THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME AT MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

By

ELIAS LEVERS MUGARI

MINI-DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT

in the

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND LAW

(Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SUPERVISOR: Prof. F AHWIRENG-OBENG

2011

DECLARATION

I declare that the **Implementation of Employee Assistance Programme at the Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province** hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Development in Social Science, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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MUGARI E. L. (MR)   **Date**

STUDENT NUMBER: ████

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the following people, as without their support and assistance, this would not have been possible.

Firstly, the Almighty for the courage and strength.

My supervisor, Prof. F. Ahwireng-Obeng. Thank you for the encouragement, guidance, support, leadership, "strictness" and motivation. There was a time when I thought I was losing it but through you I managed to make it to the end.

Dr. Mtapuri from the Turfloop School of Leadership for his guidance, mentoring and support through the study.

Mr. Elphy Shikuhele my "home-boy" for your support and assistance.

My wife Alina, and children, for your understanding, support, encouragement and inspiration.

My mother, Mrs. Beatrice Mugari, for her inspiration, motivation and support.

The staff members at libraries in University of Limpopo, Makhado Municipal Library, Polokwane Municipal Library and the University of Venda. You guys have been wonderful. Thanks a million times.

The Municipal Manager of Makhado, Mr. A. S. Tshikalange and all employees who participated in the study. My sincere appreciation for allowing me to conduct this study, and also the time-off to attend the classes.

ABSTRACT

The provision of Employee Assistance Programme in a working environment such as a municipality is very crucial. In order to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the programme to justify its existence to the outside world and to assess the impact of its fulfilment to its objectives, evaluation is therefore necessary.

The aim of this research study was to ascertain the implementation of the EAP at the Makhado Municipality in Vhembe District with special focus on the employees' awareness of the programme, its utilization and also the programme adequacy. A qualitative approach was used in this study.

Forty two (42) employees of various ranks or level's in the municipality were randomly selected to participate in the study, and they were from all the four main centres of the municipality i.e. Makhado, Waterval, Dzanani and Vuwani.

Summary of the Main Findings

A high percentage (81%) of the employees knew of the existence of an EAP within the municipality, and meetings appeared to be the main awareness strategy.

− The attitudes of employees towards the EAP were positive, this state of affairs points to the usefulness of the EAP service.

− The EAP provided by the Municipality was viewed as accessible by the majority of employees.

− The utilization rate of the EAP in the Municipality was very low as only 17% of respondents indicated that they had utilized the service before.

− The majority of referrals were conducted by supervisors while only 9.1% were self referral. The majority of respondents did not answer the question implying various reason/s and could also mean lack or poor knowledge and information about referrals within the programme.

- The majority of employees did not respond to the question on whether they were satisfied with the EAP within the municipality, and that could translate into low knowledge and information about the programme.

- The majority of employees were generally happy with the current location of EAP in the municipality.

- The majority of employees viewed EAP as confidential and the level of trust in the EAP staff was high.

- The majority of employees were not aware of the EAP policy and never participated in its formulation.

- The majority of employees felt that EAP services were useful, and this means that provision of proper information might encourage employees to use the service.

- Most employees suggested that frequent dissemination of information to employees through meetings, workshops and other regular contact sessions could enhance the EAP in the municipality.

Recommendations

The following recommendations with regard to the employees' familiarity with the EAP are important:

- o That more awareness sessions be conducted with all employees, especially those at regions unit so that adequate information is cascaded to all employees of the municipality.

- o The awareness sessions should be conducted at least quarterly involving all regions, and the EAP Advisory Committee should meet at least bi-monthly to discuss aspects to improve and enhance EAP services in the municipality.

- o It is also recommended that additional qualified EAP personnel, with at least minimum qualifications in Social Work and, or Social Psychology, or any relevant

qualifications and experience in EAP be appointed to run the programme on full-time basis.

o That evaluation of the programme implementation should be conducted using the participatory strategies such as suggestion boxes, arranging focus groups and bench-marking with other institutions. The recommendation to allow employees opportunities to submit suggestions, in-puts and give feedback regarding the programme will no doubt assist in the improvement and promotion of the programme.

o The Makhado Municipality should utilize different marketing strategies as recommended by EAP literature, such as the following:

i. The use of promotional material such as brochures, leaflets, and posters that are user-friendly and in languages understandable by all employees of the municipality.

ii. Outreach programmes: The EAP unit needs to regularly visit all the regional offices of the municipality in order to intensify information sharing to employees about the EAP. These can also include decentralising EAP workshops to the periphery offices in order to reach the employees who are far away from the head office in Louis Trichardt.

The above-mentioned could serve as effective strategies in promoting and maximising the visibility of the EAP, and may close the gap on information not reaching all employees in the municipality thereby increasing its penetration rate.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Employees and organizations of the modern workplace exist in an extremely stressful, demanding, and competitive environment which adversely affects the health and well-being of individual employees and the organization. Employers can improve employee performance and consequently organizational productivity by promoting both healthier individuals and healthier work environments.

According to Maiden (1992:2), Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) began to emerge in South Africa in the early 1980's. They are modelled after programmes in the United States and were introduced to South African work organizations by social workers and psychologists who had studied them there.

According to Ivancevich and Matterson (1999), employee assistance programmes (EAPs) are designed to deal with a wide range of stress related problems, including behavioural and emotional difficulties, substance abuse, family and marital discord, and other personal problems.

The concept of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) as a workplace intervention is relatively new in the public sector. It was originally established to assist employees with socio-economic problems. The stresses of the modern working environment, the many changes in the South African working situation and especially the advent of HIV and AIDS have changed the profile of the EAP in the public sector drastically. But Employee Assistance Programmes were implemented in the South African Public Services to deal with various employee problems long before HIV and AIDS became known, and long before transformation imperatives generated a broader range of workplace problems to deal with (Public Service Commission EAP Evaluation Report, 2006:2).

Employee Assistance Programmes were implemented in the South African Public Services to deal with various employee problems long before HIV and AIDS became known, and long before transformation imperatives generated a broader range of workplace problems to deal with (Public Service Commission EAP Evaluation Report, 2006:2).

The report further states that they were originally introduced to deal with various problems those public servants encountered which have a direct bearing on their productivity in the workplace, including, inter alia:

a) Substance abuse and/or substance dependency;

b) Adoption problems in the Public Service workplace;

c) Mental and personal relationship problems;

d) Employee conflict in the workplace;

e) Personnel development;

f) Dealing with disease; and

g) Need for counselling.

EAPs benefit government at all spheres by improving performance and productivity. According to Perry and Cayer, (1992), the typical EAP deals with any problem which interferes with employees' productivity at the work place.

This is done through various intervention programmes aimed at increasing attendance and avoiding absenteeism but also include activities involving communication, organizational commitment, staff turnover and dealing with interpersonal conflict.

The Makhado Municipality in the Vhembe District has established an EAP since 2007, and only became implemented in 2008. It has been observed that this programme has never been assessed or evaluated on its implementation before. Therefore the researcher has identified a need to assess its implementation with a particular focus on its employees' awareness and their knowledge of the EAP, the employees' utilization rate and the programme's effectiveness in addressing the employees' challenges as well as their daily needs. The purpose of the EAP implementation by companies should ensure that they receive value for money that the service is being run efficiently and to a high standard, and that the EAP is designed in a way which best meets the need of the organization and its employees (Highley and Cooper, 1994).

Matlala (1999) states that organizations can promote wellness by incorporating employee wellness and health promotion into the overall strategy of the organization, by encouraging

involvement and support from all the role players such as labour representatives, management and others. He further indicates that wellness can be promoted through developing and implementing health promotion policies, such as employee assistance programmes, a smoking policy and an HIV and AIDS policy and programme.

Employee Assistance Programme began appearing in the United States around 1950, when substance abuse was first addressed as a major problem in organizations. Under these programmes, "constructive confrontation" became the standard procedure. The employee was given an ultimatum: correct the problem or leave.

By its very title, "Employee Assistance Programme" signals a change both in application and in technique from the traditional occupational alcoholism treatment programme. Modern EAPs are comprehensive management tools that address behavioural risks in the workplace by extending professional counselling and medical services to all "troubled employees". (Cascio, 2006). An Employee Assistant Programme is not new to the South African environment. The main reason for its existence is in relation to the employee's wellness. The globalization and the subsequent stress due to constant change has through the years necessitated that employers take a hard look at the employee risks that the employee risks which may impact on their organization.

Cascio (1995) states that the objective of wellness programmes are not to eliminate symptoms and diseases; it is to help employees build lifestyles that will enable them to achieve their full physical and mental potential through health awareness. Gomez – Mejia *et al*. (1998) point out that "wellness programmes can be as simple and inexperience as providing information about stop-smoking clinics and weight-loss programmes, or as comprehensive and expensive as providing professional health screening and multimillion rand fitness facilities".

Globler *et al.* (2002: 450) observed that "In South Africa, one of the biggest expenses in companies today is in health costs. This gives employers more than adequate reason to be concerned about health and safety.

Other reasons include various legal requirements, employer goodwill and the increased employee productivity and morale that result from health programmes, smoking cessation programmes, employee assistance programmes and substance abuse programmes.

The EAP practice is, in a way, a result of the provisions of the law in South Africa and generally cannot be disputed. Laws like the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the Labour Relations Act (Act 106 of 1995) are among the pieces of legislation that give provision to the implementation of the EAP.

Grobler (2002) argue that "Employee care embraces attention to the personal, social and financial problems of individual workers. It is essential that management concerns itself with the general welfare of employees. Problems at home or in the community, as well as financial troubles, are transferred to the working environment and generally impact negatively upon it.

A high-quality EAP will effectively adhere to the concept of serving the two clients, i.e. the employer and the employee. It is believed that if the employee improves as a result of the use of this EAP benefit, then both the employee and the employer will be winners.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although EAP acceptance seems to have increased over the years, the researcher's observation is that, there are still misconceptions and misrepresentations about EAP services, especially for employees of an organization where an EAP has just newly been implemented. Similarly, in the Makhado municipality, there is a need to market and assess the level of implementation of the EAP in order to clarify misconceptions and to improve knowledge of the services rendered to employees through the organization's EAP.

The researcher has observed that the management of the municipality, including supervisors, do not necessarily give attention to then EAP although the policy has been approved by council for implementation. This may also suggest that both management and policy were not aware of EAP policy rendered in their municipality. Lack of understanding and the misconceptions about EAPs deter personnel utilization of the programme in the workplace.

Therefore, the researcher contends that undertaking a programme implementation assessment can provide much needed direction with regard to the current activities and future actions for the EAP in general and also for the employees benefit to the programme.

Blair 1990, states that too many organisations merely accept their EAPs and rarely ask for operational assessment of any kind. Therefore, periodic implementation assessment is useful to record EAP practices and to measure the improvement over time. The evaluations/assessments serve as historical reference points, an approximate current base case, or a means of setting the future goals. Without baseline or benchmark data EAP evaluation will only describe practices without tracking improvement or making comparisons (Potter: 1999).

The researcher is of the view that personnel awareness and utilization of the programme as well as programme adequacy should be assessed to determine if employees knew about the EAP and whether they were utilizing these services in the municipality or not. The assessment of the implementation is vital because if employees do not know about the EAP, this might have a negative impact in the utilization of the programme in the municipality.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The study aimed to assess the implementation of the provision of EAP services in the Makhado Municipality in Vhembe District.

The study specifically focused on the awareness of the employees' on the EAP, how the employees utilize the programme and also the adequacy of the programme in the Makhado Municipality.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

In order to achieve the above, the following objectives have been identified:

a. To ascertain the level of awareness and knowledge of employees on the EAP services in the Makhado Municipality;

b. To establish whether the EAP was addressing the needs and challenges of employees or not;

c. To establish as to how the employees utilized the programme;

d. To determine the programmes adequacy; and

e. To provide recommendations for the effective implementation of EAP in the Municipality.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of the following reasons:

a. .It will assist the EAP practitioners and other related professionals to get the general overview of EAP services implemented by the Makhado Municipality.

b. It will contribute to the literature and knowledge of EAP and also be of assistance to other municipalities in acquiring more insight and knowledge about the implementation of EAP services at a municipality level.

c. The study will assist to determine personnel awareness of an EAP and its utilization rate, and in identifying aspects that might be contributing to under-utilization of the programme in the municipality.

d. The findings of the study will enable the researcher to draw up conclusions as to whether the EAP in the municipality does meet the needs and expectations of its intended beneficiaries or not. The findings will also provide recommendations that will be useful to improve the implementation of the EAP.

1.6 Research Questions

Royse (1995:18-19) indicates that a researcher, before conducting research, must limit himself or herself to one question or at least one set of related questions or one specific idea to investigate. Sources of research questions vary; those for social work research come from two sources deduction and induction.

The first phase of any research project involves transforming an interesting research idea into a feasible, researchable problem. The statement of the research problem should be clear and unambiguous (Mouton, 2001). In this research, the unit of analysis will be the actual implementation of EAP, and the research question is formulated as follows:

What is the level of implementation of the EAP in the Makhado Municipality?

This study seeks to investigate answers to the following main questions:

a. How is the Employee Assistance Programme designed and implemented in the Makhado Municipality?
b. What is the level of satisfaction and impact among the beneficiaries of the EAP?
c. What recommendations can be made to effectively implement the EAP to the employees of Makhado Municipality?

1.7 Operational Definitions

Employment Assistance Programme (EAP)

The EAP Association defines an EAP as a worksite based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolutions of productivity problems associated with employees who are impaired by personal concerns including but not limited to: health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance (Standards for Employee Assistant Programmes in South Africa, 1999).

The researcher defines EAP as a support organizational structure for an employee, which is provided for by the employer to ensure that employees' personal problems that adversely affect their work performance are identified and intervention made through counselling.

Implementation

According to Smit 2002 as quoted in (Kotler:1984), implementation is the process that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that accomplishes the plan's stated objectives.

In this study implementations are the actions that are undertaken by management to realise the objectives of the programme

"Troubled Employee"

Troubled Employee is an individual who is confronted by unresolved personal or work-related problems. Such problems run gamut from alcoholism, drug abuse, and high stress, marital, family and financial problems. While some of these may originate "outside" the work context, they most certainly will have spill over effects to the work context (Cascio, 2006).

AIDS

This is the acronym for "acquired immune deficiency syndrome." Aids is the clinical definition given to the onset of certain life-threatening infections in persons whose immune system have ceased to function properly as a result of infection by HIV (Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects of HIV and AIDS and Employment 2000:19)

Evain (2000:324) simply defines Aids as the condition that the body has great difficulty in fighting because the immune system is weakened.

HIV

An acronym for "Human Immunodeficiency Virus". HIV is a virus that attacks, and may ultimately destroy, the body's natural immune system (Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Employment (2000:19**).**

Programme Adequacy

It refers to the appropriateness of the EAP service availability and usage as well as penetration rates. There are two major concerns addressed in determining the adequacy of EAP services - the extent to which an EAP offers needed services and the extent to which those services are provided to those who need them most (Yamatani,1993).

1.8 Outline of the Research Report

The report consists of five chapters with well established sections in each chapter, and can be outlined as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

This chapter focuses on the introduction of the study, the research problem, the objectives and significance of the study, the operational definitions and the structure of the research report.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the literature review regarding EAP. It also provides an in-depth discussion of the literature relevant to the study. In particular, the areas on the history and evolution of human services and EAP, also deals with the qualities and features of EAPs, aspects of EAP critical for successful implementation. The chapter further talks of evaluation of the implementation, employees' awareness and utilization of the EAP, benefits of EAP and its adequacy, including legislation applicable to EAP implementation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The chapter outlines on the research methodology and design of the study, the area of study, population (size), sampling methods, data collection methods and analysis. It includes limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The chapter focuses on the interpretation of the results of the study based on the findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations and Implications

This chapter outlines the summary of the research process and gives conclusions drawn from the study as well as recommendations and the implications thereof.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction and Background

This is the chapter that deals with literature review for the study. The researcher decided to start with literature review, in order to allow different views of other authors to guide and therefore provide some form of framework for the study (Creswell, 1998).

In line with the provisions of Fouche and Delport (2002), the literature review in this study is used to form a paradigm for the analysis and presentation of data.

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the evolvement of EAP as a field of practice in South Africa and also internationally. The researcher also looks at the aspects of models of EAP service delivery, different methods of EAP utilization, the benefits of EAP utilization, the basic principles of an EAP, elements necessary for successful EAP operation and challenges to the programme implementation. It is the researcher's opinion that discussions in this chapter are very much relevant to the final answer to the research question in the study. This will be evident as the discussions of the researcher will show the evolution of EAP through the years, its importance for working organizations and the impact of legislation on the implementation of EAP as a field of practice. The researcher also highlighted the history of the impact of legislation to the delivery of EAP, and how it can assist in effectively practicing EAP in public institutions, such as a municipality.

Programmes of EAP were not always accepted by the workforce in countries like New Zealand, because of the alcohol orientation (Chaddertonet, 1994).

The discussions in this chapter are subdivided into two sections. The first section deals with examination of the history of human services in the South African workplaces and also the international experiences, mainly the occupational social work aspect, and also social impact AIDS inclusion of this section is based on the reality that, in the view of the researcher, HIV and stress in workplaces have influenced almost all the developments that have taken place in this country. To support this argument of the researcher, Terblanche

(1992) observed "it would be impossible to sketch the historical development of Heaps in South Africa, without examining the development of occupational social work.

The second section of the discussions in this chapter deals with the evolvement of EAP as a field of practice in public institutions. It also looks at some of the current challenges or forces of EAPs in the workplace.

The researcher also focused attention to the current EAP implementation practices in the municipal environment and government institutions.

Masi (2000) and Grobler *et al* (2002), state that legal requirements and or provisions are but some of the driving forces behind the implementation and management of EAPs in South Africa. The researcher further explored this matter, based on such legislation that is seen to impact directly on the EAP practice.

Therefore, the selection of relevant legislation was determined by their relevance to the core functions of the EAP as described by Standards Committee of EAPA – SA.

Employers are under pressure to be successful in an increasingly competitive and changing social and economic landscape. Many employees suffer from emotional issues, family and home life conflicts, mental health concerns, substance abuse problems and other health disorders that can interfere with doing their work effectively.

It has also been proven that the nature of work itself can sometimes contribute to employee performance problems. In attrition, societal changes and community problems, such as natural disasters, violence and economic distress can influence employee health and behaviour. Whether the source of problems are from the individual employee, the workplace itself or greater society, many employers have turned to employee assistance programs to help respond to these concerns. When it is done right, an EAP can provide a great value to the organization.

2.2 The History of Human Services in South African Workplaces

Du Plessis (2001) has noted that the history of Occupational Social Work (OSW) in South Africa can be viewed from two contexts. The first context describes OSW from the social work point of view. It is concerned with the methods of practice, the schools of thought and

related issues to the delivery of the social work service; the core technology in the delivery of services from the social work point of view. The second context deals with the development of OSW from the view of a worker in a workplace. This context is based on the assumption that workers experience problems. This, in turn, necessitates the provision of social services in the workplace to support and, or develop workers to overcome their problems.

The researcher is convinced that this helps the respective workers in two ways:

- the worker is helped to improve his or her work performance and

- the worker is assisted to stabilize probable negatively affected social functioning, as a result of the problem or problems being experienced.

The discussions of the researcher, although based on both contexts, pay more emphasis to the context that involves the provision of social services to human beings as workers. The history of OSW is divided into three separate phases, thereby showing the political, legal and economic development of the country (Mbana 2005).

The period 1930 – 1948

According to Van Rensburg (1998), politically and economically, this period was characterized; firstly, by the continuation of urbanization which had started in the early 1900's. This urbanization was as a result of the need for, employment during that period. People moved to look for jobs in the mining industry, and some left their families behind. Secondly, this period also experienced the end of the Second World War and the returning of the Country's soldiers who were deployed in Northern Africa in Europe. The majority of these soldiers came back to experience a number of problems.

According to Du Plessis (2001), these problems started from material needs to adjustment problems, personal problems and posttraumatic syndromes.

This is the period that, according to Du Plessis (2001), saw the birth of the first state welfare system in South Africa. Unfortunately, these welfare services were in line with the legislation requirements of that time, as only white members of the society were targeted (Masi, 2000). Secondly, this period saw the appointment of social workers in a state – run

railway services (Du Plessis, 2001). These social workers were White, in order to cater for the population group they were serving.

The Period 1948 – 1980

According to Van Rensburg (1998), this period saw the political and legal changes that saw the voting into power of the National Party and the institution – allocation of racial discrimination. Apartheid was introduced as a government policy. But of major importance, according to Mbana (2005) during the time, were the major revolutions in the country's schools and workplaces to fight against the policies of the government. These developments culminated in the major changes that were later to take place in the country. According to Du Plessis (2001), this period saw the introduction of social services to other population groups such as African, Indians and Coloured.

