

**THE NATURE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME  
TRAINING PRACTICES WITHIN COMPANIES IN THE  
WESTERN CAPE**

by

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**A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree**

**MSW – EAP**

**in the Department of SOCIAL WORK & CRIMINOLOGY**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

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August 2015

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and give recognition to the following persons for their unconditional assistance and support while I completed this study:

- Firstly, God Almighty for clarity of thought, as well as the means and ability to complete this study.
- My husband for his continuous love, support and encouragement.
- My parents for their love, support and belief in me.
- The companies who permitted me to complete the study on their sites and all the participants who voluntarily participated in this study.
- My supervisor, Professor C.S.L. Delpont, for her guidance, patience, support and encouragement throughout this study.
- My colleagues and friends for their professional guidance and support.

Thank you all.

## ABSTRACT

# THE NATURE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME TRAINING PRACTICES WITHIN COMPANIES IN THE WESTERN CAPE

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Training in general is receiving more attention in the new evolving work environment and companies invest a lot of time, money and effort into training activities. The aim of this research study was to explore the nature of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) training practices within companies in the Western Cape.

In order to obtain the goal of the study the following objectives were formulated:

- To explore the content of EAP related training currently being presented at companies in the Western Cape.
- To explore if the current EAP related training is meeting the goals as set out by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA.
- To explore the most beneficial EAP related training presented at companies in the Western Cape.
- To explore the current challenges that companies in the Western Cape experience regarding EAP related training of employees.
- To make recommendations regarding EAP related training practices in order to improve training practices and to proactively address training challenges.

Against this background the study was guided by the following research question:

- What is the nature of EAP related training practices in companies in the Western Cape?

A **qualitative research** approach was adopted for the purpose of this study. It was applicable because the goal was to seek a better understanding of a complex situation and to explore and to use observations to build theory from the ground up. By gathering meaningful information such as the perceptions, experiences and opinions of key role players in relation to the phenomenon of EAP related training

practices in companies, the researcher explored and described the current practices and challenges.

The researcher utilised an **applied research** approach, since it sought to understand and alleviate a demanding problem in practice (EAP related training) and provided policymakers with well-grounded guides for remedial action. As the study was grounded in the **collective case study design**, the researcher chose a number of cases (companies) to make comparisons between cases (companies) and concepts to extend and validate theories.

The researcher purposely selected information-rich participants who provided the information needed. By using **non-probability, purposive sampling** the researcher purposively selected a subset of four companies in the Western Cape and studied them to make estimations and predictions about the larger population. Within the four selected companies, 13 (two to four in each of the four organisations) participants were purposively selected from which the researcher collected information.

**Semi-structured interviewing** was used as the most appropriate method of data collection for this study. An interview schedule with some predetermined questions was utilised to guide the interviews and the questions were formulated to be open-ended to generate more in-depth responses. The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself.

The study was also concluded with some useful and relevant recommendations from the employees' responses on what programmes are currently being presented, the most beneficial programmes and how to ensure more effective EAP related training practices. One of the crucial recommendations drawn from the findings of this research study was that to ensure effective training, an assessment of the current 'state of affairs' within companies, should always be completed. Training will be workable if it is grounded on a formal assessment of what is in place and what is needed to meet the specific company's business strategies and objectives. Another recommendation is that formal EAP related supervisory training should be compulsory on an on-going basis. Supervisors should be well-informed and even trained in the skills that the employees are due to be trained in. If managers are well-

informed about the benefit of training and the impact thereof it might increase their insight, leading to their buy-in, and it might in addition address the attendance issue.

**Key Words:**

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Training

EAP Related Training

Company

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ASTD:** American Society for Training and Development

**ATR:** Annual training report

**CEOS:** Chief Executive Officers

**EAP:** Employee Assistance Programme

**EAPA-SA:** Employee Assistance Programme South Africa

**EQ:** Emotional intelligence

**ETDP SETA:** Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority

**HR:** Human Resource

**HWSETA:** Health and Welfare SETA

**ICAS:** Independent Counselling and Advisory Services

**INCON HEALTH:** Industrial Nursing Consultants

**IQ:** Intellectual potential that is fixed at birth

**NSDS III:** National Skills Development Strategy III

**PIVOTAL:** The National Skills Development Strategy III refers to professional, vocational, technical and academic learning

**SETA:** Skills Education Training Authorities

**The Standards:** Standards for Employee Assistance Programmes South Africa

**WSP:** Workplace skills plan

# CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Companies are realising that their employees are the driving force of their organisations and that the trend is moving towards investing in their employees, who are often referred to as ‘human capital’ (Attridge, 2009:1). The South African Government supported this trend by implementing the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, an incentive programme that encourages companies to train and equip their employees.

As employers started to realise the importance of investing in their staff and the Government promoted it with the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 and the Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999, the researcher has noticed more pressure on Employee Assistance Programmes (hereafter referred to as EAPs) to expand their training practices.

The focus on training and equipping employees, as well as the goal set by the Standards for EAPs South Africa (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15), namely “to provide training that enhances employee and organisational resilience”, motivated the researcher to explore the nature of current EAP related training practices within companies in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The researcher is of the opinion that to arrange or to present training is part of the role of the evolving EAPs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

EAP related training practices and needs differed due to the fact that each company operated in a unique environment and was challenged with unique problems and opportunities. This study focused on exploring the nature of current EAP related training practices within companies in the Western Cape, assessing whether they are meeting the goal and objectives set out by the Standards committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15) and adhering to the Government initiative as reflected in the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998.

## 1.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

### 1.2.1 Training and Development

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the work environment will continue to be transformed by technology and globalisation (Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000:v). Schwandt and Marquardt (2000:v) further elaborate that organisations will become more virtual than physical and that workers will be more closely linked to customers across the country than to co-workers across the hall, and products and services will have shorter shelf-lives. Survival and success will depend on a company's ability to quickly and continuously adapt to change. Furthermore, Schwandt and Marquardt (2000:v) emphasise the fact that to manage and adapt to change, while continuing to learn, is very important in the current work environment.

If companies struggled to manage and adapt to change, training programmes could be implemented at a cost to assist and enhance these processes. The Government is promoting this with the Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999, reimbursing companies for training provided. Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) emphasise that as the demands of the information age spread, companies are coming to regard "training expenses as no less a part of their capital costs than plants and equipment."

From the above it is clear that there is a lot of emphasis on training and a lot of money is spent on training, but the question needs to be asked: "Is it worth it?" As most companies are in favour of investing in their staff, scepticism often highlights that training fails to have an impact on practice (Wright, 1999:91). Wright (1999:91), estimate that only 10% of training directly impact work behaviour.

Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) advise companies, taking in account the considerable amount of time, money and effort devoted to these activities, to consider the following crucial issues regarding training and development:

- First, the company should explore the concept of what training and development activities entail. In this regard Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) highlight that it meant:

Planned programmes of organisational improvement, undertaken to bring about a relatively permanent change in employee knowledge, skills, attitudes or social behaviour ...and specifically defines the term

training as... the activities directed toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes for which there is an immediate or near-term application.

- Secondly, Cascio and Aguinis (2005:387) also note that “pre-training motivation was an important determinant of training success.” If adults perceive the training as relevant to their daily activities, their motivation increases.
- Lastly, it is also very important to get the company’s ‘buy-in’ and one way of doing that is to demonstrate how it would add value to meeting their organisational values and objectives. Wright (1999:93) highlighted that “if your subject was unlikely to be recognised or rewarded by the organisation, then even if motivation was high and the individual learns a lot, change was likely to be undermined as soon as the learner returns to work.”

The above-mentioned includes only three aspects of many to be considered when training and the benefits of training are under discussion. The researcher would like to emphasise that training in the work place is becoming a vital part of the operational responsibilities of companies. Buckingham and Coffman (1999), as quoted by Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380), postulate that “organisations that provide superior opportunities for learning and growth have a distinct advantage when competing for talented employees.”

To provide superior opportunities for learning and growth it is very important to have effective training practices in place.

### **1.2.2 Effective Training Practices**

Crucial issues regarding training and development were discussed above, but the question arises: “How can one ensure effective training practices?”

Cascio and Aguinis (2005:382) discuss the outcomes of surveys conducted on corporate training and development practices. From these surveys one very important characteristic that seemed to distinguish companies with the most effective training practices from others was highlighted. This characteristic was that their training was tied to business strategies and objectives and was linked to bottom-line results (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005:382).

To be able to tie an organisation's training programmes to its business strategies and objectives, the organisation needs to clarify its strategies and objectives and then evaluate each to determine 'growth areas'. In this regard Tannenbaum (2002), as cited in Cascio and Aguinis (2005:387), mentions "that for any important change or organisational initiative it was important to identify what new capabilities would be needed; how they compare to current capabilities and what steps were necessary to bridge the gap." Mcnamara ([sa]) advises researchers to liaise with employees or members of the organisation, because often they had some image in their minds about how the organisation should be working when things were going well.

From the above it seems thus that to ensure effective training, an assessment of the current 'state of affairs' within the company is needed. Cascio and Aguinis (2005:384) refer to the initial phase of programme development as the needs assessment phase or planning phase. The needs assessment phase forms the foundation of the entire programme; if the needs assessment is incomplete, the training implemented may be far out of tune with what an organisation really needs (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005:384).

Effective training practices rely on a need assessment of what is in place and what is needed to meet the specific company's business strategies and objectives. The researcher is of the opinion that to assess a company's soft skills training needs and to arrange or to present effective soft skills training is part of the role of the evolving EAPs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Following is an explanation of why the researcher is of the opinion that EAPs are only responsible for a company's soft skill training programmes, referred to as EAP related training.

### **1.2.3 EAP Related Training**

As emphasised above, training is becoming an important part of any company and to provide the most appropriate training to address a specific company's needs is of vital importance.

Robinson and Robinson (1989:24) maintain that the trainer should have a clear view of the outcomes he expects from the training provided. These authors mention that:

"Outcomes were generally of three types:

- behaviour or skills that people demonstrated on the job,
- non-observable results such as increased analytical ability in problem solving or,
- desired changes in attitudes or values and improved operational indicators.”

The researcher would like to differentiate between the first bullet, behaviour or skills that people demonstrate on the job, and the other two outcomes mentioned in the second and third bullet. The first bullet, behaviour or skills that people demonstrated on the job, refers to technical skills needed to do the job. For example, if you were a machine operator you would need some mechanical skills. For the purpose of this study the researcher argues that it is the company’s responsibility to identify the need and to arrange for technical training. This study will focus on the training outcomes mentioned in bullet two and three as the responsibility of the evolving EAPs.

The training outcomes highlighted in bullet two and three, namely problem solving, changes in behaviour, attitudes and values, are generally seen as soft skills. Soft skills, as defined by *Dictionary.com* (2012), are: “desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude.” Moss and Tilly (1996), as quoted by Conrad (1999:4), define soft skills as “skills, abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude and behaviour rather than to formal or technical knowledge required”. In the context of this study EAP related training will refer to soft skills training.

The only study that the researcher could find about EAP related training or soft skill training to increase effectiveness in the workplace was conducted by Taute (2008). The study focussed on life skills. The author concluded that life skills training, as part of EAPs in South Africa, could enhance the social and emotional functioning and productivity of employees (Taute, 2008).

