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Corporate Social Responsibility, Operating Environment, Employee Empowerment: A Causal Model on Business Performance of Mining Companies in Region XI

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to identify the best-fit model for business performance among 400 managers, supervisors, and lead personnel within mining companies in Region XI. The study assessed the relationship between the exogenous variables, namely corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment, and the business performance as endogenous variable. The research utilized a standardized survey instrument using a quantitative, non-experimental design and a descriptive-correlational technique. The data collection process employed a stratified random sampling technique through both face-to-face and online methods. Various statistical analyses, including Pearson product-moment correlation, mean, and structural equation modeling, were employed to fulfill the study's objectives. The study's findings show that operating environment, corporate social responsibility, and business performance exhibited a very high result, while employee empowerment got a high result. Furthermore, all three exogenous variables were significantly associated with the endogenous variable of business performance. Among the different models assessed, Model 5 emerged as the best-fit model. This model highlighted corporate social responsibility, focusing on legal and ethical aspects, the operating environment considering industry regulation and competition, and employee empowerment, emphasizing meaningfulness and competence. Notably, profit and sales growth indicators represented the business performance model, which remained integral to the model's structure.

I. INTRODUCTION

The mining industry operates in a highly competitive landscape, particularly in countries abundant in mineral resources (Aarstad et al., 2018). In the Philippines, mining companies face various challenges, including but not limited to labor shortages, environmental degradation, and sustainability concerns on Homonhon Island in Samar (Angmineronews, 2023). In Tampakan, South Cotabato, issues about community and environment and challenges related to government regulations further compound the difficulties mining enterprises face (Sarmiento, 2022; Ilagan, 2021). Moreover, the international mining sector grapples with additional issues, as highlighted in the study conducted by Oh, Shin, and Ho (2022). Issues such as work engagement, intrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction have been identified as significant challenges, underscoring the multifaceted nature of obstacles encountered by mining operations on a global scale.

Furthermore, business performance is vital for mining companies, as it directly influences their sustainability, profitability, and overall success within the industry. Mining companies prioritizing sustainable business performance can create value, build resilience, and differentiate themselves in the market. By aligning their operations with sustainability principles, mining companies can improve their financial performance, attract investment, and ensure long-term viability in an evolving regulatory and social landscape (Hassani, Huang, Silva, & Ghodsi, 2018; Boutilier & Thomson, 2018). As a result, effective business performance management enables mining companies to navigate

challenges, optimize operations, and achieve their strategic objectives, ultimately contributing to sustainable development, operational efficiency, stakeholder trust, and long-term success in the industry (Cunningham, Higgs, & Williams, 2019).

Operating environment, employee empowerment, and Corporate social responsibility (CSR) are closely linked to business performance depending on the context and industry. However, evidence suggests that effectively managing CSR initiatives can yield numerous benefits, including enhanced financial performance, improved stakeholder relations, and long-term sustainability (Coelho, Jayantilal, & Ferreira, 2023). On the other hand, the operating environment significantly influences business performance by presenting both opportunities and challenges for companies. Successful businesses adapt to the dynamic working environment, capitalize on opportunities, mitigate risks, and innovate continuously to maintain or enhance their performance over time (Handoyo, Suharman, Ghani, & Soedarsono, 2023). Employee empowerment is closely associated with various aspects of business performance, including increased motivation, engagement, innovation, customer satisfaction, talent retention, and overall organizational success. Empowering employees contributes to the Organization's success and can drive improved performance and sustainable growth (Pathomphatthaphan, Das, & Jena, 2023).

On the other hand, various theories are essential for corporate social responsibility (CSR), operating environment, and employee empowerment in improving the performance of mining companies. Stakeholder theory, as articulated by Freeman (2010), underscores the relationships between a business and its various stakeholders, encompassing suppliers, investors, customers, communities, employees, and other activities of the Organization. Within the realm of mining enterprises, as posited by Ansu-Mensah, Marfo, Awuah, and Amoako (2021), the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives holds the potential to foster stronger connections with communities impacted by mining activities, diminish social tensions, and bolster the social license essential for operational continuity. Effectively addressing social and environmental concerns enables mining companies to mitigate potential risks and cultivate an environment conducive to attracting investments and sustaining backing from internal and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) emphasizes that competitiveness is determined by how they deal with their external resources. Companies depend on various external factors such as commodity prices, government regulations, access to land and resources, and relationships with suppliers and customers. Managing these dependencies and adapting to changes in the operating environment is crucial for business performance in mining companies. The theory explains resource dependencies and their implications for organizational strategies, decision-making, and performance (Song, Zhao, Shang, & Chen, 2020). On the other hand, empowerment theory (Spreitzer, 1995) focuses on psychological empowerment in the workplace, which is relevant to understanding employee empowerment in mining companies. Greater authority over the employees can significantly boost their motivation, job satisfaction, and loyalty. Empowered employees are more inclined to take initiative, offer creative suggestions, and exert discretionary effort, all of which contribute to the overall success of mining companies (Ngqeza & Dhanpat, 2021)

Moreover, the model illustrates the direct association of independent variables, namely corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment, on the dependent variable, business performance, as supported by theories. The first independent variable is corporate social responsibility (CSR), which has four indicators: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (Galbreath, 2008). CSR in mining is crucial for enhancing companies' social and environmental performance. The negative impacts, engaging stakeholders, supporting local development, and maintaining a social license to operate encompasses the range of minimizing practices. By prioritizing CSR, mining companies can contribute to sustainable development and create long-term value for the Organization and the communities they serve (Driessen & Kok, 2017).

