THE ROLE OF MANAGERS IN THE SUCCESSFUL UTILISATION OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN A PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDIXES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

DECLARATION

I hereby solemnly declare that the dissertation is my own work and that all the sources cited or quoted throughout this study have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

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TSHIFHIWA ONISMUS UGODA

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DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my caring family with special regards to Matibe Ntanganedzeni, Thuso Ugoda and Muhulu Ugoda; you have been my source of strength.

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At the outset, I am especially indebted to God who gave me the strength and protection at all times until the completion of this study. I would like to express my appreciation to all the good people who inspired me through their love, guidance, contribution and moral support during my study.

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this study was to explore the perceptions of managers regarding their role in the successful implementation of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in the Department of Education (DoE) in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. The researcher used a qualitative research approach to explore the perceptions of managers regarding their role in the successful implementation of the EAP in the DoE.

To do this, the researcher used a probability sampling technique with the purposive sampling method to select the sample for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the use of an interview schedule to gather data form 24 participants. With regard to data analysis, the researcher employed Creswell's (1998) analytical spiral to analyse the data collected from the participants. The analysis involved both the transcription and interpretation of the data.

The empirical findings revealed, on the one hand, that participants were knowledgeable about the EAP and its usefulness in managing performance. Although this is case, the findings of the study showed, on the other hand, that these participants do not use the programme to manage poor performance within the DoE. As a justification, the participants reported a lack of understanding when it comes to referral processes and types of referrals to the programme. Even important to note was that managers showed little trust (if not completely none) to staff members who deal with the EAP when it comes to upholding confidentiality and professionalism.

Thus, recommendations from the participants called for an active participation and involvement in the EAP on the part of the managers to ensure a successful implementation of the programme. Such recommendations included, amongst others, the training of managers in the DoE.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Role
- Managers
- Employee Assistance Programme

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Managers can be seen as key role players in the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) because of their daily contact with employees. This is to suggest that managers are in a better position to identify as early as possible employees that are faced with personal problems (Blair, 2004:34). Given their working relationships with employees, managers can detect changes in employees and observe deterioration in job performance. As such, referrals by managers become important if the referred members of staff receive the help they need. In other words, the managers' critical role is to ensure that referrals of troubled employees are constantly made if the successful utilisation of the EAP is to be realised within an organisation.

Against this background, it is clear that managers through their indirect interaction with their employees are the linchpin of the EAP as they are in the forefront to identify noticeable challenges and problems at an early stage. It is therefore important that managers should concern themselves with employee job performance and the recurrent deterioration thereof (Cagney, 2006a:18). To clarify, if managers are not committed to, and knowledgeable about, the principles and practices of employee assistance, the EAP will not be successful or, at best, will function in a limited way (Weaver as cited in Mannion, 2004:67). It is thus important for the EAP to "maintain its value to the organisation by providing services that are tailored to the unique needs of the organisation, meet employees' expectations at all levels and has the buy-in and support of the leadership"(Welsh-Simpson & McBride-Chambers, 2009:16). If both buy-in and support from managers can be accomplished, the possible results are that the EAP will be highly put into operation (Tiner, 2006:25).

1

Driven by the need to contextualise this study, the following key concepts are identified: role, managers and Employee Assistance Programme.

- **Role**

The concept of role is understood differently by various scholars. While Keyser (2006:179), for instance, defines "role" as "…a set of expected behaviour patterns attributed to someone occupying a given position in a social unit", Swanepoel (2005:205) understands it as an activity of a person in a particular social setting. Informed by the these two schools of thought, the researcher defines the concept of role as a set of behaviours, rights and obligations that managers have by virtue of occupying their managerial positions.

- **Managers**

Odendaal and Roodt (2001:04) describe a manager as someone who oversees the activities of others and is responsible for attaining goals in the organisation. According to the Standards for EAP in South Africa (EAPA SA, 2010:2), a manager is a person in a position of supervisory power with added status and authority. The researcher defines a manager as a person in a workplace who oversees the activities of subordinates in the section with added responsibilities and accountability.

- **Employee Assistance Programme**

The EAP is a worksite based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns including, but not limited to, health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance (EAPA SA, 2005:6). In the context of this study, the researcher defines EAP as an organisational resource designed inter alia, to address performance problems aimed at increasing productivity in the workplace.

2

1.2. LITERATURE RIVIEW

The EAP was introduced in South Africa in the late 1980's. Since then, the programme has found a place in the government's vision of "a better life for all" (Bhoodram, 2006:28). In the government setting, the EAP functions as an integral part of an organisation. It is used to assist the management in addressing organisational issues which may impact negatively on employee well-being and, in the process, help managers to report and comment on trends identified in the provision of services. As such, the EAP should be focused on preventing and remediating personal, work or family related problems that interfere with employees' optimal productivity (EAPA SA, 2005:20). On the basis of this, the roles and responsibilities of managers in ensuring a successful operation of the EAP can be summarised as below:

- To know and understand how the EAP works;
- To play their role of primary source of information about the EAP; and
- To be comfortable in referring employees to the EAP (Bruce, 1990:117).

While self-referrals to the EAP are the indicators of its acceptance by the workforce and thus its success, referrals by managers are important if a sizeable percentage of troubled employees are to receive the help that they need (Blair, 2001:56). It is clear that for the EAP to succeed, the support and active involvement of managers is essential (Barth, 2006:30). In reviewing the literature on the role of managers in the implementation of the EAP, the value-added dimension goes well beyond a manager simply viewing a managerial referral within the EAP context (Beidel & Brennan, 2006:29). Therefore, managers need to broaden their perspective concerning the EAP's managerial assistance long before it becomes an employee assistant programme.

3

Adding to the above view, Schneider, Colan and Googins (1991:99) state, without the manager, the EAP becomes a counselling programme similar to any community-based programme that deals with emotional, family and substance abuse problems. They further point out that the difference between the EAP and other programmes is not only its organisational identity but also its ability to incorporate other unique properties of the work environment. The next section offers the rationale and problem statement of this research project.

1.3. RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

While it is often the case that managers do not treat EAP issues as part of their daily business concerns, Myers (1984) as cited in Oher (1999:145) insists that the role of managers is to manage employees and ensure cooperation in an organisation in order to remove barriers that can affect negatively the performance and productivity of employees. This view is also shared by Emener, Hutchison and Richard (2003:57), all of whom argue that managers should be particularly concerned about the patterns that lead to the deterioration of job performance. Informed by this thinking, it is clear that the concerns about job performance will broaden the views of the managers, thereby improving their commitments to helping employees' holistic well-being especially in cases where their focus was mainly on alcoholism. This is due to the fact that managers are usually the first to identify employee poor performance and conduct and, as such, are expected to confront the troubled employees in a constructive manner and recommend them for the EAP.

In addition to the above, recent studies reveal that senior managers in the EAP section of the Limpopo Provincial DoE experience situations where managers do not involve themselves in issues related to the EAP (Fouché, 2002: 96). Consequently, managers are not clear of their roles in ensuring an effective and successful implementation of the programme (Bless & Higson-

4

Smith, 2000:19). This situation leads to an infrequent utilisation of the EAP. This sporadic use of the EAP creates doubt amongst top-management regarding the significance and relevance of the programme in the Department (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006: 20; Welman & Kruger, 1999:67).

The issue of inconsistency in the use of the EAP is also reported by Tsukudu (2009) who points out that the random use of the EAP is a general problem in South Africa. As such, if managers are not fully committed to the EAP in an organisation, the EAP will not serve the purpose for which it is designed. To this end, the study will help in identifying views and clarify the role of managers concerning the successful utilisation of the EAP in the DoE. The findings and recommendations of the study will assist the DoE in providing strategies that will encourage the need for the EAP in future.

As an exploratory study, the research question of this project is informed by the need to generate specific answers and gain insight onto the managers' views regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:41; Maxwell, 1998:80; Welman & Kruger, 1999:11). Therefore, this study is shaped by the following research question:
What are the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP in the DoE in the Limpopo Province?

1.4. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

While the principal goal of this study is to explore the views of managers regarding their role in the successful implementation of EAP in the DoE, the study seeks as its objectives to:

- provide a detailed theoretical background on the role of managers in the successful utilisation of EAP;
- explore the views of managers concerning their roles in the successful utilisation of the EAP; and

- identify strengths and weaknesses regarding the views of the managers on their roles in the successful utilisation of the EAP in the DoE in the Limpopo Province, and make recommendations where necessary.

1.5.   TYPE OF RESEARCH

For the purpose of this research, applied research design was used to explore the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP in the DoE (Krueger, 2003:3). The study addressed the problem regarding the under-utilisation of the EAP (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:105).

1.6.   LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION

Driven by the need to gain insight and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, the permission to interrogate the subject of this study in the DoE was granted by the Accounting officer who serves as Head of Department in the Limpopo Province (see Appendix A). Also, informed consent was issued to, and signed by, the managers as participants in the project prior to the commencement of the research (see Appendix B). The researcher was responsible for all costs related to typing, editing and binding of a complete report of this study (Welman & Kruger, 1999:265).

1.7.   ETHICAL ISSUES

The issues related to the ethical aspects of research (which according to Strydom (2005c:57), refers to a "...set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for and behavioural expectations of, the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and participants, employers, sponsors, other

research assistants and students" were followed closely by the researcher throughout the process of investigation. The following ethical aspects were taken into consideration.

- **Avoidance of harm**

Although no physical or emotional harm is anticipated in the study since the topic is not sensitive, the researcher guarded against causing any possible harm to the research participants (Babbie, 2001:439). The researcher took full responsibility to ensure that participants felt comfortable and secured in sharing their views. This was achieved by means of explaining the purpose of the study and by going through the consent form in a detailed manner to help the participants to take an informed decision.

