

**PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ON THE NEED FOR  
AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN A FINANCIAL SERVICES  
ORGANISATION IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that “Perceptions of employers and employees on the need for an Employee Assistance Programme in a financial services organisation in the Western Cape” is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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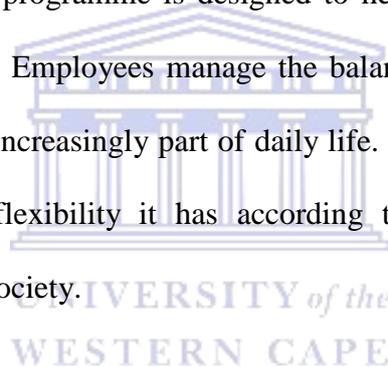
Candice Kenny



## ABSTRACT

Through the Health and Safety Act, government has placed pressure on corporate organisations to exercise their duty of care and provide support to employees who may have psychological difficulties. Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) is the one way in which organisations can fulfil their duty according to the Health and Safety Act. Human Resource is most important and valuable resource an organisation has which is often not even recognised.

The effectiveness of an organisation is to a large extent dependent on the well-being of its staff. An employee assistance programme is designed to help employers manage issues of performance in the workplace. Employees manage the balance between work and personal pressures which have become increasingly part of daily life. Furthermore, the success of this programme depends on the flexibility it has according to the ever-changing needs of employees, organisations and society.



The organisation in this study does not have formal assistance programmes in place to provide support to its employees who may have psychological difficulties. This study examines the need of an Employee Assistance Programme from the perception of both the employer and the employee and reveals that both groups have different needs, experience different types of problems and view the EAP in different contexts. Despite the differences in opinion, the evidence indicates that both employer and employee perceive there to be a great need for an EAP.

## **KEY WORDS**

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Employee Wellness Programme (EWP), Private Sector, Productivity, Presenteeism, Absenteeism



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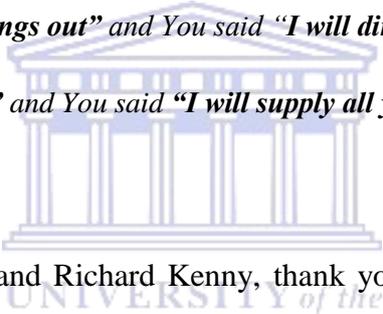
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There were times when I uttered:

- *“I can’t go on” and You said “My grace is sufficient” – II Corinthians 12:9*
- *“I can’t figure things out” and You said “I will direct your steps” – Proverbs 3:5-6*
- *“I can’t manage” and You said “I will supply all your needs” – Philippians 4:19*

- 
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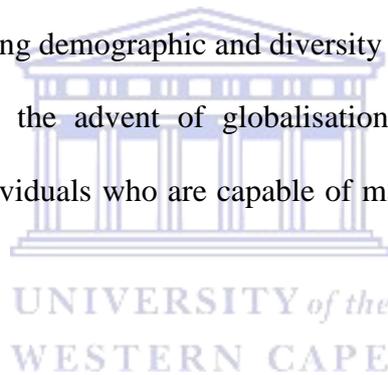
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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organisations compete fiercely to attract and retain skilful employees who provide the organisation with a competitive edge to achieve their objectives in becoming successful (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). Soni (2013) espouses the view, with which Van Hoek and Schultz (2014) concur, that the South African environment is characterised by skills shortages, an ever-changing demographic and diversity and the strife for a semblance of work-life balance, and, given the advent of globalisation, organisations are faced with increasing competition for individuals who are capable of making a significant difference to organisational performance.



Young, educated employees entering the job market might be motivated by all the wrong reasons to work for a particular organisation. Thus, it becomes vital to retain these valued employees to ensure the longevity of an organisation. Organisations have taken increasing note of the importance of the relationship between employee well-being and improved productivity and strive to implement practices that attempt to reduce costs and increase productivity. This leads to a mentality that favours profitability over the welfare of people (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). Businesses are seeing the value of employee wellness which contributes hugely to profit margins, employee loyalty and to their growth (Van der Merwe, 2004).

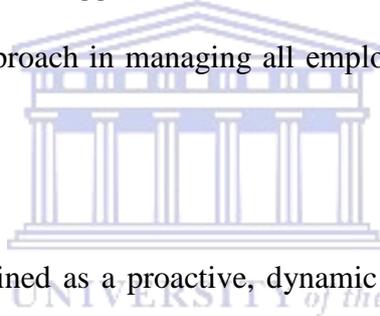
The reality is that employees today experience multiple personal problems, namely marital and family problems, financial difficulties, substance abuse, elder care, childcare and parenting issues, issues with separation and loss, as well as balancing work and family life (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). South African research (Burnhams, Dada, Linda, Myers and Parry, 2013) has revealed that 65.4% of respondents in their study reported an alcohol-related problem, with a greater propensity amongst men, while women were more likely to report drug-related problems. They further report that from a sample of 398 768 seeking assistance for generic psychosocial problems, 10 284 were reported as having an alcohol and drug related problem.

Juxtaposed against rising technological changes, with concomitant increases in job stress and burnout and those affected or infected with HIV and Aids, there is likely to be a corresponding negative impact on work performance. Furthermore, managers are just not trained to identify the early warning signs of a troubled employee. They are also not competent to deal effectively with the troubled employee within the working environment. Grobler and Joubert (2012) postulate that one way of ensuring the enhancement of health and wellness in an organisation is to promote Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) in the workplace.

Employees laden with personal or work-related issues will speak to a colleague or search the internet for possible solutions, wasting company time. Absenteeism, low morale, poor performance, late arrivals and early departures of these troubled employees impact negatively on the organisation. Employees need greater assistance within the working environment to deal effectively with personal problems, if the organisation wants to maintain a competitive advantage (Maiden, 1992).

The general perception of an EAP is the belief that employers should not interfere in the personal lives of employees. However, employers do have the right to set performance standards and establish sanctions against those who do not meet them (Carrell, Elbert, Hartfield, Grobler, Marx & Van der Schyff, 1998). However, Van Hoek and Schultz (2014) advocate a contrary approach, and posit the view that closer manager-employee relationships are likely to produce significant improvements in outputs.

Organisations are slowly acknowledging the prospects of EAPs in enhancing employees' performance through improved physical health, mental health and life management knowledge and skills. Evidence suggests that EAPs are seen as the ideal vehicle for implementing an integrated approach in managing all employees' personal related problems (Grobler & Joubert, 2012).

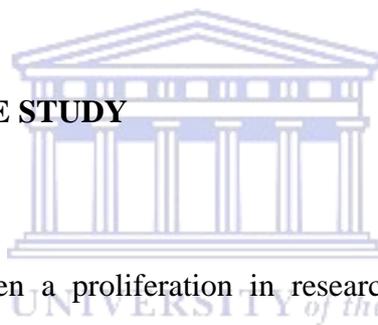


Employee wellness can be defined as a proactive, dynamic process whereby the individual and the group become aware of their responsibility to promote a life of wellness. This conscious and continuous process leads toward the enhancement of the well-being of the individual, organisation and community (Van der Merwe, 2004). Figure 1.1 depicts the array of areas that contribute to wellness.

**Figure 1.1: Wellness Wheel**



**Source: Googleimages.com**



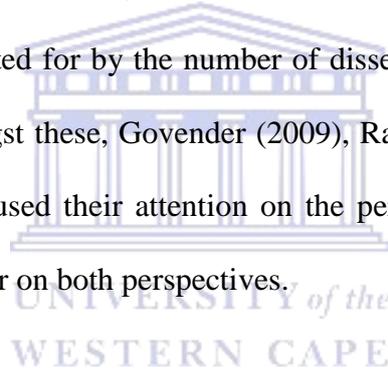
## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

In recent years, there has been a proliferation in research conducted on employee and organisational wellness (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). One of the reasons for this is that modern employees are under significant pressure to perform at a high level with maximum productivity by employers who expect their organisations to do more with less. This tension between the limited organisational resources given to employees and the increasing productivity demands of employers contributes to a variety of problems experienced by employees. These problems are further affected by efforts to balance work with also trying to have a healthy and fulfilling personal and family life (Jacobson, 2010).

Human Capital Management (2005, p. 184) expresses the increasingly important focus on employee wellness by suggesting that, “health is increasingly being understood not merely as

the absence of illness or disability, but rather as a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being. Effective corporate health and well-being programmes must take the whole person into account, recognising the impact of psychosocial factors on wellness". In response to the need to assist employees to balance their increasingly difficult personal and professional lives, a number of organisations have embarked upon using an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). An EAP is often viewed as a panacea for monitoring employee personal difficulties and is postulated to benefit work performance and reduce organisational costs (Athanasziades & Hough, 2008).

Indeed, in the South African context, EAPs and EWP have been investigated more prolifically which can be attested for by the number of dissertations and publications which are exploring this area. Amongst these, Govender (2009), Rakepa (2010), September (2010) and Ndhlovu (2010) have focused their attention on the perceptions and experiences from either employer or employee, or on both perspectives.



Du Plessis (1988) surmises that the effectiveness of EAP can be evaluated along two dimensions: the impact on the employer and the impact on the employee. However, existing literature fails to consider the impact of EAPs on employee well-being, and rather focuses on the former.

The organisation used in this study does not have a formal structure in place to support and assist troubled employees. Troubled employees are treated by an ad hoc committee. Employees attend private counselling sessions paid for by the employer. High levels of stress and pressure prevail in the working environment of this organisation due to the highly

competitive organisations competing in this industry. According to a study conducted, an estimate of ten percent of the total employee population in an average organisation is troubled at any given time. From a cost perspective, this is costing the organisation five percent of that employee's annual salary (Carrell, et al., 1998).

The main objective of this study is to determine the general perception of EAPs amongst employees and employer in the private sector. Employers cannot ignore the reality that employees may face problems on personal and professional levels. This study also aims to determine whether a formal employee support system would benefit employees in coping with personal or professional pressures of life. Furthermore, this study aims to determine the view point of the employer on this matter.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM**



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Is there a need for an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in the private sector? What is the perception of employer versus employees?

### **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to investigate the perceptions of employer and the employee with regards to the need for an EAP.

The objectives of this study are to:

- Define the term Employee Wellness
- Determine the need to implement an EAP
- Assess the perception of the employer and employee with regards to an EAP

## **1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

In this study a number of key concepts are used. This section therefore defines each of these concepts.

### **1.5.1 Employee Wellness Programme (EWP)**

An EWP “is an organised, employer-sponsored program that is designed to support employees and, sometimes, their families as they adopt and sustain behaviours that reduce health risks, improve quality of life, enhance personal effectiveness, and benefit the organisation’s bottom line” (Berry, Mirabito & Baun, 2010, p. 12).

Wellness programs offer employees and their families’ choices for pursuing healthier lifestyles with less illnesses, ultimately leading to less costly benefit packages. Examples of these benefits include: smoking cessation clinics, exercise/physical fitness programs, weight control programs, nutrition education, hypertension tests, periodic physical examinations, stress management courses, back care courses. “Wellness programs often include a health education and awareness component and, according to some analysts, these programs address issues that increase worker satisfaction and productivity” (Stoltzfus, 2009, p. 25).

### **1.5.2 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

Berridge, Cooper and Highley (1997) define EAP as a systematic, organised and continuing provision of counseling, advice and assistance, provided or funded by the employer, designed to help employees and (in most cases) their families to cope with problems arising from work-related and external sources. The Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA, 1994) defines EAP in their Standards document as “a worksite-based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns including, but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance” (EAPA, 1994, p.10).

Employee assistance programmes deal with more serious personal problems than the issues included in wellness programs. This support programme provides access to referral or counselling services for problems such as alcohol or drug abuse, marital difficulties, financial problems, legal problems, emotional problems (Stoltzfus, 2009).

### **1.5.3 Financial services industry**

This industry includes organisations that are involved in activities such as investing, lending, insurance, securities trading and securities issuance. These organisations can be characterised as being in one or more of the following lines of business: banking, insurance, financial planning and so on (Kolakowski, n.d).

#### **1.5.4 Productivity**

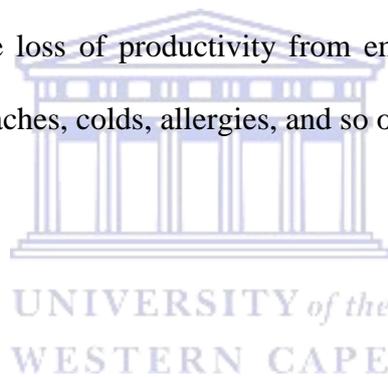
“Productivity refers to the amount of work produced in a given period of time. Productivity relates to the person’s ability to produce the standard amount or number of products, services or outcomes as described in a work description” (Balyan, 2012, p. 67).

#### **1.5.5 Presenteeism**

Presenteeism is when employees are physically present, but unproductive due to ill health (Burns, 2009). It describes the loss of productivity from employees with legitimate health related problems, such as headaches, colds, allergies, and so on (Hooper, n.d).

#### **1.5.6 Absenteeism**

Absenteeism is the non-attendance of an employee when scheduled to work (Nel, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono & Werner, 2004).



## 1.6 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This study comprises of five chapters, which are briefly outlined below.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem Statement**

This chapter provides an orientation to the research study, focusing on the introduction, motivation for the study as well as the goals and objectives of the study. This chapter also outlines a short description of main key concepts used in the study.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion on Employee Assistance Programmes, focusing on various authors' views, opinions and objectives on this topic. The following topics will be covered in the literature review: an historical overview of employee assistance programmes, the objectives of the programme, the South African legislative framework, the benefits of employee assistance programmes also identifying a troubled employee.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter highlights the actual framework used to solve the research problem, looking at the sample size to the sampling technique used as well as the research design adopted. The interpretation of the study is qualitative using content analysis to transcribe the interviews. Qualitative content analysis is the preferred choice for novice researchers because it focuses

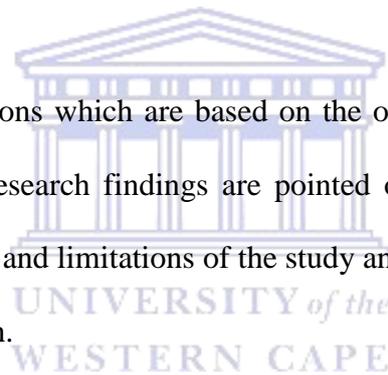
on one level of meaning, the content of the data texts (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smith, 2010).

#### **Chapter 4: Presentation of Results**

This chapter uses the data from the interviews to analyse the results of the study. The transcriptions were prepared and the raw data was examined and analysed into emerging themes which was necessary to build the validity of the study.

#### **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter provides conclusions which are based on the obtained results and the possible practical implications of the research findings are pointed out. The chapter concludes by elaborating on the implications and limitations of the study and recommendations on issues to be addressed for future research.



### **1.7 CONCLUSION**

The intention of this chapter is to provide a summary and understanding of the actual study and what will be addressed in each chapter throughout the study. This chapter focuses on the motivation for the study as well as the goal and objectives that will be attained.

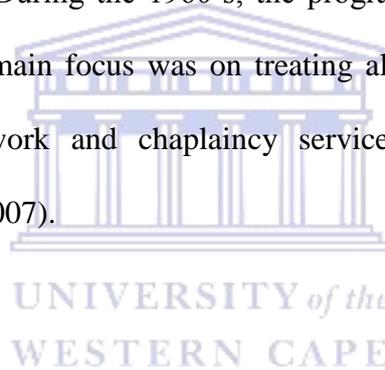
The next chapter, Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework of Employee Assistance Programmes.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) originated with alcohol programmes in the United States. In the 1940's the support of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) was the first workplace counselling program for 'alcoholic' employees and was established in companies such as DuPont and Eastman Kodak. During the 1960's, the programmes rapidly developed in the United States; however their main focus was on treating alcoholic employees. During this time, occupational welfare work and chaplaincy services were introduced into some workplaces (Buon & Taylor, 2007).

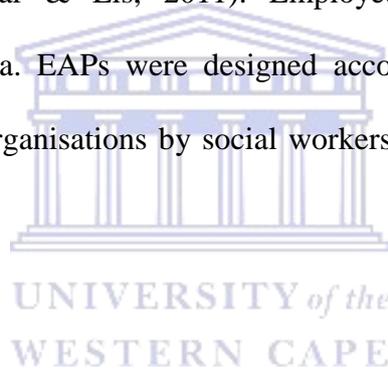


In the 1970's a new Employee Assistance Programme "EAP" model emerged that offered a broader approach to assist with problems such as financial, marital and work problems. The acceptance of these more broadly based services by employees and management alike was exceptional. The stigma associated with alcohol programs was almost totally removed. These modern EAPs offered free professional, confidential counselling services to employees in the workplace for a wide range of problems including alcohol and other drug problems. Over the past decade, the global EAP market has seen to have emerged. Although the programmes originated in the USA, the market in Asia, Australasia and Europe

continues to develop in areas quite different from that of the American EAP (Buon & Taylor, 2007).

## **2.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Employee wellness is a badly defined concept in industrial psychology. There is also a lack of research on specific practices in South African organisations to promote employee wellness (Sieberhagen, Pienaar & Els, 2011). Employee Assistance Programmes are relatively new in South Africa. EAPs were designed according to US models and were introduced to South African organisations by social workers and psychologists (September, 2010).

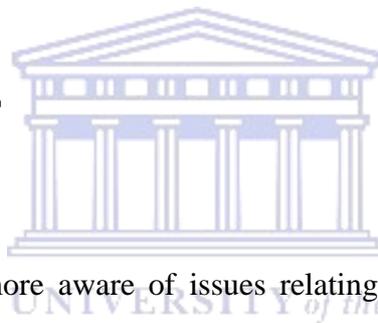


In 1992 the very first significant series of articles on the development of EAP in South Africa emerged. The first comprehensive study on EAP in South Africa revealed that economic, political, social, cultural and political norms and values are likely to continue to influence further developments in EAP in South Africa but also internationally. The South African Public Service Commission (2006) evaluated EAPs in the Public Service, and several other research initiatives were launched in order to determine the prevalence, utilisation, implementation and efficacy of EAPs. For example, Govender (2009) investigated the prevalence and nature of EAPs in the Eastern Cape Buffalo Municipality. Similarly, September (2010) undertook an exploratory study on the need for an employee assistance programme within the Cape Winelands Municipality.

Using a qualitative methodology, Ndhlovu (2010) explored positive psychological strengths in employees attending an EAP in the Public Service. Recently, Rakepa (2012) investigated the implementation of employee assistance programmes of the department of education in Motheo district in the Free State.