The second independent variable is the operating environment, which compromises three indicators: industry regulations, competition, and market conditions (Wanyoike, 2016). The working environment in mining directly impacts the strategic decision-making processes, risk management, and overall business performance of mining companies. It offers insights into various strategies and techniques that can be used to successfully assess and manage the operating environment (Ma & Chen, 2019). Furthermore, Blanchette, Higgs, and MacNeill (2020) highlight the importance of effectively managing the working environment, including understanding market dynamics, complying with regulations, and proactively engaging with stakeholders. These aspects are crucial for the achievement of strategic objectives, maintaining a competitive edge, and mitigating risks in the mining industry.

Lastly, the third independent variable is employee empowerment, assessed through four key indicators: meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact (Ugboro, 2006). Empowering employees fosters positive, enhanced job satisfaction and promotes innovation, creativity, and a healthy work environment. By providing employees with the autonomy and authority to make decisions, mining companies can tap into their knowledge and

expertise, which leads to high performance and engaged and motivated employees (Madsen & Snow,2018). In addition, Ozaralli (2015) highlighted the role of empowerment in fostering a positive work environment, improving job satisfaction, promoting innovation, and enhancing employee motivation and engagement. Understanding and implementing empowerment practices can contribute to mining companies' success and sustainable growth.

The dependent variable of this study is business performance, which encompasses three indicators: profit, sales growth, and market growth (Byukusenge, Munene, & Orobia, 2016). Mining companies strive for strong business performance to create value for their shareholders while minimizing negative impacts on employees, local communities, and the environment. These dual objective underscores the importance of responsible mining practices and a focus on business performance. By adhering to responsible mining principles and prioritizing business performance, mining companies can succeed on their own and have a significant impact, fostering long-term sustainability and positive effects on the mining industry. Through these efforts, mining companies can contribute to the well-being of their stakeholders and promote environmental stewardship and sustainable mining practices (World Gold Council, 2019).
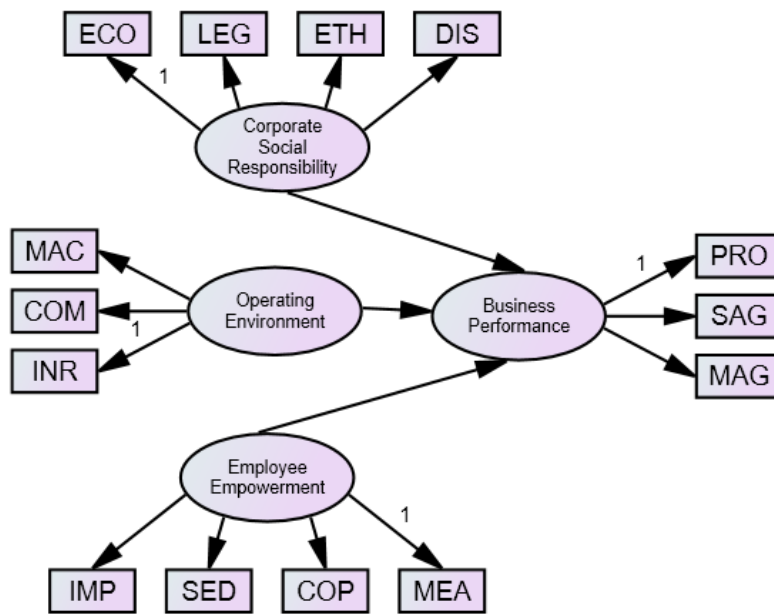

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

Legend:
ECO - Economic
LEG - Legal
ETH - Ethical
DIS - Discretionary
INR– Industry Regulations
COM- Competition
MAC – Market Conditions
MEA - Meaningfulness
COP - Competence
SED–Self determination
IMP–Impact
PRO - Profit
SAG–Sale Growth
MAG–Market Growth

Given the context above, this study focuses on the variabilities of business performance concerning the several factors that primarily affect the operation and performance of mining companies. In the previous context, the researcher uses this study to design the best-fit model of business performance mining companies in Region XI. This study measures business performance to other variables such as corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment. Also, the result of this study will be of great interest to other researchers, stakeholders, investors, employees, and even the company's decision-makers, as well as to the overall business operation. Thus, making this undertaking will be a matter of social relevance.

This study aims to determine the best-fit model that predicts the business performance of mining companies in Region XI. Specifically, this study has the following objectives: to identify the level of corporate social responsibility among mining companies in terms of economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary; to measure the level of the operating environment of mining companies in terms of industry regulations, competition, and market conditions; to determine the level of employee empowerment in terms of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact; to ascertain the level of business performance as perceived by mining companies in terms of profit, sales growth, and market growth; to determine the significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and business performance, operating environment and business performance, and employee empowerment and business performance; and to recognize the best-fit model on business performance of mining companies in Region XI.

Furthermore, the null hypothesis was examined at a significance level of 0.05. There is no significant relationship between business performance and corporate social responsibility, operating environment and business performance, and employee empowerment and business performance, and there is no best-fit model that predicts the business performance of mining companies in Region XI.

The study's findings represent a significant empirical contribution to the existing knowledge base, offering valuable insights into business performance within mining companies by considering the interplay of corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment. By presenting a new theoretical model of business performance in the mining sector, this study not only enhances the understanding of the industry dynamics but also underscores its relevance to economic development. As the mining industry strives towards achieving Decent Work and Economic Growth under Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 8, the study highlights the critical importance of addressing fundamental issues such as work engagement, intrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction. These elements are essential for encouraging sustainable development within the industry and ensuring the well-being of employees (Oh, Shin, & Ho, 2022). By prioritizing fair and inclusive working conditions, the study advocates for the well-being of employees and the fostering of sustainable economic growth within the industry.