Although this war a major step, it has to be noted that these services were separated in line with the policies of the country at the time (Mbana, 2000). The major development for this period in the field of OSW was the appointment of the first African social worker. This, according to Masi (2000), was at ISCOR in 1969.

During this period, the Chamber of Mines of South Africa started to provide a form of rehabilitation service for its employees, according to Terblanche (1992). This happened in the early 1960's when a hospital near Johannesburg at Modderfontein was erected and used to treat miners with drug – related problems and mental illnesses. The institution provided these services with the appointment of a social worker.

The Period 1980 to date

According to Mbana (2005), this is the miracle period in the South African history generally. This is the period, Van Rensburg (1998), notes that saw a number of changes in the country's political and legal framework. Of major importance was, firstly, the unbanning of political parties leading to the demolition of apartheid and the lifting of economic sanctions by the international community against the country. Secondly, democratic elections were held and in turn, led to the passing various pieces of legislation, with the aim of the total democratization of society.

OSW continued to grow in the country, according to Du Plessis (2001). Social workers of different population groups continued to be employed in various institutions, both public and private. According to Masi (2001), and the researcher's findings are government departments – mainly the South African Police Services (SAPS), the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), parastatals such as ESKOM and post office as well as private companies such as Harmony, AngloGold and others.

2.3 The Evolvement of Employee Assistance Programmes

A wide range of authors generally agrees, regarding the development of EAPs in South Africa (comparing Masi, 2000; Terblance, 1992; Du Plessis, 1992; Maiden, 1992). According to Mbane (2005), their arguments, in various ways but with a single connotation, are that South African EAPs were copied from EAPs in the United States of America (USA), and because of this fact, a brief history of the field of EAP in the USA will be outlined.

2.3.1 The Employee Assistance Programme and work in organizations today

According to Berridge *et al* (1994), the acronym EAP (employee assistance programme) has been part of the lexicography of human resources managers in Britain for a decade now — and not only those who espouse the softer or more developmental humanist philosophies of HRM.

Increasingly EAPs are also becoming part of the vocabulary and the discourse of hard-headed managers and informed directors in organizations of all types, particularly those whose distaste for the excesses of meanness and leanness leads them to monitor carefully the effects of the demands for performance on the part of employees at all levels.

The authors further state that EAPs are seen by managers as capable of playing a growing role in keeping organizations operating at a. high level of efficiency, quality and competitiveness. What is attractive to managers is that EAPs can also demonstrate their cost-effectiveness in individual and corporate terms as a new way of handling the stress of professional, commercial or creative work life, as well as the non-work stresses experienced by employees and imported by them into the job context. Some senior British managers in the past have been wary of EAPs as "yet another North American import", unsuited for the very different business and social cultures of Britain. In Europe, however, national variants

are emerging and being accepted, especially in the northern European countries; and a distinctive and flourishing EAP tradition has been created in Britain.

The EAP is thus, demonstrating its worth in tackling the complex issues of stressed employees, and the problems of coping inside work, outside work and with the interaction of work and the many other roles which employees have to play (Berridge *et al*, 1994).

According to Megranahan (1995), the employee assistance programme (EAP) is designed to benefit every area in an organization, where individual performance plays a part. He says that the scope is extremely broad and ranges from the single task, to complex jobs which all levels of employees undertake. The structure and delivery of an EAP is guided by "core" practices, generally known as the EAP core technology. It follows from these principles that, within an organization every individual's contribution is important. The EAP provides the employee (and his or her family), the supervisor/ manager, the union representative, the medical or occupational health department, the HR function, and ultimately the organization itself, with a well-tested package for addressing a wide range of issues.

He further argues that the package balances the need for performance maintenance with the desire to sustain employee wellbeing. Where this is achieved, a win-win situation will exist. Creating the right package is vital. Simply regarding an EAP (for instance) as a counselling service will not achieve the full benefits of an EAP for the organization. Equally, advocating the EAP as a panacea for all employee issues is misguided and will fail. The researcher agrees with Megranahan (1995), that before an EAP is introduced, there needs to be a clear analysis of:

- the aims and objectives for the service;

- the ways in which the EAP should be designed in order to meet the objectives and

- most vitally, how these objectives will be monitored.

Without this exercise, the off-the-shelf package will go unmonitored, may be inappropriate, and certainly will not have mechanisms to define, measure and improve the processes used to deliver an EAP: in short, to control the quality of the service. This article seeks to outline

the ways in which EAP quality can be assessed mutually, by both the EAP provider and the customer. (Megranahan; 1995).

The issue of work-life balance has received increasing attention across a range of disciplines, in part because of the wide range of problems confronting the contemporary workforce.

The scope of the national problems in areas traditionally encompassed by employee assistance program (EAP) services is troubling. It is estimated that 10% of employees are impaired sufficiently to need behavioural health intervention and that $6 billion is lost in American businesses, due to decreased productivity stemming from personal relationship difficulties. As a result, there has been a national movement to enhance and enlarge a broad range of services for employees including depression, stress, relationships, marital problems, compulsive gambling, career issues, financial and legal, concerns, lactation centres', child and elder care, health and wellness, violence, and so on.

Traditionally EAPs focused on substance and alcohol abuse. Of the 12.3 million adult users of illicit drugs, 77% work alcohol and drug use cost American business about $80 billion a year. About 6.5% of full-time and 8.6% of part-time workers are users of illicit drugs. An estimated 6.2% of adults working full-time are heavy drinkers, with one third of workers age 18 to 25 years are binge drinkers. The still-lingering stigma associated with substance abuse is a barrier to developing effective programmes. Although substance abuse prevention programmes may result in higher health care costs initially, prevention efforts lower health care costs in the long term. Prior studies have found that 78% of respondents indicated that work is their biggest source of stress, with steady increases in workplace related stress. Stress appears to have important consequences for the initiation of, vulnerability to, and/or progression of a variety of illnesses (Journal of Workplace Behavioural Health: 2008). It can contribute to work-related performance in a number of ways including diminished alertness, narrowed attention, irritability, poor problem solving, disrupted social relationships, and lowered task performance. Stress-related issues have been estimated to cost business organizations $300 billion annually. One in five workers that say they work harder, redo work, or cover for a co-worker who has been drinking —which adds to Stressors in the current workforce.

Collins and Smith (2006) completed a study of how human resource (HR) practices affected the performance of 136 high technology companies. They found that commitment-related practices (demonstrating a long-term investment in employees) were positively related to organizational climates characterized by trust and cooperation.

Health and Wellness programs are widely touted as a way to reduce rising health care costs, improve worker efficiency, reduce absenteeism, and create employee loyalty and are viewed as mutually beneficial to management and workers. Nationally, there is move to broad-based programs to offer a range of benefits and approaches to address these complex problems. However, the very complexity of program increase the difficulty of effectively communicating the nature of programs and increasing awareness of them so that employees can make informed choices. Generally, people find employee benefit communication confusing, complicated, and sometimes frustrating. Indeed, there is a surprisingly low level of understanding of employee benefits nationally. In this article, he examines the relationship between inputs that determine what sources of assistance are sought and the outcomes associated with them.

First, a review common sources of assistance, external, web, opinion leaders, formal off-site, formal on-site, and formal referral, that are used to address these problems. Secondly, I examine input factors—-accessibility; motivation, self-efficacy, and trust—that determine which one of these are likely to be used. Finally, a detail the various outcomes associated with usage: avoiding, feedback seeking, social support, balance, resilience, commitment, and productivity. The implications for managers focus on building effective EAP.

Berrigde et al (1994), argues that the characteristics of any single EAP will probably diverge greatly from those other EAPs, even between separate sites of the same organization. They further state, that most EAPs today were trained in an era of recognition of the validity of organizational diversity, whether involuntarily or purposely created, in a search for competitive advantage.

2.3.2 EAPs in the United Kingdom oil industry

According to Gammie (1997), research has shown that an escalating number of employers now recognize human capital as a valuable resource, and consequently, there is an increasing realization that employee personal wellbeing is an important determinant of organizational prosperity. As workforce performance is translated into identifiable economic losses, firms have turned to various forms of employee assistance programme in an effort to increase production and reduce costs.

There is no single generic definition of an EAP, but the following encapsulates all major facets of the majority of systems: an EAP is a programmatic intervention at the workplace, usually at the level of the individual employee, using behavioural science knowledge and the methods for the recognition and control of certain work and non-work related problems (notably alcoholism, drug abuse and mental health) which adversely affect job performance, with the objective of enabling the individual to return to making his or her full work contribution and to attaining full functioning in personal life Gammie (1997).

He further states that EAP provides workplace counselling and other support services in a systematic and readily available manner to agreed professional standards. There are a number of ways an EAP can be provided, using internal or external resources, working on or off the site. For example, an organization with staff concentrated on one or two sites may manage its own programme, whereas, a large multi-unit retail organization contracting out services is likely to use an external supplier.

Gammie (1997), further argues that now a rapid expansion of EAP activity in Europe fuelled by a number of factors: an increasing understanding of the role of counselling in management; leaner and flatter organizations making increasing demands on fewer employees; continued organizational change; people-centered programmes (e.g. TQM and Investors in People); contracting out of personnel services; increasing social pressure on individuals owing to the breakdown of the extended family; more individuals living on their own; more marital breakdown; and changes in social services. The next Graphic illustration covers a number of issues where this type of counselling has contributed positively.

GRAPHICAL ILLUSTRATION FOR COUNSELING ISSUES FOR EAPs

AIDS	Grievances	Relocation
Alcohol abuse	Indebtedness	Retirement
Bereavement	Induction	Sexual harassment
Career development	Job training	Smoking
Chronic illness	Lay-off	Stress (work-related)
Demotion	Legal matters	Stress (work-extrinsic)
Disability	Literacy and education	Substance abuse
Discipline	Marital problems	Suicide
Dismissal	Mental health	Verbal abuse
Divorce	Performance evaluation	Violence
Family problems	Physical fitness	Vocational guidance
Financial advice	Promotion	Weight control
Gambling	Racial harassment	Women's career breaks
Goal setting	Redundancy	

Source: [36]

The decision to introduce an EAP often appears to be a matter of intuition, rather than strict proof, with management increasingly concerned with preventive action to assist cost reduction through reducing the number of days lost through stress, lower medical insurance and less litigation. Indeed, evidence already exists, which suggests that successful stress management does have a positive impact on profits, highlighting pragmatism and not philanthropy as the motivational factor in the adoption of an EAP.

2.3.3 The evolution of EAPs in the USA

Padiachy (1996) provides an overview of the historical development of EAPs. In the nineteenth century, the unionization of the labour force in the United States and the growing impact of organized strikes on commerce co-incited, with some companies providing various forms of assistance to the employees. This assistance included, for example, the provision of subsidies housing, safer working conditions pension schemes, education, medical care and recreational facilities.

This was later known as the advent welfare capitalism, which came to an abrupt end with the great depression of the 1930's from the great depression until World War II, minimal progress was made in the development of assistance of employees. After World War II, as the US economy prospered during the 1950's and 1960's, attention turned once again in the more affluent west to the needs of employees.

Overtime, employers began to realize that "troubled employees" caused financial liabilities due to absenteeism, accidents damage to equipment, lowered productivity and high medical or disability benefits. This recognition created the milieu for the development of occupational mental health. Masi (2000) describes these programmes as services developed by a number of organizations that recognized that employees who presented with alcohol problems could be treated and could again be as productive as before.

In describing these programmers further, Consad (2003), states "when such gambles proved successful, the identification of employees with alcohol problems before termination due to poor job performance, became necessary. Supervisors and certain union representatives assumed these new duties. These individuals received minimal training in the signs and symptoms of alcohol abuse and addiction, so that they could recognize such problems among their colleagues." From this statement, the researcher observes that Occupational

Alcohol Programmes (OAPs) of the 1940s were not guided by any legal requirements, and there were also no trained personnel to do the jobs. Instead, the organization depended on the services of recovering alcoholics, supervisors and some union officials.

Problems associated with these programmes resulted in the development of the current form of EAPs in the late 1960s and early 1970s (compare Consad, 2003 and Masi, 2000). Basically, the problems faced by companies were, according to Conrad (2003) that people above the first line of management were left undiagnosed. This occurred because of stigma attached to the disease of alcoholism has it that, only a particular group of people is affected. The lack of understanding about the disease also led to some supervisors not being objective in the diagnosis of people with alcohol related problems. This was mainly because supervisors were not willing to expose themselves by diagnosing symptoms that they themselves might have been presenting with. Finally, in order to deal with the problems mentioned above, there was a major need for a paradigm shift in companies, Mbana (2005).

Focus was changed from identifying employees with alcohol related problems to employees whose job performance were not satisfactory. In describing the problem faced by companies and ultimately the development of EAPs, Consad (2003) commented that "when employees presented other problems contributing to, or impairing their job performance, management had no resources available to impact on them. Out of this need, the concept of employee assistance as we know it today was born."

Currently, according to Cascio (1998), EAPs in the USA represent the most common mechanism by which human services are provided within the workplace. Therefore, being the driving forces behind these programmes in the USA. Nowadays, they are summarized as the following (compare Cascio, 1998; Masi, 2000; Consad, 2003):

Legal mandate: - This is said to have its origins in the 1960s, when alcoholism was regarded as a serious handicap, and employers were then required to provide treatment for alcoholism to their employees. In a nutshell therefore, employers found themselves having to avoid legal action associated with the health and safety of their employees.

Social responsibility: - This is a factor associated very strongly with organizations or companies that continue to adopt and implement EAPs within their work environment. The reason is mainly that companies view their employees' health as one of their biggest assets. There is agreement amongst above-mentioned authors that the role played by this fact cannot be quantified. They concur, though, on the role which social responsibility plays in the continued survival of EAPs.

Corporate image: - Companies and organization are seen to be caring for their employees by providing EAPs. They receive a lot of respect for their actions from inside and also outside. This results in their public image being boasted and this, in turn, assists them to attract more consumers and/or customers for their particular products and prospective employees to their companies.

Cost effectiveness: - Through introducing EAPs, companies save lots of money. This is viewed from the point of view that a considerable amounts are spent on the implementation of EAPs save organizations a lot of money. This is viewed against the probable costs of problems like accidents, tardiness, absenteeism, errors in judgments and others that might have occurred had there been no EAP in place. The introduction and maintenance of EAPs by organizations/companies, therefore, improve bottom line profits in the form of saving the most important resources in the very existence of organizations: human beings.

2.3.4 The evolution of EAPS in South Africa

According to Maiden (1992) and Terblance (1992), South African EAPs evolved in the early 1980s were copied from American programmes. Maiden (1992), continues and states that these programmes were brought to South African organizations by this country's social workers and psychologists who had studies in the United States of America. From this group who studied in the USA, mentors and trainers emerged, who made it possible (through training programmes, conferences and workshops), for others to be aware of the field and ultimately practiced it in their organizations.

The first employee assistance programme (EAP) in South Africa was introduced by the Chamber of Mines of South Africa. According to Terblance (1999) and Masi (2000), the Chamber of Mines did this through the appointment of a consultant in 1983, to conduct a

feasibility study on EAPs for the mining community. As a result of the provisions of the study, the concept of EAP in South Africa was accepted in 1986. This was followed by the introduction of counselling centres by the Chamber of Mines, mainly for its employees in its regions. Thus, the EAP was introduced in a workplace for the first time in South Africa.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the field of EAP in South Africa generally, was at this stage not influenced by compliance to legislation and that these services were provided through the willingness of the employers. A working group of EAPs was created under the auspices of the University of South Africa, which played a major role in the evolvement of EAPs in South Africa Terblance (1992). This group went on to be incorporated into the membership of the Institute for Personnel Management of Southern Africa (IPM). The entire process ended up with the establishment of a National EAP Committee that eventually elected officers in 1989 representing, major companies, tertiary institutions and social service agency. This group operated independently although it was under the main umbrella of the IMP.

According to Masi (2000), the year 1993, saw major transformation in the field of EAP. And this resulted in the group referred to above splitting totally from the IMP. This split resulted to the establishment of the South African Chapter of EAPA in 1997.

The Standards Committee of Employee Assistance Professional Association – SA (EAPA –SA (1999), states that in March 1996 was the exact date for the formation of the first board for the committee. According to Masi (2000), the purpose of EAPA – SA is basically to bring professionalism to the EAP field in the country. This has been achieved through the development of a Standards Document and an Ethics Document that are to be used by both the EAP practitioners and the other professionals. Although EAPs have been widely used to alleviate stress and drug addiction, the main contributors to low productivity and morale among workers (Malatji 2000:107; Mogorosi 1997:1; Sithole 2001:2), the literature search in the South African context did not find any instance of EAP being used to help address the problems faced by retrenches. Therefore, this paper documents the first instance of an EAP being used for this purpose which is theoretically interesting. The question underlying this research is how could an EAP programme, which was originally intended to help workers with some of their non-work problems, be transformed into a programme that purportedly

addresses the needs of workers? Did it address the problem or did this bring about restructuring?

2.4 The Qualities and Features of EAPs in South Africa

2.4.1 Practice models

Maiden (1992), pointed out that "because of the recent introduction of EAPs into South African work organizations they have essentially skipped a generation of development."

Maiden (1992) further states that" South Africa is undergoing rapid social change. All aspects of South African society are being affected and all are responding from their particular perspective. The goal of this social revolution is the emergence of a "New South Africa", the result of integrating and blending first and third world communities.

As already indicated in the study, the concept of an EAP as a workplace intervention is relatively new in the public sector.

The EAP signifies a social responsibility acceptance by the employer, to assist the employer with certain problems. The South African legislature framework provides for the protection of employees' rights in the workplace, both the private and the public sector (Buffalo City Municipality, Draft EAP Policy).

Maiden (1992), states that EAPs in South Africa stem from the same basic conceptual origins as EAPs in the United States. He further says that this is where the similarity ends. Employee assistance programmes in South Africa have become the social conscience of the organizations in which they are ensconced. He further argues that in South Africa, the EAP is viewed by employees for the most part as an agent of charge of social conditions in the work environment.

The confidential nature of the EAP provides employees an avenue to discuss problems and air concerns that affect most employees. Maiden (1992), further states that these problems differ somewhat from those presented by labour unions, where the labour union bargains for working conditions, leave, pay and the like, the EAP appears to assume the role of an ombudsman.

Du Plessis, in Maiden (1992) states that EAPs in South Africa are best characterized as macro model, as opposed to the US Micro model EAP.

She further argues that although EAPs in South Africa were initially modelled after US, programs, they have evolved into something quite different. Maiden (1992), further says EAP presents to management issues regarding personal and/or family problems that affect a majority of the workforce resulting in significant human resource management problems for the employer.

The researcher agrees with the assumption by Du Plessis (1992), that it is both desirable and natural that EAPs evolve, over time, to embrace macro practice. Micro practice is understood largely as one-to-one or one-to-family clinical counselling or casework the focus of which is a personal problem orientation, or an emphasis on the "employee-as-person." Macro practice, on the other hand, involves collective and organizational problems which have a workplace and/or systematic orientation- a focus on the person-as-employee." The author also argues that of some problems may have the aspects of both the micro and the macro practices.

The researcher agrees with Du Plessis (1992), that micro practice should not be abandoned, rather, that a good EAP practice will include both the micro and macro practice. The arguments above have been made even clearer and practical by Du Plessis (1992), when she says that there are some special circumstances in the South African workplace, which highlight the need to have a macro perspective. These relate to the systematic and environmental issues that impact on workers and thus come to the attention of the EAP practitioners. Problems here include those rooted in sago-political circumstances beyond the control of individual workers.

The conclusion by Du Plessis (1992) regarding the method of practice for EAPs in this country is that the EAP practitioners are only totally effective if they are able to diagnose and treat the problems of departments and organizations (Mbana, 2005).

The researcher is of the opinion that the EAPs in South Africa are duty bound to continue with the macro practice approach for some time to come, due to the unique problems the workers are facing at the workplace currently.

The researcher refers to issues such as crime, domestic violence, HIV and AIDS pandemic, post traumatic stress syndromes, the migrant labour system and alcohol and drug abuse in the country, just to mention but a few. Mbana (2005), states that these problems, although addressed through the micro approach, still place more emphasis on EAP practitioners to apply a broader and hence macro approach in attending to them.

EAP services are delivered through a variety of programme models. Part of the diversity comes from the variation in the size of the organization, the availability of internal resources devoted to employee assistance services, and the willingness of the organization to expend its resources.

2. 5 Evaluation of an Employee Assistance Programme

An evaluation of an EAP is crucial to the successful operation of the programme. According to Jones (1987:99), as the employee assistance field matures, an evaluation of the programme activities or services is needed. The interest in EAP evaluation is growing for a number of reasons. Programmes are becoming more formally established and operated. Ann evaluation of an EAP can also assist personnel in determining whether the EAP has achieved the programmer's identified goals.