Service providers, including the Independent Counselling and Advisory Services (ICAS) and Industrial Nursing Consultants (Incon Health), promote on their websites that they could provide soft skills training as part of their EAPs (ICAS, 2014; Incon Health, [Sa]). The Standards committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15) set the goal that EAP related training should “provide training that enhances employee and organisational resilience”. Except for the Standards for EAPs South Africa document emphasising what they expect of EAPs, there is no or limited evidence of this goal being met or that EAP providers were

being held responsible to deliver training according to a specific standard. Neither is there evidence that EAPs are assisting companies to meet their need to adhere to government legislation.

As emphasised above, the researcher is of the opinion that to assess a company's soft skill training needs and to present or arrange for appropriate training to be presented is part of the role of the evolving EAPs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Taking into account the objectives in the Standards for EAPs-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15), the guidelines set out by the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 and the Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999, and companies' need to adhere to these requirements, it was very important to explore what the current nature of EAP related training is, the challenges in this regard, and how it links to companies' expectations and their need to adhere to legislation.

The researcher focussed on four companies in the Western Cape with established EAPs in place with a significant training component. From a qualitative perspective the researcher explored the nature of the current EAP related training practices on these sites to ascertain if it meets the non-clinical service standard as set out by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15) and government legislation regarding training and development. The aim is to make recommendations contributing to more effective EAP related training practices.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The analysis and findings of this study are grounded in the ecological systems theory. The ecological systems theory is a holistic approach that views people in the context of their environments and emphasises the continuous and reciprocal influence with their environments (Maguire, 2002:90). Both person and environment can be fully understood only in terms of their inter-relationship, in which each continually influences the other within a particular context. This is also acknowledged by Kemp (2013:3), who states that in the social sciences, ecological theories, research, and intervention models focus on the complex, dynamic, and reciprocal relationships between human organisms and a range of environmental contexts, from family and immediate milieus to larger sociocultural, political, and institutional arrangements.

Colton, Sanders and Williams (2001), as quoted by Kruger and Spies (2006:160), highlight the fact that ecological thinking appeared to be on the verge of gripping the imagination of those who are involved with various clients. They also acknowledged that one of the benefits for professionals is that such a model enables them to see their clients in the widest possible holistic social context. The interaction between the client and environment is a synergistic cycle of influence between the changing individual and the changing environment (Zastrow, 2003:18-19). There needs to be adequate resources and an environment that is conducive to employees performing at peak efficiency. Any gaps in the availability of environmental resources, the inability of individuals to make use of these resources, or the dysfunctional transactions between the individuals and the environmental systems may threaten or block the fulfilment of the individuals' needs and could result in stress and/or impaired functioning (Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen, 2006:17).

Therefore the most important advantage of the ecological systems theory is its holistic approach to understanding people in their environment and the inter-relationship. It assisted the researcher to take into account the complex interrelatedness between employees, EAP related training practices that were in place, the company, and other sociocultural environmental factors, which each continually influence the other within a particular context. Grounded in the ecological theory the researcher explored the availability of resources, the usage of resources, or dysfunctional transactions between the two and made recommendations to remove any 'stress' that might have caused impaired functioning.

#### **1.4 RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) raise the concern that if a company calculated the amount of time, money and effort devoted to training activities it might be wise to make serious considerations before implementing training and development programmes.

Wright (1999:91) elaborates by stating the following:

To base your training on what you think is important or useful may fail if not taking into account the needs and goals of the organisation or the needs of individual work roles within it. Such provision may not be considered a good return on investment.



As EAPs in South Africa are still evolving there is limited information available on EAP related training practices. The researcher is of the opinion that EAPs should be managed by professionals who will be able to compile and present training for most soft skills or alternatively training should be arranged with an outside resource to conduct the appropriate soft skills training.

There is substantial existing international research on corporate soft skills training practices and the advantages thereof, but more specific research is required to bridge the “research gap” of the current nature of EAP related training practices in South Africa. As mentioned above, EAP providers advertise training programmes on their websites. Now the question is, did companies buy into it and if they did and it was presented, did it benefit the staff or address the companies’ needs? What is required is further and more up-to-date research about the nature, needs and challenges of EAP related training practices in companies in the South African context.

The researcher explored the current nature of EAP related training practices in the Western Cape of South Africa and determined whether they meet the goal and objectives set out by the Standards committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15). If not, the researcher determined what challenges played a role.

Therefore the following research question guided the study:

**What was the nature of EAP related training practices in companies in the Western Cape?**

The study was to the advantage of EAPs to increase their insight into legal matters regarding EAP related training. Challenges were identified with regard to EAP related training practices, and the information is useful for EAPA-SA and companies to amend their programmes, improve their training practices and address training challenges proactively.

## **1.5 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **Goal of the study:**

To explore the nature of EAP related training practices in companies in the Western Cape.

### **Objectives of the study:**

In order to obtain the goal of the study the following objectives were formulated:

- To explore the content of EAP related training currently being presented at companies in the Western Cape.
- To explore if the current EAP related training is meeting the goals as set out by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010).
- To explore the most beneficial EAP related training presented at companies in the Western Cape.
- To explore the current challenges that companies in the Western Cape experience regarding EAP related training of employees.
- To make recommendations regarding EAP related training practices in order to improve training practices and to proactively address training challenges.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative research approach was applicable, because the goal was to seek a better understanding of a complex situation and to explore and to use the observations to build theory from the ground up (Fouché & Delport, 2011:64). By gathering meaningful information such as the perceptions, experiences and opinions of key role players in relation to the phenomenon of EAP related training practices in companies, the researcher explored and described the current practices and challenges.

The research was applied in nature as the results were valid, descriptive and informative as to how change may be accomplished (Miller & Salkind, 2002:5) regarding EAP related training in practice. Fouché and De Vos (2011:95) emphasise that “the distinction between theoretical results and practical results marks the principal difference between pure and applied research studies.”

The researcher selected a number of cases (companies) and explored their EAP related training practices. The most appropriate qualitative research design was thus the collective **case study design**, as this design refers to choosing a number of cases to make comparisons between cases and concepts to extend and validate theories (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321).

The study population included all companies in the Western Cape with an established EAP with a significant training component. Kumar (2011:193) explains sampling as the process of selecting a few from a bigger group (the population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the occurrence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group.

By using non-probability, purposive sampling the researcher purposively selected a subset of four companies from the population to study and to use for estimations and predictions about the larger population. Within the four selected companies, 13 (two to four in each of the four organisations) participants were purposively selected from which the researcher collected information.

The researcher kept in mind that in qualitative research you do not have an exact predetermined sample size, but during the data collection phase you wait to reach a point of data saturation to make predictions about the bigger group/population (Kumar, 2011:192). The researcher interviewed participants until the saturation point was reached.

The researcher made use of a qualitative data collection method, namely **semi-structured interviews**, to collect information. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008:291) explain that semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. The flexibility of this approach, particularly as compared to structured interviews, also allowed for the discovery or elaboration of information that was important to participants, but may not have previously been thought of as relevant by the researcher.

The researcher had a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the researcher used it to guide the interview and not to dictate it (Greeff, 2011:352). The aim was to set an atmosphere and ensure a relationship where the participant was the expert and was able to introduce issues that were not included in the schedule.

Cresswell (in Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:403) views the process of data analysis as a spiral, where the researcher moves in analytical circles. One enters with data consisting of text and images and exits with an account or a narrative. The following

practical steps for qualitative data analysis presented by Schurink et al. (2011:403-404) served as a guideline for this specific study:

- Planning for recording of data
- Data collection and preliminary analyses
- Managing the data
- Reading and writing memos
- Generating categories and coding the data
- Testing and searching for alternative explanations
- Interpreting and developing typologies
- Presenting the data

The researcher planned and arranged for an appropriate setting and tried to eliminate any interference with ongoing daily activities by contacting participants in advance to set up a suitable date and time for interviews and recordings. During the interviews the researcher took brief field notes and interviews were recorded – with the consent of the participants – to allow a more comprehensive and verbatim account of the content of the interview. The interviews were later transcribed using an independent transcriber.

These notes, together with the transcriptions, were studied to identify patterns and categories. Schurink et al. (2011:410) emphasise that “salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of belief that link people and settings together is the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis.”

The basic coding system that was initially based on the themes of the interview schedule was broken down to identify more grounded categories, meaning a small manageable set of themes and sub-themes to write into the final narrative (Schurink et al., 2011:410).

As advised by Schurink et al. (2011:415), the researcher determined how useful the data were by illuminating the questions being explored and how central they are to the story that was unfolding about the social phenomenon being studied.

The researcher focused on the exhaustiveness and mutual exclusiveness of the data, verified the results against relevant literature with the view to contextualise them within

larger theoretical perspectives and paradigms, and finally presented these results in text.

The research methods used in this study will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

## 1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has been restricted in the following ways:

- Time restricted this study to 13 participants and due to the small sample size findings cannot be generalised to the whole population.
- Being qualitative in nature, this study focused on describing individuals' experiences and perceptions. These experiences and perceptions are however always subjective. The data should be interpreted as such and cannot necessarily be interpreted as the objective reality.
- Another shortfall of this research study was that the participants sometimes did not answer the questions, or answered in a disorganised or indirect fashion that complicated the data analysis process. Furthermore, even though the interview schedule was designed with ample open-ended questions so as to generate more elaborate answers, some of the participants found ways to avoid opening up in detail and just provided basic answers without clarifying exactly what they meant by some of their responses.

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following concepts were relevant in the context of this study:

- **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):** The Standards Committee of EAPASA (2010:1) defines an EAP as “the company’s resource, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues”. EAPs are therefore primarily concerned with interventions to promote effectiveness and consequently productivity in the workplace.
- **Training:** Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) define the term training as “the activities directed toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes for which there is an immediate or near-term application”. Training as defined by the

*Collins English Dictionary* (2015) is “the process of bringing a person to an agreed standard of proficiency by practice and instruction”. For the use of this study the concept training refers to the activities directed toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to bring a person to an agreed standard of proficiency.

- **EAP Related Training:** In the context of this study, EAP related training is defined as “the activities directed by the company’s resource named, the EAP toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to enhance workplace effectiveness” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15).
- **Company:** The *Collins English Dictionary* (2015) defines a company as, “a business enterprise”. The *Collins English Dictionary* (2015) further defines a ‘business’ as “an industrial, commercial, or professional operation; purchase and sale of goods and services”. This study included four companies, two in the service delivery sector and two linked to the production of goods and therefore the researcher would like to refer to the Merriam-Webster’s (2015) definition of a company for the use of this study, “a business organisation that makes, buys, or sells goods or provides services in exchange for money”.
- **Site:** In the context of this study a site is defined as, “a place where a particular event or activity is occurring or has occurred” (Oxford Dictionaries, Language matters, 2015).

## 1.9 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

### Chapter 1: General introduction

As this study was a mini-dissertation the first chapter focused on the general background of the study, problem formulation, goal and objectives of the study, research question and a brief description of research methods used in the study.

### Chapter 2: Literature review

The second chapter consists of an in depth literature review to put the research question, namely “What is the nature of EAP related training practices in companies?”, in context with the broader debate regarding training in this field. The literature review is grounded in the ecological systems theory; a holistic approach to understanding people in their environment and the interrelationship between them and their environment.

