

# An investigation of emotion experiences at work: A critical incident technique approach

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## Declaration of originality of research

### DECLARATION

I, Natalie Booth, hereby declare that *An investigation of emotion experiences at work: A critical incident technique approach* is my own work and that views and opinions expressed in this study are those of the author and relevant literature references as shown in the references. I also declare that the content of this research will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

NATALIE BOOTH

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FEBRUARY 2013

**LANGUAGE EDITING**

## WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby declare that I am a qualified Language Practitioner and obtained a Masters Artium degree in Language Practice at the University of the Free State. I am also a member of the Translation Institute of South Africa. My membership number is 1002449.

I also declare that I edited the dissertation done by Ms N Booth in October and November 2012.

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## COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references and the editorial style as prescribed by the *Publication Manual (6th edition)* of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University to use APA style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

## **ABSTRACT**

**Topic:** An investigation of emotion experiences at work: A critical incident technique approach

**Orientation:** Emotions at work have been considered as an important facet of employees' work life. However, research regarding the investigation of the emotion experiences at work per se has been lacking.

**Research Purpose:** The general objective of this study is to critically investigate what emotion events are experienced and how these events are appraised for them to result in specific emotions.

**Motivation for the study:** Currently a lack of research regarding emotion experiences as a process exists.

**Research design, approach and method:** To investigate emotion experiences as a process a Qualitative study was conducted among one hundred ( $n=100$ ) professional mining employees using The Critical Incident Technique Approach.

**Main findings:** 84% of the participants experienced negative emotion events and a mere 14% of participants experienced positive emotion events at work. Negative emotion events were appraised as negative and participants indicated not having control or power over the events, yet adaption was possible. Negative emotions included: anger, disgust and sadness. Positive emotion events were appraised as positive even though the participants reported not having control or power over the situation. Participant did report being able to live with the consequences. Positive emotions provoked included joy, pleasure and pride.

**Practical/managerial implications:** When the emotion experiences of employees are investigated as a process, better understanding of emotions will be gained which will enable the implementation of the most appropriate interventions to fulfil individual needs and reaching organisational goals.

**Contribution/value-adding:** Existing research on the emotion experience as a process has been lacking especially in the South African context. This study will thus contribute to research regarding the investigation of the emotion experience as a process and not mere independent components.

**Keywords:** Emotion experiences, emotion events, emotion appraisal, discrete emotion, workplace, mining industry, critical incident technique approach.

## OPSOMMING

**Tema:** ‘n Ondersoek van die emosionele ondervindinge in die werkplek: ‘n Kritiese insident tegniek benadering

**Oriëntasie:** Emosies in die werkplek word geïdentifiseer as een van die belangrikste aspekte van werknemers se werks lewe. Dit blyk egter dat daar ‘n tekort is aan navorsing met betrekking to die emosionele ondervinding proses in die werkplek.

**Navorsingsdoelstelling:** Die algemene doelstelling van die studie is om te bepaal watter emosionele voorvalle deur werknemers ondervind word en hoe hierdie voorvalle waardeur word vir hierdie voorvalle om ‘n spesifieke diskrete emosie tot gevolg te hê.

**Motivering vir die studie:** Tans word daar ondervind dat daar ‘n tekort is van navorsing oor die emosionele ondervinding proses.

**Navorsingsontwerp.-benadering en- metode:** Om ondersoek in te stel met betrekking to die emosionele wedervaring proses, sal ‘n Kwantitatiewe metode aangewend word. Die studie sal een honderd ( $n=100$ ) professionele mynwerkers insluit. Die tegniek wat toegapas sal word vir die gebruik van die studie is Die Kritiese Insident Tegniek benadering.

**Hoofbevindinge:** 84% van die deelnemers het negatiewe emosionele ondervinding ervaar. In teenstryding het slegs 14% van die deelnemers positiewe emosionele wederervaringe ondervind in die werkplek. Negatiewe emosionele ondervinding was as negatief gewaardeer en deelnemers het gerapporteer dat alhoewel hulle geen beheer of mag oor die situasie gehad het nie, kon hulle steeds aanpas. Negatiewe emosies geïdentifiseer sluit in woede, hartseer en afkeer. Positiewe emosionele ondervinding was as positief gewaardeer al het deelnemers geen beheer of mag oor die situasie gehad nie. Deelnemers het gerapporteer dat hulle met gemak kan lewe met die gevolge van positiewe emosionele wederervaringe. Laasgenoemde lei na die ervaring van positiewe emosies soos geluk, plesier en trots.

**Praktiese en bestuursimplikasies:** Deur ondersoek in te stel in die emosionele ondervinding proses van werknemers, sal ‘n dieper sin van begrip van emosies van werknemers geskep

word. Die laasgenoemde sal organisasies in staat stel om intervensies te implimenteer wat die mees gepas sal wees om in die behoeftes van die werknemres te voldoen en steeds organisatoriese doelwitte te bereik.

**Bydrae/Waardetoevoeging:** Binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks is daar tans 'n tekort aan navorsing oor die emosionele ondervinding proses in die werkplek. Die studies al dus bydra tot huidige navorsing oor die emosionele wedervaring proses en nie slegs die individuele komponente van die proses nie.

**Kernwoorde:** Emosionele ondervinding, emosionele voorval, waardering van emosie, diskrete emosie, werkplek, myn-industrie, kritiese insident tegniek benadering.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This mini-dissertation focuses on the investigation of the emotion experience process as a whole encompassing emotion events, emotion appraisal and discrete emotion within the workplace. The study will be conducted in the mining industry among professional mine employees. In this chapter, the research objectives and specific objectives are discussed. Furthermore, the research design and research approach are explained. Following the latter is a summary of this chapter.

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

#### **1.1.1 Overview of the problem**

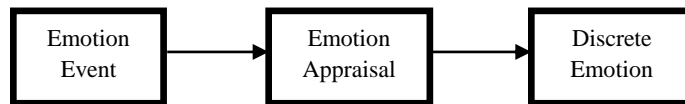
During the last two decades increasing attention has been paid to employees' emotions in the workplace (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011). Current studies on emotion focus primarily on emotions in organisations (Briner, 1999), emotion generation and regulation (Gross & Barrett, 2011), emotional intelligence and motivation (Christie, Jordan, Troth & Lawrence, 2007), and emotions among different cultures (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2012). The reason why emotion research has become so popular may be due to the fact that emotions cannot be separated from the employee and thus it cannot be separated from the workplace (Gross & Barrett, 2011). Although a great deal of attention has been paid to emotions and it is considered an important aspect of work life, one may find that employees' emotions and the events that stimulate these emotions remain fairly new in research about emotion (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Gibson, 2005). This may especially be true within the mining industry which can be identified as a sector where possible emotional events may be prevalent, as it may be perceived as one of the most dangerous and hazardous occupations within the world, but particularly within South Africa (Eweje, 2005).

Emotion is perceived as a central aspect within the workplace. Härtel, Zerbe and Ashkanasy (2005) found in various studies that organisations need to be aware of emotions in the workplace. Organisations cannot deal effectively with these emotions and the effects thereof, if they do not know what emotions are experienced and what these emotions may result into. According to Frost (2003) emotions are linked to the behaviour of employees. This finding is in accordance with the experience sampling method (ESM) research of Fisher and Noble (2004), suggesting that behaviours of employees are affected by job satisfaction, affect, performance and emotion.

Appraisals of emotion events in the workplace become important as they may be related to the experience of affect, job satisfaction and performance of employees. Research has indicated that if organisations make an effort to gain understanding of the emotion events and emotion itself experienced in the workplace, they may prevent possible negative workplace outcomes such as burnout and dissatisfaction (Zapf, 2002).

However, current research on emotions only focused on specific elements of the experience of emotion and did not consider emotion experiences as a process. A large amount of research over the years has been limited to emotional intelligence studies and the effect it has on organisational constructs such as leadership and management (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Cooper & Sawaf, 1998; Goleman, 1998). Examples of topics related to emotion that were researched extensively include the subjective appraisal of emotions and what it entails (Scherer & Wallbott, 1994), emotional labour (Grandey, 2000), the generation of emotion, as well as the regulation of emotion (Gross & Barrett, 2011).

Furthermore, emotion research focuses on discrete emotions (Ashkanasy & Humphey, 2011; Bergh & Theron, 2006; Gibson, 2005) independent of the emotion event that stimulated the emotion. In this regard, De Vries, Brokken and Lemmens (2009) argue that an emotion experience consists of an emotion event, resulting in a discrete emotion being experienced. Moreover, research regarding the appraisal of emotion events is lacking. The importance of appraisal as part of the study of emotion experienced has been highlighted by various models (De Vries et al., 2009; Sander, Grandjean & Scherer, 2005; Scherer, 2001). Emotion events have also been researched to a certain extent over the last few years (Gibson, 2005), but once again it was done in isolation to the appraisal of these events and the emotions that followed the appraisal. Research has thus focused on certain components of emotion and has not considered investigating emotion as a process – a combination of events, appraisals and discrete emotions, as indicated in *Figure 1*.



*Figure 1:* Graphic presentation of the Emotion Experience Process. Adopted from “Appraisal considered as a process of multilevel sequential checking,” by K. R. Scherer, 2001, In K. R. Scherer, A. Schorr, & T. Johnstone (Eds.), *Appraisal processes in emotion: Theory, Methods, Research* (pp. 92-120). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

The conclusion can be drawn that an emotion experiences cannot be viewed as a single experience. It should rather be viewed as a series of processes or components, all that emotions consist of (Jonker, Van der Merwe, Fontaine & Meiring, 2011). It is thus of the utmost importance that the entire emotion experience is researched, because it will provide insight into how the emotion events are appraised and which emotions will be the end result. The Sequential Checking Theory of Scherer can be applied in this regard (Scherer, 2001). This theory makes provision for the complete investigation into emotion experiences as a process; it considers the emotion events, the cognitive appraisal of the events and finally the discrete subjective experience of emotion by the individual as result of the entire process.

Once understanding of this process has been gained, a whole new field of studies will emerge, enabling organisations to understand the emotions their employees experience much better. To conduct such a study in South Africa with its diverse population is even more important, as most research done with regards to emotion experiences and the appraisal of emotions has been done internationally and not locally. Conducting this research will not only result in more efficient organisations, it will also open up opportunities for a new field of study within the South African context. The above-mentioned is especially true in the mining industry, because mining is considered as one of the top three most dangerous occupations in South Africa (The Daily Smoke, 2011) resulting in affective work events.

Various media has reported violence resulting in death, for example in the Rustenburg Platinum Mine where miners died during a strike (Word Press, 2012). Miners have died or have been seriously hurt in all parts of the world as result of the collapsing of mines. These events may stimulate emotions. If these emotion events, the appraisal of these events and the resulting emotions are not investigated, organisations may suffer losses should these individuals not be

able to cope effectively and as result become counterproductive or absent on a regular basis (Zapf, 2002).

To conclude, one should always keep in mind that emotion is not an isolated construct, but rather a framework of aspects (a sequence of processes) (Scherer, 2001). These aspects include the emotion event, the appraisal of the event and the emotion experienced as a result (De Vries et al., 2009). Next, the literature review will address the current level of knowledge on emotion events, emotion appraisal and discreet emotions.

### **1.1.2 Literature Review**

#### **Emotion events**

Emotion events in the workplace are the first component of the process of emotion experiences (De Vries et al., 2009). Scherer's Component-Process Model (2005) indicated that an emotion event first has to stimulate the process before it can continue. Emotion events are often referred to as stimulus events. Scherer (2005) describe these events as something that happens to the individual and stimulates or triggers a response once the event has been appraised. According to Scherer (2005) emotion events may consist of various phenomena like the behaviour of others, the death of a loved one or being in an accident. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) describe emotion events as changes in an individual's present experience. They were, however, of the opinion that the emphasis should be placed on how these emotion events are appraised and what emotion is the result of the emotion event.

Barrett, Mesquita, Ochsner and Groos (2007) and Scherer (2005) indicated in their research that the emotion event is only the beginning of the process of experiencing emotion. Emotion events employees may have to face in the workplace may include retrenchments, accidents resulting in serious injuries, health hazards, victimisation, violent attacks among employees, death of fellow employees or near death experiences (Congard, Dauvier, Antoine & Gilles, 2011). Once the emotion event has taken place, the next process - according to the theory of Scherer (2001) - may include the appraisal of the emotion event.



## **Emotion appraisal**

Almost all theories of emotion believe that the emotion one experiences depends on the appraisal the individual has done of the event, which may be important to the well-being or the survival of the individual (Scherer, 2001). Scherer concluded that some of the first researchers to examine the appraisal process as phenomena were Arnold in 1960 and Lazarus in 1966. An appraisal is the interpretation of the causes and consequences of an emotion event with regards to the individual experiencing the emotion's personal goals, standards and norms (De Vries et al., 2009). One can conclude that De Vries, et al. (2009) perceived the appraisal of emotions as a cognitive process which can either be beneficial to researching a goal, or a hindrance. Scherer (2001) suggested that the type and the intensity of emotion individuals experience as result of an emotion event depend on the individual's perception of the event.

Scherer (2001) suggested Stimulus Evaluation Checks (SEC) as the basis of the process of appraisal. He claimed that the SEC follows a fixed order, indicating that the evaluation of emotion events proceeds in a sequence. Scherer (2001) indicated the stages of the appraisal process as: (1) the detection of stimulus that requires attention and further information processing, (2) assessment of the event with regards to the implications and consequences it has on the individual's goals and needs, (3) to determine the coping potential and (4) to evaluate the normative importance of the event.

Some researchers Stander, Grandjean and Scherer (2005) concluded that the appraisal of an emotion event is not a once-off matter, but rather a situation in which an individual continuously scans his or her environment, as well as his or her internal state, to evaluate and re-evaluate changes. The individual thus continues to appraise the event to either adjust or terminate the stimulant that triggered the appraisal process (Stander, et al., 2005). Gross and Barrett (2011) appropriately named the appraisal construct of the emotional experience the appraisal zone. The appraisal zone can be seen as the border between the discrete emotion being generated and the regulation of the emotion (Gross & Barrett, 2011). Desmet (2002) proposed four main types of product appraisals done by individuals. These types include the relation of a product to one's goals, the sensorial appeal of the product, the legitimacy of an action represented by the product and the newness of the product.

Once the appraisal process of the emotion event is completed, the emotion that the individual is experiencing becomes the central focus. Various researches have been conducted on discrete emotion in general, for example anger in the workplace (Scherer, 2005) and happiness (Barrett et al., 2007), but - as mentioned previously - limited research has been done on the discrete emotions resulting from emotion events in the workplace once the appraisal process has been completed. As a result the literature review on discrete emotions experienced will be done from current literature.

### **Discrete emotions**

Emotions are responses to a specific event that can be seen as meaningful to the individual. This meaning may be positive or negative. There are various definitions of emotions; Scherer (1987) conceptualise emotion as episodes of interconnected, synchronised changes in the states of individuals' sub-systems in response to the evaluation he or she made of an external or internal stimulus event that may be relevant to the concern of the individual. Plug, Louw, Gouws and Meyer (1997) were of the opinion that the description of emotion depends on the viewpoint of the researcher. Matsumoto and Hwang (2012) describe emotion as transient, bio-psycho-social reactions to events that have consequences for our well-being; it may necessitate imperative action. Emotions thus prepare the individual by adaptive action tendencies for the specific situation. Matsumoto and Hwang (2012) implied that if mankind did not have emotions, they would not have the ability to make rapid decisions in a situation where a decision needs to be made with regards to what action to take such as flee, attack, care for others or defend. Experience of discrete emotions thus becomes important in decision-making in the workplace.

Emotions instigate a system of components which include the following: subjective experiences, expressive behaviour, psychological reactions, action tendencies and cognition. The term emotion can overall be seen as a metaphor for all the reactions listed (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2012) resulting in the subjective affective experience. When discussing emotions, it is important to note that there are two different types of emotions, aesthetic and utilitarian emotions. Utilitarian emotions include the common or basic emotions such as anger, fear, joy disgust, sadness, shame and guilt (Scherer, 2005). They are called utilitarian emotions as they assist humans to adapt to events that may have consequences for the well-being of the human race.

These adaptive functions of emotions help individuals to prepare for action tendencies, recovery and reorientation, motivational enhancement or the creation of social obligations (Scherer, 2005). Utilitarian emotions are necessary for the survival of humans and as a result these emotions tend to be high in intensity and can be considered as emergency reactions to situations. Aesthetic emotions, on the other hand, aid individuals in the adaptation to events that require the appraisal of the relevance of goals and coping potential. These emotions include being moved or awed, being full of wonder, admiration, bliss, ecstasy, fascination, harmony, rapture and solemnity (Scherer, 2005). Emotion is therefore an important aspect of work-life as it tends to have a profound impact on the quality of work experiences.

To conclude, it is important to observe how emotions are experienced and expressed (Gibson, 2005). Being aware of one's own emotional tendencies and that of others increases the chances that the emotions being experienced are expressed in such a way that it will help the individual and the organisation to perform optimally at all times (Gibson, 2005). To perform optimally the entire process of the emotion experienced needs to be considered, thus the emotion event, the appraisal of the event and the emotion itself. Once this has occurred, it will enable understanding of the emotions experienced at work.

The following research questions can be formulated based on the above-mentioned description of the research problem:

- What emotion events are experienced by employees in the workplace?
- How are the emotion events experienced appraised by employees?
- What are the discrete emotions experienced by employees in the workplace?

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research objectives are divided into general objectives and specific objectives.

### **1.2.1 General objective**

The general objective of this study is to critically investigate what emotion events are experienced and how these events are appraised for them to result in a specific emotion.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of this research are:

- To examine what emotion events employees experience in the workplace.
- To determine how the emotion events experienced are appraised by employees.
- To determine what discrete emotions are experienced by employees in the workplace.

### **1.3 CONTRIBUTIONS**

The most important contribution of this study will be the contribution to the literature. Previous literature primarily focused on emotion events, the appraisal thereof or the discrete emotions independently, not researching them as a process but as non-relating components. Conducting this research will thus contribute a great deal to the literature, nationally and internationally, as it will provide more information on the experiencing of emotion as a process. Little if any research has been done in South Africa on the experiencing of emotion events, the appraisal of those events and the discrete emotions resulting from the events. The conclusion can be made that this research will contribute even more to the local literature in specific. This will aid South African researchers to broaden their horizons in this regard; they will hopefully conduct further research on this topic in future. This research will aid employers in organisations to gain understanding of its employees and provide them with the necessary information to implement interventions - should they be needed. The individual too will gain understanding of the emotion experience and the emotions resulting from the emotion event he or she has experienced. This information may enable him or her to find effective coping strategies to deal with the emotion experience and moving on to a brighter future and a better quality of life.

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method consists of the literature review and empirical study.

### **1.4.1 Literature review**

The primary focus of the literature review was to analyse prior research done on emotion, emotion events, appraisal of emotion and the experiencing of emotions as a process. The literature review provided background and insight into the concepts that form part of the process of emotion experiences.

Articles relevant to the present study were identified via the utilisation of research databases such as *EBSCOHOST*, *Google Scholar*, *Emerald*, *SAePublications*, *ProQuest*, *ISI web of knowledge*, *SABINET online*, *Science Direct*, *SACat*, *APA PsycArticles*, *Academic Search Premier*, *JSTOR*, *Springlink*, *Metacrawler* and *NEXUS*. Publication dates of publications that were utilised ranged from 1990 to 2011. The following search terms were used to gather relevant data: emotion, emotion experience, emotion event, emotion episode, emotion appraisal, emotion process, critical incident technique.

The following journals were consulted for relevant information pertinent to the current study: *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*; *Journal of Counselling and Development*; *Journal of Educational Psychology*; *Learning and Individual Differences*; *Journal of Higher Education*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*; *Personnel Psychology*; *Industrial and Organisational Psychology*; *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*; *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Journal of Cross referencing techniques will also be utilised to ensure maximum literature coverage as per the study.

### **1.4.2 Empirical study**

The empirical study consists of the research design, participants, procedure and data analysis in order to achieve the research objectives.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1.5.1 Research Approach**

A qualitative research methodology from a phenomenological and narrative approach was used for the purpose of this study, using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) as data gathering method. Qualitative research can be described as a form of systematic empirical investigation into meaning (Shank, 2002). This form of research involves a more interpretative and naturalistic approach which means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural surroundings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings the participants bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). Struwig and Stead (2001) see qualitative research as a tool to see a phenomenon through the eyes of the participants, making it an exploratory technique of a relatively personal nature (Salkind, 2009). The design that was followed for the purpose of this study was the narrative design.

The narrative design is based on the assumption that the life and world of the participant can be best understood from the participant's own description and viewpoint (Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005). The narrative design has become increasingly popular as it allows participants taking part in a study to tell the researcher their life stories and the experiences they might have had in their own words (Bruner, 1990). The advantage of this approach to the researcher is that it provides a complete and detailed picture of the individuals and his or her experiences. This approach is grounded in a constructionist perspective. The constructionists is of the believe that there is no truth in the world besides that of the narrative reality that can only be socially and personally constructed by the subject who was actively and personally involved (Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005). The latter indicates that the goal is not merely to discover facts reported by the participant, it also includes gaining understanding of the context in which the participant constructs his or her views, whether it is factual or not (Lawler, 2002).

### **1.5.2 Research Strategy**

This study was conducted among participants who are professional workers within the mining industry. Professional workers in the mining industry typically refer to engineers, accountants, production managers, human resource officers and geologists. The participants are employees of one gold mine organisation situated in Gauteng as well as the North-West Province. As

mentioned previously the critical incident technique was used to determine what emotion events employees experience at work, how these employees appraise the emotion events and what emotions result from this process. Permission was gained from the board of directors of the mine to conduct the study. The study will be qualitative and participants will administer surveys in written form explaining the emotion event in his or her individual words. The data obtained from the surveys were then analysed and interpreted.

### **1.5.3 Research setting**

The data was collected in a classroom setting. The setting was relaxed and familiar in order for the participants to feel comfortable within their surroundings. The venue (the training centres of the mine) where the narratives were completed was private to eliminate the risk of any disturbances. The objective and the process of the research study were explained in detail to all the participants. This was done to ensure that the participants completely understand the objective of the research and make the participants feel at ease. The participants had the opportunity to ask the researcher questions relating to the study to clarify any uncertainties or concerns. As the narratives were completed in a classroom setting with the researcher present, the narratives were handed to the researcher self, keeping the identity of the participants anonymous.

### **1.5.4 Entrée and establishing researcher roles and sampling**

Entrée to the mines located in Gauteng and the North-West Province and its employees was negotiated with the Board of Directors prior to starting the research process. This was done by presenting the proposal of the study to the Board of Directors of the mine, explaining the need and importance of the study and what the study entails. The Board of Directors was given the opportunity to consider whether they wish to partake in the study. Once the board indicated that they wish to partake in the study, a written agreement was signed giving permission to the research team to enter the premises and conduct the research.