Walsh, (1982), argues that very few companies have conducted extensive evaluation / assessments of their programme or there is much inclination to invest in experimentation. She says that managers generally feel that the benefits from EAPs are difficult to measure in tangible terms; reduced disruption and improved productivity are real but often subjectively perceived benefits.

The following aspects may be evaluated:

2.5.1 Programme utilization

According to Ligon and Yegidis in Emener, Hutchinson and Richard (2003:131) utilization evaluation provides programmes with data concerning who is using what services and to

what extent. These authors indicate that addition of staff, outreach programmes, and off-site locations have been found to enhance the EAP utilization rate.

A utilization evaluation of an EAP helps in determining if the target populations of the programme have been reached and whether different aspects of the EAP are over or underutilized.

Lawrence, Boxer and Tarakeshwar (2002:3), identify issues that appear to mediate EAP utilization including employees' trust in the confidentiality of services provided, administrative support of the programme, ease of access, positive feedback from previous users of the service, and perceived efficacy of the service. Misperceptions and lack of understanding about EAPs have been found to inhibit utilization (Frost, 1990:45; Temple and Honig, 1997:15 as well as Csiernik, 2003:45).

The researcher is of the opinion that essential to a successful EAP, is the ability to communicate to employees what service are available through the company's EAP and what steps employees need to take to access these services. It is, therefore, important that the EAP be marketed in order to enhance employees' utilization of the programme.

A utilization analysis is a very informative and useful evaluative tool. Its usefulness can be shown; if utilization rates are compared to some predetermined measure of need. One can then sensibly ask if a programme is being successful in meeting the needs of a particular organization's employees. Coshan (1991), states that the high utilization rate of an EAP can be an indication of the programmer's success. However, lower utilization, may cause companies to ask whether the programme is worth the costs.

2.5.2 Characteristics of EAP clients

The demographics of an organization and the characteristics of each client influence EAP utilization. Jones (1987:108) is of the opinion that an EAP is intended to serve any and all employees and their dependants who are experiencing personal problems. One should therefore anticipate a diverse client population. It is important that an EAP be evaluated to determine whether it caters for all clients. Research indicates that women are more likely to utilize an EAP than men (Oher, 1993:59). It is important that employees, their families, and all others eligible for the programme be informed about the organization's EAP and the

services it offers and be continually updated on new programme initiatives in order to enhance programme penetration rate (Csiernik, 2003:21).

2.5.3 Programme penetration

Referrals entail the manner in which employees access the EAP. According to Jones (1987:111), how clients arrive at the EAP is an important operational question for a number of reasons. First, the EAP should at least have a broad base of support from its employees, supervisors and family members. Where the troubled employees are referred is probably the most important process evaluation question and the answers determine the quality and effectiveness of care which the clients received (Jones 1987:116).

2.5.4 Employees' awareness of the EAP

The awareness of the EAP influences the utilization and penetration rate of the programme. Because of this, it is important to evaluate factors associated with awareness of the programme. An evaluation of employees' awareness of the programme may cover the following aspects:

2.5.4.1 Visibility of the EAP

The visibility of the EAP implies that the programme should clearly be seen or noticeable by employees. The visibility of the EAP can have a positive impact upon employee awareness which in turn is related to the utilization of an EAP (Frost 1990:50). Evaluation to determine the visibility of an EAP is, therefore, important. When an EAP utilizes several methods to inform the workforce about its services, the employees' levels of awareness are likely to be high. Beidel in Oher (1991:91) identify the following strategies to maximize EAP visibility and effectiveness:

- An EAP needs to be marketed to the employees in order to enhance staff awareness and utilization of the programme.
- It is imperative that an EAP identifies its goals for the overall marketing campaign and its objectives for any specific marketing or promotional activity.
- A general informational brochure on the programme might be the strategy of choice to introduce the EAP to the workforce; and

- Another indirect method to promote and enhance visibility of an EAP within an organization is through the evaluation of the programme.

2.5.4.2 Employees' familiarity with an EAP

Employees' familiarity with the 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 (2002:4), there is a link between employees' familiarity with the EAP and the utilization of the programme. When employees are aware of EAP services they are more likely to utilize the services. It is thus important that information on EAP be shared amongst the workforce to improve the utilization rate.

2.5.4.3 Employees perceptions of using the EAP

Perception refers to the ability to see, hear or understand things. This part of the evaluation examines the following areas: deciding to use the EAP, being able to speak to someone over the phone to make an appointment, leaving their work area to go to the EAP as well as explaining to co-workers or supervisor where one is going. As such, it is imperative to examine the factors employees perceive would deter them from using the EAP.(Khorommbi,2007).

2.5.4.4 Employees concerns about confidentiality

Confidentiality means that the information shared during consultation will not be disclosed to anyone without the employee's written consent. Without the client's signed informed consent, no one access may be permitted to employees' private and personal information. The protection of confidentiality is important in the success of the EAP. Unless confidentiality is assured, employees may choose not to contact the EAP.

Frost (1990:52), states that an evaluation of an EAP should examine important issues such as employees' concerns about confidentiality when using the programme. The researcher concurs with the Frost since confidentiality plays an important role in EAP utilization because it might either enhance utilization or inhibit the employees' utilization of the programme. According to Ligon and Yegidis in Emener et al (2003:138), no EAP can expect

to be worthwhile unless the individual anooonymity of each participant and his/her family is protected.

Nakoa et al. 2006, further state that the personal information on the use the EAP remained confidential and was not to be provided to staff in the company, except when workers are agreed to let EAP staff report their use help health care professionals.

2.5.5 Service needs assessment

A service needs assessment refers to the evaluation of a number of employees in need of the EAP service. Yamatani (1993:67) is of the opinion that a major objective of a service needs assessment is to establish the potential number of workers needing various EAP services. There are four components in needs assessment studies: identification of the seriousness of the problems of the workers, specification of the selected problems and service needs, assessment of service gaps in the work setting, and development or modification of EAP goals and objectives. The researcher is, therefore, of the opinion that these aspects are important in evaluation since they may help in determining types of problems encountered by employees, whether available programmes and resources are meeting the various needs of the employees and might also help in identifying current gaps in available services.

2. 5.6 Compliance/legality assessment

Compliance and legality assessment entail obedience to a rule, agreement or demand. EAP practitioners should comply with the laws and regulations as well as policies regarding EAP operation. Yamatani (1993:68), further contends that employers and EAP counsellors should be informed about potential legal disputes and preventative approaches.

2.5.7 Programme adequacy

The programme adequacy assessment examines the appropriateness of the EAP services, their availability and usage, as well as penetration rates.

Yamatani (1993:70), furthermore remarks that there are two concerns addressed in the determining the adequacy of an EAP service system.

They are the extent to which an EAP offers the needed services and the extent to which those services are provided to those who need them most. Generally, a higher usage rate of the programme may be an indication that the EAP is successfully meeting the employees' needs.

Perry and Cayer (1992:8) are of the opinion that the adequacy of performance is a feature that attempts to address the output of a programme relative to the needs that the programme is projected to serve. Thus, it represents and assessment of the ability of the programme to deal with the prevailing programs. In effect, one is estimating the power of the EAP to deliver EAP versus the need for assistance in the organization.

The following are the factors associated with the determination of the programme adequacy:

- Comprehensiveness of service needs;
- EAP service acceptance by employees as well as the employer; and
- Allocation of resources for meeting the employees' needs.

2.5.8 External resources assessment

The assessment of external resources includes an examination of the type of outside agencies and services used, and the extent of usage and client satisfaction with these services (Yamatani 1993:72). EAPs frequently rely on outside resources for delivering the necessary services to clients. An EAP may contract an outside service provider for reasons such as the unavailability of such services within the programme, clients' case loads, service gaps, and inadequate EAP staff knowledge and skills. This evaluation will help in identifying the types of cases referred to an outside practitioner and their outcomes.

2.5.9 Programme effort

The assessment of programme effort is based on a number of questions regarding the programme initiation, utilization and implementation. Other pertinent information regarding programme effort may include activities devoted to finding resources that could increase the service utilization rate (Yamatani 1993:73). Perry and Cayer (1994:9), report that most evaluation reports are so concerned with the specific aspects of the components of an EAP that they tend to lose sight of the totality, context or framework of the evaluation.

A programme effort assessment includes an assessment of the extent to which time and staff resources are devoted to review service objectives and activities, the procurement of follow-up information from programme beneficiaries, and alternative programme strategies used if the programme efforts did not appear sufficient to achieve the service goals and objectives. The programme effort assessment is generally useful for further strengthening of the EAP system by identifying potential areas in need of process improvement. It is also useful for EAPs experiencing programme failure or suffering from lawsuits due to unanticipated outcomes (Yamatani 1993:74).

2.5.10 Programme effectiveness

Programme effectiveness can be evaluated by measuring the extent of changes associated with programme intervention in the areas identified by the programme goals and objectives. The anticipated changes include two major categories, normally work behaviour (e.g. changes in work attendance, performance and attitude) and reductions in the costs of health insurance and other related benefit (Yamatani 1993:74).

Balgopal and Patchenr (1998:83), state that performance in the workplace differs from one department to another while organizations' programmes may differ in their effectiveness that is in the extent to which pre-established objectives are attained as a result of the activity. EAPs have received great exposure but little evidence exists about the effectiveness of these programmes. It is, therefore, important that EAPs be evaluated in order to determine their effectiveness.

2.5.11 Benefit equity

The major question to be examined for the assessment of programme equity is: are all service benefits distributed evenly among the different population groups? In this instance, the major reference factor consist of demographic attributes such as age, gender, race and types of personal problems among EAP service users as well as non users who can benefit from EAP interventions. An EAP may be superior in its effectiveness but it may be considered as discriminatory on the grounds that it has produced an inequitable distribution of EAP benefits among the different groups of workers (Yamatani 1993:76). As such, it is important that the EAP caters for the needs of all employees and their families.

2.5.12 Client satisfaction

Client satisfaction is an assessment based on the clients' opinions regarding the extent to which they are satisfied with the EAP service. The clients may be surveyed as regarding their satisfaction and dissatisfaction related to the programme goals and objectives, adequacy, effectiveness, and attitude, as well, as interest. Assessment involves solicitation of opinions of clients regarding the adequacy and quality of services received, and their suggestions regarding programme improvement. An assessment in this area should also include client's opinions regarding the overall strength and weaknesses of the programme as well as areas requiring improvement and modification. Thus, client satisfaction evaluation is more contributory towards programme improvements when the EAP identifies the sources of client dissatisfaction and modifies its operation accordingly (Yamatani 1993:78 and Ligon and Yegidis in Emener *et al*, 2003:131).

2.5.13 Lost/benefit assessment

Yamatani (1993:78) and Ligon and Yegidis in Emener *et al* (2003:132), are of the opinion that cost/benefit assessment calls for comparisons between the cost of the programme operation and estimated amount of benefits (or savings) it has generated. The total direct costs of the programme can be categorized into two major groups: fixed costs and variable costs. The fixed costs are items that are unlikely to change annually during the EAP operation (for example the administrator's salary, malpractice insurance premiums and overhead costs). The variable costs are costs that more than likely will change according to the change in number of EAP clients as well as other factors.

The total benefits attributable to EAP can be divided into two major categories tangible and intangible benefits. The tangible benefit is represented by measurable positive effects of the EAP that are directly related to its programme objectives: for example, savings effected by EAP as a result of changes in the work behaviour of the employee or decrease in costs of health insurance and other related benefits. More specifically, the following five major areas are often considered in EAP benefit calculations: work performance, absenteeism, paid health insurance claims, workmen's compensation payments and sickness and accidents payments. The intangible benefits associated with EAP include clients' psychological and attitudinal changes, and impacts upon individuals and groups who are interpersonally

associated with clients. Based on the cost and benefit data, the EAP will also be capable of determining a break-even point: a balance between the total cost of operating the EAP and the total benefit generated by the employee served by the EAP.

2.5.14 Programme constraints analysis

A programme constraints analysis is the examination of aspects that limit or restrict the programmer's freedom of action such as legal and or financial constraints. According to Yamatani (1993:79), programme adequacy, compliance/legality, effectiveness and, benefit equity are not only related to the implementation effort but may also be related to various limitations and obstacles that stand in the way of achieving successful outcomes.

The organizational constraints (for example, political fragmentation, excessive centralization, poor management/supervision and training, and low morale) and physical constraints (for example, the lack of needed equipment and facilities) may also be responsible for a partially successful or unsuccessful EAP system.

The constraints analysis can be conducted in order to improve EAP cost efficiency, programme effectiveness, client satisfaction, and for the maximization of EAP benefit to employees and to the employer. Programme constraints may be obviated by ensuring that the EAP has all the essential components.

2.5.15 Components Necessary for EAP Evaluation

Components are essential building blocks of an EAP. In order to evaluate EAPs, it is essential that the components of the programme be identified and reviewed in terms of their real presence for evaluation purposes. The following four fundamental dimensions crucial to any EAP as well as basic to the evaluative process have been identified by Taylor, Holosko, Wayne Smith, and Feit (1988:71).

- Policy: Policies should reflect a supportive understanding by management, by recognizing its role in employee problem solving;
- Training: Training is essential from the highest level of management to the front-line supervisors;
- Services: Services relate to the availability of resources with which to match the workers, needs; and

- Follow-up: Follow-up provides the opportunity to monitor the employee's progress during the treatment phase and his/her adjustment back into the workplace.

To evaluate an EAP, it is necessary to identify data that will enable the employer to determine how a programme is doing in relation to future decisions about its continuation, modification and improvement.

2.6 *A Comprehensive Evaluation Framework*

According to Battle (1988; 84), most evaluations of human services are designed to determine whether the programme is affecting any change and to assess the quality of the services provided. However, consistent and routine evaluations should provide information on which to base programme decisions regarding the modification, expansion or even discontinuation of the programme.

Cayer and Perry (1988:156), allege that evaluation is often conceived as primarily the outcome or summative evaluation designed to determine if a programme meets its goals. In this instance, one must acknowledge the importance of process or formative evaluation to help understand outcome evaluation. Process evaluation focuses upon how the programme functions not whether goals are met but what is done to attempt to meet them. It is thus important that a comprehensive evaluation framework should contain elements of both process and outcome evaluation. This approach may then be seen as the specification of the foci and purposes of the evaluation. An evaluating framework must identify the standards in terms of which performance will be assessed, define organizational dimensions of the programme, specify the units of analysis, and specify the population from which evaluative information should be collected.

The importance of evaluating an EAP cannot be overestimated. Employee assistance programmes must be evaluated to justify their existence to some external authorities and even if this is not the case, an EAP should be assessed to ascertain the extent to which it is reaching its objectives, and to find ways to improve its performance (Perry and Cayer 1992: 1, Highley and Cooper 1994: 1 and Weiss 1998; 20). The goals of an EAP service should be built in from the beginning, while it is essential for organizations to be able to evaluate whether or not those goals are being met.

According to Mark, Henry and Julnes (2000:9), evaluation in principle has a broad scope. The authors identified the big six P's that can be evaluated: programmes, policies, products, personnel, performance, and proposals.

The authors further contend that the reasoning underlying evaluating transcends the objects of evaluation. Mark *et al* (2000:9), state that the evaluation theory is about why evaluation is carried out, for whom and how? The authors further elaborate on the different approaches in evaluation

- The theory driven approach: according to this approach, evaluators should begin by identifying a programme theory that is a model of the mechanisms that link programme activities and outcome and then use this programme theory as the guide to the evaluation design.

- Utilization focused evaluation theory: In this approach the evaluator identifies the intended users and use of an evaluation and then selects inquiry methods to match those uses. Success in this approach is explicitly defined by whether the intended utilization takes place. According to De Vos (2005:385-386). One way of studying programme utilization is to gather detailed descriptive information about what the programme is doing. Utilization of evaluation answers the following questions: what do clients in the programme experience, what services are provided to clients and how is the programme organized? Utilization evaluation includes attention to inputs, activities and processes of the programme. Evaluation helps to inform decision makers about what is going on in the programme and how the programme has developed.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher will focus on the utilization of the evaluation theory. However, the researcher is in agreement with Frost (1990:45) that essential to successful EAP is the ability to communicate to employees what services are available through the company's EAP and what steps employees need to take to access the services. The author further contends that misperception and lack of understanding about EAPs have been found to inhibit their utilization. The researcher, therefore, concurs with Frost that it is of paramount importance that when one conducts an evaluation of this nature, the following aspects should be taken into consideration: the employees' overall knowledge of the EAP, the employees' familiarity with how to access the EAP and the employees'

perceptions of the confidentiality of the EAP services since these factors can either inhibit EAP usage or increase usage of EAP services. Frost (1990:46), furthermore argues that employees confusion about what the EAP is and how to use it can be a major barrier to utilizations.

A value-driven approach will also be relevant in this study since one of the aspects being evaluated is programme adequacy. According to Peters (1993:83), a value-driven approach is important to the operation of South African EAPs. An EAP is in essence a generator of value for the customer. Adding value to the operations of the clients and taking the needs of the clients into account when providing services are necessary to keep the client satisfied. The researcher concurs with Peters (1999:83) that the way an EAP providers structures, its services and operations should be based on what the clients feel comfortable with to deliver an excellent service.

2.7 Prerequisites for Evaluating EAPS

Prerequisites refer to things required as a condition for something to happen or exist. According to Holosko (1998:60), certain prerequisites must be in place prior to conducting any EAP evaluation. These are construed as essential ingredients for successful evaluations, and all must be systematically addressed to some degree at the beginning of the evaluation process. These prerequisites include:

2.7.1 Organizational and programme commitment

Any EAP, which embarks on an evaluation without having the support of the administration, managers, or key decision-makers in the respective organization and the programme, is seriously remiss. A sincere administrative commitment is crucial to the evaluation's development and conduct. Administrative support from both the host organization's administration and the coordinators of the EAP is the key to influencing and obtaining other levels of support in the organization or programme and as a result, needs to be obtaining first. Thus, gaining support for an EAP evaluation is an area in which much reciprocal learning and cooperation between managers of the host organizations, union officials, EAP administrators, and the EAP evaluator needs to be done. This first level of support solidifies the purpose of the evaluation and shapes its subsequent assumptions, design, conduct and ultimate dissemination.

2. 7.2 The reason for EAP evaluation to be answered before it can be evaluated

It is important to answer why, when and how part of EAP before it can be evaluated. These questions seem harmless, yet if they are not satisfactorily answered prior to conducting the EAP evaluation, a variety of problems may unfold. According to Holosko (1988:62), the EAP should not be concerned if their answers to the why question conduct evaluation seem obvious. These are different reasons why an EAP should be evaluated. For example, an EAP can be evaluated for programme justification or that evaluation was mandated by the funding source. Regardless of this reasons for conducting the evaluation, at the onset of the EAP evaluation, the organization and EAP coordinators must agree to answer why they are conducting the evaluation which in turn, directly influences the when and how.

Holosko (1988:63), states that when the evaluation should be conducted is an important issue which EAP evaluators need to be sensitive to. The general preference is the earlier the better, as EAP may inherit the potential for subsequent evaluations into their overall planning and operational frameworks. However, if EAP evaluation is to be conducted after the programme has been operational for some time, certain challenges may be encountered. These types of evaluation may face a host of inevitable problems such as tracking clients or staff who participated in the programme and contending without missing, lost, misplaced or forgotten information which inevitably occurred over time. The researcher, therefore, agrees with Holosko (1988:63), that such difficulties may be avoided by commencing the evaluation process at the onset of the programme.

Finally, how to do evaluation is best resolved by those who are conducting it. More specifically, how clearly implies issues which may be beyond the scope of those not directly involved with the evaluation. However, this model suggests a cooperative approach which allows EAP evaluators to do what they do best, yet at the same time ensuring that they are accountable to the host organization and EAP for planning and conducting the evaluation (Holosko, 1988:63).

2.7.3 Goals and objectives require specification

According to Holosko (1988:64), goals and objectives when operationalized in evaluation terms, become efficiency and effectiveness criteria which are the lifeblood of any

evaluation. Evaluation research assesses programme processes, efficiency and/or effectiveness.

2.7.4 Information irretrievability

Organizations and EAPs have a peculiar relationship about collecting information for the purposes of planning, evaluating and decision-making. This relationship is peculiar for a number of reasons. First, most organizations are information short when it comes to programme evaluations, yet they perceive themselves as having an information overload. Second, most EAPs have a disproportionate amount of background information about their employees, and little bout what services or activities these employees received. It is, therefore, important that information be accessible and retrievable if any evaluative effort is to occur. Again, the significance of having the evaluation commence early on in the programme planning development stage, ensures that data will be retrievable (Holosko, 1988:65). The above-mentioned prerequisites are suggested as guidelines to be used in the planning process, and they should be considered prior to the conduct of any EAP evaluation.