### **Chapter 3: Research methodology and empirical study**

The third chapter focuses on a detail description of the research methodology used in the study, as well as the research findings.

### **Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations**

The fourth chapter focuses on conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the study.

## **1.10 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 1 simply provided a road map of how the whole research study was conducted, as well as the layout of all the contents in the dissertation. An in-depth literature review and further discussion of the concepts around EAP related training will be presented in Chapter 2.

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME TRAINING PRACTICES

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of research in the field of EAP related training is something that becomes apparent from a brief investigation of recent literature on this topic. Firstly, research has proven “that organisations investing more than their competitors in training and innovative human resource practices tend to outperform their competitors” (Rothwell, Lindholm & Wallick, 2003:xi). Secondly, a number of challenges are highlighted that need to be addressed in this regard (Shenge, 2014; Laker & Powell, 2011) and thirdly, it is clear that there are a number of factors that contribute significantly to the successful implementation of training in the workplace (Georges, 1996).

In the context of this study, training shall comprise activities directed toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to bring employees to an agreed standard of proficiency. Shenge (2014:51) notes that “effective training could raise performance, improve morale, and increase an organisation’s potential”.

This chapter will review the main categories of literature on the subject of EAP related training and will highlight the following themes relevant to the research topic. Firstly the researcher will conceptualise relevant concepts, namely training generally and EAP related training specifically, and then integrate current legislation regarding training. Attention will be given to the Standards for EAPs South Africa; a guideline to assist all relevant stakeholders in establishing and enhancing quality EAPs in accordance with international best practices. A short discussion will follow reflecting on the most important soft skills required in the workplace, for example communication and adaptability skills, development skills, group effectiveness skills, and influencing skills (Conrad, 1999:10). Before the conclusion of the chapter, the challenges in relation to the implementation of training and effective training practices will be discussed.



The relevant literature will be discussed briefly to contextualise the current research and to give an indication of the need for this study. In the literature survey it became apparent that much more research is required on EAP related training.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS: TRAINING AND EAP RELATED TRAINING**

Rothwell et al. (2003:xi) note that “for many years, chief executive officers (CEOs) and board members have used different versions of the politically correct phrase, ‘people are our most important assets’ in board meetings, stockholders meetings, and annual reports.” Research has generally proven this statement to be true and as indicated above, “organisations investing more than their competitors in training and innovative human resource practices tend to outperform their competitors” (Rothwell et al., 2003:xi).

As stated in Chapter 1, Attridge (2009:1) agrees that companies realise increasingly that their employees are the driving force of their organisations and that it is becoming the trend to invest in their employees; their ‘human capital’. Again, referring to Chapter 1, the South African Government supported this trend by implementing the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, a programme that encourages companies to train and equip their employees, as well as the Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999, an incentive programme to reimburse companies who invested in training.

In order to understand EAP related training practices it is thus important to firstly conceptualise the key concepts ‘training’ as well as ‘EAP related training’.

### **2.2.1 Training**

When exploring the term training, Rothwell et al. (2003:3) describe training as “thorough planned learning interventions, focusing on identifying and developing key competencies that enable employees to perform their current jobs”. Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) define the term training as “the activities directed toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes for which there is an immediate or near-term application”. The *Collins English Dictionary* (2014) defines training as “the process of bringing a person to an agreed standard of proficiency by practice and instruction”. In

the context of this study, the term training denotes activities directed at the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to bring an employee to an agreed standard of proficiency.

The researcher would like to focus on Shenge's (2014:50) approach to training, which describes training as "an organised approach to positively impacting individuals' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to improve individual, team, and organisational effectiveness". Shenge (2014:50) stresses that "training gives organisations access to resources that will allow them to compete successfully in a changing environment". Schwandt and Marquardt (2000:v) emphasise that to manage and adapt to change while continuing to learn is very important in the current work environment, "survival and success will depend on a company's ability to quickly and continuously adapt to change".

Organisations often refer to training and development as if it is a single discipline. It should be emphasised though that the focus of training is typically on providing employees with specific skills or helping them correct deficiencies in their performance, whilst development on the other hand is aimed at providing employees with the abilities that the organisation will need in future (Shenge, 2014:50). "Training is job-specific and its scope is on individual employees while the scope of development is on the entire work group" (Shenge, 2014:50).

To conclude, Rothwell et al. (2003:25) identify the key aspect of training as "understanding the mission of the business and then to develop programmes in an organised fashion that will facilitate the accomplishment of that mission". Effective training can raise performance, improve morale, and increase an organisation's potential according to Shenge (2014:51). In recognition of the importance of training Nickols (2000), as cited in Shenge (2014:51), notes that "training is a management tool, not the private domain of those who specialise in its development or delivery".

### **2.2.2 EAP related training**

In order to understand the concept EAP related training as the focus of this study, the researcher deems it expedient to differentiate first of all between hard skills (technical skills that involve working with equipment, data, software, etc.) and soft skills, which

denotes intrapersonal skills such as one's ability to manage oneself as well as interpersonal skills such as how one handles one's interactions with others (Laker & Powell, 2011:112). Just as the trainers are different for each of these areas, the methods of instruction are different as well (Goldstein & Sorcher, 1974 in Laker & Powell, 2011:120):

Soft skill training is typically more experiential (case study, role playing, conference, seminar, etc.), with more formalistic methods of evaluation, whereas hard skills training relies on more performance based methods of instruction (on the job training, job instruction training, etc.) and more summative forms of evaluation.

The importance of soft skills training is emphasised by Laker and Powell (2011:113) who remarked that there is an increasing awareness that technical skills, even for technical positions, are insufficient for success beyond entry-level positions, let alone for professional fields. In this regard the authors postulated that, "subsequent success beyond these initial levels usually requires proficiency in soft skill areas: leadership, self-management, conflict resolution, communication and emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1995; Laker & Powell, 2011:113).

The most important soft skills that organisations look for when recruiting new employees, according to the *NACE Job Outlook 2008*, are communication skills (4.6 on a 5 point scale, 5 being ranked as 'extremely important'), a strong work ethic (4.6), teamwork skills (4.5), and initiative, interpersonal skills and problem solving skills in a close collective fourth place with a 4.4 rating (Manktelow, 2009:5). In this regard Caudron (2011:1) refers to the managing director of the Centre for Professional Development at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, who remarks that a new era is dawning in Corporate America and executives are starting to talk about the importance of trust, confidence, empathy, adaptability and self-control as needed soft skills.

Soft skills are also associated with emotional intelligence. According to Caudron (2011:2) there is solid research to prove that the soft skills listed above that contribute to emotional intelligence, can be taught. Unlike IQ, which is a person's intellectual potential that is fixed at birth, patterns of emotional intelligence (or "EQ") can be developed over time. Caudron (2011:1) highlights that this information resulted from Daniel Goleman's research published in his international best seller *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* and his follow-up book *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. Due

to all the publicity generated by Daniel Goleman's best sellers, employers do appear to be more willing to invest in soft skills development, especially at the higher management levels (Caudron, 2011:2).

Although most EQ development programmes centre on soft skills training, the broader focus on behaviour and organisational change means that EQ efforts typically take much longer and are more involved than conventional skills development courses (Caudron, 2011:4). "To get the bottom-line benefits from soft-skills development, employers have to be willing to commit for the long haul" (Caudron, 2011:4).

EAPs are primarily concerned with interventions aimed at the promotion of effectiveness and consequently productivity in the workplace. Matlhape (2003:31) contends that EAP services are an essential component of the workplace, given the key role it can play in enhancing productivity and improving profitability. As emphasised in Chapter 1, the researcher is of the opinion that one of the principal objectives of an EAP, as it evolves into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will be to assess the soft skills training needs of companies and to present or arrange for appropriate training to be presented at such organisations. Soft skills training presented or arranged to be presented by the EAP will thus be referred to in this study as EAP related training.

EAP related training forms part and is embedded in legislation regarding training practices in the South African context as it will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.3 LEGISLATION REGARDING TRAINING PRACTISES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

By implementing the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, the South African Government showed its commitment to supporting organisations to train and equip their staff. The main objective of this enactment is to improve skills and increase productivity in order to compete successfully in a global economy (Services Sector Education & Training Authority, [Sa]). To accomplish this, the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 encourages employers to promote skills development by using the workplace as an active learning environment. The levy grant scheme, legislated through the Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999, serves to fund the skills development initiative in the country. The intention is to encourage a planned and structured approach to learning (Services Sector Education & Training Authority, [Sa]). To do this the South

African Government implemented Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), each with its own clearly defined sector and sub-sectors. The Education, Training and Development Practices, Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) is in place to oversee all the SETAs in respect of training and to manage the levies (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *ETDP SETA*).

The question is: why is it important to have knowledge of the SETAs, ETDP SETAs and levies? The reason is that the South African Government is promoting training via the Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999, allowing companies to claim back some of the levies paid as an incentive for training provided. The researcher is of the opinion that it is very important for EAP consultants to have knowledge of this legislation and how levies can be claimed back so that they are able to advise companies or to align their training to the benefit of the company. Matlhape (2003:31) contends that EAP services are an essential component of the workplace, given the key role it can play in enhancing productivity and improving profitability. He argues therefore that, “EAPs should be regarded as a strategic issue and therefore be located in the core strategies of the business” (Matlhape, 2003:31). The EAPs should liaise with the human resource (HR) department when it comes to the planning of training or accrediting training material to ensure the maximum advantage for a company.

Against this background it is important to elaborate on the Skills Education Training Authorities in South Africa (SETAs), the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector (ETDP SETA) and the Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999.

### **2.3.1 Skills Education Training Authorities in South Africa (SETA)**

The first important legislation aspect in the context of EAP related training is the so called “SETA” which stands for Skills Education Training Authorities in South Africa (Skills Development Act 97 of 1998:10). In order to understand the SETA it is important to take note of the fact that there are a substantial number of people throughout South Africa who want and need to learn new skills. Some of these people are still at school or in college, while others are already employed but need to improve the skills that they have or acquire new ones to be applied in a changing workplace. More than half of the Grade 12 learners in the South African school system don’t have sufficient basic skills to find employment in any sector of the economy (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa]

*Skills Education Training...*). It is clear therefore that skills development, along with training and education are vital elements for the public in South Africa and for the country's economy generally.

Prior to 2000, there were 33 industry training boards in South Africa that covered various sectors of the economy. While their responsibility was supposedly “education and training”, they focused mainly on apprenticeships (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *Skills Education Training...*). They weren't responsible for ensuring the levels of quality of, for example, college courses and similar training initiatives.

Recognising the dire need to improve skills development, the South African Parliament promulgated the Skills Development Act in 1998 (Skills Development Act 97 of 1998) which introduced a new SETA system. In March 2000, the then Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana, formally established 23 SETAs, each with its own clearly defined sector and sub-sectors. All the SETAs were to be responsible for both the private and public sectors within their own sector as a whole (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *Skills Education Training...*). One SETA would deal with banking, for example, while another would deal with health and welfare. In this regard, for example, the mission of the Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA) is to “create and implement an integrated approach for the development and provision of an appropriately skilled workforce that will be empowered to render quality health and social development services that are comparable to world class standards” (Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority HWSETA, 2014). The scope of this SETA includes private and public hospitals, nursing services, veterinary services, optical and optometric services, and social work activities (HWSETA, 2014).