Moreover, in line with the broader sustainable development goals, the study emphasizes the revolutionary potential of sustainable mining techniques. By embracing sustainability principles, responsible consumption, and production (SDG 12), and climate action (SDG 13), mining companies can improve their financial performance and contribute positively to environmental and social sustainability. As discussed in the study, effective business performance management is crucial for mining companies to overcome challenges, optimize operations, and achieve strategic objectives (Cunningham et al., 2019). This emphasis on innovation and efficient infrastructure aligns with Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure under SDG 9, further emphasizing the mining sector's role in driving sustainable development. Overall, the research offers a thorough comprehension of the multifaceted nature of business performance in mining companies, highlighting its implications for industry practitioners and policymakers in advancing sustainable development agendas.

Additionally, the findings of this study serve as fundamental data and supplementary resources for researchers and academics interested in further exploring the business performance of mining companies. This supports Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), highlighting the importance of collaboration and knowledge-sharing in addressing complex global challenges. By disseminating this information, the study contributes to global initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and foster sustainable development within the mining industry. This collaboration and exchange of knowledge are essential for driving innovation and facilitating informed decision-making to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the mining sector and promote its sustainable development.

II.   METHOD

Research Respondents

This study employs a systematic and scientific approach in selecting research respondents for the survey. The study was focused on collecting data from a targeted group comprising 400 individuals who held positions as managers, supervisors, or lead men. The data on the list of mining companies in Region XI was obtained from the Mindanao Geosciences Bureau, and it was the basis for determining the study's respondents. Furthermore, when using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, a sample size greater than 200 is deemed ideal (Deng, Yang, & Marcoulides, 2018). The structural equation model necessitates larger sample sizes due to its complex nature, as it involves simultaneous analysis of multiple variables and latent constructs (Dash & Paul, 2021). Therefore, considering 400 respondents in this study, it is deemed appropriate and well-justified. By surpassing the suggested threshold of 200, the researchers have taken a prudent approach to enhance the accuracy and robustness of the SEM analysis in this study.

Stratified random sampling is a robust sampling technique utilized to select respondents for the study. This method ensures a representative and diverse sample while considering the researcher's inclusion criteria. By creating discrete subgroups or strata within the target population based on specific attributes, stratified random sampling ensures an adequate representation of each stratum in the final sample, enhancing the generalizability of the results (Babbie & Mouton, 2016).This study's participants were supervisors, lead men, or managers of mining companies located in Region XI. To ensure the inclusion of qualified individuals, specific criteria were considered when selecting respondents.

The Respondents must have held managerial, supervisory, or lead roles within mining companies for at least one (1) year. Moreover, the mining company should have been operational for at least five (5) years, indicating industry experience and stability. On the other side, non-managerial and non-supervisory level employees were omitted since, according to the nature of their field of study, they cannot accurately evaluate the scope of this research undertaking. Further, it is crucial to note that the ethical well-being and autonomy of the respondents were prioritized. If a participant felt uncomfortable or intimidated or experienced actual or perceived physical, psychological, or emotional harm, they could withdraw as a respondent from the study. Further, limiting the survey to Region XI enabled a more focused investigation into the mining businesses within that specific geographic area.

The researcher's decision to investigate mining companies in Region XI was driven to determine the relationship between the operating environment, corporate social responsibility (CSR), employee empowerment, and business performance in a broader scope. The researcher's objective in conducting this study in the area was to provide readers with a thorough grasp of the performance of mining businesses in the operating environment, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and employee empowerment as independent factors. This study holds significance as it marks the first application of multivariate analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in the Region, thereby contributing to the advancement of research in the area. This form of analysis facilitates a comprehensive examination of the relationships between variables, providing insightful information on how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the operating environment, employee empowerment, and business performance interact.

Materials and Instrument

An adjusted and modified questionnaire was utilized in this study to achieve its objectives effectively. Initially, surveys from various relevant researchers served as a foundation. However, these surveys underwent comprehensive restructuring to ensure their relevance to the current situation, local, and focus of the study. A panel of six experts, comprising one external validator and five internal validators, participated in the validation process for the modified and adjusted questionnaires. Variables such as objectivity, appropriateness, applicability of questions within each category, presentation, item organization, and alignment with the study's primary goal were carefully considered during the validation process. The validated survey questionnaire received an excellent rating of 4.60.

Furthermore, the questionnaire underwent a pre-testing phase using Cronbach's Alpha, a technique commonly employed by scholars to assess the validity of surveys containing numerous questions that utilize the Likert scale. This step was crucial in ensuring the instrument's applicability and reliability. The Cronbach alpha for corporate social responsibility, operating environment, employee empowerment, and business performance are .951, .847, and .947, respectively. The resulting alpha is greater than the acceptable alpha based on the reliability index by Shi and Sun (2012). The first instrument measures the extent of CSR with the following indicators: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (Galbreath, 2008). The second instrument is the operating environment from the study of Wanyoike (2016), which has three domains: industry regulations, competition, and market conditions. The instrument for assessing employee empowerment, the third component, was adapted from research conducted by Ugboro (2006) and encompassed four indicators: impact, meaningfulness, competence, and self-determination. Meanwhile, the fourth

instrument, focusing on business performance, drew inspiration from the study by Byukusenge, Munene, and Orobia (2016) based on three indicators: profit, sales growth, and market growth. Respondents indicated their answers using a Likert scale as shown below:

Range of Means	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	This means that the measures of CSR, OE, EE, and BP are always observed.
3.40 – 4.19	High	This means that the measures of CSR, OE, EE, and BP are often observed.
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	This means that the measures of CSR, OE, EE, and BP are sometimes observed.
1.80 – 2.59	Low	This means that the measures of CSR, OE, EE, and BP are seldom observed.
1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	This means that the measures of CSR, OE, EE, and BP are never observed.