In spite of the benefits of an EAP, the potential of these programmes and employee assistance practitioners is under-utilised by many organisations in South Africa compared to other organisations in the global market. There is no doubt that a country like South Africa will benefit a great deal from EAPs as they are experiencing many stressors, such as the impact of HIV and AIDS, diversity challenges, unemployment and poverty (September, 2010).

### **2.3 THE EAP CONCEPT**



Organisations are becoming more aware of issues relating to employee wellness or well-being and there is an increase in public interest in integrating wellness activities with employers' responsibilities. The move towards healthy workplaces and empowered employees mirrors trends between positive psychological states and organisational well-being. This has led to the introduction of various programmes, which include Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and Employee Wellness Programmes (EWPs) to address wellness issues in the workplace (Sieberhagen, et al., 2011).

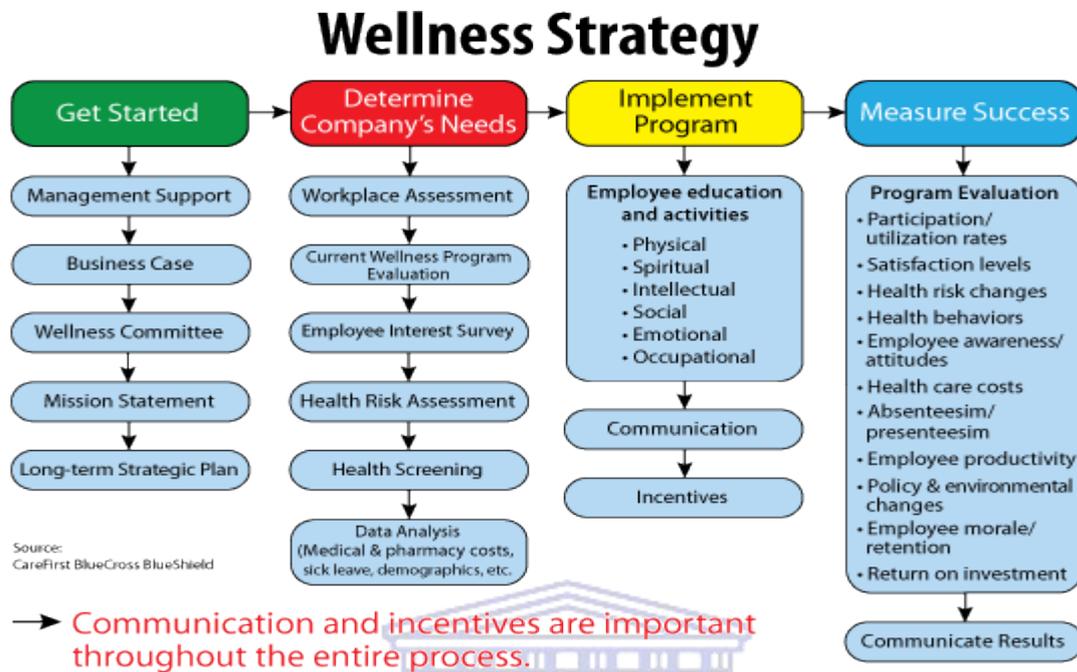
Naicker and Fouché (2003, p. 25), describe an EAP “as a method of intervention that focuses on the decline of job performance, not on the nature of the employee’s problem to restore the worker to full productivity”. Furthermore, Naicker and Fouché (2003, p. 25) defined EAP as

a “professional assessment, referral and/or short term counseling service offered to employees with alcohol, drug or mental health problems that may be affecting their work performance”. Like most therapeutic treatments, EAP’s are believed to help those in psychological distress.

According to Berridge and Cooper (1994, p. 5), an EAP is “a programmatic intervention at the workplace, usually at the level of the individual employee using behavioural science knowledge and methods for the recognition and control of certain work- and non-work-related problems”.

The EAP concept is founded on the basis of an open systems framework, which recognises employees who are unable to separate themselves from personal problems whilst at work (Hollman, 1982). Usually, the problems are treated confidentially, until however they start affecting work performance. This is when troubled employees are referred by their supervisors for the treatment of an EAP. This is a critical stage where the organisation attempts to assist the troubled employee through EAP referral instead of dismissing the troubled employee (Santa Barbara, 1984). Figure 2.1 illustrates the process involved in an organisation’s wellness strategy.

Figure 2.1: Wellness Strategy



Source: Googleimages.com

## 2.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

EAPs are implemented in organisations with a specific purpose and objective in mind. According to Rajin (2012) there are three sets of objectives that employers intend to achieve, namely:

- To conform to the obligations and common law duty of care
- To provide and support the wellbeing of employees
- To retain employees and improve production.

In the mining industry today, statutory obligations and common law have forced managers through legislation to ensure that they comply with safety requirements. This is a legislative requirement for public institutions that provide protection services to society. The nature of work in these institutions is dangerous and stressful to the employees. Traditionally, employers were not interested with the personal problems experienced by employees. As a result, employees felt that their employers were disinterested in their well-being (Rajin, 2012).

Currently, employers express great concern for the well-being of their employees as this has impacted productivity. In this instance, EAPs are designed with the objective of supporting employees to solve problems and to create an environment in which managers and supervisors attempt to identify employees who are in need of assistance and referral for appropriate support and care. The ultimate goal is to maintain employee performance that is void of problems that could affect job satisfaction. EAPs are also designed to motivate employees to seek help before their personal problems reach chronic levels that may reduce their ability to perform their job well. EAPs help retain valued employees, restore productivity and enable them to lead meaningful and happy lives whilst they are in the workplace (Rajin, 2012).

## **2.5 CONCEPTUAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

The employer has a social responsibility to assist employees with certain problems. The South African legislative framework clearly outlines the protection of employee's rights in the workplace in both public and private sectors (Pezer & Schoeman, 2005).

Government, being of the largest employers in the country, realised that employees are faced with private and social problems. These problems have a major impact on employees and in turn impact their performance in the workplace. The perception is that introducing counselling through an EAP would assist in changes in psychological well-being. “A well-functioning and effective EAP could assist government to reactively and pro-actively address its employees’ needs and problems” (Pezer & Schoeman, 2005, p. 119).

South Africa has no EAP Act, however there are several legislative acts that are the driving force behind the implementation of EAP’s in South Africa.

#### **2.5.1 The SA Constitution (Act 108 of 1996)**

Chapter two, The Bill of Rights in the Constitution outlines a few rights, such as human dignity, equality and freedom. Section 23, indicates that all persons have the right to choose trades, occupations and professions. All persons have the right to work and have access to healthcare services and suitable social services. Employees have the right to be treated equally and with dignity and this can be done facilitated through the use of EAP.

#### **2.5.2 Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993)**

This Act clearly outlines that employers must establish and maintain a work environment that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. Even though health and safety aspects are covered by this act, legislation regarding wellness is lacking.

### **2.5.3 The Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998)**

Section 54, The Code of Good Practice on HIV/AIDS and employment, supports the implementation of policies which impacts upon this pandemic confronting South Africa. The purpose of the act is to achieve equality within the workplace and to eradicate unfair discrimination against employees. In the context of an EAP, the introduction of the support programme protects employees against unfair discrimination based on family responsibility, ethical or social origin, HIV status and HIV, drug and alcohol testing.

### **2.5.4 Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995)**

The purpose of this Act is to provide and regulate the fundamental rights of workers. Sections 9 and 10 protect employees who are performance managed due to poor performance and incapacity. The Act emphasises that before dismissing employees, their personal problems should be taken into account. The employer must also prove that corrective measures through professional counselling and guidance were available and in place for the employee to correct behaviour. According to the Act, employees have the right to private and confidential processes, lest they provide informed consent to disclose the information.

## **2.6 EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Employees and employers are confused by the terms employee wellness and employee assistance programme and believe they are the same. Burns (2009, p. 16), however, helps to clarify these two concepts by stating “the most commonly seen programme elements of employee well-being is in fact employee assistance programmes”.

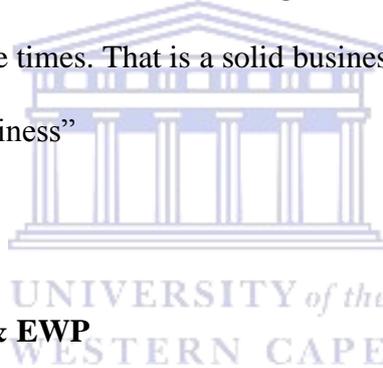
The harmful usage of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) remains widespread among people of all ages and socio-economic groups. AOD abuse is a major cause of mortality and is a risk factor for non-communicable diseases. The 2010 analysis of 67 risk factors and risk factor clusters for death and disability found that alcohol was the fifth leading risk factor for death and disability globally, accounting for 5.5% of disability adjusted life years lost – up from eighth position in 1990. Problematic AOD use by employed people potentially has negative implications for their health; since untreated and undertreated health problems, including harmful AOD use, exact substantial costs from individuals and their employers (Burnhams, et a., 2013).

### **2.6.1 Why is it necessary?**

Organisations have been forced to acknowledge alarming statistics relating to their workforce and have dedicated significant attention and funding to the most important asset, namely the human capital asset. The average workplace consists of the following:

- 50% of employees are overweight
- 60% do not exercise enough,
- 25% are stressed,
- 12% are depressed,
- 10% have relationship problems,
- 40% worry about debt,
- 10% are HIV positive,
- 15% suffer from frequent headaches, and the list goes on (Burns, 2009, p. 17).

Burns (2009, p.17) maintains that “the return is generally greater than the expense by probably between three and five times. That is a solid business case and that is why employee well-being is big, and good business”



## **2.7 BENEFITS OF EAP & EWP**

The employee and employer are the two key beneficiaries who may gain from an EAP. From an organisation’s perspective EAPs help to save good employees and maintain their productivity (Joseph & Injodey, 2006).

The support employees receive from their organisation through EAPs presents great benefits to those who implement these programmes. Sieberhagen et al., (2011) outline the benefits organisations derive from both EAP’s and EWP’s.

**Table 2.1: Benefits through EAP and EWP**

Benefits through EAP	Benefits through EWP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased mental wellness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced absenteeism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased presenteeism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting labour legislation requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Life &amp; job satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improved industrial relations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased employee performance &amp; productivity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced depression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced health care costs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A reduction in accidents.</li> </ul>

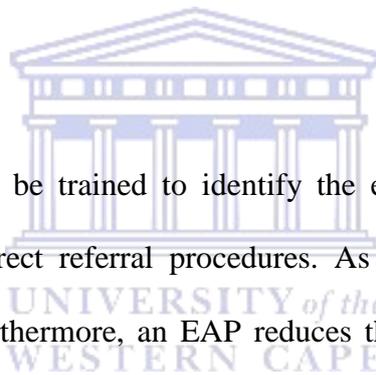
**Source: Sieberhagen et al., (2011)**

According to a recently published booklet by HealthInSite, all 20 research studies conducted describe key learnings from their own programme deployments: the likely return on investment is between 300 and 500%, the healthiest employees in the typical organisation may be up to three times more effective, 85% of programme users report to making healthy behavioural changes and 60% of programme users report improved productivity.

Researchers therefore suggest that organisations should approach problems in a structured way which focuses on the employee and on the organisation. The rationale behind this approach is that the wellness of an employee can influence the wellness of an organisation, and vice versa. The success and effectiveness of EAPs depend on a number of factors, which include the rationale and the use and evaluation of these programmes. Various researchers emphasise the importance of conducting a needs analysis in order to identify the stressors and

issues that employees experience. Organisations should conduct this needs analysis before designing and introducing an EAP. This will allow them to target issues that need to be addressed accurately (Berridge, et al., 1997).

When employees participate or ignore EWPs it is essential to determine the utilisation rate and the reasons employees given. This will provide valuable information about the effectiveness of the programmes. The purpose of evaluating EAPs is to justify function and importance and to determine the extent in which objectives are achieved and to find ways to improve effectiveness. Incorrect measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of EWPs could result in inaccurate conclusions based on evaluations of the organisations (Highley & Cooper, 1994).



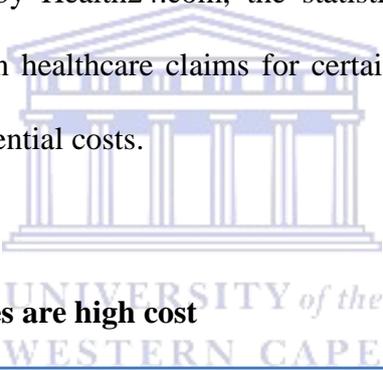
Managers and supervisors can be trained to identify the early warning signs of troubled employees as well as the correct referral procedures. As a result, an EAP can increase management effectiveness. Furthermore, an EAP reduces the risk of litigation by teaching employees to respond effectively to workplace harassment and discrimination. This could potentially lead to the decline in legal actions, and could contribute to a reduction in workplace violence by providing education, prevention resources and consultation for stressed employees (September, 2010).

## 2.8 IMPACT OF HEALTH PROBLEMS ON THE ORGANISATION

Employee attendance should not be viewed in isolation. One should rather look at the holistic picture, taking into account other collateral workplace indicators, namely employee turnover and workers' compensation claims rate. Absenteeism, work delays and productivity decline are often warning signs, signalling that something is wrong in the workplace and this often leads to accidents and injury (Burns, 2009).

Based on a study conducted by Health24.com, the statistics revealed possible monetary values calculated per annum on healthcare claims for certain health risk factors. Table 2.2 below briefly outlines these potential costs.

**Table 2.2: High-risk employees are high cost**



Depression Risk	- R 1 763
Elevated Cholesterol	- R1 171
Stress	- R 881
Body Mass Index (BMI)	- R 748
Glucose Levels	- R 558
Blood Pressure	- R 354
Alcohol	- R 329

**Source: Burns (2009)**

### 2.8.1 Presenteeism

Presenteeism, also known as the hidden enemy, is when employees are physically present but unproductive due to ill-health. The direct costs involved are tangible enough to measure medical and pharmacy claims, absenteeism and workmens' compensation. However, indirect costs are difficult to measure and this is deemed to be the hidden enemy as companies do not know the extent. An American study revealed the amount of unproductive work hours per day based on the following diseases (Burns, 2009, p. 18).

- Heart disease - 4.3 hours/day
- Respiratory infection - 4.1 hours/day
- Diabetes - 4 hours/day
- Blood Pressure - 3.4 hours/day
- Migraine - 3.4 hours/day
- Arthritis - 3.2 hours/day
- Allergies – 2.8 hours/day
- Stress - 2.3 hours/day
- Depression - 2.2 hours/day
- Anxiety - 2.2 hours/day

## 2.8.2 Absenteeism

Absenteeism can be defined as any failure of an employee to report to work or to remain at work as scheduled, regardless of the reason. The term “as scheduled” is very important as it excludes holidays such as annual leave, maternity leave or court cases (Cascio, 2003).

Nel et al., (2004) maintain that absenteeism is regarded as withdrawal behaviour, used as a means to escape an undesirable working environment. In other words, absenteeism can be viewed as part of withdrawal syndrome, where employees react to undesirable working conditions by behaviours designed to distance them from work, which include, lateness and intent to leave.



### 2.8.2.1 Causes of Absenteeism

This section briefly examines the possible causes of absenteeism in the workplace.

- **Lifestyle Characteristics**

Excessive smoking, drinking and drugs, can also be considered possible causes of absenteeism. These bad habits affect the employee's ability to come to work. For example, a person who has had a good partying weekend will be unfit to come to work on Monday morning (Lawrence, 1990).

- **Family Responsibilities**

The presence of dependent children can be another employee – related cause of absenteeism, as someone in the family may have to stay off from work when the children are sick or where the babysitter did not report for duty (Lawrence, 1990).

### **2.8.2.2 Consequences for Absenteeism**

The cost associated with absenteeism is the most salient and tangible negative consequence at an organisational level. The extent of the cost depends on the absence of policies in the organisations. Some organisations may incur administrative expenses needed to keep attendance records as costs of absenteeism. Furthermore, some organisations may hire extra employees to replace those employees who are absent. This results in higher payroll costs to the organisation due to absenteeism. The costs that are likely to be associated with absenteeism is likely to influence organisational effectiveness, as high levels of absenteeism reduce the overall productivity of employees and therefore affects the bottom line of the organisation (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

Ian Martin, director of Elixir Corporate Health states that absenteeism has both direct and indirect costs attached to it. Direct costs attribute to paying employees' salaries during legitimate sick leave. "There is also an indirect cost relating to lost productivity: either the job stands still until the employee returns to work, or there is a cost associated with recruiting or transferring someone else to ensure that the job continues. This indirect cost is mostly assumed to be between two and two-and-a-half times the direct cost" (Rossouw, 2010, p. 3).

Sandwith (1987) contends that EAP's have an obvious part to play in the dealing with absenteeism as personal problems often affect employee attendance at work. Therefore, trained supervisors will assist troubled employees to avert early attendance problems.

### **2.8.3 Cost of employee turnover**

According to The Australian Faculty of Occupational Medicine (1999, p.10) the consequences of workplace non-attendance include:

- increased costs
- lower morale
- increased workloads
- frustrated managers
- loss of productivity
- non achievement of objectives
- reduced provision of services
- decreased product quality
- increased training costs and loss of key skills and personnel
- increased supervisory and administrative costs



There are also a number of hidden costs such as “additional supervisory time, extra staff needed, overtime, employment of temporary staff, administration, training, effects of reduced service provision and loss of business are frequently under estimated” (The Australian

Faculty of Occupational Medicine, 1999, p.10). These hidden costs may amount to double the cost of wages.

## 2.9 REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTING EAPS

There are a number of reasons why more and more organisations are introducing EAPs to their organisations. The main reasons are due to the high incidence of sick leave, high absenteeism and social responsibility. These reasons show that organisations are reactive in their approach and indicate that they should investigate workplace factors that contribute to employees being sick and absent from work. The high HIV and Aids pandemic that South Africa faces could be one of the contributors to employees being sick. Work stress can directly affect the health of employees and the current high levels of sick leave and absenteeism may be symptoms of already existing problems Sieberhagen, et al., (2011)

Social responsibility is another major reason for employers to introduce EAPs to their organisations. They are beginning to link corporate social responsibility, improvements in their value to shareholders and the morale of employees. In addition, organisations must list their corporate responsibility activities in government tenders, it 'pays' to invest in social responsibility (Van Den Ende, 2004). Stress was reported to be the fourth reason why EAPs were introduced to organisations. The occurrence of HR incidents and employees who constantly work overtime often cause stress. If organisations focused more on these issues, sick leave and absenteeism might reduce and employees may perceive the organisations to be more caring.