2. 8 Reasons for Conducting Programme Evaluation

There are various reasons for conducting programme evaluation. Dickman, Challenger, Emener, and Hutchinson (1988:244) and Emener and Yegidis in Emener *et al* (2003:125) mention the following reasons for conducting programme evaluation:

2.8.1 Vindication

Vindication means showing or proving that the programme is valuable. Evaluation can be dedicated to finding out the extent to which the programme is achieving its goals. Information on this score can be used to decide whether the programme should be continued and spread to further locations, or whether investments in it should be cut. Therefore, when evaluating a programme, it is important to collect data (facts) to illustrate and demonstrate that the programme is worthwhile.

Justifying a programmer's existence and its continuance can be a very important function especially if resources are scarce or threatened (Dickman *et al*, 1988:244 and Ligon and Yegidis in Emener *et al*, (2003:130).

2.8.2 Marketing

Marketing refers to the theory and practice of presenting, advertising and selling things. When evaluating the programme it may be desirable to expand or extend parts of a programme into new areas. However, activities such as this require the convincing of others that the expansion or extension is worthwhile, and programme evaluation can be useful. Policy makers may want to know the consequences of the programme for its clients so that they can decide whether or not to expand it to new sites or to new categories of participants. According to Ligon and Yegidis (2003; 130), as an EAP continues to broaden its services, it is important to be able to market the need for expansion in a persuasive and convincing manner.

2.8.3 Verification

Verification means to make sure that something is true, accurate and justified. Verifying the worth and impact of the programme is important for its survival. This aspect is important because it will enhance the accountability of those rendering the service. Programme improvement requires knowledge and understanding of how a programme works. Ligon and Yegidis (2003:130), advise that EAPs cannot survive simply on the faith that the service is beneficial. Instead data are needed to support the need for expending resources for EAPs.

2.8.4 Improvement

Improvement refers to a positive change to produce something of a better standard or quality. Ligon and Yegidis (2003:130), suggest that programme evaluation provides input that is useful in modifying services on an ongoing basis. Dickman *et al* (1988:244), opine that analyzing facts about the programme cannot only specify strengths and weaknesses, but also suggest their magnitude and overall impact on programme outcomes (results and effects).

Another reason for conducting EAP evaluation is to determine whether EAPs have fulfilled their purposes and duties properly by providing quality service. A thorough evaluation should identify areas in need of improvement and suggest alternatives for accomplishing stated goals. Weiss (1998:25) is of the opinion that undertaking evaluation assists in finding out early in the game what is going on so that changes can be made. Evaluation that focuses

on programme process can yield data on what is happening during the programme and identify points at which improvement is called for.

2.8.5 Understanding

Programme improvement requires knowledge and understanding of how a programme works and why a programme works. However, programme evaluation activities cannot always fully answer questions such as these, but it can indeed enhance one's understanding of the how and why aspects of the programme. In this instance evaluation is aimed at finding out what is exactly happening in the programme, whether people are using the programme or not (Dickman *et al* 1988:244; Weiss 1988:27 as well as Ligon and Yegidis 2003:130).

2. 8.6 Accountability

Accountability implies that when a programme is undertaken, the company should take responsibility in terms of the fiscal and programmatic use of resources. Beyond the genuine commitment to excellence on behalf of programme leaders, programmes are frequently under pressure to demonstrate effectiveness, "results that show a difference of an impact" (Dickman *et al*, 1988:244; Weis 1988:288). Direct funders insist on holding programmes accountable for producing results. According to Rutman (1984:17) as well as Ligon and Yegedis (2003:131), the accountability perspective of evaluation holds that the worth of the programme must be reported and thereby demonstrated if it is to receive continued legislative, financial and public support. Programme evaluation thus comes to be viewed as a responsible means of arriving at difficult decisions on the reallocation of resources.

2. 8.7 Feedback to practitioners

Weis (1998:29), states that evaluation is sometimes expected to give feedback to practitioners as the programme continues. This may help practitioners to improve where necessary. Feedback to practitioners may be done through programme evaluation by ensuring that the research document is made available in the organization's resource centre's and universities' libraries. Another mechanism of giving feedback can be through the presentation of research findings and recommendations to practitioners wherein a possible action plan to improve the programme can be developed.

2.9 The Process of Evaluating the Programme

Rutman (1984:16) identifies the process of evaluating the EAP as follows:

2.9.1 Defining the client

There are inevitably numerous parties having an interest in the evaluation, legislators, client groups, interest groups, and the general public. The first step in planning an evaluation is to determine who the primary client for evaluation is (Rutman 1984:16)

An EAP model should therefore, be structured to meet the unique needs and demands of the specific organization. The researcher is of opinion that a services to employees (Phillips and Older as cited in Dickman *et al* 1988:133; Cagney as cited in Oher 1999:64).

The following are the different models of EAP:

2.9.1.1 Internal/In-house Model

This is an EAP model that entails a comprehensive service delivery approach. In this model trained professionals provide EAP service to the employees of the organization.

These practitioners are appointed he EAP model provided on a fulltime basis to render EAP services in the organization. This model, like any other model of service delivery, it has its advantages that can be summarized as follows:

The EAP practitioner has access to and effectively understands the working and culture of the organization.

It is possible to employees during working hours and this may enhance staff utilization of the organization.

An EAP model enhances ownership of the programme by the employees, that is, they feel 'it's our programmer'.

It provides on – site problem assessment and, therefore, enhances staff awareness of the programme.

The internal EAP model allows for closer management of EAP professionals.

Clinical supervision and quality assurance functions are routinely performed (Cagney in Oher 1999:65).

The following are the disadvantages of the Internal/In-house model of the EAP:

According to Cagney in Oher (1999: 64), the major concern about an internal, EAP is that it may be perceived as being too closely identified with a particular department and that the confidentiality of the problems may be difficult to protect. The employees may sometimes fear to utilize such services because they might think that if management becomes aware of their personal problems they can run the risk of losing opportunities (Sonnestuhl and Trice 1990). Only large organizations can justify full staff.

There is a possibility of staff burn-out with a one-person programme. Although EAP services are delivered by using different models, research findings suggest that there are greater rates of EAP utilization when the employee assistance professional is internal to the organization and acculturated with the organization `s needs rather than when counselling is provided by external clinicians (Csiernik, 2003: 47).

2.9.1.2 External Contracted Model

This is the model of EAP service delivery wherein the EAP professionals are the employees of an outside service provider that is contracted by the organization to conduct the EAP services. Most organizations often view contract services as a faster and efficient way to establish and maintain an EAP (Sonnestuhl and Trice, 1990). Unlike the internal model, employees may be very much comfortable with this model because it can be viewed as ensuring more confidentiality than when the programme is within the organization.

The outsourced model is viewed as having the ability to heighten voluntary utilization because of the perceived increase of confidentiality. It is also considered a more cost-effective approach to human-needs management. Maiden noted that in 1991 most EAPs in South Africa were internal (1998:8). The other setback of the contracted EAP services is the belief that it lacks experience with the workplace and also accountability for those offering the services to the organizations. Furthermore, there is no on-site counselling capacity, no ownership and some supervisors may be reluctant to deal with outsiders. The externally

contracted model can provide twenty four hour a day service and it is less costly than the in-house model (Oher, 1991: 66: Cagney, 1999: 66).

2.9.1.3 The Consortium Model

Small companies often use this model of service delivery, which cannot afford extensive EAP services. It enables the organizations to contract jointly with the independent services provider to share the costs. In this instance the organizations can join forces to contract an EAP provider to deliver quality services to the employees at a lower cost. The organizations utilizing this model, pool their resources together to develop a collaborative programme. The advantages of this model are that it is cost effective, confidentiality is easier to maintain and it reach a vast number of employees in different organizations.

The disadvantages of this model are that mangers and staff may be reluctant to deal with outsiders and the service providers usually know little about the participating organizations (Masi, 1984: 6).

2.9.1.4 The Union-Based Model

The primary services offered by this model are referrals, and prevention and problem identification. The advantage is credibility with union members and confidentiality. The disadvantage is that the union- based model does not serve non-union employees (Phillips and Older 1988:138). If a union was involved in establishing the EAP, utilization of the service may increase since union members would be able to refer their members to an EAP (Csiernik, 2003:48).

2. 10 Methods of Utilizing an EAP

There are different ways in which employees can use the EAP such as self referral, information referral supervisor/ management referral. According to Blair (1985: 11), the following methods can be used in utilizing an EAP:

2.10.1 Self referrals

Self referral is voluntary, self initiated request for assistance by the individual eligible for EAP services. It is an increasingly common utilization form (Gould and Smith1988:.47) Self – referral is described as a common characteristic of a successful EAP.

According to Wright in Klarreich, Francek and Moore (1985:18) and Cagney in Oher (1999: 61), when an employee experiences problems he/she can contact the EAP on his /her own initiative to seek assistance .This is referred to as self-referral as an employee himself / herself presents a problem or request for a service. In this regard, the EAP practitioner will conduct a preliminary assessment of the employee's problem and then recommend a course of action, which may include a referral to an external resource for treatment. Employees who self-refer are more likely to utilize the EAP services. Cagney in Oher (1999:61) states that 90% of EAP clients through self referral.

2.10.2 Informal referral

Informal referral is when an employee is advised either by a manager, colleague, union representative or family member ,to consult with the EAP .Although a supervisor can also informally encourage an employee to contact EAP ,it remains the prerogative of the individual whether to contact the EAP or not (Blair 1985:11; Gould and Smith1988:48).Informal referral of an employee to EAP may help in enhancing the employee's knowledge of the EAP and services provided and may enhance utilization of the programme.

2.10.3 Formal referral

In this instance the supervisor or manager refers employee to the EAP in writing, due to lowered job performance or attendance and/or any problem that may cause an employee to be unproductive at work. According to Blair (1985:11 and Wright (1985:19), this type of referral constitutes a unique feature of EAP. The formal supervisor y referral is based on pattern of declining job performance that is observed over a period of time.

Cagney in Oher (1999:62)states that when an employer has a functional EAP he/she do not have wait for the employees' problems to escalate to a point where fitness for duty deteriorates .Supervisors should intervene at the an early stage of dysfunction and refer the employees to EAPs. The supervisor 's referral is utilized when a supervisor 's normal attempts to correct the situation , such as reaffirmation of performance expectations ,offering job training ,changing the work situation, improving communication ,and /or making similar managerial interventions , do not result or desired performance

Supervisors are encouraged to stress that the referral to the EAP helps employees get assistance to improve performance. The more managers and supervisors refer employees to the programme the more the penetration rate increases (Schenger and Hayward in Thoreson and Hosokawa 1984:333).The use of the EAP provides an alternative to discharging valuable trained employees and encourages the return to the effective performance level of employees in whom the employer has invested time and training. Employee utilization of an EAP service is, to a large extent, a function of the success of the ongoing workforce education and supervisory training.

2.10.4 Follow–up

A follow up has been identified as one of the methods for accessing an EAP. Employees should have access to follow –up services to ensure that they continue to receive the type counselling or treatment support needed to successfully resolve their problems Follow-up is a key component of any preventative programme, as it assists in averting a relapse. into crisis situation where an employee's health ,wellness or employment may be threatened (Csiernik 2003:19).

2.11 Benefits of Utilizing an EAP

According to Dickman and Emener (1988:123) mentioned the following benefits of utilizing an EAP.

2.11.1 Benefits to the union

2.11.1.1 Consistency with the union's mission

According to Dickman and Emener (1988:123) as well as Hutchison and Richard (2003:59), the primary stated purpose of both the union and the EAP is to help its members. Thus, when a union supports the efforts of an EAP, it is doing what is primarily designed to do helping its members. When a union supports the EAP, there is a greater chance for employees to utilize the services .A union, therefore has a vital obligation to cooperate and show care are for its member.

2.11.1.2 Building of cohesiveness

In the most instances, a union's strength and power which come from its members are contingent upon the member's perceptions of the extent to which the union is caring, the extent to which the union cares about the well-being and wellness of its members. An excellent way for a union to demonstrate its caring for its members is through meaningful involvement in a successful EAP, which is helpful to employees (Dickman *et al* 2003:59).

2.11.1.3 Real help versus sympathy

To help initiate, plan, support, implement, evaluate, and improve an effective EAP, is an excellent way for a union to say (figuratively): We want to support each member's access to expert assistance.

Because of their relationship with their members unions can give understanding sympathetic offers of assistance, counselling and treatment (Dickman and Emener in Emener *et al* 2003:58).

2.11.1.4 Help versus arbitration

Arbitration is the setting of an argument by the decision of a person or group that has been chosen by both sides (Longman Dictionary 1990:43).Arbitration is expensive, not only to management but to the union as well. Too often the situation emerges as a win-lose situation, and frequently to win or lose is not is not a solution for an employee .A management victory in the absence of an enlightened joint programme (EAP) might result in punitive action rather than in urgently needed treatment.

Based on the four benefits for the union, it can be deducted that an EAP can save the company's money, thereby increasing profits.

The bottom-line consideration for a union is that higher wages are more easily negotiated from a profitable than a non-profitable company. As such, the unions are compelled to play an active role in the initiation, planning, implementation, evaluation and refinement of EAP (Dickman and Emener 1988:123 as well as Dickman and Emener in Emener *et al* 2003:58).

2.11.2 Benefits to management

EAP evaluation has benefits to management since it helps management to know if the programme is cost effective and whether it is reaching its objectives or not. The following are the benefits management can derive from utilizing an EAP.

2.11.2.1 Increased cooperation

An EAP involves key personnel in what is frequently called supervisory training. This training focuses on the intervention techniques, referral procedures, signs to look for in the troubled employee, as well as the review and discussion of the company policies and procedures.

Importantly, supervisors, management representatives, stewards, and other labour representatives are trained together so that training experience can facilitate closer co-operation and increase togetherness among the leaders within the environment which is good for the company (Dickman and Emener 1988:125; Dickman and Emener in Emener *et al*. 2003:59).

2.11.2.2 Enhanced morale

An effective EAP enhances employee's morale workplace. A low morale and other related concerns including high absenteeism, high turn-over and apathy are frequently discussed in the business and have been meaningfully related to reductions in productivity. Nonetheless, it has been experienced that when union and management work together to help troubled employees and their families through the auspices of the effective EAP worker's morale tends to increase and become more positive (Dickman and Emener in Emener *et al*. 2003:59).

2.11.2.3 More troubled workers are helped

Dickman and Emener (1988:125), state that a company wants to help their troubled employees for numerous reasons. Identifying troubled employees and convincing them that they need assistance and then helping them, is easier said than done. Nonetheless, when the union and management co-operate within an EAP, the likelihood of a higher penetration rate exists and which may lead a greater likelihood of reaching more troubled workers who need help (Dickman and Emener *et al.* 2003:59).

2.11.2.4 Enhanced productivity

An effective EAP assists in enhancing productivity in the workplace. Helping workers towards being more fully functioning individuals will have a positive impact on productivity (Dickman and Emener 1988:126; Dickman and Emener *et al*. 2003:59). Walsh (1982;494) further argues that EAP is a generic entity, and can be defined as a set of company policies and procedures for identifying, or responding to, personal or emotional problems of employees which interfere, directly or indirectly with job performance.

It therefore means that the EAP provides information and or referrals to appropriate counselling, treatment, and support services, for which the organization benefit in terms of an improved productivity by its workers.

2.12 Legal Requirements

According to Mbana (2005), reference was made "to the fact that one of the main forces of the EAP discipline in this country currently is legal requirements." This is supported by Grobler et al (2002) who submit that one of the major problems faced by companies today are ever increasing health care costs. They further state that for the employees, companies are legally bound to assist them by attending to their health and safety problems. EAPs are but some of the tools that the employers have at their disposal to address their health and safety problems.

Masi (2000) also supports the fact that legal requirements are the important forces for EAPs in South Africa. She does by noting that EAPs are some of the programmes that can ensure that the rights and ethics workers as embedded through legislation do benefit them. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, provides the framework for human rights, employment, labour relations and the good practice thereof. Policy documents such as the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) proclaim that the development of effective and lifelong career development paths for all public servants should be undertaken as part of a strategic framework for effective human resource development.

Similarly, the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997) provides a policy framework for effective management that will facilitate the development

of human resource management practices. A comprehensive guide for managing HIV and AIDS in the workplace for the public sector was developed and implemented in 2002. The South African government is also guided by universally accepted standards provided by the International Labour Organization (Buffalo City's Municipal EAP case study).

It is worth noting that, legislation, directly related to EAP will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

2.13 Social Responsibility

Social responsibility is the third major driver of EAPs in South Africa, according to Masi (2000), and is moral and or social responsibility towards the health of employees on the part of the employers.

Masi (2000), is of the view that there is some acknowledgement and recognition that the EAP system can play a key role in the transformation process currently taking place in the country. The EAPs can achieve this through supporting employees and managers in the management of their work-life stressors, behavioural health and physical health risks arising at work-places. To support these sentiments, Grobler et al (2002) have submitted that EAP are designed to help employees overcome personal crisis such as alcoholism, job burnout or family problems. They further point out that "employees may be particularly grateful to employers who have lent them assistance during financial or personal crisis" (Grobler et al, 2002).

Modern EAPs extend professional counselling and medical services to all "troubled" employees. A troubled employee is an individual who is confronted by unresolved personal or work-related problems, such problems run the gamut from alcoholism, drug abuse, and high stress to marital, family and financial problems. While some of these may originate "outside" the work context, they most certainly will have spillovers effects to the work context (Casio: 1995). The researcher agrees with the view point that EAPs contribute to positively to influence responsibility in terms of social life, and you cannot in any way separate employees social life to the employee life outside the work environment.

2.14 EAP Standards

The South African Chapter of Employee Assistance Programmed Association (EAPA) was established in 1996 and one of the initial projects the board engaged in was the development of a South African document on Standard for Employee Assistance Programmes.

The Standards committee of EAPA – SA compiled the first set of standards in October 1999 and was then revised in March 2005 (EAPA-SA 2005:5). EAPA-SA Chapter is part of an international association and made up to a duly elected Board of members. The South African Chapter has been responsible for the coordination of an annual conference that develops members through training and education.

The standards developed by EAPA-SA in 2005 are under-mentioned as follows:

2.14.1 Programme Design

An Advisory Committee at the highest possible level within the organization involving all segments of the workforce should be established.

The programme design shall be based on an assessment of organizational and employee needs as they relate to EAP utilization. The background information and organizational date to be considered in the programme design shall include at least the following:-

- Organizational profile and needs,
- Employee needs;
- Supervisors' and union representatives needs; and
- Health care profile and needs.

Pillay (2007), states that "there should be an appropriate model for specific employer organizations, reflecting detailed procedures: pricing of EAPs should be negotiated and agreed upon between the service provider and the employer, after different models had been considered. Models should be transparent and acceptable to all role players involved."

2.14.2 Implementation

The policy shall decide the EAP in its entirety. The policy statement is crucial, and shall provide the principles, guarantees, the rights and responsibly of various stakeholders, such as the user, the employee and the provider. An implementation plan shall outline the actions and schedule needed to establish an operational effective EAP (Khorombi, 2007).

2.14.3 Management and Administration

Suitable qualified EAP Professionals and adequate number shall be available to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the programme. Every EAP Professional who provided services shall be subjected to on-going consultation and/or cases management.

Written policy shall include a statement on confidentiality consistent with all professional standards, ethics and legal requirements which regulate the management of information.

The EAP shall maintain records.

All EAP professionals shall have adequate professional liability insurance.

The EAP Professionals shall register and maintain their registration with the in respective statutory and/or professional councils and shall adhere to codes of practice of such bodies.

2.14.4 Direct Services

The EAP is to offer trauma defusing and trauma debriefing services for employees, family members and the organization in extreme situations.

The EAP will offer responsive intervention services for employees, family members and the organization in crisis situations.

EAP professionals, or assessment, will:

- Conduct an assessment to identify employee and/or family member problems,
- Develop a plan of action; and
- Recommend or refer the individual(s) to an appropriate resource of intervention.

EAP professionals will determine when it may be appropriate to provide short-term intervention services' and when to make a referral to community resources.

The process of referral will be reviewed and monitored to ensure progress. The EAP will ensure that follow-up and aftercare services are provided to EAP clients, supervisors and union representatives.

The EAP professional will consult with organization when development and events, such as retrenchments or merges, impact on employee well-being and fall within the EAP professionals area of expertise. The EAP will provide training for supervisors, Union representatives in order to give them an understanding of the EAP.

EAP professionals will ensure the availability and use of promotional material and educational activities which encourage the use of programme by supervisors, managers, union representatives, peers, employees and family members.

2.14.5 Networking

The EAP being an integral part of the organization, should network with the various internal departments.

The EAP, shall identify, utilize and evaluate healthcare delivery systems and community resources which provide quality assistance at an affordable cost for the organization, employee and family members.