The SETAs were to engage with learnerships, internships, unit based skills programmes, and apprenticeships. The SETAs were also given much greater powers than the training boards had had, and far greater responsibilities. One of the primary objectives of the SETAs was to collect skills levies from employers within each sector, in terms of the Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999, and make the funds so collected available within the sector for education and training. These funds were to be made available to employers, training bodies, and learners in the form of discretionary grants and bursaries (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *Skills Education Training...*).

In November 2009 Mr Thabo Mashongoane, director at the Department of Higher Education and Training, announced that the Department of Higher Education and Training would assume the responsibility for skills development that had previously been one of the functions of the Department of Labour (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *Skills Education Training...*). Following the transfer of the responsibility to the Department of Higher Education and Training, Mr Mashongoane introduced a draft framework in April 2010 for a new **National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III)** to be implemented between March 2011 and March 2016. Companies are currently guided by the third National Skills Development Strategy (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011:3) following the integration of higher and further education and skills development into a single Department of Higher Education and Training.

The NSDS III promotes partnerships between employers, public education institutions (Further Education and Training colleges, universities, universities of technology), private training providers, and SETAs in order to integrate education and training for the benefit of all South Africans. “Advocating that priority will be given to strengthen the relationship between public colleges, universities, the SETAs, and employers” (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011:3).

### **2.3.2 Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA)**

The ETDP SETA is a vital link between the various South African SETAs that were set up between 1998, when the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 came into force, and 2000, when the SETAs began operating. The declared vision of the ETDP SETA has therefore been to promote and facilitate the development and improvement of the skills profile of the education, training and development sector so as to benefit not only employers, but also employees and the full range of workers (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *ETDP SETA*).

Ultimately, this SETA is an important driver for the South African economy as a whole, as it will contribute to a better educated and informed workforce with valuable workplace experience and ethics.



### **Goal and objectives of the ETDP:**

While each individual Education and Training Authority has a closely defined sector to focus on, the ETDP SETA has to focus on a much wider education and training base. In general, the ETDP SETA's mission is to promote, facilitate and develop education, training and development as a whole, with the aim to (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *ETDP SETA*):

- ensure that the skill levels of employees and workers are constantly raised and improved,
- ensure that there is a healthy balance between supply and demand in the labour market across all sectors,
- ensure that there are diverse and flexible routes that allow for all levels of both initial and later in-service education and training of the full spectrum of workers and employees involved in education and training,
- ensure that a wide variety of different career paths are available to South Africans seeking employment,
- improve the general quality of education and training – from college courses to every variable short course an establishment might seek to offer,
- administer the required levy grant system efficiently,
- effectively improve internal and external communications so that national human resources and skills development progress as rapidly as possible,
- encourage dialogue and interaction between everyone in the sector – both private and public – in terms of training delivery and the transfer of skills,
- make sure that workers and employees, as well as employers, all benefit from good quality training that leads to a higher productivity rate, and
- encourage harmonious mutual dependencies between employers and their employees.

Ultimately, the ETDP is also responsible for liaising regularly with all the other SETAs, as well as the departments of Education and Labour, the National Skills Authority (NSA), and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The ETDP will continue to focus on education, training and development in all its guises from the simplest short course to college courses that continue for several years (iEducation SETA South Africa, [Sa] *ETDP SETA*).



### 2.3.3 Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999

In terms of the Skills Development Levy Act, No. 9 of 1999, all organisations in South Africa with a payroll exceeding R500,000 per annum must pay a 1% Skills Development Tax on their payroll. This tax is paid by the employer as part of its general statutory taxes calculated in accordance with the EMP 201 SARS form (Skills Development Levy Act 9 of 1999). In terms of this act organisations may recover up to 80% of their paid Skills Development Levies (Thomas, 2014) provided that they arrange approved training for employees.

As emphasised above, the ETDP SETA administers the required levy grant system to ensure that workers, employees and employers all benefit from good quality training that leads to a higher productivity rate. Companies that pay these Skills Development Levies may claim back in accordance with the system and principles, the salient aspects of which are set out below.

An organisation is allowed to claim back 20% as part of a mandatory grant from the ETDP SETA, but a precondition for such a claim to be honoured is the compilation of a workplace skills plan (WSP) (Skills Development Act 97 of 1998:10; Services Sector Education and Training Authority, [Sa]). A WSP is a document that serves to structure the type and amount of training for the year ahead, and is based on the skills needed by a particular organisation. A good WSP should consider current and future needs, taking into account gaps identified through a skills audit, the performance management system, succession planning initiatives, and any new processes or technology changes planned for the year (Services Sector Education and Training Authority, [Sa]). It is a structured document that states what training and interventions the company is planning for the year. In addition to the compilation of the WSP the organisation must prepare an annual training report (ATR), which in essence comprises all attendance registers, proof of expenditure, and a list of training providers used. With the ATR, the SETA can establish whether training was done or is in the process of being done (Services Sector Education and Training Authority, [Sa]). Once an organisation has completed these two documents it becomes eligible to receive its mandatory grant.

At this stage most EAP related training is claimed or included in the WSP and ATR (Thomas, 2014) or in other words claimed under the mandatory grant. However, the

company can only claim 20% of levies paid via the mandatory grant. The question then arises: how does the discretionary grant work and how can EAP related training presented be claimed under the discretionary grant to support the company to receive another estimated 60% of levies paid?

When the question is raised about discretionary grants, The NSDS III refers to professional, vocational, technical and academic learning (PIVOTAL) programmes (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011:3). These are programmes which provide a full occupation-directed qualification. Such programmes will normally begin in a college or university and would include supervised practical learning in a workplace as part of the requirements set by the relevant learning institution. The programmes – especially for workers – could in some cases start in the workplace and then move to a college or university. The programmes would typically culminate in an occupational qualification. PIVOTAL courses will normally be offered by arrangement between a SETA, an educational institution, an employer and a learner. Fundamental to the successful implementation of PIVOTAL programmes will be a model of cooperation between a SETA, a higher or further education and training institution, and an employer. This will help ensure responsive curricula and courses (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011:9).

To claim back the expenses incurred on any EAP related training under the discretionary grant, the training will have to form part of a qualification. For example, as part of a learnership employees must complete a module on fundamentals, which has traditionally been limited to numeracy and literacy, but which can now include soft skills. The relevant course material will have to be accredited for the employee to receive the qualification and the company to be able to claim any discretionary levies (Thomas, 2014).

Above-mentioned legislation shows the commitment by the South African Government towards training practices in all sectors, and a general understanding of the acts are very important as explained above but the focus of this study is on EAP related training presented at companies and in this regard guidelines are provided by the Standards for Employee Assistance Programmes South Africa document (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010). The following section will include a discussion of these guidelines.

## 2.4 EAP TRAINING AS A STANDARD IN THE EAPs IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010) compiled a set of standards, namely the “Standards for Employee Assistance Programmes South Africa” (hereafter referred to as ‘The Standards’) to serve as a guideline to assist all relevant stakeholders in establishing and enhancing quality EAPs in accordance with international best practices. It is recommended that The Standards should be adapted without compromising the underlying principles.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, The Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:1) defines an EAP in The Standards as “the company’s resource, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues”. EAPs are therefore concerned primarily with interventions to promote effectiveness and consequently productivity in the workplace.

The first of the six core technologies referred to in the definition of EAPs is “training and development”. This includes “training and development of, and assistance to, company stakeholders (managers, supervisors, and unions) seeking to effectively manage the employee who is experiencing behavioural, emotional and wellness issues; enhancing the work environment and improving employee job performance” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1). The International Standards for EAPs (Employee Assistance Professionals Association, 2010:27) also emphasise that the EAP should promote leadership training that will educate leaders about their roles in the programme and that will enable them to communicate to employees’ programme objectives and procedures. The intent of training is to provide role clarification and skill in early problem recognition, timely intervention, and appropriate referral to the EAP.

The above-mentioned guidelines place a lot of emphasis on training and developing managers, supervisors and unions in the use of the EAP, referring to supervisory training. But the purpose of The Standards is also to provide the scope of EAP services and in this regard the researcher would like to refer to Standard number 23, highlighted by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15), which focuses on training as an intervention strategy. The goal set for EAP training as an intervention is to provide

training that enhances employee and organisational resilience (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15).

The researcher would like to highlight the first two objectives to reach this goal:

- “To provide targeted interventions in response to commonly identified trends and business risks, and
- to build and strengthen individual and organisations skills and competencies” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1).

In other words The Standards promote soft skill training in principle. The important question is, though, how companies should go about identifying trends and business risks and deciding what training to present.

Cascio and Aguinis (2005:382) discuss the outcomes of surveys conducted in respect of corporate training and development practices. These surveys highlighted one very important characteristic that seemed to distinguish companies with the most effective training practices from others. What made the difference is that the companies with the effective training practices tied their training to business strategies and objectives, therefore linking it to bottom-line results (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005:382).

A theme that will be explored in more detail in this study is the basis upon which companies currently identify EAP related training topics to be presented and as recommended above how to tie it to the business strategies and objectives. However, before turning to such discussion the researcher would like to discuss in general soft skill themes/topics, which are considered important to present.

## **2.5 SOFT SKILLS AS A FOCUS OF EAP TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE**

Today’s job market is becoming ever more competitive and for that reason soft skills are deemed very important. To be successful in this challenging environment, candidates for jobs have to possess a “competitive edge” that distinguishes them from other candidates with similar qualifications and comparable evaluation results (Schulz, 2008:150). The competitive edge refers to additional knowledge and skills made up of convincing personal traits and habits, in other words soft skills (Schulz, 2008:150). Conrad (1999:9) highlights that experimental evidence confirms that soft skills affect the

ratings of job applicants and refers to empirical studies showing that workers with soft skills earn higher salaries. Another study done by Moss and Tilly (1995), cited in Conrad (1999:10), states that “86% of employers included soft skills on their list of most important hiring criteria”.

The most important soft skills that organisations look for, as highlighted in paragraph 2.2.2 according to the *NACE Job Outlook 2008*, are communication skills, strong work ethic and teamwork skills (Manktelow, 2009:5). Schulz (2008:149) highlights communication skills, critical and structured thinking, and creativity. When it comes to technical professionals, Bancino and Zevalkink (2007:21) suggest that communication is the skill most often lacking and they elaborate that communication training programmes usually contain a mix of topics such as: face-to-face communications, nonverbal communication, active listening, writing, and presentation skills. Bancino and Zevalkink (2007: 21) are also of the opinion that basic interpersonal skills, such as self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management, conflict management and diversity, are excellent complements to communication skills.

It should therefore be stated that when the issue of soft skills is raised in literature, communication skills are the first to be highlighted. The studies done by Manktelow (2009:5), Schulz (2008:149), and Bancino and Zevalkink (2007:21) are only a few examples of many studies done exploring the soft skills needed in the corporate environment. However, the researcher would like to discuss soft skills according to skill groups identified in a study done by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). The ASTD conducted extensive on-site and telephone interviews with employers nationwide in the United States (US) and from these interviews the ASTD identified seven skill groups, four of which are soft skills (Conrad, 1999:10). Conrad (1999:10) and Overtom (2000) both refer to this study in their articles.