The researcher explained that the results will be anonymous and will not be used to discriminate against employees, but will provide the mine with the results should the mine wish to use them in interventions if needed. An availability voluntary sample of professional mining employees was used to reach the objective of this study. The qualitative study was conducted among 100 participants ( $n= 100$ ) from Gauteng and the North-West Province who will be completing

narratives to examine a critical incident in the workplace. As mentioned the research was conducted among mining professionals who are easily accessible. The process was completely voluntary, which means that participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the process at any time they wished to do so.

### **1.5.5 Data collection method and recording**

As mentioned the critical incident technique was used during this study. The CIT was originally established by Flanagan in 1954 (Irvine, Roberts, Tranter, Williams & Jones, 2008) and will be adopted for this study. According to Flanagan (1954) the CIT comprises of a set of procedures that can enable one to collect direct observations of human behaviour. This will be done in such a manner that it will facilitate the potential usefulness in solving everyday problems. The CIT may in actual fact be seen as a procedure to gather explicit but important information and facts regarding behaviour in defined situations (Flanagan, 1954). Participants are asked to identify specific emotion events he or she has experienced in the workplace. The emphasis is on the incident or event (Usability Net, 2012). The importance of the incident is based on the rationalization, the implication and the meaning given to it (Angelides, 2001).

There are five steps in critical incident technique which are the following: 1) determine the study's aims, 2) plan how the incidents will be collected, 3) collect the data, 4) analyse the data and 5) interpret and report on the data (Irvine et al., 2008). The advantages of this technique are that the critical incidents provide a dramatic manifestation of the impact of behaviour and it provides the human story behind research findings (Marrelli, 1990). It thus provides insight into how individuals experience these incidents up close and personal and what influence it had on those individuals. This technique befits the purposes of this study as it provides personal information on emotion experienced and the process the individual went through.

Various studies have been done regarding the validity and reliability of the CIT. Past studies questioning the reliability and validity of the CIT, done by Andersson and Nilsson (1964), concluded that the CIT has both face validity and inter-rater reliability. A decade later Ronan and Latham (1974) too came to the conclusion that the CIT is valid and reliable. During their study they found that the CIT was indeed reliable and valid, finding the technique as relatively observable and objective permitting test-retest reliability (Ronan & Latham, 1974). However,



research regarding the validity and reliability of the CIT did not end in the 1990s. More recent research was done in this regard by Skiba, 2000; Tirri and Koro-Ljungberg, 2002; Ellinger and Bostrom, 2002 (as cited in Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson & Maglio, 2005). These researchers found that their research correlated with past research in that the CIT was regarded as both valid and reliable over the past 50 years (Butterfield et al.). Butterfield et al. (2005) are of opinion that this technique will be valid and reliable for the next 50 years to come, making it a valuable tool for future researchers.

The data collection took place in one session that was scheduled ahead of time. A sample of professionals from the mining industry in Gauteng and the North-West Province was used in this study. A biographical questionnaire was completed by all participants. As the critical incidents technique was used, the method of data collection was that of narratives. The narratives were administered as a hard copy where the participants were asked to tell the story of his or her emotion event. In completing the narratives, the participants wrote down the critical incident as he or she experienced it. Open-ended questions that guides participants to tell experiences of the emotion process was asked. These open-ended questions were derived from the Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ) which is based on Scherer's Component Process Model of Emotion. These questions include:

- How would you describe this emotion experience in your own words?
- At the time of experiencing the emotion, did you think that the real or potential consequences of the event could have or could still be avoided or modified by appropriate human action?
- After you had a good idea of what the probable consequences of the event would be, did you think that you would be able to avoid the consequences or modify them to your advantage (through your own power or helped by others)?
- After you had a good idea of what the probable consequences of the event would be, did you think that you could live with, and adjust to, the consequences of the vent that could not be avoided or modified?
- Please name the emotion that corresponds best with the emotion experience you reported above.

The data captured in the survey, which has been completed by the participant on his or her own, was encapsulated in a hard copy. The information is safely stored and the identity of the participants will continue to be anonymous.

### **1.5.6 Data analyses**

The narratives collected from the participants were analysed by means of content analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). According to Struwig and Stead (2001), qualitative content analysis has been defined as the gathering and analysing of textual content. The latter may include messages such as words, meanings, symbols and themes. The data analysis process was initiated by constructing a data classification system. This is done to enable the identification of emerging themes and categories (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). It was achieved by creating categories and a coding scheme derived from three sources: the data, previous related studies and theories. A list of coding categories was generated from the model or theory. The researcher may alter the model or theory within the course of the analysis, as new categories may emerge (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

During this step it is important to free the data from any unnecessary information, determine the meaning of all sub-units and link all information together, forming a complete picture of the emotion event. All responses to the critical incidents were classified according to the emotional content of the emotion event. The text from the narratives was read carefully. Once this was done the words and content of the descriptions were analysed. The words will be sorted and placed in an Excel sheet. To ensure quality control and to remain true to the meaning of the incidents as described by the participants and avoiding misinterpretation, the coding of the data was initially be coded by two Industrial Psychologists. Once they had completed this process, an independent third Industrial Psychologist with good past performance in qualitative methods classified these categories as a reliability check on the category scheme. An inter-coder reliability measure suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate agreement between the classifications. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the overlap between the coding and categories identified by the coders and the independent Industrial Psychologist should be more than 70% for it to be regarded as reliable. As the overlap for this study was more than 70%, the inference can be made that the results are reliable.

Inferences were made and the reconstructions of meanings derived from the data were presented. According to Bradley (1993) the activities involved exploring the properties and dimensions of categories, identifying relationships between categories, uncovering patterns, and testing categories against the full range of data. For the study to be replicable by other researchers, the analytical procedures and processes was monitored and reported as detailed and truthfully as possible as suggested by Patton (2002). The report will provide a sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the basis of the research as well as sufficient interpretation to allow understanding of the findings.

### **1.5.7 Ethical considerations**

In order for this study to be considered successful, careful considerations of fairness and ensuring the ethical conduct of research is crucial (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009). Ethical issues such as voluntary participation, informed consent, doing no harm, confidentiality and privacy was taken into account. The information will be provided to the employee wellness programme of the mine.

Ethical guidelines that were fully adhered to during this study included:

- All subjects involved in the research were volunteers.
- All volunteers were fluent in English, thus no interpreters were necessary.
- Sufficient information about the study was provided to ensure that risks and benefits were understood by the volunteers as suggested by Foxcroft and Roodt (2009).
- No volunteers were compensated for participation in the study.
- Participants had the opportunity to withdraw at any time they wished to.
- The researcher ensured freedom of opinion, respect and non-discrimination.
- Written consent was obtained as suggested by Foxcroft and Roodt (2009).

## **1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION**

The chapters in this mini-dissertation are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction.

Chapter 2: Research article.

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

## **1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 raises awareness regarding the lack of research in the emotion experience process as suggested by Scherer's (1987; 2004; 2005) Sequential Check Theory. In this chapter the components of the emotion experience process, namely the emotion event, the emotion appraisal and the discrete emotion was discussed. The latter were discussed independently but the importance of the process was emphasised during this chapter as one sequence elicits the next.

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**CHAPTER 2**  
**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **AN INVESTIGATION OF EMOTION EXPERIENCES AT WORK: A CRITICAL INCIDENT TECHNIQUE APPROACH.**

### **ABSTRACT**

**Orientation:** Emotions at work have been considered as an important facet of employees' work life. However, research regarding the investigation of the emotion experiences at work per se has been lacking.

**Research Purpose:** The general objective of this study is to critically investigate what emotion events are experienced and how these events are appraised for them to result in specific emotions.

**Motivation for the study:** A lack of research regarding emotion experiences as a process exists currently.

**Research design, approach and method:** To investigate emotion experiences as a process. A qualitative study was conducted among one hundred ( $n=100$ ) professional mining employees using the Critical Incident Technique Approach.

**Main findings:** 84% of the participants experienced negative emotion events and a mere 14% of the participants experienced positive emotion events at work. Negative emotion events were appraised as negative and participants indicated not having control or power over the events, yet adaptation was possible. Negative emotions included anger, disgust and sadness. Positive emotion events were appraised as positive, even though the participants reported not having control or power over the situation. Participants reported being able to live with the consequences. Positive emotions provoked included joy, pleasure and pride.

**Practical/managerial implications:** When the emotion experiences of employees are investigated as a process, better understanding of emotions will be gained which will enable the implementation of the most appropriate interventions to fulfil individual needs and reaching organisational goals.

**Contribution/value-adding:** Existing research on the emotion experience as a process has been lacking, especially in the South African context. This study will thus contribute to research regarding the investigation of the emotion experience as a process and not as mere independent components.

**Keywords:** Emotion experiences, emotion events, emotion appraisal, discrete emotion, workplace, mining industry, Critical Incident Technique Approach.

## **‘N ONDERSOEK VAN DIE EMOSIONELE ONDERVINDINGE IN DIE WERKPLEK: ‘N KRITIESE INSIDENT TEGNIEK BENADERING**

### **OPSOMMING**

**Oriëntasie:** Emosies in die werkplek word geïdentifiseer as een van die belangrikste aspekte van werknemers se werkslewe. Dit blyk egter dat daar ‘n tekort is aan navorsing met betrekking tot die emosionele ondervindingsproses in die werkplek.

**Navorsingsdoelstelling:** Die algemene doelstelling van die studie is om te bepaal watter emosionele voorvalle deur werknemers ondervind word, asook hoe hierdie voorvalle waardeur word om ‘n spesifieke diskrete emosie tot gevolg te hê.

**Motivering vir die studie:** Tans word daar ‘n tekort aan navorsing oor die emosionele ondervindingproses ondervind.

**Navorsingsontwerp, -benadering en -metode:** Om ondersoek in te stel na die emosionele wedervaringsproses sal ‘n kwantitatiewe metode aangewend word. Die studie sal een honderd ( $n=100$ ) professionele mynwerkers insluit. Die tegniek wat toegepas sal word vir die gebruik van die studie is Die Kritiese Insident Tegniek Benadering.

**Hoofbevindinge:** 84% van die deelnemers het negatiewe emosionele ondervindings in die werkplek ervaar. In teenstelling het slegs 14% van die deelnemers positiewe emosionele wedervaringe in die werkplek ervaar. Negatiewe emosionele ondervindings is as negatief

waardeer en deelnemers rapporteer dat alhoewel hulle geen beheer of mag oor die situasie gehad het nie, hulle steeds kon aanpas. Negatiewe emosies geïdentifiseer sluit in woede, hartseer en afkeer. Positiewe emosionele ondervinding is as positief waardeer, al het deelnemers geen beheer of mag oor die situasie gehad nie. Deelnemers rapporteer dat hulle met gemak met die gevolge van positiewe emosionele wedervaringe kan saamleef. Laasgenoemde lei tot die ervaring van positiewe emosies soos geluk, plesier en trots.

**Praktiese en bestuursimplikasies:** Deur ondersoek in te stel na die emosionele ondervindingsproses van werknemers sal 'n dieper begrip van die emosies van werknemers geskep word. Laasgenoemde sal organisasies in staat stel om die mees gepaste intervensies te implementeer om in die behoeftes van die werknemers te voldoen, asook steeds organisatoriese doelwitte te bereik.

**Bydrae/Waardetoevoeging:** Binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks is daar tans 'n tekort aan navorsing oor die emosionele ondervindingsproses in die werkplek. Die studies sal dus bydra tot huidige navorsing oor die emosionele wedervaringsproses en nie slegs die individuele komponente van die proses nie.

**Kernwoorde:** Emosionele ondervinding, emosionele voorval, waardering van emosie, diskrete emosie, werkplek, myn-industrie, Kritiese Insident Tegniek Benadering.

## **BACKGROUND AND KEY FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

An emotion at work - as a topic of research interest - has grown considerably in the past decade (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Garland et al., 2010; Kaiser & Müller-Seitz, 2007; Kalat & Shiota, 2007). This may be due to the fact that emotions are an integral part of human beings (Gross & Barrett, 2011). One cannot separate emotion from the lives of mankind. The implication of the latter statement implies that emotion cannot be separated from the employee and the workplace (Gross & Barrett, 2011). Therefore, the workplace is a natural setting at which researchers can study emotions, because a person spends a large amount of his or her time at his or her job daily (Weiss, 2002).

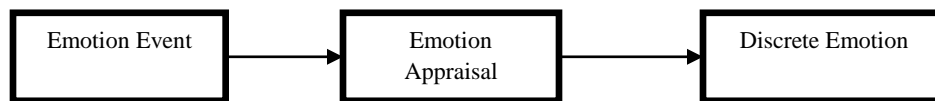
Past research has been restricted to studies on emotional intelligence and motivation and their possible effects on organisational constructs such as leadership and management (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Brotheridge & Lee, 2008; Christie, Jordan, Troth & Lawrence, 2007; Cooper & Sawaf, 1998; Goleman, 1998). Some examples of topics related to emotion which were extensively researched consist of subjective appraisal of emotions and what they entail (Scherer & Wallbott, 1994), emotional labour (Grandey, 2000), the generation of emotion, as well as the regulation of emotion (Congard, Dauvier, Antoine & Gilles, 2011; Gross & Barrett, 2011). In addition, research done regarding emotions primarily focused on discrete emotions (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Bergh & Theron, 2006; Briner, 1999; Fox & Spector, 2002; Gibson, 2005).

Furthermore, research has indicated that emotions are perceived as a central aspect within organisations and as such organisations need to be aware of the emotions their employees experience on a daily basis (Härtel, Zerbe & Ashkanasy, 2005). Organisations should thus gain better understanding of the mechanism that underpins emotions (Congard et al., 2011). This is necessary as organisations may not have the ability to deal effectively with emotions and the possible effects of those emotions if the employers do not know what specific emotions their employees are experiencing and what the potential consequences of those emotions might entail. According to previous research (Frost, 2003; Glasø, Vie, Holmdal & Einarsen, 2011) emotions at work are fundamental and must be taken into account for one to understand the behaviour of employees. These findings are in agreement with the experience sampling method (ESM) researched by Fisher and Noble (2004). The ESM suggests that the behaviours of all employees are affected by job satisfaction, affect, performance and emotions, as investigated in the field of Organisational Behaviour.

However, even though research on emotions at work has escalated and emotions are considered an important facet of employees' work life, there is a lack of research regarding the emotion experiences at work. Research must also investigate emotions in the work context, as well as the emotion events at work which stimulate these emotions (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Gibson, 2005). It is important to note that for one to investigate the emotion experiences of employees, one need to investigate the different components that emotion experiences consist of (Scherer, 2001). The latter include the investigation of the emotion events, the appraisal of those emotions

and the eliciting of discrete emotions. As result, a specific need to study emotion events, the appraisal of the events and the resulting emotions in the workplace has arisen.

In response to the latter statement, De Vries, Brokken and Lemmens (2009) agreed by adding that an emotion experience encompasses of an emotion event, resulting in a discrete emotion being experienced. Furthermore, various models in emotion research have highlighted the significance of studying the appraisal of emotion experiences (De Vries et al., 2009; Sander, Grandjean & Scherer, 2005; Scherer, 2001). In addition, emotion events, too, have been researched in recent years to some extent (Gibson, 2005). This has, however, been done independently from the appraisal of emotion events and the emotions resulting from the appraisal process. Thus research done to date has mainly focused on certain facets of emotion and has not considered the experience of emotion as a process. The conclusion can be drawn that current research on emotion has not considered investigating the different components that the emotion experiences consists of.



*Figure 2:* Graphic presentation of the Emotion Experience Process. Adopted from “Appraisal considered as a process of multilevel sequential checking,” by K. R. Scherer, 2001, In K. R. Scherer, A. Schorr, & T. Johnstone (Eds.), *Appraisal processes in emotion: Theory, Methods, Research* (pp. 92-120). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Thus, for one to research the emotions of employees one should investigate emotion experiences as a process consisting of different components. To investigate emotion experiences as a process, the Sequential Checking Theory of Scherer can be best utilized (Scherer, 2001). Scherer’s SQT enables the complete investigation of emotion experiences as a process, taking into account the emotion event, the cognitive appraisal of the emotion event and ultimately the discrete subjective experience of emotion the individual experiences consequently. The appraisal of emotion events within the workplace became important when past research indicated that it may be related to the experience of affect, job satisfaction, emotion health and performance of employees (Brotheridge & Lee, 2008). Research done in this regard indicated that should organisations make an effort to

gain better understanding of emotion events and emotions itself experienced in the working environment, employers of organisations may be able to prevent potential negative workplace outcomes such as burnout and job dissatisfaction (Zapf, 2002).

The latter may particularly be true within the mining industry as this trade is said to be considered as one of the top three most dangerous occupations in South Africa (Eweje, 2005; The Daily Smoke, 2011). The mining industry has been identified as one where potential emotion events may be experienced on a regular basis. A range of media has reported violence resulting in death, for example in Rustenburg Mine where miners died during a strike (Word Press, 2012) and most recent the tragic death of 34 mining employees during a strike for wage increases at Lonmin Mine in Marikana (News IAfrica, 2012). Collapsing mines worldwide has resulted in deaths or miners getting gravely injured. These events may stimulate various emotions. Should emotion events in mines or organisations, the appraisal of these events and the resulting emotions not be investigated, organisations may suffer losses should employees not be able to cope successfully with the emotions he or she is experiencing; this can lead to these individuals become counter-productive or absent on a regular basis (Zapf, 2002).

In conclusion, it is important to bear in mind that the emotion one experiences is not an isolated construct, but rather a sequence of processes consisting of different components, as suggested by Scherer (2001). The sequence in the emotion process includes the emotion event, the appraisal of the emotion event and finally the discrete emotion experienced as product (De Vries et al., 2009).

The literature review will now discuss the components of the emotion experience process, namely emotion events, emotion appraisal and discrete emotion. The components will be discussed separately in accordance to the sequence suggested by Scherer (2001).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The components of the emotion experience process, namely emotion events, emotion appraisal and discrete emotion will be discussed separately in accordance to the sequence suggested by Scherer (1987; 2001; 2004). Scherer's (1987; 2001) Sequential Check Theory provides the theoretical framework suggesting the components that need to be investigated regarding emotion



experiences at work. Therefore reference to his theory will be made throughout the literature review.

### **Emotion events**

The emotion experience starts off with an individual experiencing a content rich event in the setting in which the individual functions on a daily basis (Barrett et al., 2007). As individuals spend a large part of their time on activities in a work setting, emotion events are bound to take place, as no environment is free of these events. De Vries et al. (2009) agreed with Barrett et al. (2007), suggesting that emotion events in the workplace can be seen as the first component of the emotion experiences. Scherer (2005) compiled a model on this topic, namely the Component-Process Model. The model specified that an emotion event has to stimulate the emotion experience initially before it can continue. Scherer (2005) continued by describing emotion events as phenomena that take place in the individual's environment and prompt a reaction once the emotion events have been appraised by the individual.

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), were of the opinion that emotion events can be perceived as changes in the present experiences of an individual. Although they provided a definition of emotion events, they felt very strongly that the emphasis should be placed on how emotion events are appraised and what emotions the emotion events will prompt. Barrett et al. (2007) and Scherer (2005) concluded that after considering all the explanations, the emotion event is merely the launch of the emotion experience process.

Frijda (1988; 2005) conducted various studies on the topic of emotion experience and agreed with the previous researchers with regards to what emotion events are, as well as the perception that they initiate the emotion experience. Frijda is, however, of the opinion that emotion events are not well-designed as 'feelings' as such, as they are associated to the 'inner' or 'subjective' experience (Frijda, 2005). Furthermore, as the events experienced by individuals unfold in the workplace, it is imperative to note that it is not merely what happens to the individual that is important, but more important is the interpretation the individual makes of the event and its possible consequences (Spector & Fox, 2002).

The manner in which one should characterise emotion events originated in phenomenology (Santre, 1939, as cited in Frijda, 2005). The term emphasises the nature of emotion events that is

that emotion events are about something and not simply of something (Frijda, 2005). The emotion events individuals experience provide the individuals with important information regarding their milieu and situation. The latter serve as vital sources of judgement and action to be taken (Schwartz & Clore, 2003). Emotions generally occur in response to an emotion event. The emotion event the individual experiences in his or her working environment is usually of some significance to the individual (Frijda, 1988). The evaluation the employee attaches to the appraisal of the emotion event may also be of some importance to the individual.

According to Frijda (1988) emotion events which please the goals of the individual, or those that are associated with the individual's goals, usually result in the individual experiencing positive emotions. On the other hand, emotion events which may harm or threaten the individual and his/her intentions or existence in some way, may cause negative emotions (Frijda, 1988). Moors (2009) agreed with the notion that if one experiences emotion, it must have a positive or negative essence to it. Emotion events which are experienced by individuals may differ in accordance to the circumstances the individual functions in (Frijda, 2005).

Scherer (2005) suggests that emotion events may consist of a range of phenomena like the behaviour of others, the death of a loved one or being involved in an accident. Examples of emotion events employees may experience in the workplace may include retrenchments, accidents resulting in serious injuries, health hazards, victimisation, violent attacks among employees, the death of fellow employees and near-death experiences (Congard et al., 2011). Liu and Perrewé (2005) indicated organisational change as a major event in organisations which may cause various emotions of an intense nature; these emotions tend to be negative rather than positive and have a negative effect on the performance and morale of the employees. Should a particular meaning be attached to an emotion event, a specific emotion will be the product. It can thus be concluded that once the emotion event has taken place, the next step in the emotion experience process, according to the theory of Scherer (2001), may include the appraisal of the emotion event the individual has experienced.

### **Emotion appraisal**

Past research indicated that most theories of emotions are centred around the fact that the emotion one experiences depends on the appraisal the individual has made of the emotion event

(Scherer, 2001; 2005). The emotion event experienced may be imperative to the well-being or the survival of the person (Scherer, 2001). Scherer (2001) and Woods (2009) came to the conclusion that the process theory of appraisal lies in the heart of the emotional life work done by Lazarus in 1966. Lazarus, however, was not the only researcher who can be perceived as a pioneer of the appraisal theory. Arnold (1960) was also one of the first researchers to study this phenomenon in 1960 (Woods, 2009). De Vries et al. (2009) established that the appraisal of emotion is the interpretation one makes of the causes and consequences of an emotion event as it was experienced. The appraisal of the emotion event is done with regards to the personal goals, standards and norms of the individual who has experienced the emotion event.