EAP professional shall maintain and upgrade their knowledge by belonging to an organization specifically designed for EAP professionals attending training and/or professional development programmes and maintaining regular ongoing contact with other EAP professionals.

EAP professionals shall be informed and network with external bodies that impact on EAP activities.

2.14.6 Evaluation and Cost-Effectiveness of EAP

EAP professionals shall evaluate the appropriateness, cost effectiveness and efficiency of EAP operational activities (EAPA-SA. 2005). The development of EAPs is typically based on humanitarian on economic agendas on a combination thereof (Terblanche, 1992). He

further argues that "being able to identify which agenda is primary and which is secondary will dictate the strategy used to market EAP implementation to employees. Motive on strong humanitarian existence also have an influence on the importance of evaluating and determining the cost-effectiveness of programs. Although humanitarian motives play a stronger role than economics in South Africa EAPs, there is still concern among employers about the cost-effectiveness of their EAPs, as such (Terblance,1999).

2.15 Aspects of Employee Assistance Programmes Critical For Successful EAP Implementation

There are certain aspects that have emerged as come ingredients for the successful implementation of employee assistance programmes. According to Dickman (2003); Dirkman (1998); and Nelson Semener (2003), these elements include a written policy statement, top management support, confidentiality, labor union involvement where possible, employee and family communication and education, the role of supervisors, the EAP professional as a marketing agent, and the structure and culture of the organization.

The researcher is of the view that these elements are not only important for the successful implementation of the programme, but are also as integral part of promotion and communication strategies, as they form the basis for programme utilization.

The under mentioned are the important elements and are briefly discussed as follows:

2.15.1 The Written Policy Statement

Terblance (1992), maintain that the policy statement is a crucial component of an EAP, which provides the opportunity to stipulate specifics with regard to those aspects that need to be addressed. Conrad Research Corporation (1996) maintains that the development of a policy statement should precede any EAP implementation on.

It is further argued by Conrad Research Corporation (1996) that when clearly written and widely publicized, the statement serves as a guide to supervisors and managers regarding constructive handling of an employee's personal problems. It also prescribes ways of balancing organizational needs of the individual employee and the employee assistance programmed itself. In addition, the policy should be able to explain to employees that the EAP is a mechanism for providing confidential access to counselling end services, as well as

reassuring them that the programme will not jeopardize the current or future position with the company. (Minis, 2005).

Dickman (1998) explains that every industry establishing an EAP must have a clear policy statement regarding the philosophy and intent of the programme. From a marketing perspective, the researcher views the relevance of the policy statement as to emphasize the fact that the organization acknowledges that employees are not immune to human problems. Hence, an EAP is implemented to provide professional assistance to employees whose problems interfere with work productivity, in order to restore them to their full capacity rather than dismiss them from their work environment.

The policy statement, therefore, serves to assure employees that they are the organization's most valuable assets, and encourages them to utilize the service.

2.15.2 Top Management Support

Maiden (1992), states that involvement of management, supervisors and the total labour force is necessary for the successful functioning of an EAP. Dickman (2003) states that management endorsement and active involvement from the very top of the corporate structure is required to get the EAP off the ground. In a study conducted by Reynolds and Lehman (2003), significant conclusions were drawn regarding the relationship between employee trust in top management and willingness to utilize EAP services.

Firstly, it was established that employees with low trust in management were less likely to believe that the confidentiality of sensitive information would be maintained than would employees who trusted management. Secondly, employees who did not want to reveal a stigma were particularly discouraged at the idea using the EAP if they did not trust the confidential maintenance of their information. Thirdly, employees who perceived greater trust in the organization were more likely to go to the EAP if they had a problem. The researcher believes that these findings emphasize the importance of top management of organizations to support EAP policies, principles and procedures. This further means that top management needs to be oriented on the EAP.

Both internal and external programmes alike appear to require access to the highest levels of management for optimum success (Consad Research Corporation (1996). Top

management endorsement is critical for ensuring an EAPs acceptance and protection in the organization.

Dickman (1988), also maintain that it is absolutely necessary that management, at its highest level, endorse and actively support their EAP Marketing of the EAP needs adequate budget, and therefore allocation of financial resources and the general support need to top management of the organization.

The researcher has the view that top-level commitment is critical in ensuring support of the EAP by all levels of management and also in allocation of financial resources to implement EAP activities in any organization. The marketing activities of the EAP can only be possible if top management supports the programmed itself. However, DeFalco (2001) warns that it is not enough to have top management, support, if the effects of the programme are not quantified and continually placed before management as a cost saving-improvement activity, management will loose interest. This suggests that the EAP practitioner must always be able to quantify the service, for management to be aware that the resources are not wasted but the programme benefits the workforce.

2.15.3 Labour Union Involvement

EAPA recommends the formation of an advisory committee that includes labour representatives, where possible, to maximize potential for success (EAPA, 1990). According to Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1995), depending on the circumstances, union support and involvement can also dramatically increase programme acceptance and efficiency in unionized facilities. Union support and involvement greatly improve the effectiveness of EAPs, especially when the union is involved in the formulation of the policy. It is the researcher's view that unions should always participate and be involved in the formulation of the EAP policy in order to promote ownership and for maximum utilization of the EAP in the organization. Therefore, when labour is involved in the organization, it is crucial to secure its support. Union should therefore, be utilized as a valuable resource to market EAP to employees (Mnisi, 2005).

2.15.4 Employee and Family Education

EAPA-SA (1999), maintains that appropriate marketing and promotion of the programme will encourage utilization of its services, which ultimately impacts on the healthy functioning of the organization. The researcher believes strongly that an EAP must communicate its availability and services to all employees and their immediate families in cases where family members are also covered by the programme, in order to effectively function. Several communication tools such as newsletters, brochures, posters, verbal presentations, videos are used to reach members of the workforce and their immediate families as they would have been adopted by the organization. Marketing of EAPs pays an important role in the development and acceptance of EAPs in industry (Terblanche, 1999).

Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1995), argued that at a minimum, employees must know about a company's policy and understand what the programme can and cannot do. Lack of information and knowledge of the policy and scope of programme efforts could keep employees away from using the EAP, or lead to inappropriate and disappointing expectations. Uncertainty among the employees regarding the nature and value of EAPs may lead to under-utilization of the programme.

Educational programmes also make employees aware of the organization's commitment to helping those in need. The researcher observed that there is a dire need for proper, accurate information about the nature and value of EAPs in the work environment. Lack of education and proper information about the EAP results in employees under-utilizing the service or employees requesting for assistance on matter that are not within the scope of EAP. This justifies the critical need to educate employees on the type of services rendered by the EAP.

2.15.5 The Individual EAP Professional as a Marketing Agent

Myers (1984), states that although top management, structure, authority, strong organizational policy statement and training are important, they will not ensure EAP effectiveness unless the EAP professional activates them to produce a viable programme. The EAP professional is a catalyst in an EAP, who fulfils multiple roles as a change agent.

Beidel (1999),) also argues that although marketing strategies are available and essential for any successful EAP, the EAP professional is often the most critical marketing device within the organization. This is so no matter how effective the written materials or electronic media are in promoting the programme, the professional may be the absolute marketing tool having the opportunity to reach customers and influence their perceptions – each and every day he/she operates within organization or interacts with any employee, manager, or family member. The EAP professional is held to a high standard in most organizations. And with that standard is the responsibility to carry oneself in the most positive light and to live by the policies, principles and procedures advocated by the EAP professionals. EAP professionals represent their programme in all their interactions in the workplace, as a result a number of expectations and principles provide the basis for an EAP professional is effective marketing of a programme.

Francek (1985), states that "the profane of a successful EAP marketing consultant will include skills, experience and education, reflecting the mixture of human service and business interest. A successful consultant is the one who will be able to translate the product (human service) into the language of business (finance). A successful consultant will need specific skills in making the written and oral presentation, negotiation, market analysis, organizational analysis and networking.

It is evident for from the discussion above, that EAP of selected staff need to feel comfortable in presenting a professional image that is compatible with the business world. EAP staff member should display self-confidence in a warm and outgoing way.

The researcher believes that it is important for EAP staff members to possess a variety of skills in order to be a successful marketing agent as this will ensure successful implementation of the EAP. The EAP staff should be able to recognize that the primary goal of an organization in providing the EAP is to improve employees' job performance. The EAP staff should be able to carry out short-term counselling as on-site time is a critical issue as supervisors are concern about how much time an employee misses from the job to attend to sessions.

2.15.6 The Role of the Supervisor

The involvement of supervisors is necessary for the successful functioning of an EAP (Terblanche, 1992). An EAP is an organizational asset, which plays a significant role in helping those in positions of authority to resolve complicated work performance problems.

The researcher believes that the training of supervisors is not optional, as it forms an integral part of the successful implementation of the EAP. Training of supervisors is an absolute necessity and remains a component of the EAP. Thus the training of supervisors is vital to achieve an understanding of not only to mere existence but also of the influence of social problems on productivity (Terblanche, 1992).

Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1995), maintain that supervisors have traditionally played a major role in the carrying out of EAP policies. The responsibility for training and educating supervisors to perform necessary functions usually rests with the employee assistance practitioner. EAP practitioners can train supervisors to identify troubled employees through deteriorating job performance, and to motivate these individuals to resolve their problems and improve performance either on their own or through the EAP. When using intervention strategies, supervisors confront employees with evidence of declining work effectiveness, providing suggestions about how to improve. Prompted by the advice of supervisors, employees who sometimes face difficulties, enter treatment, or utilize everyday problem-solving techniques to eliminate the trouble on their own (Mnisi, 2005).

The researcher recognizes the important role of supervisors in the workplace has become more complicated, as our modern-day employees are faced with more broad and complex problems than in the past. Therefore, the supervisor must take a human interest in the subordinates who work with them, and should be able to make available EAP services known to them. A supervisor should be able to make referrals of EAP cases. It is also very important for supervisors to know and understand that their role is not to diagnose personal problems, but to focus on employee job performance.

2.15.7 Confidentiality

According to Dickman (2003) and Mayne (2004), confidentiality is the cornerstone of EAP services. Mayne (2004) further indicates that individuals considering using the EAP must be

certain that any information they provide will be treated as confidential, except in special circumstances. DeFalco (2001) states that referring supervisors are entitled to know two things: that the employee contacted the EAP office: and whether the employee is participating in the programme or not. The researcher is of the opinion that an assurance to clients that preservation of secrecy is essential to the success of EAP implementation should be build in the heap marketing strategy.

If the participants are not assured that communication with counsellors will be confidential, an EAP can become ineffective. The researcher full agrees that EAPs cannot be effectively implemented without commitment to confidentiality, and without this, employees will not be comfortable to make use of the intended programme. It is therefore crucial that confidentiality be clearly stated in the programmer's policy and all marketing material of the EAP, such as posters, flyers as a means to guarantee the effectiveness of the programme.

2.15.8 The Structure and Culture of the Organisation

Dickman ((1998) maintains that organizational structure and dynamics are critical and pivotal to the work of EAP professionals. EAP professionals are urged to develop a professional practice in which they will always be learners of organizational structure and dynamics as these factors have an impact on the functioning of the programme. Beidel (1999) argues that the most important consideration for the EAP marketing plan is the culture of the organization functions and gets things done. The ability to formulate the EAP marketing strategies that take into consideration the culture of the organization is therefore, vital to the integration and utilization of the programme within the organization.

The researcher believes that communication forms an integral part of the organization's culture, hence it should be taken into consideration when a decision is made on the type of marketing strategies to be implemented. It is therefore evident that the implementation of the EAP cannot be successful, without the serious consideration of the culture of that particular organization. According to Keohale and Newman (1984), management commitment too the EAP is reflected by the position of the programme within the organization's structure, which is a key to its success. Many of the decisions regarding the internal policy of the organization and the contractual arrangements need immediate attention. Because of this need for rapid decision-making, top management structure must

allow time for direct and active participation in the programmer's operation, particularly during the stages of planning and marketing. Active participation is required because decisions about the EAP often call for new directions and priorities of the organization as a whole. Any given company has its own internal coalitions and power struggles that, if not understood, could jeopardize the success of` the EAP before it gets started.

Furthermore, Keohale and Newman (1984) maintain that the crucial foundation for developing and employee assistance programme includes a solid commitment on the part of an organization's top management. The commitment to the EAP is reflected by the resources made available to the programme, such as allocation of staff time for coordinating the programme, securing funds for the coordinator's positions, and the necessary staff. The aspects discussed above are vital to EAP marketing and implementation within an organization. If these aspects are in place, the EAP is more likely to be effective as they provide a sound foundation for EAP marketing.

2.16 Various Legislation That Have an Impact in the Implementation of Employee Assistance Programmes in a Municipality Environment

2.16.1 Introduction

The researcher would explore further on the legal requirements that are driving forces behind the implementation and management of EAPs in South Africa. This has also been alluded to by Masi (2002) and Grobler *et al* (2001).

The law, in the form of legislation, provides the general standards that govern society in general. This section therefore accords particular opportunity of exploring the extent to which some legislation impacts on the proactive implementation of EAP in the municipal environment. The researcher will briefly concentrate on the legislation that is seen to have a direct impact on the proactive implementation of EAP. This means that the selection of the Acts will be determined by their relevance to the primary functions of the EAP as outlined by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA.

2.16.2 The Legislation that Drives the Implementation EAPS

The linkage between legislation and the provision of services to "trouble employees" has been debated by various authors here and abroad. Amongst these authors, Chima

(2002:08) went a step further in his discussion and his submissions centered around the reasons why EAP professionals and/or practitioners found it difficult to implement some pieces of legislation (mainly the Americans with Disabilities Act –ADA). In concluding this picture, he provided a number of reasons, as follows:

- Legislation too vague in terms of their terminology. As a result they make their interpretation have a number of connotations for various people, or
- They lack specifications. This legislation (ADA) is aimed at bringing a number of changes not only in the workplaces but to the lives of millions of Americans. These changes are not well spelt out in terms of how they must be brought about, thereby making it difficult for practitioners to implement them.

The researcher will hereunder look at the positive implications and also limitations of some of the pieces of legislation from the perspectives presented above.

2.16.2.1 The Constitution (Act No 108 Of 1996)

The Constitution is the supreme law of the country and all other legislations are are derived from it. This Act has three sections that are of importance and have a direct impact on the implementation of EAP in general, not only in the municipal environment.

Firstly, the Act, through Section 22, accords people the right to choose their professions, trades and occupations freely. The Constitution further provides that people must proactive these under the ambient of regulations of the law. The researcher's opinion, therefore, is that people owe their status or positions as employees on the provisions of this section.

Secondly, Section 27 of the Constitution gives provision that every person has the right to access health care and appropriate social services. These services form the basic care of the EAP in South Africa. The researcher is of the opinion that the EAP's of identifying and treating problems of employees that affect productivity at the workplaces may be healthy and/or socially included.

The Act has provisions on the rights of employees to form trade unions and participate in activities and programmes as stipulated in Section 23. In spite of the above-mentioned

provisions, in line with what Chima (2008:08) alluded to; there is no specific referral to the EAP per se.

2.16.2.2 The Employment Equity Act (Act No 55 Of 1998)

EAP practitioners and/or professionals in South Africa are at times called in to address other challenges in the workplaces that do not fall directly in the scope of EAP practice in other countries. Du Plessis (1991) stated that the scope of EAPs in South Africa in general is much broader than programmes in other countries like United States and the United Kingdom. Maiden (1992) argues further that "in South Africa, the EAP is viewed by employees for the most part as agents of change for social conditions in the work environment.

The Act, through Section 54, provides for the development of a Code of Good Practice on HIV and AIDS and employment. This code advocates for the development and implementation of a policy and a programme in response to the impact of the pandemic. This provides a form of a management strategy for the employers and employees. The EAP has played a significant role in this regard although the Act has no clear mention of specific people to be in the forefront of the implementation of the Act's provisions.

The Act further states that there should be fairness and non-discrimination in the management of employees in general and this includes employees infected by HIV. What is also important about the Act is that it stresses the use of confidentiality in the treatment and management of employees infected by HIV. The areas of discrimination are put much broader to include gender, religion, sexual orientation, race, language and others. Maiden (1992) argues that the areas referred to by the Act are but some of the areas that EAP practitioners and/or professionals have assisted employers and employees. The researcher's opinion is that, although the Act does not have specifics, it can be positively exploited by employers in the public sector to improve the psychosocial well being of employees.

2.16.2.3 The Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (Act No 10)

The purpose of this piece of legislation is to determine and describe injuries and diseases that are borne from the workplace. In addition, the Act also prescribes compensation to employees who have either been injured or who acquired a work-induced disease in the

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course of their employment. Employment in a municipal environment may result in an occupational injury or in an employee suffering from an occupational related disease.

The Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (1996) provides that the EAP will offer responsive intervention services to employees, family members, and the organization in acute crises situations." The Standard Committee further stipulates that the motivation for this intervention is to maintain the credibility of the EAP and to "lesson or prevent long-term difficulty or dysfunctionality, both on an individual and an organizational level." Guild *et al*. (2001), point out that under the Compensation for Occupational Diseases and Injuries Act, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is regarded as an injury rather than a disease.

In line with the function of service delivery, EAP practitioners and/or professionals can assist employees to claim their compensation. Furthermore, in the event of an employee's death, the EAP can play a role in terms of assisting the family of the employee. EAP can also assist with the treatment through counselling, or can refer the affected employee/s for further assistance.

2.16.2.4 The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act No 75 Of 1997)

The management functions of the total human resources falls within the parameters of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. The relevance of the EAP in a municipal environment is that employees who have problems in their work-environment, such as shift-work, need to be assisted and interventions be implemented accordingly. Any problem/s that may affect productivity as well as the social well-being of employees are part of this legislation.

Secondly, the Act, through Section 23, provides that the employer must show proof of incapacity in the form of medical certificate to be signed by a qualified person. The person should also have been registered with a professional body for his/her practice.

2.16.2.5 The Labour Relations Act (Act No 66 Of 1995)

The Labour Relations Act is superior to the rest of the other legislations in terms of EAP Services provisions in the workplaces throughout the country.

This Act on the Section dealing with definitions defines the parameters for the provision of EAP Services. The Act through Section 9 and 10 provides guidelines for the management of

employees who are poor performers, including incapacitated employees within the working environment. Amongst the host of reasons given by the Act for poor performance and incapacity, is the reality of alcohol and drug abuse by these employees. The Act, *inter alia*, recommends that before employers can dismiss employees, they should investigate the causes of their behaviour. And as a collective measure, the employers should provide counselling, training, appropriate evaluation, instruction and guidance to those employees.

Burniquel (2003), in commenting about the services as indicated above says that "in certain kinds of incapacity, for example drug or alcoholism abuse, counselling and rehabilitation may be appropriate steps for the employer to consider."

The researcher's opinion is that there is no reason, therefore, not to be convinced that, institutions (private and public), including companies are legally bound to implement EAPs as per the provisions of the Labour Relations Act as outlined above.

2.16.3 The Social Legislation

The researcher presented and discussed the Legislation Acts in the previous section which are the driving force behind the implementation and the practice of EAP in the municipal working environment.

In this section he discusses the Social legislation that has an impact on the implementation of EAP. These are pieces of legislation that give direction to the role players. i.e. organizations, institutions, professionals and/or practitioners in terms of how they implement and sustain the EAP practice.

2.6.3.1 The Skills Development Act (Act No 97 Of 1998)

According to Du Plessis (2000), this piece of legislation has the following as objectives directly related to the EAP practice.

- Developing the skills of employees by:
- Improving the quality of lives of workers, their prospect of work and labor mobility;
- Improving productivity in the workplace and improve the competition of employees; and
- Improving the delivery of Social services.

- Encouraging employers to provide employees with new skills;
- Encouraging employees to participate in learner ship and other training programmes; and
- Assisting retrenched workers to re-enter the labor market.

The objectives as outlined above, viewed from the EAP principles and discussion of the researcher regarding some of the services provided by EAP professionals in the public sector, have the following implications for EAP practice, in the opinion of the researcher.

They determine the scope of practice for professionals and/or practitioners in EAP in the process of skills development.

- They also provide guideline in terms of assistance that can be provided to employees at various stages of employment, for example, learner ship that also include mentoring for new and young employees in the work-places. Secondly, they provide skills to older employees who might not have benefited, previously. Lastly, they assist employees who are in the process of being retrenched or who might be in the process of having their contracts terminated for one reason or the other. Can also be of assistance to employees who might be redeployed to other sections of the workplace.