The researcher is of the opinion that the skill groups identified by the ASTD can be seen as a comprehensive summary of the soft skills required giving an employee a ‘competitive edge’. The soft skill groups identified were the following:

- “Communication and adaptability skills (speaking, listening, problem solving and thinking creatively);

- development skills (self-esteem, motivation and goal setting, career planning/development);
- group effectiveness skills (interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation); and
- influencing skills (understanding organisational culture, sharing leadership)” (Conrad, 1999:10).

The researcher is going to use these four soft skill groups for the purpose of this study as the soft skills required by employees in the corporate environment. However, based on the literature review, the researcher adds one additional skill to the communication and adaptability skills list, namely time management. See Table 2.1 for a visual display of the four soft skill groups mentioned above.

**Table 2.1: Soft Skills identified for the use of this study.**

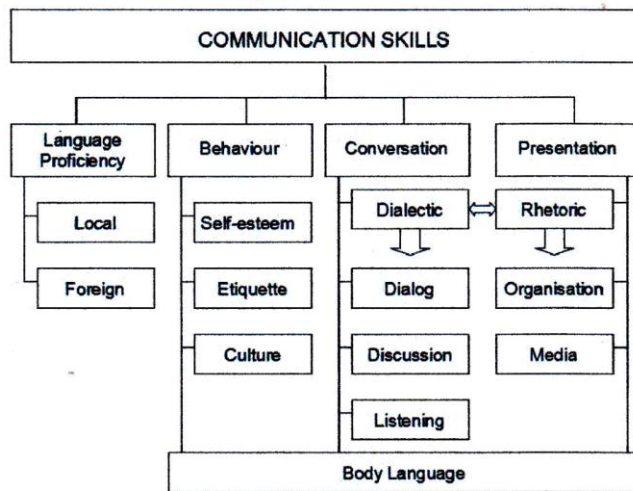
<b>Communication &amp; Adaptability Skills</b> Speaking Listening Problem Solving Thinking Creatively Time Management	<b>Group Effectiveness Skills</b> Interpersonal skills Negotiation Teamwork
<b>Development skills</b> Self-esteem Motivation Goal Setting Career Planning/development	<b>Influencing Skills</b> Understanding Organisational Culture Sharing Leadership

In the paragraphs that follow an explanation is given on what these four soft skill groups entail and why they are considered important.

### 2.5.1 Communication and adaptability skills

As clearly indicated in point 2.5, communication skills are indeed the most needed soft skill, but unfortunately also the most lacking (Schulz, 2008:149). As indicated in the table above, communication and adaptability skills consist of speaking and listening, problem solving, thinking creatively and time management.

Specifically referring to **speaking and listening** as part of communication skills the researcher would like to set out what it entails in her opinion by referring to Figure 2.1 below, as compiled by Schulz (2008:148).



**Figure 2.1: Communication Skills**

According to Figure 2.1, Schulz (2008:149) emphasises that communication consists of language proficiency, behaviour, conversation and presentation. It is not just about being fluent in the required language, but one's behaviour should complement the situation. It includes how you present yourself, appropriate etiquette as required by the situation, and respecting cultural diversity. Conversation consists of a dialog, including listening and discussing. The fourth pillar, presentation, is to organise and present information and data via different channels.

Schulz (2008:149) deems communication skills essential as they are a prerequisite for a range of other soft skills, such as moderating discussions or conflict management.

When it comes to **problem solving and creative thinking** Overtom (2000) highlights the competing market that led to the redesign of the workplace into an innovative work environment known as the high performance workplace. According to Bailey (1997) and Packer (1998), both cited in Overtom (2000), this environment requires behaviour and orientation towards work that go beyond step by step task performance. It expects workers at all levels to **solve problems**, create ways to improve the methods they use, and engage effectively with their co-workers. Schulz (2008:149) elaborates that problem solving includes filtering data, analysing it and making informed decisions based on the data. The skill creativity on the other hand refers to 'thinking out of the box' during the problem solving process and finding innovative approaches to solving problems (Schulz, 2008:149).



**Time management** is not mentioned above in the four soft skill groups identified in the ASTD. The researcher would like to include time management in this study as one of the soft skills required by companies under communication and adaptability skills. The researcher is of the opinion that adaptability means to be flexible, and to be flexible while still ensuring that an employee meets deadlines, implies that the employee should be in control of his or her time. Time management promotes efficient work practices by highlighting wastage and it leads to effective use of time by focusing on chosen activities (Blair, 1992:7). Personal time management can be defined as, “a systematic application of common sense strategies, enabling you to take control of your own time, how you then use that time is up to you” (Blair, 1992:7). As far back as 1989 Robinson and Robinson (1989:35) emphasised a frequent request for time management training. They argued that it seems to be “the cure for many performance ills”.

### 2.5.2 Group effectiveness skills

In order to work effectively in a group, Bancino and Zevalkink (2007: 21) are of the opinion that basic interpersonal skills, which include self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management, conflict management and diversity, are essential. As far back as 1988 Carnevale, Gainer and Meltzer (1988:14) emphasised that whenever people work together successful interaction depends on negotiation skills and a sense of group purpose and the quality of these factors defines and controls working relationships (Carnevale et al., 1988:14).

**Interpersonal skills** training is directed toward assisting employees to recognise and improve the ability to judge and balance appropriate behaviour, cope with undesirable behaviour in other words to, absorb stress, deal with ambiguity, listen, inspire confidence in others, structure social interaction, share responsibility, and interact easily with others. Such skills are essential to successful **negotiation** (Carnevale et al., 1988: 14).

**Teamwork** as a group effective skill comprises interpersonal and negotiation skills (Carnevale et al., 1988:14). However, Conrad (1999:9) is of the opinion that “in some ways interpersonal and teamwork skills encompass all the other workplace competencies.” Teamwork requires good speaking and listening skills, strong self-esteem coupled with a sense of responsibility, and the cognitive skills to recognise group norms (Conrad, 1999:9).



Team members also need an understanding of group dynamics, which evolve and change as the team approaches its goal. Greenberg and Baron (2003:7) emphasise the importance of teamwork. They state that “people who are carefully trained to work together in teams tend to be happier and more productive than those who are simply thrown together without any definite organisational support” (Greenberg & Baron, 2003:7).

### 2.5.3 Development skills

As far back as 1988, Carnevale et al. (1988:13) postulated that “an individual's effectiveness in the workplace can be linked directly to positive **self-esteem** and successful personal management” highlighting that “a good self-image means the employee takes pride in his or her work”. Swann, Chang-Schneider and Larsen McClarty (2007:88) elaborates that, “theoretically, efficacy/self-views influence the choices people make, the effort they expend, how long they persevere in the face of challenge, and the degree of anxiety or confidence they bring to the task at hand”.

Key elements of self-esteem training include assisting employees to recognise their current skills, become aware of their impact on others, understand their emotional set points, acquire the ability to cope with stress, change, criticism, etc., and deal with their own limitations by recognising the need for and seeking new information to apply to problems and construct solutions (Carnevale et al., 1988:13). Swann, Chang-Schneider and Larsen McClarty (2007:88) further explain in this regard, “that a higher self-esteem do not alter people’s capabilities, they help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have, efficacy/self-views thus help explain why performances differ among people who have similar knowledge and skills”. Different performances lead to the question of what motivates people?

**Motivation** defined by *Dictionary.com* (2012) is, “the state or condition of being motivated or having a strong reason to act or accomplish something”. Valencia ([sa]) is of the opinion that motivation comes from within us such as thoughts, beliefs, ambitions, and goals. Carnevale et al. (1988:13) had the following to say in this regard: “for an employer to succeed in the market place employees must be motivated, they must possess the ability to set and to meet reasonable goals.” Setting reasonable goals link to career planning and management. The literature suggests that there is a major shift

away from the traditional career from (life-long employment with a single employer or two) to multiple careers, with shorter times spent in each career. The shift to individual focused **career management/planning** is significant, but the organisational role should not be underestimated (Baruch, 2006:135). Baruch (2006:135) highlights that with further rapid changes, new technologies and increased rate of knowledge acquisition, employees need more training and development activities because the need for flexibility, innovation, quality and efficiency, which spread from production to services and beyond are consistent across geography and sectors.

To conclude, personal and career development skills rest on a foundation of good self-esteem and motivation, and from the shop floor to the salesroom the motivated employee comes out on top. Carnevale et al. (1988:13) is of the opinion that training in motivation/goal setting is, “rooted in techniques for setting and meeting defined objectives, including recognising signposts of incremental success along the way toward meeting a goal. Like self-esteem training, it focuses on self-awareness and adaptability as keys to dealing with things or people and it also emphasizes self-direction.”

#### **2.5.4 Influencing skills**

Influencing skills as the fourth soft skills group focusing primarily on the skills of understanding organisational culture and sharing leadership (Conrad, 1999:10).

Organisational factors, for example norms, rules, procedures, as well as reward and punishment structures are typically interwoven with an individual’s present intra- and interpersonal behaviour. It is very important to have a good knowledge and understanding of an **organisation’s culture**, because to change soft skill behaviours successfully the organisational forces that maintain those behaviours must also change (Laker & Powell, 2011:115).

The organisation as a whole plays a role to influence specific behaviours, but Laker and Powell (2011:116) point out that with soft skills “it is very likely that the trainee will look to the manager as a role model/coach in view of new behaviours or the implementation of the behaviours.” Thus it is important for managers to play a significant role in deciding on soft skill training and to take part in training and model the behaviour.

Emphasising the important role of managers above it is also important to discuss the movement towards **shared leadership** as shared leadership is seen as one of the soft skills needed according to the ASTD. Graham (2007:3) supports this by stating that, “great leaders are necessary and very helpful to raising performance standards, but true leadership for high performance teams is shared leadership”. A team can become dependent on a leader and the principle of shared leadership is interdependence, every member of the team is taking ownership and responsibility for the overall performance of the group. Graham (2007:3) is of the opinion that in business shared leadership can take a group of individuals to a higher level of performance and productivity. Graham (2007:3-4) highlights the following 6 fundamentals for successful shared leadership:

- respect for each individual,
- trust in each other,
- common or shared goals,
- personal accountability,
- effective communication,
- discipline to stay the course.

To conclude, Schulz (2008:149) highlights that a large part of soft skills relates to personal traits and habits. An interesting question flowing from this is whether a person’s traits and habits can be changed or improved? Schulz (2008:150) refers to the debate about whether it is possible to enhance soft skills in a few hours of training. He concludes, though, that whether or not it is possible a professional who wants to achieve success has no choice but to acquire and improve his/her soft skills. To conclude the researcher would like to quote Schulz (2008:150): “A key aspect in this regard is a person’s ability to recognise and acknowledge certain behavioural shortfalls or plain bad habits. As a German proverb states: ‘Self-recognition is the first step towards improvement’”.

Some soft skill training themes/topics are deemed more important than others and above-mentioned was a discussion of only a few of many soft skills that can contribute to a company’s effectiveness. The following section will explore the challenges when arranging and implementing EAP related training (soft skills training).

## 2.6 CHALLENGES WITH REGARD TO EAP RELATED TRAINING

Training typically presents a number of challenges and every training process brings with it a number of questions that managers have to answer. Shenge (2014:51) identified the following as examples of such questions: “Is training the solution to the problem? Is training a good investment? Will the training be feasible?” All these questions are predicated on sound theoretical frameworks about training. The company faces some challenges when making decisions about training, but the trainees can also be challenged by prior learning and experience, their own resistance, organisational resistance, less managerial support and greater managerial resistance. The challenges faced by the company as well as the challenges faced by trainees will briefly be discussed in the next sub-sections.

