

The 4IR and the promotion of women working in the South African mining sector

By M Kaggwa and M Nchabeleng

SASA Conference

17 July 2019

Introduction

- ❖ Women employment is a key factor to any country's development – Women are a resource available for a country to engage in productive activities
- ❖ The post-1994 South African government has been pro-active in coming up with legislation to encourage women employment in formal sectors of the economy
- ❖ Specific to mining, government came up with a Mining Charter that specifies women employment targets in the sector.

Introduction cont'd

- ❖ Despite the women progressive legislation, women still face challenges working in the sector.
- ❖ The emergence of 4IR would either reduce or add onto this challenges - This is the aspect of research interest presented in this paper.

Research Methodology

- ❖ Literature review on the key factors that enables women to embrace technology.
- ❖ Documentation of the demographics and employment status of women in the mining sector.
- ❖ An assessment of whether the demographics and employment status of women in the mining sector support 4IR .

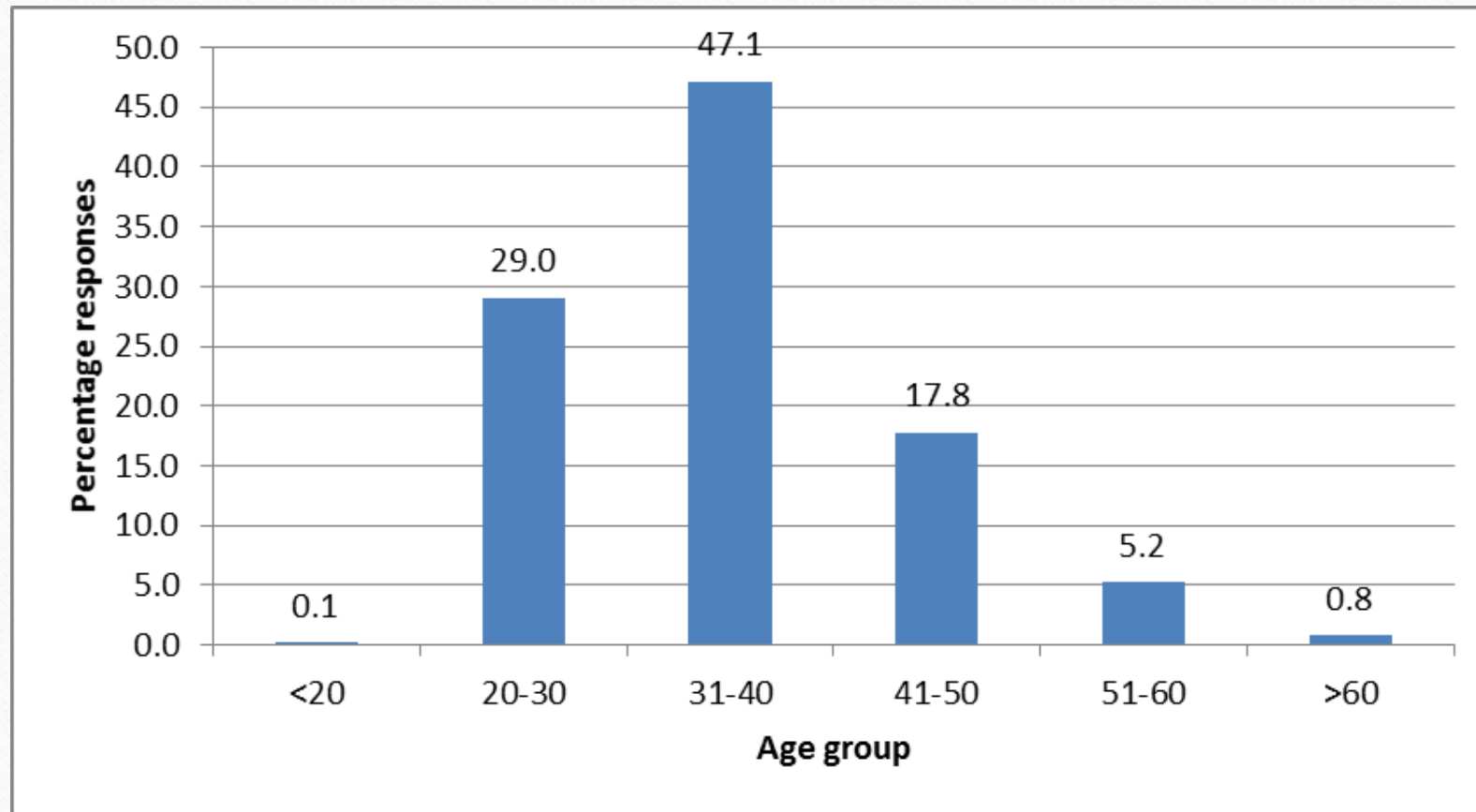
Key factors that enables women to embrace 4IR (Technology)

- ❖ Age - In terms of technology, young people adapt to new technologies more quickly than old people (Valor & Sieber, 2003).
- ❖ Education level - People with certain level of education are often after personal and professional development (Mizell, 2010).
- ❖ Position – Positions held by women makes them more vulnerable to lose jobs in the 4IR. This is due to low skills and education attainment (Koutroumpis,2019).
- ❖ Gender – Specific to 4IR, percentage of women NOT in the technology sector is 52% compared to 48% of men in the sector globally. In OECD countries, at the age of 15, fewer than 5% of girls think they will follow professionally in the field of technical sciences and technology wider than 18% of boys (Koutroumpis,2019) .