2.16.3.2 The Domestic Violence Act (Act No 116 Of 1998)

The Standard Committee of EAPA-SA (1999) provides that some of the core activities of EAPs include, amongst others the following:

- Confidential, relevant, appropriate and timely problem assessment services;
- Relevant referrals of diagnosis treatment and assistance;

It is a well-known fact that some of the challenges that have a negative impact on the work performance and social functioning of employees may have their roots in the workplace, domestic and/or of social origins. These may include, but are not limited to physical abuse, harassment, sexual abuse, intimidation and emotional, verbal and psychological abuse. For those with workplace origin, the employers usually have solutions in the form of disciplinary

actions against the offenders. On the other hand, those emanating from home or the social context of employees are to be corrected by social institutions, and this Act then comes in.

The provisions of this Act, professionals and/or practitioners at workplaces have clear guidelines as to how to handle any problem that may be identified as an act of domestic violence experienced by employees that has a negative impact on the affected employee's work performance and/or social functioning.

The professionals and/or practitioners, as part of their core function, simply refer the aggrieved employee to a relevant institution that can be a police station, a magistrate's court or any other institution that can otherwise assist the employee with his/her problem.

The Act can be used for purpose of empowering employees in life-skills programmes, sexual harassment in the workplace and abuse. This will be in terms of fulfilling the requirement of training as one of the core functions of EAP.

2.16.3.3 The Child Care Act (Act No 74 Of 1983), read with The Child Care Amendment Act (86 of 1999) and The Maintenance Act (Act No 99 Of 1998)

It is a fact that EAP practitioners and/or professionals in South Africa are compounded with extra functions of being custodians of the employees' rights as well as general welfare, and that of their dependents, has been well described.

The researcher's experience in the public sector has proved to him that some employees turn to ignore their responsibilities at times for a number of reasons. This often results into abandonment, neglect and non-maintenance.

The EAP professionals and/or practitioners make use of the above legislation to intervene and correct the mentioned problems for the employees.

2.16.3.4 The Unemployment Insurance Act (Act No 30 Of 1996)

According to Fouche (2008), the Act is aimed at combating unemployment and to provide for a form of payment to those who contribute when they are not employed. The key role of EAP regarding this Act is to ensure that employees are registered as contributors to the Unemployment Insurance Fund while they are earning at a workplace.

In the event of employee termination, through dismissal, retrenchment, illness or in cases of work related death, when providing counselling services either to employees or their dependents, the EAP provides assistance and information as to the procedures and channels to follow in terms of insurance claim.

2.17 Detailed Research Questions

The following under-listed are the detailed research questions:

2.17.1 Policy and procedures

- What resources have been allocated to promote the municipal policies relating to employee assistance?

- Is there a safeguard for confidentiality for EAP clients?

- Does the municipality possess a written policy on EAP that reflects the contemporary opinions of employee problems and an earnestness of intent to help them?

2.17.2 Services

- To what extent do potential beneficiaries of EAP have an input into the EAP?

- Are EAP services located proximally to the employees?

- Is the EAP perceived as mandated from the top management with the potential for reprisals?

- Is there clear written procedure for identification of employee problems and for referrals?

- How is the information on EAP received or communicated to the employees?

2.17.3. Administration of EAP

- Is there a formal orientation for management about EAP and municipality implications?

- What has the EAP utilization rate been since the start of the implementation of the programme?

- How extensively are all employees made aware of the municipal functions and philosophy of the EAP?

2.18 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The following is a summary of the findings from the literature review;

o EAP in South Africa was introduced by the Chamber of Mines after a consultant was appointed to conduct a feasibility study on EAPs for the mining community in 1983.

o The concept of EAP was accepted in 1986, thus the programme was introduced in the workplace for the first time in South Africa.

- There are various EAP models, such as the internal/ in-house, external/contracted, the consortium, and the union-based models.

-Evaluation processes for implementation is needed to ensure that the   EAP is correctly designed for that organization in which it is operating and that it is meeting the needs of that organization and its employees.

o EAP assessment of implementation plays an important role in the success of the programme. The following aspects such as programme utilization, characteristics of EAP clients, referral sources, the programme penetration, and also employees' awareness of the programme.

o The elements of a successful EAP assessment and operation discussed included the following; top management endorsement, a written policy statement, involvement of unions, staffing, EAP awareness, supervisor's role, confidentiality, broad service components, appropriate insurance coverage, and the evaluation of the programme.

o A comprehensive evaluation framework in EAP implementation is vital for the programme, and it has both the elements of the process and the outcome evaluation.

o EAPs are evaluated for marketing, vindication, verification, improvement, and understanding and also for accountability.

o Referral increases the utilization of the EAP in the work environment.

o There is important legislation that drives the implementation of EAP in the public sector, namely; The Constitution Act, Employment Equity Act, the Compensation of Occupational Injuries and diseases Act, the Basic conditions of employment Act, the Labour Relations Act. These also include the social legislation such as The Skills Development Act, The Domestic Violence Act, the Unemployment act, and the Child care and Maintenance Act.

o Evaluation of the implementation is important to improve the service, to raise the outcomes, and also to increase efficiency of the services rendered.

o Capacity building of supervisors improves awareness to the programme.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the research design undergirding the study. It also expands on the population, the sample selected and the data collection and analysis methods used. The limitations to this study are also revealed in this section.

3.2.1 Research approach

The research was evaluative in nature and adopted qualitative approach. The researcher developed a questionnaire as a data collection instrument from literature on evaluation of EAPs. In order to facilitate understanding by respondents, the aim of the research was highlighted on the front page of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was pilot tested at the Makhado Municipality in Vhembe District where two employees who were not in the sampling frame were requested to complete the questionnaire. The purpose of pilot testing the questionnaire was to determine if the employees would be able to understand and to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was translated and explained also in Tshivenda and Xitsonga in order for the respondents to clearly understand its contents since some employees did not understand English well.

After having obtained permission to conduct the study, the researcher visited the Human Resources section at the Louis Trichardt Office in order to obtain the information on the employees of the Makhado Municipality.

After obtaining the information on the organizational structure, it was evident that the Municipality had a total of 868 employees distributed to the head quarters in Louis Trichardt (Makhado), the regional offices which are Waterval, Vuwani and Dzanani respectively. The researcher used a random sampling wherein a total of fifty two (52) employees were identified to participate in the study.

The process of the collection of data commenced after receiving approval from the Municipal Manager for the study to be conducted. Data were collected in Makhado Municipality in all the offices, including the regional office.

The questionnaires were administered over a period of three working days. Fifty-two questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and forty two questionnaires were returned which represents a 80.8% response rate. The data were analyzed by the statistician using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research findings are presented based on the sequence of the sections per questionnaire.

3.2.2 Research design

According to Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:63), a research design has two meanings: Firstly, it can refer to the planning in any research, the gathering of data, and the analysis and interpretation of the obtained data.

The researcher utilized the evaluative research design based on the fact that the study was to assess the EAP services provision to the employees of the municipalities, and is used for evaluating social programmes.

The choice of the research design that the researcher used is qualitative. Within that tradition, the researcher adopted the phenomenological approach because the study examined the employees' views and opinions regarding their level of satisfaction with the implementation of the EAP.

The researcher made use of questionnaires and interviews to respondents in order to obtain their views about the implementation of the EAP in the municipality.

Potter (1999) is of the opinion that the evaluation research focuses on answering specific questions about social programmes and their development. These questions normally focus on programme implementation and outcome and also the services provided.

This means that evaluation research uses social research methodologies to judge and to improve ways in which human service policies and programmes are carried out from their earliest stages of defining and designing programmes to their development and implementation.

3.3 Study Area

The study area was Makhado Local Municipality which is located in the Northern part of Limpopo Province in Vhembe District. This organization is a local sphere of government, with its headquarters based in Louis Trichardt. The size of the workforce is over 800, and more than 90% employees are Africans (Blacks). The staff of the municipality are located in four centres' namely, Waterval, Dzanani, Vuwani and Makhado, the latter being the headquarters. The study focused on all the four centres of the municipality.

The Employee Assistance Programme was established in February 2007 to provide the Makhado Municipality employees with effective employee assistance services. The necessity of the EAP was identified based on problems such as critical financial management skills, stress, burn-out, substance abuse, ill-health and absenteeism. Given the stressful nature of the jobs that employees perform, the development and implementation of the EAP was seen as critical.

3.4 Population

The total employee population for Makhado Municipality as at end of June 2010 was at 868 (Organizational Structure, 2009/10). However, it would be impossible for all of them to participate in the study; hence a sample was drawn to involve different ranks of the municipality personnel.

The population for a study is a group of people about whom conclusions are drawn (Babbie, 1998). Dane (1990) further describes population as all people units or elements that can be included in a study or research report. Since it is not possible to study all the employees in the population of interest or make every possible observation of them, a sample is selected from among the data that might be collected and studied (Mnisi: 2005).

The research focused on all the employees at different levels or ranks within the municipal staff establishment.

The following is the breakdown in terms of participants:

    a. 28 employees from the Municipality Headquarters in Louis Trichardt participated;

    b. 6 employees from the Waterval region participated;

c. 5 employees from the Vuwani region participated; and

d. 3 employees from the Dzanani region participated.

A total of forty two (42) employees of different ranks in the municipality participated in the study.

3.5 Sampling Method

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), the researcher must determine the size of the sample that will provide sufficient data to answer the research question. Babbie (1992) defines a sample as a special subset of a population observed for purposes of making inferences about the nature of the total population itself. The size of the sample for this study was drawn from the people who were deemed competent to respond to the issues being researched.

Concerning the latter group of employees, the subjects were categorized in terms of employee levels because it was essentially at the lower levels where they were most vulnerable to socio-economic challenges which reflected in their absenteeism and personal financial management problems. Thus, the required number of participants was randomly selected from the employees of the municipality based on their rank in the organization. According to Strydom and Venter (2002), in random sampling each individual case in the population theoretically has an equal chance to be selected to the sample. The numbers involved in the sample were also informed by constraints of the budget and time.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The researcher made use of a semi-structured questionnaire as a method for data collection. McMillan and Schumacher (1993) refer to a questionnaire as a technique that encompasses a variety of instruments in which the subjects react to written questions. In this case, the semi-structured questionnaire included open-ended and closed-ended questions (a majority of which were closed-ended questions) and face-to- face interviews as the second data collection method was used as some of the lower category employees were illiterate.

The semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to the participants, with the convenient return box strategically placed at EAP office in order to enhance the rate of return. The measuring instrument was constructed in line with the format proposed by Greef (2002).

This format provided that questions should consist of three forms of questions, namely; main questions which helped the researcher to start and guide the conversation, probes which are questions that assisted the researcher to get clarity and further explanations from the respondents, and lastly, follow-up questions that helped the researcher to understand the meanings of answers to main questions.

3.7 Data Analysis Method

The researcher focused on analyzing the raw data after the data-collection phase in order for it to be easily assimilated (Royse, 1991). Data analysis involves the examination of data that was gathered during the study. This entails a breakdown into constituent parts to obtain answers to research questions using categories and major themes.

The researcher focused on establishing categories and themes of the information and classified them together in order to derive meaning from the responses provided by participants in the study. For example, some broad categories were transformed into 'Yes' and 'No' questions to facilitate analysis. The counts per response were used to generate the percentages which were in turn transformed into tables and graphs. A thematic approach was used to analyse the qualitative responses. Broad themes were identified under which the responses were slotted.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The quality and quantity of information to be gleaned from the questionnaires depended on the willingness of the respondents to cooperate. Non-cooperation could have resulted in participants failing to see any value in participating in the study. Some participants could also have viewed the topic as too sensitive and the questionnaire as potentially intrusive or embarrassing.

In this study, the researcher only focused on three aspects, namely, the employees' awareness or knowledge of the EAP, the programme adequacy and its utilization.

Respondents who had used the EAP service before could have felt uncomfortable towards responding to the questions, and those who had never used it before could have been less interested to respond.

A respondent may feel obliged to give an opinion, and in that case it is difficult to know how true or reliable the answers are. Furthermore, the scope of the research was only limited to the total of 42 participants.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Dooled (1995) argues that ethics involves the study of right and wrong conduct. The researcher identified the following ethical issues as pertinent to this research project.

3.9.1 Informed Consent

This involves obtaining the voluntary participation of the subjects, with their rights to withdraw from the study at any time, thus counteracting potential undue influence or coercion (Kvale 1995). To ensure the implementation of this ethical principle, the researcher provided the prospective subjects with written information about the study and a consent form for a signature before they could participate in the study. To ensure that voluntary participation in the study was sought, participants signed consent from prior to implementation of the questionnaire.

3.9.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality implies that only the researcher and possibly a few members should be aware of the identity of participants and that the researcher should have made a commitment with regard to confidentiality (Strydom, 2002). Respondents would not be required to write their names on the questionnaires.

3.9.3 Release of the Findings

Babbie (2001) maintains that the researcher is in the best position to personally realize what the shortcomings of his study are and should mention them clearly in the report. The findings of this research are reported according to the requirements of the University of Limpopo. Participants will be informed about the findings in an objective manner without providing too many details and principle of confidentiality will be maintained.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the empirical findings of the study. The research methodology is briefly described, followed by the discussion of the research findings which are presented according to the sections of the questionnaire. The aim of the research was to evaluate the implementation of the Employee Assistance Programme at the Makhado Municipality in the Vhembe District, specifically focusing on employees' awareness of the EAP, utilization and programme adequacy. The questionnaires were administered from 29 July 2010 to 02 August 2010.

4.2 Research Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This section presents the research findings.

4.2.1.1 Age distribution of respondents

Data in Table 1 below shows the age profile of the respondents. The age cohort 46-55 dominated by accounting for 26.2% of the respondents followed by the age group 41-45 with 19% and the rest were fairly evenly spread within groups. The least represented was the age group 21-25.

Table 1: Age of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-25	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
	26-30	5	11.9	11.9	14.3
	31-35	7	16.7	16.7	31.0
	36-40	6	14.3	14.3	45.2
	41-45	8	19.0	19.0	64.3
	46-55	11	26.2	26.2	90.5
	Over 55	4	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

4.2.1.2. Gender distribution

More males than females participated in this study. A majority (66.7%) of the respondents were males (See Table 2 below). Figure 1 depicts the distribution of respondents by gender.

Table 2: Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	28	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Female	14	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

Fig 1: Gender distribution of respondents
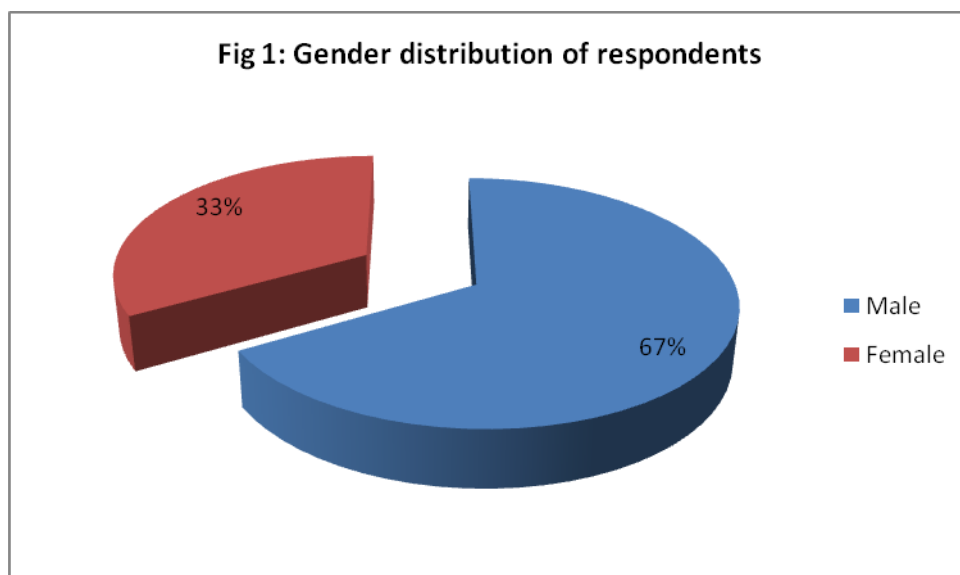
4.2.1.3. Rank of employees

The distribution of the respondents in the survey shows the following pattern: Service workers showed their dominance by constituting 19% of the respondents. The groups that trailed consisted of clerical assistants (14%) and managers (12%) respectively (See Table 3 below).

Table 3: Rank of respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Service worker	8	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Driver/ messenger	2	4.8	4.8	23.8
	Sub-accountant	1	2.4	2.4	26.2
	Clerical assistant	6	14.3	14.3	40.5
	Traffic officer	3	7.1	7.1	47.6
	Secretary	3	7.1	7.1	54.8
	Superintendent	2	4.8	4.8	59.5
	Librarian	4	9.5	9.5	69.0
	Training officer	4	9.5	9.5	78.6
	Assistant manager	4	9.5	9.5	88.1
	Manager	5	11.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

4.2.1 Demographic Factors

4.2.1.5 Marital Status

The majority (64%) of the respondents were married. The singles followed. The other categories of widowed and divorced were not represented.

Table 4: Marital status of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	27	64.3	64.3	64.3
	Single	15	35.7	35.7	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

4.2.1.6. Number of dependent children

Respondents were asked the number of dependent children which they had. About 62 per cent of the respondents had between 1-3 children. Those with 4-6 dependent children constituted 24% of the respondents (See Table 5 below).

Table 5: Number of dependent children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-3	26	61.9	65.0	65.0
	4-6	10	23.8	25.0	90.0
	7+	4	9.5	10.0	100.0
	Total	40	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.8		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.1.7. Number of years respondents were employed by the Makhado Municipality

The data in Table 6 below shows that the majority (62%) of respondents had been working for the Municipality for more than 7 years. This group is followed by those with 1-3 years with the Municipality constituting about 22 per cent of the respondents who participated in this study.

Table 6: Years employed by the Makhado Municipality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-3	9	21.4	21.4	21.4
	4-6	7	16.7	16.7	38.1
	7+	26	61.9	61.9	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

4.2.2 Awareness of EAP

4.2.2.1 Employees' awareness of EAP's existence

According to data in Table 7 below, the majority (81%) of the respondents knew about the existence of the EAP. This implies some high level of awareness of the existence of the programme. About two per cent were uncertain. The fact that a sizeable proportion of the respondents either did not know about it (17%) or were uncertain (2%) is ample reason for concern. Fig 2 below graphically illustrates this point in the form of a histogram.

Table 7: Knowledge about the EAP in the Municipality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	34	81.0	81.0	81.0
	No	7	16.7	16.7	97.6
	Uncertain	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

Fig 2: Knowledge about the EAP in the municipality
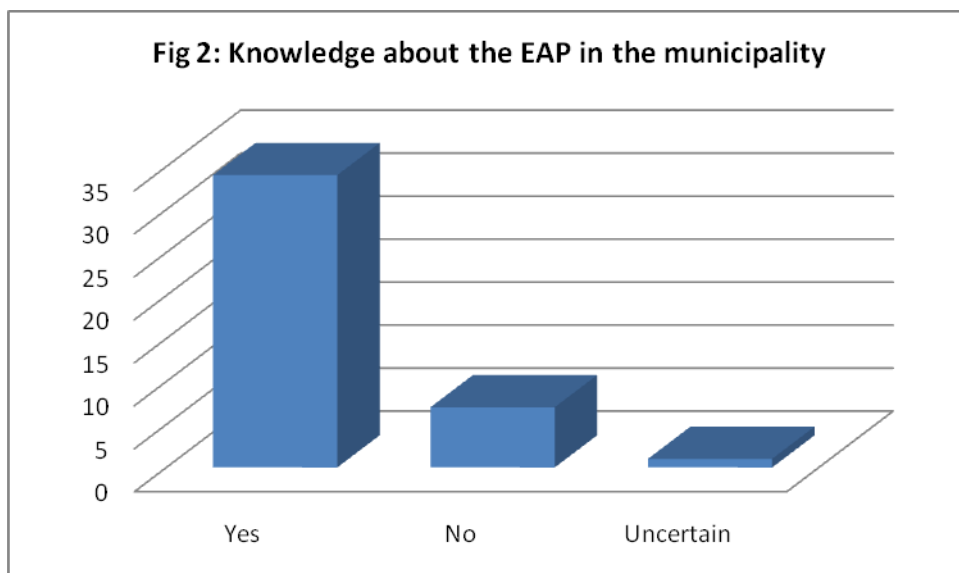
4.2.2.2 EAP awareness strategies

Given   the centrality of marketing to increasing awareness of EAPs, respondents were asked how they came to know about the EAP.

Meetings accounting for 38% of the respondents, followed by workshops (19%) appear to be the most popular strategies through which people have come to know about the EAP including the role of supervisor (19%) which cannot be ignored. This is consistent with what Maiden (1992) advocates. He advocates the involvement of management, supervisors and the total labour force as necessary ingredients for the successful functioning of an EAP and for raising awareness.