De Vries et al. (2009) suggested that the appraisal of emotion is a cognitive process. This process can either be assisting one to reach a goal, or a barrier in reaching a goal. Scherer (2001) stated that the nature and the force or intensity of the emotion one experiences in response to an emotion event, depend on the perception the individual has of the event experienced. Lazarus (1991) stated that the appraisal of emotion is about how mankind understands the implications of what is happening in his or her individual life with regards to his/her personal well-being. All of this appears to happen in a certain order.

Scherer (2001) suggested Stimulus Evaluation Checks (SEC) to be the basis of the appraisal process. He claimed that SEC follows a fixed order. This indicates that the evaluation of emotion events advance in a sequence. Sander, Grandjean and Scherer (2005) indicated the stages of the appraisal process to be as follows: (1) finding the stimulus which may require attention and further information processing, (2) assessing the event with regards to the inference and consequences it has on the individual person's goals and needs, (3) establishing the coping potential and (4) evaluating the normative implication of the event.

Researchers have differentiated between two categories of appraisals, namely primary and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal has to do with whether or not what the individual is experiencing is regarded as relevant to the his or her individual values, goal commitment, beliefs about the world and motivation (Scherer, Schorr & Johnstone, 2001). Goal commitment has been emphasised as important because it motivates human beings to strive to attain their goals, even in the face of adversity and discouragement. Without goal commitment one has no need for adaption importance. This means the individual will go about his or her daily life without

anything which may interrupt his or her routine. Without the possibility of harm, threat or challenge, thus not relevant to the well-being of the person, there is nothing to consider (Scherer et al., 2001). As a result if there is no threat that causes stress, it may result in positive emotions. The opposite may, however, lead to feelings of affect or emotion experienced as negative.

Secondary appraisal focuses on the person-environment relationship, i.e. coping options. When an individual experiences a stressful event, he or she has to evaluate coping options and come to a decision on which one to choose and how to set the chosen coping strategy or action in motion (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). The coping action one chooses is not set in stone, and often changes in accordance with the flow of events. Secondary appraisal is not less important than primary appraisal. Primary appraisal, however, is mainly a judgement about whether the emotion event is worthy of attention or not (Scherer et al., 2001). The conclusion can be drawn that primary and secondary appraisal cannot be separated, but rather form an integrated cognitive-motivational-relational process (Scherer et al., 2001).

Sander et al. (2005) determined that the appraisal process of a specific emotion is not a once-off affair. Some researchers, however, are of the opinion that human beings constantly scan the environment in which they function, as well as their internal state, to assess and re-assess any changes (Sander et al., 2005; Lazarus, 1991). This is done to either adjust to the stimulant or terminate the stimulant which initially set off the appraisal process. Gross and Barrett (2011) named the appraisal construct of the emotion experience process very aptly the appraisal zone.

The so-called appraisal zone can be seen as the boundary between discrete emotions generated from emotion events and the regulation of the emotion experienced (Gross & Barrett, 2011). Desmet (2002) suggested four types of product appraisals done by individuals are: 1) the relation of a product to one's goals, 2) the sensorial appeal of the product, 3) the legitimacy of an action represented by the product and 4) the newness of the product.

Once the appraisal of the emotion event has been completed, the emotion the individual may be experiencing becomes the central focal point. Appraisal theories do not merely attempt to describe emotion, but also explain emotion. Thus the appraisal process can be seen as the link between the organism and the emotion event stimulating the process (Scherer & Ellsworth, 2003). Various studies have been conducted on discrete emotion such as anger (Scherer, 2005)

and happiness (Barrett et al., 2007), but limited research has been done on the specific discrete emotions resulting from emotion events in the work setting once the appraisal process has been completed. Consequently the literature review on discrete emotions experienced will be derived from current literature.

### **Discrete emotions**

Findings in various studies suggest that researchers need to pay more attention to discrete emotions as these emotions may well provide employers with a richer understanding of his or her employees' feelings and behaviours at work (Kaiser & Müller-Seitz, 2007; Staw, Sutton & Pelled, 1994). Discrete emotions appear to have different repercussions for behaviours at work even if these emotions belong to the same affective domain (Lee & Allen, 2002). Emotion can be seen as a constant mechanism for flexible adaption in one's everyday life. It serves a twofold function of preparing appropriate responses to emotion events and providing opportunities for the evaluation and communication in the interest of response optimization (Scherer, 1987). Emotions can be perceived as a response to a particular event which can be seen as significant to the individual experiencing the emotion. The meaning or significance one may attach to emotions may either be positive or negative. In existing literature regarding emotion one may find that various researchers defined emotion in accordance to their own unique understanding of the phenomenon (Scherer, 1987).

Scherer (1987) concluded that emotions are the occurrence of unified, synchronised changes in the situation of a human being's subsystems in response to the assessment the individual has made of an external or internal stimulus event. This event may be relevant to the concern of the individual. Plug et al. (1997) concluded that the meaning one may attach to emotion depends on the point of view of the individual researcher. Other researchers such as Matsumoto and Hwang (2012) conceptualised emotion as short-lived, bio-psycho-social responses to emotion events which may have consequences for one's well-being and it may require imperative action. It can thus be concluded that emotions serve as adaptive functions in reaction to environmental events which may have repercussions for one's survival (Plutchik, 1989). The role of emotions is thus to invigorate human beings psychologically and in the process induce the appropriate and necessary action (Spector & Fox, 2002).

According to Bies, Tripp and Kramer (1997) emotions characteristically aid individuals in the formulation of the intention to engage in certain behaviours or produce a promptness to act later when certain events or circumstances are encountered. Matsumoto and Hwang (2012) agreed with the previous researchers by stating that if human beings did not have emotions, mankind would not have had the ability to make brisk decisions in situations where decisions need to be made regarding what action is necessary such as flee, attack, care for others or defend. Some of the research done by Scherer (1987) echoed the conclusions by Bies et al. (1997) and Matsumoto and Hwang (2012) by stating that emotions have five different functions for man and his social environment. These functions include: 1) the assessment of the event which stimulates the emotion in terms of the relevance it might hold for the well-being of the individual experiencing the emotion, 2) the regulation of internal states necessary to prepare the individual for action, 3) the launch of explicit motives and action tendencies, 4) the expression as well as the communication of the response and intentions of the individual and 5) the monitoring and focussing on the changes in the circumstances of the individual (Scherer, 1987).

As demonstrated, emotions initiate a scheme of components. The components may include the following: subjective experiences, expressive behaviour, psychological reactions, action tendencies and cognition. Taken as a whole, the term emotion can in actual fact be seen as a metaphor for all the reactions listed which result in the subjective emotion experience (Matsumoto and Hwang, 2012). It should be noted that in discussing emotions there are two categories of emotions, the aesthetic and utilitarian emotions. Utilitarian emotions consist of the general or common emotions in one's everyday life such as anger, fear, joy, pride, disgust, sadness, shame and guilt (Scherer, 2005). These emotions are called utilitarian emotions as they generally aid human beings in adapting to events in their environment which may have certain consequences for the well-being of the individual.

The adaptive functions of utilitarian emotions assist human beings in preparing action tendencies, recovery and reorientation, motivational enhancement or the creation of social obligations (Scherer, 2005) necessary in everyday life. Utilitarian emotions are important for the survival of mankind and as result utilitarian emotions tend to be high in intensity. Furthermore, utilitarian emotions are generally considered as emergency reactions to situations to the individual experiencing the emotions. On the other hand, the second category of emotions

namely aesthetic emotions assist individuals in adapting to a specific event that may necessitate the appraisal of the relevance of certain goals and coping potential (Scherer, 2005). There are a variety of aesthetic emotions, i.e. being moved or awed, being full of wonder, admiration, bliss, ecstasy, fascination, harmony, rapture and solemnity (Scherer, 2005).

A study conducted by Scherer (2004) on the emotions individuals experience most frequently on a daily basis, stated that anger and joy outrank all other emotions listed above. This being said, some organisational researchers were of opinion that anger and pride may be emotion states experienced most often in the work setting, as these emotions motivate certain work behaviour which may be either in line with work demands or dissonant to work demands (Fitness, 2000; Weiss, Suckow & Cropanzano, 1999). However, these researchers focused primarily on events that may possibly cause anger and pride, not considering events which may result in other emotions being experienced in the workplace. Literature may not currently hold all the answers to what emotion events stimulate specific discrete emotions, it does nonetheless indicate that emotion is an important aspect of employees' work life as they are likely to have a profound impact on the quality of the employees' work experiences.

To conclude, it is vital to be aware of and study how emotions are experienced and expressed by people in their day to day life, especially in the work setting (Gibson, 2005). Emotions can be seen as adaptations to problems in the environment in which the individual functions on a regular basis (Frijda, 1986). Thus being aware of one's personal emotional predispositions as well as those of others may increase the likelihood that the emotions experienced are expressed in a way that might help both the individual and the organisation to perform most favourable at all times (Gibson, 2005). In order for this to become a reality, the process of emotion experiences must be considered as a whole and not as independent components. Thus the emotion event, emotion appraisal and discrete emotion should be studied as an inclusive process. Should this knowledge be obtained, it will facilitate an understanding of the emotions employees experience in the workplace.

The following research questions were formulated against this background:

- What are the emotion events experienced by employees in the workplace?
- How are emotion events appraised by employees in the workplace?

- What are the discrete emotions experienced by employees in the workplace?

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **Research Approach**

For the purpose of this study a qualitative method from a phenomenological and narrative approach was used. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used as data collection method in this study. According to Shank (2002) qualitative research can be defined as a form of systematic empirical investigation into meaning. By using this approach a more realistic and naturalistic approach can be followed in the research process. This approach to research enables researchers to study things within their natural setting and attempt to make sense of, or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings the participants bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research can be seen as a tool to see or study a phenomenon through the eyes of the participants, making it a technique to explore the personal nature of mankind and its behaviour (Salkind, 2009). The design that was used for the purpose of this study was the narrative design.

According to Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2005) the narrative design is based on the hypothesis that the life and world of the participants can be understood most effectively from the viewpoints and descriptions of the participants taking part in the study. This design has become gradually more popular as it provides the participants the opportunity to tell their life stories and experiences in their own words (Bruner, 1990). There are various advantages for researchers using this approach or design. One of the advantages of this approach to research, is that it provides a complete and detailed picture of the participant and his/her experiences that is the product and objective of the study.

This approach to research is ingrained in a constructionist perspective. According to Strydom et al. (2005) constructionists are of the belief that there are no truths in the world, except for the narrative reality which can only be socially and personally constructed by the participant who was actively and personally implicated. This being said, the goal of research is not merely to discover facts reported by the participants, it also includes gaining understanding of the milieu in which the participants construct their views, should they be factual or not (Lawler, 2002).



## **Research Strategy**

This study was conducted on professional workers within the mining industry, specifically engineers, accountants, production managers, human resource officers and geologists. The gold mining organisation upon which the study was conducted consists of two mines, one situated in Gauteng and the other in the North-West Province. The critical incident technique was used to study and determine the emotion events employees experience at work, how the participant appraises these events and what discrete emotions result from the entire process. In order to gain entrance into the mine, permission was gained from the board of directors by explaining the study and what advantages the study may pose for the mine during a meeting prior to starting the research. As mentioned, the study is qualitative of nature and participants handed in narratives in written form explaining the emotion event in their own words own, explaining how the events took place in real life. Once the data had been collected, it was analysed and interpreted.

## **Research method**

### **Research setting**

All data was collected from participants in a placid classroom setting. In order for the participants to feel at ease with the surroundings in which the data was collected, a relaxed and familiar venue was used. A private venue was provided by the mine where participants could render their narratives without any harmful disturbances. The training centres of the mines were then used as they met all the criteria mentioned above. All participants taking part in the study were provided with all the details regarding the research study, the process of data collection and what the objective of the study was. The aim of providing the participants with all the information regarding the objective of the research was to ensure that the participants felt at ease and relaxed during the completion of the narratives. Participants were given the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions relevant to the study. This was done to give participants clarity regarding all aspects of the research process, or any concerns he or she might have had.

### **Entrée and establishing researcher roles and sampling**

Prior to entering the mines' premises in both Gauteng and the North-West Province, and gaining access to the mining organisation's employees to start with the research, the terms and conditions

were negotiated with the board of directors. This was done by means of a formal presentation of the proposed research to the Board of Directors, explaining in detail the significance and necessity of the study. After being given the opportunity to consider whether the mines would agree to partake in the study, the mine's Board of Directors agreed and a formal agreement was signed providing the necessary permission to the research team to enter the premises of the mines and initiate the research process. Prior to starting the research process, the researcher explained that all results gained from the study would be kept anonymous and would not be used to discriminate against employees. This statement was carried out and all results are confidential. Animosity was kept as the researcher retrieved the narratives from the participants self once they have completed it in the training centre of the mine. The mine's Board of Directors was given the option to use the results should interventions be needed. The Board of Directors made the decision to use the results in its wellness programme.

To reach the objective of the study, an availability voluntary sample of 100 professional mining employees ( $n=100$ ) from Gauteng and the North-West Province took part in the research process. The research process required participants to write a narrative based on a series of questions on examining a critical incident he or she might have experienced in the workplace. Access to the participants was gained and the entire process was completely voluntary, thus participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the process at any time they wished to do so.

### **Data collection method and recording**

As mentioned, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used to reach the objective of this study. The founder of the CIT was Flanagan in 1954 (Irvine, Roberts, Tranter, Williams & Jones, 2008). The CIT enables one to accumulate direct observations of the behaviour of human beings through a set of procedures (Flanagan, 1954). This process was done in such a manner that it facilitated the prospective usefulness in solving common problems one may come to face on an everyday basis. According to Flanagan (1954), the CIT can be seen as a procedure researchers can use to gather explicit as well as vital information and facts with regards to the behaviour of subjects or participants in defined situations.

In making use of the CIT, participants have to identify specific emotion events employees might have experienced in his or her work environment. It is important to note that the emphasis in the

CIT is that of a specific event or incident (Usability Net, 2012). For one to determine the importance of each incident, one needs to focus on the rationalisation, implication and the meaning the participants may give to these incidents (Angelides, 2001). The Critical Incident Technique comprises of five steps which include the following: 1) determine the aim of the given study, 2) map out how the incidents will be collected from the participants, 3) collect the data, 4) analyse the data collected and 5) interpret and report the data collected and analysed (Irvine et al., 2008).

There are various advantages of using the CIT. The most important advantage is that this technique provides a dramatic demonstration of the impact of human behaviour. It also provides the human story of the participants and not merely the research findings one would come to expect (Marrelli, 1990). The conclusion can be drawn that the CIT provides insight into how the participants experience these incidents up close and personal. When using this technique, the influences the incidents might have had on the participants become more evident, as well as making the findings more intimate. This technique befits the purpose of the study very well as it provides personal information on the emotion experienced by the individual, as well as the entire process the participant had to go through.

During the past decades various studies have been done by Andersson and Nilsson (1964) questioning the validity and reliability of the CIT. They came to the conclusion that the CIT proved to have both face validity and inter-rater reliability. However, researchers continued to question the validity and reliability of the CIT, and a decade later Ronan and Latham (1974) too came to the conclusion that the CIT was indeed valid and reliable. In completing their study, Ronan and Latham (1974) found the technique relatively observable and objective permitting test-retest reliability. Research in this regard did not end in the 1990s. Recent research done regarding the reliability and validity of the CIT was conducted by Skiba (2000) and Tirri and Koro-Ljungberg (2002) and Ellinger & Bostrom (2002) as cited in Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson and Maglio (2005). Recent research done by the above-mentioned researchers proves to correlate with research done in the past. Over the last 50 years the CIT has remained valid and reliable and has indeed proved to be a valuable tool to use in the world of research (Butterfield et al., 2005).

The data collection was scheduled ahead of time and took place in one session where the professional mining employees completed a biographical questionnaire. Narratives were

completed by the participants as the method of data collection was the Critical Incident Technique Approach. While completing a hard copy of the narrative, each participant was asked to tell his or her story of the emotion event or critical incident as he/she experienced it. This was done by using open-ended questions guiding the participants to explain the emotion experience and taking him/her through the emotion process.

The questions in the narratives were derived from the Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ) which is based on Scherer's Component Process Model of Emotion. The questions in the narratives include the following:

- How would you describe this emotion experience in your own words?
- At the time of experiencing the emotion, did you think that the real or potential consequences of the event could have or could still be avoided or modified by appropriate human action?
- After you had a good idea of what the probable consequences of the event would be, did you think that you would be able to avoid the consequences or modify them to your advantage (through your own power or helped by others)?
- After you had a good idea of what the probable consequences of the event would be, did you think that you could live with, and adjust to, the consequences of the event that could not be avoided or modified?
- Please name the emotion that corresponds best with the emotion experience you reported above.

The data was collected by means of a survey the participants completed on their own in a hard copy format. The information will be stored securely and the identity of all the participants will be unspecified and confidential.

### **Data analyses**

The narratives completed by the participants were analysed by utilising content analyses (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Qualitative content analysis can be defined as the gathering and analysing of any written content (Struwig & Stead, 2001). Written content may include messages such as words, meaning, symbols and themes. During this study the data analysis process was initiated by the construction of a data classification system which resulted in emerging themes and

categories that could be identified more efficiently (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). The latter was achieved by creating categories and coding schemes from three themes. These included the data, previous related studies and theories. A list of the coding categories was generated from current models and theories, such as that of Scherer. The model and theory were slightly altered during the analysis of the data as new categories emerged in the process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

During the data analysis step in the research process, the data was cleansed from any unnecessary information. This was done to ensure that the meaning of all sub-units was understood correctly, uniting all the information gathered and ultimately form a complete and detailed picture of the emotion event. The responses to the critical incidents gathered from the completed narratives were classified in accordance to the emotion content of the emotion event. The content from the narratives was read carefully. Once that task was completed, the words and content of the descriptions were analysed and sorted and the identified words were placed into an Excel sheet. Coding of the data was initially done by two industrial psychologists to ensure quality control, that the true meaning of the incidents - as described by the participants - was upheld and that no misinterpretations took place in the process. Once the two industrial psychologists had completed his or her tasks, an independent third Industrial Psychologists (with a good record of past performance in qualitative methods) classified the categories identified as a reliability check on the category scheme.

For the purpose of this study an inter-coder reliability measure, suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), was utilised for the calculated agreement between the classifications made by the three Industrial Psychologists. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that the overlap between the coding and the categories identified by the coders as well as those identified by the independent industrial psychologist should be more than 70% for it to be regarded as reliable.

Once that process was completed, inferences were made and the reconstructions of meaning were derived from the data collected. Activities in this stage of the process included the exploration of the properties and dimensions of categories, identifying relationships between categories, uncovering patterns and testing categories against the complete range of the data collected (Bradley, 1993). As suggested by Paton (2002), the analytical procedures and processes were monitored and reported in as much detail and as truthful as possible to ensure that the study can be replicated by researchers in future. The results were presented to the board of directors of

the mine in which the study took place. A report was provided to supply the reader with a sufficient description of the research. This was done to ensure that the reader understands the basis of the research and to provide the reader with sufficient interpretation to aid him or her in understanding the findings of the research.

### **Ethical considerations**

To ensure that the study is successful, various measures were followed. Some of these measures included the careful considerations of fairness and ensuring that ethical conduct was followed at all times as suggested by Foxcroft and Roodt (2009). Ethical issues kept in mind were issues such as voluntary participation by the mining professionals, informed consent, withholding from doing harm during the process and keeping all information confidential and private. The results and any relevant information were provided to the wellness programmes of the mine. However, this was done in such a manner that participants' privacy was protected at all times.

Ethical guidelines, as suggested by Foxcroft and Roodt (2009), that were adhered to at all times during the research process included the following:

- All participants involved in the research process were volunteers.
- Adequate information regarding the study was provided to the participants. This was done to ensure that the participants understood the risks and benefits of taking part in the study.
- None of the volunteers was compensated in any way for taking part in the study.
- Participants were given the option to withdraw from the research process at any time if he/she wished to do so.
- The researcher took action at all times to ensure the freedom, opinions, respect and non-discrimination of the participants.
- Written consent was obtained from the participants stating that he or she took part in the process voluntary and he/she understood the risks and benefits of taking part in the study.

## FINDINGS

### Participants

The study sample consisted of white, black, coloured and Indian South African professional mine employees from various designations ( $n=100$ ). The participants were from either Gauteng or the North-West Province and participated on a voluntary basis. Table 1 illustrates some of the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

*Characteristics of the participants taking part in the study ( $n=100$ )*

Items	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	23-33	16	16
	34-44	28	28
	45-55	48	48
	56-66	8	8
Gender	Male	84	84
	Female	16	16
Region	Gauteng	55	55
	North-West Province	45	45
Ethnicity	Black	12	12
	Coloured	14	14
	Indian	9	9
	White	65	65
Years of service	Less than a year	4	4
	1-10 years	20	20
	11-20 years	38	38
	21-30 years	30	30
	31-40 years	8	8
Designation	Engineering	20	20
	Specialist	15	15
	Finances	7	7
	Production	39	39
	Human Resources	19	19

The sample consisted of an availability voluntary sample of professional mine employees from various designations ( $n=100$ ) with the majority situated in Gauteng (55%). In terms of age, the majority of the participants (48%) were between the ages of 45-55 years. In terms of gender, the males outnumbered the female participants encompassing 84% of the sample. With regards to ethnicity, 65% of the participants were white. The majority of participants had been working for the same employer for 11-20 years (38%). Participants were from various designations, amongst

others engineering, specialist positions, finance, production and human resources. The majority of the participants occupied a position in production (39%).

Table 2 illustrates the categories and frequencies of negative emotion events participants experienced most often in the workplace.

Table 2

*Categories of Negative Emotion Events and Positive Emotion Events Experienced (n= 100)*

<b>Categories of Negative Emotion Events</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Categories of Positive Emotion Events</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Victimisation and Bullying	(20)	20	Receiving Recognition on performance	(11)	11
Health and Safety Issues	(10)	10	Goal Achievement	(3)	3
Lack of Recognition on Performance	(9)	9			
Workplace Conflict	(7)	7			
Involvement in Disciplinary action	(7)	7			
Ineffective Teamwork	(5)	5			
Personal Incidents	(5)	5			
Human Resource Strategies	(5)	5			
Behaviour of Work Colleagues	(4)	4			
Organisational Change	(4)	4			
Unsuspected Problems	(3)	3			
High Workload	(2)	2			
Workplace Policy	(2)	2			
Lack of Colleague Support	(1)	1			
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14%</b>

\* Note: 2 (2%) out of 100 emotion events reported in the workplace were unclassifiable.