According to other researchers, there are also other reasons why more and more organisations are introducing the use of EAPs, namely to increase employee productivity, welfare benefits and morale, to improve the image of the company, to improve retention, productivity and well-being, and to help employees to stop smoking, lose weight and monitor their blood pressure. Based on this, it is evident that there are a range of reasons why organisations are moving towards implementing EAPs. Literature focuses more on issues of productivity and health, while South African organisations focus more on reducing sick leave and meeting goals of social responsibility. Although there seems to be overlapping reasons for introducing EAPs, the common factor is that individual issues are the primary focus and not organisational issues that might affect the individual (Sieberhagen, et al., 2011).

Organisations that have implemented EAPs have encountered issues of notably trust and confidentiality. Individuals who provided the EAP services are employees of the organisation. It has been recommended that it is best to use an external service provider to provide employee wellness services. With this said, ethical conduct for employees who service EAPs becomes an important issue. Other issues noted were related to service providers introducing programmes to remote locations (Sieberhagen, et al., 2011).

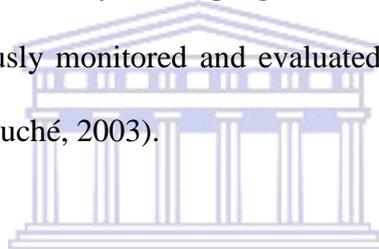
EAP is cost effective for employers to use, for example rehabilitating a chemically dependent employee, costs less than training a new employee. Large institutions are compelled to institutionalise EAPs to avoid low productivity and to improve the lives of employees. EAPs have high recovery rates among employees who accept referral for professional help. With the institutionalisation of EAPs, employers believe that they will save money by helping employees and as a result employees tend to gain confidence in such employers, knowing that the employer is concerned about their well-being (Rajin, 2012).

Organisations that use service providers can reduce work related problems. Many services are delivered and provided telephonically, via email or the internet. The assistance of service providers within an existing infrastructure might be a more cost-effective way of managing employee wellness. This is particularly true for smaller organisations that do not have the technological infrastructure to render these services (Sieberhagen, et al., 2011).

EAPs which are sponsored by employers have increased because the programmes enhance profitability by reducing absenteeism, employee turnover, accidents and medical claims. EAPs are an important resource for employers and employees mainly because of the expectations of each. It is therefore important that the employer maintains a motivated team of employees, who contributes to the success of the organisation. EAPs have received considerable recognition for both clinical and organisational accomplishments. Larger organisations regard EAP as an essential component of the human resource (HR) function because of the value that is attached to EAPs. In recent times many managers have organised themselves as component parts of their organisations. In South Africa, most of the public institutions, namely local police stations, fire departments, and municipalities offer EAP to their employees (Rajin, 2012).

## 2.10 EAP RESEARCH

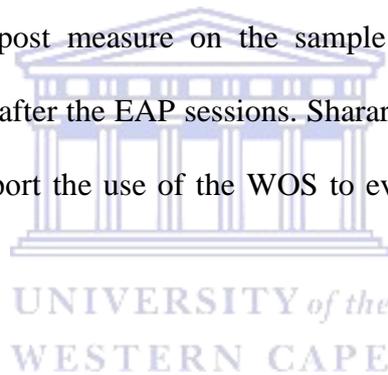
Organisations worldwide are moving towards a greater need for maximum employee productivity and effectiveness in a global economy where labour and skills shortages are a reality. In order to remain ahead of their competitors, organisations are realising the vital importance of the strategic value of worker recruitment and retention. In the workplace organisations are using the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) together with other related programmes to enhance their overall Human Resources systems. Researchers suggest that the introduction of EAP's and other services are not wholly enough to achieve all the above mentioned objectives. Like any other programme, if EAP's are not implemented properly and are not continuously monitored and evaluated, it will become another money wasted initiative (Naicker & Fouché, 2003).



According to Naicker (2002), organisations are faced with the challenge of achieving optimum productivity but not at the expense of placing damaging demands on their workforces. High demands are however unavoidable, but management foresee a real and important need to help their employees cope effectively with social, personal and professional problems confronting them. Management is slowly realising that a healthier workforce can help achieve optimum productivity, while decreasing the workload on managers, who no longer need to deal with a troubled workforce. “A healthier workforce produces tangible benefits such as reduced costs associated with sickness, turnover rates, reduced workplace accident rates and improved internal communication” (Naicker, 2002, p. 1). EAP's are gradually being seen by organisations as a means to attain the benefits associated with a healthier workforce.

### 2.10.1 Evaluating the workplace effects of EAP counseling

Despite the popularity of studies conducted on how EAP can improve work performance, little assessment of workplace effects of EAP counselling exist. Sharar, Pompe and Lennox (2012) conducted a study to determine whether a relationship exists between EAP counselling and improved workplace effectiveness. The Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS) is a psychometrically tested and validated tool, designed for EAP's. The tool contains five-item measures and five scales that lie at the heart of understanding EAP effectiveness, namely absenteeism, presenteeism, work engagement, life satisfaction, and workplace distress. This tool was used as a pre and post measure on the sample of 197 participants. The post assessment took place 90 days after the EAP sessions. Sharar et al., (2012, p. 7) reported that the results of the studies “support the use of the WOS to evaluate the workplace effects of EAP”.



The results below depict and support the statement that EAP clinical service delivery results in a positive impact on the workplace, through the evaluation of the Workplace Outcome Suite.

FIGURE 1: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Means on Absenteeism

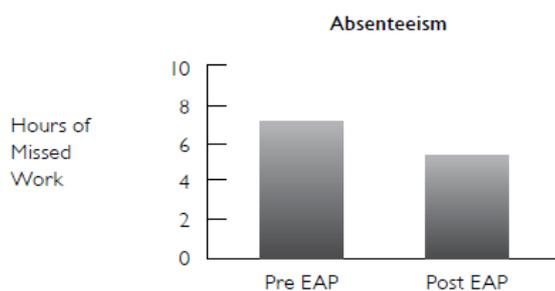


FIGURE 2: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Means on Presenteeism

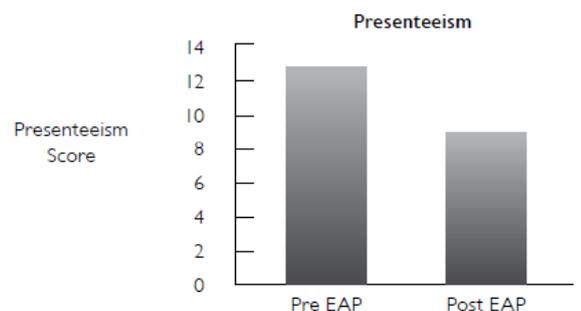


FIGURE 3: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Means on Work Engagement

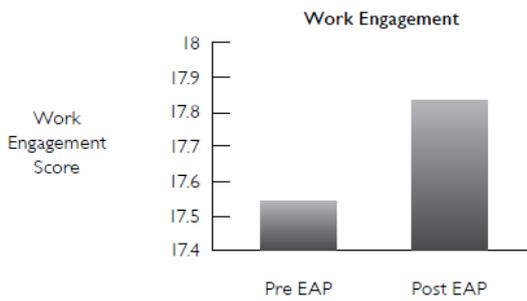


FIGURE 4: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Means on Life Satisfaction

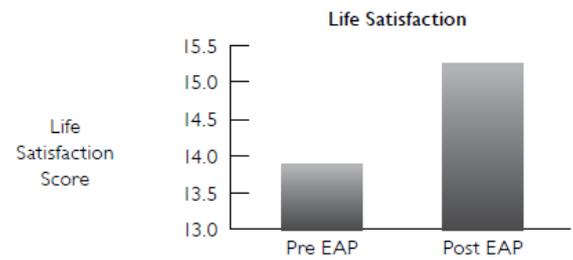


FIGURE 5: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Means on Workplace Distress



Sharar et al., (2012)

### 2.10.2 Effectiveness of EAP

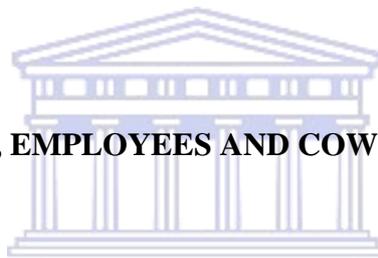


There are a number of reports which reflect the effectiveness of EAP. This section will only focus on a few reports of successful EAP outside the context of the working environment.

Kline and Snow (1994) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of a 15 session stress management program on a group of 142 mothers working as secretaries. The results indicated that the programme produced positive changes in the womens' work coping skills as well as their ability to handle stressors originating in one sphere, and impacted functioning in the other.

An EAP intervention was put to the test, to determine whether it would reduce the incidents of domestic violence in men referred to the service for alcohol addiction. The results depicted that while spousal abuse occurred less frequently, the patterns of violence continued (Maiden, 1996).

Sixty-one couples, with at least one partner considering divorce were assessed through the EAP. The couples were provided with at least five standard EAP sessions, while 53% accepted referrals for longer-term counselling. Six months later, clients rated the immediate involvement of the spouse as the most helpful event (Bayer, 1995).



## **2.11 ROLE OF EMPLOYER, EMPLOYEES AND COWORKERS**

An employment contract stipulates that the employer is obligated to pay a fixed wage and other agreed-upon fringe benefits. In return, however, workers do not provide a fixed amount of effort, but rather relinquish their capacity to work. The employer's role is then to convert this capacity into productive activity. The employer does not enjoy unilateral control over employees but is dependent on their skill and availability. It is therefore in the best interest of employers and employees to actively engage in creating an effective workplace. The effective workplace benefits employers by ensuring that organisational goals are met more consistently, since it assists employees to be more engaged and committed. The effective workplace is also advantageous for employees; supporting them to work more efficiently and to achieve better work life balance (Annandale, 2012).

According to Klarreich, Franchek and Moore (1985), the active support of supervisors and managers is needed in order to ensure that EAPs flourish and perform at its optimum level. Furthermore, the hallmark of a very good EAP is for managers to refer troubled employees before it affects job performance. Supervisors are under obligation to inform the employee of the counselling services available through the EAP, should the employee's problems become apparent.

Supervisors have three responsibilities for the successful operation of EAP, namely to know and understand how EAP works, to play the role of the primary and best source of information about EAP and to be comfortable in referring employees to the EAP both voluntary and involuntary (Bruce, 1990).

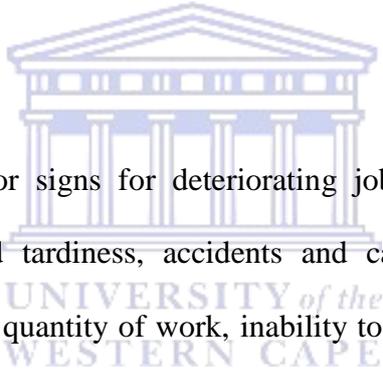
Employees are not likely to resist treatment especially when they run the risk of being dismissed due to bad behaviour or poor performance. Scanlon, (1986) indicates this intervention uses the leverage of disciplinary action to motivate employees to comply with the treatment at hand. The disadvantage of this approach is that it may be too late to detect some problems. In many instances, a manager does not work closely with an employee and has very little contact; the manager is therefore unable to spot problems the employee may experience.

Peer referral can assist managers to combat this problem. This is another method of referring an employee, through their colleagues (Scanlon, 1986). Davis and Gibson (1994) feel that this is highly unlikely to happen as employees believe that formal intervention should take place at managerial level. Employees may also feel that it is best not to get involved in

another employee's personal problems. Hostility may arise creating an awkward working environment.

## **2.12 IDENTIFYING A TROUBLED EMPLOYEE**

As management, one of the primary functions is to be able to identify a troubled employee sooner rather than later. Since this is a critical role for management, it is worthwhile to examine areas in which supervisors must be alerted to such behaviour changes or appearance of a typical behaviour. It is important to keep in mind that some employee's exhibit job performance problems occasionally and this does not mean they are troubled (Simelane, 2007).

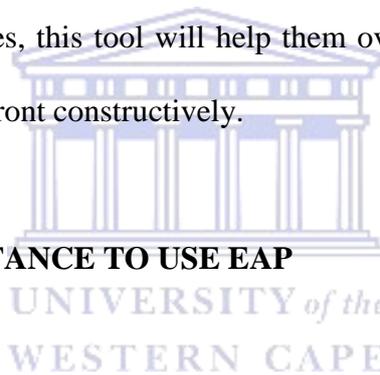


Managers need to look out for signs for deteriorating job performance, which may be classified as: absenteeism and tardiness, accidents and carelessness, conflicts with co-workers, decline in quality and quantity of work, inability to concentrate, memory problems and confusion, mood swings and unusual behaviour, poor appearance and poor hygiene, unprofessional conduct and on-job-absenteeism (presenteeism) (Romano, 1995).

Managers need to look out for behaviour patterns and not isolated incidents. Even though isolated incidents may not necessarily warrant extreme concern, it is important to respond to employee's performance problems as early as possible (Romano, 1995). Some employees are able to hide their problems for a long time; supervisors should therefore be on the lookout for a pattern of job performance deterioration.

### **2.12.1 Constructive Confrontation**

In order to ensure that EAP enhances performance and helps people cope with ongoing pressures of life, it is important for managers to have a thorough understanding of the term constructive confrontation. Constructive confrontation is when employees are approached and confronted with evidence suggesting their unsatisfactory job performance. With this, managers need to coach and guide employees on ways of improving their work, while highlighting the consequences of continued poor performance (Cagney, 2006). “Supervisors fear confronting employees and therefore see the EAP as a crisis management tool rather than a resource and a performance management tool” (Cagney, 2006, p. 19). Since supervisors are reluctant to approach employees, this tool will help them overcome this fear, provided they are well trained on how to confront constructively.



### **2.13 SUPERVISORS RESISTANCE TO USE EAP**

Unfortunately the reality is that supervisors may only take the necessary steps to help an employee when the employee's performance is going to impact upon that of the supervisor (Blair, 2004).

Supervisors are poorly prepared to handle a confrontational interview, and this results in supervisors ignoring employee problems until they become aggravated to the point where disciplinary action is needed. Most referrals therefore seem to be reactive referrals based on highly visible triggering events (Cagney, 2006).

According to Myers (1984), supervisors show little interest in confronting employees as these episodes can be very unpleasant. Supervisors ignore the confrontation process with the hope that employees will resign out of their own free will. Meyers (1984, p. 233) further states that “supervisors are reluctant to confront a deficient team member, as this may provoke team hostility towards the supervisor”. Supervisors also believe that employee confrontation creates more aggravation than relief.

The assumption of some supervisors is that referring a troubled employee to an EAP, is a poor reflection of their supervisory skills. Others feel it is their responsibility to help resolve everything that affects an employee since, he/she reports to them. On the other hand, some believe that when employees are referred to an EAP, this limits their power and authority as supervisors to discipline them (Klarreich et al., 1985).

According to Klarreich et al., (1985), most supervisors are promoted through the ranks and are likely to be friends of employees; hence they may overlook behaviour and often cover up for employee deficiencies. With this said, some employees confide in supervisors, and this often complicates things as supervisors end up counselling the employee which can be damaging as they are not professionally trained.

In order to overcome supervisors’ resistance to use an EAP, supervisory training programmes are the most effective way as they create awareness of the EAP. This programme helps to clarify the role of supervisors within the context of an EAP and further provides adequate procedures for referrals (Sutherland & Cooper, 2000).

## **2.14 EMPLOYEE WELL BEING: HOW TO CARRY THIS OUT**

After looking at what employee wellbeing is and assessing why it is so important, the next question would be, how does one go about establishing this. Burns (2009) has proposed a few practical approaches which can be followed:

### **1. Get senior buy-in**

It is important that the senior management team in the organisation support the implementation of well-being programmes. If they do not support this initiative, the programme is bound to fail or underperform. Senior management needs to be pursued and needs to view this initiative as an investment to the business.

### **2. Assess the organisation**

Conduct an assessment or needs analysis on the organisation to determine how well, or sick employees are.

### **3. Configure programmes**

Before designing an intervention, it is important to take into account the following factors: distribution type, language literacy, appropriate media type (online programme work), existing internal skills and the results of an organisational risk assessment.



#### **4. Identify trusted providers**

It is critical to consider a reputable professional service provider with a solid track record with a client list. This together with the fact the company should have an approach that seeks to understand the organisation before proposing specific services.

#### **5. Deploy**

Once a trusted provider has been selected, ensure that the service is implemented with energetic marketing and communication drives. If the marketing strategy does not sell well, employees will not buy into it.

#### **6. Monitor**



The most important way to determine the effectiveness of any program is to monitor the progress after it has been implemented. Determine whether people actually utilise the service, get feedback from them (do people like it, is it working) and try to quantify impact (is there a behaviour change). This is an ongoing cyclical exercise, where a well-being programme will continually evolve over time.

##### **2.14.1 Choosing a Wellness Programme**

Mchunu (2012) agrees with current research, where wellness programmes are known to produce physical and mental health improvements among employees provided the organisation has a comprehensive programme in place, which caters for the needs of the

organisation. Furthermore, he provides a brief summary of various components that could be included in a wellness programme. Table 2.3 is not meant to provide an exhaustive list of all these activities, but rather to ensure that all stakeholders are part of the decision making process of deciding which programmes are needed and applicable to their organisation. The following factors need to be taken into account when deciding on the correct wellness programme, employee needs, organisational needs, employee demographics and availability of resources.