5	Strongly Agree
4	Agree
3	Moderately Agree
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

The level of corporate social responsibility (CSR), operating environment (OE), employee empowerment (EE), and business performance (BP) are interpreted using the scale below:

Design and Procedure

This study adopted a quantitative, non-experimental research approach to develop a comprehensive business performance model. Employing a combination of structural equation modeling and descriptive-correlational techniques, the research aimed to expound the studies on the business performance of mining companies in Region XI. As elucidated by Asenahabi (2019), non-experimental research involves observing natural events without considering unnecessary variables. Nassaji (2015) posited that descriptive research is geared towards meticulously describing and categorizing phenomena. Moreover, according to Bloomfield and Fisher (2019), correlational research seeks to uncover relationships between similar variables across diverse populations or within the same population across multiple variables (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019).

Moreover, this study employs structural equation modeling (SEM), a powerful analytical tool, to craft an optimal model for the subjects under investigation. SEM is increasingly favored in scientific research for evaluating and interpreting multivariate causal relationships. Fan et al. (2016) highlighted that SEM offers a robust multivariate technique. Tripathi and Jha (2017) underscore the significance of the structural model in elucidating how latent variables interrelate. Furthermore, this study examines the relationships among the endogenous variable, business performance, and three exogenous variables: operating environment, employee empowerment, and corporate social responsibility.

The data collection process for this study involved several procedures. Securing approval to initiate the study marks the initial phase, and it was officially certified by the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee on October 9, 2023. Additionally, authorization letters from the university's professional dean were acquired on the same day to facilitate the survey. After the approval of the letter, on October 11, 2023, the researcher conducted a pilot study utilizing the validated questionnaire focused on mining enterprises in Region XI. The researcher used face-to-face and

online data collection, following the safety protocols for face-to-face surveys. Following the successful pilot testing and the approval from the statistician, the researcher distributed and gathered the research questionnaire from the designated mining enterprises in Region XI between October 16, 2023, and November 16, 2023.

Upon data collection, the subsequent steps involve coding, tabulating, and employing various statistical techniques to analyze the gathered information. Operating environment, business performance, employee empowerment, and corporate social responsibility were all measured using the mean. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation, commonly known as Pearson R, was employed to examine the correlations between the variables. Furthermore, it was utilized to identify the optimal model for assessing the business performance of mining enterprises in Region XI and to explore the relationships between the operating environment, business performance, and corporate social responsibility. Further, all included indices must fall within acceptable thresholds to identify the most suitable model. Specifically, the p-value should exceed 0.05, and the degrees of freedom/chi-square ratio should be less than 5. Additionally, the pclose value for the root mean square error of approximation should be greater than 0.05 and less than 0.05, respectively. Furthermore, indicators such as the goodness of fit, comparative fit, Tucker-Lewis, and normed fit index should all surpass 0.95.

The researcher emphasized upholding ethical norms throughout the study to safeguard participants' rights and maintain the confidentiality of the data they provided. Under protocol number UMERC-2023-431 (Appendix G), the study procedure underwent evaluation to ensure alignment with the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee's (UMERC) predefined criteria and recommendations. Several measures were implemented to ensure adherence to ethical principles during both the evaluation and execution of the study protocol. The researcher prioritized maintaining the confidentiality of participants' information and protecting their rights by strictly observing these ethical standards.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the insights obtained from lead men, supervisors, and managers of mining companies in Region XI regarding various aspects, including corporate social responsibility, operating environment, employee empowerment, and business performance.

Level of Corporate Social Responsibility

Table 1 illustrates the level of corporate social responsibility (CSR) demonstrated by mining enterprises in Region XI, categorized by economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary factors. The overall aggregate mean score of 4.19 (with a standard deviation of 0.34) indicates a high level of CSR adherence. This suggests consistent observance of CSR practices. Upon examining each indicator individually, it was found that the discretionary factor had the lowest mean score of 4.10 (considered High), with a standard deviation of 0.41. In contrast, the legal factor exhibited the highest mean score of 4.32 (classified as Very High), with a standard deviation of 0.33. Thus, mining businesses in Region XI were identified as having high CSR commitment.

The results indicate a notable commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) among lead men, supervisors, and managers within the mining sector. This suggests that mining corporations consistently prioritize CSR initiatives. The findings highlight that these corporations actively engage in behaviors conducive to achieving a high level of CSR. Such actions aim to ensure environmental sustainability and enhance local communities' well-being. Moreover, the majority of CSR initiatives undertaken by mining corporations align with the objectives outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These corporations allocate significant resources to generate value, uphold, and sometimes adapt to meet the needs of stakeholders. This strategic approach is primarily motivated by demands from the financial sector and an increasing awareness of reputational concerns.

Table 1. Level of Corporate Social Responsibility of Mining Company

Indicators		SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Economic		0.41	4.20	Very High
Legal		0.33	4.32	Very High
Ethical		0.43	4.14	High
Discretionary		0.41	4.10	High
	Overall	**0.34**	**4.19**	**High**

Mining Companies in Region XI are perceived to have a high level of corporate social responsibility, with extreme performance in economic and legal aspects. This implies that mining companies in Region XI always observed these practices. This is coherent with the findings of Parker and Cox (2020), who emphasized that the effective implementation of CSR is obtained when the company closely monitors the employees' productivity. The management is informed of the relevant environmental laws. These social responsibilities are essential in setting strategic goals for the company's decision-making. This positive evaluation contrasts the problems outlined in the introduction, which focuses on the issues of community, environment, and government regulations of mining companies in Region XII (Sarmiento, 2022; Ilagan, 2021).