### 2.6.1 Challenges faced by the company

The researcher will be elaborating on the three questions raised above when it comes to challenges faced by the company in relation to training.

In relation to the first question **whether training is the solution to the problem**, it should be mentioned that not all performance problems call for training. Performance discrepancies can have several causes, for instance unclear or conflicting requests, morale problems, and poor-quality materials, many of which are beyond the workers’ control and would therefore not be affected by training (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2004 in Shenge, 2014:51). Hagen (2014) points out that it is often easier for managers to request soft skill training than to address the problem in their department. When requests for training are considered, it is important to evaluate if the training is going to solve or address the problem. Shenge (2014:51) and Hagen (2014) emphasise that it is important to link the training to the vision, mission and goals of the company and not to blindly implement training because of a one-off request.

McKee, the managing director of the Center for Professional Development at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (USA), met with the executive board of a Fortune 50 financial services firm where it was questioned **whether soft skill training is a good investment** (Caudron, 2011:1). The issue under discussion was a leadership-development programme for the company’s senior executives. The

programme was agreed to in principle, but then one board member raised the concern: “This programme sounds fine, but how do we teach our executives to trust one another?” McKee’s experience indicates that “a new era is dawning in Corporate America and executives are starting to talk about the importance of such things as trust, confidence, empathy, adaptability and self-control and as a result, soft skill training is gaining new respect” (Caudron, 2011:1). Carnevale et al. (1988:13) are of the opinion that employers want employees who can think on their feet (problem solving), who can come up with innovative solutions when needed (creative thinking), who have pride in themselves and their potential to be successful (self-esteem), who know how to get things done (goal setting/motivation), and who have some sense of the skills needed to perform well in the workplace (personal and career development). Even though interpersonal skills are critical for employers, many job applicants and current employees in business do not have adequate interpersonal skills. Robles (2012:463) emphasises that organisations need to train current employees to enhance their soft skills. To conclude on whether soft skill training is a good investment, the researcher would like to quote Buckingham and Coffman (1999), as cited in Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) who stated: “Organisations that provide superior opportunities for learning and growth have a distinct advantage when competing for talented employees.”

Regarding the question about the **feasibility of training**, it is important to note at the outset that a precondition for effective training is adequate preparation (Shenge, 2014:52). A well-designed training programme flows from the strategic goals of the company. The researcher is of the opinion that to be able to link an organisation’s training programmes to its business strategies and objectives, the organisation needs to clarify its strategies and objectives and then evaluate each to determine ‘growth areas’. In this regard Cascio and Aguinis (2005:387) mention that “for any important change or organisational initiative it is important to identify what new capabilities will be needed; how they compare to current capabilities and what steps are necessary to bridge the gap.” Mcnamara ([sa]) advises researchers to liaise with employees or members of the organisation, because often they have some image in their minds of how the organisation should be working when things are going well. It follows that to ensure effective training an assessment of the current ‘state of affairs’ within the company is needed. Cascio and Aguinis (2005:384) refer to the initial phase of programme development as the needs assessment phase or planning phase. The needs assessment phase will form the foundation of the entire programme; if the needs

assessment is incomplete, the training implemented may be far out of tune with what an organisation really needs (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005:384). Training will thus be workable and feasible if it is grounded on an assessment of what is in place and what is needed to meet the specific company's business strategies and objectives.

## 2.6.2 Challenges faced by the trainees

According to Laker and Powell (2011:114) trainees learning soft skills, as compared to learning hard skills, are more likely to be adversely affected by the following challenges:

- **Prior learning and experience can be a challenge** because most of those being trained in soft skills have been in situations that are similar or identical to those for which they are now being trained; they have experienced the situation and have responded in a specific way. Laker and Powell (2011:115) are of the opinion that “trainees may have already built up a series of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural patterns that negatively interfere with the acquisition and application of the new soft skills that they are being taught.”
- In terms of psychological challenges, attention also needs to be given to **organisational factors**. For example, norms, rules, procedures, as well as reward and punishment structures of an organisation typically influencing employees' present intra- and interpersonal behaviours. In a study completed by Lancaster, Milia and Cameron (2013:15) participants reported feelings of frustration upon returning to work to find that established ways of working blocked attempts to transfer training. They described the organisational culture as “punitive, focussed on tasks rather than people, bureaucratic and slow to change”. Furthermore, the majority of the participants reported policies as an issue, describing them as “too restrictive, not reflective of the pace of change in the organisation and too numerous to remember” (Lancaster et al., 2013:15). To change such soft skill behaviours successfully the organisational factors that maintain those behaviours should also change (Laker & Powell, 2011:115). In this regard Wright (1999:93) highlights that “if your subject [employee] is unlikely to be recognised or rewarded by the organisation, then even if motivation is high and the individual learns a lot, change is likely to be undermined as soon as the learner returns to work.” It is thus clear that an organisation's norms and values

should complement the soft skills themes presented and it should promote the implementation thereof.

- It is easy to state that the organisation's norms and values must complement the soft skill themes presented, but **identifying training needs and objectives** is a big challenge when it comes to soft skill training due to the uncertainty involved in exactly what the trainee needs to know and in what contexts he or she needs to apply that learning. This has implications both in terms of training design and in terms of the evaluation and measurement of training (Laker & Powell, 2011:116). This is especially true when the group of trainees are from different departments and levels within the corporation. Adding to this is the challenge of **less similarity between training and work or work environment**. When it comes to hard skills, for instance, it is easier to determine what skills the person needs to complete the job, because the setting is more restricted. With soft skill training there is more uncertainty about what the person needs to know and in what context it needs to be applied (Laker & Powell, 2011:116). It will also differ depending on what level the employee is functioning within the company; the soft skills needed on ground level differs from the skills at top management level.
- **Managerial support and role modelling** can have a serious influence on training transfer into the workplace. Laker and Powell (2011:116) is of the opinion that it is very important for managers to agree with or be well-informed about the themes being presented and either attend or already be well-equipped in the skills, because when it comes to soft skills it is very likely that the trainee will look to the manager as a role model or maybe a coach for subsequent reinforcement back in the workplace. Lankau and Scandura, (2002:7) supports this argument by emphasising in their study that, "training programs are effective vehicles for transmitting specific technical and organisational information, but they believe that personal learning is largely influenced by relationships with others in the organisation. Lankau and Scandura, (2002:7) believe that, "mentors may provide a unique resource for the types of personal learning required of employees in today's complex and rapidly changing environment. Lacking properly trained managers or mentors can be a challenge for newly trained trainees and affect training transfer.



- **Managerial support and role modelling also links to the challenge of less immediate and less salient feedback and consequences when it comes to soft skill training.** According to Laker and Powell (2011:117) feedback and subsequent consequences play a significant role in developing a skill. In hard skills the feedback and consequences of one's actions are usually very specific and usually clearly indicate whether one has been successful or unsuccessful in demonstrating the skill. With soft skills, this is clearly not the case. The range and complexity of the feedback on and consequences of soft skills are much greater than for hard skills. Santos and Stuart (2003:39) raised the concern in their study that the appropriate feedback might be lacking, it was emphasised that a supportive environment is key to training effectiveness and it was clear from their study that, the respondents both valued and needed coaching and feedback on an ongoing basis. Santos and Stuart (2003:39) reported that, "more than a quarter of respondents were not receiving coaching and feedback to the extent that they wished. It was noted that when employees returned to work after training the most common experience was to be asked, 'How did it go?' or 'Have you had a good time?' by their line managers, during a brief 5 minute chat".
- Another challenge with regards to soft skill training is the issue of **a lesser degree of immediate and subsequent proficiency in using their (employees') training (mastery).** Lancaster et al. (2013:15) emphasise that to have the opportunity to use new skills is regarded as critical to reinforce learning. Supportive supervisors facilitated practice opportunities by including participants in planning and decision-making, allowing them to chair meetings, broadening their roles and encouraging them to develop and try new ideas. Laker and Powell (2011:119) note in this regard that mastering of soft skills usually requires continued instruction or guidance post training. If supervisors/management does not provide ongoing support, guidance and opportunities to implement what have been learnt the company needs to review the role of the supervisors.

It should be clear from the aforementioned that the involvement and buy-in from managerial level is essential for proper soft skill training and aspects of the business environment sometimes need to change to ensure successful soft skill training. The organisation's norms, rules, procedures and structures will have to complement the training. Furthermore, managers will have to act as role models for employees, they



should create opportunities for implementing the skills, and they should provide feedback on a regular base.

To educate the company and make this possible, the EAP needs to be strategically located in the business and be part of business decision-making and planning (Matlhape, 2003:31).

## **2.7 EFFECTIVE TRAINING PRACTICES**

Following the conceptualisation of the concept training in point 2.2 above and concluding that in the context of this study the term training denotes activities directed toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to bring an employee to an agreed standard of proficiency, it is now important when exploring effective training practices to firstly differentiate between training and education and to review transfer of training as discussed in the next sub-section.

### **2.7.1 Training vs. Education**

It is important for organisations and managers to understand, plan and critically evaluate training, because poor, inappropriate or inadequate training can be a source of frustration for everyone involved and can also be costly (Shenge, 2014:50). In debating the effectiveness of a training programme, the concept of training versus education needs to be explored. Georges (1996:1) describes the difference between these two concepts as follows: “To train is to make someone proficient with the execution of a given task and to educate is to increase intellectual awareness of a subject”.

Georges (1996:1) is critical about the typical approach to soft skill training and questions whether companies and the trainers they employ train or educate when it comes to soft skills. He argues that there might not be a causal relationship between education and performance, but there is indeed a causal relationship between training and performance. In this regard Georges (1996:2) postulates:

Sceptics will protest that some people who receive what I'm calling education in soft-skills areas actually do turn out higher performance as a result: they do, in fact, get better at selling or influencing or working in a team. And this is true-for maybe 10 percent to 15 percent of the trainees. Why? Because those people were already skilful before they attended

your latest educational offering. If you take anyone who is already competent and add more education, you often will get better performance to some degree.

The question is thus: How does one acquire skilfulness? The researcher would like to focus on Georges' (1996:2) model, consisting of two stages.

During the first stage the students are quickly educated about the results they are being asked to achieve and the skills they will have to execute in order to obtain those results. Then during the second stage they practice, with a coach who can cut down trial-and-error time, until they achieve an acceptable standard implementing the skill.

Georges (1996:2-3) refers to action learning when discussing real training. His recommendation is to invite people to a meeting room for a 'real life' working session, into which some coaching will be added. The purpose of this working session is to evaluate and make decisions about ideas for improving the business; "real ideas for real improvement that will make a real difference to the company" (Georges, 1996:2). Georges (1996:2) advises participants to bring their own ideas to the meeting, but he stipulates that these ideas must meet two criteria:

- First, the people in the meeting must be capable of implementing them; that is, someone in the room must have the authority to give a real yes or no to the idea.
- Second, if adopted, the improvement must be both measurable and capable of producing financial consequences for the business within 90 days.

Following these two steps, Georges (1996:2) recommends an educational overview of the skills that would most likely help them gain the commitment and support they'll need to implement their ideas ("It's all about buy-in"). It is important to define what "skilful" means – not just what the skills are. For instance, you are skilful at "showing respect" if you can acknowledge another person's point of view so well that the person begins to feel better and you can see more positive emotions emanating from the person within 20 seconds.