**Table 2.3: Choosing relevant workplace wellness programme.**

Programme	Target group	Required resources	Objectives	Benefits
EAP	Employees with personal problems	Professional counselling services EAP counsellor	To reduce stigma associated with mental illnesses Assist employees to get appropriate professional help	Improved job performance Reduced absenteeism Helps employees resolve personal problems Increased safety awareness
Healthy diet/nutrition	Overweight, middle aged employees with chronic illnesses such as diabetes type 2 and hypertension Sedentary employees	On site services such as: • Healthy food options • Professional advice • Awareness and information	Prevention of diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, obesity, osteoporosis, back pain	Reduction in health care costs and absenteeism Increased productivity
HIV/AIDS	All employees	VCT services ART services Support system	Prevention of HIV infection Assisting infected employees to stay healthy Offer assistance for affected employees	Improved quality of life Increased awareness Increased productivity Decrease absenteeism
Physical activity	Employees of all ages Special focus on middle aged employees Sedentary employees	Gym facilities on site/offsite facilities supported by management Swimming pool facilities Walking space	Prevention of diseases e.g. hypertension, heart disease, Diabetes type 2 Improving quality of life Reduce risk of developing depression	Reduction in medical aid claims and absenteeism Increased employee morale
Smoking/substance abuse cessation	Smokers and substance abusers	Counselling therapy Support system, rehabilitation programme	Prevention of diseases such as lung cancer Prevention of secondary smoking to other employees	Reduction in absenteeism rate Increased safety standards Increased quality of life
Stress management	Employees involved in stressful jobs e.g. noisy environment, monotonous jobs	Organisational change Support system – skills training Counselling services	Modify/eliminate stressors Increase stress management skills	Reduction in medical costs Reduction in stress related accidents
Weight control	Obese/overweight employees	Gym facilities Support system	Prevention of diseases e.g. heart diseases, stroke, colon cancers	Improved quality of life Decreased medical costs Improved self esteem
Advanced driving lessons	Young employees	Driving instructor	To reduce motor vehicle accidents Improved safety in the workplace	Reduced medical costs and absenteeism
Retirement preparation	Employees within 5 years of retirement	A consultant	To reduce stress related to retirement To improve succession planning Improved mental and physical health after retirement	Less medical expenses after retirement Improved quality of life

Source: Mchunu (2012)

## **2.15 EAP MODELS**

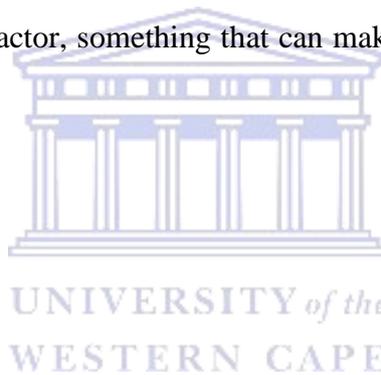
There are many types of EAP models available. For those organisations who offer an EAP, they often use these programmes as diagnosis and treatment, while others prefer to offer the service as a basis for education alone. Byars and Rue (2006) identified four EAP models, namely in-house, out-house, consortium and affiliate.

### **2.15.1 The in-house model**

The in-house-model is a type of EAP in which diagnosis and the treatment services are provided within an institution. Here, the employer maintains a full service facility and employs EAP practitioners on a full time basis. Whilst using the in-house model, the employer, utilises the entire employee assistance staff and organises their functions into components of a unit. The manager of that unit is held accountable for supervising the unit's staff, to develop EAP policies and frameworks and to design procedures that will be followed in the implementation of policies. With the use of an in-house model, EAPs are situated within the organisation and in some instances the offices are located away from the worksite. The advantage of in-house EAP models is that EAP practitioners become empathetic to employees, compared to EAP practitioners that do not possess any knowledge about the institution. In-house EAPs provide employees with a sense of security because they are not given a quick diagnosis and sent to an outside source (Byars & Rue, 2006).

### **2.15.2 The out-of-house model**

The out-of-house model is an outsourced EAP, where employers enter into a contractual agreement with an external EAP provider to provide employees with an EAP at either the facility of the service provider or the facility provided by the employer. Whilst using the out-of-house model, employers usually liaise with outside contractors to provide employee assistance staff and services. The out-of-house model provides better accountability, lower legal liability, and ease-up start and implementation. With the use of out-of-house model, confidentiality is often maintained, compared to when in-house EAP models are used. The disadvantage associated with the use of this model is that usually it requires employees to travel to the office of the contractor, something that can make employees reluctant (Byars & Rue, 2006).

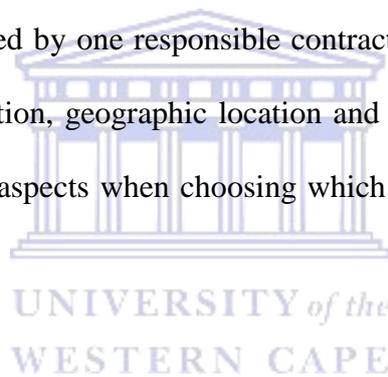


### **2.15.3 The consortium model**

In the consortium model, the different institutions combine all their resources (for example finances, personnel, facility) to develop an EAP. The consortium model is usually common for small sized institutions. These institutions usually partner to form a consortium that will provide an EAP to their employees. With the use of the consortium model, EAPs are designed, structured and staffed by the employers who are members of the EAP consortium and the cost of offering such services is divided amongst member institutions. An advantage of using the consortium model is that smaller institutions get a cost benefit of carrying out employee assistance, which they cannot afford on their own. Operating consortium models may be complex and may require a difficult decision-making process (Byars & Rue, 2006).

#### **2.15.4 The affiliate model**

The affiliate model is almost similar to the out-of-house model of an EAP; however it focuses mainly on short term emergencies as and when they arise. With the use of the affiliate model, the employer works in partnership with a contractor, who in terms of the contractual agreement, is liable for providing EAP. A contractor is the service provider, who subcontracts with local professionals rather than making use of internal staff. This enables the service provider to reach employees at an institution's location in which the contractor might not have an office. Whilst using the affiliate model, the contractor may have less control over a sub-contracted professional; however, this has become a vehicle with which employees at various locations can be reached by one responsible contractor. Each employer will have to consider the size of the institution, geographic location and diversity, employee population, values and goals as important aspects when choosing which model to utilise (Byars & Rue, 2006).



#### **2.16 THE FUTURE OF EAP**

The future of EAP is contingent upon the future needs of employers, employees, family members and the broader communities. It is evident, that EAP is a workplace benefit for both employees and employers, and it is likely to continue to grow as businesses are pressured to increase productivity, while still taking care and supporting a healthy and safe workforce. With ever growing pressures, individuals may continue to struggle to maintain and balance work-like demands. EA professionals will need to be there in the future to help support them in evaluating problems and finding potential solutions (Jacobson & Attridge, 2010).

### **2.16.1 EAP Professionals**

An EAP is a multi-disciplinary field, with the large majority of professionals holding degrees in social work or psychology. Regardless of the growing popularity among organisations, the field of EAP is suffering due to a shortage of trained EA professionals. The lack of professional education and knowledge presents a great challenge to develop future leaders and researchers who will improve the EAP field (Jacobson & Attridge, 2010).

### **2.16.2 Globalization**

Since the EA concept originated in the United States, countries all around the world are modelling and duplicating this program. EA around the world are defined differently in each country; this depends on the country's legal system, health care system, culture, resources for mental health and substance abuse, and so on. The EAP profession has a strong future with many opportunities for positive change, all because of global interest (Jacobson & Attridge, 2010).

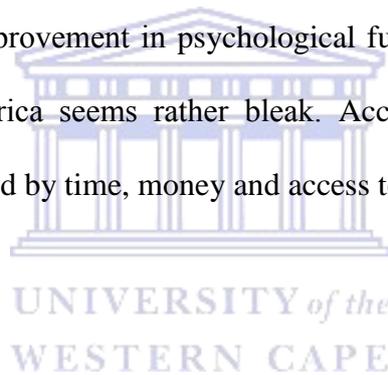
### **2.16.3 Technology**

Employees have become very familiar with the purpose of EAP's thanks to web based services such as the internet. They no longer need to fear the stigma associated with addiction, and can now access prevention programmes online through the internet at any time with relative anonymity. EAP websites have become more informative with direct access to provider lists, tips sheets, educational webinars and self-assessment tools. Following the recent economic recessions, employers are looking for ways to cut costs, while the utilisation

of EAP is higher than ever. “One way to provide services at a potentially lower cost; is through phone and online counselling” (Jacobson & Attridge, 2010, p. 26).

## **2.17 CONCLUSION**

The past decades’ literature has been more about how EAP’s should be carried out and its’ failures and shortcomings research than has actually been carried out (Csiernik, 1995). Too much literature still exists on the lack of research on specific practices in South African organisations to promote employee wellness, yet EAP was designed according to US models and introduced in South Africa in 1992 (Maiden, 1992). Without firm evident based-research to demonstrate employee’s improvement in psychological functioning and performance, the future of EAP’s in South Africa seems rather bleak. According to Naicker and Fouché (2003), evaluation is constrained by time, money and access to employees in the workplace.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to outline the qualitative research design and methodology used to conduct the research. This research designed is used when the researcher is interested in finding meaning in understanding a certain phenomenon from an insider's perspective. This chapter highlights the research approach, selection of the sample, instruments used, data collection methods and also ethical issues to be considered.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

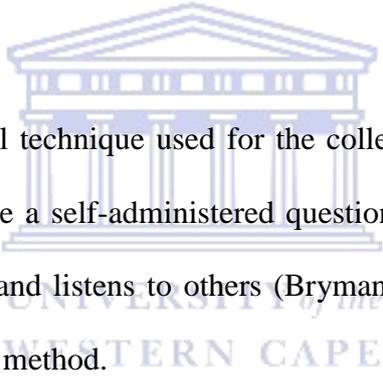


A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The choice of design reflects priority on decisions being given to a range of dimensions of the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Rakepa (2012) explains that a research design describes the conditions under which data will be collected, how respondents will be selected and what instructions will be used. Furthermore, a research design provides answers to the 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where' and 'how' of a research project.

This study was based on an exploratory research design type. "An exploratory design is conducted about a research problem when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to. The

focus is on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation or undertaken when problems are in a preliminary stage of investigation” (Lynn University, 2013). This study is flexible and is able to address research questions such as ‘what, ’why’, and ‘how’.

Furthermore this study type is often used to generate formal hypotheses and develop precise research problems. On the other hand the findings are typically not generalizable to the entire population, while the research inhibits the ability to make conclusive findings. The process is flexible yet unstructured which leads to tentative results that have very limited value in decision-making (Lynn University, 2013).



A research method is the actual technique used for the collection of data. It may involve a specific instrument, for example a self-administered questionnaire or a structured interview where the researcher observes and listens to others (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This study has employed a qualitative research method.

According to Sekaran and Bougie, (2010) the qualitative approach produces descriptive data. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) added that this approach is essentially descriptive in nature and typically takes the form of in-depth interviews or group discussions. Fundamentally, the qualitative research approach is used to study formerly unexplored areas (Welman et al., 2005).

The decision to use a predominantly qualitative research approach in this study was based on the very nature of qualitative research, best described in terms of its anti-positivistic, interpretive and holistic approach. The main aim of qualitative research is to understand the social reality of the respondents and the meaning that people attach to it (Babbie, 1992). The following features of qualitative research were noted:

- Qualitative researchers discard the notion of an external, objective reality. They aim to understand reality by discovering the meanings that people in a specific setting attach to it. To them behaviour is intentional and creative, and it can be explained but not predicted.
- The qualitative researcher is subjective, interacts with the subject and accepts that s/he cannot be detached and value-free.
- Qualitative methodology is dialectical and interpretive. During the process of interaction between the researcher and the subject, the subject's world is discovered and interpreted by means of qualitative methods.
- Qualitative research design lacks feeling and emotion from the person being interviewed. It may also lack insight, by understanding what but not understanding why (Babbie, 1992).

In this study two in-depth interviews were used and the analysis of documentary sources was undertaken.

### 3.2.1 Content analysis

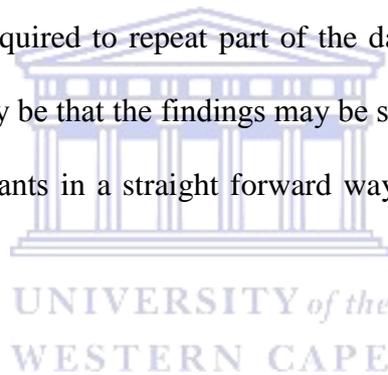
Babbie and Mouton (2008, p. 491) defines content analysis as “words or phrases within a wide range of texts, including books chapters, essays, interviews and speeches as well as informal conversations and headlines” Green (2004, p. 82) on the other hand defines content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use”.

Content analysis is an objective coding scheme which should be applied to the notes or data received from interviews and field notes. It is not amenable to analysis until the information conveyed has been condensed and made systematically comparable. The researcher would examine artefacts of social communication; these would include written documents or transcripts of recorded verbal communications. When using a content strategy, researchers should decide at what level they intend to sample and the unit of analysis to be counted. Sampling may occur at any or all the following levels: words, phrases, sentences paragraphs, sections or similar elements relevant to the context. Seven major elements in written messages can be counted in content analysis, namely words or terms, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts and semantics (Henning, et al., 2010, p. 107).

By examining the presence or repetition of specific words and phrases in these texts, a researcher is able to make inferences about the philosophical assumptions of a writer, a written piece, the audience for which a piece is written, and even the culture and time in which the text is embedded. The characteristics of content analysis refer to language or

communication with regards to its content. Two types of content analyses are applicable, namely thematic (conceptual) and relational analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). Thematic analysis refers to ‘coding and categorising as well as extracting and constructing themes from categories’ also referred to as ‘thematic organisation’ (Henning, et al., 2010, p. 107). The actual coding and categorizing of the data is to get to grips with the content which then becomes part of the analysis process.

The greatest advantage of content analysis is its time and cost saving benefits. No special equipment is needed to complete the research nor is there any obligation to obtain a certain number of research resources. Content analysis provides a safe and secure approach to data even when the researcher is required to repeat part of the data collection. The limitation of qualitative content analysis may be that the findings may be superficial as it captures the ‘real world’ of the research participants in a straight forward way without much interrogation of the data (Henning et al., 2010).



### **3.3 POLPULATION AND SAMPLE**

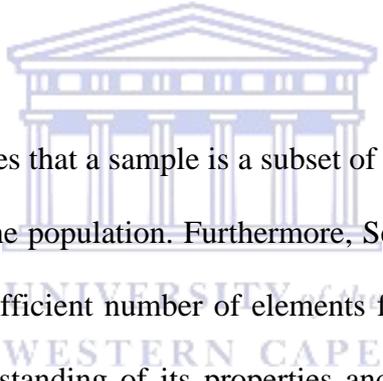
#### **3.3.1 Population**

Sekaran and Bougie (2010) define a population as the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher would like to investigate. The population for this research study was selected from an organisation in the private sector. The employees comprise of various levels within the organisation. This will give broader insight of the perception and need of EAPs amongst private sector employees. It is impractical to include

all members of the population in a research project. The sample of employees that represents a whole will be used by the researcher to collect the data.

According to Henning et al., (2010), a ‘theoretical population’ are those employees who are able to partner with the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. Since it is impossible to study the entire population that interests the researcher, the researcher will therefore select the group of people who represent the population and from whom they can collect data (Babbie & Mouton, 2008).

### **3.3.2 Sample**



Sekaran and Bougie (2010) states that a sample is a subset of the population and it consists of some members selected from the population. Furthermore, Sekaran (2003) defined sampling as the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population, so that the study of the sample and understanding of its properties and characteristics would make it possible for one to generalize such properties or characteristics to the population elements.

For the purpose of this research the chosen sample size were sixteen private sector employees. Five were selected from top, middle and junior management and eleven from various levels of employment within the organisation. This sample is therefore considered manageable in relation to the general population of employees.

The researcher designed the interview most suited to the participant. The researcher conceptualised the process as a partnership which should lead to a specific goal. The researcher thus selected a sample that could provide insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Henning, et al., 2010).

### **3.3.3 Sampling Procedure**

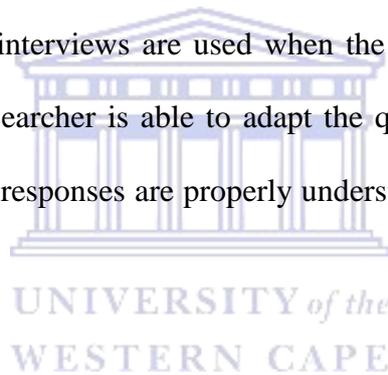
Purposive sampling is the method that was used in this study. Purposive sampling is when the information obtained is not from whom are most conveniently available, but rather from specific target groups who can provide the desired information, either because they are the only ones who possess it, or who conform to some criteria set by the researcher (Sekaran, 2001). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling design. “In non-probability sampling designs, the elements in the population have no probabilities attached to their being chosen as sample subjects. This means that the findings from the study of the sample cannot be confidently generalized to the population.” (Sekaran, 2001, p. 277).

Sekaran (2001) goes on to state that non-probability sampling is used when time or other factors become critical. This method may at times be the only meaningful way to investigate. The disadvantages though, are that it may not be as representative of the population as full random sample would be and further it is not possible to assess the possible sampling error.

### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, two data collection methods were used. Firstly, one-on-one interviews with the Head of Human Resources and all line managers from various levels in the organisation were conducted. An interview is a method of data collection, which involves direct personal contact with the participant (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, structured interviews were conducted. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) structured interviews are used when the researcher knows exactly what information is needed. The researcher is able to adapt the questions as necessary to clarify any doubts and ensure that the responses are properly understood, by repeating or rephrasing the questions.



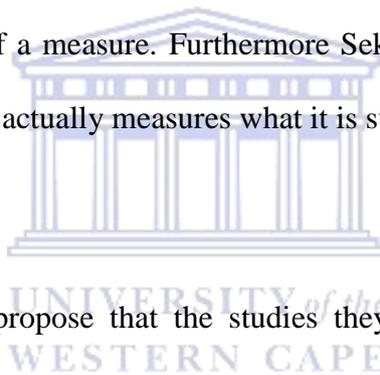
The aim was to determine the perception and the need of employee wellness programmes. Structured interviews were conducted with management and the employees to determine their views on the essence and need of implementing such a programme in the organisation. This method is appropriate for the proposed study because of time and cost constraints. Secondly, a case study was conducted to determine the extent of the need for this programme.

Case studies and other archival records provide loads of information for research and problem solving (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Documentary information of the organisation,

namely, sick leave records, absenteeism records and termination records were evaluated to establish a link for the need of an employee assistance programme.

### **3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

According to Sekaran (2001, p. 204) “the reliability of a measure indicates the extent to which the measure is without bias (error) and offers consistent measurement across time and across the various items in the instrument. In other words, the reliability of a measure indicates the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the goodness of a measure. Furthermore Sekaran (2001), states that validity refers to whether an instrument actually measures what it is supposed to measure.



Some qualitative researchers propose that the studies they produce should be judged or evaluated according to different criteria from those used in relation to quantitative research. Bryman and Bell (2007) as cited in Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that alternative terms and ways of assessing qualitative research are required. They proposed two primary criteria for assessing a qualitative study namely trustworthiness and authenticity. “Trustworthiness is made up of four criteria, namely;

- Credibility – which parallels internal validity
- Transferability – which parallels external validity
- Dependability – which parallels reliability

- Conformability – which parallels objectivity”. (Bryman & Bell, 2007 as cited in Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 411).

Authenticity comprised of:

- Fairness – “Does the research fairly represent different viewpoints among members of the social setting?”
- Ontological authenticity – “Does the research help members to arrive at a better understanding of their social milieu?”
- Educative authenticity – “Does the research help members appreciate better the perspectives of other members of their social setting?”
- Catalytic authenticity – “Has the research acted as an impetus to members to engage in action to change their circumstances?”
- Tactical authenticity – “Has the research empowered members to take the steps necessary for engaging in action?” (Bryman & Bell, 2007 as cited in Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 415).