- **Deception of subjects**

The researcher strived not to deceive the participants and presented facts as a true reflection of what was to take place during the study and, in the process, provided the research subjects with adequate information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study (Strydom, 2002a:66).

- **Voluntary participation**

The researcher understood that no one should be forced to participate in the study. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form that stipulated that he/she voluntarily undertook to participate in the study and did so on his/her own free will. Thus, the researcher did not coerce the participants to partake in the study against their wish. Rather, all participants were informed that they should feel free to withdraw from the study at any time if the so wished (Babbie, 2001:438).

- **Informed consent**

The researcher administered the informed consent form to describe the goals of the study, procedures to be followed during the investigation and assured the participants that the information would only be used for the purpose of the study (Strydom, 2002a:65). The participants gave their written

consent to voluntarily participate in the study, and signed the consent forms before the start of the interview process.

- **Release or publication of findings**

With regard to the release and publication of the findings of this study, the participants were informed that the findings of this project would be released clearly and unambiguously in the form of a dissertation, which would be stored as part of knowledge generation and production by the Department of Education, University of Pretoria. A manuscript on the results of the study would also be prepared for publication in a professional, academic journal (Strydom, 2005a:65).

- **Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality**

As the researcher knew the participants due to the nature and the context within which the study was carried, anonymity was guaranteed (Babbie, 2004:35). In addition, the participants were also informed that confidentiality would be maintained, thereby ensuring that their names remained unknown at all cost and, most importantly, the information acquired would not be for purposes outside the study (Bless et al., 2006:181). To ensure privacy and confidentiality, all interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants.

- **Competence of the researcher**

The researcher is competent and adequately skilled to undertake the research as he has successfully completed a module in research methodology at the University of Pretoria.

1.8.   THE OVERALL DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The structural designed of this report comprises the following chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction and general orientation.
This chapter will introduce the goal and motivation of the study. The chapter will also present the research problem, design and methodology, limitations, ethical consideration as well as the overall structure of the study.

Chapter Two: The role of managers in the successful utilisation of the EAP
Chapter two will offer an in-depth exploration of literature on the involvement and training of managers in the integration of the EAP as well as the priorities for the successful implementation of the EAP.

Chapter Three: Research methodology, empirical study and analysis
Chapter three will provide the methodological procedures and design, aspects such as the selected sample, sampling methods, and the research instruments used in the data collection process.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and interpretation
Chapter four will focus on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study.

Chapter five: Conclusions and recommendations
As a concluding section of this study, Chapter five will draw conclusions and sets out recommendations for future research on topics related to the phenomenon under investigation.

1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the challenges faced by the researcher in the process of investigation was that participants would not participate while their interviews were tape-recorded. As a solution to this, the researcher had to resort to recording the interviews in writing in order to accommodate the preferences of the participants. Apart from this, some of the participants were not readily available for interviews due to their busy schedule given their responsibilities as managers in the Department. As such, the researcher had to conduct some of the interviews after office hours to accommodate their daily scheduled commitments and responsibilities, and this proved time consuming.

1.10. SUMMARY

While Chapter 1 provided an introductory section of the study, thereby outlining its goal and objectives, research question and approach, the nature and design of this research, the feasibility, sampling method, data collection procedures and analysis as well as the ethical issues of this study, Chapter 2 will offer a section on literature review pertaining to the roles played by managers in the successful utilisation of the EAP.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF MANAGERS IN THE SUCCESSFUL UTILISATION OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this Chapter is to theoretically contextualize what is identified as the role of managers in the successful utilisation of the EAP in an organisation. The Chapter draws from views made by various scholars regarding the integration of the EAP, the importance of training managers about the programme, as well the benefits attached to the EAP. The Chapter, however, puts particular emphasis on the role of managers in the successful implementation of the EAP. It also covers such aspects as the development of policies, management of job performance and the role managers can play when it comes to the referral of employees to the EAP.

MacDonald, Wells, Lothian and Shain (2000:42) define an EAP as "a voluntary confidential, short-term counselling programme that provides advisory and information services". The services covered by the programme include, amongst others, managerial consultation, managers and union training, employee orientation, child care, critical incidents, stress, debriefing and employee education (Masi, 1994). Although the EAP has the potential to assist employees in several areas of life as listed above, it is important to note that the programme does not receive the kind of attention it deserves.

In the context of this study, one of the ways in which the use of the EAP could be increased is by establishing strong referral agents. The most effective means of achieving this could be through an intensive training of managers as it is one of the core technologies within the standards of the EAP (EAPA SA, 2010:1) in enhancing the use of EAP by employees. Even important to note is that the successful utilisation of the EAP relies on the active involvement of all

stakeholders in an organisation. In this regard, managers and union support can play a major role in enhancing the effective use of the EAP in an organisation.

The issue of support and active participation of all parties involved as discussed above is also taken up by Lowe (2004:4) who contends that for the EAP to gain leverage and insight in the organisation, it is recommended that the EAP professional must be able to redefine employee health concerns as strategic issues affecting corporate costs and productivity. In other words, a healthy organisation will promote a working environment which will contribute to the employee's health and high performance. Weaver as quoted in Mannion (2004:67) also stresses the importance of allowing the executive managers' commitment to the EAP in order to gain adequate knowledge of the nature, structure and purpose of the programme. The following discussion will focus on the role managers need to play in the integration of an EAP in the organisation.

2.2.   THE ROLE OF MANAGERS IN THE INTEGRATION OF AN EAP

Managers are key role players in an organisation as they are responsible for encouraging employees to seek assistance from an EAP (Stoer-Scaggs, 1999:42). This is also confirmed by Weaver as quoted in Mannion (2004:67) who argues that "if management is not thoroughly committed to, and knowledgeable about, the principles and practice of employee assistance, the EAP will be unsuccessful and function in a limited way. It is for this reason that Weaver emphasizes the executive management's commitment to the EAP.

Like Weaver, Dickman (1998:10) argues that endorsement, active support and involvement from the management as the highest level of a corporate structure are essential if an EAP is to get off the ground. The EAP professional needs to network with executive management in meetings, thus providing feedback regarding the EAP and its effect on the organisation. This continuous interaction between the AEP professional and the executive management of an organisation will make for an effective functioning of the EAP.

12

Moreover, the endorsement of the EAP as echoed by Dickman (1998) by the executive management through the networking efforts of the EAP professional will result in the EAP being integrated into the formal and informal performance appraisal procedures (Schmidenberg & Cordey, 1991:13). If managers become quick in identifying and dealing with poor performance of their employees, the EAP will receive more referrals and thus prevent problems that could result in a decline in work performance (Mannion, 2004:84).

2.3.   TRAINING OF MANAGERS IN AN EAP

Writing about the training of managers for the effective implementation of the EAP, Klarreich, Francek and Moore (1985:183) contend that once the EAP policy is put in place, there is a need to promote managerial expertise in all the operational processes required. This view is also supported by Schneider et al. (1991:41) who point out that managers are in a better position to identify troubled employees and thus intervene in a meaningful way within an organisation. Against this background, the training of managers for the purpose of the EAP will better enhance their skills in identifying troubled employees, increase their understanding of the EAP and, most importantly, improve their skills and confidence in using the programme effectively.

Furthermore, Hopkins (1997:33) claims through training managers can learn to be more responsible to workers' problems, help develop peer assistance within work groups and establish a link between the EAP and community resources for troubled employees. In line with the above views, Myers (1984:235) and EAPA SA (2010:15) argue that the main objectives relating to the training of managers in the field of EAP include, amongst others, to:

- equip managers to fulfill their functional roles in terms of access, support and utilisation of the EAP;
- enhance the ability of managers to make appropriate referrals;
- manage the employee effectively;

- enhance the work environment;

- improve employee job performance;

- describe the costs to the organisation attributable to the deficiencies of troubled employees; and

- explain the pervasiveness of treatable problems in the workplace.

As shown above, Hoskinson (2005:5) concedes that the training of line managers to handle formal referral will have a significant impact on the cost-effectiveness of the EAP service. Without the active involvement of managers in the referrals processes, Hoskinson continues, the EAP services will report modest returns on investment. As a justification to this thinking, she refers to a landmark study carried out at Chevron, where a 14:1 return was achieved, in which case 75% of the savings resulted from the intervention by trained line managers. Hoskinson further insists that "managers generally respond well to training designed to help them manage the referral process". Therefore, for Hoskinson, the training of line managers is a suitable component for inclusion in EAP contracts. Hoskinson's views as highlighted above are underlined by EAPA SA's (2010:15) that an on-going training will enhance managers' ability to make appropriate referrals and ensure the support for the EAP among union representatives.

2.4. PRIORITIES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL USE OF AN EAP

The Public Service Commission's (PSC) (2006) evaluation of the EAP in the public service outlines a number of priorities for the successful use of the programme. These include that:

- productivity must be seen as a strategic issue surrounding EAPs. This priority will facilitate the use of productivity-enhancing solutions such as EAP and communicating department leadership commitment to the use of EAP as a solution;

14

- the use of EAPs should be based on an informed set of expectations, which will have an impact on their strategic objectives. When using EAPs management's focus should not only be to meet the department's business objectives, but also to achieve the optimal utilisation of organisational resources;

- EAP systems should be less reactive and rather develop a more pro-actively preventative and facilitative role. A reactive or treatment focus is inclined to develop a stigma against employees who are identified as needing counselling and support from the EAP, whereas a pro-active focus can be used to transform the organisational culture as a whole to a more caring and supportive one;

- EAPs fulfil organisational development functions and should therefore be positioned as a central part to all HRM functions in an organisation; and

- an EAP professionals often contribute to the negative attitude of employees towards EAPs within organisations because of their overly caring focus and a limited business focus. For them to be able to respond to, and anticipate, the EAP's needs within a company, there is a need for EAP professionals to be aware of how the application of the EAP can improve the functioning of individual employees and therefore the organisation as a whole.

