. Ltd., Private limited.

for a conflictive situation. This suggests that there is enough evidence to imply an association between company ownership and the perceived company support for medical assurance and retirement plans and sensitivity towards violent conflictive situations. A key informant explained that there are certain benefits and rewards which are enjoyed by permanent workers only. For instance, the same number of workers who qualify for medical assurance is also the same ones provided with retirement plans.

### Combining subjective and objective measures for social protection

The social protection index was generated by combining the subjective estimates and objective measures of retirement plans and medical insurance supported by the mining companies and whether a strike or other conflictive situation occurred. The formula below sums up the social protection index,  $SP = \alpha_2RP + \beta_2 MA + \gamma_2VC$ .

As shown in Table 5, the *p*-values show a statistical difference in companies' performance based on support for retirement plans and medical assurance and occurrence of a conflictive situation. The companies listed in foreign exchange provide the most support regarding retirement plans and medical insurance, with indices of 20.69 and 22.13, respectively. Government-owned companies, on the other hand, lead the way in reducing conflictive situations. On aggregate, companies in the foreign exchange provide the best social protection at 57.75. The companies listed in foreign exchange earn their licence to operate by addressing social concerns.

### Index using a combination of objective and subjective measures

The human resources index reflects the overall assessment of socially responsible human resources management for the mining companies. This index summarises the mining companies' environmental performance by category. The index is obtained by combining ECR and social protection indices. (Where:  $ECR = \alpha_1SL + \beta_1TC + \gamma_1CB$  and Social Protection,  $SP = \alpha_2RP + \beta_2 MA + \gamma_2VC$ ).

Socially responsible human resources management would be the sum of ECR and social protection, Socially Responsible Human Resources Management (SHRM) = ECR + SP.

**TABLE 6:** Composite indices for socially responsible human resources management.

Index	Employee corporation relations	Social protection	Socially responsible Human resources management
Local Pvt. Ltd.	53.70	49.09	102.79
Listed in Zimbabwe Stock Exchange	48.97	53.53	102.51
Listed in Foreign Stock Exchange	62.72	57.75	120.47
Government-owned	51.51	53.83	105.34
Multinational companies	46.585	49.19	95.76
chi-squared	43.46	19.17	33.35
<i>p</i> value	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

Pvt. Ltd., Private limited.

Table 6 shows the overall corporate social responsibility in human resources by the mining companies.

## Outline of the results

### Discussions

The results in Table 6 indicate that there is a significant difference in the performance of the companies in terms of socially responsible human resources management. The highest performer in socially accountable human resources management is companies listed in a foreign stock exchange with an index of 120.47.

Table 6 shows that the next best performers in socially responsible human resources management are government-owned companies with an index of 105.34. Local private limited companies come third with an index of 102.79, almost neck and neck with companies listed in the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange with an index of 102.51. Multinational companies not listed are the least performers with an index of 95.76.

The research attempted to assess the scope and nature of socially responsible human resources management in the gold mining sector in Zimbabwe using the modified balanced scorecard approach. The results revealed that the gold mining sector in Zimbabwe practises sound socially responsible human resources management; however the results showed that there are different degrees in the extent to which they practise their management. The companies listed in foreign exchanges have the highest index indicating their best degree of performance. This is in line with extant literature, which supports that companies with a global link have a societal approach to CSR because they have to consider the international standards. Clarke and Crane (2018) and Parsa

et al. (2018) assert that multinational companies are increasingly under pressure to provide an account of how fairly and ethically they treat their workforce.

The government-owned companies predicted to be classical and shareholder-oriented have performed beyond expectation. There are no strikes or job actions reported, and a possible explanation is the regulatory environment. According to Buhmann, Jonsson and Fisker (2018), the basic minimum level of socially responsible human resources management practices depends on the political framework of rules and regulations defined by governmental authorities. The current high unemployment rate in the country is above 16% (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2019). This is in line with literature where Burda, Genadek and Hamermesh (2020) suggest that unemployment incentivises workers to work harder to decrease lay-offs. As a result, employees avoid any conflicts that can jeopardise their chances of remaining employed. Multinational companies not listed with parent company abroad perfectly conform to Heminway's (2017) classical statements where shareholder value maximisation is most important.

### Managerial information

All indicators used are very important to sound human resources management. However with the aspect of training needs assessments must be carefully done so that the training benefits both the employees trained and the mining company.

### Value and contribution

This study contributes to the previous literature on socially responsible human resources management by illuminating the possible role played by governance structure in CSR adoption.

### Practical implications

The modified balanced scorecard framework used points to the idea that companies can adopt the same method to evaluate their performance. The corporates can increase the extent to which they can improve their corporate social responsibility in human resources management by using the balanced scorecard to assess their own individual performances.

### Limitations and recommendations

This research has some limitations, which also serve as potential opportunities for future research. Theoretical perspectives of the firm, which are classical, stakeholder and societal, cannot act alone to explain the complex phenomenon of SCP in assessing the nature of socially responsible human resources management. The classical, stakeholder and societal perspectives provide a basis to integrate the extant CSR performance literature. Yet, more

factors like the institutional and legal environment impact on the performance.

This suggests further research, which can build on the mining companies' capabilities to respond to socially responsible human resources management needs. Therefore, further research combines critical principles of the company's classical, stakeholder and societal views with concepts of legal institutions and more about the structure. The future research should include board structure and managerial attitudes as determinants of the nature and scope of socially responsible human resources management.

### Conclusion

The research attempted to evaluate the scope and nature of socially responsible human resources management performance of gold mining companies in Zimbabwe using the modified balanced scorecard approach. The assessment revealed that all companies practise socially responsible human resource management. The companies listed in the foreign stock exchange have the highest index. The study also aimed to determine which among the companies identified by governance systems perform best and the results they have differences in the extent to which they do so with companies listed in foreign exchanges outperforming all other categories.

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### Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

### Authors' contributions

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### Data availability

The data for this article is held by the first author on behalf of North-West University as data was collected for PhD research.

### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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