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

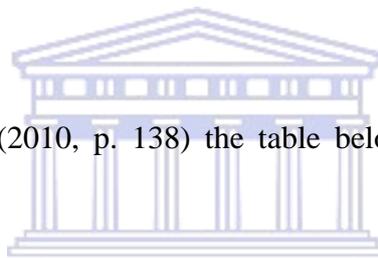
All data analyses collected or gathered in the research study were documented carefully and analysed qualitatively. Interviews were transcribed and checked for completeness and errors, to facilitate the analysis process. The tools used provide the researcher with support during the interpretation, condensation and synthesising phase. There are a number of options which can be used to determine the meaning of the phenomena that occur. The conclusions drawn

through the interpretation of results of data analysis should be objective and not based on any subjective or emotional value (Babbie & Mouton, 2008).

### 3.6.1 Coding the data

Coding data requires of the researcher to decide what they are going to code, namely, coding for frequency or coding for existence. The researcher decides whether they are prepared to generalize on words that may have similar meaning within the parameters of what is deemed acceptable or not. Through this process a set of rules automatically emerges for the study. (Babbie & Mouton, 2008).

According to Henning et al., (2010, p. 138) the table below outlines the three phases of content analysis.



<p><b>Phase 1: Orientation to the data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading or studying data sets to form overview and to comprehend the context (within the data).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 2: On the way – working the data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coding segments of meaning.</li> <li>• Categorizing related codes into groups.</li> <li>• Seeking relationships between categories to form thematic patterns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 3: Final composition of the analysed data text (verbal &amp; visual)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing the final themes of the set of data.</li> <li>• Presenting pattern of related themes.</li> </ul>

**Table 3.1: Phases of content analysis**

Green (2004) mentioned that there are three basic approaches to content analysis, namely:

- The frequency count of the words
- To examine the occurrence of words
- The coding of text units using a coding scheme

In this study content analysis was undertaken from interviews after the data was transcribed and developed.

### 3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are several ethical issues that need to be considered when collecting data. According to Sekaran (2001), these ethical issues pertain to those who sponsor the research, who collect the data and who offer the same. She mentions the following ethical issues that the researcher needs to be aware of:

- *Voluntary Participation:* Social research often represents an intrusion into peoples' lives and the participation of people in social experiments disrupts their regular activities. Therefore, people should not be subjected to research of such nature, unless they agree to it. However, participation in research must be voluntary and people may refuse to divulge information about themselves.
- *No harm to participants:* Research should never injure the people involved in the study by revealing personal information that would be embarrassing to the participant; or that could affect or endanger their home or working lives.

- *Anonymity and Confidentiality:* The most important concern is the protection of the participants' identity other than their interest and well-being. The participants should be convinced that their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout and after the research study is conducted.
- *Deceiving Participants:* This is highly unethical. Participants should be given the correct and valid information and not be taken advantage of.
- *Falsification of Data:* There should be absolutely no misrepresentation or distortion in reporting on the data collected from participants.

There are also certain ethical behaviours of the respondents that need to be kept in mind when conducting a study. According to Sekaran (2001, p. 260) they are: “the subject, once having exercised the choice to participate in a study should cooperate fully in the tasks ahead, like responding to a survey or taking part in an experiment; and the respondent also has an obligation to be truthful and honest in the responses. Misrepresentation or giving information, knowing it to be untrue, should be avoided”.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

The intention of this chapter was to explain the research design process, as this is the framework or blueprint of this study. This chapter also provided an overview of the population and sample used. The instrument used was utilised as weak as a few ethical issues needed to be kept in mind to conduct research were overlooked. The aim was to outline procedural details needed to be followed in order to obtain the information needed to try and structure the research problem.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains how data based on the process explained in Chapter three was collected and analyzed. The basis of this study aims to achieve these objectives, namely to determine the need for an Employee Assistance Programme at the financial services organisation and the opposing view of the employee and the employer.

#### 4.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

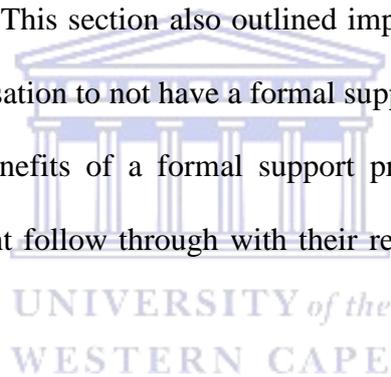


The Operations Director granted permission to conduct interviews with 11 employees and 5 managers (from junior to top management to gain information for this study). The interviews were guided by two different questionnaires namely one for the employee and another for the employer. The questions were specifically designed to formulate differences and similarities in the answers obtained. The questionnaire was sub-divided into four sections, which consisted of a combination of open-ended, close-ended and multiple choice questions.

The first section obtained the demographics of the participants, based on gender, age group, race, marital status, years of experience and current rank. The second section determined the awareness, knowledge and general interest this programme offers.

The third section focused on the personal and professional nature of problems employees faced and management's level of awareness thereof. One was able to determine whether employees were at ease discussing work related or personal problems with management. Both employee and employer had the opportunity to express their view on the possible correlation between problems experienced and the effect on productivity.

The fourth section focused on the need for an employee assistance programme and a study of the current support system the organisation provided troubled employees. Different viewpoints were assessed with regards to the responsibility of management towards employees in need of support. This section also outlined important aspects, namely possible reasons for this specific organisation to not have a formal support programme in place; would management recognize the benefits of a formal support programme in this workplace if offered and would management follow through with their referral of troubled employees in need to support.



In addition the organisational records were accessed to substantiate the need for an employee assistance programme.

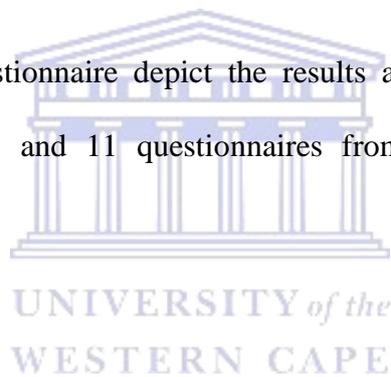
## **4.3 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

This section provides a brief summary on the following aspects:

- Description of data collection
- Findings of two interviews conducted
- Analysis of organisational records

### **4.3.1 Outcomes of interviews**

The four sections of the questionnaire depict the results accordingly. The 16 interviews conducted were guided by 5 and 11 questionnaires from an employer and employee perspective, respectively.



#### 4.3.1.1 Section One: Demographics

**Table 4.1: Demographics for Managers**

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	4	80
	Female	1	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	>19	0	0
	20-29	0	0
	30-39	5	100
	40-49	0	0
	50-59	0	0
	60+	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>
Race	African	0	0
	White	5	100
	Coloured	0	0
	Indian	0	0
	Other	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status	Single	1	20
	Married	4	80
	Divorced	0	0
	Widow	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>
Years of Experience	0-5	0	0
	6-10	1	20
	11-15	3	60
	16-20	1	20
	21+	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>
Current Position	HR Manager	1	20
	Director	2	40
	Team Leader	1	20
	Senior Manager	1	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.1 demonstrates and represents the management component interviewed. Two Directors, one Human Resources Manager, one Senior Manager and one Team Leader

comprised of 4 males and 1 female of white race in the 30-39 age group. These managers all have more than 5 years of work experience.

**Table 4.2: Demographics for Employees**

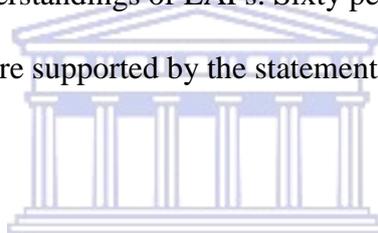
Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	5	45
	Female	6	55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	>19	0	0
	20-29	7	64
	30-39	3	27
	40-49	1	9
	50-59	0	0
	60+	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Race</b>	African	0	0
	White	5	46
	Coloured	3	27
	Indian	2	18
	Other	1	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	8	73
	Married	3	27
	Divorced	0	0
	Widow	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Years of Experience</b>	0-5	8	73
	6-10	1	9
	11-15	0	0
	16-20	1	9
	21+	1	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.2 demonstrates and represents the employee component interviewed, which comprised of 5 males and 6 females over the age 19, from four different race groups. Work experience ranges from +/- 5 to 21+ years.

#### **4.3.1.2 Section Two: Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

This section determined the general awareness, knowledge and interests of the EAP from the perspective of employer and employee.

The various levels of management's intellectual discernment provided a combination of different responses of their understandings of EAPs. Sixty percent of management had insight about EAPs. Examples of this are supported by the statements below.



- “Benefits offered to assist employees whose work performance is below grade level”.
- “A programme that assists the employee in terms of physical and emotional well-being to improve work performance”.
- “Referral programme for troubled employees is often regarded as a support programme”.

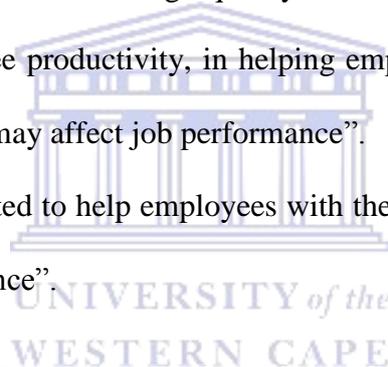
Forty percent of management had little or no insight about EAPs. Examples of this are supported by the following response below.

- “It is a primary function of the HR department to ensure that the overall well-being of employees are addressed”.

- “A programme that assist employees with aspects relevant to their role. These include training courses and one-to-one assistance”.

The varied levels of employees’ intellectual discernment provided a combination of different responses of their understanding of EAPs. Nine percent of the employees had insight about EAPs. Examples of this are supported in the statements below.

- “Counselling services for employees to assist with non-work related issues that may have an impact on their ability to work effectively”.
- “Programs to help staff with non-work related personal issues”.
- “Provision of comprehensive and high quality EAP services that assist organisations in maximizing employee productivity, in helping employees to identify and improve personal concerns that may affect job performance”.
- “A programme designated to help employees with their problems which could impact on their work performance”.



Seventy-three percent of employees had little insight of EAPs and responded vaguely. Eighteen percent of employees had no insight of EAPs. Examples of this are supported by the responses below.

- “Programs that are put in place by the employer to assist the employee financially, with regards to skills development; or general personal development”.
- “A program that assists individuals to perform their job, providing them with the tools to perform their job”.
- “The employer helps the employees with certain things”.
- “These are programs designed to improve the employees’ work experience, so they become better at their jobs”.

- “Specially developed programmes to assist the employees’ professional development”.

Management elaborated on the functions of EAPs. Sixty percent of participants identified the functions while 40% indicated to have little knowledge in this regard. Their responses included:

- “To provide a support system for troubled employees”.
- “To provide counselling services through a support programme”.

The results indicate that 40% of the participants did not hear about the programme and neither understood the functions, purpose nor objectives of the support programme. Examples of this are supported by the responses below.

- “I don’t know”.
- “I am not too sure what the functions are”.
- “Teaching, training and guidance”.

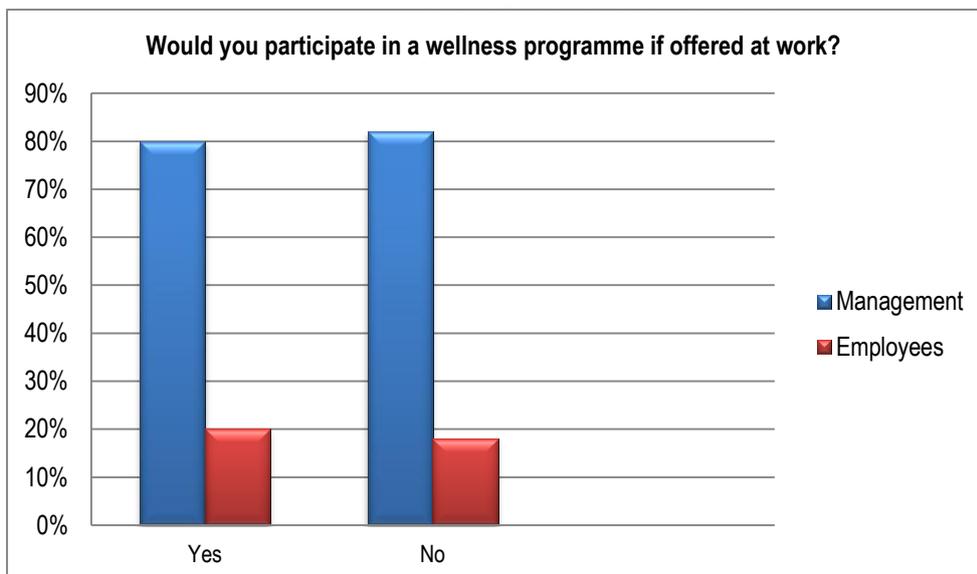
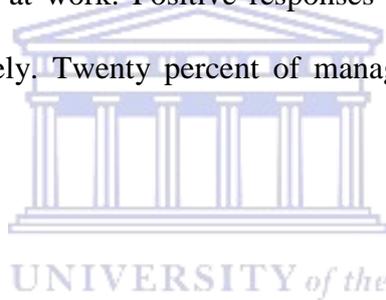
The employees elaborated on the functions of EAPs. Seventy-three percent of employees had no knowledge of these programmes and were unable to respond appropriately in the interviews.

- “I don’t know”.
- “Not really”.
- “I have no idea what the functions are”.

Twenty-seven percent of employees understood the functions of an EAP and responded appropriately in the interviews.

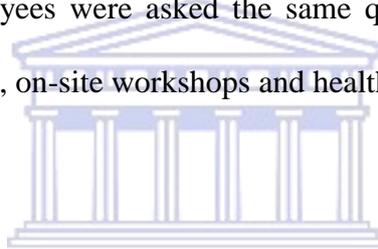
- “Make it easier for employees to deal with personal issues so that they are still able to do their work properly.”
- “Providing the necessary tools in order for you to perform a job correctly and efficiently.”
- “Improve the performance of the employee.”

Management and employees were asked whether they would participate in a wellness programme if offered to them at work. Positive responses of management and employees were 80% and 82% respectively. Twenty percent of management and 18% of employees showed no interest.



Four managers indicated that they would be interested in a support programme, such as the EAP if offered to them at work. One manager indicated not to have an interest, unless it was offered by a reputable company. This manager was interested in knowing whether the programme would be offered in-house or by an external provider and this would ultimately decide his interest in the programme. After constant probing it was clear that he had no clue of the support programme or its function.

Management showed an interest in learning about health and lifestyle programmes if offered to them, namely through the following channels: online programmes, on-site workshops and reading material. When employees were asked the same question, their preferences were: one-on-one counseling sessions, on-site workshops and health screenings.

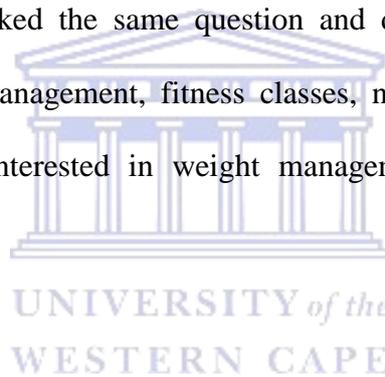


Management was provided with a list of wellness topics to determine their interest. The results indicated interest in the following: emotional health, physical activity, stress management and maintaining a work life balance. Employees displayed an interest in the following wellness topics: back injury prevention, cholesterol management, diabetes, healthy cooking, nutrition, physical activity, stress management and maintaining a work life balance.

When management was asked to indicate which screening tests would interest them the results demonstrated the following: Sixty percent of the participants indicated an interest in testing their blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and vision. Forty percent of the participants showed an interest in flu shots, body mass index and hearing tests. On the other hand 40% of

the participants indicated no interest in screening tests. Management was asked to select a number of tests that were appealing to them. They were not restricted in selecting only one test. Employees were asked the same question, and their responses were as follows: 100% of employees were interested in testing their blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and vision. 91% of employees were interested in body mass index and hearing tests, while 73% showed an interest in flu shots. Employees were allowed to select multiple tests.

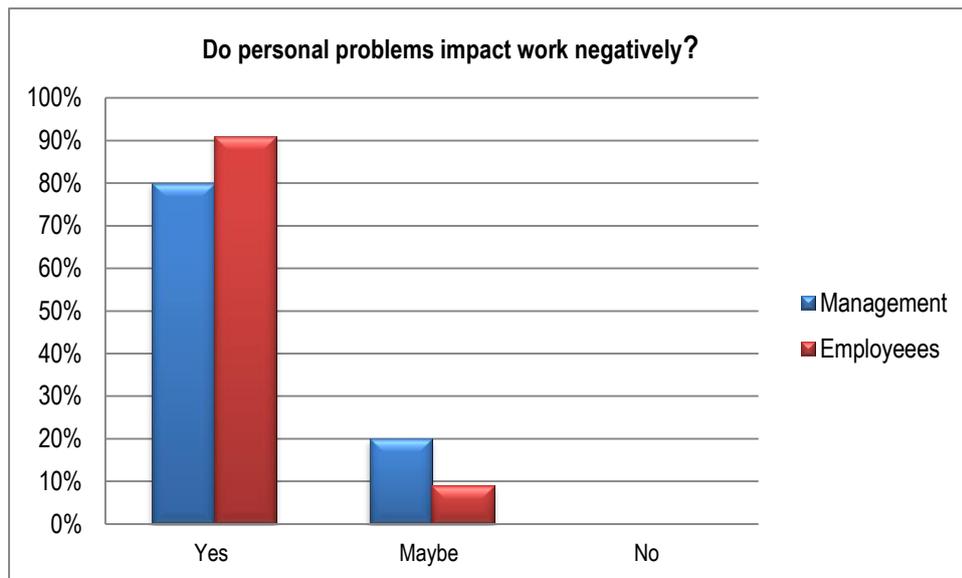
Management was then provided with a list of programmes to determine their interest. There was a definite display of interest in the following: stress management, nutrition and wellness-coaching. Employees were asked the same question and displayed an interest in similar programmes, namely stress management, fitness classes, nutrition and wellness-coaching. Management was not very interested in weight management and employees were not interested in immunizations.