2.5. THE ROLE OF MANAGERS IN THE SUCCESFUL USE OF THE EAP

The PSC's (2006) evaluation of EAP in the public service outlines that "management commitment and leadership have proven to be one of the most important aspects influencing the successful functioning of EAPs". The general impression regarding the role and influence of leadership is that commitment and support of top and middle management is extremely valid. Bruce (1990:117) outlines the responsibilities of a manager for the successful utilisation of an EAP:

15

- to know and understand how EAP works,

- to play the role of the primary and best source of information about EAP, and

- to be comfortable in referring employees to the EAP both voluntary and involuntary.

In the same breath, the University of Waterloo's EAP (2000:4) also reveals that the roles of the manager are to:

- always take appropriate management action if there is a performance problem;

- encourage the early use of the EAP for personal difficulties;

- indicate that EAP help is available within the text of any corrective warning letter;

- be supportive when the employee is using the programme; and

- follow up on referrals to ensure EAP that counselling is helping to resolve the problem.

The next section presents the theoretical interpretations by various authors on the roles of managers in the successful utilisation of the EAP.

2.5.1 Monitoring job performance

Various authors present different views regarding the role of managers in ensuring the effective implementation of the EAP within an organisation. While Bruce (1990:26), for instance, argues that managers use performance monitoring to refer an employee to the EAP, Robinson (2008:03) claims that monitoring job performance is the key to one's role as a manager. As such, managers, Robinson continues, are responsible for ensuring that work gets done and that employees are doing their jobs according to job standards. In this case, where there is deterioration in job performance, there may be something in the employee's personal life which adversely affects his/her performance. Therefore, the manager should address what he/she knows best, that is, the

job and the performance required to accomplish that job and, thereafter, makes referral to the EAP.

Ramano (1995:90) also supports this view and states that managers should be concerned about job performance specifically with any consistent job performance deterioration. In other words, it is the role of the manager to identify any pattern of deteriorating job performance over a period of time and, in the process, document and discuss what was observed with an individual employee. This is also shared by Robinson (2008:04) who further points out that when employees are troubled or concerned, their behaviour usually changes work patterns and job performance may decline. However, it is important to note that occasional incidents of poor job performance do not necessarily mean that there is a serious problem. One way to asses more serious problems is by knowing how often and how severe the employee's job impairment becomes. Ramano (1995:92) classified the signs of deteriorating job performance as outlined below:

- Absenteeism and tardiness

- Accidents and carelessness

- Conflicts with co-workers

- Decline in quality and quantity of work

- Inability to concentrate, memory problems and confusion

- Poor appearance and poor hygiene

- Unprofessional conduct

- On job absenteeism.

Robinson (2008:05) elaborates further and outlines behavioural patterns of declining performance as follow.

Increased absenteeism	Presenteeism
• Increased absences • Excessive disability • Repeated short absences • Improbable high number of absence for minor illnesses • Excessive tardiness	• Continued absences from desk • Increased number and length of coffee breaks • Physical illness on the job • Complaints from co-workers
Friction with other employees	**Concentration problems**
• Overreaction to real or imagined criticism • Wide swings in mood • Unreasonable resentments • Avoidance of associates • Irritability	• Greater effort to finish work • Jobs and project take longer • Easily distracted
Unusual behaviour	**Confusion**
• Temper tantrums • Physical violence • Emotional outbursts	• Difficulty in recalling and details • Increasing difficulty in handling and completing assignments • Difficulty in recalling own mistakes
Lowered job efficiency	
• Missed deadlines • Increased number of errors • Poor decision making • Wasted time and material	

18

In cases where several of the performance patterns described above begin to appear, a problem may exist. It is critical therefore that when a manager notices some of these signs, the employee's performance patterns should be documented. The manager's observations in this regard will provide specific feedback during discussions with the employee, which may lead to an EAP referral whose results will ensure a successful utilisation of the EAP in the organisation (Robinson, 2008:06).

2.5.2 Constructive confrontation

It is essential that EAPs operate outside the disciplinary system of an organisation (Zastrow, 2004:398). As such, managers who are in a good position to identify employee problems through deterioration in work performance should be constructive when they confront the employee concern (Cagey, 2006a:18). Cagney further claims that it is necessary to break through the denial of the troubled employee and to encourage the employee to take action. This position is also shared by Barth (2006:30) who argues that if the EAP wants to enhance performance and help people cope with the ongoing challenges of modern life, managers need to have a thorough knowledge of the concept of constructive confrontation. Robinson (2008:06) outlines constructive confrontation guidelines which managers need to follow when handling and discussing a performance problem with an employee. Such guidelines call for managers to:

- document declining performance;

- tell the employee what you have observed; referring to your documentation. If you need help preparing for the discussion, contact your EAP coordinator;

- communicate as clearly as possible your view of the performance problem;

- let the employee know the consequences of failure to resolve the performance issue;

- avoid making speculations on the cause of the performance decline;

- get the employee's view of the performance problem;

- avoid engaging in any discussion with the employee about any personal problem that may hamper the employee's performance;

- focus only on work performance; and

- outline a path to correct the situation within the bounds of the work situation.

Consistent with the above guidelines, it is clear that constructive confrontation gives the manager the opportunity to combine discussions regarding performance problems with offering assistance, and such a practice should not be seen as a punitive measure (Cagney, 2006b:14).

2.5.3 The ODIR principles applied by managers

Robinson (2008:08) indicates that ODIR principles must be applied by managers when they employ a constructive confrontation approach with an employee regarding issues that relate to performance problems. Robinson's concept of ODIR principle are summarized below:

O- Observe

D-Document

I-Inform

R-Refer

Robinson further provides detailed information regarding the application of the ODIR principles by managers within an organisation.

20

- **Observe**

Myers (1984:108) contends that managers are frequently ill-trained and poorly prepared to handle the confrontation interview. The result is that they often ignore employee deficiencies until it becomes so aggravated that severe disciplinary action is needed. Instead, the ICAS managers' handbook (2007) suggests that managers should be able to recognize and identify changes in an employee's work performance. In this case, quality and quantity of work, punctuality, meeting deadlines and changes in behaviour may serve as indicators. Thus, managers need to ensure clarity on the job description and the organisation's expectations of employees. Furthermore, managers need to be attentive to employees who present problems such as insubordination, absenteeism and change in behaviour.

- **Document**

Documentation of job performance and attendance will assist the manager with the recognition and identification of the problem's signs and symptoms. The documented information will thus serve as factual evidence for the referral of a troubled employee. The manager needs to tell the employee what he/she has observed referring to the documentation (Robinson, 2008:06). SANCA EAP Training (2000:6) also indicates that information such as the nature of incidents and the details pertaining to the incidents, date, time, reason for concern and the relevant action needed to achieve the goals and objectives should be recorded. This will help managers avoid the challenge of trying to recall all the information as other important details could be omitted. In the event of disciplinary action being instituted, managers will thus offer proper and accurate documentary evidence that may be essential, the absence of which may render the process insignificant.

In addition, Robinson (2008:04) reveals that occasional incidents of poor job performance may not necessarily mean that there is a serious problem. One way to asses more serious problem is to know how often and how severe the

21

employee's job impairment becomes. Given this, documentary evidence becomes crucial as it will assist managers in making a referral to the EAP. It is also important to note that documentation after intervention is also important in order to assess whether or not progress has occurred after EAP intervention (Robinson, 2008:05).

- **Inform**

SANCA EAP Training (2000:6) states that it is important for a manager to bring the noticeable changes in the work performance to the attention of the employee concerned. Robinson (2008:06) outlines guidelines to be followed when handling and discussing performance problem with an employee. She further indicates that a manager should communicate as clearly as possible his/her view on job performance and also make the employee aware, through documented evidence, of what he/she observed. To do this, the manager during the first constructive confrontation session should advice the employee of the detected pattern of poor performance. Even important is that, managers need to further document the resolution of the constructive confrontation session, such as time frames, goals and objectives.

- **Reference**

Managers play an important role during the referral process. Hepworth, Rooney and Larsen (2002:42) understand referral as a process where a need for help has been identified at the best interest of a troubled person. Referrals to the EAP are based solely on the decline in job performance. Hoskinson (2005:6) indicates that line managers can justifiably intervene pro-actively, thereby making formal referral to an EAP on grounds of an individual's work performance that has declined, and that pressure is being put on others in the same department or that their behaviour creates a safety risk. The intervention is generally known as formal referral while it will always remain voluntary for an individual to access an EAP. Myers (1984:234) affirms that formal referral will take place when an employee is formally referred to the EAP due to a decline in performance.

However, it is worth mentioning that managers are more likely to deal timeously with impaired job performance of employees they manage if they understand the EAP as legitimate and authoritative subsystems such as HR or industrial relations within the larger organisational system. If managers are quick in identifying and dealing with poor performance, the employee is more likely to use the EAP for problems that could cause decline in work performance--hence increasing the utilisation of the programme in an organisation (Mannion, 2004:88). It is probably for that same reason that Beidel and Brennan (2006:29) take the role of managers further by stating that managers are also responsible for helping work teams identify and achieve goals, supporting the productivity of each team member and resolving any difficulties that could arise. With regard to the EAP referral, the managers, however, should stress the benefit and importance of seeking assistance and ensure emphasis on confidentiality as the underlying principle.

2.5.4 Referral of the troubled employee

A troubled employee is an employee whose behaviour in the workplace causes reduced productivity and lowers morale for self, co-workers or the manager (Bruce, 1990:4). Myers (1984:3) refers to the examples of job performance deficiencies as absence, poor conduct and safety and a lack of work quality and quantity. As a solution to these, this study presents two types of referrals to be made by managers within an organisation. These are self and mandatory referrals.