In Table 2 84% of the 100 participants taking part in the study experienced negative emotion events and a mere 14% of the participants experienced positive emotion events that took place in the working environment. Two (2) out of the 100 emotion events were unclassifiable. Each participant reported one emotion event. With regards to the negative emotion events, seventeen categories of events experienced by participants emerged (see Tables 2 and 3). In terms of the positive emotion events, four categories were extracted (see Tables 2 and 4). This indicated that the negative emotion events outnumber the positive emotion events experienced by participants at work. Overlap of results after the data analysis were 85%, indicating that the co-raters found an 85% overlap once the categories were coded by the two industrial psychologists analysing the data, and the third independent industrial psychologist coding the data for quality control.



## Categories of Negative Emotion Events Experienced

The three highest categories of negative emotion events included “*Victimisation and Bullying*”, “*Health and Safety Issues*” and “*Lack of Recognition on Performance*”. Of the top three most experienced negative emotion events at the workplace “*Victimisation and Bullying*” scored the highest with 20 emotion events reported. Victimisation and bullying describe situations where employees are deliberately humiliated, belittled and verbally abused by higher ranking employees in the presence of fellow colleagues. The second highest reported emotion event reported by participant was “*Health and Safety Issues*”, with 10 emotion events experienced. This category can be described as fatal accidents in the workplace resulting to death of fellow colleagues and serious injuries of oneself or a team member working in close proximity with each other. The incidents resulting in the occurrence of fatalities are mostly due to health and safety procedures and policies not being followed as prescribed. However, some of the incidents are merely freak accidents with no particular explanation.

“*Lack of Recognition on Performance*” (9) includes not receiving promotions, bonuses and recognition for good performance. It may typically include a situation where individuals having the most experience and good performance appraisals apply for promotion and do not receive it. This may continue for years. “*Lack of Bonus on Performance*” involves employees who do not receive a much wanted financial incentive as recognition for good performance. All of these result in employees not feeling appreciated for effort exerted to perform to the maximum.

“*Workplace Conflict*” and “*Involvement in Disciplinary Action*” scored the third highest of the negative emotion events reported, with a score of 7 each. Workplace conflict can be best described as arguments and aggressive behaviour occurring between colleagues in the workplace. Threats are often exchanged and the incidents are in most cases mere seconds away from becoming physical before onlookers engage and end the arguments. The second category scoring 7, “*Involvement in Disciplinary Action*”, typically describes situations in which employees attend disciplinary hearings because rules as set in the policies and procedures were broken or employees attend these hearings to testify against colleagues.

*“Ineffective Teamwork”* (5) occurs when team members do not work together or do not do his or her part and as a result the team performs poorly and members start blaming one another. *“Personal Incidents”* (5) refers to incidents of a personal nature. These incidents may be personal, but it can have a profound impact on the performance and state of mind of the individual at work. *“Human Resource Management Strategies”* (5) consists of demotion and retrenchments. Demotion as a human resource management strategy describes a situation where employees have been working in a position for many years and received certain advantages. However, with changes made in the organisation, the position becomes void and employees have to take a lower ranking job with fewer advantages. Alternatively, retrenchments happen when employees are discharged by an organisation when it experiences financial difficulties.

*“Behaviour of Work Colleagues”* (4) is behaviours towards colleagues or management which may have a negative effect on the relationships between parties. *“Organisational Change”* (4) may include any changes made by management to better the organisation, but it is seen as negative by employees and they react in resistance. *“Unsuspected Problems”* (3) include any negative, unsuspected and uncontrollable crisis employees have to deal with. *“High Workload”* (2) involves feelings of overload regarding the amount of work in relation to the time given to complete it. *“Workplace Policy”* involves feelings of resentment and anger towards those who feel workplace policies do not apply to them and no actions are taken against those individuals. *“Lack of Colleague Support”* (1) involves situations where one may need the support of a colleague and that support is not provided. Examples of some of the reported negative emotion events are reported in Table 3. Five examples are reported from the top five highest negative emotion events experienced in the workplace, as reported in Table 2.

Table 3

*Examples of Negative Emotion Events Experienced***Victimisation and Bullying (n=20):**

I was humiliated in front of the whole office by my superior. I wonder how the staff under me feels after witnessing the whole event.

**Health and Safety Issues (n=10):**

Losing one of my staff members in a fire. Guilt thought it could be avoided.

**Lack of Recognition on Performance (9):**

Being eligible for promotion and being seen over for several months because of employment equity targets. Some of the people appointed are much more junior than I am, with a lot less experience. I lie of this having to face my colleagues and answering with embarrassment that I had been seen over. Demotivated and in light of that see a dim future for me in the company.

**Workplace Conflict (n=7):**

Argument between myself and my manager over an artisan that I was asked to employ even though I found the artisan incompetent. I became extremely angry.

**Involvement in Disciplinary action (n=7):**

I was told to go and see the manager, entering his office a formal complaint form was in front of him with the personal officer present. I was totally shocked and confused and the outcome made me furious. I was given a severe penalty and taken out of the section.

**Personal Incidents (5):**

Tested positive for cancer. Shock at the positive result (even if I knew it could be positive), and the implications for me and my family on the short- and longer term.

Next, categories of positive emotion events in a mining environment will be presented:

**Categories of Positive Emotion Events Experienced**

The highest positive emotion events reported were “*Receiving Recognition on Performance*” with 11 participants reporting this category of events. The latter consists of promotions, receiving a bonus and general recognition. *Promotion* involves feelings of excitement on accepting the new challenges and new opportunities the workplace has to offer. *Receiving a*

*bonus* refers to the monetary incentives one receives for all the effort one takes in doing one's daily job. The last positive emotion event reported was *receiving verbal recognition*; it involves situations where an employee receives words of appreciation by employers or managers for a job well done.

The second highest reported positive emotion events were "*Goal Achievement*" with three emotion events reported in the workplace. This category refers to those situations when a person has set goals he or she wishes to achieve, and they are realised. This accomplishment leads to feelings of pride and joy.

Examples of the reported positive emotion events are reported in Table 4. Four examples are reported, one from each categories of the positive emotion events experienced in the workplace, as reported in Table 2.

Table 4

*Examples of Positive Emotion Events Experienced*

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**Receiving Recognition on Performance (11):**

When the Engineering Manager phoned me to confirm that my promotion was finalised. This was a big emotional high. Our prayers were answered.

We as a team were thanked for a job done excellently by our Vice President of the mine. Very unexpected surprise and very pleasing to the team that was involved.

**Goal Achievement (n=3):**

I passed my A+ PC technologies course with a 71% pass mark. It gives me much more confidence in the current position that I occupy. You did it!

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Next, examples of negative emotion events within each category will be provided with the general associated appraisal of these events and the general associated discrete emotions reported will be presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Examples of Negative Emotion Events and the general associated Appraisal and resulting general associated Negative Discrete Emotion experienced*

Negative Emotion Event	General Associated Appraisal	General Associated Discrete Emotion
<b>Victimisation and Bullying</b>		
<p>1. A discussion was held in a meeting about an incident that happened at my place of work. I am the responsible person and one of my charges was asked to present the incident to an audience of my colleagues. I believe this was done in order to highlight and humiliate all involved with the incident. Humiliated and worthless.</p>	<p>The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.</p> <p>Some of the participants did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.</p>	<p>Rage Disgust Despair Irritation Humiliation</p>
<p>2. I was the subject of an extremely vicious, venomous and hate-filled episode of Verbal abuse by two “colleagues” at work during the FIRST WEEK of my Employment. The incident left a bad impression on me.</p>	<p>Others did however feel that the consequences could definitely be avoided or modified.</p>	<p>Anger Surprise Sadness</p>
<p>3. The experiences where your manager and some other colleagues bully you by excluding you from processes that should be your responsibility. This made me quite demotivated in my output and also very negative.</p>	<p>Participants felt that he or she could not live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.</p>	
<p>4. Person in my office has a bad attitude and seems to pick on everyone and everyone makes excuses for him, the other day I moved out of his way in the hall and he actually said I was a coward when I only respect him as an elder person to move out of his way. I also heard bad comments from him about me from other people when I arrived newly to that office.</p>		

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5. Higher ranking employee that treats his lower ranking subordinates without the required respect. Has the attitude that he is better than you. When he is challenged and loses his verbal attack he uses his status to be victorious

### Health and Safety Issues

- |  |  |                                       |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Losing one of my staff members in a fire. Guilt thought it could be avoided.  | The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.     | Sadness<br>Despair<br>Anxiety<br>Rage |
| 2. One of our Security officials got shot and as a result we also got shot at and we had to devise some strategies to retrieve the body. Scared and afraid of further human loss.  | They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.  | Fear<br>Irritation<br>Guilt           |
| 3. Mining related incident that caused persons to die, due to workers ignoring safety rules and instructions.  | Participants felt that he or she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified. |                                       |
| 4. I had an underground accident where I lost 95% of the use of my ankle. Not nice, uncomfortable and a Learning curve.  |  |                                       |
| 5. We experienced two fatalities this year. This brings stress to the working place. Investigations and disciplinary hearings are consequences. Dealing with death is a negative emotion, considering that the incident could have been avoided. |  |                                       |

### Lack of Receiving Recognition on Performance

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Being eligible for promotion and being seen over for several months because of employment equity targets. Some of the people appointed are much more junior than I am, with a lot less experience. I lieu of this having to face my colleagues and | The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action. | Irritation<br>Disgust<br>De-motivated<br>Sadness |
|---|--|--|
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answering with embarrassment that I had been seen over. Demotivated and in light of that see a dim future for me in the company.

They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.

2. I was invited for an interview for the position of PPS in the smelt house. At that stage I was the most experience person for that job because I relieve them for four years. Somebody with no Met experience was appointed in the job. Participants felt that he or she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.
3. No recognition for output – no salary adjustment (several, even the latest skills retaining adjustment July '08). Downgrading and useless.
4. My work not appreciated.
5. Applied for the post that was advertise, but I was just been moved literally I feel that I have been treated very badly. it have been a year now but if I asked about promotion I have been told that I agreed with the manager about literal movement really don't understand why I should be treated like this in the company that I have save loyalty for the past 14 years. In the whole mine I don't think that there is someone that has been treated like this. It hurt worse because people that are doing the same job with me I earning the amount for the job that they do but on my side is not like that. Very badly treated and less consideration.

### Workplace Conflict

1. At Quarter end (September 2006) responsibility codes changed. A senior employee did not do his part, and when I confronted him, he threatened to slap me. Remember we are working toward 'D' Dates and 'D' Times. The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action. Rage  
Disgust  
Anger
  2. Argument between myself and my manager over an artisan that I was asked to employ even though I found the artisan incompetent. I became extremely angry. They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.
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|---|---|
| <p>3. I had a fight with my HOD Girlfriend that is also working in the same place (different) department. I discussed the matter with my manager, in actual fact, the situation is getting worse daily, the point that both parties do not even greet anymore. It has been noted that my HOD is putting more pressure on me. My Department and the entire situation have got to a point that it affects the department.</p> | <p>Participants felt that he or she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.</p> |
| <p>4. An extremely emotional argument (shouting match) with a subordinate of a different race. If I didn't walk away it would have turned into a physical assault. Extremely unpleasant and violent.</p>  |   |
| <p>5. Had an altercation with a mine overseer because I did not want to pay his section roll centaurs which were more than two months old – our standard being that the survey department would pay only as far back as two months for rolls which had not being picked up by the Geology department.</p>   |   |

### **Involvement in Disciplinary Action**

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|---|---|--|
| <p>1. I was told to go and see the manager, entering his office a formal complaint form was in front of him with the personal officer present. I was totally shocked and confused and the outcome made me furious. I was given a severe penalty and taken out of the section.</p> | <p>The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.</p>   | <p>Rage<br/>Irritation<br/>Sadness<br/>Despair</p> |
| <p>2. An EE meeting in attempt to resolve a dispute. Not a very constructive meeting – participants were very arrogant, negative and uncooperative. Ended in me being hit with a book, causing me to lose my temper as well.</p>  | <p>Some participants did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent. Others however feel that the consequences could definitely be avoided or modified.</p>  | <p>Disgust<br/>Surprise</p>                        |
| <p>3. A poor alarm management system led to me not seeing an alarm that turned out to be positive, this caused the company a financial loss and I was given a final warning. After having a clean record with 20 years of service. Extremely upsetting.</p>                       | <p>Some participants felt that he or she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified. Other participants felt that he or she could definitely live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.</p> |  |
| <p>4. Represented some one that was nearly dismissed.</p>   |   |  |
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5. I had to testify against of one of my colleagues.

### Ineffective Teamwork

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|---|--|--|
| 1. I asked some of my people to sort out the storage room after they are done with their daily jobs. They gave me a very negative attitude and I ended up doing it myself. I felt disappointed in my people, and angry at them seeing that I never ask them to do anything except their work. I felt they were being ungrateful. It also made me think whether I am not strict enough with them.  | The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action. | Irritation<br>Disgust<br>Sadness<br>Rage |
| 2. A sub-ordinate only returned to work one and a half hour after his lunch time. Disappointed in his actions.  | They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.  | Anxiety<br>Surprise<br>Disappointment    |
| 3. When people aren't doing what they supposed to do and when my integrity is challenged without any substantial reasoning. The results are high levels of stress affecting my diet, health and mental stability. Emotions that increases your level of stress and compromise your confidence.  | Participants felt that he or she could not live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.  |  |
| 4. The day after a meeting was concluded, a situation arose contradicting the discussion that had taken place. The event really set back progress on the project and was left to me to report to management. The fact that when asked during the initial meeting whether all possible situations had been resolved, and this one was not considered to be a problem really made me angry when the news was delivered. Frustration and disappointment. |  |  |
| 5. I'm normally a very calm person, but one of my sub-ordinates kept turning up late for work, taking time off work frequently, called in sick but then showed up at work the next day with new highlights, hair done etc. One day I was out of the office for the morning and when I come back the afternoon she just left the office again. Not aware that I've just stopped outside. Back in   |  |  |
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the office I asked one of the other employees where she is going and they then informed me that she were out of office for most of the morning, but they don't know where she has been to now. She came back about 30 min later. I just had enough and asked where she has been since I've been informed that she were out of office for almost 3 hours while I was not there in the morning and now she were out for another 30min? She mumbled an excuse that she had to go home quickly and grab some work and disappeared. The next moment her sister stormed into my office and start screaming on my on how unfair I was to check on them. That they are grown-up and nobody needed to police them. Then she stormed out and accused everyone in the department of 'splitting' on them, trying to find out who told me that they've been out of the office the morning. She even went as far as to scream at one of the guys in our department 4 Paterson grades above her. She come back, told me that I'm a bitch and that she and her sister will put in a day's leave if that would make me happy. Everyone in my department came to ask why she's raving like a mad person and why she accuses them of being sick people checking up on them. I had to explain the situation to them and I had to protect the identity of the person who told me of her absence as well. The next day she came to apologize and we could sit down and talked about the situation and her behavior. It still caused a lot of tension in the overall office situation, but I felt slightly better. The previous day I were filled with a mixture of emotions and tried not to talk too much as I knew I might really turn into the bitch I've been made out to be. I felt angry, irritated, powerless, annoyed, incapable, aggravated and sad all in one.

### Personal Incidents

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|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1. My wife phoned me at work to inform me of the test result that came back that she had cancer.  | The majority of the participants felt as though the events could possibility have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action. | Fear<br>Anxiety<br>Sadness |
| 2. Tested positive for cancer. Shock at the positive result (even if I knew it could be positive), and the implications for me and my family on the short- and longer term. | Some participants did however feel that the consequences could not be avoided or modified. Other participants did however feel that the |                            |
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|--|---|
| 3. A colleague passed away in a motorcycle accident. It was very sad to lose a colleague with such high potential.   | consequences could definitely be avoided or modified.   |
| 4. My husband was in a car accident where a pedestrian was killed. Soon after the incident my husband tried to commit suicide. (5 days after accident). In the same time my Manger was not available and I had more tasks at work to perform than usual. I started withdrawing myself from my husband, children, family and work. I am depressed, have mood swings and doubting my capabilities. | Participants felt that he or she could not live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified. |
| 5. Broken into my house, my wife moved to a new career away from my home and I had a serious audit that seniors of the company attended while knowing that we are not ready for it, which placed me under immense stress. First it was unbearable; now in retrospect I have learned a lot about myself.  |   |

### Human Resource Management Strategies

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|---|--|--|
| 1. My position at work was declared redundant and I had to go back to my old job. About 8 months later they appoint a new person in that position who knows nothing about the job and it were expected from me to train the person.   | The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.   | Rage<br>Irritation<br>Anxiety<br>Worthlessness   |
| 2. I was informed about a week ago that the project I was working on may be closed in two months' time. This meant that I will not be working under the same manager and that I will have to be relocated to another division. I love what I am doing at the moment and my manager is a very good leader. Angry, disgusted, irritated, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party involved could not appreciate the importance of the project and its goals. | They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.<br><br>Participants felt that he/she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified. | Sadness<br>Angry<br>Hurt<br>Disgusted<br>Content |
| 3. Was demoted in 2005 due to the organization being in a dire financial difficulty. Was devastated and believed I was seen to  |  |  |
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be no good to the company. I felt to be in an emotional state of no return so much so that I experienced anxiety attacks at night. Received anti-depressants to curb my emotional state!

4. Being retrenched at the age of 58. Worthless – no longer respected by all.
5. In 2000 I was told I was going to be retrenched by my Superior, to add further insult to injury it was told to me in a meeting where others overheard what He had been said. An additional issue was that they had arranged a transfer (at that department insistence) for me one month before I was told. I was angry, hurt and disgusted that a company that I had work for, for 15 years would treat me like that with no apparent reason. I lost all respect for the person/s that had so blatantly manipulated a situation to ensure their jobs were safe and sacrificed me.

#### **Behaviour of Work Colleagues**

1. Employee claiming overtime not paid: does not know which date worked overtime. Employee not willing to discuss the dates and action taken with his supervisor. To make matters worse, accusing T&A Dept. with unsubstantially error committed! Irritably amazed that somebody can be that anxious and ignore all advises, and insist on to get what he does not know about! Personality: If I don't have control over situation and can do nothing to change it; I make peace with it!
2. Certain issues were discussed with my colleague instead of with me, as I am responsible for it. It let me feel if they do not trust my judgment and ignored me. In the end, the information given by my colleague was incorrect and I had to rectify it.
3. My junior co-worker could not report to the bosses of the incident occurred during his shift at night. Next morning I had to give a report about that incident, which I could not have info about, I had to phone this guy at home for more info. Negatively the issue became mine and I had to forcefully charge this person.

The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.

Rage  
Disgust  
Content

Some participants did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent. Other participants did however feel that the consequences could definitely be avoided or modified to some extent.

Some participants felt that he or she could not live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified. Other participants felt that he or she could definitely live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.

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Later I was the quality party and that person came out clean. The bosses were sorry about the mishap because the guy was a Union rep. I was very bitter for two days.

4. Found a work colleague discussing confidential information over the phone with someone else. Made me very distrusting of others' intentions.

### Organisational Change

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|---|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deploying new technology to business units and getting the resistance to change from all levels of people. An experience forced onto me by top management.</li> </ol>   | <p>The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.</p>     | <p>Irritation<br/>Fear<br/>Disgust</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The roll out of our new software does not function properly and I sent a request for someone to come to site to sort it out. They still have not sent someone. I was extremely cross and irritated.</li> </ol>  | <p>They did however feel that the consequences could not be avoided or modified.</p>  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The time I was told we were going to be incorporated with a mine, it made feel as if I was going to be dropped in the middle of strangers who will act strangely towards me.</li> </ol>   | <p>Participants felt that he or she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.</p> |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Mr. X is working in an operation necessitating 24 hours operation and he is unwilling to train his personnel on new skills he has acquired/obtained. Every time problems arise after he has knocked off, he keeps on calling my section to assist his department. Mr. X does not want to share his opinions as to why he does not train his personnel on the new developments.</li> </ol> |   |  |

### Unsuspected Problems

- |  |   |                               |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A sample of uranium went missing on the way to Canada. Extreme concern over individual's health and safety.</li> </ol> | <p>The majority of the participants felt as though the events could possibly have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.</p> | <p>Irritation<br/>Anxiety</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Major failure of Main feed Conveyor at in one of the Plants.</li> </ol>  | <p>They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.</p>  |                               |
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Participants felt that he or she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.

### Remuneration issues

1. Expectation created that I would receive a retention bonus. Was excluded from the list which has caused me to question how important my contribution at work relates to what my financial worth to the company is. It has made me negative.
2. My pay was late again. For the umpteenth time this year. It was very stress-full. It means that all my automatic bank payments would be returned and cost a lot to reverse. It felt as if I had no control over events that influenced my life as a whole. I felt extremely frustrated.

The majority of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.

Anxiety  
Disgust Despair

They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.

Participants felt that he or she could not live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified

### High Workload

1. I gave a presentation to staff on motivational issued, addressing work ethics, timekeeping, team work etc. In doing so, I hoped to create a new team spirit, overcome lacking discipline and inspire everybody to deliver honest and accurate work. I had a feeling that communication was lacking somewhat and it was therefore important to complete this presentation successfully. On the day of the presentation, I was nearly interrupted due to a busy work schedule, however managed to force down the event by setting aside the time for it. The event went off positively and aspects thereof are addressed during weekly follow-up meetings. I am of the opinion that I achieved success with this intervention. Irritated when it appeared as if the session could be derailed due to work load.
2. I was under quite a lot of pressure due to my studies, changes in work environment etc., was exhausted and emotional as I felt as though I would not be able to perform I wanted. I displayed some emotion as work – totally out of character. For a time I was quite down, but as I evaluated my own emotions and the reasons thereof I was able to regain the objectivity to separate fact from

The majority of the participants felt as though the events could not have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.

Irritation  
Fear  
Anxiety

They did however feel that the consequences could definitely be avoided or modified.

Participants felt that he or she could definitely live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.

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fiction. I feel great now as I gain feel in control of emotions.  
Unpleasant, but necessary to regain my focus.