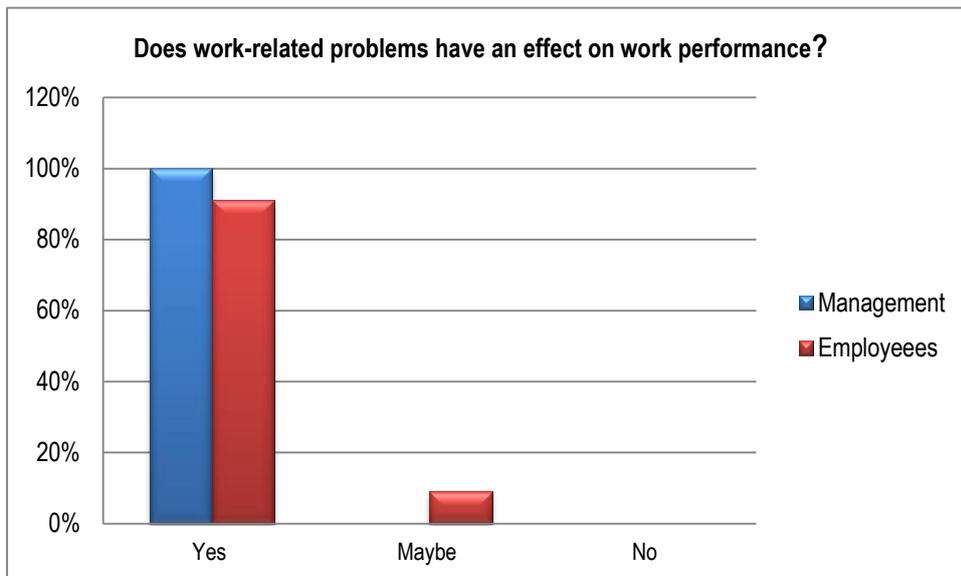
#### **4.3.1.3 Section Three: Problems experienced by employees**

This section determines whether employees experience personal or professional problems in the workplace that may impact negatively on work, productivity and team morale.

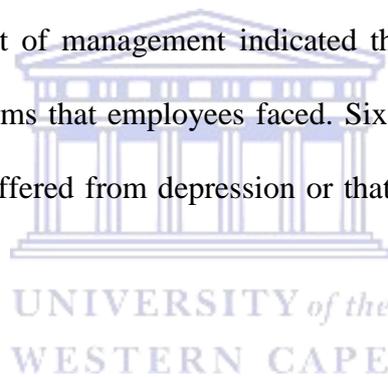
Management was asked whether personal problems impacted negatively on work. The results indicated 80% of management and 90% of employees believing there to be a correlation between personal problems and the negative impact on work. 20% of management and 10% of employees were unsure about the correlation between personal problems and the negative impact on work.



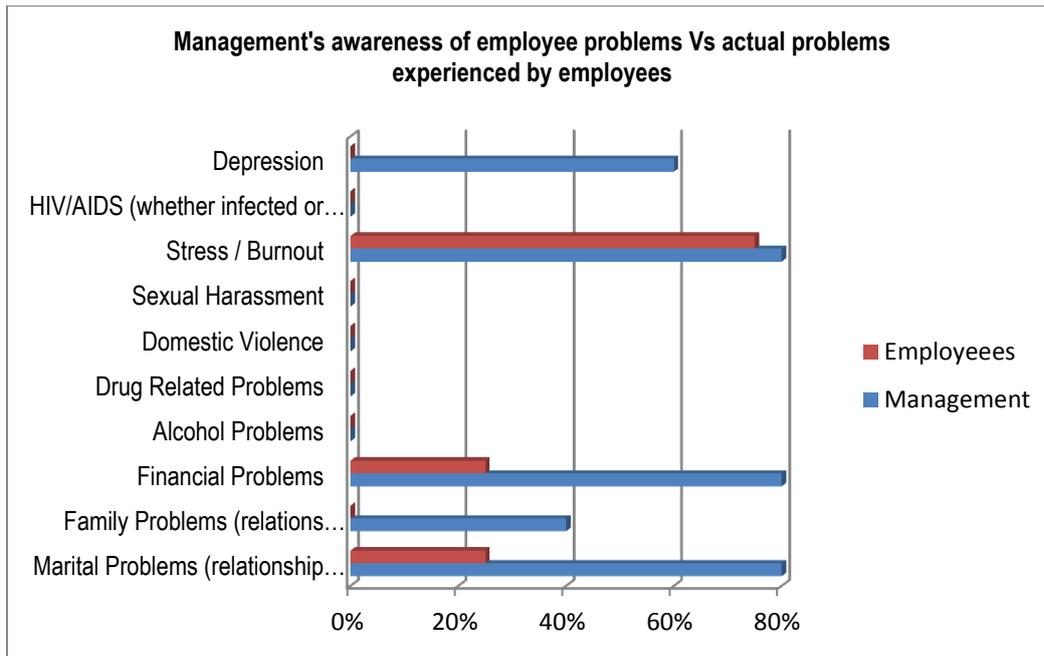
The next question determined whether management and employees felt that work-related problems had a negative effect on work performance. The results yield that 100% of management and 91% of employees felt that work-related problems had an effect on work performance, the remaining 9% of employees were unsure of the relationship between work-related problems and the effect on work performance.



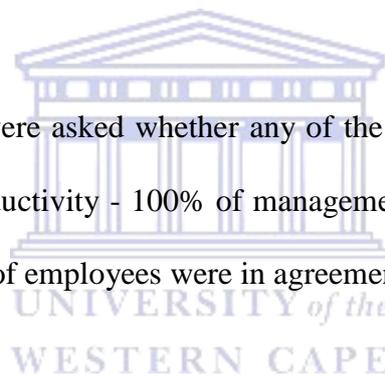
Management was asked whether they were aware of any problems that their team members currently faced. Eighty percent of management indicated that they were aware of marital, financial, stress/burnout problems that employees faced. Sixty percent of management were unaware that staff members suffered from depression or that 40% were experiencing family problems.



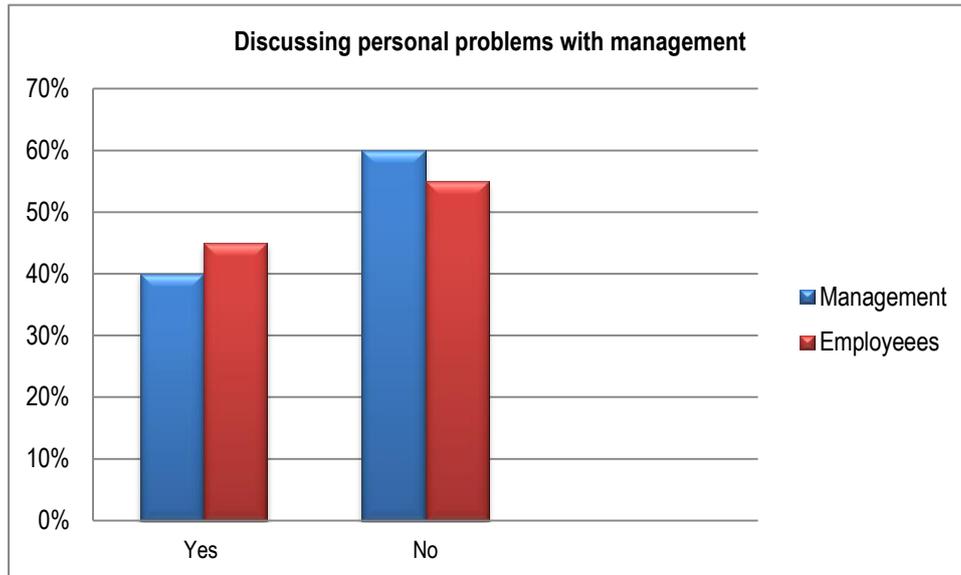
Employees were asked to highlight all problems they currently experienced. Twenty five percent experienced marital problems and financial problems, while 75% of employees experienced stress / burnout.



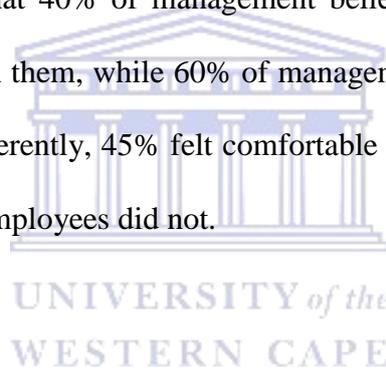
Management and employees were asked whether any of the above-mentioned problems had an influence on employee productivity - 100% of management agreed that above-mentioned influenced productivity - 90% of employees were in agreement and 10% disagreed.



Management was asked whether employees would discuss personal problems with them. In turn, employees were asked whether they felt comfortable in discussing personal problems with management.

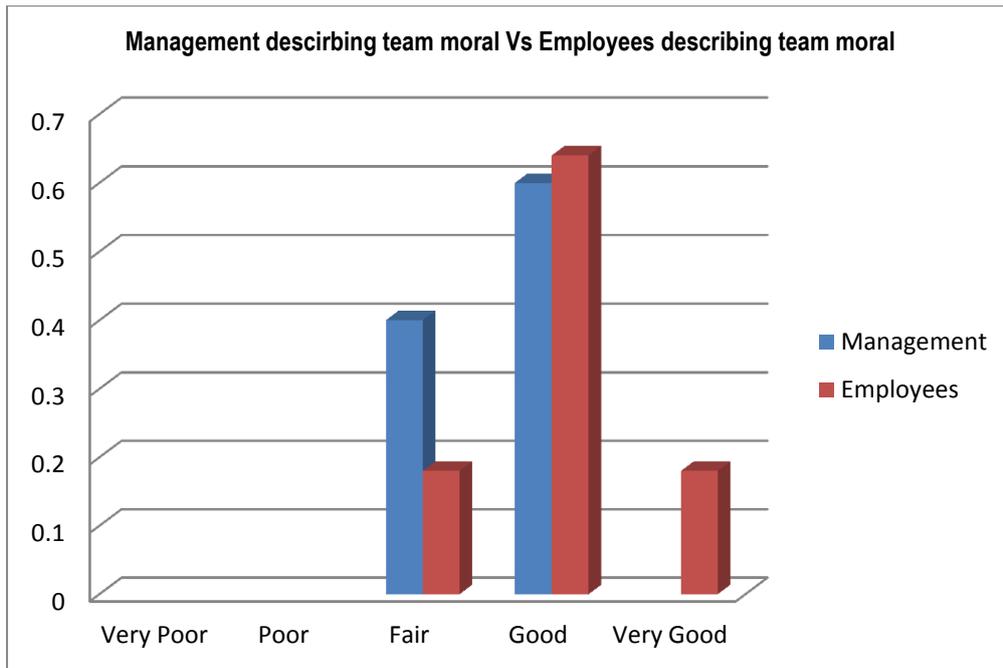


The results above indicated that 40% of management believed that their personnel would discuss personal problems with them, while 60% of management believe that their personnel would not. Employees felt differently, 45% felt comfortable in discussing personal problems with management and 55% of employees did not.

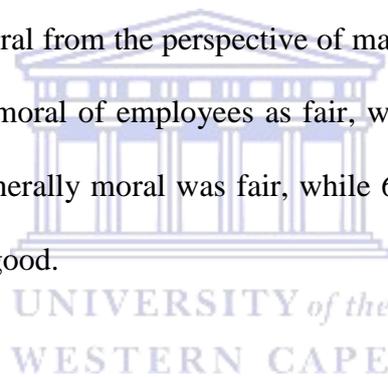


Employees gave the following reasons for not feeling comfortable in discussing personal problems with management.

- “I will talk to my line manager /HR about work problems but not personal problems, as I do not feel comfortable discussing personal problems with my manager”.
- “I prefer to keep work and home life problems separate”.
- “I like to deal with my problems on my own”.
- “Confidentiality and knowledge would be used against me”.



The results above rate team moral from the perspective of management and employees - 40% of management described the moral of employees as fair, while 60% thought it was good - 18% of employees felt that generally moral was fair, while 64% indicated moral to be good and 18% felt moral to be very good.



#### 4.3.1.4 Section Four: The need for a support system

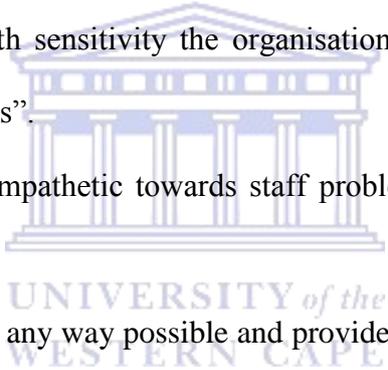
This section determines the need for this organisation to have a support system in place and assesses the absence of a formal programme which may be beneficial for this organisation.

Both management and employees were asked whether the organisation had a social responsibility towards its employees. 100% of management and 64% of employee agreed that the organisation had a social responsibility towards its employees. The 36% of employees

who indicated that it was not the organisation's duty to have a social responsibility towards its employees responded accordingly.

- “Employees are responsible for their own well-being”.
- “Creating a good social environment depends on all employees”.
- “We all have a social responsibility towards helping each other”.
- “Social responsibility should come from both parties – employee and employer”.

Management was asked how the organisation currently dealt with employees who experienced personal problems and responded accordingly.

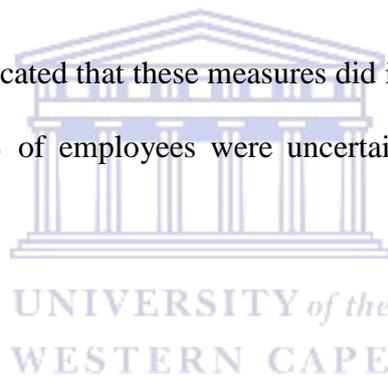
- 
- “Problems are dealt with sensitivity the organisation gives employees time to deal with their personal issues”.
  - “The organisation is sympathetic towards staff problems, however within reason of cause”.
  - “Managers will assist in any way possible and provide flexibility if possible regarding to workload and time-off”.
  - “Support is provided in extreme cases if the employee is willing to share problems with his manager”.

Seventy-five percent of management indicated that these measures do in fact help employees to deal with their problems. Twenty-five percent of management indicated that they were unsure if this method dealt efficiently with employee problems as employees were often not willing to share personal problems with them.

Employees were asked how the organisation currently dealt with employees who experienced personal problems. Their responses were as follows:

- Sixty percent of employees were uncertain how the company dealt pertaining to this.
- Ten percent of employees indicated that the company provided no support
- The remaining 30% of employees responded as follows:
  - “Each individual is dealt with differently accordance with nature of problem”.
  - “Unsure, but from experience the company is very compassionate when dealing with personal issues”.
  - “One-on-one interviews conducted by management / human resources”.

Nine percent of employees indicated that these measures did in fact help employees deal with personal problems, while 91% of employees were uncertain of the effectiveness of these measures.



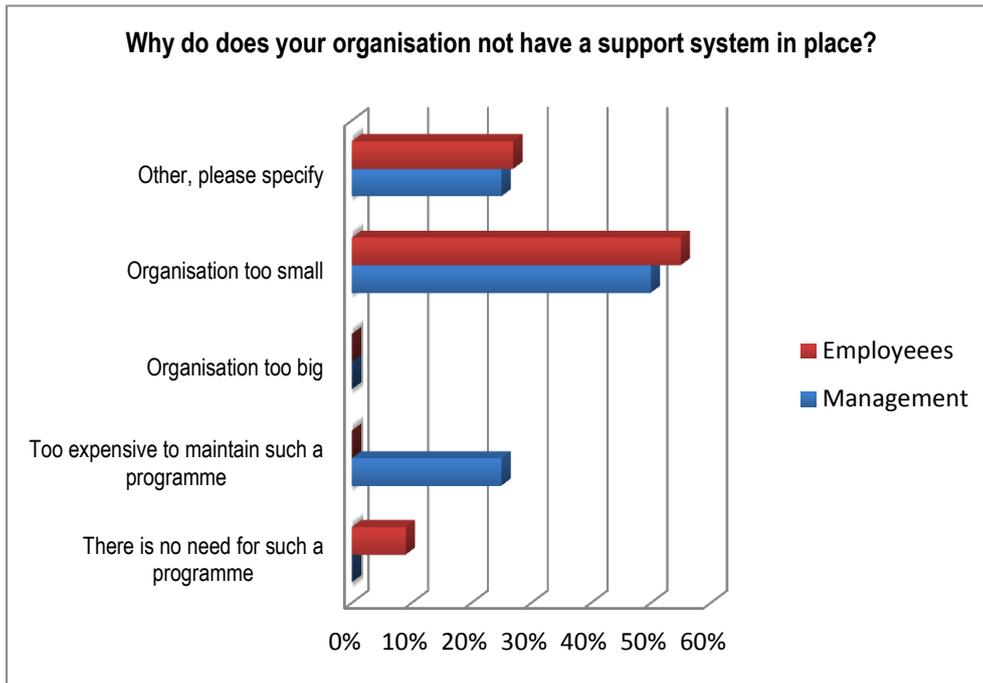
Management provided these suggestions when asked how the organisation should deal with employee related problems. Twenty percent offered no suggestions while 80% of management offered the following suggestions:

- “An EAP would be a good benefit to enable employees to talk about any issues with trained professionals in a safe, secure and confidential environment”.
- “Depending on the problem, general support, advice and understanding is a good start. The employee should know that he/he is able to speak to someone (other than just his manager) in the organisation in confidence to obtain advice, support and understanding from the organisation”.

When employees were asked the same question the outcome of their responses were as follows:

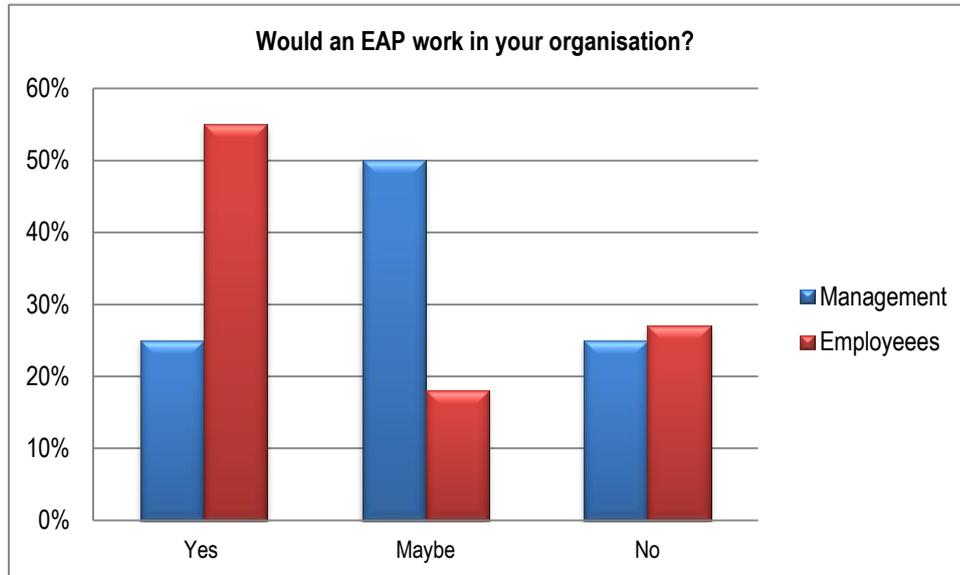
- Eighteen percent of employees did not respond to this question.
- Nine percent of employees were unsure and said it would depend on the problem.
- Eighteen percent suggested that regular catch-up sessions should be offered to employees.
- Nine percent suggested that external professional help should be considered
- Forty-five percent suggested the following:
  - “Matters should be dealt with in a matured and sensitive manner”.
  - “Discuss the problem with staff and provide clear plans to overcome and improve situation”.
  - “Identify the problem and offer necessary support”.
  - “Be mindful of the emotional state of the employee as this often impacts on productivity. Provide time off if need be”.
  - “Management should offer more support and manage the issues the staff member faces”.