Self-referrals are initiated by employees who are aware of a problem or are experiencing enough discomfort to seek resources (Cagney, 2006b:20). Caney further points out that the employees may have been encouraged to use the EAP by co-workers, family members or managers. These employees possess some level of insight or at least are motivated to obtain relief. Tiner (2006:26) distinguishes between informal and formal referrals to the EAP. He explains that informal referral (also referred to as self-referral) occurs when the manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing personal issues that are not

necessarily affecting the employee's job performance. Tiner agrees with Cagney (2006b:20) that in such an instance, friends, family or colleagues may encourage a person to use the EAP. In contrast to self-referral, mandatory referrals are directly related to job performance (Cagney, 2006b, 20) but must not be seen "as a condition precedent to commencement of disciplinary action". Mandatory referrals are "seldom pro-active referrals but rather re-active referrals based on triggering events" (Cagney, 2006b:20).

- **Identification of the problem**

The manager needs to identify changes in work patterns, decreases in work performance, violations of policy, and any issues that compromise the safety of the work environment.

- **Documentation**

A manager should provide written, factual, objective and confidential information that focuses only on job performance.

- **Expectations**

A manager must identify and discuss specific behaviours and work performance characteristics that need to improve and agree on when these changes are expected, and how the manager will know they have occurred.

- **Timeline**

The manager should discuss a specific timeline for improvement, including when to evaluate expected changes, and set a policy for the implementation of changes.

- **Consequences**

Managers need to know their company's policies regarding disciplinary procedures. It is crucial to follow through with a review process and discuss any actions to be taken. Cagney (2006b:14) is adamant that without referrals by managers, "difficult clients who do not self-refer would not be reached and clients in denial would not be confronted".

24

2.5.5 Development of an overreaching policy

A clearly-written policy must describe the EAP in its entirety as this will ensure consistent application of the rules and regulations of the EAP. An EAP policy will "ensure that the mandates, principles and focal areas of the EAP are fair, consistently applied and balanced regarding the interests of all various stakeholders (EAPA SA, 2010:6).   According to the PSC (2006:43), management need to ensure that overreaching policies are developed and, at least, should address the following:

- **Nature of assistance**

The services to be provided by EAP should be clearly spelt out so that employees are well informed.

- **Objectives**

The intended objectives to be realised through the introduction of the EAP policy should be articulated.

- **Activities in relation to the different areas of assistance**

Employees should be informed by the policy in terms of what the different activities are in relation to all the areas of assistance.

- **Responsibilities of role players**

The responsibilities of different role players in the application of the EAP must be clearly spelt out.

- **Referral procedures**

Employees must be informed of the referral procedures to be followed in instances where a need for assistance is identified.

- **Confidentiality**

It is essential for employees to be aware that what they say to EAP staff will remain confidential; otherwise they will be reluctant to discuss their problems openly (Zastrow, 2004:399). This is reiterated by PSC (2006:43) who insists that employees must be assured that the information they provide will not be divulged to any party or person. As a result, the employees will feel comfortable and protected to use the service. In this regard, confidentiality is of utmost importance as EAPA SA (2010:9) points out that the EAP's professionalism and credibility depend on maintaining confidentiality.

Zastrow (2004:399), however, is realistic and practical and says that "sometimes management finds confidentiality a difficult concession to make because it is paying the bill", but there is no other way to establish trust with employees. It needs to be mentioned, though, that trust can only be enhanced if the employee feels his/her privacy is protected (EAPA SA, 2010:9). In addition to this, Oher (1999:40) mentions that all information of the employee stays confidential and does not become part of the individual's employment records. To this end, neither job security nor promotional opportunities are jeopardised solely because of the diagnosis, counselling and treatment they receive from EAP.

2.5.6 Leadership commitment

Carnot and Emener (2003:37) point out that it is an absolute necessity that top management at its highest level endorses and actively supports their EAP. Top management's support and understanding can insure that the following occur:

- doors will open to EAP personnel at all other levels of management;

- adequate financial support will be made available for training of managers;

- enthusiastic support of middle and lower management will more likely model and reflect top management initiatives; and

- a successful and effective EAP (Watkins, 2004:7).

According to the PSC (2006:40), leadership commitment is identified as consistently impacting most critically on EAPs in terms of its effectiveness in an organisation. The PSC further outlines that leadership commitment contributes significantly to the effective implementation and utilisation of EAP in an organisation.

- **Management Support**

The concept of management support concerns ensuring the realization and utilisation of programmes. It is important that management does not only communicate ideas and visions with employees, but also provide support in terms of financial or human resources to implement the EAP.

- **Visible leadership**

Employees' perceptions greatly influence their decision and behaviour. Therefore, managers must contribute to the necessity of the EAPs if employees are to use them. The benefits of having employees witnessing the managers active involvement in developing and maintaining the EAP should not be underestimated.

- **Leadership participation and programme utilisation**

The concept of visible leadership refers to the leadership participation in which managers themselves take the lead in the utilisation of the various programmes and services effectively in order to give them their personal stamp of approval. Leadership should face up to the fears first, if employees are expected to follow.

- **Budget**

The issue of insufficient budget was repeatedly raised as a key depilating factor. It is also a matter directly related to leadership commitment and passion. It is crucial that appropriate budgets be allocated to the EAP units to ensure that they function effectively.

- **Communication**

Communication from a management perspective refers to the process of communicating strategies down the organisational levels and having them understood and implemented. It is also refers to receiving feedback from the employees to understand their experiences. Therefore, it would be beneficial if management could be seen as relaying their strategies and commitment regarding the EAPs directly to employees.

2.6. THE BENEFITS OF AN EAP

Hay as cited by Kraft (2004:32) notes that more employers are recognising that "EAP services are a low-cost, high-value asset that can make a substantial contribution to supporting human capital". Kelly, Holbrook and Bragen (2005:192) elaborate on this view by stating that an awareness of the EAP can lead to early detection and ultimately, a greater return on investment for the organisation. Kelly et al. (2005:192) further maintains that early detection is not only a benefit to the employee in distress, but also to the employer as prevention and early detection may decrease absenteeism and turnover.

The two key beneficiaries to gain from an EAP in an organisation are the employer and the employee. Joseph and Injodey (2006:31) indicate that an EAP gives the organisation an option to save a good employee and maintain his productivity.

28

2.6.1 Support for the employer

Dickman and Emener (1988:102) identify the following benefits of the EAP to management:

- **Increased Cooperation**

The issue of training to key personnel (managers, labour representatives and supervisors) on intervention techniques, referral procedures, signs to look for in identifying troubled employees, company policies and procedures will all increase cooperation.

- **Enhanced morale**

With the existence of the EAP which is designed to assist troubled employees and their immediate family members, worker morale tends to increase and be more positive (Sutherland & Cooper, 2000:224).

- **More troubled employees are helped**

When managers and labour representatives work together in an EAP, the likelihood of a higher penetration rate exists and hence there is a greater likelihood of reaching more troubled workers who need help.

- **Enhanced Productivity**

Helping workers toward being more fully functioning individuals will have a positive impact on productivity.

- **Increased alternatives and options to problem resolution**

Supervisors, managers and labour representatives will have potions of dealing with problematic employees before they can resort to disciplinary procedures. Klarreich et al. (1985:90) emphasise that the benefit of an EAP to managers is an opportunity to consult with the EAP when confronted with a troubled employee. The EAP also helps the manager to keep professional boundaries intact in the workplace. The EAP can also offer a personalised service to

29

employees by making use of different resources through networking (Kelly et al., 2005:194).

2.6.2   Support for the employee

Apart from the above, Sutherland and Cooper (2000:224) view the ultimate benefit of the EAP as the improvement of job performance and to:

- improve changes of employee retention, with savings in recruitment, training costs and expertise protection;
- reduce managerial workload resulting from problem employees shared with the EAP;
- treat disciplinary and dismissal issues more precisely, constructively and humanely; and
- improve financial control of labour costs.

Informed by this, the researcher believes that investing in employees through the EAP will save a lot of time for the employers because the programme in terms easy access to information about their employees. Rather, employees in turn will recognise that the organisation values them and this will increase the organisation's retention. It is therefore important that all managers are fully aware of the programme so that it can assist them in directing troubled employees and play a major role as a business partner.

Joseph and Injodey (2006:31) believe that when stress, distress, substance abuse or depression takes hold, it begins to interfere with an employee's work. Employees want help in recovering quickly from such challenges. Tiner (2006:25) states that with proper treatment arranged through an EAP, many troubled employees can be restored to a satisfactory level of job performance. As such, the researcher believes that satisfactory level of job performance could even be achieved by employees themselves if they could be empowered early to know that asking for help is not a weakness.

2.7   SUMMARY

Drawing from the relevant literature as reviewed in this Chapter, it is evident that managers have a critical role to play in the successful utilisation of the EAP in the organisation. The Chapter also presented different views from various authors regarding the roles managers can play to enhance effective implementation of the EAP in an organisation. Such views also highlighted the extent to which both employees and an organisation can benefit out the EAP is used effectively. Chapter three will explain the research design and methodological procedures used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.   INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a detailed account of the methods used to carry out this research project. Specific attention is given to the approach, research design, sampling method, data collection process as well as the writing of the final report. The researcher also discusses the data analysis process, thereby taking into account the similarities and differences of the dominant, recurrent themes and sub-themes out of the raw data collected from the participants.

3.2.   RESEARCH APPROACH

Driven by the need to gain an in-depth understanding of the managers regarding the their role in the EAP, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach given its ability to present numerical and theoretical representation of the data analysed (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:271; Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:43; Creswell, 1998:130). Kumar (2005:18) also attests to the fact that qualitative researchers explore feelings and perceptions in order to identify and describe themes from the responses of subjects. Consistent with this view, the researcher also sought to explore the perceptions of managers regarding the role they play in ensuring that the EAP is used successfully within the DoE. To gain access to these perceptions, the researcher believes that a direct engagement and interaction with the managers was relevant for the study of this nature.