Characteristics of women workers in the mining sector in the context of 4IR

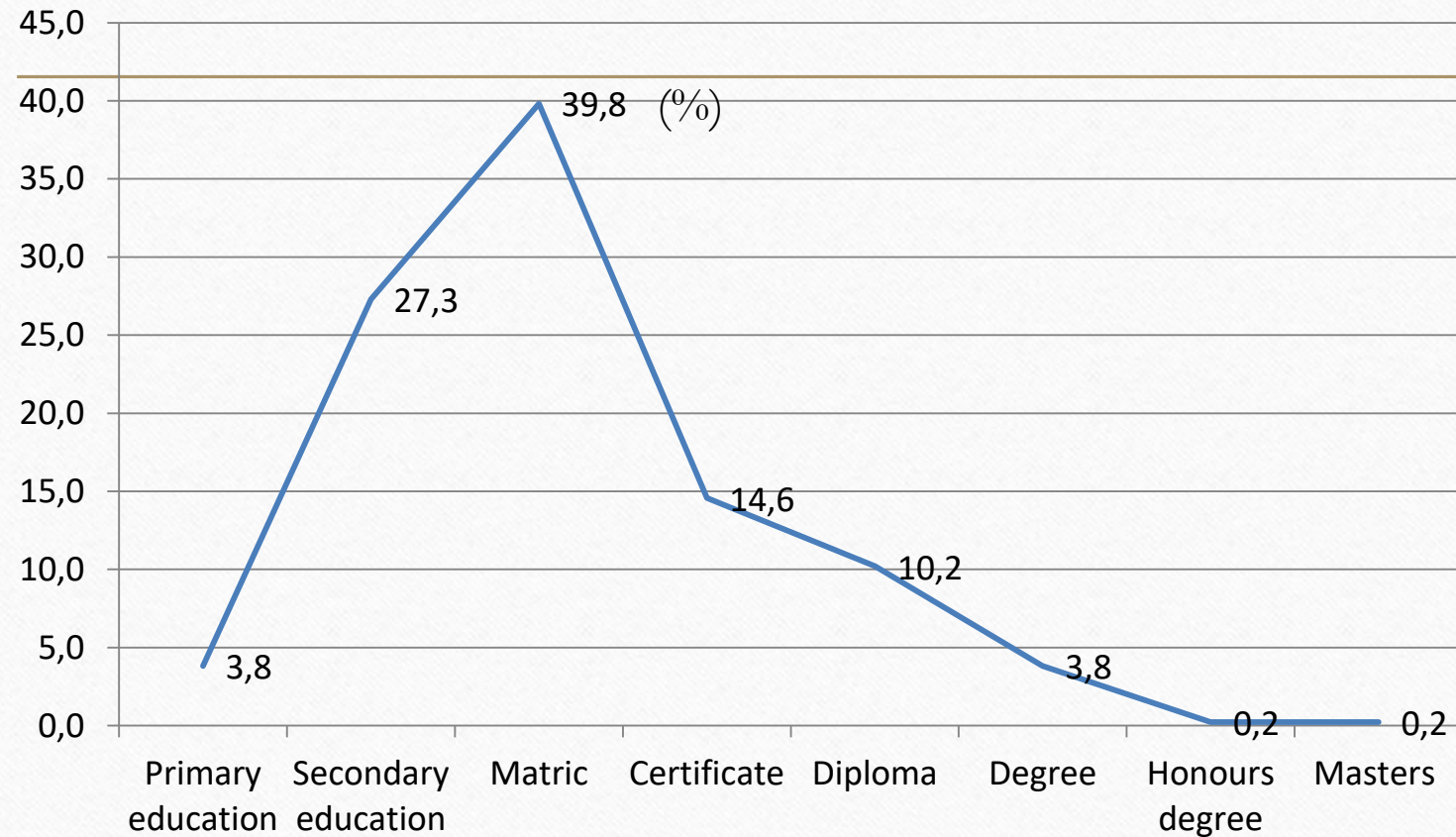
- ❖ This paper draws from a survey of findings on challenges facing women in South Africa's mining sector that was conducted in 2015.
- ❖ A total of 2 365 women were interviewed across eight National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) regions namely: Highveld, Eastern Cape, North East, PWV, Matlosana, Free State, Rustenburg and Kimberley.
- ❖ A questionnaire consisting of 36 questions was used in the field work as a tool for collecting data.
- ❖ Although there are other factors that will influence whether the emergence of 4IR will promote or constraint women participation in the mining sector, this paper restricts itself to three aspects namely; Age, Position they hold and Education level.