Both parties were asked what they believed the reasons were that accounted for their organisation to not have a support system (such as an EAP) in place.



One percent of employees indicated that there was no need for a support programme, 1% of employees and management indicated that it was too expensive to maintain this programme. Fifty-five percent and 50% of employees and management respectively indicated that the size of the organisation was small, while 27% of employees and 25% of management indicated otherwise. Their responses are indicated below:

<b>Management</b>	<b>Employees</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unofficially, this organisation does not assist employees. The small size has led to an official EAP not being in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May be due to the lack of interest shown by employees and the lack of early identification of problems. The organisation has not seen a need to set this programme in place.</li> <li>▪ There is a support programme in place but it needs to be regulated.</li> <li>▪ Staff can take advantage of such a programme.</li> </ul>



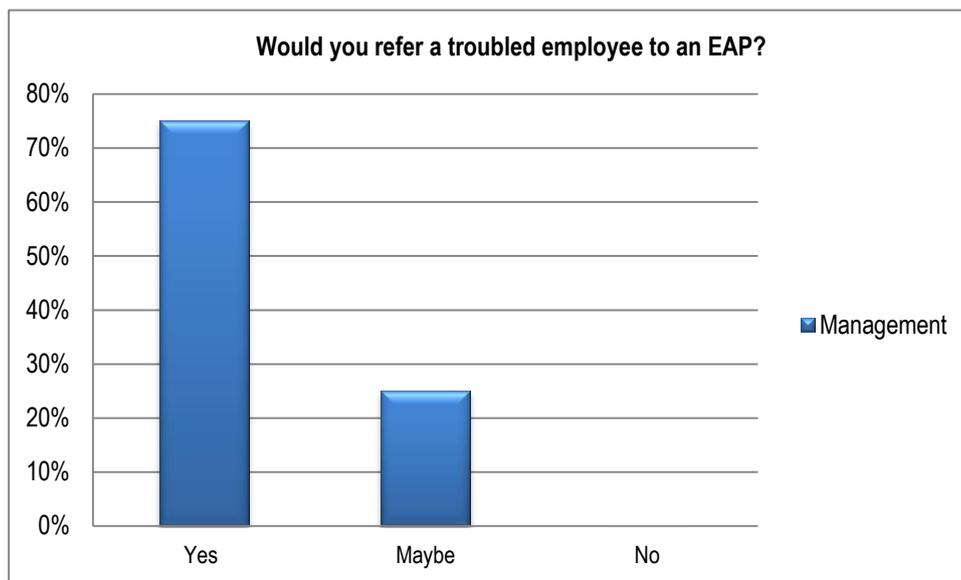
Both parties were asked whether an EAP would work in their organisation. The results above indicates that 25% of management and 55% of employees agreed that this programme would work. Fifty percent of management and 18% of employees were unsure whether this programme would be beneficial. One of the managers indicated that this programme may work, however he/she would first need to fully understand what an EAP is. Twenty-five percent of management and 27% of employees indicated that this programme would not work in this organisation. The 27% of employees suggested these reasons why this programme would not work:

- “It might only work for staff who have no support structure outside of work”
- “The success depends largely on what and how the programme is implemented”
- “There may a lack of interest from staff”.

Twenty-five percent of management suggested these reasons why this programme would not work:

- “The company has its own way of dealing with issues”.
- “Company is too small, would work for larger corporates”.
- “Organisation size is too small therefore no official EAP has been introduced”.

Management was asked whether they would refer a troubled employee to an EAP, if offered by the organisation. The results were as follows:



The results indicate that 75% of management would definitely refer an employee to the EAP programme, while 25% of management merely indicated a possibility of a referral.

### **4.3.2 Organisational records**

A thorough investigation was conducted on the organisation's sick leave and termination records. All the records listed were assessed according to the financial year from January to December 2013.

#### **4.3.5.1 Sick leave records**

The sick leave records were extremely low because employees and management hardly took sick leave, unless it was deemed necessary. A sick note was always presented on their return to work. It was also evident that employees who were on sick leave would in fact “work from home”. They could not afford to miss a day's work due to the high volume of work. Employees and management take full responsibility for their jobs and are highly committed and dedicated in meeting deadlines.

#### **4.3.5.2 Absenteeism records**

The absenteeism records for the 2013 financial year were relatively low. Employees had sufficient leave at the end of the year and hardly infringed upon negative leave balance.

#### **4.3.5.3 Termination records**

The termination records increased in 2013 compared to the 2012 financial year. The average staff turnover was at 45% with the majority of employees in the 25-35 age group. The assessment of exit interviews revealed that the majority of employees resigned for better prospects, career progression, increase in salary and other benefits.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide further discussions, conclusions and recommendations based on the results presented in chapter four. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the limitations, thus provides a basis for future research.

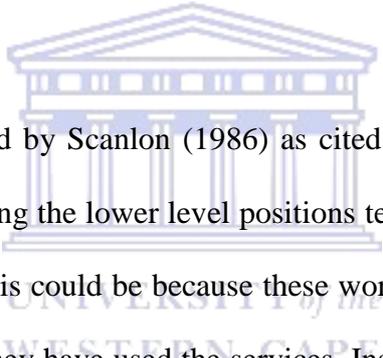
Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) or employee wellness programmes have been introduced in workplaces to take care of employees' health and well-being, while at the same time improving employees' work productivity and performance. Work organisations, whether in the public or private service, have thus become increasingly aware of the significant relationship between employee wellness and productivity.

EAP is therefore considered to be an employee benefit, as well as a means of improving employees' (and therefore by extension employer) productivity through reducing personal problems that may negatively affect an employee's job performance. Harter, Schmidt and Keyes (2002), state that "workplace well-being and performance are not independent. Rather they are complimentary and dependent on components of a financially and psychologically healthy workplace" (p.16).

## **5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **5.2.1 SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROPENSITY TO USE AN EAP**

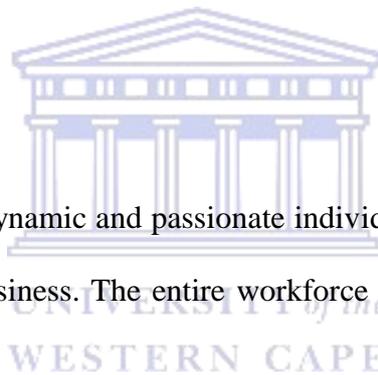
According to Delaney, Grube and Ames (1998) a number of factors affect ones' propensity to use an EAP. Firstly, the belief in the EAP or EAP efficacy would have a great impact on the propensity to use the programme. A correlation was found between the following demographic variables and those seeking help from an EAP, namely union status, education, ethnicity, age and gender.



According to a study conducted by Scanlon (1986) as cited by Delaney et al., (1998) blue collar workers or those occupying the lower level positions tend to be the main consumers of EAP. Research indicates that this could be because these workers do not fear a loss of status if others were to find out that they have used the services. Instead, it could be due to the fact that one would expect this group of individuals to have more challenges or problems as a result of their position and therefore would seek a greater need for help. Furthermore, Scanlon (1986) as cited by Delaney et al., (1998) found that the use of EAP was greater among women. Gerstein, Moore, Duffey and Dainas (1993) however contradicted this and found no significant difference in the utilisation of EAP between men and women.

The employee's results on the other hand indicated that females were more likely to utilize the EAP than their male counterparts. Harlow (1998) confirmed this based on a study he conducted and reported a higher use of EAP among women.

After collating the data the following was evident during the interview process. Eighty-five percent of management have been with the organisation for a number of years and were promoted through the ranks to either directorship or top management positions. Management displayed confidence in mentoring and leading their team from a work point of view, but when it came to having that one-on-one personal interaction with their staff, they seemed to lack the confidence to do so.



The employees are educated, dynamic and passionate individuals who strive hard to meet the needs and objectives of the business. The entire workforce is made up of 34% females and 66% males.

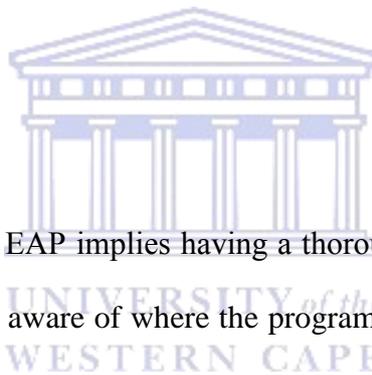
### **5.2.2 SECTION TWO: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)**

The purpose of this section determines the general awareness, knowledge and interest of the employer and employee with regards to an EAP.

### 5.2.2.1 Awareness of EAP

Nearly 60% of managers who participated in the survey indicated that they were aware of the EAP concept and knew exactly what the functions of the programme was, while 40% of them were unaware of the existence of an EAP and did not know what the function was.

Approximately 91% of employees who participated indicated that they were aware of the EAP concept, yet only 60% of them were able to identify the functions. Simultaneously 9% of the employees were unaware of the existence of an EAP, yet 40% of them were unable to recognize the functions.

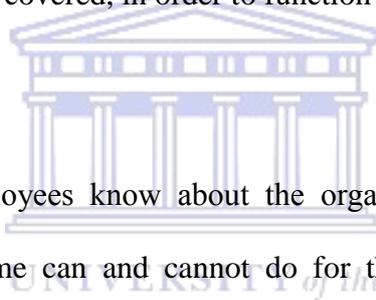


Employees' familiarity with an EAP implies having a thorough knowledge of what the EAP does. The employees should be aware of where the programme is located and how to access the programme and the services rendered. According to Lawrence, Boxer and Tarakeshwar (2002) there is a link between employees' familiarity with the EAP and the utilisation of the programme.

Several studies suggested a correlation between the knowledge or awareness of the EAP and the use thereof (Harlow, 1998). It was found that those who did not perceive a need for EAP were in fact those who did not use the EAP (Park, 1992). Studies have suggested that the success rate of the EAP was rated higher among police officers who had used the EAP (Asen

& Colon, 1995). Furthermore, Park (1992) concluded that less awareness of the EAP was found amongst men and employees over the age of 50.

Employees' awareness of the EAP can be achieved by adopting any number of strategies. In some organisations each employee is informed about the EAP and the services it provides at the time of orientation. For some sections of the workforce, visibility contributes to employees' awareness and encourages utilisation of the programme. Balgopal and Patchner (1988) and Emener et al. (2003) state that for an EAP to be effective, it needs constant marketing at all levels of the organisation. An EAP must communicate its availability to employees and their families, if covered, in order to function effectively.

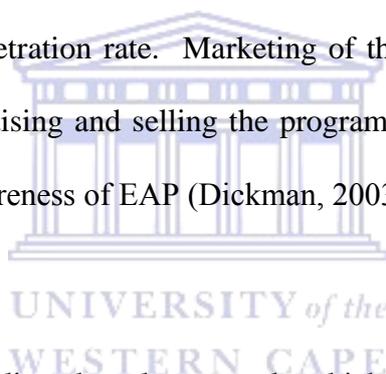


It is also important that employees know about the organisation's EAP policies and to understand what the programme can and cannot do for them. This can be done through marketing of the EAP services to ensure that the employees utilise the services. Csiernik (2003) advises that information updates about the programme need to occur regularly to maintain the spotlight on the programme and ensure its continued support and usage. Unfamiliarity with the policy and scope of the programme efforts could prevent employees from using the EAP. Educational programmes also make employees aware of the organisation's commitment to helping those in need (Sonnestuhl & Trice, 1986).

### 5.2.2.2 Utilisation of EAP

Approximately 80% of management and 82% of employees displayed a great interest in participating in an EAP programme.

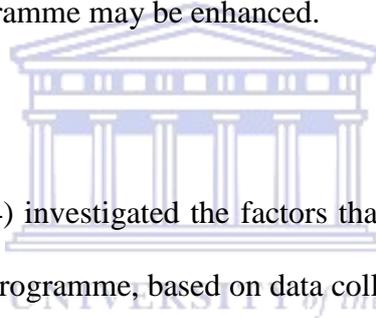
These results are supported by Frost (1990) who maintains that employees' awareness about EAP is an important predictor of utilisation. It is therefore, important, that all employees be informed about the programme in order to enhance their chances of utilizing the EAP and enhancing the programme penetration rate. Marketing of the EAP refers to the theory and practice of presentation, advertising and selling the programme. Constant marketing of the EAP enhances employees' awareness of EAP (Dickman, 2003).



These results contradict the findings based on a study which concluded that clients are more willing to use EAP's through self-referrals rather than through a referral source. Naicker and Fouché (2003, p. 26), reported on the following evidence found: "Straussner's (1988) study of utilisation of all EAPs in the New York Metropolitan area found that 54% of clients were self-referred, Bayer & Barkin (1990) found that 68% of the EAP consortium that they studied were self-referred, while nearly all (96.2%) of 182 randomly selected EAP practitioners surveyed by McClellan and Miller (1988) reported that they utilised self-referral as a means of identifying clients".

The voluntary use of EAP's is also greatly influenced by the social support offered or the belief that a co-worker would be supportive of the usage of EAP. Delaney et al., (1998) concluded that a correlation was found between the increased social support and the likelihood of EAP usage.

According to Harlow (1998) employees would be more motivated to utilize an EAP if they believed that this would impact on their careers. He further states that employees who have experienced the use of the programme before would have a more positive attitude towards the programme compared to non-users. When employees have a positive attitude towards the EAP, the utilisation of the programme may be enhanced.



Milne, Blum and Roman (1994) investigated the factors that influence employee propensity to use an employee assistance programme, based on data collected from 1 987 employees at a large organisation in the United States. The results revealed by Milne et. al. (1994) included that expressed levels of confidence in the EAP is significantly influenced by an individual's familiarity with it and perceptions of accessibility as well as by the individual's perceptions of top management and supervisory support for it.

Lawrence et al. (2002), identified issues that appear to mediate EAP utilisation including employees' trust in confidentiality of the services provided, the ease of access and perceived efficacy of the programme. Trust and confidentiality issues are influenced by amongst others, the location of the EAP and the privacy of the office. The researcher supports French, Roman, Dunlap, and Steele (1997) in Tarakeshwar et al. (2002) who maintain that when employees believe that other personnel can find out if they used the EAP, utilisation of the programme becomes relatively lower. However, when managers and supervisors support employees with problems, utilisation of the programme is enhanced.

One area of research suggests that EAP service utilisation and impact rate is relatively limited with face-to-face utilisation for counseling services averaging 3% to 5% each year (Amaral, 2008; EASNA, 2009). This raises questions about whether or not employees in the most need are actually accessing and using services. Some EAPs report that individuals who self-refer to the EAP often do so for mild to moderate problems that cause acute stress, rather than for serious mental health disorders and substance abuse.

Frost (1990) discussed an evaluation method that was designed to assess employee awareness of the company EAP, by means of a questionnaire. He looked at employee familiarity with the EAP and how it relates to the appropriate use of the programme. Results from Frost's study (1990) indicated:

1. High visibility of the EAP could have a positive impact on utilisation.
2. Accessibility of the EAP had a direct impact on utilisation.

3. Employee concerns about confidentiality with regard to co-workers finding out they had used the EAP, and information being reported back to their supervisors, affecting employment status, also affected utilisation.

### **5.2.3 SECTION THREE: PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY EMPLOYEES**

#### **5.2.3.1 Impact of personal and work-related problems on performance**

Approximately 80% of management and 90% of employees believe that personal problems impact negatively on work. These results indicate that employees and managers face a number of challenges and difficulties (whether in a personal or professional capacity) and have experienced the impact of these problems on their work performance.

Approximately 100% of management and 91% of employees agreed that work-related problems have an effect on work performance, while 9% of employees were unsure of the effect of work-related problems on work performance.

The EAP Digest (1985, p. 7) states that “an estimated 18% of the workforce is affected by personal problems that can have an adverse effect on job performance; 12% have substance abuse-related problems and 6% have emotional problems”.

“A troubled employee impacts negatively on the organisation because of excessive absenteeism rates, tardiness and early departures from work. Common problems found with a troubled employee in the workplace include regular altercations with co-workers, a tendency

to cause more injuries as a result of negligence, bad decision-making abilities, and a tendency to spoil and break equipment through negligence. A troubled employee's overall work performance is low, affecting the total expenditure of the organisation.” (Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2006, p. 398).

Many South Africans have difficulties in adapting to changes such as the past, violence, stress, HIV/AIDS, post-traumatic stress, retrenchment and suicide (SA Sociological Association 2003). They need assistance to cope and the workplace is a suitable place to provide some assistance and coping mechanisms. The challenge of an EAP lies in where the employer's responsibilities starts and ends and it is therefore of the utmost importance that the aims and objectives of the EAP is clearly defined and communicated to employees.

#### **5.2.3.2 Talking to Management about personal problems**

Approximately 55% of employees lacked the confidence to speak to their line manager about problems they faced.

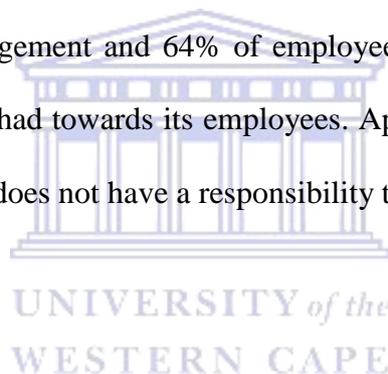
It is important to understand that an EAP responds to the needs of employees who face such a plethora of alcohol, drug abuse, personal, family, financial, grief, mental health, medical and legal issues. This is known as the broad-brush approach to industrial counselling. “When employees realize that the EAP is open to any problem that the employee or family member has they will more likely avail themselves to the programme services and thus enhance the penetration rate” (Balgopal & Patchner, 1988, p. 98).

In South Africa, with its many stressors including the effect of HIV/AIDS and crime, the rapid rate of change which the country is undergoing, diversity challenges and high levels of poverty and unemployment, EAPs, if appropriately implemented, have the potential to provide considerable relief to the management of staff and organisations (Rakepa, 2010).