To this end, the use of a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to interact, question, probe and make follow-up where necessary (Babbie, 2005:23). Moreover, the use of a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gain understanding of the knowledge of managers concerning the EAP, the

processes and functions thereof and, to a great extent, explore the key role played by managers to ensure success in the utilisation of the programme.

3.3.   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.3.1 Research design

This study used a qualitative research design as it would allow the researcher to identify and develop procedures necessary to undertake this study (Kumar, 2005:84). Given the nature of this study, it is the intention of the researcher to arrive at a complete description and understanding of the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of EAP in the DoE (Babbie, 2001:91; Struwig & Stead, 2001:8). It is also an opportunity for managers to learn more about the EAP and the crucial role that they play in the successful implementation and utilisation of the programme.

3.3.2 Research population, sample and sample method

The population that the researcher was interested in was the managers of all levels (Senior General Manager, General Manager, Senior Manager, Manager and Deputy Manager) at the DoE, Head Office in Polokwane, Limpopo Provinve (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:173; Strydom, 2005a:193).

The Head Office of the DoE in Limpopo Province has 24 units from which a group of participants could be selected (Trochim, 2001:20. The researcher chose a non-probability sampling and used purposive sampling (Strydom & Venter, 2002:203) to select a sample of 24 participants. The purposive sampling method is based on the judgement of the researcher (Bless et al., 2006:106) regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. In order to avoid inherent bias, participants were selected from diverse cultures, language, race and gender (Strydom, 2005a:202).

33

The 24 participants chosen for the sake of this study are managers who:
- have at least five years managerial experience in the DoE,
- are managing a team of employees in their units, and
- are from all age, race and gender groups.

3.3.3 Data collection

In accordance with the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research (Greeff, 2005:286), the researcher used semi-structured, one-on-one interviews in order to obtain the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of EAP in Limpopo Province's DoE (Struwig & Stead, 2001:13). The researcher, furthermore, prepared an interview schedule to guide the interviews (Greeff, 2005:296). The interview schedule focused on a few concise questions or themes. Such questions were open-ended and logically formulated. The researcher designed a set of predetermined questions in an interview schedule. It must be mentioned that the interview were to be guided by the schedule rather than being dictated by it (Greeff, 2002:302). This was so because, as Struwig and Stead (2001:98) argue, participants are also given the opportunity to discuss issues beyond the questions' confines (Struwig & Stead, 2001:98).

Even though the researcher used a semi-structured interview, there was flexibility for follow-ups, probing and in-depth discussion during the interview sessions to allow for interaction and engagement. Permission to take notes during the interview processes was requested and obtained from the participants for ethical compliance. The interview-schedule was pilot tested on two managers who shared the same characteristics as the managers who form the sample of the study. The two participants were not included in the main study (Strydom, 2005b:209). The interview schedule was found to be user-friendly during the pilot testing, and no changes were necessary.

Data was gathered by means of a semi-structured interview as per the semi-structured interview schedule (see appendix C). The interviews lasted for 30 to 45 minutes, allowing for follow-up and probing discussions. The interviews were conducted in English and, in the process, notes were taken by the researcher for the purposes of analyzing and interpreting thereafter. It also needs to be mentioned that to ensure confidentiality and privacy, all raw data in the form of notes taken during the interviews will be emanating from the interviews will be safely stored for 15 years at the Department of Social Work and Criminology according to the policy of the University of Pretoria.

3.3.4 Data analysis

The researcher analysed the collected data in order to bring meaning, order and structure to the data (De Vos, 2005:333). The processes were conducted according to the following:

- **Planning for recording of data**

The researcher planned for the recording of data in a systematic manner that is appropriate to the setting and the participants. The researcher used separate structured interview schedules for each interview to take notes of all the responses (De Vos, 2005:334). A well-tested tape recorder was used in addition to the written notes.

The participants were asked for permission to take notes in detail and to use a tape recorder during the interviews for future references by the researcher. The researcher used files to record all completed interviews and kept them in a lockable drawer.

- **Data collection and preliminary analyses: a twofold approach**

A twofold approach in data analysis was followed. The first aspect involved data analysis at the site during data collection by means of recording of 24 interviews conducted and, secondly, data analysis away from the site following a period of data collection by transcribing the data of each interview afterwards

35

was administered (De Vos, 2005:335). Prior to this, the researcher collected data from the participants while formulating meanings in relation to their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP in the DoE, Limpopo Province. This process afforded the researcher the opportunity to probe and get clarity on certain issues.

- **Managing data**

As a first step in data analysis away from the site, the researcher organised his data into a computer and manual folder for each participant. The researcher immersed himself in the data by transcribing each interview and by typing and organizing the filed notes (De Vos, 2005:336).

- **Reading and writing memos**

The researcher familiarised himself with the data by reading through all the data repeatedly in order to understand and make sense of the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP (De Vos, 2005:336). The researcher reviewed the notes taken during the interview and compared them with what was recorded on the tape recorder. This process was reviewed several times until the researcher was in a position to make a clear interpretation of the research findings. By reviewing the notes collected during interviews, the researcher was able to identify themes.

- **Generating categories, themes and patterns**

The researcher identified the prominent, grounded categories of meaning held by participants in the setting after reading through all the data. He then identified general themes and sub-themes that recurred throughout the data (Creswell, 1998:144). The researcher was careful in identifying common expressions from the interviews with managers on their views regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP in the DoE.

- **Coding the data**

The researcher made use of different coloured-highlighters to code and mark the different categories and themes on the transcribed data (De Vos,

2005:338). He also used key words in coding the data in order to ease understanding when analyzing.

- **Testing the emergent understandings**

In the process of evaluating the plausibility of his understanding, the researcher worked through the data repeatedly (asking the research question that informs this study) to make sure that the themes identified are central to provide answers to the research question (De Vos, 2005:338).

- **Searching for alternative explanations**

Whilst scrutinizing the data, the researcher considered other explanations for the data received, for he truly wanted to deliver answers and explanations that could be addressed by top-management and EAP professionals (De Vos, 2005:338-339). The final result was the wishes of managers to be capacitated and actively involved in the programme for it to be a "must have" facility as opposed to something "nice to have" in the Limpopo Province's DoE.

- **Representing and visualizing**

According to De Vos (2005:339), the researcher should present the data in such a way that other people beside the research subjects can have a clear image of the information. For example, figures or tables can be used to present the data collected. In this research, figures and tables were used to present specific information concerning the profile of the participants. Data was also presented and interpreted in words. The researcher formulated the meaning of the research findings by grouping the same key words and themes together. With regard to lending shape and form to the raw data collected, the researcher compiled a final document divided into four chapters where he would report on the results of his research.

3.4.   SUMMARY

Chapter three attended to a description of the process that was undertaken to conduct this study. The researcher chose a qualitative research approach as it relies more on words to gain insight on the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP. A collective case study provided an opportunity for the study to focus on a specific population within a specified time frame. Twenty four managers formed the sample from a population of all managers in the DoE, Head Office, in Limpopo Province.

The data collected for this study was obtained through the use of semi-structured interviews administered for 30 minutes to 45 minutes. Permission for this study was sought from the Head of DoE in the Limpopo Province. Thereafter, consent was also requested from employees who formed part of this study.

The next chapter provides an analysis of the responses given by participants. The interpretations arising thereof will be used to generate themes and sub-themes and linked with the literature reviewed in chapter two of this report.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter four focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the empirical data of the study based on the themes and sub-themes identified from the participants' responses. The aim of the research was to explore the perceptions of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP at the DoE in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. All interviewed participants were managers at the DoE, Head Office. The interviews were conducted from 16 May 2012 to 06 June 2012.

4.2. PRESENTATION OF DATA

The background information of the participants is presented in the form of tables, followed by discussions and analysis of the information presented.

- **SECTION A**

4.2.1 Demographic Information

The following figures and tables indicate the age distribution of the participants, their gender, ranks, number of years employed by the Department, and the number of employees managed.

- **Age Distribution of Participants**

Figure 1:   Pie-chart of age
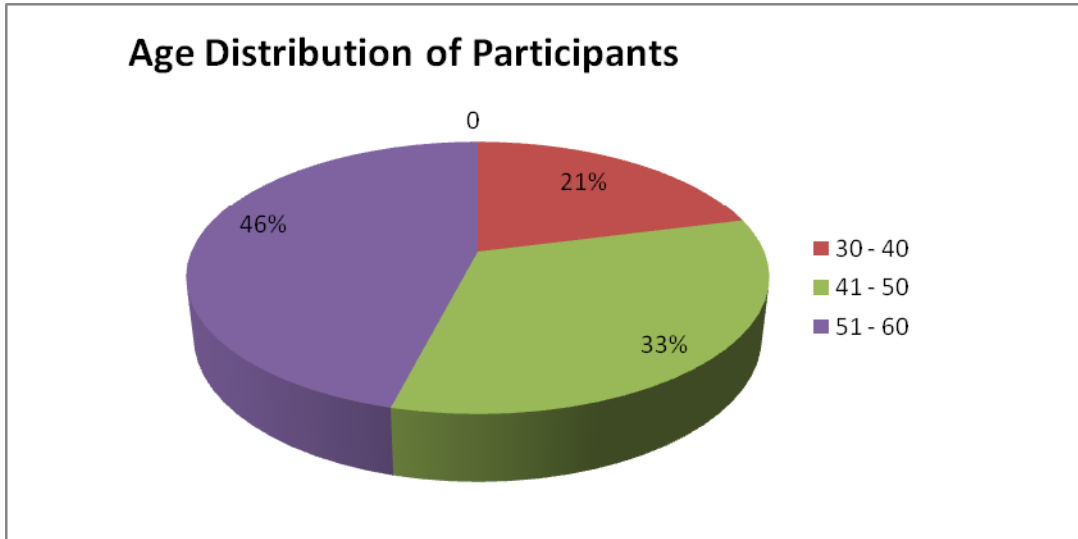
Pie Chart 1 depicts that the majority of participants (11) were between the ages of 51 to 60 years of age.   The findings suggest that managers in the DoE consist of older people.