In addition to this result, the ethical and discretionary demonstrate a high level of CSR, which implies that these indicators are often observed in mining companies. The high-level description supports the claim of Lagdamen and Schneider (2023) on the importance of a code of conduct in doing business and the company's obligation to diverse stakeholders, including employees, shareholders, communities, and clients.

Level of Operating Environment

Table 2 presents the level of industry regulations, competition, and market conditions as operating environment factors. The overall mean score of 3.71 indicates a high level, implying that mining businesses often conform to industry standards and regulations. Upon analyzing each indicator individually, it was found that the market condition indicator had the lowest mean score of 3.56 (classified as High), with a standard deviation of 0.41. In contrast, the competition indicator had the highest mean score of 3.83 (considered High), with a standard deviation 0.53. The positive perception of the operating environment for mining companies in Region XI is underscored by the high levels observed across all indicators. This emphasizes the importance of market conditions, competition, and industry regulations in fostering the success and sustainability of mining operations in the Region.

Table 2. Level of Operating Environment of Mining Companies

Indicators		SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Industry Regulations		0.49	3.73	High
Competition		0.53	3.83	High
Market Conditions		0.41	3.56	High
	Overall	**0.37**	**3.71**	**High**

The high level of industry regulation within the operating environment aligns with the conclusions drawn by Jones and Miller (2019), who emphasized the importance of compliance with industry regulations for ethical and sustainable mining practices. Adherence to rules is crucial for maintaining a social license, fostering positive relationships with stakeholders, and meeting legal obligations. However, it is noteworthy that the government regulations governing mining operations in Region XII, as previously outlined in the introduction, appear to contradict these findings (Sarmiento, 2022; Ilagan, 2021). In addition to this aspect, the high-level result on the competition indicator corroborates the assertion made by Farida and Setiawan (2022) regarding the influence of competition on corporate strategies. Mining companies often plan strategically to enhance their competitive advantage, considering cost efficiency, technological innovation, and differentiation strategies. Moreover, the significant impact of market conditions underscores the importance of understanding market dynamics. Mining businesses may adjust their business strategies based on variables such as shifts in demand, commodity prices, and geopolitical factors, as highlighted by Grant (2021).

Level of Employee Empowerment

Table 3 presents the level of employee empowerment at mining businesses in Region XI, as measured by impact, meaningfulness, competence, and self-determination. With an overall mean score of 4.45, the level of employee empowerment is very high. This suggests that the degree of worker autonomy is consistently monitored and maintained within the organizations. The mean scores for all four measures were notably high. Upon individual analysis, the indicators of meaningfulness and competence displayed the highest mean scores of 4.54 (classified as Very High), with standard deviations of 0.30 and 0.26, respectively. Following closely, the impact indicator exhibited a mean score of 4.41 (also considered Very High), with a standard deviation of 0.43. The self-determination indicator recorded the lowest mean score of 4.31 (classified as Very High), with a standard deviation of 0.48. In mining businesses in Region XI, employee empowerment is observed at an exceedingly high level. This suggests that workers within these mining businesses experience profound empowerment across various dimensions. This outcome underscores a positive correlation between competent work, self-determination, meaningful job roles, and perceived impact on the Organization.

Table 3. Level of Employee Empowerment

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Meaningfulness	0.30	4.54	Very High
Competence	0.26	4.54	Very High
Self-determination	0.48	4.31	Very High
Impact	0.43	4.41	Very High
Overall	**0.28**	**4.45**	**Very High**

The study's findings indicate a strong consensus and uniformity among workers regarding several empowerment-related matters. This aligns with Deci et al.'s (2017) research, which underscores the significance of meaningful work in boosting employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Moreover, employees' perception of competence is critical in fostering empowerment and job satisfaction (Magomaeva, 2017). Autonomy and self-determination increase the employees' motivation and overall performance, which could lead to organizational success (Forner et al., 2020). Additionally, employees' feelings towards their work impact the Organization and society (Monje-Amor et al., 2021). Thus, empowered employees often increase innovation, job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness (Menon, 2023). On the other hand, the study contrasts the problems outlined in the introduction, wherein one of the problems of mining companies is employee motivation, engagement, and satisfaction (Oh et al., 2022).

Level of Business Performance

Table 4 displays the level of business success, as indicated by profit, sales growth, and market growth, among mining businesses in Region XI. With an overall mean score of 4.11, it can be inferred that the business performance of these mining businesses is consistently monitored. Profit achieved the highest mean score of 4.20, which is classified as

very high. Following profit, market growth obtained a mean score of 4.14, denoting a high level. Sales growth, with a mean score of 3.98, is considered high but had the lowest mean among the three indicators.

Table 4. Level of Business Performance of Mining Companies

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Profit	0.46	4.20	Very High
Sale Growth	0.42	3.98	High
Market Growth	0.42	4.14	High
Overall	**0.36**	**4.11**	**High**

The study highlights that mining businesses in Region XI consistently monitor their company performance, with particularly robust results in terms of profit, a key organizational objective. Data indicates a significant increase in revenue for mining companies over the past three years. Moreover, these businesses reinvest their net profit, contributing to the expansion and growth of the company.

The indicator that received a very high mean is the profit. This implies that mining companies perform exceptionally in terms of profitability. This finding is like Azeem et al. (2021) assertion that sustained profitability is a crucial indicator of a company's competitive advantage and long-term viability. Further, sales growth is also a vital metric for organizational success, reflecting market competitiveness and customer demand (Hill & Jones, 2017). Expanding the market share as a strategic goal for mining companies is an advantage for the Organization, especially regarding financial success and market competitiveness in the mining sector (Ireland et al., 2017).

Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Performance of Mining Companies

The results of the association test between mining companies' business performance in Region XI and corporate social responsibility are presented in Table 5. The relationship was evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance, as specified by the hypothesis. With a p-value of less than 0.05 and an overall r-value of 0.697, thus, null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates a positive correlation between business performance and corporate social responsibility. The correlation coefficient of r = 0.697 signifies a strong correlation between mining companies' business performance and corporate social responsibility.

More precisely, the findings reveal a significant correlation between business performance and all dimensions of corporate social responsibility, with p-values less than 0.05 and total r-values of 0.640 for economic, 0.480 for legal, 0.658 for ethical, and 0.613 for discretionary factors. As demonstrated in Table 5, every indicator for each variable is interconnected. Consequently, the two variables exhibit a positive association.

The findings of Juhandi et al. (2020), emphasizes a strong correlation between corporate social responsibility and business performance. Corporate Social Responsibility, as communicated through Sustainability Reports containing both financial and non-financial information, plays a vital role in fosteringsustainable growth for companies (Tsalis et al., 2020. Furthermore, Dmytriyev et al. (2021) study demonstrates a positive correlation between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate success, aligning with stakeholder theory, which underscores the importance of businesses offering comprehensive information in accountability reports.This implies that companies dedicating more resources to CSR practices are likely to experience improvements in their financial performance. Furthermore, CSR is recognized as a mechanism for cultivating long-term customer loyalty (Fatima&Elbanna, 2023; Meiryani et al., 2023).

Table 5. Significance of the Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Performance of Mining Companies

Corporate Social Responsibility	Business Performance			
	Profit	Sale Growth	Market Growth	**Overall**
Economic	.483**	.567**	.530**	**.640****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Legal	.387**	.308**	.489**	**.480****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Ethical	.535**	.548**	.540**	**.658****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Discretionary	.391**	.490**	.638**	**.613****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Overall	**.522****	**.564****	**.637****	**.697****
	.000	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**

Relationship between Operating Environment and Business Performance of Mining Companies

The results of the association test between mining companies' business performance in Region XI and corporate social responsibility are presented in Table 5. The relationship was evaluated at the 0.05 significance level, as specified by the hypothesis. With a p-value of less than 0.05 and an overall r-value of 0.697, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates a positive correlation between business performance and corporate social responsibility. The correlation coefficient of r = 0.697 signifies a strong correlation between mining companies' business performance and corporate social responsibility.

More precisely, the findings reveal a significant correlation between business performance and all dimensions of corporate social responsibility, with p-values less than 0.05 and total R-values of 0.640 for economic, 0.480 for legal, 0.658 for ethical, and 0.613 for discretionary factors. As demonstrated in Table 5, every indicator for each variable is interconnected. Consequently, the two variables exhibit a positive association.

Table 6. Significance of the Relationship between Operating Environment and Business Performance of Mining Companies

Operating Environment	Business Performance			
	Profit	Sale Growth	Market Growth	**Overall**
Industry Regulation	.195**	.403**	.533**	**.452****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Competition	.465**	.438**	.452**	**.551****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Market Conditions	.496**	.414**	.250**	**.475****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Overall	**.492****	**.538****	**.541****	**.636****
	.000	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**

This finding is supported in the study of Kaberia and Bula (2022) which asserts that operating environment and business performance has a strong and statistically significant correlation. The study also claims that the combined impact of industry regulation, competition, and market conditions significantly influences the overall success of mining companies. This aligns with the view that a holistic understanding and management of the operating environment are critical for sustained business success. Furthermore, regulatory compliance can lead to operational efficiency, reduced legal risks, and enhanced reputation, ultimately contributing to improved financial performance (Baah et al., 2020). In

addition, intense competition can drive companies to innovate, improve efficiency, and adopt competitive strategies, which can positively impact profitability, sales growth, and overall performance (Farida & Setiawan, 2022).Moreover, companies that adapt to changing market conditions, such as fluctuations in demand and pricing, are better positioned for sustained success (Hu et al., 2023).

Relationship between Employee Empowerment and Business Performance of Mining Companies

The results of the association test between the business performance of mining businesses in Region XI and employee empowerment are presented in Table 7. The data revealed an overall correlation coefficient 0.538 at the 0.05 significance level. This suggests a strong correlation between corporate performance and employee empowerment within mining businesses.

In particular, it was found that all indicators of employee empowerment exhibiting a correlation with business performance are statistically significant. The correlation coefficients for meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact were determined to be .424, .128, and .520, respectively, with a p-value less than 0.05. This suggests a strong and positive relationship between business performance and employee empowerment.

Table 7. Significance of the Relationship between Employee Empowerment and Business Performance of Mining Companies

Employee Empowerment	Business Performance			
	Profit	Sale Growth	Market Growth	**Overall**
Meaningfulness	.285**	.287**	.476**	**.424****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Competence	.017	.101*	.207**	**.128****
	.733	.038	.000	**.008**
Self-determination	.346**	.444**	.497**	**.520****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Impact	.306**	.294**	.486**	**.439****
	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Overall	**.348****	**.406****	**.577****	**.538****
	.000	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**

Furthermore, Afram et al. (2022) corroborates the significant association between employee empowerment and business performance. They argue that a comprehensive approach to employee empowerment significantly impacts the company's overall success, citing a substantial and statistically significant relationship between employee empowerment and business performance. Additionally, the implementation of employee empowerment initiatives is aimed at enhancing performance. Skills derived from human capital play a crucial role in fostering employee empowerment and enhancing organizational performance (Jocelyne & Kariuki, 2020).

Generated Structural Models

This part analyzes the interrelationships among the variables in the study. Five models were generated to obtain mining companies' best-fit business performance model. The models were assessed against the given fit indices and served as a basis to accept or reject the model.