### Workplace Policy

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|--|--|
| <p>1. I was very upset about the policy and procedure, the way it is understood, guide lines of qualifications needed for a particular circumstance does not mean that if you have a higher qualification, then it is not recognized. Delays in paying reimbursements for studying and traveling it causes lot of pressure from bank loans, and paying fines due to the money not paid in time; it's like caring the company's problems. It is very painful to undergo an emotional stress; you become demoralized and demotivated an anguish that haunts you every day and night, unhealthy relationship at work and at home.</p> | <p>The majority of the participants felt as though the events could possibly have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.</p> <p>Irritation<br/>Despair</p>  |
| <p>2. Poorly handled DME enquiry that has continued over 5 days. Ignorance and arrogance of presiding official is unbelievable, combined with a general lack of respect and sometimes open contempt for all levels of management. Resignation to the fact that it is no longer our country and that they do not care how badly it is run and really do not care about the consequences, long term of their actions, or are not capable of caring.</p>  | <p>They did however feel that the consequences could not be avoided or modified.</p> <p>Participants felt that he or she could possibly live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.</p> |

### Lack of Colleague Support

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|---|---|
| <p>1. When relating message to the next person and the person does not pay attention and instead interprets your message to suit him/her. That triggers my emotions and resulted in confrontation. Very tense and at the same time frustrating and hurtful.</p> | <p>The majority of the participants felt as though the events could not have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.</p> <p>Rage<br/>Surprise<br/>Frustrated</p>  |
|   | <p>They did however feel that the consequences could only be avoided or modified to some extent.</p> <p>Participants felt that he or she could not live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.</p> |
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According to Table 5, Participants reported experiencing the following general associated negative emotions as result of *“Victimisation and Bullying”*: rage, disgust, despair, irritation, humiliation, anger, surprise and sadness. With regards to the general associated appraisal of the emotion event, one half of the participants felt as though the events could definitely have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action and that the consequences could have been avoided or modified to some extent. The other half felt that the consequences could definitely have been avoided or modified. Participants further reported that they would not be able to live and adjust to the consequences of the events if could it not be avoided or modified.

Participants reported emotion events with regards to *“Health and Safety Issues”*. Emotions experienced in this category include sadness, despair, anxiety, rage, fear, irritation and guilt. A large percentage of participants reported feeling the event experienced could have definitely been avoided or modified by human action, but felt that the consequences of this event could only be avoided to some extent. Participants did, however, feel that they would be able to live with the consequences of this event.

As mentioned *“Lack of Recognition on Performance”* consists of a person not receiving recognition in the form of lack of promotion. This emotion event elicited the following emotions from the participants: irritation, disgust and de-motivation. One group of participants reported feeling as if the events could have been avoided or modified by human actions, the other reported that the event could most definitely have been modified or avoided. With regards to the appraisal of the consequences of the events, one group of participants reported that it could have been modified; the other group reported it could merely have been modified or avoided to some extent. All the participants reported the ability to live with the consequences of the events. In the general category of *Lack of receiving recognition* the single most reported emotion was sadness. Participants reported that the event could have been adapted by human action, but the consequences could only have been avoided or modified to some extent. Furthermore participants felt as though the possibility to live with the consequences was indeed a possibility.

*“Workplace Conflict”* was associated with emotions of rage, disgust and anger. Participants reported that it would have been possible to modify the events with the necessary human action,



though the consequences could only have been avoided or modified to some extent. With regards to being able to live with the consequences could they not be changed, participants felt it was very possible. With regards to "*Involvement in Disciplinary Action*," the following emotions were identified: rage, irritation, sadness, despair, disgust and surprise. Participants reported that the event could have definitely been avoided or modified. Some participants reported that the consequences of events could have been modified; others felt it could only have been modified or avoided to some extent. This category proved controversial as some participants reported being able to live with the consequences of the events if needed, others felt it was possible, but only to a certain extent.

The category of "*Ineffective Teamwork*" gave rise to emotions such as irritation, disgust, sadness, rage, anxiety, surprise and disappointment. The majority of participants felt that these events could have easily been modified or avoided with the correct actions. Participants felt that the consequences of these events could merely have been modified to some extent. Should the latter prove to be impossible, the participants reported not being able to live with the outcome.

With regards to "*Personal Incidents*" emotions reported were fear, anxiety and sadness. The majority of participants reported that the event could possibly have been avoided. Some of the participants felt the consequences could have been modified, whereas the second group felt the direct opposite. However, all the participants reported the ability to live with and cope with the consequences. Regarding "*Human Resource Management Strategies*," demotion, emotions identified included the following: rage, irritation and anxiety. It was reported that participants felt the event could have been avoided, but living with the consequences was definitely possible. However, participants also reported that the consequences could have been avoided completely. With regards to the retrenchment aspect of human resources management strategies, the following emotions were identified: anxiety, worthlessness, sadness, anger, hurt, disgust and content. Participants indicated that the possibility that the events and consequences of those events could have been avoided or adapted was very likely. The participants also reported that it was very likely to live with and adjust to the consequences should change not be possible.

The category of "*Behaviour of Work Colleagues*" included emotions such as rage, disgust and content. Participants reported feeling that the reported negative emotion events could have been adapted by human actions. Some reported the consequences could definitely have been avoided or adapted, and others felt it could simply have been modified to some extent. Another contradiction was that one group of the participants reported being able to live with the consequences of the events, yet the other group felt this to be impossible.

In the category of "*Organisational Change*" emotions identified were irritation, fear and disgust. The participants reported human action could definitely have modified and avoided the event, but the consequences of the events could not be adapted or avoided. Participants did, however, feel as though the possibility of living with the consequences of the events was very possible.

In the category of "*Unsuspected Problems*" emotions such as irritation and anxiety were reported. The majority of participants felt the events could have been avoided or adapted by human action, but did report feeling as though living with the consequences was only possible to some degree. Participants reported that living with the consequences of the events was possible could it not have been avoided by any action. With regards to "*Remuneration Issues*" emotions reported included anxiety, disgust and fear. It was reported that the event could have been adapted or avoided, but participants felt that the consequence could only possibly have been adapted. The participants reported that living with the consequences would not be possible at all with regards to this category of events.

"*High Workload*" was associated with feelings of irritation, fear and anxiety. The participants reported feeling as though the events could not have been modified or avoided, but the consequences in contrast could have been adapted or avoided. Living with the consequences was reported as very likely. In the category of "*Workplace Policies*", emotions such as irritation and despair were reported. The participants reported that the events could very well have been avoided, but the consequences not. It was also reported that living with the consequences of these events was indeed possible should no human actions modify the events in any way. In reporting about "*Lack of Colleague Support*", emotions such as rage, surprise and frustrations surfaced. The participants reported the impossibility of avoiding or adapting to the event in any

manner; they also felt that the consequences could have been avoided or modified by human actions to some extent. With regards to being able to live with the consequences of the events, the participants reported that as not possible.

Examples of positive emotion events will be provided with the general associated appraisal of these events and the resulting general positive associated discrete emotions reported will be illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6

*Examples of Positive Emotion Events and the general associated Appraisal and resulting general associated Positive Discrete Emotion experienced*

<b>Positive Emotion Event</b>	<b>General Associated Appraisal</b>	<b>General Associated Discrete Emotion</b>
<b>Receiving Recognition on Performance</b>		
1. When I found out that I was going to be promoted. Intense excitement, but on the other hand terribly nervous.	The majority of the participants felt as though the events could not have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.	Joy Pleasure Pride
2. Receiving a bonus.	They did however feel that the consequences could not be avoided or modified to some extent.	Pleasure Excited
3. We as a team were thanked for a job done excellently by our mine's Vice President. Very unexpected surprise and very pleasing to the team that was involved.	Participants felt that he or she could definitely live with and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.	Surprise
4. During my mid-year exam I have been promoted, moved to a new house and Business Unit. Excited and anxious to start my new challenge.		
5. Got appointed as environmental coordinator. It was very nice because I have worked very hard to achieve the promotion. I am very proud on my achievement.		
<b>Goal Achievement</b>		
1. I passed my A+ PC technologies course with a 71% pass mark. It gives me much more confidence in the current position that I occupy. You did it!	The majority of the participants felt as though the events could possibly have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action.	Joy Pride Anxiety
2. I recommended to senior management to upgrade some equipment after I had done a lot of homework and the project was accepted and funded when another department found out and disagreed with my findings although they were aware of	They did however feel that the consequences could definitely be avoided or modified.  Participants felt that he or she could definitely live with	

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my proposed project. I was accused of anti-company actions but when the dust settled my findings were found out to be the correct ones. I had two opposite emotional experiences of **satisfaction** then **Dismay** and finally **satisfaction** when my project was successfully completed. Final outcome was pleasant but the negative side could have been avoided if I had been taken seriously by H/O personnel.

and adjust to the consequences of the event could it not be avoided or modified.

3. I received a notification that I had to attend my graduation ceremony for the Management Mastery Program course that I completed through the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business. This naturally caused me to have an intense emotional experience as the negative career consequences for not attaining the qualification were very high due to the high cost of the course. The recognition potential that one gains by excelling in the course was also a very positive motivator throughout the course. The course has been ongoing for about 1 and a half years and so I was also very relieved that all the time and effort that I had devoted to the course was not in vain.
-

According to Table 6, participants reported “*Receiving Recognition on Performance*” as a positive emotion event experienced at work. This category of emotion events encompasses any kind of recognition or reward for performance and may include promotions, receiving a bonus and verbal recognition for a job well done. *Promotions* as an aspect of this category can be identified with emotions including the following: joy, pleasure, pride, pleasure and excitement as reported by participants. The majority of participants indicated that these events could have been avoided or modified (the power was not in the hands of the participants), though the consequences could only have been adapted or avoided to some extent. One group of participants reported that living with the consequences and being able to adjust was very possible; others differed by indicating that living with the consequences was merely possible to some extent.

With regards to *receiving a bonus* participants reported emotions of pleasure, joy, surprise and pride. The majority of participants indicated that the events could not have been avoided, although some felt the consequences could not have been adapted or avoided, whereas others felt the consequences could very well have been avoided or modified. In general the participants reported that the possibility of living with the consequences of the event was very likely. With regards to *receiving verbal recognition*, emotions such as surprise and joy were reported. The participants indicated that the events could not have been avoided or modified, nor could its consequences. Participants also reported the possibility of living with the consequences was most probable.

In the category of “*Goal achievement*,” participants reported feelings of joy, pride and anxiety. They indicated that the events could very well have been modified with human actions. Participants indicated that the consequences could have been adapted or modified, although it was reported that participants could definitely live with the consequences.

The findings of the critical incidents will be discussed next. The discussion will be concluded with the limitations of the study and general conclusion and recommendations for future research

## DISCUSSION

In recent years emotions as a research topic have become increasingly popular (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011). The reason might be that emotions are regarded as an integrated part of mankind as they cannot be separated from the lives of human beings (Gross & Barrett, 2011). This statement implies that emotions cannot be separated from the employee, thus it cannot be separated from the workplace making it an ideal setting to research emotions as one spends a great deal of one's life in the workplace (Weiss, 2002).

Although research on emotions at work has increased in recent years and the importance and need for this research has become evident, there still remains a lack of research on the emotions and the events which stimulate these emotions at work (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Gibson, 2005). Consequentially a specific need has been identified to study the emotion events, the appraisal of these events and the discrete emotions which are the results of the identified events in the work setting. Current research on emotion has been investigating emotion events, the appraisal of emotions and discrete emotions independently and not as an inclusive process. Scherer (2001) suggested investigating emotion experiences as a process and not as independent components. For this purpose Scherer compiled the Sequential Checking Theory which enables one to account for the emotion event, the cognitive appraisal of the emotion event and finally the discrete emotion experienced by the individual.

The research questions were formulated against this background of the research problem. The general objective of this study was to critically investigate what emotion events are experienced, how these emotion events are appraised and finally to investigate the discrete emotions experienced by professional workers in the mining industry.

Next, the findings according to each research question will be discussed. The results will follow the sequence of the emotion experience process in accordance to Scherer's Sequential Check Theory. Firstly the negative emotion experience, encompassing the emotion event, emotion appraisal and discrete emotion, will be discussed according to the research questions. It will be followed by the positive emotion events, emotion appraisal and discrete emotions experiences in the work environment.

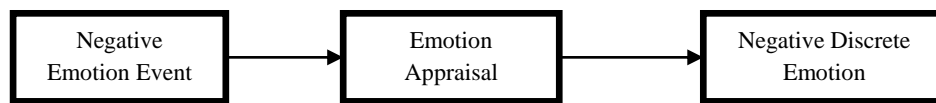
The research questions that will be addressed include the following:

1. *What emotion events are experienced by employees in the workplace?*

2. *How are emotion events appraised by employees in the workplace?*
3. *What are the discrete emotions experienced by employees in the workplace?*

During data analysis both positive and negative emotion events were identified. Seventeen categories of negative emotion events emerged.

### **Categories of Negative Emotion Events Experienced**



*Figure 3: Graphic presentation of the Negative Emotion Experience Process.*

During data analysis seventeen (17) categories of negative emotion events were experienced. Twenty (20) participants reported emotion events on “*Victimisation and Bullying.*” Victimisation and bullying describe situations where employees are deliberately humiliated, belittled and verbally abused by higher ranking employees in the presence of fellow colleagues. Petrylaité (2011) and Zapf and Gross (2001) conceptualised bullying and victimisation as any recurring, unreasonable behaviour focused on an individual or group of individuals in the working environment.

Victimisation and bullying may take on various forms and usually include acts of an aggressive nature directed towards an employee (Hansen et al., 2005). These actions or behaviours may include teasing, scolding spreading rumours and even threats. According to Hansen et al. (2005) victimisation and bullying are frequent in the workplace with various negative effects and emotions as result. The latter research relates with this study’s finding as victimisation and bullying was the negative emotion event reported most often by participants.

Research findings of Hansen et al. (2005) and Björkqvist, Österman and Hjelt-Bäck (1994) indicated that individuals subjected to victimisation and bullying may suffer from various physical and psychological consequences. Some of the consequences may include chronic fatigue, insomnia, melancholy, apathy, lack of concentration and social phobia (Björkqvist et al., 1994). Clinical observations identified social isolation, social maladjustment,



psychosomatic illnesses, compulsions, helplessness, work alienation, lower self-esteem and productivity and increased sickness and absenteeism as consequences of continuous victimisation and bullying (Hoel, Faragher & Cooper, 2004; Leymann, 1990; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). Research findings of Einarsen (2000) agreed with findings of Björkqvist et al. (1994) and Leymann, (1990), adding various psychological symptoms of victimisation and bullying such as hostility, hypersensitivity, memory loss and feelings of nervousness.

Studies conducted by Kivimäki et al. (2003) found a distinct relationship between bullying and victimisation and incidences of depression. Data indicated that the longer employees are exposed to bullying and victimisation, the greater the risk of depression. It has been claimed that prolonged exposure to bullying and victimisation at work may result in employees experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Björkqvist et al., 1994; Einarsen & Hellestøy, 1998; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004). In some cases of victimisation and bullying suicide attempts have been reported by those who have been the subject of victimisation and bullying over a long period of time.

Ten (10) participants reported emotion events on "*Health and Safety Issues.*" Health and safety issues refer to events in the workplace such as fatal incidents causing serious injury (of oneself or a colleague) or the death of a colleague with whom one may be in contact on a daily basis. Karazman, Kloimüller, Geissler & Karazman-Morawetz (1999) associated health and safety issues as any aspect of one's work environment which may have a negative effect on one's physical or psychological well-being. Research conducted by Karazman et al. (1999) indicated that the occupational health and safety policies can have pathogenic effects and it may result in aversive emotions, stress, reluctance, illness or accidents at the workplace.

Griffin and Neal (2000) suggested that the perception individuals have of their working environment will have a profound influence on the behaviours and attitudes employees demonstrate at work. If the employee feels safe in his or her working environment, the individual may perform better as it may be one less thing the individual needs to worry about (Griffin & Neal, 2000). Participant in this study reported that some health and safety issues causing fatalities are mostly due to health and safety policies and procedures not being followed, thus linking with the findings of Karazman et al. (1999). Health and safety issue need to be a first priority within all organisations and should be reflected in the safety-related policies and procedures of all organisations. In making employees aware of health and safety

issues within the organisation and motivating employees by rewarding them for adhering to health and safety policies and procedures, organisations will be able to create a culture and climate of health and safety promotion. It will elicit feelings of engagement from employees as it implies that the organisation is taking care of its employees (Griffin & Neal, 2000).

Health and safety issues are important in all industries, but especially in the mining industry as it have been identified as one of the most dangerous occupations in the world (Eweje, 2005). The Department of Minerals and Energy (2005) has reported that since the 1990s incidents in the mining industry have decreased somewhat due to the improved regulation of mine health and safety. The South African mines' health and safety standard are not equal to international standards at present. However, safety has improved vastly in recent years since the implementation of the following South African laws: Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993), the Mine Health and Safety Act (Act 29 of 1996) and the National Occupational Health and Safety Bill of 2005. In continuing to emphasise the importance of health and safety and creating health and safety cultures within organisations, the difficulties related to this issue is bound to decrease in the coming years.

With regards to "*Lack of Recognition of Performance*" nine (9) participants reported situations in which they do not receive recognition. This category consists of the lack of promotion, lack of bonuses and the lack of verbal recognition for good performance delivered by employees. With regards to the *lack of promotions* as a negative workplace emotion event, the following inferences could be made: promotions are types of reward to individuals for good performance where individuals are given the opportunity to move to a better position within the organisation and in the process receive more benefits and responsibility as well as autonomy. Promotions in general are perceived as positive emotion events resulting in the individual being promoted to experience positive emotions (Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate & Flectcher, 2011). However, the opposite is true for the lack of promotion for individuals who have been anticipating promotions and not receiving the awaited promotions. In most cases the lack of promotions are devastating and perceived as negative emotion events for those who experience these events.

The second aspect of *lack of recognition* of performance consists of lack of bonus. As an emotion event this is most often perceived as negative. According to Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2011), a bonus can be seen as a tangible reward given to employees for outstanding performance. Should employees perform well and receive such a bonus, the employees

experience the emotion event as positive. However, should the employee perform well and expect to receive a bonus for the good work done, and not receive such a bonus, the emotion event is most often than not acknowledged as a negative emotion event by employees (Berg & Theron, 2006; Lutgen-Sandvik et al, 2011).

Lastly, *receiving verbal recognition* is often viewed as an important component for engagement issues and the well-being of employees (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005). Receiving verbal recognition indicates situations in which employees receive positive feedback and praise for good performance by management (Kreibig, Gendolla & Scherer, 2009). Receiving recognition is normally experienced as a positive emotion event as it evokes positive emotions at work (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2011). The deduction can be made that when one requires verbal recognition or has been expecting verbal recognition for good performance and does not receive it, it will result in the event being experienced as negative rather than (Kidd, 2008).

Seven (7) participants reported emotion events related to “*Workplace Conflict*”. Workplace conflict is a process that begins when one employee perceives that another has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first employee deems as important and cares about (Robbins, Judge, Odendal & Roodt, 2004; Wall & Callister, 1995). Conflict in the workplace may also arise in situations where employees have different beliefs, values, positions or interests (Barsky, 2000). Various causes of workplace conflict have been reported; some of these causes include 1) individual characteristics such as personality, values and goals, 2) perceptual interface, for example mistrust of others or misunderstandings between two parties, 3) communication, 4) behaviour including power struggles and blocking a party’s goals, 5) structure, for example power imbalances and status differences and 6) previous interactions, for example past conflict (Wall & Callister, 1995).

The emotion event related to workplace conflict will be the process in which parties differ and as a result arguments and aggressive behaviour, anger and feelings of hostility may manifest between colleagues (Thomas, 1979). In most cases an emotion event related to workplace conflict may not only have an effect on the parties, but on the onlookers as well. Spector and Fox (2002) and Dasborough (2006) identified conflict in the workplace as one of the negative emotion events most often found within the work environment and in most cases it may manifest into stress in the workplace (Ephross & Vassil, 1993).

According to Hansen et al. (2006), stress reactions caused in the workplace may develop in situations where the individual appraises the situation as threatening and in response is not able to cope with the situations in a more effective manner. In most cases emotions direct the threatened parties to behave in an ineffective rather than an effective manner in handling the conflict, causing a chain reaction of negative events. It has been found that workplace conflict is related to low job satisfaction, reduced motivation and performance (Bergman & Volkema, 1989; Derr, 1978).

Studies conducted by Jehn, Northcraft and Neale (1999) and Desivilya, Somech and Lidgoster (2010) indicated that workplace conflict may be much needed - if managed correctly- as the diversity in the work team may lead to diverse and fresh ideas eliciting greater performance. However, should the conflict not be managed correctly and it escalates, employees may start to withdraw from the work team and environment, which may lead to a decrease in performance and job satisfaction (Strachan & Fuller, 2009) and the possible increase of disengagement of employees (Jehn et al., 1999). Spector, Fox and Doagalski (2005) reported counterproductive work behaviour as a consequence of continued workplace conflict. Counterproductive work behaviour typically implies doing work tasks incorrectly, not reporting mistakes made or problems to supervisors, and absenteeism. Research conducted by Bies and Tripp (2005) identified revenge as a consequence of workplace conflict. The latter may include goal hindrance and the violation of rules.

Seven (7) participants reported emotion events as the "*Involvement in Disciplinary action.*" Discipline stems from the Latin word 'discere' which means to learn (Muchinsky, Kriek & Schreuder, 2005). The aim of discipline is therefore to provide tools to help employees learn how to follow the appropriate behaviour patterns with regards to the roles as set in the employment relationship. However, Butterfield, Trevino and Ball (1996) conducted research and came to the conclusion that the involvement in disciplinary action is a complex cognitive and emotional process for employees and often for those involved.

Furthermore, in most cases these events are experienced as negative rather than positive by individuals as punishment is related to disciplinary action more often than not. Fear of punishment may provoke undesired upsets, which may include anxiety, depression and lower levels of effort exerted by employees (De Lara, 2006; Deutsch, 1985). This was also the case for the participants reporting on these events. These types of events are often accompanied by fear and stress. Stress may elicit various consequences, which may include lower levels of

individual and organisational performance and effectiveness within the workplace (Chusmir & Franks, 1988).

Five (5) participants reported “*Ineffective Teamwork*” as negative emotion events experienced at work. Ineffective teamwork was identified as situations in which team members did not work together as a team and as result the team started blaming one another for performing poorly. Effective teamwork can be conceptualised as situations where team members share a vision for future success of the team, in which case the team work harder and motivate each other to reach the goals set by management (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010; Robbins et al., 2004).

Effective teamwork is characterised by confidence of the team itself and confidence amongst individual team members. For a team to work effectively, the team needs structure. This entails each team member being informed of the overall goal of the team and the goal of each subunit within the team. Team members need to be informed of their individual assignments and how they will contribute to reaching the team’s overhead goals (Urban, Bowers, Monday & Morgan, 1995). Individual assignments need to be distributed evenly to prevent certain team members from suffering from work overload.

Furthermore, the communication structure is one of the single most important aspects of an effective work team. The communication structure provides guidance as to whom may speak in the team and who will distribute information (Urban et al., 1995). Knowledge sharing is an important aspect of communication as well. Should this be absent, teams perform poorly adding strain on the group causing these types of situations to be experienced as negative emotion events within organisations. Once a team has performed poorly it will lead to a decrease in motivation and poor performance is likely to be repeated if the team structure is not optimised and adjusted.