- **Gender Distribution**

Figure 2: **Pie chart of gender**
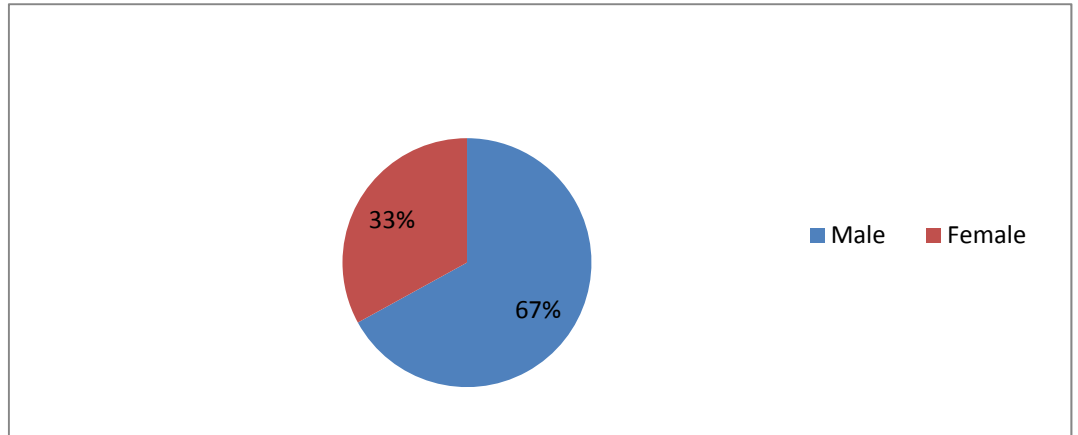
Sixteen participants (67%) were males while eight (33%) were females. The findings in this study as represented by the Chart above reveals that the management of the DoE is dominated by male employees.

Table 1: **Rank of participants**

Rank of participants	Frequency	Percentage
Senior General Manager	1	4%
General Manager	1	4%
Senior Manager	6	25%
Manager	12	50%
Deputy Manager	4	17%
TOTAL	**24**	**100%**

Table 1 clearly illustrates that the sample of the research was representative of various ranks of the management of the DoE in Limpopo Province. According to this representation, 50% of the managers participated in this study, followed by 25% of senior managers. Within the context of this study, the fact that the majority of participants were managers is of great importance as they form part of the level of management that interacts directly with officials on a daily basis. In addition, managers are also charged with the responsibility of bringing the EAP.

41

- **Race**

All the participants who took part in the study were black Africans.

Table 2:   Number of years employed by the Department

Number of years of service	Managers	Percentage
5	7	29%
6 – 11	4	17%
12 – 20	3	13%
21 – 30	8	33%
31 – 40	2	8%
TOTAL	**24**	100%

According to table 2 above, while it is clear that the majority of participants have been in the DoE in Limpopo Province for more than 21 years, only 29% of managers who also participated in this study served the Department for a period of at least five years. In this regard, this highest percentage of managers who have been in the Department long before the introduction of the EAP can have a particular influence on the utilisation of the EAP services in the organisation.

Table 3:   Number of employees managed

Number of employees managed	Managers	Percentage
1 – 5	10	42%
6 – 10	8	33%
11 – 15	3	12.5%
16 – 35	3	12.5%
TOTAL	**24**	**100%**

The table above shows that all managers have employees reporting to them. According to the table above, it is clear that the majority of managers (42%) are responsible for supervising between 1 and 5 employees each, with only 33% of managers is responsible for managing between 6 and 10 employees in the units.

- **SECTION B**

4.2.2 Central themes

De Vos (2005:338) maintains that identifying themes, recurring ideas or language patterns of belief that link people and settings is the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis. The researcher identified the following themes and sub-themes as presented in the table below.

Table 4: Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Knowledge of the EAP	- Commitment from management - Understanding of the EAP - Knowledge of a troubled employee - Managers as key role players
Referral process to the EAP	- Types of referral - Frequency of referral - Reservations to refer
Benefits of the EAP	- Increase productivity - Employees' well being
Guidelines for active involvement of managers in the EAP	- Training of managers - Early identification - Raising awareness - Policies and systems

43

THEME 1:   KNOWLEDGE OF THE EAP

The first theme identified was the participants' knowledge of the EAP. The researcher divided commitment of management, understanding of the EAP, knowledge of a troubled employee and managers as key role players into the four sub-themes.

Sub-theme 1:   Commitment of management

Participants revealed that without visible top management commitment to the EAP, the programme will not be able to play a significant role. The following are comments from participants with regard to their views on management commitment.

- *"Commitment from management can strengthen the EAP."*
- *"Management is very committed to the EAP."*
- *"Through management's commitment, we are involved in dealing with HIV/AIDS in the workplace."*
- *"Without management's commitment, the EAP will not be able to play a significant role in mitigating the impact of employees' problems."*
- *"Managers should form part of Advisory committee."*
- *"Management receives reports from the EAP implementation"*
- *"Management must manage performance and promote EAP to the staff."*
- *"Management does attend EAP events. Only a few from the management level do and this motivates junior staff."*
- *"Management of the Department gives budget to the EAP."*
- *"Management approves policies and guidelines for the EAP in the Department, and this shows commitment."*

The above comments concur with Weaver's assertion as quoted in Mannion (2004:67) that "if management is not thoroughly committed to, and knowledgeable about, the principles and practice of employee assistance, the EAP will not survive or at best will be questioned in a limited way". The comments as presented above are also in line with Barth's (2006:30) that for an

EAP to be useful and successful, the support and active involvement of managers is essential. Likewise, Carnot and Emener (2003:37) contend that it is an absolute necessity that top management at its highest level, endorses and actively supports the EAP.

Sub-theme 2:   Understanding of the EAP

The responses from the interviews indicate that the participants understand the concept of EAP as well as the need for its existence in the Department. The extracts below are an indication of the participants' understanding:

- *"An EAP is aimed at helping employees to deal and cope with their personal problems and stress related challenges."*
- *"The EAP is a programme designed to assist employees encountering physical, social or emotional challenges so that they can become productive."*
- *"An EAP is about taking care of the health and wellbeing of employees."*
- *"The EAP is meant to ensure that employees maintain healthy workplaces that take cognizance of the employees' physical, social and emotional wellbeing."*
- *"It is a programme that assists employees in considering their own wellbeing for a better life style and good health."*
- *"An EAP is a programme to assist or counsel employees who might have social or personal problems."*
- *"EAPs are programmes that cater for health, wellness and overall welfare of employees at a working institution."*

The above responses indicate that the participants understand the concept of EAP and its existence in the organisation, and that they are aware that the programme is a useful management tool for managing poor job performance. Their responses are in line with Robinson's (2008:04) concession that when employees are troubled or concerned, their behaviour usually changes work patterns and job performance may decline. In the context of this study, the participants' understanding of the concept of EAP seems to support Frost's

(1990:46) assertion that awareness of the EAP is an important predictor of utilisation.

Sub-theme 3:   Knowledge of a troubled employee

The research participants in this study also possess the knowledge regarding a troubled employee.   As shown below, their understanding of a troubled employee reveal the following characteristics:

- *"An employee who presents behavioural and emotional problems."*
- *"A clash between the personal and work life of an employee."*
- *"An employee who is always absent from work, not concentrating, not interested in work, and is always drunk."*
- *"An employee who presents personal problems."*
- *"An employee who is stressed due to the circumstances or conditions that he/she finds him/herself in."*
- *"An employee who is experiencing challenges such as severe alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual abuse and marriage problems."*
- *"An employee who shows low levels of productivity and no job satisfaction."*

The above characterisation of a troubled employee is also taken up by Bruce (1990:4) whose description of a troubled employee includes that such an employee's behaviour in the workplace causes reduced productivity. This view is also shared by Myers (1984:3) who argues that a troubled employee tend to experience job performance deficiencies, recurrent absence, poor conduct and safety and a lack of work quality. For this reason, it is important for managers to be concerned about job performance seems to be on a decline.

Sub-theme 4: Managers as key role players

It needs to be mentioned that the participants in this study do not view themselves as key role players in the successful utilisation of the EAP. The following statements are an indication of the participant's responses.

- *"I'm currently not a key role player especially considering the way the services are rendered and structured at present. Ordinarily, I would be a role player in the referral of employees for their treatments."*

- *"I would be a key role player if the system was such that we as managers are the ones dealing with referral issues."*

- *"I am not a key role player in the EAP."*

- *"I have not made any referral, maybe in the future after I will have been trained, I will be able to indicate whether I'm a key role player or not."*

- *"I think I still need some improvement/training in terms of full participation in the EAP."*

- *"I'm not a key role player as a manager, the EAP should educate staff about their services."*

The above statements undermine the views of such scholars as Blair (2004:34) and Stoer-Scaggs (1999:42), both of whom claim that the manager can be seen as a key role player in the EAP because of the daily contact with employees.

THEME 2:   REFERRAL PROCESS TO THE EAP

The research participants seem uncertain of the types of referral to the EAP, hense the possibility of infrequent referral for utilisation of the EAP in the DoE. The second theme identified in the data collected was the referral process to the EAP with the focus on types of referral, the frequency of referral and reservations to refer.