## **5.2.4 SECTION FOUR: THE NEED FOR A SUPPORT SYSTEM**

### **5.2.4.1 Social Responsibility**

Approximately 100% of management and 64% of employees felt strongly about the social responsibility the organisation had towards its employees. Approximately 36% of employees indicated that the organisation does not have a responsibility towards its organisation.



According to Maiden (1999) EAP's in South Africa were implemented by organisations in the 1980's as a means of demonstrating internal social responsibility towards their employees. This was especially for the disadvantaged workers whose community's psychosocial resources were non-existent. This somehow changed the focus of what the programme was actually designed for, and was often seen as a convenience instead of being an integral part of the business (Naicker, 2002).

According to Googins and Godfrey (1987, p. 12) “more organisations have a mounting sense of social responsibility or humanitarian approach towards their employees and therefore realise the importance of an EAP”.

#### **5.2.4.2 Organisation’s existing methods**

When asked what the organisation’s existing method of dealing with employees who experience personal or work-related problems. Management and employees agree that there is no formal structure in place to assist employees. They of the view that the minimum is being done to support and help troubled employee.



#### **5.2.4.3 Suggestions on how to deal with employee related problems**

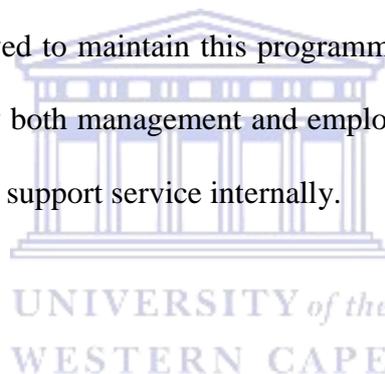
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Participants offered the following suggestions on how to deal effectively with employee related problems. Both parties agreed that the development of a formal structured programme would be ideal in helping to deal with and attend to employee related issues. This clearly indicates that there is a need for a support programme like the EAP in this organisation.

#### **5.2.4.4 Reasons for not having a support system in place**

Management felt that the size of the organisation was small and too expensive to maintain. Employees also felt that the programme was too expensive, there was a lack of interest and staff members could take advantage of the programmes.

These findings were partially supported by a study conducted by Buon and Taylor (2007) whereby respondents were asked why they thought their organisation did not have an EAP in place. Twenty-three percent of respondents felt the organisation was too small, 17% felt that it was due the high cost involved to maintain this programme, 15% indicated that there was no need for this programme by both management and employees and 20% indicated that the HR department would offer the support service internally.



According to Naicker and Fouche (2003) the following was noted with regards to the cost effectiveness of the programme. “In terms of the cost effectiveness of the programme, it was computed that for every R1.00 spent on the EAP between R5 and R8 was saved in terms of recovered lost productivity” Furthermore, organisations “lose between 28% - 35% of a troubled employee’s income due to productivity loss. Thus, both a 28% and a 35% impact have been used in the calculations” (Naicker & Fouche, 2003, p. 30).

#### **5.2.4.5 Would an EAP work in the organisation**

The majority of participants, namely 73% of employees and 75% of management felt that a support structure such as an EAP could work for this organisation. It is evident that there is a need for an EAP service. The majority of the organisation has shown an interest in utilising this service if made available to them.

The attitude of supervisors towards an EAP and the extent to which they encourage self-referrals have a profound impact on their subordinates seeking help. The value that supervisors place on the success of an EAP was confirmed by a study conducted by Amaral & Cross (1998). This study compared the sick-leave days taken from two groups; one group was formal supervisory referrals and the other was voluntary referrals. The year after their EAP treatment the voluntary referrals sick-leave increased by 49%, compared to the formally referred who showed a 33% decrease in sick-leave.

Based on a study conducted by Attridge (2001) 75% of clients who used external EAP's showed a decrease in stress, while 73% improved overall health and well-being, 67% improved their performance, 72% improved productivity and 60% reported avoided absenteeism. The findings concluded that users of EAP benefitted in more than one area.

#### **5.2.4.6 Referring an employee to EAP**

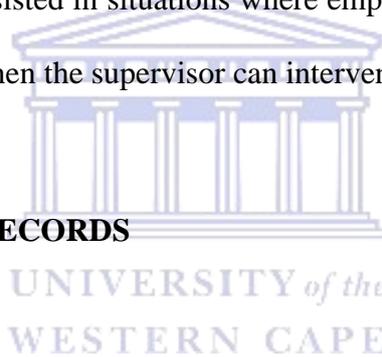
Roughly 75% of management would refer an employee to the EAP programme, while 25% of management indicated that there might be possibility that they would make the referral. These results indicate that a great deal of support is expected at management level.

Walton (2003) posits the view that employees are more apt to utilise the EAP services available to them at the workplace if management are more supportive of the service and if they had access to the services offered as well if information was more readily available regarding the counselors being used in the service. Hopkins (1997, p. 34), however, postulates that supervisors may play a valuable role in assisting employees to seek help, as they are “conduits to assistance”. He maintains that supervisors have an influence on employee’s perceptions of an organisation’s climate, and if they succeed in creating the impression of a supportive environment, then the propensity to utilise an EAP may be significantly improved.

A variable closely related to the propensity to use the EAP service is the role supervisors play. “Supervisor encouragement may play a pivotal role in aiding troubled employees to seek help, as they are “conduits to assistance” (Delaney et al., 1998, p. 34). He maintains that supervisors have an influence on employees’ perceptions of an organisation’s climate and if they succeed in creating the impression of a supportive environment, then the propensity to utilise an EAP may be significantly improved.

Hiatt et al., (1999) found that employees who were referred to an EAP based on poor job performance, significantly improved after the treatment. Significant improvements were also found in work conduct, quality and quantity of work and interpersonal relationships. Consistently, further evidence suggests that improvements were found with male employees who were treated for substance abuse and occupational problems.

Participation in an EAP should be voluntary without, however denying management and supervisors referrals where necessary. Csiernik (2003) states that employees who seek help voluntarily are the most successful in resolving their difficulties. However, management may arrange for employees to be assisted in situations where employees themselves do not realise that they have a problem, and then the supervisor can intervene (Bruce, 1990).



### **5.2.5 ORGANISATIONAL RECORDS**

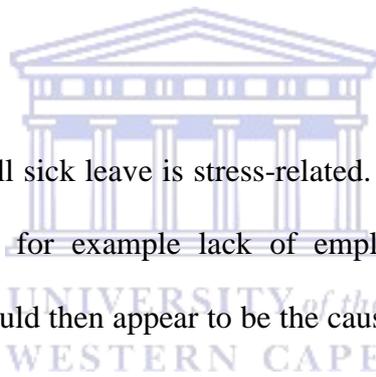
The sick leave, absenteeism and termination records were carefully assessed and analysed. The sick leave records provided an indication of how often employees are ill, possibly due to sickness, stress or personal related reasons. The absenteeism record helped to determine whether employees are experiencing personal and or work-related problems, which result in a high absence rate. The termination record helped to establish the organisation's turnover rate and the reasons for this. Both these records could possibly be addressed through the help of an EAP. These are only three of many indicators which can be used to interpret and possibly draw conclusions based on the need to establish an EAP.

### **5.2.5.1 Sick leave records**

The sick leave records were assessed to determine how often employees of this organisation fell in. There could be a number of reasons however this could possibly be due to employees suffering from stress, burnout and depression that could be minimized through the use of an EAP.

The sick leave records were found to be extremely low. Employees hardly took sick leave, unless it was absolutely necessary.

A study revealed that 30% of all sick leave is stress-related. If this percentage is added to all other factors linked to stress, for example lack of employee commitment and lack of employee motivation, stress would then appear to be the cause of 40% of all absences. (Hoel, Sparks, & Cooper, 2001).



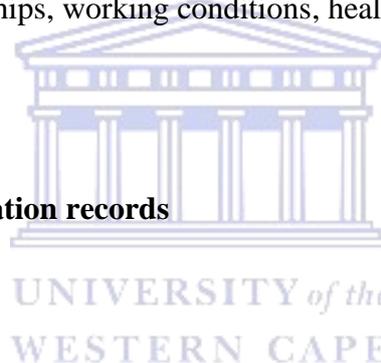
### **5.2.5.2 Absenteeism records**

The absenteeism records were assessed to determine how often employees are absent in the organisation. Employees could be absent for a number of reasons, however this could be due to health problems caused by excessive smoking, drinking and the consumption of drugs. This could be addressed through the use of an EAP.

The absenteeism policy in place indicated that employees were only allowed to carry forward a maximum of 5 days to the following year. Based on the assessment of these records, it was found that majority of employees carried forward more than 5 days leave to the following year. This indicated that employees absenteeism rate was fairly low and employees displayed dedication and commitment towards their organisation and work.

Lawrence (1990) states that the causes of absenteeism can be broken down into employee-related and work-related causes. Employee-related causes could be physical condition, lifestyle characteristics, family responsibility and accident prone. Work-related causes could be the nature of job, internal relationships, working conditions, health and safety hazards.

#### **5.2.5.2 Termination records**



The termination records were assessed to determine how often employees leave the organisation. There could be a number of reasons why employees leave, however there could be a possibility that employees do not feel valued and well-looked after. This could be addressed through the use of an EAP and or through incentives. The staff turnover was at 45% which was extremely high compared to previous years.

There is a direct correlation between absenteeism and retention (turnover) according to Price M Mueller causal model of turnover. “The intent to leave, reflecting the interaction between intent to stay with job mobility, workplace factors, career and personal development

opportunities, affects absenteeism rates. Workplace climate factors share some causal factors and can be linked to occupational health and safety factors in the workplace, productivity, absenteeism, work injury, management practices, and the physical work environment” (The Australian Faculty of Occupational Medicine, 1999, p.17). Even though these strong relationships exist, each of these are separate constructs and can vary independently in causation and outcome.

“Employees leave the organisation on a monthly basis and a firm amount of turnover is expected, unavoidable and viewed as beneficial for the organisation. Some turnover can be viewed as dysfunctional when it becomes excessive and creates an unstable workforce and increases HR cost and organisational ineffectiveness” (Grobler, et al., 2006, p. 125).

A link could not be established between the organisation’s sick leave records and absenteeism records based on the fact that these records were extremely low. No ongoing trend could be established that could be linked to a need for employee assistance programme.

The organisation’s termination records displayed a possible link between the high turnover rate and the need for an EAP. The 45% turnover rate could possibly be linked to the need for an EAP.

### 5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Getting employees who benefitted from attending the EAP was a minor limitation and also not an easy task because of the confidential nature of the EAP itself. Employees who participated in this study had to be assured of their anonymity at pre-interviews, mid-interviews and post-interviews in order for them to participate freely and willingly.

Another limitation of this study was participants being very articulate in providing information as envisaged, possibly due to lack of education and topic of study not conducted in their vernacular. Therefore the same words were often repeated in different contexts meaning and/or describing different experiences. However, the actual meaning was not lost in translation, interpretation and analysis of the data.

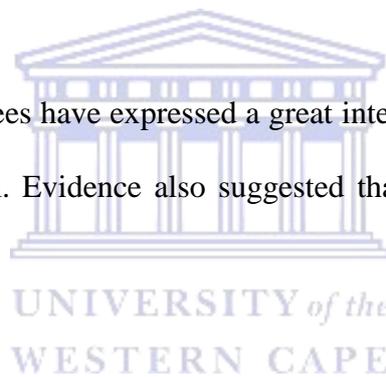
An additional limitation as highlighted by Mabasa (2002) relates to the interviewing method. She indicates that interviews collect data about experiences or events that have already occurred or are not readily available and therefore the collected data is subject to limitations (or even 267 exaggerations) of recall because it is second-order data that is one step removed from the actual occurrence of the situation.

## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Since the results obtained in this study were specific to this organisation, any generalizability of the findings must be made with caution.

Based on the evidence acquired, this study indicated a great need for an EAP at this organisation. The employee's lack of knowledge and awareness was evident in this study. Management's knowledge and awareness of the EAP, however, indicated that they understood the value of employee assistance programmes even though top management had not implemented and integrated this programme into their organisational culture and strategy.

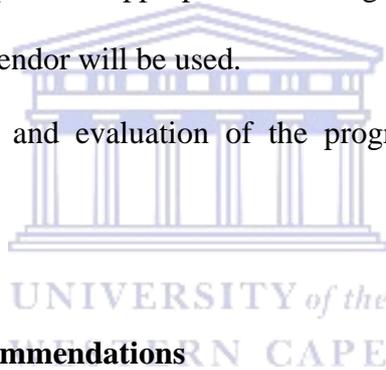
Both management and employees have expressed a great interest in participating in a support programme, if offered to them. Evidence also suggested that a holistic approach would be applicable to this organisation.



This study has confirmed that employees of the organisation are struggling with a number of personal problems which are negatively affecting their job performance. Management was also unaware that majority of their staff members suffered from personal related problems. The majority of employees felt uncomfortable discussing their personal problems with their line-manager. Management was prepared to support the use of an EAP when it came to referring a troubled staff member. The organisation's high termination record also highlights the greater need for this programme.

#### **5.4.1 Management-related recommendations**

- Top management should participate in the needs analysis which will create the foundation for the implementation of the employee assistance programme
- Management should receive training to better their understanding of what the EAP is and the role thereof
- Management should drive the development of an over-arching policy and enhance awareness of the programme
- Management should ensure that adequate budgets and resources are made available for an EAP.
- Management should appoint an appropriate EAP organisation and determine whether an internal or external vendor will be used.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme is needed to determine success.



#### **5.4.2 Employee-related recommendations**

- Employees should improve their understanding of what the EAP is and the role thereof.
- Employees should utilize the EAP effectively.
- Promote and ensure confidentiality. Employees must be assured that the information they provide will not be divulged to any person without consent.
- Provide compassionate guidance. Since EAPs deal with sensitive issues, it is important to have counsellors who that provide appropriate emotional support.

## 5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Identifying areas for future research is one of the goals of conducting research, particularly a qualitative one. Investigations into issues pertaining to EAP and positive psychology in general need more attention as there are no known combined studies (at the time when this study was conducted) on these areas. Based on the findings and discussions of this study, the following recommendations for future research in the field of positive psychology and EAP are presented:

- Future research could look into using a more diverse and inclusive group in terms of gender and racial representation.
- Future research could investigate the EAP and positive psychological strengths in employees attending EAP in NGOs, parastatals, private sector or any other sector that has EAPs.
- An exploration of positive psychological strengths and the EAP from the EAP practitioners' side could broaden and add more information and value to future research.
- Future studies could focus on contrasting successful to unsuccessful EAP practitioners.
- Similar studies could be looked at in other South African provinces not included in this study.
- Future research could focus on the personalities and expertise of the EAP practitioners.
- Similar studies could be conducted in other countries with organisations that have EAPs.

- Future research could focus on researching different outcomes of an EAP run by the same practitioner.
- Future research could focus more on the EAP and impact of negative emotions.



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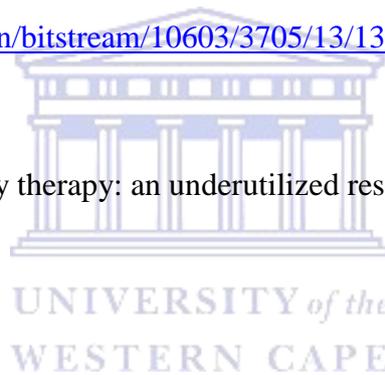
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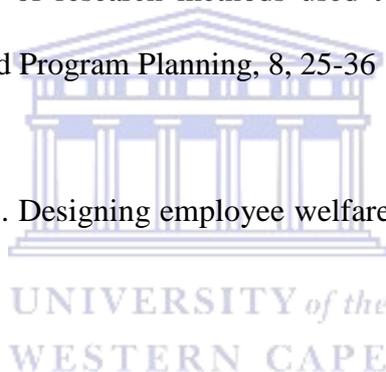
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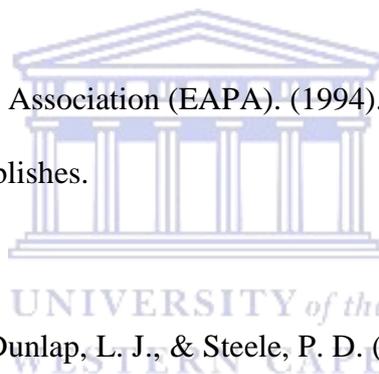
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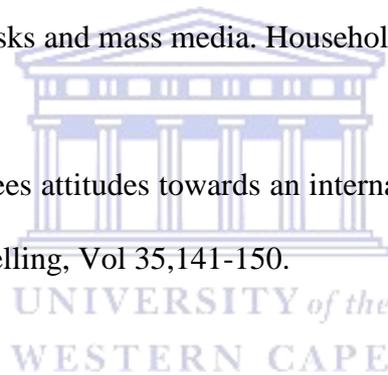
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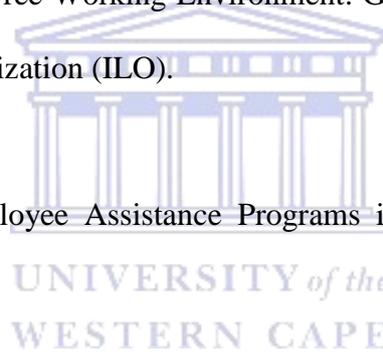
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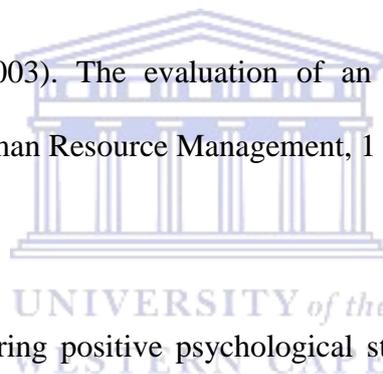
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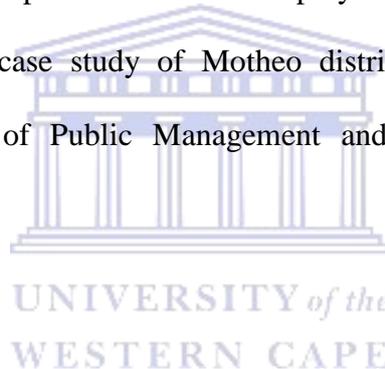
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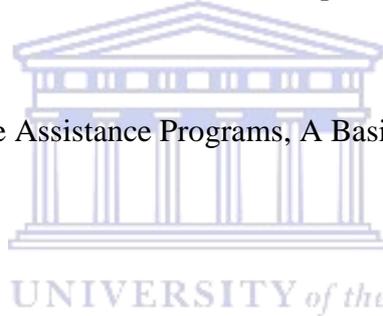
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