With regards to “*Personal Incidents*”, five participants reported these incidents as negative emotion events experienced at work. Personal incidents refer to private challenges individuals have to face (Thompson, 2005). These incidents may be personal, but can have a profound impact on the performance and state of mind of the individual at work as they tend to spill over to the working environment. Some of the participants received bad news of a personal nature at work, resulting in the event being perceived as a negative emotion event experienced at work as it was the setting in which the news was received. As mentioned

previously, emotions are part of one's daily life and experiencing these emotions cannot be prevented.

Personal incidents will spill over and have an effect on the work-life balance and one's ability to perform optimally at work (Kidd, 2008). Personal health problems, e.g. cancer, or a loved one being diagnosed with cancer, are most often experienced as negative emotions. These may not be the result of workplace issues, but they do affect the individual on an emotional level. Employees with cancer are becoming more commonplace in the workplace. Advanced drug treatment has enabled individuals to shed the status as a terminally ill employee as these individuals are able to make adjustments in their daily lives (Pryce, Munir & Haslam, 2006).

As a result more employees maintain their daily activities, including working. Cancer treatment can have a profound impact on one's life and ability to work. Some side effects of the treatment include pain and discomfort, fatigue, poor cognitive functioning and in some cases a need for transportation. Some employees may not have cancer themselves, but spouses suffering from the illness. The experience can be very tiring and emotional, and in most cases the treatment is as traumatic to the spouses of the patient as to the patient himself/herself (Pryce et al., 2006; Stewart et al., 2001). In most circumstances organisations implement some work adjustments such as flexible working hours and less straining tasks or role adjustments (Pryce et al., 2006). Some of the interventions used for employees with cancer are often used in cases of injured employees as well.

Regarding "*Human Resource Management Strategies*" five (5) events were reported by participants. Human resource strategies comprise emotion events regarding strategies in the workplace which include demotion and retrenchment. Both demotion and retrenchment have been identified as career barriers leading to great career adversity eliciting feelings of anxiety and stress for the future (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Demotion is often identified as one of the components of organisational change (Kiefer, 2005). Demotion can be described as specific occupations within organisations being deemed redundant, or may include situations where employees are being redeployed to a different department or occupation entirely.

In most cases demotion causes employees to experience difficulties in adjusting, and as such is often perceived as negative emotion events (Kidd, 2008). Research findings of Josten and Schalk (2010) indicated that employees perceive demotion as implicating failure, which may lead to extreme feelings of despair and depression. One starts to question ones abilities and in the process most employees consequently become bitter. These individuals show resistance

towards the organisation and engage in actions to take revenge on the organisation (Bies and Tripp, 2004).

The second component of human resource management strategies entails retrenchments. Retrenchments are the product of downsizing due to economic circumstances, the implementation of new technology or restructuring within organisations (Muchinsky et al., 2005). Retrenchments are characterised as stress-inducing and can have a profound negative effect on the emotions and lives of individuals being retrenched.

Four (4) participants reported "*Behaviour of Work Colleagues*" as negative emotion events experienced in the work environment. These behaviours include the behaviour of one's colleague or manager which may have negative effects on the relationships between the parties. Behaviour of work colleagues may also be characterised by any difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Kidd, 2008). According to Kidd (2008), difficulties may be resulting from relationships between colleagues which may have gone bad due to problems within the organisation such as inequitable treatment, feelings of alienation from the individual's work or the organisation. These are all emotion events most often perceived as negative by employees and may lead to low job satisfaction and conflict within the team of colleagues working in close proximity (Basch & Fisher, 2000).

Four (4) participants reported "*Organisational Change*" as emotion events experienced at work. Kiefer (2005) conceptualised organisational change as modifications management of organisations make which may provide wealth of opportunities for growth and development within the organisation. However, Kiefer (2005) reported that organisational change has both its benefits and its disadvantages. Klarner, By and Deifenbach (2011) stated that various factors including interests, values and beliefs of employees will influence the emotions the employees will experience about the changes made within the organisation. According to Kiefer (2005) and Vakola and Nikolaou (2005), most often than not, multiple and on-going organisational change will ultimately result in employees experiencing these changes as negative because they place a lot of strain on both the individual and the organisation. Individuals may experience uncertainty due to the changes within the organisation.

Once the employees start to experience uncertainty, feelings of fear are elicited and the individual employees begin to doubt their own potential to cope with the new situation in the working environment (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Some research indicated that organisational change can be as traumatic an event as death and grief and tend to be

very stressful experiences for individual employees (Grant, 1996; Henderson-Loney, 1996). Some consequences of organisational change may include low levels of morale and motivation, a decrease in performance, high turnover and sick-leave, poor internal communication and increased levels of conflict and dysfunctional attitudes at work (Murphy, 1995; Schabracq & Cooper, 2000; Weiss, 2002). Research findings of Mchugh (1997) indicated that organisational change can lead to stress which may result in overall poor performance and effectiveness within the organisation. The longer the organisational changes continue, the more employees lose trust in the organisation and start to withdraw from the organisation, thus eliciting more of the negative consequences mentioned (Kiefer, 2005).

Research findings of Bellack (1999) and Scott-Ladd and Chan (2004) suggested that emotionally intelligent individuals cope more effectively with organisational change as these individuals are more self-aware with regards to their own strengths and limitations. Furthermore emotionally intelligent individuals tend to be more confident, optimistic, flexible and comfortable with change (Goleman, 1998). The conclusion can therefore be made that organisations can remedy negative emotions in respect to organisational change by developing the emotional intelligence of its employees.

Three (3) participants reported emotion events regarding “*Unsuspected Problems*” experienced in the working environment. Unsuspected problems may include any uncontrollable crisis or issues employees have to deal with. These events tend to be very stressful and as such tend to be recognised as negative emotion events due to the negative emotions evoked (Kidd, 2008). The consequences of events caused by unsuspected problems elicit feelings of anxiety and irritation.

Two (2) participants reported “*High Workload*” as negative emotion events. Employees experience high workload when they have a large amount of work to do in a short time. Individuals experience excessive pressure in combination with impossible deadlines and too many unnecessary disruptions (Bergh & Theron, 2006). Research findings of Dasborough (2006) reported work overload or high workload as two of the most frequent negative emotion events employees experience on a regular basis.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2006), high workload develops when one has too many work demands and too few job resources to deal with those on a daily basis. Consequences of high workload may include exhaustion of one’s mental and physical resources leading to individuals experiencing low levels of energy, various health problems, narrowing of



attention and fatigue. Exposure to long-term high workload may lead to the individual being completely drained of energy, which may elicit a breakdown and ultimately burnout (Bakker and Demerouti, 2006).

Two (2) participants reported “*Workplace Policy*” as negative emotion events they have encountered in the workplace. Workplace policy refers to resources employees have to share and how those resources should be allocated. It also includes the reduction of the organisation’s expenditure and downsizing (Most, 2006). In most organisations workplace policies provide guidelines for employees’ behaviour and procedures to be followed for the different situations employees may face in doing their jobs. Furthermore it indicates how decisions will be made and who will make those decisions (Forsyth, 2006).

Workplace policy evokes feelings of resentment and anger by employees who feel workplace policies apply to them, but others ‘do not play by the rules’ yet no actions are taken against those individuals. The most common reason for this response is that employees feel that some individuals do not adhere to policies and no action is taken against them. This is called procedural injustice or organisational injustice (Aryee, Budhwar & Chen, 2002; Forsyth, 2006). Organisational injustice can be seen as the perception of the fairness and rightfulness of the policies and methods used to make decisions, resolve disputes and allocate resources.

The conclusion can be drawn that organisational injustice implies that some employees are punished for not following policies, whereas others do not follow policies and are not punished, thus unfair practices take place. The consequences of unfairness regarding workplace policies include a decrease of trust in the organisation and its policies, feelings of anger and resentment towards the organisation and lower levels of compliance to the policies (De Lara, 2006; Forsyth, 2006).

One (1) participant reported “*Lack of Colleague Support*” he/she experienced as a negative emotion event in the workplace. Social support by colleagues entails emotional and instrumental support (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2011). Support by work colleagues results in employees experiencing positive emotions, as the support in such situations is seen as a positive event. Bakker and Demerouti (2006) identified colleague support as one of the job resources employees need within the working environment to cope with the job demands they encounter daily. Thus the conclusion can be drawn that should employees not receive colleagues’ support in difficult times (e.g. when they have an issue with a supervisor or

trouble at home and merely need a colleague to listen), the event will be considered as a negative emotion by the persons who need the support at time.

In general the assumption can be made that the majority of participants experienced negative emotion events on organisational level. The latter statement implies that 79% of the negative emotion events reported were events related to the workplace, thus implying that those events took place at the workplace of the participants and not in their personal lives. Furthermore, a mere 5% of negative emotion events were related to events taking place in the personal lives of the individuals spilling over into the employees' work life.

### **Appraisal**

The appraisal of emotion evolves about people's understand of the implications of what is happening in their individual lives with regards to their personal well-being. Appraisal of emotion events is necessary for individuals to determine what impact a specific situation will have on his or her life. During the data analysis general associated appraisal of events were identified. The question derived from the GAQ forms part of the emotion-focussed coping potential. Coping as a component of appraisal aids individuals in selecting the emotion responses which will help him or her reach important goals and needs for the situation he or she might be facing (Scherer et al., 2001).

Coping refers to the manner one will act in response to the emotion event once it has taken place. Lazarus (1984;1991) suggested that coping is the interaction between an individual and his or her environment and consists of the cognitive and behavioural energies one uses to manage external and internal stresses that may be appraised as challenging or exceeding an individual's resources. The individual approaches the situation by cognitively appraising the given situation, assessing the level of threat the situation holds and the amount of resources available to cope effectively with the situation (Lazarus, 1984). The latter statement implies that the coping strategy one utilises will depend on the appraisal of the situation (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986, as cited in Aitken & Crawford, 2007).

### **General Appraisal of Associated Negative Emotion Events**

It was reported that the majority of participants felt as though the negative emotion events could *possibly* have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action. It is related to the amount of control one has over an emotion event taking place as one of the components of the appraisal process (Scherer et al., 2001). However, it is important to note that appropriate

human action does not imply action taken by the individual himself or herself, but perhaps action taken by someone in a position of power. It relates to one's locus of control.

Rotter (1966, 1975) was one of the pioneers of the generalised theories about the amount of control one can exercise over a given situation. Rotter's theory was derived from the social learning theory. In testing his theory, Rooter measured whether the individual places his or her locus of control internally or externally (Lazarus, 1991). Internal locus of control is ones perception that one has the ability to control the environment and consequently the change within the environment and the outcomes the changes can have one's life. In contrast, external locus is ones perception that the environment and external factors control events in one's life, thus implying that the environment and people in the environment determine what happens in one's life (Lazarus, 1991).

The conclusion can be drawn that participants felt that as individuals he or she did not have control over the event and that the negative event could have been avoided with the appropriate human action from those in power, e.g. management, to prevent negative emotion events. This statement suggests that participants felt that the environment and those in that environment could have changed the outcome of the event, implying that the participants experienced external locus of control. Control in this sense simply implies that individuals felt that the events could have been prevented or the consequences could have been changed or modified by an accepted driving force other than him or her (Miller, 1980).

The above-mentioned conclusion can be elicited as management usually possesses the appropriate capabilities and resources which could have been utilised to prevent the negative emotion events. The negative emotion events could possibly have been controlled in such a manner that a different outcome would have been created in which the employees could have coped more effectively with the situation. Participants said that negative emotions could have been avoided if the environment had been controlled and organised more effectively by those in power.

With regards to the power check aspect of the coping dimension, the general appraisal of negative emotion events indicated that participants felt the consequences of the events could have been avoided or modified to some extent. This indicates that the majority of participants felt that others had the power to exert control and take appropriate action to prevent the events and its consequences. When a person is able to use the power check, he or she is able to make effective use of the resources available to change the event and its outcome

favourably to his or her own interests and in the process lives with the consequences (Scherer et al., 2001). This corresponds with Seyle's (1993) notion of coping. Seyle (1993) suggested that coping is one's realistic and adjustable thoughts and actions which may resolve problems in stressful events leading to reduced levels of stress being experienced.

Power - in this sense - therefore refers to one's probability to influence a potentially controllable event or having the help of others to possibly control the event. As proposed by Miller (1980), the event could have been prevented or the possible consequences of the events could have been changed should one have utilised the most appropriate driving force or involved those who do possess the power to make changes and prevent negative events from taking place. It was found in this study that individuals felt they did not have the power or the control to prevent the events from taking place. The conclusion can thus be drawn that participants felt that those in power positions and in control of the resources could have controlled the situation and possibly even have prevented the events from taking place; in the process the levels of stress could have been released, as suggested by Seyle (1993).

Furthermore, in situations where individuals feel a loss of control and power over events and the possible outcomes of those events, various negative emotion behaviours may be elicited as a means of coping with the situation and its consequences. Scherer et al. (2001) suggested that should the negative emotion event be appraised contradictory with the intention of the individual, the appraisal will bring forth negative means of coping response. The means of coping with a low sense of control and power over what happens in one's working environment may include avoidance coping, suppression of emotion and emotion detachment (Aitken & Crawford, 2007; Ashkanasky & Daus, 2002; Lazarus, 1991).

Avoidance coping is the action where one withdraws or moves away from the offender causing the negative event, or withdrawing from the negative event itself (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2006; Lazarus, 1991). The consequences may be that one does not deal with the emotions which may lead to negative behaviours and attitudes in future (Aquino et al., 2006). Avoidance in the workplace may, for example, include withdrawing from one's team should the team be the cause of the negative event, or not wanting to go down the mine shaft if one was once badly injured in that environment. Suppression describes the tiring process of managing or regulating one's true emotions in the workplace (Ashkanasky & Daus, 2002; Grandey, 2000).

The consequences of suppression are that negative emotions may be bottled up and that may often lead to counter-productive work behaviours and actions. The pitfall of both avoidance and suppression as coping mechanisms is that there is no healthy outlet or expression of the negative emotions experienced. This may lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, low organisational commitment, low job satisfaction and ultimately weakness of one's immune system which may elicit illnesses such as hypertension and cancer (Abraham, 1999; Ashkanasky & Daus, 2002). Detachment can be used in two ways as coping mechanisms. The first way of emotion detachment as a coping strategy is often used to cope with one's emotions at work and to protect one's own emotions and dignity while at work (Erickson, 2004). Griffen (1977) concluded that detachment may be used to obscure a lack of attachment to defend oneself against psychological dangers. Although detachment as a coping strategy may protect the employees at work to some extent, it does have its limitations such as narrowing the individual's motivation and hope for a better future (Erickson, 2004).

The second way of using detachment is most often perceived as more positive or effective, as it enables employees to psychologically detach themselves from work during non-work time (Sonnetag & Bayer, 2005). Being able to detach from ones work while away from the workplace will provide employees with time to recover from the negative emotion events they might encounter in the working environment (Sonnentag, Kuttler & Fritz, 2009). This indicates that in some cases individuals are able to adjust to the situation even it is associated with negative feelings.

The adjustment check refers to human beings being able to adjust or adapt and live with the consequences of an emotion event to some extent once all possible interventions have been exhausted (Scherer et al., 2001). The general response of individual participants was that he or she could to some extent live with the consequences of an emotion event if it could not have been modified or avoided. This may imply that participants felt that as individuals they did not possess the power or the control to change the situation and in response the only option may be to adjust to the situation as there might be no other outcome. This response indicates a sense of adjustment for the sake of survival and implies coping with the situation as best as possible, even in times of adversity.

There are various factors which might enable some individuals to adjust and adapt in times of adversity with more ease than others. Some of these factors may include one's sense of resilience, level of emotional intelligence and support in the workplace. Tusaie and Dyer

(2004) and Coleman and Ganing (2002) concluded that resilience refers to one's ability to move forward in a positive fashion away from the negative, traumatic or stressful experiences one may have encountered and in the process overcome stress or adversity.

Resilience enables one to adjust to adversity, maintain stability, retain one's sense of control over one's working environment and move forward (Jackson, Firtko & Edenborough, 2007). Ashkanasky and Daus (2002) suggested that emotional intelligence is the source of cautious optimism and aids one in moving forward and away from the negative the individual might have experienced. Furthermore, social support from others, especially colleagues, has been proven to help employees cope more effectively with stressful situations or negative emotion events (Welbourne et al., 2007). It has been concluded that social support elicits higher levels of job satisfaction and emotional support.

### **Emotions**

Often within the workplace emotion events happen to employees, eliciting emotions in response to the stimuli event. The emotions one experiences in response to the emotion events will influence one's behaviour and attitudes (Weiss & Cropanazo, 1996). Fisher (2002) agreed with the last statement, adding that one should distinguish between negative and positive emotion events, how they were appraised and ultimately the positive and negative emotions elicited by those events. According to Green (1992) there are three criteria one can use to distinguish between positive and negative emotions.

The first criterion is the cognitive criteria. This refers to one's evaluation of the causes of the emotions. Positive emotions are related to the belief that something is desirable; in contrast, negative emotions are experienced as being undesirable (Green, 1992). This relates to the appraisal theory of Lazarus. Behavioural criterion relates to one's behaviour as the term suggests. Positive emotion elicits desirable behaviour and negative emotions elicit undesirable behaviour (Averill, 1980). The last criteria include the experiential criterion. This simply implies that negative emotions are experienced as unpleasant and positive emotions are experienced as pleasant (Averill, 1980; Kaiser & Müller-Seitz, 2007).

### **General Negative Discrete Emotions Experienced**

Emotions may be considered as an individual's reactions to an event or object, for example one may be angry at someone or something (Frijda, 1993). According to Lazarus (1991) positive emotions arise from beneficial events or situations, whereas various negative

emotions may arise from certain detrimental or threatening situations or events. In this study it was found that participants experience more negative emotion events and as result the participants experience more negative emotions once the appraisal process has been completed. This finding relates to the findings of Kaiser and Müller (2007) who concluded that negative emotion events elicit negative emotions in the workplace.

Negative emotion events were associated with negative emotions and are often perceived as unpleasant, whereas positive emotion events relate to positive emotions and experienced as pleasant. These findings relate to the research findings of Green (1992) and Averill (1980). The reasons for these findings are not clear, but perhaps the dangerous and stressful working environment of the mining industry and the conditions of this industry might play a role.

Furthermore, various researchers distinguished between inward-focused negative emotions and outward-focused negative emotions (Fischer & Tangney, 1995; Lazarus, 1991). Inward-focused negative emotions can be conceptualised as self-conscious emotions. These emotions occur when individuals appraise themselves negatively, or when individuals feel as though others are judging him or her negatively (Fischer & Tangney, 1995; Ortony, Clore & Collins, 1988). Inward-focused emotions may be elicited when individuals' behaviour or some aspect of his or her behaviour is not in relation to the individuals' personal morals or values and the persons feel a loss of or a threat of loss to their social or personal character (Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001). An example of these emotions may include shame and guilt. Guilt, humiliation, disappointment and demotivation were four of the 12 general negative emotion events reported by participants in this study.

Outward-focused negative emotions are contradictory to inward-focused negative emotions as these emotions occur when individuals evaluate other parties and assess the other parties' role in causing the problem or negative emotion event (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Examples of such emotions may include anger and hostility. The general negative emotions reported by the participants regarding outward-focussed negative emotions include rage, disgust, despair, irritation, anger, surprise, sadness and fear.

Anger (the negative emotion most often found in organisations) is connected to some beliefs due to appraisals individuals might have made. These beliefs include 1) individuals can influence the object of his or her anger, 2) other parties are held responsible for the actions and outcomes and 3) the other parties should have behaved in a different way (Tavis, 1982, as cited in Barclay, Skarlicki & Pugh, 2005). Outward-focussed negative emotions can signal

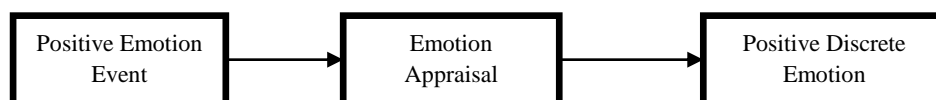
various messages, including displeasure with a specific action taken by someone, displeasure with treatment received, or a violation of integrity.

The conclusion can be made that negative outward-focussed emotions are associated with blaming another party for the emotion event as a result of that party's actions (Barclay et al., 2005). In accordance with other findings it was found in this study that participants experienced the above-mentioned negative emotions after appraising the negative events negatively. Furthermore, participants reported feeling as if the organisation or object in the environment was the cause of these events; those responsible for the events taking place could have taken action in preventing these negative events causing the negative emotions.

Additionally, some of the emotions reported in this study were found in studies by Caprara, Di Giunta, Eisenberg and Pastorelli (2012) and included anger, sadness, fear, shame and guilt as the most negative emotions experienced in the workplace. If positive emotions are connected to high levels of performance and outcomes for the organisation (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), the conclusion can be drawn that negative emotions may be related to lower levels of performance, job satisfaction and engagement. The latter may be true as Frijda (1985) and Smith and Pope (1992) suggested that if negative emotion events are appraised as motive inconsistent, they will elicit negative emotions resulting in negative consequences in the workplace. Research findings of Lee and Allen (2002) were in agreement with the above-mentioned statements, concluding that various negative emotions can contribute to workplace deviance behaviour. Emotions such as anger may associate strongly with counter-productive behaviour at work, leading to a decrease in the performance of employees experiencing this emotion (Lee & Allen, 2002).

The results regarding the positive emotion experience process will be discussed next.

#### **Categories of Positive Emotion Events Experienced**



*Figure 4: Graphic presentation of the Positive Emotion Experience Process.*

Eleven (11) participants reported “*Receiving Recognition on Performance*” as a positive emotion event experienced at work. Receiving recognition on performance consists of one receiving promotions, bonuses and verbal recognition on good performance. “*Promotions*”



refer to being rewarded for one's unique contribution by being offered a higher ranking position as the one the individual used to occupy (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2011). Usually promotions co-occur with receiving recognition; it is associated with positive emotions and described as a positive emotion event by employees receiving promotions. Participants describe receiving promotions as exciting, because he or she will be able to take on new challenges and opportunities in the workplace.

*"Receiving a Bonus"* as a positive emotion event at work refers to a substantial reward or incentive (usually monetary) employees receive for exceptional performance in the workplace (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2011). According to Parkinson (1996), rewards such as receiving a bonus distinguish employees who have been performing well; it results in positive affect and emotions being experienced by the individual. As positive emotions are experienced by individuals on receiving bonuses for the hard work done, the conclusion can be drawn that these events are positive for those experiencing these events. *"Receiving Verbal Recognition"* refers to employees receiving positive feedback for their effort in achieving a goal or overall good performance and hard work (Basch & Fisher, 1998). Research findings of Basch and Fisher (1998) and Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) stipulated that receiving recognition is associated with positive emotions and generally perceived as positive emotion events because of the positive emotions it evokes.