Generated Structural Model 1 to 4, as shown in table 8, goodness of fit results, reveals that the model fit values were not within the range of the indices criteria as demonstrated by CMIN/DF > 2, GFI, CFI, NFI, TLI < 0.95, and RMSEA > 0.05 with a P- Close < 0.05. This means the model must meet the criteria and show an inferior fit.

Table 8. *Summary of Goodness of Fit Measures of the Five Generated Models*

Model	P-value (>0.05)	CMIN / DF (0<value<2)	GFI (>0.95)	CFI (>0.95)	NFI (>0.95)	TLI (>0.95)	RMSEA (<0.05)	P-close (>0.05)
1	.000	13.112	.745	.807	.795	.762	.170	.000
2	.000	9.233	.823	.872	.859	.838	.140	.000
3	.000	6.761	.847	.910	.897	.887	.117	.000
4	.000	6.85	.847	.910	.897	.885	.118	.00
5	.160	1.412	.991	.997	.991	.993	.031	.797

Legend: CMIN/DF – *Chi Square/Degrees of Freedom*   NFI –*Normed Fit Index*

GFI– Goodness *of Fit Index*   TLI -*Tucker-Lewis Index*

RMSEA – *Root Mean Square of Error Approximation*

CFI - Comparative *Fit Index*

Best Fit Model of Business Performance

Figure 2 expounds the standard estimates of Generated Model 5. Model 5 shows the interrelationships of the latent exogenous variables, corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment, and its direct causal relationship with the latent endogenous variable, business performance in mining companies. As this can be gleaned in model 5, the best-fit model, corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment are exogenous variables that directly relate to business performance. Additionally, the model demonstrated how these three exogenous variables are related. Corporate social responsibility refers now to the operating environment and employee empowerment. Further, the working environment also had a direct relationship with employee empowerment.

Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, two out of four corporate social responsibility indicators, namely, economic, and ethical, remained significant predictors of business performance. Meanwhile, the operating environment had two of three indicators, namely, industry regulations and competition, which affected business performance. On the other hand, employee empowerment had two out of four indicators remaining, namely, meaningfulness and competence, that significantly impact business performance. Based on the result, it can be deduced that the business performance of mining companies in Region XI was best anchored on corporate social responsibility, which was measured in economics and ethics, the operating environment in terms of industry regulation and competition, and employee empowerment in terms of meaningfulness and competence.

Additionally, a direct causal relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables is demonstrated by the produced structural model 5. The endogenous variable of business performance is measured in terms of profit, sales growth, and market growth. However, the model displayed only two of three indicators that remained viable business performance constructs: profit and sales growth. The result of the study eliminates the legal and discretionary of corporate social responsibility, market conditions on the operating environment, self-determination and impact on employee empowerment, and market growth on business performance because their p-value and beta values did not reach the appropriate levels.
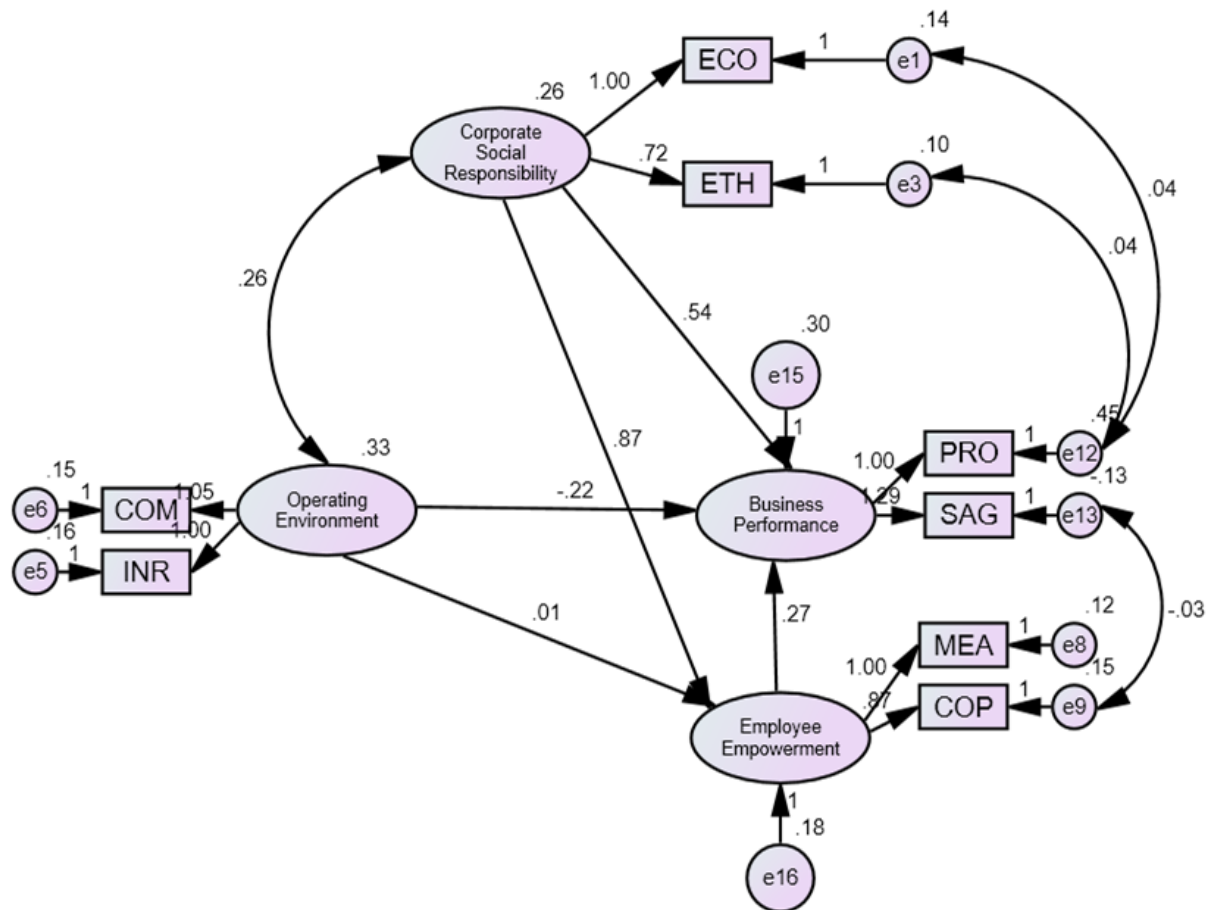
Figure 2: Best Fit Model in Standard Solution