The researcher supports this model explained above, as it is grounded in the principle of linking training to your business strategy as advised by Shenge (2014:51) and Hagen (2014) in point 2.5.1. Get people together in a workshop, ask their input, get their buy-in, draw up an action plan, educate them, and then train them in the skills required to

achieve the business goals that have been set. Shenge (2014:52) propagates this model when he says “a well-designed training programme flows from the strategic goals of the company”.

### 2.7.2 Transfer of training

The second key aspect when it comes to effective training practices is the transfer of training. Blume, Ford, Baldwin and Huang (2010:1067) define training transfer as consisting of two major dimensions:

- **generalisation** which means the extent to which the knowledge and skill acquired in a learning setting are applied to different settings, people, and/or situations from those trained, and
- **maintenance** which refers to the extent to which change that results from a learning experience persists over time.

Holton and Baldwin (2003), as quoted by Shenge (2014:53) added by stating that “in order to improve job performance the skills and behaviours learned and practiced during training have to be transferred to the workplace, maintained over time, and generalised across contexts.”

The point is made by several scholars that there is ample evidence suggesting that a considerable part of organisations’ investment in training does not result in optimal transfer. The researcher would like to highlight the following practical principals to ensure effective training transfer, as suggested by Heathfield (2014), Laker and Powell (2011:114-120), and Lancaster et al. (2013:15-16):

- The trainer should make a difference.
- The supervisor and trainer should set a positive, productive tone for the training session and the later application of learning.
- Training should be part of a consistent message from the organisation.
- Each individual’s manager and the manager’s manager should attend the training with their staff.
- Training should be provided in ‘chunks’ that are scheduled over a period of time.
- Employees should be trained in skills and information that are immediately applicable on the job.

Each of the above practical principles will briefly be discussed.

### **2.7.2.1 The trainer should make a difference**

Heathfield (2014) emphasises that trainees react more favourably to trainers who have experience in their industry. They appreciate facilitators who have experienced and addressed the issues and situations highlighted in the training, for example a CEO in the same industry who has been on ground level and who displays the soft skills he learned or needed to reach the 'top'. In other words, according to Heathfield (2014), the trainer should know his subject. Eitington (2011:538) shares Heathfields' point of view by elaborating that, "the way to learn your subject well is to have experienced it deeply". Trainees expect from a trainer to be highly knowledgeable based on his or her intimate exposure/experience of the topic he/she presents.

### **2.7.2.2 The supervisor and trainer should set a positive, productive tone for the training session and the later application of learning.**

It is important to set a positive and productive tone for a training session in order to ensure effective training transfer. This is confirmed in a study conducted by Lancaster et al. (2013:16) in which it was concluded that all participants felt motivated as a result of being nominated to attend training courses. It signalled to the participants that the organisation considered them as playing a key role in its goal to become more competitive. Being motivated already, interviews with their supervisors then further instilled confidence in the participants' ability to learn.

Heathfield (2014) is of the opinion that the opening of a training session should stress, "what is in it for me?" and if that is clarified it will determine the trainees' participation. The opening should emphasise the advantage of a training session for the trainee, the value of the session, and throughout the course the value should be reviewed and highlighted.

### **2.7.2.3 Training should be part of a consistent message from the organisation**

Heathfield (2014) emphasises the fact that training sessions should build on each other and reinforce the content learned in earlier sessions. Too many organisations approach training as a potpourri or menu of available classes and sessions. When there is no interconnection between training sessions and the information provided in the training sessions, organisations may lose a great opportunity to reinforce basic shared skills, approaches, and values. Training must reference earlier sessions, draw parallels, and reinforce content. In this regard Lancaster et al. (2013:15) elaborate in their study that

participants valued timely feedback from supervisors 'along the way', because it developed self-awareness, confidence, and the opportunity to correct undesired behaviours.

#### ***2.7.2.4 Each individual's manager and the manager's manager should attend the training with their staff***

If employees on different levels within the company attend a training programme, trainees might be more willing to try out the new ideas learned. According to Heathfield (2014) "It is especially effective if trainees see their managers trying out new skills learned". Laker and Powell (2011:116) point out that with soft skills it is very likely that the trainee will look to the manager as a role model/coach in view of new behaviours or the implementation of the behaviours. In a study conducted by Lancaster et al. (2013:15) all participants believed it was essential that supervisors first complete the training course so that they could act as coaches and reinforce new behaviours. The participants described positive role models as good leaders.

#### ***2.7.2.5 Training should be provided in 'chunks' that are scheduled over a period of time***

It is advised that small amounts of content be presented, based on a couple of well-defined objectives, over a couple of weeks. This approach will allow trainees to practice concepts in between training sessions (Heathfield, 2014). In this regard Caudron (2011:2) highlights that "To get the bottom-line benefits from soft-skills development, employers have to be willing to commit for the long haul". Ongoing training and reinforcement is thus needed.

#### ***2.7.2.6 Employees should be trained in skills and information that are immediately applicable on the job***

Georges (1996:1-3) has a very practical view on this aspect as discussed in paragraph 2.7.1 above (Training vs. Education). According to him employees should be invited to be part of the planning of a training session and they should be invited to a working session to make decisions about ideas for improving the business; real ideas for real improvement that will make a real difference to the company. After the training session employees should have the opportunity to implement the new skills to ensure an improvement or to reach the goals set.

Heathfield (2014) proposes creating situations in which practice is immediate and frequent to help participants retain what they have learnt. The opportunity or need to apply knowledge and skills immediately to trainees' jobs has been repeatedly emphasised in several studies. When trainees lack the opportunity to use what they have learned in training, it is unlikely that a high degree of transfer will occur (Heathfield, 2014).

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

In the overview of the literature on EAP related training practices in this chapter, several main themes have been identified within this field of study. These themes are of the utmost importance in the context of this study.

The first theme was the conceptualisation of the concepts training and EAP related training. The researcher would like to highlight that the soft skills referred to in this study as EAP related training denotes intrapersonal skills such as one's ability to manage oneself, as well as interpersonal skills such as how one handles one's interactions with others (Laker & Powell, 2011:112). The most important soft skills identified for the use of this study are:

- “Communication and adaptability skills (speaking, listening, problem solving, thinking creatively and time management);
- development skills (self-esteem, motivation and goal setting, career planning/development);
- group effectiveness skills (interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation) and
- influencing skills (understanding organisational culture, sharing leadership)” (Conrad, 1999:10).

According to Caudron (2011:1) employers do appear to be more willing to invest in soft skills development, especially at the higher management levels. However, the research gap to be explored is whether theory and practice complement each other. What are companies in the Western Cape currently presenting and do they agree with Caudron (2011:1) that soft skill training is a good investment?

The second theme identified was legislation with regard to training in South Africa. It is clear that the Government supports training in the workplace, but do companies adhere

to these requirements and do they have the knowledge to claim for training provided to ensure the maximum benefit for the company?

The third theme identified was that The Standards support training (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1) and the researcher would like to further explore whether companies are meeting the goals set out:

- “to provide targeted interventions in response to commonly identified trends and business risks, and
- to build and strengthen individual and organisation skills and competencies” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1).

Challenges experienced with the implementing of soft skill training by companies and employees were identified and the researcher would like to further explore this theme in the research study, with the view to identify the challenges within companies in the Western Cape and to explore solutions in this regard.

The final theme focuses on training transfer. The researcher identified a few factors that play a role in ensuring successful training transfer, but it would be of great value to investigate what the result would be in this respect at the specific organisations which will be participating in this study.

The next chapter will thus focus on the research methodology used in this study as well as the empirical results of the study.

# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) raised the concern that if a company would calculate the amount of time, money and effort devoted to training activities it might be wise to make serious considerations before implementing training and development programmes.

Following this concern raised by Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) the researcher wanted to gain knowledge of what EAP related training is currently being presented, legislation in this regard, and the challenges companies face to decide on a topic, implement and present EAP related training, with the view to make recommendations regarding EAP related training practices to assist companies.

To gain more knowledge this study was conducted in the Western Cape area at four different companies, two of which represented the service delivery sector, one the food and beverage sector (including a production plant) and one a clothing production company.

While the previous chapter focused on a literature review with regard to training in general and EAP related training practices specifically, this chapter will focus on research methodology used in this study as well as the empirical findings of the study. The main purpose of this chapter is to analyse, interpret and present the research findings, and to communicate the information that has been accumulated from the research findings.

### 3.2 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

#### 3.2.1 Goal of the study

To explore the nature of EAP related training practices at companies in the Western Cape.



### 3.2.2 Objectives of the study

In order to obtain the goal of the study the following objectives were formulated:

- To explore the content of EAP related training currently being presented at companies in the Western Cape.
- To explore if the current EAP related training is meeting the goals as set out by The Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010).
- To explore the most beneficial EAP related training presented at companies in the Western.
- To explore the current challenges that companies in the Western Cape experience regarding EAP related training.
- To make recommendations regarding EAP related training practices in order to improve training practices and to proactively address training challenges.

Against this background the study was guided by the following research question: **What is the nature of EAP related training practices at companies in the Western Cape?**

### 3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section the focus will be on a thorough discussion of the following: research approach, type of research, research design, population, sample and sampling method, data collection method, data analysis, and trustworthiness of data as well as ethical considerations as it was applicable in this study.

#### 3.3.1 Research approach

Due to the fact that the researcher was concerned with describing and understanding a phenomenon based on the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider, the **qualitative research approach** was utilised (Fouché & Delport, 2011:65). The researcher applied the qualitative research approach because the goal of the study was to seek a better understanding of a complex situation, as well as to explore and to use observations to build theory from the ground up (Fouché & Delport, 2011:64).

By gathering meaningful information such as the perceptions, experiences and opinions of key role players in relation to the phenomenon of EAP related training practices in

companies, the researcher explored and described the current practices and challenges.

### 3.3.2 Type of research

The study adopted an applied research position since it sought to understand and alleviate a demanding problem in practice (EAP related training) and provided policymakers with well-grounded guides for remedial action (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95). The goal was to explore the value of basic knowledge in an applied setting that could be useful to a policymaker who seeks to eliminate or alleviate a social challenge (Miller & Salkind, 2002:3).

This study, exploring the current EAP related training, was applied in nature as the results were valid, descriptive and informative as to how change may be accomplished (Miller & Salkind, 2002:5) regarding EAP related training in practice. Fouché and De Vos (2011:95) emphasise that “the distinction between theoretical results and practical results marks the principal difference between pure and applied research studies.”

### 3.3.3 Research design

The researcher explored the nature of current EAP related training practices in companies. For this purpose the researcher selected a number of cases (companies) and explored their EAP related training practices. The most appropriate qualitative research design was thus the **collective case study design** as this design referred to choosing cases to make comparisons between cases and concepts to extend and validate theories (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321). Creswell (in Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321) stated that “a case study can be regarded as an exploration of in-depth analysis of a bounded system, where such a system is bounded by time and/or place.” The case being studied can refer to a process, activity, event, programme or individual, or even to multiple individuals (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:321). When multiple cases are involved it is referred to as a collective case study.