In general receiving recognition is associated with a motivational component. Once an individual has received recognition - be it promotion, a bonus or verbal recognition - it will motivate the individual extrinsically to perform well in future (Kreibig, Gendolla & Scherer, 2009). Some of the most common emotions employees experience as result of these types of events includes joy, pride and surprise. These emotion events and emotions are often associated with job satisfaction and high levels of performance and engagement (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Bakker & Demerouti, 2006).

Three (3) participants reported positive emotion events regarding *"Goal Achievement"*. Goal achievement refers to accomplishment and progression based on the achievement of the individual rather than social position (Son-Hing, Bobocel & Zanna, 2002). In goal achievement the employee derives fulfilment and meaning from the work he or she does and the results the hard work produces. Feelings of pride and satisfaction are often experienced in such situations (Du Gay, 1996). Basch and Fisher (2000) found that goal achievement as an emotion event is one of the most common indicators of positive emotions being experienced

in the workplace. A sense of achievement is related to internal satisfaction for mastering one's goals (Webb, 2003).

Furthermore, goal achievement can be linked to persistence and engagement in the workplace and is frequently associated with intrinsic motivation. The feeling of achievement and self-actualisation motivates the individual to persist even when facing adversity (Wright & Kirby, 2001). Findings of Nurmi, Salmela-Aro and Koivisto (2002) suggested that because goal achievement elicits positive feelings and consequences for the individual, the individual will strive to achieve in his goals and this will lead to success and good performance in the workplace in future.

The conclusion can be made that the participants experienced more positive emotion events on the organisational level. One can thus safely infer that 11% of positive emotion events were events that took place in the employees' working environment. 3% of the positive emotion events experienced by employees was on a personal level due to a sense of self-achievement.

The appraisal of the positive emotion events will be discussed next.

### **General Appraisal of Associated Positive Emotion Events**

When an emotion event is appraised as vastly significant to an individual's current needs and goals within a situation and it is perceived to aid the person in achieving his or her needs or goals, the deduction can be made that the positive emotion event has been appraised as positive and will elicit positive emotions (Scherer, 2009). It was found in this study that the majority of participants felt that the emotion event experienced could not have been avoided or modified by human action. This simply implies that the individuals did not have control and power over the events and no human action could have changed the outcomes of the event. It also implies that the power and control were in the hands of others, and the actions of others led to the positive emotion events.

Even though the power and control were in the possession of others, it does not elicit a negative appraisal as the outcome of the events was in relation to the needs and goals of the individuals experiencing the positive events. The event aided the participants to achieve his or her individual goals or fulfil his or her needs and as such a positive appraisal of the event was prompted.

Positive emotion events most often than not result in positive emotions being experienced (Lazarus, 1991). The conclusion can be drawn that one would be able to live with experiencing positive rather than negative emotions at work. This claim is found in the findings of this study as participants reported that as individuals they could easily live with the consequences of the positive emotion events. When investigating the results, it seems as though individuals find it easier to cope and live with the outcomes of positive emotion events than that of negative emotion events as positive emotions are intrinsically pleasant (Demir, Desmet & Hekkert, 2009).

### **General Positive Discrete Emotions Experienced**

As mentioned, when an emotion event is appraised as positive and highly relevant to one's needs and goals, the event will elicit positive emotions (Scherer, 2009). This was no exception in this study as the participants who reported positive emotion events appraised these events positively which stimulated positive emotion events being experienced. With regards to the general positive discrete emotion reported, the following emotions were identified: joy, pleasure, pride, excitement and surprise. It should be noted that fewer positive emotions were reported by the participants in relation to the number of negative emotions reported.

However, positive emotions may have more profound and lasting consequences for employees than negative emotions. According to Garland et al. (2010), positive emotions have the ability to broaden one's thought and action repertoires, increase one's intellectual flexibility, increase one's meaning-based coping, engagement, social relationships and finally one's performance (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Staw, Robert & Pelled, 1994). Furthermore, positive emotions help shape more resilient individual resources which will elicit further positive emotions. This will lead to self-sustaining increased well-being (Fredrickson, 1998; Garland et al, 2010).

Research findings of Fredrickson (1998) suggested that positive emotions have evolutionary origins which may lead to more long-term thoughts and actions. This relates to successful business outcomes within organisations. It can thus be concluded that positive emotions are experienced by employees in the workplace when the basic individual needs of employees are met within the organisation. When the basic needs of employees are met, they will function to broaden the employees' attention, cognition and action in regions which are related to the prosperity of the organisation (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002).

## Conclusion

The results clearly demonstrate the emotion experience process. The process starts with the emotion event as the stimulus which is followed by the emotion appraisal and finally the discrete emotion experienced. The results illustrated that 84% of the participants reported experiencing negative emotion events at the workplace. In contrast a mere 14% of the participants reported experiencing positive emotion events in the working environment regularly. In accordance with the findings of prior studies, it was indicated that in most cases employees experience more negative emotion events and resulting emotions after appraisal than positive emotion events and positive discrete emotions, even though most people indicated all they wishes for is to be happy and experience positive emotions at work and life in general (Kalat & Shiota, 2007). The most frequent negative emotion events reported included victimisation and bullying, health and safety issues, workplace conflict, involvement in disciplinary action, personal incidents and lack of promotions.

In contrast, positive emotion events included promotions, goal achievement, receiving a bonus and receiving recognition. These findings correlate with previous studies conducted individually by Lutgen-Sandvik (2011), Basch and Fisher (2000), Kiefer (2005) and Kidd (2008). With regards to the emotion appraisal of the emotion events the general associated appraisal of the negative emotion event was as follows: it was reported that the majority of participants felt as if the negative emotion events could *possibly* have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action. This is related to the amount of control one has over an emotion event taking place as one of the components of the appraisal process (Scherer et al., 2001). The conclusion can be drawn that participants felt that those who possess the appropriate capabilities and have access to resources could possibly have been able to control the situation and create a different outcome.

Additionally, with regards to the power check of aspect of the coping dimension, the general appraisal of negative emotion events indicated that participants felt the outcomes of the events could be avoided or modified to some extent. This indicates that the majority of participant felt he or she may not have had the power or control to take the appropriate action. It can thus be interpreted that the employees felt that those in power positions with the control over resources could have taken the appropriate action in preventing the negative emotion event from taking place.

The adjustment check refers to human beings being able to adjust or adapt and live with the consequences of an emotion event to some extent once all possible interventions have been exhausted (Scherer et al., 2001). The general response of individual participants was that he or she could, to some extent, live with the consequences of an emotion event if it could not be modified or avoided. This may indicate that participants realised that the situation could not have been modified, and as such the only outcome was to adjust to the situation, even if the feeling experienced among participants was that the negative event was unnecessary and could have been avoided by those in the position to do so.

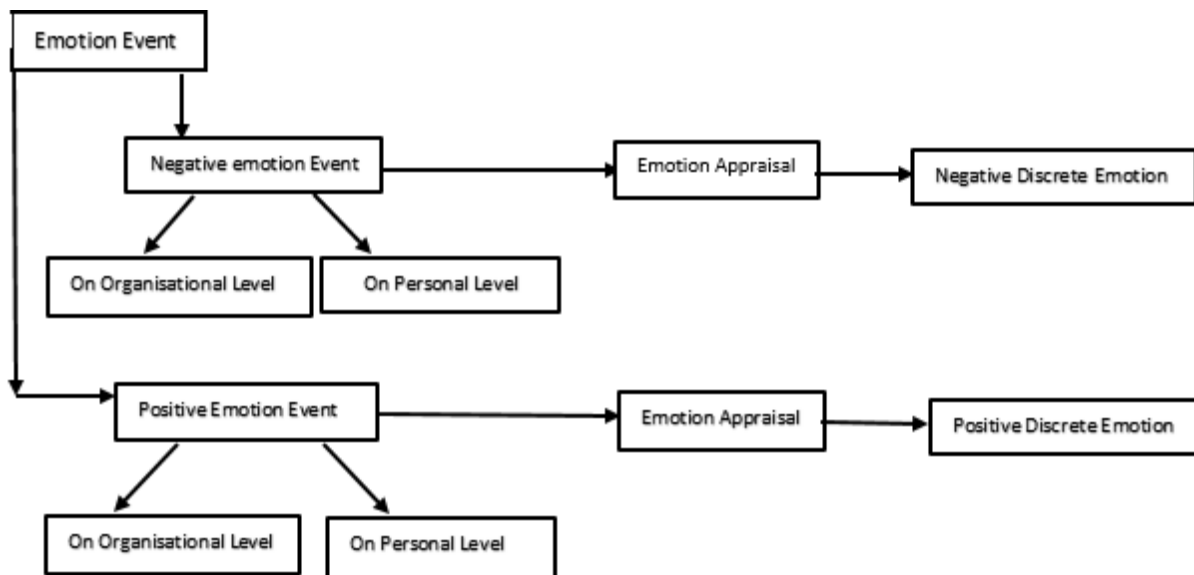
With regards to the emotion appraisal of the emotion events, the general associated appraisal of the positive emotion events was as follow: the majority of participants felt that the emotion event experienced could not have been avoided or modified by human action. This simply implies that the individuals did not have control over the events and no human action from them could have changed the outcomes of the event. With regards to power over the emotion event, the majority of participants reported that they had no power over the events to change or modify them in any way. As the event was experienced and appraised as positive and had positive emotions and outcomes, one may conclude that the participants were happy with the outcome and would not have changed the outcome as it was in relation to their individual goals or needs at the time.

Positive emotion events most often than not resulted in positive emotions being experienced (Lazarus, 1991). The conclusion can be drawn that one would be able to live with experiencing positive rather than negative emotion. This is found in the findings of this study as participants reported that as individuals they could easily live with the consequences of the positive emotion events. Furthermore, it seems as if individuals found it easier to cope and live with the outcomes of positive emotion events than those of negative emotion events, as positive emotions are intrinsically pleasant (Demir et al., 2009).

According to Woods (2009) the coping ability of emotion events will be vital in the successful negotiation of situations at work that might be experienced as either positive or negative. Furthermore, for one to adjust to emotion events experienced at work, certain personal factors will influence the appraisal of those events and as result the outcomes of the events. The personal factors include 1) whether the employee feels the situation was caused by the employee or the organisation, 2) whether the employee feels he or she had the power to address the problem, 3) whether the individual has a social support system at work and

home and 4) whether the employee thinks the situation might change in future (Woods, 2009).

With regards to the discrete emotions experienced as the final step of the process of emotion, the following generally associated negative emotions were reported by participants: rage, disgust, despair, irritation, humiliation, anger, surprise, sadness, fear, guilt, disappointment and de-motivation. With regards to the general positive emotion reported, the following emotions were identified: joy, pleasure, pride, excitement and surprise. It is important to note that fewer positive emotions were reported by the participants in relation to the number of negative emotions. The reason is not clear, but it can be assumed that the type of industry the participants work in may have an influence on the number of negative emotion events, how those events are appraised and the negative emotions being elicited.



*Figure 5: Graphical Demonstration of the Results of the Emotion Experience Process of this study.*

To conclude, *Figure 5* demonstrates the findings of this study with regards to the emotion experience process. The figure indicates that some of the emotion events took place on organisational level and others on a personal level. This implies that when an emotion event takes place on an organisational level, the employee may experience the event to be an outcome of the actions taken by the organisation. On the contrary, emotions events experienced on the personal level indicate that the participant feels that the emotion event was the result of actions taken by the individual and not the organisation. The findings

indicated that emotion events on organisational level tend to be viewed as more negative than positive.

However, it may be argued that some of the personal emotion events were not events over which the person had any control or power. It was merely a personal experience not caused by the organisation per se. It also refers to how the individuals appraised the negative emotion events. The model and the findings suggest that participants often felt that negative emotion events were, in most cases, outcomes of the actions taken by the organisation and were appraised as negative. Participants reported feeling as if those in power positions in the organisations could have taken control and prevented the negative events from taking place at all. In addition, when emotion events were appraised as negative, regardless of the cause, the emotion events elicited a variety of negative emotions such as anger, fear and sadness.

Positive emotion events were seemingly fewer than negative emotion events. Most of the participants reported positive events caused by actions of the organisation and that as an individual he or she did not have any power or control on the decision of the organisation when taking actions to elicit the positive outcome. Some of the positive emotion events were due to personal actions the individuals took to achieve goals they might have set for themselves, for example goal achievement. This implies that participants appraised the positive emotions as positive, which prompted positive emotions being experienced by employees. Some of the participants mentioned positive emotions they experienced, i.e. joy, pride and pleasure.

## **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study was conducted on professional employees from all professions of the mining industry. The employees were from Gauteng and the North-West Province. Most of the employees were white males between the ages of 40 and 60. Therefore the findings cannot be generalised to include all industries or other provinces of South Africa. Generalisation of the current results to include other industries and provinces requires further experiential investigation.

One of the limitations was that the sample was not inclusive of an equal amount of male and female participants and the race ratio was imbalanced. The sampling should be more diverse to include more women and different races for the purpose of generalisation. Secondly, there

was no control about any external influences prior to reporting emotion events and the appraisal of those events.

Even though the study has limitations, various recommendations can be made for future research. With regards to information on emotion events, emotion appraisal and the elicited discrete emotion, it is recommended that researchers continue to investigate the emotion experiences with the entire process in mind. This should be done across all industries and not among professional workers only, but also among the non-professional employees. With regards to sampling, researchers could consider not making use of an availability sample, but rather consider the use of quota sampling to have the most diverse sample possible.

The benefit of conducting this research is that one would be able to gain a better understanding of the emotion experience process as a whole and not merely as independent components. Once better understanding is gained of the emotion events, emotion appraisal and the resulting discrete emotion, better understanding of emotion experiences will be obtained to implement better strategies in organisations to prevent any negative consequences of the event for the employee and his or her life and performance.

More research on the process and how it is enacted in the workplace is necessary. One needs to take in account all three components to gain the best information on emotion experiences. Researchers need to go back to the basics to truly understand emotion experiences as a whole. This information is a necessity for organisations to improve the well-being programmes and quality of life of their employees.

Furthermore, it is recommended that organisations provide training and information for employees regarding detachment as a coping mechanism, where employees are taught to detach from work in non-work time and take part in leisure activities. This will provide employees with the time needed to recover from work and keep the employees engaged. Examples of activities can be provided during training, as well as the benefits of detachment as a coping mechanism.

Organisations could also employ a psychologist and refer all employees experiencing difficult emotion experiences to that person to aid them in coping and working through the process in the most effective manner to reach the best possible outcomes. Training in emotional intelligence may be of good use in managerial positions, as it will enable managers to be aware of the emotional states of the employees working under him or her. This will aid



managers to identify employees who may be experiencing negative emotions and help those employees to deal with emotions before the emotions influence their behaviour and performance negatively as well.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

All information and insight gained from this study should be shared with organisations to better interventions when dealing with emotion experiences and their consequences. Pro-active programmes should be set in place to help individuals deal with emotion experiences in the most appropriate manner before they change into experiences regarded as negative.

This research is much needed in South Africa, because the diversity and richness of the process of emotions experiences has not yet been researched up to date. Having this information and keeping the cultural relevance and diverse population in mind will help organisations to know what the process will be like for different cultures, and what is needed to implement interventions suited for all cultures, races, genders and ages. When this has been done, organisations will be able to aid its employees to cope more affectively with emotion experiences and the possible outcomes of those experiences.

Furthermore, various studies have been conducted regarding the various models of appraisal, but knowledge of how these models can be practically applied in the workplace has been lacking. More research is needed in this regard in the field of Industrial Psychology to enhance the understanding of the emotion experience.

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**CHAPTER 3**

**CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study is to draw a conclusion from the research article that formed part of this study. Conclusions are drawn in accordance with the research objectives formulated in the article chapter. The limitations of this study will also be discussed and recommendations for future research will be made.

#### 3.1 CONCLUSION

The objectives of this study were firstly to investigate what emotion events are experienced by employees in the workplace. Secondly, this study wanted to determine how emotion events are appraised by employees in the workplace, and finally it wanted to explore what discrete emotions are experienced by employees in the workplace. The findings indicated various emotion events being experienced by participants in the workplace on a regular basis. These events consisted of both positive and negative emotion events. Furthermore, it was found that negative emotion events were appraised as negative eliciting negative discrete emotions and positive emotions were appraised as positive by participants prompting positive discrete emotions in the workplace.

The results will be discussed in accordance to the research objectives formulated with the Sequential Check Theory, as suggested by Scherer, in mind. In answering each research question the negative aspect will be discussed first, followed by the positive aspect of each question.

The first objective was to identify the emotion events experienced by employees in the workplace. The results indicated that 84% of the participants experienced negative emotion events, and a mere 5% experiencing positive emotion events at work.

#### **Categories of Negative Emotion Events Experienced**

Seventeen (17) categories of negative emotion events at work were identified during data analysis. The top five categories included "Victimisation and Bullying" (20), "Health and Safety issues" (10), "Lack of Recognition on Performance" (9), "Workplace Conflict" (7) and "Involvement in Disciplinary Action" (7). Victimisation and bullying were described by

participants as situations in which employees were deliberately humiliated, belittled and verbally abused by higher ranking employees in the presence of fellow colleagues. Various research findings have indicated several physical and psychological consequences for individuals subjected to victimisation and bullying at work (Björkqvist, Österman & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994; Hansen et al., 2005), such as chronic fatigue, insomnia and even increased sickness absenteeism. A study from Leymann (1990) and Björkqvist et al. (1994) similarly indicated that participants experienced lack of concentration, melancholy, apathy, work alienation, helplessness, lower levels of self-esteem and productivity, as well as social phobia due to bullying as negative emotion events at work.

A distinct relationship was found between bullying and victimisation and the prevalence of depression (Kivimäki et al., 2003). A study from Björkqvist et al. (1994) and Einarsen & Hellestøy (1998) similarly indicated that participants showed symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to victimisation and bullying. Furthermore, a study of Matthiesen and Einarsen (2004) reported suicide attempts as one of the outcomes of prolonged exposure to victimisation and bullying in the workplace

The second highest reported emotion events were “*Health and Safety Issues*”. Participants reported these events in the workplace, such as fatal incidents causing serious injury (of oneself or a colleague) or the death of a colleague. In general health and safety issues may include any facet of one’s work environment which may elicit negative effects on one’s physical or emotional well-being (Karazman et al., 1999). Research conducted by Karazman et al. (1999) concluded that health and safety policies at work can have pathogenic properties and may result in aversive emotions, stress, reluctance illness or accidents at the workplace.

Participants in the current study reported that some health and safety issues causing fatalities are mostly due to health and safety policies and procedures not being followed in the workplace, thus linking with the findings of Karazman et al. (1999). The previous information is of the utmost importance as health and safety is important in all industries, more so in the mining industry as it has been classified as one of the most dangerous occupations worldwide (Eweje, 2005).

The third most reported negative emotion events in the workplace were with regards to “*Lack of Recognition of Performance*” (9). This category includes all situations in the workplace in which employees do not receive recognition on performance. According to the participants of the current study this category comprises of the lack of promotion, lack of a bonus and the

lack of verbal recognition for good performance delivered by employees. *Promotions* are types of rewards given to individuals for good performance; individuals are given the opportunity to move to a better position within the organisation. In general, promotions are perceived as positive emotion events resulting in the particular individual experiencing positive emotions (Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate & Fletcher, 2011). The opposite is also true of the lack of promotion for individuals who have been anticipating promotions and do not receive the anticipated promotions.

*Lack of Bonus* is most often perceived as negative. According to Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2011), a bonus can be seen as a tangible reward given to employees for outstanding performance. When individuals perform well at work and receive a bonus, they experience the emotion event as positive. However, the current study and studies conducted by Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2011) and Berg and Theron (2006) found that should the employee perform well and have the expectation to receive a bonus for the good work done, and not receive such a bonus, the emotion event is most often than not acknowledged as a negative emotion event by employees.

Lastly, *Receiving Verbal Recognition* is often viewed as an important component in engagement issues and the well-being of employees (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005). Receiving verbal recognition specifies situations at work in which employees receive positive feedback and praise for good performance by management (Kreibig, Gendolla & Scherer, 2009). The deduction can be made that when one needs verbal recognition or has been expecting verbal recognition for good performance and does not receive it, it will result in the event being experienced as a negative rather than a positive emotion event. This was found in the current study and in a study conducted by Kidd (2008).

Seven (7) participants reported emotion events related to “*Workplace Conflict*”. According to the findings of the current study and studies conducted by Wall and Callister (1995) and Robbins, Judge, Odendal and Roodt (2004), workplace conflict can be viewed as a process initiated when one employee perceives that another has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something that the first employee deems as important and cares about. According to various studies conflict in the workplace has been identified as one of the most frequent negative emotion event reported in the work setting and in most cases it may manifest in stress in the working environment (Ephross & Vassil, 1993; Fox & Spector, 2002; Dasborough, 2006). It has been found that workplace conflict has been related to low job

satisfaction, reduced motivation and performance (Bergman & Volkema, 1989; Derr, 1978). Various studies have indicated that workplace conflict may indeed be much needed if managed correctly, the reason being that the diversity in the work team may lead to assorted and fresh ideas eliciting greater performance (Desivilya, Somech & Lidgoster, 2010; Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999). Moreover, if is not managed appropriately and conflict intensifies, employees may start to withdraw from the work team and organisation which may lead to a decrease in performance and job satisfaction (Strachan & Fuller, 2009) and possibly elicit disengagement of employees (Jehn et al., 1999).

Seven (7) participants reported emotion events regarding Involvement in Disciplinary Action. The aim of discipline is to provide tools to help employees learn how to follow the appropriate behaviour patterns with regards to the roles as set in the employment relationship (Muchinsky, Kriek & Schreuder, 2005). Emotion events regarding involvement in disciplinary actions are most often perceived as negative, because the fear of punishment may incite undesired distresses for employees involved in these actions. The latter was found in the current study and proved to be similar to the findings of De Lara (2006) and Deutsch (1985). This emotion event has not been reported on extendedly, however. Studies on the topic indicated various consequences of employees having to deal with this emotion event, such as anxiety, depression and lower levels of effort exerted by employees (De Lara, 2006; Deutsch, 1985).

“*Ineffective Teamwork*” (5) as negative emotion events experienced at work, were identified as situations in which team members did not work together as a team and as result the team started blaming one another for poor levels of performance. When teams are performing poorly, it adds strain on the team causing these types of circumstances to be experienced as negative emotion events within organisations (Urban et al., 1995). Once a team has performed poorly, it will lead to a decrease in motivation. Poor performance is likely to be repeated if the team structure is not improved and altered to the needs of the group.