Table 8: How respondents knew about EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Meeting	16	38.1	42.1	42.1
	Workshop	8	19.0	21.1	63.2
	Brochure flyer	1	2.4	2.6	65.8
	Colleague	4	9.5	10.5	76.3
	Manager	1	2.4	2.6	78.9
	Supervisor	8	19.0	21.1	100.0
	Total	38	90.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4	9.5		
Total		42	100.0		

Beidel in Oher (1991:91) argues that to maximize EAP visibility and effectiveness an EAP needs to be marketed to the employees in order to enhance staff awareness and utilization of the programme.

4.2.3 Employees' exposure to EAP information session

While about 45 per cent of the respondents had not been exposed to EAP information sessions, 40 per cent had. This exposes the gap and suggests the need for undertaking the exposure sessions. This also has implications on the penetration rate. Uncertainty in this case may be read to mean not knowing. Ideally this pattern needs to be changed if inroads are to be made in wooing more employees to use the EAP services being presently provided by the municipality.

Table 9: Exposure to EAP information sessions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	17	40.5	44.7	44.7
	No	19	45.2	50.0	94.7
	Uncertain	2	4.8	5.3	100.0
	Total	38	90.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4	9.5		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.3.1 Services rendered by EAP

Respondents were also asked what services are rendered by their EAP. Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents were of the view that the EAP offers counselling. The rest did not respondent to the question suggesting some level of ignorance about the services that the EAP provided (See Table 10 below). Table 10 also shows that sizeable proportions (52%) of the respondents were of the view that the EAP indeed provided services related to alcohol problems.

Table 10: Services rendered by the EAP

EAP service	Yes	No	Missing System	Total
Counselling	57.1	0	42.9	100
Alcohol problems	52.4	0	47.6	100
Financial management	54.8	0	45.2	100
Marital problems	19.0	2.4	78.6	100
Stress management	26.2	0	73.8	100
HIV/AIDS	35.7	2.4	61.9	100

About fifty-five per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that the EAP provided financial management services. Financial problems can detract employees from discharging their duties properly with serious adverse impacts on productivity. Nipping this problem in the bud would assist both the employer and the employee in the circumstances by emphasising that both parties had to manage their financial matters on a sound footing for their own survival.

Many respondents were not aware or just did not respond to the question whether the EAP provided marital problem services. Only 19% answered in the affirmative and about 79% did

not answer the question the question at all. This suggests perhaps reluctance by employees to share their private information with strangers.

Twenty- six per cent believed that the EAP provided stress management services and the majority (74%) did not respond. Thirty- five per cent were of the view that the EAP provides HIV/AIDS services. The rest either did not respond or said 'No'. Other services provided by the EAP included rabies, malaria, swine flu and eye awareness campaigns.

4.2.3.1 Employees' attitudes towards EAP

Some consensus seems to emerge regarding the employees' attitudes towards the EAP. About eighty-three per cent of the respondents were positive about the EAP and 14% were ambivalent. This state of affairs points to the usefulness of the services being provided by the EAP and how it is viewed by employees in a positive light.

Table 11: Respondent's attitude toward EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive	35	83.3	85.4	85.4
	Uncertain	6	14.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	41	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.3.2 Accessibility of EAP

The majority (76%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the EAP in the municipality is readily accessible. Only 12% did not share that view. A graphic illustration, pie chart, is provided as Fig 3 below.

Table 12: Accessibility of EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	32	76.2	78.0	78.0
	No	5	11.9	12.2	90.2
	Uncertain	4	9.5	9.8	100.0
	Total	41	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		42	100.0		

Fig 3: Accessibility of EAP
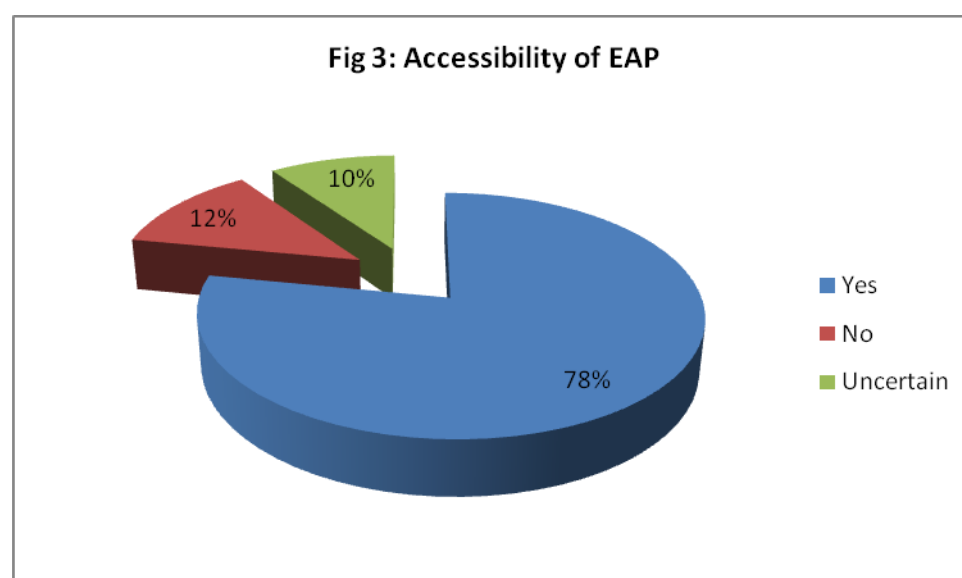
Respondents offered some recommendations aimed at improving the EAP. Some argued that there is need to convene EAP meetings monthly as is done by Trade Unions. Others suggested that there must be fulltime workers and counsellors dedicated to deal solely with the EAPs in a focused manner. Respondents also recommended 'revival workshops' that will be conducted so committees can put theory into practice. Also recommended were small group sessions of less than 10 people for openness and problem solving.

4.2.4 EAP utilization

4.2.4.1 Employees' utilization of EAP

Questions were posed regarding the general utilisation of the EAP services. Seventy- one per cent of the respondents had not utilised the EAP. This represents limited patronage of the programme as just about 17% had used it.

Table 13: Respondents who either visited or used the EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	7	16.7	18.9	18.9
	No	30	71.4	81.1	100.0
	Total	37	88.1	100.0	
Missing	System	5	11.9		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.2. EAP Referrals

While EAPA-SA (1992) states that the goal of supervisory training is to equip supervisors to fulfil their roles in early recognition, intervention and appropriate referral to the EAP, data in Table 14 shows that the supervisor plays a key role in referrals. Many people (74%) did not answer this question implying varied reasons beyond the supervisor. The situation may require redress.

Table 14: Referrals to EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Self	1	2.4	9.1	9.1
	Supervisor	9	21.4	81.8	90.9
	Colleague	1	2.4	9.1	100.0
	Total	11	26.2	100.0	
Missing	System	31	73.8		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.3 Employees' satisfaction with EAP

Data in Table 19 reveal that only about 36 per cent of the respondents are satisfied with the EAP. A majority (60%) of the respondents did not answer this question.

Table 15: Respondents' level of satisfaction with EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Satisfied	15	35.7	88.2	88.2
	Dissatisfied	1	2.4	5.9	94.1
	Uncertain	1	2.4	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	40.5	100.0	
Missing	System	25	59.5		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.4 Referral of employees to external resources

Four respondents (10%) reported that they were referred to seek the services of external agencies. Many (60%) again did not respond to this question.

Table 16: Referral to external resources for further assistance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	4	9.5	23.5	23.5
	No	11	26.2	64.7	88.2
	Uncertain	2	4.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	17	40.5	100.0	
Missing	System	25	59.5		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.5 Employees' knowledge about the location of EAP

Knowledge about the location of the EAP is important as it facilitates access to the programme. The majority (69%) responded that the EAP resided in the Head Office.

Table 17: Knowledge about the location of the EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Head Office	29	69.0	82.9	82.9
	Regions	4	9.5	11.4	94.3
	Other	2	4.8	5.7	100.0
	Total	35	83.3	100.0	
Missing	System	7	16.7		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.6 Distance of EAP from employees' work station

In terms of distance, about 67% and 10% of the respondents had their workstations located 0-20 and 20-60km respectively from the EAP. For the latter, access can be an issue requiring redress merely by virtue of distance where mobile teams who assist as an alternative to increase access if the demand/numbers justifies it (See Table 18 below).

Table 18: Distance of EAP from workstation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-20km	28	66.7	84.8	84.8
	20-60km	4	9.5	12.1	97.0
	60+km	1	2.4	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	78.6	100.0	
Missing	System	9	21.4		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.7 Satisfaction with current location of EAP

The majority (69%) of the respondents were generally happy with the current location of the EAP services.

Table 19: Happiness with current location

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	69.0	80.6	80.6
	No	5	11.9	13.9	94.4
	Uncertain	2	4.8	5.6	100.0
	Total	36	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	6	14.3		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.8 Preferred location of EAP by employees'

In terms of preferred location of the EAP, many did not answer this question. However, respondents preferred the services being located in the regions.

Table 20: Preferred location of EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Regions	7	16.7	63.6	63.6
	Mobile offices	3	7.1	27.3	90.9
	Other	1	2.4	9.1	100.0
	Total	11	26.2	100.0	
Missing	System	31	73.8		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.4.9 Recommending EAP to a colleague

According to the data in Table 21 below, the majority (88%) of the respondents were of the view that they could recommend the EAP services to colleagues. Only three respondents said they could not do so.

Table 21: Recommending EAP to colleagues

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	37	88.1	90.2	90.2
	No	3	7.1	7.3	97.6
	Uncertain	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.5 Employees' concerns about confidentiality

Questions were asked regarding employees concerns with regard to confidentiality. Wright (2002) maintains that confidentiality is crucial to ensuring a high level of employee participation, which in turn makes the programme more successful. The success of EAPs revolves, to a large extent, on employee confidence that the EAP respects individual privacy and adheres to confidentiality requirements and procedures.

4.2.5.1. Employees' feeling safe about disclosing their problems

Table 22 shows that about 74 per cent of the respondents feel safe to discuss their problems with EAP staff. This has the effect of enhancing use by employees as it builds their trust and confidence in the EAP services.

Table 22: Feeling safe to discuss problems with EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	31	73.8	73.8	73.8
	No	7	16.7	16.7	90.5
	Uncertain	4	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

4.2.5.2. EAP staff adherence to confidentiality

Respondents did not think that EAP staff would discuss their problems with other employees. About sixty per cent said 'No' to that question. Trust and confidentiality are very important hallmarks of EAPs. Breaching these features will lead to lesser usage of the services.

Table 23: Problems told to other employees

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	23.8	23.8	23.8
	No	25	59.5	59.5	83.3
	Uncertain	7	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

4.2.5.3. Privacy of EAPs office

About 43 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the offices in which the EAP services were provided were conducive to privacy. The mere fact that 38% of the respondents were 'Uncertain' about the privacy in the office where EAP services were provided reflects lapses in the delivery of EAP services. This calls for urgent redress.

Table 24: Privacy in EAP offices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	42.9	42.9	42.9
	No	8	19.0	19.0	61.9
	Uncertain	16	38.1	38.1	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

4.2.5.4. Employees' awareness of EAP policy within the Department

The majority (55%) of the respondents were not aware of the EAP policy within their municipality. This situation is also untenable. Policy is important. Cohen (1985) indicates that once an EAP policy has been outlined and the roles of those within the organization have been defined, a means of promoting managerial and supervisory expertise in operationalising the process is essential to ensure an effective roll out in whose absence the roll out may not be effective and far reaching.

Table 25: Awareness of EAP policy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	12	28.6	29.3	29.3
	No	23	54.8	56.1	85.4
	Uncertain	6	14.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	41	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.5.5 Employees' participation in policy formulation

The majority (64%) felt that they did not participate in EAP policy formulation. This is indicative of exclusion and does not bode well for the EAP if it seeks to achieve employee wellness. This is graphically depicted in Figure 4 below in the form of a pie chart.

Table 26: Involvement in policy formulation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	8	19.0	19.5	19.5
	No	27	64.3	65.9	85.4
	Uncertain	6	14.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	41	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		42	100.0		

Fig 4 Involvement in policy formulation

3%
14%
19%
64%

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain
- Missing
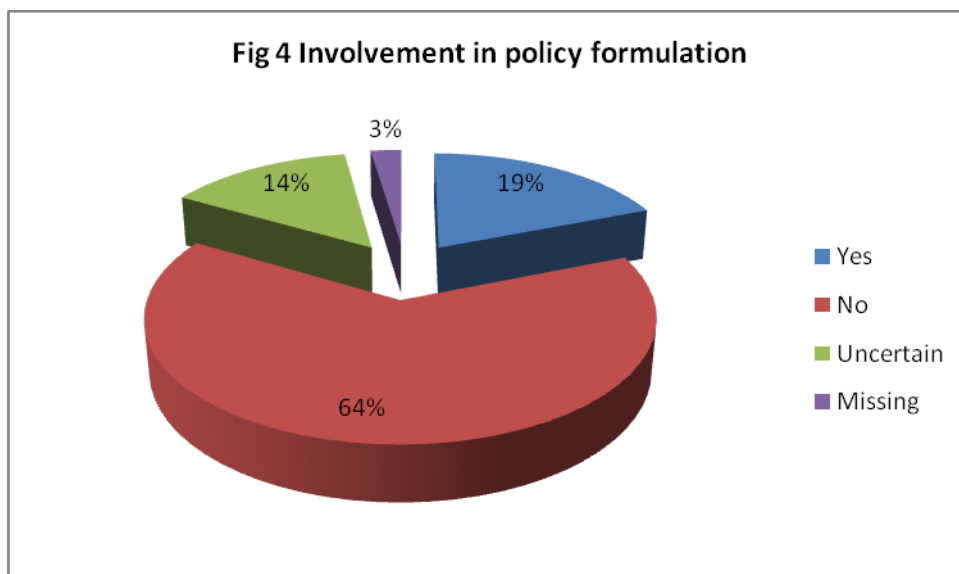
4.2.6 Programme adequacy

4.2.6.1 EAPs response to employees' personal problems

Fifty- two per cent of the respondents were of the view that the EAP responded to their personal problems. This attests to a large measure to its adequacy. However, about 36% of the respondents were uncertain.

Table 27: Responsiveness of existing EAP to personal problems

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	22	52.4	53.7	53.7
	No	4	9.5	9.8	63.4
	Uncertain	15	35.7	36.6	100.0
	Total	41	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.6.2 Usefulness of EAP services to employees

About 48 per cent of the respondents saw the utility and usefulness of EAP services. This can come about through the provision of proper information which encourages people to step

forward when necessary and to proactively seek help themselves (Mnisi, 2005) and therefore make use of the services.

Table 28: Usefulness of services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Useful	20	47.6	66.7	66.7
	Not useful	2	4.8	6.7	73.3
	Uncertain	8	19.0	26.7	100.0
	Total	30	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	12	28.6		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.6.3. Additional services required by respondents

Respondents offered a variety of services that they wanted the EAP to render. These ranged from counselling both employees and family to taking care of supervisors including offering legal services. For details consult Table 29 below

Table 29: Additional EAP services needed by the respondents

Counselling employees and family together
Debt control, financial management and family advice
Disciplining those who come drunk
Carrying out regular workshops for supervisors
Educating people about EAP and spreading the news about EAP
An evaluation of the EAP services
Extending EAP services to former employees
Providing services on how to handle families
Induct employees properly and all must be workshopped on mission and service delivery
Provide services covering loss and grief; work and career issues; legal matters
Providing more sport to reduce stress
Carrying out motivational sessions, family day for employees, sports
Participation in all activities of the municipality to reduce stress
Teaching budgeting, a free alcohol environment

4.2.6.4. Employees suggestions on how to improve EAP services

Respondents provided suggestions on how the EAP services could be enhanced. Some recommended 'Ill health employees assistance', early retirement, meeting frequently and holding quarterly workshops for staff (See Table 30 below).

Table 30: Suggestions to improve the EAP services

Balancing family and work matters; personal development and training
Continuous awareness workshops, 2/3 times a year at the showgrounds
Do revival workshops on a quarterly basis
EAP Committee must meet monthly and identify people with problems
Employ officers trained to deal with EAP matters
Encourage employees to use EAP
Establish EAP Committee led by intellectuals and which is proactive
Ill health employees assistance and early retirement
Keep confidentiality at EAP
Make sure employees are stress free and satisfied
Meet frequently
Must have fulltime staff under HR
Professionally trained people must do EAP job
Quarterly workshops for staff
Regular information sessions for employees
Service delivery for communities
Staff motivation
The EAP personnel must be readily available to formalise the programme and indicate their offices
Quarterly workshops for staff
Workshop on debt control, financial management

4.2.7. Referral of employees to EAP by managers and supervisors

4.2.7.1 Frequency of managers' and supervisors' referral of employees to EAP

Data in Table 31 show that referrals were done by both managers and supervisors. Fifteen respondents were in managerial and supervisory positions. Thus using valid percent, 60% of

the managers used them, while 40% did not. The rest of the respondents (64%) in this study were not managers. When they were done, they were for personal crises and absenteeism.

Table 31: Frequency of referrals to the EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sometimes	9	21.4	60.0	60.0
	Never	6	14.3	40.0	100.0
	Total	15	35.7	100.0	
Missing	System	27	64.3		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.7.3 Decision whether to use EAP or not by managers/supervisors

Respondents were asked whether they at some point contemplated not to use EAP services. Two per cent of the respondents said 'Yes' and 26% said 'No' and the rest did not respond.

Table 32: Decision not to use EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1	2.4	8.3	8.3
	No	11	26.2	91.7	100.0
	Total	12	28.6	100.0	
Missing	System	30	71.4		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.7.2 Identified problems when referring employees to EAP

Respondents were asked whether they encountered problems when they made referrals. Using valid percent, about 67% of the managers said they did not encounter problems with referrals, while 33% said they did.

Table 33: Problems encountered with referrals

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	3	7.1	33.3	33.3
	No	6	14.3	66.7	100.0
	Total	9	21.4	100.0	
Missing	System	33	78.6		
Total		42	100.0		

4.2.7.3 Motivation by supervisors on changes observed after referring an employee to EAP

Supervisors felt a sense of victory after observing changes after referring an employee to the EAP. The excerpt below encapsulates the general sentiment among managerial and supervisory staff:

> 'There are limitations on bad behaviour. We indeed, observe changed behaviour after an employee has visited the EAP. That is gratifying', Manager 38 years old commented.

Some of the observed behaviours are tabulated in Table 34 below from the perspective of managers and supervisors.

Table 34: Managers' and supervisors' views on referrals

Employee failed to comply
Employees referred to EAP but persist with habit
Improved self confidence in employees
Limitations on bad behaviour, employee showing restraint/controlled behaviour
No change hence EAP
People change after the session
People continue with absenteeism and alcohol abuse
There is a change
We have not come across a case needing EAP

4.2.7.7 Employees' familiarity with EAP

Managers were asked if they thought employees in the Municipality were familiar with EAP services. Using valid percent, the majority (73%) responded to the question in the affirmative. Frost (1990:51) mentions that in order to enhance employees' utilization of an EAP, employees need to be familiar with the services rendered by an EAP.

Table 35: Familiarity with EAP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	26.2	73.3	73.3
	No	4	9.5	26.7	100.0
	Total	15	35.7	100.0	
Missing	System	27	64.3		
Total		42	100.0		

A cross tabulation on familiarity by gender was done. Of the respondents in either managerial or supervisory positions, 13 were males and 2 females. Of the 11 respondents who believed employees were familiar with EAP, 10 were males and 1 was female (See Table 36).

Table 36: Gender of respondent * Familiarity with EAP Cross tabulation

		Familiarity with EAP		
		Yes	No	Total
Gender of respondent	Male	10	3	13
	Female	1	1	2
Total		11	4	15

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1   Introduction

This Chapter presents a summary of the key issues unpacked in this study as well as the conclusions and recommendations posited to improve the EAP as currently constituted. The careful planning and assessment of EAP provisioning is very important and crucial to a successful implementation of the programme. The main aim of the study was to assess the implementation of EAP at the Makhado Municipality, to ascertain the employees' level of awareness of the programme, its adequacy and utilization.

5.2 Summary of the Study

Random sampling was used for the study wherein volunteers were requested to participate, and a total of 42 employees from various job levels participated. The questionnaires were translated and explained in indigenous languages, i.e. Tshivenda and Xitsonga since there were those who could not understand the English language. The sample was drawn from employees of different levels of ranks from the headquarters of the municipality in Louis Trichardt, and also from the regional offices, i.e. Vuwani, Waterval and Dzanani respectively. A qualitative approach was used in the study, and questionnaires were used as a form of collecting data from participants.

The researcher made himself available to assist the respondents, and in cases where he was not available, a request was made for the supervisors and managers to assist those who experienced problems in understanding and completing the questionnaires.

5.3 Summary of the Main Findings-

A high percentage (81%) of the employees knew of the existence of an EAP within the municipality, and meetings appeared to be the main awareness strategy.

The attitudes of employees towards the EAP were positive, this state of affairs points to the usefulness of the EAP service.