Legend:

ECO-economic	*COM-competition*	*COP-competence*
ETH-ethical	*INR-industry regulation*	*PRO-profit*
	MEA-meaningfulness	*SAG-sales growth*

The direct causal link of corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment towards business performance among mining companies in Region XI corroborates the findings of the study of Yousefian et al. (223), Ebabu Engidaw (2021), and Abid and Ahmed (2020) that elevating the prioritization of stakeholders' interests through robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, coupled with the effective implementation of strategies within the operating environment and a steadfast commitment to employee empowerment, synergistically enhances the overall performance of the Organization. Further, Hsu et al. (2022) state that mining companies should view corporate social responsibility as diverse stakeholders together while concurrently enhancing the company's reputation and fostering sustainable development. In addition, the operating environment emerges as a pivotal factor influencing industry performance, with the operating environment factors being the most substantial contributors to overall performance (Banda, 2020). Moreover, employee empowerment is a fundamental practice that markedly shapes the performance of the Organization (Diah & Cahyadi, 2020).

On the other hand, Table 8 presents the result of the goodness of fit measures of Generated Model 5. As can be seen in the results, all model fit values have successfully met the criteria set by each index: CMIN/DF < 2, GFI, CFI, NFI, TLI 0. >95, and RMSEA <0.05 with a P- Close >0.05. The result aligns with the study of Gupta and Singh (2015), emphasizing the acceptability criterion on fit estimation in structural equation modeling. CMIN/DF should be less than 2, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) should be more than 0.95. Moreover, the RMEA and PCLOSE indicate 0.01, 0.05, and 0.08 as excellent, sound, and mediocre fit, respectively, with a P-Close greater than 0.05.

The model fit for business performance among mining companies is aligned with the Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura (1986), which emphasizes the importance of behavior, personal factors, and environmental factors on the performance of the Organization. Further, by creating a conducive environment and actively assisting employees in managing their behaviors and emotional aspects, organizations enhance individual well-being and pave the way for the collective achievement of organizational goals and the continuous improvement of overall organizational performance. Zarate Torres (2011) focuses on the context that employee performance is organizational performance.

This is also supported by the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2010), which emphasizes the essential connection between organizations and their operating environments. Together, they provide a comprehensive pers   for organizations to navigate the complexities of their external contexts, fostering sustainability and societal   ance (Oiku et al., 2022).

IV.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The result of the study shows that the level of corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and business performance are high, indicating that these variables are often observed in mining companies. The study also revealed a very high level of employee empowerment, which implies that this variable is always kept in mining companies in Region XI. The result underscores that the overall high level of corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and business performance should be improved and enhanced to reach a very high level. The firms should foster transparency in communication about CSR initiatives to stakeholders, emphasizing the tangible benefits of these efforts. Mining companies should also periodically reassess and adapt their CSR strategies to align with evolving societal expectations and industry best practices.

Furthermore, mining companies should review and update strategies in response to competition, ensuring they align with evolving market conditions. Foster collaboration with regulatory bodies, industry peers, and local communities to maintain a proactive stance on environmental and social responsibilities. Moreover, mining companies prioritize ongoing market research to remain current with market developments, client demands, and potential areas for expansion. By proactively addressing these aspects, mining companies can solidify their financial success, foster sustainable growth, and maintain a competitive edge in the dynamic mining sector. A high level of employee empowerment is recommended to sustain and strengthen their practices.

Further, the results show that corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment are significantly associated with business performance. The relationship among corporate social responsibility, operating environment, and employee empowerment concerning business performance suggests that mining companies must maintain these factors. This is because a higher level of these factors leads to organizational success. This can be done by continuously setting robust corporate social responsibility initiatives to attain sustainable and effective organizational performance. It is also recommended that mining companies should adopt a proactive approach to navigate and thrive within this dynamic landscape. Regularly assess and adapt business strategies in response to evolving regulations, market trends, and competitive dynamics. Furthermore, mining companies should prioritize and invest in employee empowerment initiatives. Foster a work environment that promotes meaningful contributions, enhances employees' competence through training and skill development, encourages self-determination, and recognizes the impact of individual and collective efforts on organizational goals.

Out of the five structural models examined, model five consistently exhibited excellent fit indices to the data, thus establishing it as the most suitable model. The best-fit model shows corporate social responsibility with indicators of the economic and ethical operating environment, which includes industry regulations and competition, and employee empowerment with indicators of meaningfulness and competence as the best predictor of business performance. This implies that corporate social responsibility, operating management, and employee empowerment contribute to the overall performance of mining companies.

A study on the indicators excluded after the structural equation modeling must be done to explore the characteristics of those indicators, which can also be used to ascertain the business performance of mining companies in this unstable market environment. It is also recommended that a similar study be conducted to identify robust predictors that should have been covered in this study. Future researchers may also include another type of industry as the subject of the study.

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