Age profile of women in the mining sector in context of 4IR



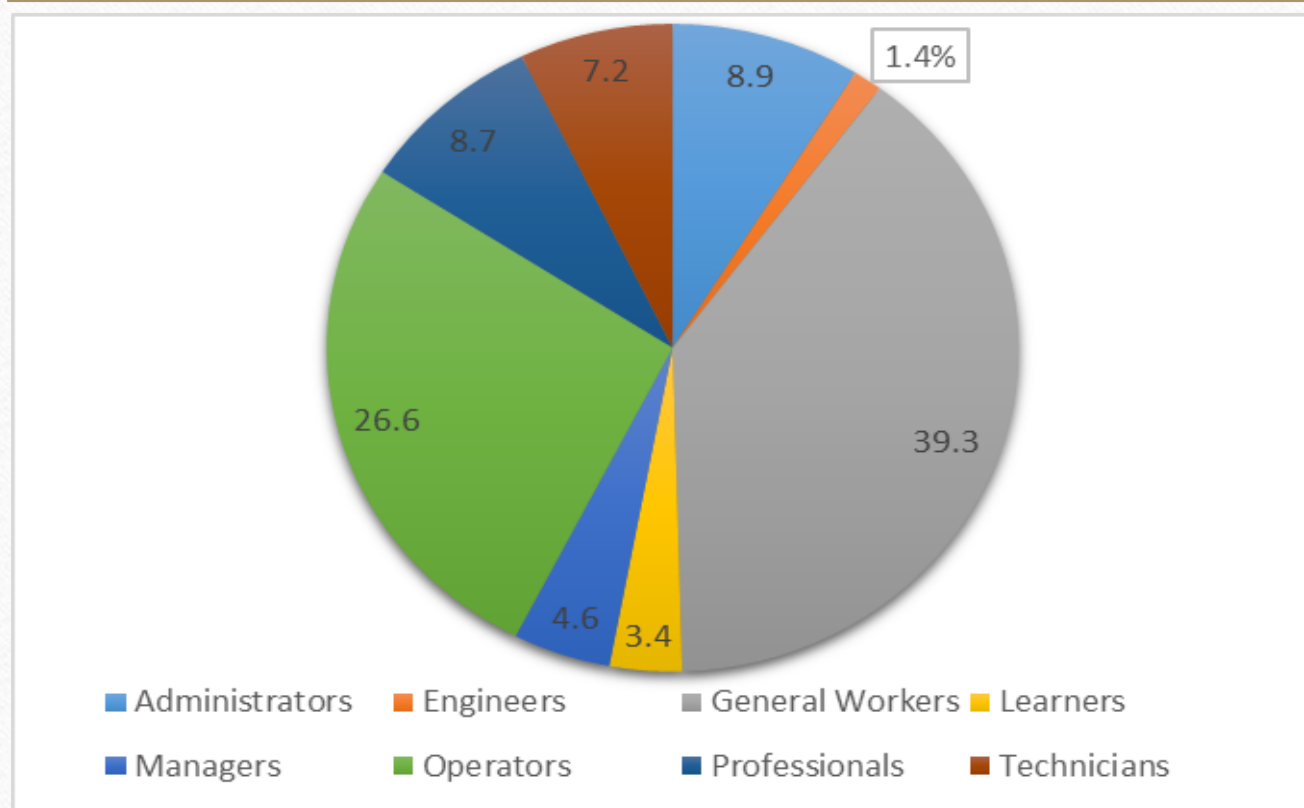
The predominant age group of women in the mining puts them in the category of those who are not likely keep track and embrace of 4IR new technologies

Level of women education in the mining sectors in context of 4IR



Low level of education of women working in the mining sector and in non-technical areas means that they are more vulnerable to 4IR related retrenchment

Positions held by women in the mining sector in context of 4IR



Most women hold positions where they have little influence on how 4IR will unfold in the workplace and be able to protect themselves from retrenchment

Conclusion

- ❖ The 4IR in South Africa is likely to impede on the interventions made by government and mining stakeholders to increase women participation in the mining sector.
- ❖ This is based on the demographics (age, position and education level) and the employability of these women in the mining sector.
- ❖ The 4IR threatens women employment in the mining sector. The paper recommends that in the short term, the sector should be allowed to operate at different levels of the IR.