Sub-theme 1:   Types of referral

The participants in this study do not understand the different types of referral to the EAP. The following excerpts from the participants are an indication of their lack of knowledge in this regard:

- *"Financial referral."*
- *"Referral of HIV patients."*
- *"Referral on PILLIR."*
- *"Referral to medical doctors, to rehabilitation, to psychological services."*
- *"Formal, informal and self referral."*
- *"Injury at work, referred to hospital."*
- *"Medical referral and professional counselling."*
- *"Counselling, Rehabilitation and Counselling."*
- *"Alcoholics."*
- *"Supervisors referral."*
- *"Counselling, support and social support."*

The above responses are indicative of the lack of knowledge and understanding of the types of referrals within the context of the EAP. While Tiner (2006:26) and Cagney (2006b:20) distinguish between informal and formal referrals to the EAP, Hepworth et al. (2002:42) characterise referral as a process where a need for help have been identified, at the best interest of the troubled person.

Sub-theme 2:   Frequency of referral

Another trend that the researcher identified relates to the frequency of referral to the EAP by managers. The following are statements from the participants regarding the frequency of referral to the EAP.

- *"Never!"*
- *"I do not trust easily, to refer."*
- *"Seldom."*
- *"When there is a need."*
- *"Since I became a manager I have never referred an employee."*
- *"One in three years."*
- *"Sometimes, because there are benefits out of the EAP."*
- *"There are regular one-on-one meetings with my staff and problems are picked up before they worsen."*
- *"Employees have a right to do self-referral and they do it."*

Considering the fact that participants are not knowledgeable on the type of referrals, their lack of referral to the EAP are a clear indication that that managers need to be informed of the actions to be taken when urgent need arises. Cagney (2006a:18) believes that managers are the linchpin of the EAP in the organisation given their access to directly interact with their employees. As a consequence, they are the first level in the organisational hierarchy to identify any challenges and problems that the employee might be experiencing at an early stage. Tiner (2006:26) elaborates further that the manager needs to identify changes in work patterns, decreases in work performance, violations of policy and any issues that compromise the safety of the work environment. Cagney (2006b:14) is adamant that without referrals by managers, "difficult clients who do not self-refer would not be reached and clients in denial, would not be confronted".

Sub-theme 3:   Reservations to refer

With regard to the above sub-theme, it would seem that managers do not feel comfortable referring their employees to the programme. This is evident in that their responses are dominated by lack of ethical issues such as confidentiality and professionalism.   The following responses provide uncertainties and perceptions of managers as participants with regard to making referral of the troubled employees to the EAP.

- *"Many reservations yes."*
- *"The official in charge of the programme is not a professional in the field, therefore the official is not bound by any code of ethics applicable to the field of EAP."*
- *"Definitely yes, working in the EAP unit requires an element of secrecy and officials in the unit have not been vetted."*
- *"It is rumoured around that employees secrecy reported in the unit are being divulged."*
- *"No reservations about referring employees to the EAP as it is a very important programme designed to assist troubled employees at work."*
- *"Yes, because some officials in the unit are unable to maintain confidentiality of the client."*
- *"Some officials are very sceptical on the outcomes in the form of confidentiality."*
- *"Some officials in charge of the programme are not professionals."*
- *"No. The only advice is that the unit should enhance its follow-up programmes."*
- *"Yes, I do have reservations."*
- *"Private Service providers offer services much more effectively and professionally than the in-house services."*

The responses are also supported by Welss's (2003:63) view that assurance of client confidentiality is associated with a higher utilisation of the programme. EAPA SA (2010:9) takes it further by emphasising that trust can only be enhanced if the employee feels his/her privacy is protected. As already pointed

50

out elsewhere in this study, Zastrow (2004:399) offers a pragmatic view and claims that, "sometimes management finds confidentiality a difficult concession to make."

THEME 3:   BENEFITS OF THE EAP

The third theme identified from the empirical data was participant's perception regarding the benefits of the EAP in the workplace. The following two sub-themes were identified: increased productivity and employees well being.

Sub-theme 1:   Increase productivity

The participants in this study indicate that the EAP increases productivity amongst employees in an organisation. EAPA SA (2005:20) also reveals that the EAP focuses on preventing and remediating personal, work and/or family-related problems that interfere with employees' optimal productivity.   The following assertions are an indication of the participants' responses.

- *"Yes, employees feel free to confide to a neutral person (the EAP staff) and that improves productivity."*
- *"Yes, after getting assistance, performance of an employee improves."*
- *"Yes, employees realise a concern of their wellbeing from their manager."*
- *"Productivity is maintained and even improved as assistance is provided by the EAP staff."*
- *"Yes, employees receive support on prevention and treatment of all diseases that affect them negatively at work."*
- *"Yes, it leads to increased productivity, interpersonal relations and good working conditions."*
- *"Yes, productivity, creativity and commitment are increased."*
- *"Yes, employees' problems are addressed and the productivity improves and, as such, the organisation performs maximally."*

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These responses reveal that EAP services are useful to the troubled employee. These responses are also consistent with Hay's view as cited by Kraft (2004:32) that several employers recognise that, "EAP services are a low-cost, high-value asset that can make a substantial contribution to supporting human capital". Kelly et al. (2005:192) also point out that early detection is not only a benefit to the employee in distress, but also to the employer as prevention and early detection may decrease absenteeism and turnover. Joseph and Injodey (2006:31) also claim that the two key beneficiaries to gain from an EAP in an organisation are the employer and the employee. This is so because as the EAP gives the organisation an option to save a good employee, it, in turn, maintains the productivity on the part of an organisation.

Sub-theme 2:   Employees well being

The participants indicate that the EAP improves the health and wellbeing of employees in an organization, thereby assisting them to regain control of their lives, their physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing. The following statements attest to this:

- *"Yes, employees realise a concern of their wellbeing from their manager."*
- *"Yes, it helps to rehabilitate them to live a balanced life with good work ethics and principles."*
- *"Yes, healthy and energetic workforce."*
- *"Employees do benefit because they are made to realise the importance of accepting that they have a problem before they can deal with it."*
- *"Yes, employees realise that employers care about their wellbeing."*
- *"Yes, health screening and counselling assist employees to take good care of their health."*
- *"Yes, the benefits have a lot to be desired."*
- *"Employees become stress free."*
- *"Yes, to those who take the advice and live with it."*
- *"Yes, cooperation amongst employees, healthy life style of employee and good communications of employees."*

52

- *"Yes."*
- *"Yes, employees regain control and become productive."*

The above responses reiterate the definition of the EAP as "a worksite based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance" (EAPA SA, 2005:6). Kelly et al. (2005:192) take this further and state that an awareness of the EAP can lead to early detection and, ultimately, a greater return on investment for the organisation. With the existence of the EAP which is designed to assist troubled employees and their immediate family members, worker morale tends to increase as employees become more positive (Sutherland & Cooper, 2000:224).

THEME 4: GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF MANAGERS IN THE EAP

The fourth theme identified from data collected revealed that guidelines are important in obtaining active involvement and commitment by managers in the EAP. In theme 4, the following four sub-themes were identified: training of managers, early identification, raising awareness and policies and, lastly, systems.

Sub-theme 1:   Training of managers

With regard to the above theme, the participants are adamant that the training of managers in field of EAP is of utmost importance as it increases their understanding of the programme and thus improve their skills and confidence to effectively use it. The following comments relate to the point above:

- *All managers need to be informed of the programme."*
- *"Through training, we will be able to enhance employees' chances of using the EAP and thus improve the programme penetration."*
- *"I have never made any referral, maybe in future after being trained."*

53

- *"Managers must be trained so that they will be able to identify problems and challenges facing employee and refer them to the EAP."*
- *"If trained, managers will be able to assist employees who have problems."*
- *"Managers should be trained so that they become involved in the programme."*
- *"Managers are to be the ones dealing with the referral issues."*
- *"The training of managers will help become key role players."*
- *"The training of managers will increase the use of the EAP in the Department."*
- *"Refresher course for managers is necessary as they has been trained long time ago."*

The above extracts confirm that the training of managers is crucial in increasing the use of the EAP in an organisation. The responses are in line with Hopkins's (1997:33) views that through training, managers can learn to be more concern about their employees' problems and thus help them develop peer assistance programmes within an organisation. According to the EAPA SA (2010:15), the goal of training managers is to "enhance employee and organisational resilience", with the motivation to enhance managers' ability to make appropriate referrals. In order to increase the EAP utilisation rate, it is important to establish strong referral agents. The most effective means of achieving this is through the training of managers, which is one of the core technologies within the standards of the EAPA SA, and a valuable service as it will enhance utilisation of the EAP by employees (EAPA SA, 2010:1).

Sub-theme 2:   Early identification

Managers should be concerned with job performance and specifically with any consistent job performance deterioration. The consistent job performance deterioration may be any pattern of deterioration over a period of time that should be noted, documented and discussed with an individual employee. With regard to this view, the participant had the following to say:

- *"As a manager one is in a direct contact with the employees on a daily basis and therefore in a position to identify job deterioration."*
- *"One is able to observe the deterioration of the employee's performance and refer to the EAP."*
- *"As a middle manager, one has to detect and identify all problems from officials and immediately refer them to the EAP for a more professional approach."*
- *"Managers are usually the first to identify poor work performance."*
- *"Managers are the ones who are working directly with the employees. Therefore, managers are the ones who are in the best position to identify a troubled employee at an early stage."*
- *"If trained, managers will be helpful in identifying troubled employee earlier."*
- *"Managers meet with staff everyday and are able to see employees who are not well early and thus refer them to the EAP."*
- *If trained managers will be able to identify and refer employees with problems."*

The above comments are also supported by Schneider *et al'*s. (1991:41) views that managers are in a unique position to identify troubled employees and intervene in a meaningful way.