The EAP provided by the Municipality was viewed as accessible by the majority of employees.

The utilization rate of the EAP in the Municipality was very low as only 17% of respondents indicated that they had utilized the service before.

a) The majority of referrals were conducted by supervisors while only 9.1% were self referral. The majority of respondents did not answer the question implying various reason/s and could also mean lack or poor knowledge and information about referrals within the programme.
b) The majority of employees did not respond to the question on whether they were satisfied with the EAP within the municipality, and that could translate into low knowledge and information about the programme.
c) The majority of employees were generally happy with the current location of EAP in the municipality.
d) The majority of employees viewed EAP as confidential and the level of trust in the EAP staff was high.
e) The majorities of employees were not aware of the EAP policy and never participated in its formulation.
f) The majority of employees felt that EAP services were useful, and this means that provision of proper information might encourage employees to use the service.
g) Most employees suggested that frequent dissemination of information to employees through meetings, workshops and other regular contact sessions could enhance the EAP in the municipality.

5.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations were made regarding this study:

5.4.1 Demographic Factors

The following conclusions on demographic factors are salient:

Conclusions

- The researcher draws the conclusion that more males than females participated in the study, and that the majority of the respondents were married and had dependents. The age cohort 46-55 dominated the employee age distribution of the   Makhado Municipality employees.

Recommendations

In line with the study conducted, the following recommendations are necessary;

- Based on the fact that most employees are in the middle age cohort, married and had dependents as reflected in the research findings, it is recommended that

the EAP introduce programmes on financial savings, in order for them to save money for their dependents for academic purposes. Furthermore, pre-retirement programmes be introduced and also educate them about planning their retirement.

Gould and smith (1988) recommend that pre-retirement programmes for employees should include the following:

o Financial planning should include aspects such as financial management and also investments for the future.

o Health Planning   is to include physiological changes that are associated with aging of employees. It has to do with healthy lifestyles such as nutritional needs and physical fitness.

o The psychology of a retiring employee has to be prepared for different kinds of stresses and be in the position to adjust and adapt to demands that accompany life and retirement in future.

5.4.2.   Awareness of EAP by employees

The following conclusions about the employees' awareness of the EAP are pertinent:

Conclusions

o The majority of the respondents (81%) were aware of the existence of the EAP within the municipality, while (17%) did not know about it, with (2%) being uncertain.

o The Makhado Municipality made use of meetings, followed by workshops as the strategies through which employees are informed about the EAP.

o About 45% of respondents indicated that they had not been exposed to EAP information sessions, which exposes the gap to the programme as it has implications on the penetration rate.

o EAP awareness remains an important factor for programme implementation and motivation to utilize the service at the employees' disposal.

o   There was a dire need for all employees of the municipality to be informed of the EAP services.

Recommendations

The under-mentioned recommendations are significant with regard to employees' awareness of the EAP,

o   It is recommended that all the employees of the Makhado Municipality be informed of the EAP in order to promote and ensure that all staff members are aware of the existence of the programme.

o   More efforts have to be made by the municipality to continuously market the EAP awareness in order to enhance its utilization by the employees.

o   Innovative marketing strategies have to be developed and should take into cognisance the literacy level of the employees within the municipality for effective implementation. These strategies must be relevant and should be designed in such a manner as to fit all levels of employees in the municipality.

o   The Makhado Municipality should utilize different marketing strategies as recommended by EAP literature, such as the following:

i.   The use of promotional material such as brochures, leaflets, and posters that are user-friendly and in languages that is accessible and understable by all employees of the municipality.

ii. Outreach programmes: The EAP unit needs to regularly visit all the regional offices of the municipality in order to intensify information sharing to employees about the EAP. These can also include decentralising EAP workshops to the periphery offices in order to reach the employees who are far away from the head office in Louis Trichardt.

The above-mentioned could serve as effective strategies in promoting and maximising the visibility of the EAP, and   may close the gap on information not reaching all employees in the municipality thereby increasing its penetration rate.

5.4.3. Accessibility of EAP

In line with the findings pertaining to the location of the EAP, the following conclusions are relevant with regard to the accessibility of the programme in the municipality:

Conclusions

- The majority of respondents (76%) were of the opinion that although the EAP was centralised at head office in Louis Trichardt, the programme were still viewed as accessible. However, 12% of the respondents did not share the same view and 9% were uncertain about the location of the EAP within the municipality.

- The majority of respondents, (about 67%) indicated that the EAP was within the 0-20 kilometres from their work stations and were satisfied with the current location of the programme. However, a minority of the respondents would prefer mobile teams to assist as an alternative to increase access of the service.

- In terms of the preferred location of the EAP, the majority (73.8%) did not respond to the question, however, 16% preferred that the service be decentralised to regions.

Recommendations

The under-mentioned are the recommendations relevant regarding the EAP's location so that its accessibility to all employees within the Makhado Municipality is realized.

- It is a reality that EAP is at the head office of the municipality in Louis Trichardt, and a need is there for the EAP staff to regularly undertake visits to regions in order to promote the programme and increase its access to all employees.

- These regular visits to regions and other offices will increase opportunities for employees to interact with employees who are to benefit from the programme and will improve good working relationships and build trust. The

penetration and the utilization rate of the programme will also be increased to the benefit of the municipality.

o It is vital to locate the programme in a place where all employees would feel free and comfortable to visit the EAP personnel.

5.4.4. The Employees' Utilization of the Programme

Based on the findings the following conclusions are vital to the study:

Conclusions

o The utilization rate of the EAP in the Makhado Municipality was very low with 71% of the respondents indicating that they had not utilised the programme.

o The majority 74% did not respond to the question implying varied reasons as this could be due to lack of effective referral systems and inadequate knowledge and information about the serviced.

o It can be concluded that the research findings that there is poor utilization of EAP and that only 36% of respondents were satisfied with the programme. The majority did not respond to the question which could mean and justify inadequate referrals and lack of knowledge and information about the programme which results in low utilization.

Recommendations

The under-mentioned are recommendations pertinent in striving for maximum utilization of the EAP by municipal employees:

o Intensify marketing strategies on the EAP, and inform employees about the various methods of utilizing the programme such as the supervisor's referral, self-referral, and referrals by a family member or colleague. The information about this could be communicated to the employees through workshops, during induction courses, seminars, meetings and also through internal communication tools such as posters and circulars.

- Capacity building for supervisors, managers, including top management should be conducted on regular basis, at least twice per annum in order to cascade information and remind them about the EAP services, the principle, and referral procedures and also on the importance of providing feedback on the programme.

- It is also recommended that the EAP intensify programmes on the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles, financial Management workshops that are also to include investments. These programmes can be outsourced from external service providers, and/or relevant sector departments within all spheres of government be requested to assist free of charge.

5.4.5. Employees' concerns about confidentiality

The following conclusions about confidentiality are salient:

Conclusions

- The majority of the respondents 74% in the Makhado Municipality viewed the EAP as confident, and felt safe to discuss their problems with the EAP staff. It is however, important to note that a low number raised concerns about the confidentiality of the programme and this means that there were some employees who were not aware of the confidentiality aspect of the programme.

- The majority of employees viewed the EAP's office as conducive to privacy; however, 38% of the employees were uncertain about the privacy in the office where EAP services were provided. This reflects a lapse in the delivery of the programme in the municipality.

- The majority of employees (55%) indicated that they did not participate in the formulation of the policy within the municipality and this reflects the low utilisation rate as employees have not been aware of the existence of such a policy.

o The exclusion of employees to policy formulation does not bode well for the EAP if it seeks to achieve employee wellness.

Recommendations

Based on the study, the following recommendations are pertinent:

o It is recommended that the employees be well informed about the confidentiality aspect of the EAP in the municipality.

o All the employees of the municipality should be well briefed and be conversant of the EAP policy of the municipality in the reviewing of the policy when need be, and should be involved and contribute.

o It is also recommended that all employees be encouraged to be involved and participate when the policy is developed or reviewed in order to allow them an opportunity to contribute by submitting inputs.

o The policy document should form part of the marketing activities so that all employees should be aware of its existence.

5.4.5. Programme adequacy

The following are the conclusions with regard to the programme adequacy:

Conclusions

o A conclusion can be drawn that at least 52% of the respondents indicated that the EAP within the Makhado Municipality was addressing their personal problems and this attests to a large measure to its adequacy.

o Slightly less than half (48%) of respondents indicated that the EAP was useful and 19% indicated that they were uncertain, which is a gap in terms of lack of adequate proper information about the programme.

o Supervisors indicated that they felt that there was a sense of victory because positive changes were observed by employees who they referred to the programme.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations regarding programme adequacy:

- o The findings that only 48% of the respondents indicated that the EAP was useful and 19% indicated that they were uncertain, is sufficient evident that regular evaluation of the programme to determine if it was addressing the employees' needs or not was done.

- o That evaluation of the programme implementation should be conducted using the participatory strategies such as suggestion boxes, arranging focus groups and bench-marking with other institutions. The recommendation to allow employees opportunities to submit suggestions, in-puts and give feedback regarding the programme will no doubt assist in the improvement and promotion of the programme.

5.4.6 Referral of Employees to EAP

Based on the study, the following conclusions about the referral to EAP were important:

Conclusions

- o The frequency of referrals by supervisors and managers to the EAP in the municipality was 60%, which is satisfactory. It is evident from the research findings that most managers and supervisors referred their subordinates to the EAP.

- o A conclusion can be drawn that there is an acceptable level of supervisory training on EAP to the managers and supervisors in the municipality.

- o Also that the managers and supervisors had the knowledge and information about their roles in EAP though the municipality needed to intensify capacity building.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made regarding EAP employees' referrals:

o That regular supervisory training is arranged within the municipality to target all management and supervisors. Capacity training should encompass the following aspects of EAP:

i. Policy on EAP;

ii. How is referrals conducted;

iii. How to identify a troubled employee at work;

iv. Wellness and Healthy lifestyles programmes; and

v. Financial management.

5.4.6. Employees' Familiarity with EAP

The following conclusion can be drawn regarding employees' familiarity with the EAP;

Conclusion

o The majority of the managers and supervisors indicated that employees were familiar with the EAP: services, although some indicated (9.5%) that they were not familiar with the programme. Conclusion can then be drawn that this means that not all employees within the Makhado Municipality were familiar with the EAP.

o There is still more work to be done in terms of intensifying the marketing and promotion of the EAP in the municipality.

Recommendations

The following recommendations with regard to the employees' familiarity with the EAP are important:

o That more awareness sessions be conducted with all employees, especially those at regions unit so that adequate information is cascaded to all employees of the municipality.

- The awareness sessions should be conducted at least quarterly involving all regions, and the EAP Advisory Committee should meet at least bi-monthly to discuss aspects to improve and enhance EAP services in the municipality.

- It is also recommended that additional qualified EAP personnel, with at least minimum qualifications in Social Work and, or Social Psychology, or any relevant qualifications and experience in EAP be appointed to run the programme on full-time basis.

5.5 Implications

The study has demonstrated that there are admirable and undesirable aspects in the EAP services as currently provided in the Makhado Municipality. On the positive side, there is a general level of awareness, a positive attitude towards it from employees; it is accessible and adequate/comprehensive. However, on the negative side many respondents claimed that they had never seen the policy on EAP and many had not participated in its formulation. Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1995) argue that at least a minimum of employees must know about a company's policy and understand what the programme can and cannot do for them.

In order to enhance the programme, employees and their unions must be afforded the space to engage in dialogue with management at all levels including policy in a democratic fashion.

There may be need to involve the unions to increase the penetration rate which may lead to a greater likelihood of reaching more troubled workers who need help as postulated by Dickman and Emener et *al*. (2003:59).

As currently constituted, the EAP services could benefit by raising awareness through meetings, workshops and supervisors who have proved so far to be effective. However, new channels have to be explored.

There is need to increase exposure to EAP services through increased exposure of employees to EAP information sessions.

It is therefore recommended that policy should be disseminated and its formulation should be participatory to encourage usage of the EAP services and ultimately enhance productivity and morale.

Calls were made by respondents to expand the array of services being provided by the EAP. This can only happen given the current resource constraints such as funding and staff. Calls were also made to have in place dedicated staff to spearhead the EAP cause. In terms of re-thinking the current model, internal/in-house or external, may be a subject of further research taking into account the costs and benefits thereof so is an evaluation that measures the extent of changes associated with programme intervention to unpack the level of change related to absenteeism, performance and individual attitude.

5.6 Concluding Statement

The implementation of an EAP programme is one of the cornerstones to determine if the programme which is provided is achieving its objectives as envisaged or not. Regular evaluation of the implementation also assists a great deal in the improvement of the programme being provided.

The study was aimed at ascertaining the level of implementation of the Employee Assistance Programme at the Makhado Municipality in the Vhembe district. This study focused on awareness of the programme, its utilization and its adequacy.

The objectives and goals of the study were realized because the researcher was able to determine the level of employees' awareness to the programme, its utilization and the programme adequacy. This study presented an opportunity to present the recommendations in order to improve the Employment Assistance Programme within the Makhado Municipality in the Vhembe District.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

DEAR RESPONDENT

THE RESEARCH STUDY: IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME: MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY, IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

You are kindly invited to participate in the study of the above – mentioned topic. The study is conducted in fulfilment of the requirements for an M.DEV degree with the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership.

Respondents need to take of the following aspects regarding the research:-

- The investigation is undertaken on an anonymous basis

- There are no right and wrong answers.

- The information to be provided would enable the researcher to make P/T/0 informed, suitable appropriate recommendations improving the EAP.

- You are requested to mark answers by ticking with an X or "RIGHT" in the boxes, and also motivate where applicable.

Please feel absolutely free to actively participate in this research study.

Thanking you in anticipating for your assistance.

Yours faithfully

E.L. MUGARI

M.DEV. STUDENT

ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE

IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN THE MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT

QUESTIONNAIRE TO EMPLOYEES AT HEAD-QUARTERS AND REGIONS

1. Demographic factors

A. What is your age now?

21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-55	Over 55
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B. What is your gender?

Male	1	Female	2

C. State your rank: _____

1. Service workers

2. Driver messenger

3. Sub- Accountant

4. Clerical assist

5. Artisan/ Technician

6. Traffic officer

7. Secretary

8. Superintendents

9. Librarian

10. Training officer

11. Assistant manager

12. Manager

13. Director

D. Number of years' employed by the Makhado Municipality _____

What is your marital status?

Married	Single	Divorced	Widowed
1	2	3	4

E. How many dependent children do you have? _____

2. Employees' awareness of EAP in the Municipality

F. Do you know of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in the Municipality?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

NB: If your answer to 2.1 is yes, proceed to answer the following questions:

G. How did you get to know about the EAP?

Pay slip information	Workshop	Brochure flyer	Superviso r	Posters	Colleague	Meeting	Manage r	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

F. Have you ever been exposed to an EAP information session?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

H. Which of the following services is rendered by your EAP?

Counselling	Alcohol problems	Financial management	Marital problems	Stress management	HIV/AIDS	Other(specify)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C. Employees perception of using an EAP

I. What is your attitude towards the EAP of the Municipality?

Positive	Negative	Uncertain
1	2	3

J. Do you think that the EAP service is accessible in the Municipality?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

If the answer above is no, give recommendations to improve it

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Employees' utilization of EAP

NB: Only to be answered by those who know an EAP

J. Have you ever visited or used the EAP before?

Yes	No	Not sure
1	2	3

K. If yes, who referred you to the EAP?

Self	Supervisor	Colleague	Family	Other

1	2	3	4	5

L. How did you feel about the service?

Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Uncertain
1	2	3

M. If you have used the EAP services before, have you ever been referred to external resources for further assistance?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

N. Do you know where the EAP is located in the Municipality?

Head office	Regions	Other specify
1	2	3

O. What is the distance of the EAP from your work station?

0-20 kilometres	20-60 kilometres	More than 60 kilometres
1	2	3

P. Are you happy with the current location of the EAP services?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Q. If your answer is no in 4.7, where would you prefer the EAP services to be?

Regions	Mobile offices	Other specify
1	2	3

R. Would you recommend the EAP services to a colleague?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

5. Employees concerns about confidentiality

S. Would you feel safe to discuss your problems with the EAP staff?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

T. Do you think EAP staff would discuss your personal problems with other employees?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

U. Is the office in which the EAP services are provided conducive to privacy?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

V. Are you aware of the EAP policy in your Municipality?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

X. Did you participate in EAP policy formulation?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

W. Do you know of any EAP staff member?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

6. Programme adequacy

Y. Do you think the existing EAP respond to your personal problems?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Z. If yes, how useful are the services to you?

Useful	Not useful	Uncertain
1	2	3

A.A What other services would you want the EAP to render?

_____

_____

_____
_____

B.B If you are requested to make one input or improvement to the EAP, what would it be?

_____

_____

_____

_____

NB: This part should be completed by Managers and Supervisors only

7. Referral to EAP

C.C How often do you refer employees to the EAP?

Often	Sometimes	Never
1	2	3

D.D For which of the following problems have you referred an employee from your office/section for an EAP?

Absenteeism	Aggressive behaviour	Tardiness	Low performance	Alcohol abuse	Personal crisis	Health problems	Financial problems	Drug abuses

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

E.E Did you ever decide not to use the EAP?

Yes	No
1	2

F.F Are there problems experienced when referring employees to the EAP?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

G.G Have you observed changes after an employee was referred to the EAP?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

H.H Please motivate your response above

_____

_____

_____

I.I. Do you think that employees in the Municipality are familiar with EAP services?

Yes	No	Uncertain
1	2	3

Thank You.   Inkomu!   Ro livhuwa!

MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY

e-mail: town.secretary@makhado.co.za
www.makhado.gov.za

Tel: (015) 519 3000
Fax: (015) 516 1195
Private Bag X2596
LOUIS TRICHARDT
0920

Ref   : 5/3/1 & 5/4/2
Enq   : T.S. Ndou
Date   : 28 July 2010

Mr E.L. Mugari
P/ Bag X 2596
LOUISTRICHARDT
0920

Sir

PERSONNEL: PERMISSION: RESEARCH ON IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN THE MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA: MUGARI E.L

I have great pleasure in informing you that your request dated 18 May 2010 on the above matter is approved, subject to the Municipality's best practice and Conventions for students that undertakes research on Council's records viz.

1. Research activities will not disrupt the normal operation of the Municipality.

2. Prompt and timeous arrangements must be made with the Department Head concerned when assistance is required.

3. Copy of the research finding / thesis must be submitted to the Municipality.

4. The Municipality has no power over research conducted with community members and this part will be performed with the community at their own free will.

5. Research will be for a specific period with an option of extension approved by the municipal manager.

6. Confidential records / information must not be reflected in thesis documents.

7. The collection of data for research from employees of the Municipality will be conducted on prior arrangements made through the Office of the Director Corporate support and shared services.

8. The Municipality is indemnified against any claims for damages by the municipality which may result directly or indirectly from the research activity.

9. Research information may not be used for any form of publication media other than the applicant's studies except with permission of the Municipality.

10. The Authorization is granted in line with provisions of the Municipality Access to Information Manual read with the Promotion to Access of Information Act, and the National Archives Act and approved by the relevant Head of Department (HOD) with regards to the classification of information.

You are therefore kindly requested to visit the Local Municipality at corner or Erasmus and Krogh Street, Civic Centre, Corporate Service Department, Human Resources Division, office number A002, basement floor, on or before 30 August 2010 to complete the necessary forms.
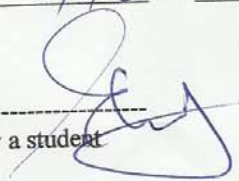
Yours faithfully

MR A.S. TSHIKALANGE
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

I, _E. L. MUGARI_ by my signature herein below confirms that I have read and understood the contents of this letter and accepts the conditions set out and undertake to abide by the conditions as outlined.

SIGNED ON 03/08/10 AT Louis Trichardt 2010.

Cognisance taken by a student

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Turfloop Campus
Faculty of Management and Law

Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership
PO Box 759
Fauna Park
0787
SOUTH AFRICA
Tel/Fax: (015) 290 2816/7
Moyot@edupark.ac.za/ lepatup@edupark.ac.za
Website:www.ul.ac.za

18 May 2010

TO : Municipal Manager
     Makhado Municipality

RE: RESEARCH FOR MDEV MINI-DISSERTATION

Mr Mugari EL (200113261) is registered as an MDEV student in our School. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree, student is currently preparing his mini-dissertation.

We therefore kindly request you to assist Mr EL Mugari with regard to his research. He will be gathering secondary data as well as conducting interviews on his topic which is:

Implementation of employee assistance programme in the Makhado municipality in Limpopo province.

Your assistance to the student will be very much appreciated.

Thank you

Dr T Moyo
Programme Manager
MDEV Programme

Finding Solutions for Africa