An interesting finding was initiated with regards to “*Personal Incidents*”. Five (5) participants reported these incidents as negative emotion events experienced at work. Personal incidents refer to private challenges individuals have to encounter (Thompson, 2005) which have a profound impact on the performance and state of mind of the individual at work as they tend to spill over to one’s working milieu. Two of the personal incidents identified were being diagnosed with cancer and having a loved one who had been identified

with the disease. Up to now this emotion event has not been reported as an emotion event in the context of the emotion experience process per se, which makes this an interesting finding. However, cancer and its influence in the workplace have been studied to some extent but in different settings. Studies on the topic found that cancer treatment can have a great effect on one's life and ability to work.

Regarding "*Human Resource Management Strategies*" five (5) events were reported by participants. Human resource strategies encompass emotion events regarding strategies in the workplace which have to do with demotion and retrenchment. Both demotion and retrenchment have been identified as career obstacles that lead to great career adversity and provoke feelings of anxiety and stress for the future (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002).

Four (4) participants reported "*Behaviour of Work Colleagues*" as negative emotion events experienced in the work setting. These behaviours may typically include any behaviour of one's colleagues or management which may have negative effects on the relationships between the parties. It has been reported that behaviour of work colleagues and the negative perceptions related to the matter may be caused due to difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Kidd, 2008). This may include low job satisfaction and conflict within the team of colleagues working in close proximity (Basch & Fisher, 2000).

Four (4) participants reported "*Organisational Change*" as negative emotion events at work. Kiefer (2005) identified organisational changes as modifications management of organisations makes which may provide wealth of opportunities for growth and development within the organisation. Some consequences of organisational change may include low levels of morale and motivation, a decrease in performance, high turnover and sick-leave, poor internal communication and increased levels of conflict and dysfunctional attitudes at work (Murphy, 1995; Schabracq & Cooper, 2000; Weiss, 2002).

Three (3) participants reported emotion events regarding "*Unsuspected Problems*" experienced in the work environment. These may include any uncontrollable crisis or issues employees have to deal with in their daily activities. Unsuspected events tend to be very stressful and as they tend to be acknowledged as negative emotion events due to the negative emotions they evoke (Kidd, 2008). The consequences of events caused by unsuspected problems elicit feelings of anxiety and irritation which may lead to adverse work-related behaviour.

Two (2) participants reported “*High Workload*” as negative emotion events. Employees experience high workload when they have a high amount of work to be done in a short amount of time. According to Dasborough (2006) work overload or high workload has been identified as one of the most frequent negative emotion events employees experience on a regular basis in the workplace. Research finding of Bakker and Demerouti (2006) concluded that high workload may have various harmful consequences, including the exhaustion of one’s mental and physical resources. The consequences may result in low levels of energy, various health problems, lower levels of attention and fatigue. Furthermore, prolonged exposure to high workload may lead to employees feeling drained of energy which may result in breakdown and eventually burnout (Bakker and Demerouti, 2006).

Two (2) participants reported “*Workplace Policy*” related negative emotion events he or she has encountered in the workplace. In most cases workplace policies provide rules for employees’ behaviour and processes to be followed for the all possible circumstances employees may face in doing their jobs. It also indicates how decisions will be made, who will make those decisions and also how resources will be allocated within the organisation (Forsyth, 2006). In the current study participants reported that workplace policy evokes feelings of resentment and anger by those employees who feel workplace policies apply to them, but other employees ‘do not play by the rules’, yet no actions are taken against those individuals for not keeping to the guidelines provided in the policies. Studies conducted by Ayeree, Budhwar and Chen (2002), found that when employees feel as though workplace policies are not enforced fairly, it will elicit feelings of resentment and organisational injustice and the prevalence of unfair labour practices.

One (1) participant reported “*Lack of Colleague Support*” he or she experienced as a negative emotion event in the working environment. According to Lutgen-Sandvik (2011) social support from colleagues comprises of emotional and instrumental support from co-workers. One of the most important job resources employees need on a daily basis in the workplace to cope effectively with job demands, is colleague support (Bakker and Demerouti, 2006). Participants evaluated the lack of colleague support in crucial situations as negative emotion events in the workplace, because the person felt the support was much needed and he or she did not receive it.

A hypothesis can be formulated from the findings suggesting that the majority of participants experienced negative emotion events on organisational level. The latter statement implies that

79% of the negative emotion events reported was related to the workplace, implying that those events took place at the participants' workplace and not in their personal lives. Furthermore, a simple 5% of negative emotion events were related to events taking place in the personal lives of the individuals spilling over into his or her work life.

Next the results regarding the positive emotion events experience will be discussed as part of first objective.

### **Categories of Positive Emotion Events Experienced**

Eleven (11) participants reported "*Receiving Recognition on Performance*" as positive emotion events experienced at work. This implies that a person receives promotions, bonuses and verbal recognition on good performance. *Promotions* refer to situations where one is rewarded for the unique input he or she brings to the organisation by offering him or her a higher ranking position as the one previously occupied (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2011). Participants describe receiving promotions as positive emotion events filled with excitement as they will be able to take on new challenges and prospects in the workplace. *Receiving a Bonus* as a positive emotion event at work refers to a substantial reward or incentive (usually monetary) employees receive for exceptional performance in the work setting (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2011).

*Receiving Verbal Recognition* refers to employees being the recipients of positive feedback from management for their efforts to achieve a goal, or overall good performance and hard work (Basch & Fisher, 1998). According to Basch and Fisher (1998) and Henzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959), receiving recognition is often related to positive emotions and generally perceived as positive emotion events because of the positive emotions it evokes in the workplace. In general receiving recognition is perceived as a motivational element in the working environment. Once an individual has received verbal recognition for either obtaining a promotion or bonus, it will motivate the employee extrinsically to keep performing well in the future (Kreibig, Gendolla & Scherer, 2009). Receiving recognition and the emotions it elicits are often accompanied by job satisfaction and high levels of performance and engagement to the organisation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006; Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005).

Three (3) participants reported positive emotion events regarding "*Goal Achievement*". Goal achievement refers to accomplishment and progression one has made based on the achievement of the individual instead of his or her social position (Son-Hing, Bobocel &



Zanna, 2002). It implies that the employee finds fulfilment and meaning in the outcomes he or she has achieved after hard work to achieve the goal the individual has set out to attain. Basch and Fisher (2000) concluded that goal achievement as an emotion event is one of the most common indicators of positive emotions being experienced in the workplace. According to Webb (2003) a sense of achievement is related to internal satisfaction for mastering one's sought after accomplishments.

Furthermore, goal achievement has been linked to persistence and engagement in the workplace and frequently correlates with intrinsic motivation (Wright & Kirby, 2001). The feeling of achievement and self-actualisation motivates the individual to persist even in situations where the individual is facing adversity (Wright & Kirby, 2001). Nurmi, Salmela-Aro and Koivisto (2002) concluded that goal achievement elicits positive feelings and consequences for the individual. The individual will therefore strive for goal achievement in his or her future in order to produce success and good performance in the workplace.

From the findings of the current study the hypothesis can be deduced that the participants experienced more positive emotion events on organisational level, as 11% of positive emotion events were events that took place in the employees' working environment. On the contrary, 3% of the positive emotion events experienced by employees was on a personal level due to a sense of self achievement.

The second objective of this study was to determine how emotion events are appraised by employees in the workplace. The appraisal of emotion merely refers to how people understand what is currently taking place in his or her life and how that will influence his or her life in general (Scherer, Schorr & Johnstone, 2001). During data analysis general associated appraisal of events were identified. The question derived from the GAQ forms part of the emotion-focused coping potential. Appraisal aids individuals in selecting the emotion responses which will help him or her reach important goals and fulfil the needs of the situation he or she might be facing (Scherer et al., 2001).

According to Lazarus (1984) the individual approaches the situation by cognitively appraising the given situation, assessing the level of threat the situation holds and the number of resources available to cope effectively with the situation.

### **General Appraisal of associated Negative Emotion Events**

Research on the appraisal of emotion events within South African has been limited. It is therefore important to note that the appraisal of emotions in the context of the present study is unique.

These findings in the current study are unique, because existing research does not apply the appraisal theory practically as was done here. The findings of this study indicated that the majority of participants felt as though the negative emotion events could *possibly* have been avoided or modified by appropriate human action. According to Scherer et al. (2001) this is related to the amount of control one has over an emotion event taking place as one of the components of the appraisal process. It is imperative to note that the suggested appropriate human action does not imply action taken by the individuals themselves but perhaps by someone in a position of power.

The deduction can be made that participants felt that as individuals they did not have control over the event and that the negative event could have been avoided with the appropriate human action from those in power – e.g. management - to take action to prevent negative emotion events. This statement suggests that participants felt as though the situation and those in that situation could have changed the outcome of the event. This proposed that the participants experienced external locus of control. Furthermore, control in this sense simply implies that individuals feel the events could have been prevented or the consequences could have been changed or modified by an accepted driving force other than themselves (Miller, 1980).

The next check of the coping dimension of appraisal is the power check. In general the appraisal of negative emotion events indicates that participants felt that the consequence of the events could have been avoided or modified to some extent. This indicates that the majority of participants felt that other people had the power to exert control and take appropriate action in preventing the events and the negative consequences of those events. Scherer et al. (2001) stated that when one is able to make effective use of the resources to one's exposure to change the event and the outcome of that event in correlation to one's own interests; one has made effective use of the power check. This will aid one in being able to live with consequences of the event.

Furthermore, the power check refers to the probability of influencing a potentially controllable event or having the help of others to possibly control the event entirely. As Miller (1980) proposed the event could have been prevented or the potential consequences of the events could have been altered should one utilise the most appropriate driving force or involve those who do poses the power to make changes and prevent negative events from taking place. In this study it was found that employees felt they did not have the power or the control to prevent the negative events from taking place. The deduction can thus be made that participants felt that those in power with the resources at their disposal could have controlled the state of affairs and possibly even have prevented the events from taking place. In the process the levels of stress would have been reduced, as suggested by Seyle (1993).

According to Scherer et al. (2001), when negative emotion events are appraised contrary to the intention of the individual, the appraisal will bring forth negative means of coping in response. The strategies of coping with a low sense of control and power over what happens in one's working environment may include avoidance coping, suppression of emotion and emotional detachment (Aitken & Crawford, 2007; Ashkanasky & Daus, 2002; Lazarus, 1991). Avoidance coping describes the situation where one withdraws or moves away from one's offender causing the negative event, or withdrawing from the negative event itself (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2006; Lazarus, 1991). Suppression on the other hand describes the draining process of managing or regulating one's true emotions in the workplace on a regular basis (Ashkanasky & Daus, 2002; Grandey, 2000).

However, the consequences of suppression are that negative emotions are bottled up. This may result in counterproductive work behaviours and actions. The pitfall of both avoidance and suppression as coping mechanisms is that there is no healthy outlet or expression of the negative emotions experienced. This may cause emotional exhaustion, burnout, low organisational commitment, low job satisfaction and ultimately weakness of one's immune system which may lead to illnesses such as hypertension and cancer (Abraham, 1999; Ashkanasky & Daus, 2002).

There are two ways of looking at emotion detachment. The first way of using emotion detachment as a coping strategy is to cope with one's emotions at work and to protect one's own emotions and dignity in the process (Erickson, 2004). Even though detachment as a coping strategy may protect the employees to some extent at work, it does have its

limitations. These include the narrowing of the individual's motivation and hope for a better future (Erickson, 2004).

The second way of utilising detachment as a coping mechanism is most often considered as more positive or effective as it enables employees to psychologically detach themselves from work during non-work time (Sonnetag & Bayer, 2005). Detachment in this sense provides employees with time to recover from the negative emotion events they might encounter in the workplace (Sonnetag, Kuttler & Fritz, 2009).

The third coping dimension has been identified as the adjustment check. The adjustment check refers to a person being able to adjust or adapt and live with the costs of an emotion event to some extent, once all possible interventions have been exhausted (Scherer et al., 2001). The general response of individual participants was that they could to some extent live with the consequences of an emotion event could it not be modified or avoided. The interpretation can be made that participants felt that as individuals they did not possess the power or the control to change the situation and in response the only option may be to adjust to the situation as there might be no other outcome. This response indicates a sense of adjustment for the sake of survival and implies coping with the situation as best as possible, even in difficult times.

### **General Appraisal of associated Positive Emotion Events**

Scherer (2009) stated that when an emotion event is appraised as vastly significant to an individual's current needs and goals within a situation and it is supposed to further the person in achieving his or her needs or goals, it can be concluded that the positive emotion event has been appraised as positive and will bring about positive emotions. It was found in this study that the majority of participants felt that the emotion event experienced could not have been avoided or modified by human action. Furthermore, the individuals did not have control and power over the events and no action from them could change the outcomes of the event. The deduction can be made that the power and control were in the hands of others, and the actions of others led to the positive emotion events.

Despite the fact the power and control were controlled by others, it did not elicit a negative appraisal, as the outcome of the event was in parallel to the needs and goals of the employees experiencing the positive event. The event aided the participants to achieve their individual goals or fulfil their needs and as such a positive appraisal of the event was stimulated.

According to Lazarus (1991) positive emotion events more often than not elicit positive emotions being experienced.

The inference can be made that one would be able to live with experiencing positive rather than negative emotions at work. This study verified the above because participants reported that as individuals they could easily live with the consequences of the positive emotion events. When investigating the results, it seemed as though individuals find it easier to cope and live with the consequences of positive emotion events than with that of negative emotion events, because positive emotions are intrinsically satisfying (Demir, Desmet & Hekkert, 2009).

The third objective of this study was to explore what discrete emotions are experienced by employees in the workplace, because events often take place which may elicit various emotions in response to those stimuli. Weiss and Cropanaza (1996) concluded that the emotions one experiences in reaction to emotion events will have an impact on one's behaviour and attitudes. Fisher (2002) agreed with the Weiss and Cropanazo, adding that one should distinct between negative and positive emotion events, how they have been appraised and ultimately the positive and negative emotions elicited by those events.

### **General Negative Discrete Emotions Experienced**

According to Frijda (1993) emotions may be considered as an individual's response to an event or object, for example one may be angry at someone or something. Lazarus (1991) has concluded that positive emotions ascend from beneficial events or conditions whereas various negative emotions may arise from certain detrimental or threatening conditions or events. In this study the findings suggested that the participants experience more negative emotion events and as result they experience more negative emotions once the appraisal process has been completed. These findings echo the findings of Kaiser and Müller (2007) who concluded that negative emotion events elicit negative emotions in the workplace.

Furthermore, various researchers differentiated between inward-focused negative emotions and outward-focused negative emotions (Fischer & Tangney, 1995; Lazarus, 1991). Inward-focused negative emotions can be conceptualised as self-conscious emotions. These emotions are stimulated when a person appraises himself or herself negatively, or if individuals feel as though other people are judging him or her negatively (Fischer & Tangney, 1995; Ortony, Clore & Collins, 1988). Inward-focused emotions may be prompted when individuals'

behaviour or some aspect of their self is not in relation with the person's personal morals or values and the person feels a loss or a threat of loss of his or her social or personal character (Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001). Guilt, humiliation, disappointment and demotivation were four inward-focussed emotions identified of the twelve general negative emotion events reported by participants in this study.

Contradictory to inward-focused negative emotions are outward-focused negative emotions. These emotions occur when individuals evaluate other parties and assess the other parties' role in causing the problem or negative emotion event (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Examples of the outward-focussed emotions may include anger and hostility. The general negative emotions reported by the participants regarding outward-focussed negative emotions include rage, disgust, despair, irritation, anger, surprise, sadness and fear.

The inferences can be made that negative outward-focused emotions are associated with blaming another party for the emotion event as a result of that party's actions (Barclay et al., 2005). The findings of Barclay et al. (2005) showed a relationship with the findings of the present study, indicating that participants experienced negative emotions after appraising these events negatively. Participants reported feeling as though the organisation or object in the environment was the cause of these events, and action could have been taken to prevent these negative events which were the stimuli of the negative emotions.

Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) made the connection between positive emotions and high levels of performance and beneficial outcomes for the organisation. The inference can be made that that negative emotions may be related to lower levels of performance, job satisfaction and engagement. The former may be accurate, as Frijda (1985) and Smith and Pope (1992) suggested that if negative emotion events are appraised as motive inconsistent, they will elicit negative emotions resulting in negative consequences in the workplace.

### **General Positive Discrete Emotions Experienced**

When an emotion event is appraised as positive and highly significant to one's needs and goals, the event will bring about positive emotions (Scherer, 2009). The former findings were in line with the current study as the participants who reported positive emotion events appraised these events positively, which stimulated positive emotion events being experienced. Various general positive discrete emotions were reported. These positive emotions experienced by the participants included joy, pleasure, pride, excitement and

surprise. It can be noted that fewer positive emotions were reported by the participants in relation to the number of negative emotions reported.

However, it has been reported that positive emotions may have more profound and lasting values for employees than that of negative emotions. Garland et al. (2010) deduced that positive emotions have the ability to extend one's thoughts and action repertoires, increase one's intellectual flexibility, and increase one's meaning-based coping, engagement (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Staw, Robert & Pelled, 1994), social relationships and finally performance. In addition, positive emotions help form more resilient individual resources which will provoke further positive emotions. According to Fredrickson (1998) and Garland et al. (2010), this will lead to self-sustaining increased well-being (Fredrickson, 1998; Garland et al, 2010).

The inference can be made that positive emotions are experienced by employees in the workplace when the basic distinct necessities of employees are met within the organisation. Harter, Schmidt and Keyes (2002) suggested that once the basic needs of employees are met, it will function to extend the employees' attention, cognition and action in regions which are related to the prosperity of the organisation (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002).

### **3.2 LIMITATIONS**

Despite the positive results found in this study, the study was not without limitations. Firstly, the sample group was not representative in terms of age. Although all age groups were moderately represented, the age group of 45-55 years represented 48% of the sample. The sample needs to include more participants of the other age groups to ensure a representative sample regarding age. Secondly, the sample existed predominantly of males representing 84% of the sample and females a mere 16%. It is important to ensure that the sample includes a balanced number of males and females to ensure the generalisation of findings of the study.

Furthermore, the sample was a convenience sample and as result participants were of the Gauteng and North-West region solely in the mining industry. Therefore the findings cannot be generalised to all industries or the other provinces of South Africa. Generalisation of the current results requires further experiential investigation. Thirdly, the race ratio was out of balance with 65% White, 14% Coloured, 12% Black and 9% Indian participants, indicating a sample largely consisting of white male participants. The sampling should be more divers and

include more women and different races for the purpose of generalisation. Secondly, there was no control for any external influences prior to reporting emotion events and the appraisal of those.

Fourthly, the sample consisted of professional workers in the mining industry. However, the designation of professions was not representative of all professions and 39% of the participants were professionals in production in the mining industry and as result the findings cannot be generalised across all professions.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.3.1 Recommendations on organisational level**

The benefit of conducting this research is that one would be able to gain a better understanding of the emotion experience process as a whole and not merely as independent components. Once better understanding has been gained of the emotion events, emotion appraisal and the resulting discrete emotion, better understanding of emotion experiences will be obtained to implement better strategies in organisations to prevent any negative consequences of the events for employees' lives and performance. More research on the process and how it pans out practically in the workplace is necessary across all industries. One needs to take into account all three components to gain the best information on emotion experiences. Researchers need to go back to the basics to truly understand emotion experiences as a whole. This information is necessary for organisations to better the well-being programmes and quality of life of their employees.

Health and safety issues often lead to injuries and possibly death. For this reason organisations need to become pro-active in preventing these events from taking place. Health and safety needs to be priority within all organisations and should be reflected in the safety-related policies and procedures of all organisations. Organisations should strive to make employees aware on a daily basis of health and safety issues within the organisation by having posters, blogs and health and safety forums to continuously reinforce this knowledge. Motivating employees by rewarding them for adhering to health and safety policies and procedures, organisations will be able to create a culture and climate of health and safety promotion. This will elicit feelings of engagement from employees as it implies that the organisation is taking care of its employees (Griffin & Neal, 2000).



An interesting finding was that cancer was mentioned as a personal issue employees may have to face. Organisations need to become more informed about chronic illnesses such as cancer, TB and HIV/AIDS and implement policies and procedures to guide the process should an employee contract any of these diseases. Policies and procedures need to include alternative jobs or flexible work hours for those diagnosed with these illnesses

Participants in this study identified unfairness of punishment for not adhering to policies and procedures as negative emotion events. Some employees are punished for not adhering to policies and procedures, but other employees who do not adhere to policies and procedures will not be punished at all. It is recommended that organisations take steps to ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to, and punishment for not adhering to these is applied fairly. One of the consequences for not paying this matter enough attention might be counter-productive behaviours in the workplace.

Furthermore, it is recommended that organisations provide training and information for employees regarding detachment as a coping mechanism where employees are taught to detach from work in non-work time and take part in leisure activities. This will provide employees the time needed to recover from work and keep the employees engaged. Examples of activities can be provided as well as the benefits of detachment as a coping mechanism can be provided when training is done.

Findings of this study have identified achievement as a positive emotion, as well as the positive effects of achieving a goal one has set for him or herself. With this in mind, organisations should encourage its employees to continue studying if the employees wish to pursue this goal. However, support should be provided to employees who wish to study as a means of achieving their goals.

More general recommendations for organisations include the employment of an Industrial Psychologist and referring all employees experiencing difficult emotion experiences to that person to help them in coping and working through the process in the most effective manner for the best possible outcomes. Training in emotional intelligence may be of good use in managerial positions, as it will enable managers to be aware of the emotional states of the employees in their care. This will aid managers to identify employees who may be experiencing negative emotions and help them to deal with those emotions before these employee's behaviour and performance are influenced in a negative manner.

### **3.3.2 Recommendations regarding future research**

Even though the study has limitations, various recommendations can be made for future research. With regards to information on emotion events, emotion appraisal and the elicited discrete emotion, it is recommended that researchers continue to investigate the emotion experiences with the entire process in mind. This should be done across all industries and not only among professional workers, but also among the non-professional employees. With regards to the sampling, researchers could consider not to make use of an availability sample, but rather consider the use of quota sampling to have the most diverse sample possible

All information and insight gained from this study should be shared with organisations to better interventions on how to deal with emotion experiences and the consequences. Pro-active programmes should be put in place to help individuals to deal with emotion experiences in the most appropriate manner before they are entirely transformed into negative experiences.

The process of emotions experiences has not been fully researched in South Africa; this study can contribute in this regard. When organisations possess this information and they keep the cultural relevance and diverse population in mind, it might help them to know what the process will be like for different cultures, and what is needed to implement interventions suited for all cultures, races, genders and ages. Once this is done, organisations will be able to aid their employees to cope more affectively with emotion experiences and the possible outcomes of those experiences.

Furthermore, some of the emotion events are yet to be research to the extent needed to understand them properly and in the process gain understanding of the consequences they can have on the organisation. Two of these negative emotion events include Behaviour of Work Colleagues and Unsuspected Problems at Work.

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