Sub-theme 3:   Raising awareness

Managers need to be responsible for ensuring that awareness is raised amongst employees and managers themselves in order to sensitise about the role that the EAP plays in addressing poor performance in an organisation. In relation to this, the participants point out that:

- *"Given an opportunity, I would ensure publicity and the benefits of the programme."*

- *"As a manager, it is pivotal to inform your colleagues regarding the EAP so that they are aware of how the programme can assist employee in the Department."*

- *"Managers should tell their staff about the existence and services of the EAP."*

- *"If trained managers should be the source of the EAP information."*

- *"The more employees are aware of the services, the higher the rate of the utilisation of the programme."*

- *"Managers should provide employees with information booklets and promotional materials in order to raise awareness of the programme."*

The extracts above give an indication that participants concur with Bruce (1990:117) who states that the responsibilities of a manager for the successful utilisation of the EAP is to know and understand how the EAP works. Bruce further argues that managers should play the role of the primary and best source of information about the EAP and its significance in an organisation. These extracts are in line with Frost's (1990:46) views that employees' awareness about the EAP is an important predictor of utilisation.

Sub-theme 4:   Policies and systems

The participants in this study also point out that appropriate policies and systems on EAP can enhance the utilisation of the programme within an organisation. Consistent with the above, participants reveal that:

- *"A manager's handbook should be developed and distributed to all managers."*
- *"Department has developed EAP policies."*
- *"Policies should comprise the curriculum of the training."*
- *"Policies should be communicated to all staff in order to ensure utilisation."*
- *"The system should allow managers to be drivers of the programme to increase utilisation."*
- *"Procedure manual should be developed."*
- *"The EAP policies are not available on the Intranet."*

The responses correlate with the report by the PSC (2006:43) which states that, "management shall ensure that overreaching policies should be developed and as a minimum they should address confidentiality". The responses are also consistent with Klarreich et al.'s (1985:183) view that once the EAP policy is in place, there is a need to promote managerial expertise and operational processes.

4.3.   SUMMARY

This study was aimed at exploring the perceptions of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of EAP in the DoE. This chapter revealed that the management level of the DoE is dominated by males, whose ages range from 30 to 50 years. The chapter also showed that managers in the DoE hold a service record of 21 to 30 years in the Department. With regard to the knowledge of the EAP, the chapter unveiled that the participants in this study are aware of the EAP but seems uncertain about the types and processes of

referrals to the EAP in the Department. Moreover, the chapter indicated that the level of trust in the EAP staff as a necessity for maintaining confidentiality and professionalism was low. In this regard, the participants in this study were not aware of the EAP policy and had never participated in any policy formulation to do with programme. The next chapter will provide the conclusions, recommendations and summary of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.   INTRODUCTION

This study was qualitative in nature and was aimed at finding answers to the research question: **What are the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP within the DoE?** The goal of the study was to explore the perceptions of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of EAP in the DoE in Limpopo Province. To do this, a non-probability sampling within the confines of a purposive sampling was used. A total of 24 managers from various ranks and units of management participated in the study. For the sake of this study, data was collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews.

This chapter serves as the final evaluation of the research process and results. The chapter concludes by providing a summary of the whole study. Also, in order to enable the researcher to design a coherent and effective research report, the following conclusions and recommendations will be necessary.

5.2   CONCLUSIONS

Drawing from the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the management of DoE comprises more males than females. The majority of managers in the Department is between ages 51 to 60 and have worked for the DoE for a period of 21 to 30 years. With these numbers of years of experience, the managers are knowledgeable and aware of the existence of the EAP within the DoE and are able to describe a troubled employee. The managers acknowledged the importance of the buy-in of management for the successful utilization of the EAP, but were unable to identify themselves as key role players in the EAP. They, however, were able to make a claim that the EAP

increases productivity and helps troubled employees to regain control of their lives.

It can also be concluded that managers in the DoE are not knowledgeable about their roles in the EAP and the referral processes involved. They do not know about the different types of referral and therefore do not refer employees to the EAP. The managers as participants in this study also expressed their reservations regarding issues of confidentiality and professionalism on the part of the EAP personnel. It can therefore be concluded that not all managers within the Department were aware of the importance of the principles of confidentiality as the cornerstone of an EAP within an organisation.

5.3.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into consideration that most of the participants in this project worked as managers in the DoE long before the introduction of the EAP, it is recommended that the training of managers be conducted to capacitate and empower them in ways that would enable them to use the EAP as a tool to manage poor performance. The training managers in this case should cover the following aspects.

- The roles of managers in the EAP;

- Identifying a troubled employee and constructive confrontation;

- The types of referral and referral processes;

- The EAP policy and procedures;

- Confidentiality as the cornerstone of the EAP;

- The various methods of utilizing the EAP;

- Key role players in the EAP; and

- The behavioural patterns of decline performance.

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Apart from the above, a manager's handbook about the EAP should be developed and distributed to all managers during training. Furthermore, the Department needs to promote managerial expertise in the utilisation of the EAP policies and processes.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Inform by the findings of this study, recommendations for further investigation into the following areas of the EAP are necessary:

- The role of Organised Labour in the successful utilisation of EAP in an organisation.
- The impact of EAP policy development in the successful utilisation of EAP in the organisation.

5.5   SUMMARY

The main goal of this study was to explore the views of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP in the DoE in Limpopo Province. The goal of this study was guided by the following objectives:

- To provide a detailed theoretical background on the role of managers in the successful utilisation of the EAP. This objective was accomplished in chapter two;
- To explore the views of managers concerning their roles in the successful utilisation of the EAP. This objective was attained in chapter four wherein empirical findings are presented in detail.   The data collected through semi-structured interviews were clearly analysed, presented and interpreted; and
- To identify strengths and shortfalls in the views of the managers on their roles in the EAP in order to make recommendations to the DoE as guidelines for the successful utilisation of the programme. This objective

has been achieved in chapter five where the researcher presents the recommendations based on the findings.

The researcher will therefore conclude that the goal and objectives of this study have been accomplished. It is evident that the managers do not have enough knowledge about their role for the successful utilisation of the EAP within the context of the Department of Education.

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APPENDIX A

Mr. MJ Thamaga

Head of Department

17 OCTOBER 2011

Enq: Ugoda T.O
Tel: 015 290 7965
Manager: Intergovernmental Relations & Donor Funding

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY FOR MASTERS IN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME: MR T.O UGODA. MANAGER: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND DONOR FUNDING

PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

The purpose of the submission it request for the HODs approval for Mr. T.O Ugoda, Manager: Intergovernmental Relations and Donor Funding unit to;

- Conduct research using Human participants (Senior Managers, Managers and Deputy Managers of Limpopo Province Department of Education) as sources of information.

- The findings and recommendations to assist on the Improvement of Employee Health and Wellness Programme for Limpopo Province Department of Education.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

- To describe the role of managers in the successful utilisation of EAP through an in-depth literature review;

- To explore the perceptions of managers concerning their roles in the successful utilisation of the EAP through an empirical study.

- To formulate conclusions and recommendations for Limpopo Provincial Department of Education regarding the roles to be played by managers in order to ensure the successful utilisation of the EAP.

72

DISCUSSION

The researcher is currently studying towards a Masters Degree in Social Work; Specializing in Employee Assistance Programmes. The researcher joined Limpopo Province Department of Education in January 2011 from Mpumalanga Department of Education through cross transfer while studying for a Master in Employee Assistance Programmes.

The goal of the study is to explore the perceptions of managers regarding their role in the successful utilisation of EAP at the Department of Education.

Limpopo Province Department of Education experienced a situation where managers are not involved in the Employee Assistance Programme and not clear of their role in the successful utilisation of the EAP in Limpopo Provincial Department of Education, which led to the under-utilisation of the EAP services. As a result the problem of under-utilisation of the programme creates doubt amongst top-management of the significance and relevance of such a programme in the department.

The researcher is of the opinion that as managers are usually the first to identify poor work performance or conduct, they need to be able to constructively confront the troubled employee and refer him/her to the EAP for assistance.

If the EAP is not fully integrated within the organisation, it will not be able to assist the employee who is experiencing job performance problems. To this end, the researcher is of the view that the study will deliver findings and recommendations that will assist the DoE to implement strategies to improve the utilisation rate of the EAP in future in order to make it a must-have programme in the department that enhance productivity amongst employees.

The most appropriate research design for the qualitative applied study is a collective case study. The population consists of all the managers (Directors,

73

Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) at the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education, Head Office in Polokwane. The researcher will utilise non-probability sampling using purposive sampling. A sample of 24 participants which are managers of each section will be drawn from the population.

The researcher will utilise semi-structured one-on-one interviews with managers from Limpopo Provincial Department of Education (Head office) in Polokwane. The researcher will make use of an interview schedule to conduct the interviews. The analytical spiral of Creswell (1998) will be used when analyzing the data. Data will be presented in the form of themes and sub-themes. In the pilot study, the researcher will pilot test the interview schedule on two managers who share the same characteristics as other managers who form the population of the study. The two participants will not be included in the main study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore recommended that the request be approved as the findings and recommendations will assist the Limpopo Province Department of Education to implement strategies to improve the utilisation rate of the EAP in future in order to make it a must-have programme in the department that enhance productivity amongst employees.

Approved/ Disapproved

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..   **..................................**

MR M.J THAMAGA   **DATE**

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PERCEPTIONS OF MANAGERS REGARDING THEIR ROLE WITHIN THE EAP

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Race
4. How long have you been working for DoE?
5. What is your position at DoE?
6. How many employees do you have reporting to you?

Section B: Knowledge of the EAP

1. Explain your understanding of the EAP?
2. Describe a troubled employee
3. Explain the different kinds of referral in the EAP
4. Are there any benefits for you in using the EAP for your employees?
5. How often do you refer employees to the EAP? Explain why
6. Do employees benefit from using the EAP? Explain
7. Do you have reservations about referring employees to the EAP? Explain
8. Would you say you are a key role player in the EAP? Explain

APPENDIX D

LETTER FROM EDITOR

76