### 3.3.4 Research methods

The research methods mainly constitute the identification of the population and the sample. However, the researcher will also provide a brief description of the data collection method used, the process of data analysis, and strategies utilised in this study to ensure trustworthiness.

#### 3.3.4.1 *Study population and sampling*

The study population included all companies in the Western Cape with an established EAP with a significant training component.

Kumar (2011:193) explained sampling as “the process of selecting a few from a bigger group (the population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the occurrence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group”. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:202), a sample can be defined as “a special subset of a population observed in order to make inferences about the nature of the total population itself”.

In qualitative research you can purposely select information rich participants who will provide you with the information you need (Kumar, 2011:192). By using non-probability, purposive sampling the researcher purposively selected a sample of four companies from the population to study and to use for estimations and predictions about the larger population. The criteria for inclusion according to the purposive sampling method was that the company had to be situated in the Western Cape, should have an established EAP with a significant training component, and should have agreed to take part in the study.

Within the four selected companies, 13 participants (two to four in each of the four companies) were purposively selected and the researcher collected information from these participants. They met the following specific criteria for inclusion in this study:

- involved with developing, facilitating, coordinating, implementing or monitoring EAP related training or Wellness Programmes in the selected company;
- employed by the company for more than two years to ensure a good knowledge base of the EAP and the impact thereof; and

- able to communicate fluently in Afrikaans or English, as the interviews were conducted in these two languages.

The researcher kept in mind that in qualitative research you do not have an exact predetermined sample size. Instead, during the data collection phase, she waited to reach a point of data saturation to make predictions about the bigger group/population (Kumar, 2011:192). The researcher continued to pursue, arrange and complete interviews to the point of data replication, when no new information could be noted the researcher concluded that the saturation point was reached.

#### **3.3.4.2 Data collection**

This study made use of a qualitative data collection method, namely **semi-structured interviews**, to collect information. Gill et al. (2008:291) explained that semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail.

Gill et al. (2008:291) highlighted that this interview format is used most frequently in healthcare, as it provides participants with some guidance on what to talk about, which many find helpful. The flexibility of this approach, particularly as compared to structured interviews, also allowed for the discovery or elaboration of information that was important to participants, but may not have previously been thought of as relevant by the researcher.

Greeff (2011:342) emphasised that the quality of the semi-structured interview depends mainly on the skills of the researcher as interviewer. Greeff (2011:347) further elaborated that the content of the interview was what the participant was saying – the verbal message. This was the easiest component of the interview to study, but the process of the interview was much more elusive, even though it was a powerful component thereof. It involved reading between the lines of what the participant said and noticing how the participant talked and behaved during the interview – thus observing the non-verbal cues.

There was not much information on EAP related training practices and the interview process enriched the information gathered. The researcher had a set of predetermined

questions on an interview schedule (see Annexure A), but the researcher only used it to guide the interview and not to dictate it (Greeff, 2011:352). The aim was to set a positive atmosphere and to ensure a relationship where the participant was the expert who could introduce issues not included in the schedule.

### **3.3.4.3 Data analysis**

Qualitative data analysis was, first and foremost, a process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising, creating new concepts and theory by blending together empirical evidence and abstract concepts (Schurink et al., 2011:399-401). Cresswell (in Schurink et al., 2011:403) views the process of data analysis as a spiral, where the researcher moves in analytical circles. One enters with data consisting of text and images and exits with an account or narrative.

The practical steps for qualitative data analysis presented by Schurink et al. (2011:403-404) served as a guideline for this specific study and are discussed below.

#### **3.3.4.3.1 PLANNING FOR RECORDING OF DATA**

The researcher planned and arranged for an appropriate setting and tried to eliminate any interference with ongoing daily activities by contacting participants in advance to set up a suitable date and time for interviews and recordings. Attention was given to plan a system to simplify the retrieval for analysis, as advised by Schurink et al. (2011:404).

#### **3.3.4.3.2 DATA COLLECTION AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSES**

The researcher would like to emphasise that qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretation are closely interwoven. Schurink et al. (2011:405) highlight that in the course of data collection, ideas about directions for analysis will occur.

During the interviews the researcher took brief field notes. After the interviews she filled in any gaps in the notes and, once back at the office, immediately sorted, coded and indexed the information. It was important to immediately sort the data, identify new themes, and follow up on hunches after the first set of interviews to collect additional data before the analysis started.

#### 3.3.4.3.3 *MANAGING THE DATA*

Managing data as described by Schurink et al. (2011:408) was the “first step in data analysis away from the site.”

Interviews were tape recorded – with the consent of the participants – to allow a more comprehensive and verbatim account of the content of the interview and were transcribed after the interview, using an independent transcriber.

The themes on the interview schedule were used and new themes were identified during interviews to code and file the transcribed data together with the field notes. As data gathering continued data were filed according to these codes and new themes that arose were coded and included. When the data gathering process was completed and the ‘rough’ data coded and filed, it was important to make a copy of the data and save one copy at a different location.

#### 3.3.4.3.4 *READING AND WRITING MEMOS*

This phase focused on getting a feel for the entire database by studying/reading the transcripts several times, studying the additional field notes, and even listening to the recordings again.

While reading the transcripts and field notes, the researcher wrote memos. These notes, together with the transcripts, were studied to identify patterns and categories.

#### 3.3.4.3.5 *GENERATING CATEGORIES AND CODING THE DATA*

Schurink et al. (2011:410) emphasise that “salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of belief that link people and settings together is the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis.” The coding process already started back at the office after the first set of interviews/data gathering and was extended as the process/interviews continued.

The basic coding system that was initially based on the themes of the interview schedule was broken down to identify more grounded categories, meaning a small manageable set of themes and sub-themes written into the final narrative (Schurink et al., 2011:410).

#### 3.3.4.3.6 *TESTING AND SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS*

During this phase as advised by Schurink et al. (2011:415), the researcher tried to determine how useful the data were. Schurink et al. (2011:415) is of the opinion that, “one should search for other plausible explanations for these data and the linkages among them”.

As the researcher discovered categories and patterns in the data, she engaged in critically challenging the very patterns that seemed so apparent. Comparisons with literature were used to challenge the contents of categories, themes and sub-themes and to explore alternative explanations.

#### 3.3.4.3.7 *INTERPRETING AND DEVELOPING TYPOLOGIES*

Schurink et al. (2011:415) define typologies as “conceptual frameworks in which phenomena are classified in terms of the characteristics that they have in common with other phenomena”. The researcher focused on the exhaustiveness and mutual exclusiveness of the data.

#### 3.3.4.3.8 *PRESENTING THE DATA*

The results were verified against relevant literature with the view to contextualise it within larger theoretical perspectives and paradigms. The empirical findings were presented in text format.

#### **3.3.4.4 *Trustworthiness***

Lietz, Langer and Furman (2006:6) emphasise that engaging in strategies such as reflexivity, audit trail, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking and prolonged engagement can greatly add to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. The following three of the above-mentioned strategies were utilised in this study in order to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative information:

- Attention was given to **reflexivity**, defined as “the process of deconstructing who we are and the ways in which our beliefs, experiences and identity intersect with that of the participant” (Lietz et al., 2006:8). Mauther and Doucet, as quoted by Lietz et al. (2006:8), suggest that one important way to engage in reflexivity is through meetings with a research group. In this specific study the researcher made use of her supervision sessions to acknowledge her own actions and

decisions that have inevitably impacted upon the meaning and context of the experiences under investigation.

- With regards to **peer reviewing**, the researcher engaged in dialogue with EAP colleagues outside of the research project who have experience with the topic, population or methods being utilised (Lietz et al., 2006:11)
- **Member checking**, also known as respondent validation, “allow participants to review findings from the data analysis in order to confirm or challenge the accuracy of the work” (Lietz et al., 2006:14). This gave authority to the participants’ perspectives, therefore managing the threat of bias. The researcher used member checking to validate the data by taking a summary of the findings to the key participants of the study and requesting their feedback on whether it was an accurate reflection of their opinions and the information shared.

### 3.3.5 Pilot study

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) define a pilot study as “a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate”. The purpose of the pilot study was to improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of the semi-structured interview schedule. Pilot testing the semi-structured interview schedule assisted the researcher to clarify and reconstruct the schedule.

The researcher interviewed one employee at company A, to test the semi-structured interview schedule. The relevant data were obtained from the participant and for that reason the researcher continued the study using the approved semi-structured interview schedule.

## 3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering that the research in question followed a qualitative design, particular care was taken by the researcher to be aware of any ethical concerns that could arise. The following ethical issues were taken into consideration:



### **3.4.1 Informed consent**

Each participant was contacted individually in person or by phone to enquire if they will take part in the study. They were briefed on the research at stake and their role and any ethical issues that might have been of any concern to them. A letter of informed consent was handed to participants individually before the interview, including information about the purpose of the study and research procedures that will be followed, as well as possible advantages and disadvantages which the participants may be exposed to, so that the participants could decide to give consent or refuse to participate in the study (Strydom, 2011:117-118). Before signing the informed consent letter the participants were briefed about the purpose and procedures of the study, that participation in the study was voluntarily, and that there was no compensation for participating in the study.

It was highlighted in the informed consent letters that the individual face-to-face interviews were going to be audio recorded and that the audiotapes and the field notes would be stored at the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria for 15 years.

### **3.4.2 Harm to subjects**

Creswell (in Strydom, 2011:115) emphasises that “the researcher has an ethical obligation to protect participants within all possible reasonable limits from any form of physical discomfort that may emerge from the research project.” The researcher tried to ensure that the study did not in any way cause harm or discomfort to the participants during the interviews. The researcher explained to EAP providers, the company and the individuals taking part that the aim of the study was only to explore current EAP related training practices and to gather information on current practices, and not to evaluate a specific programme. Furthermore, the researcher explained to the participants that if they should experience any discomfort or harm during the interviews, they would be referred to a psychologist in the area with knowledge of the EAP field to provide the appropriate support and debriefing. However, none of the participants showed any discomfort or harm.

### 3.4.3 Violation of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Strydom (2011:119) emphasises that “confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner.” The researcher ensured this by making direct contact with the participants and to ensure confidential sound proof areas for the interviews and the researcher being the only one dealing with the information. No names or company details were communicated to the transcribers.

The anonymity of participants was protected by using a coding system. Each participant and company received a pseudonym or code, and these pseudonyms or codes were used to label any raw material used in the data collection process. They were also used to refer to these participants and organisations in the final report.

### 3.4.4 Debriefing

The researcher put time aside after each interview to clarify any misunderstandings with participants. Correspondence to thank the participants for their participation did go out within seven days after the interviews. The researcher invited participants to raise any concerns they may have had, however no participant wanted debriefing.

## 3.5 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The researcher analysed, interpreted and presented the qualitative data after interviewing 13 participants involved in the EAP field. All the interviews were first recorded on audio tapes, then transcribed and finally analysed by carefully going through all the transcripts utilising a coding system. Themes and sub-themes were then identified, interpreted and verified against the appropriate literature.

The findings of the study will be canvassed in accordance with the following outline:

- **Section 3.5.1:** Demographical profile of the 13 research participants.
- **Section 3.5.2:** A presentation of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the process of data analysis. Each theme and sub-theme will be discussed according to a summary of findings, quotations to verify the findings, and an integration of the relevant literature.

### 3.5.1 Demographical profile of participants

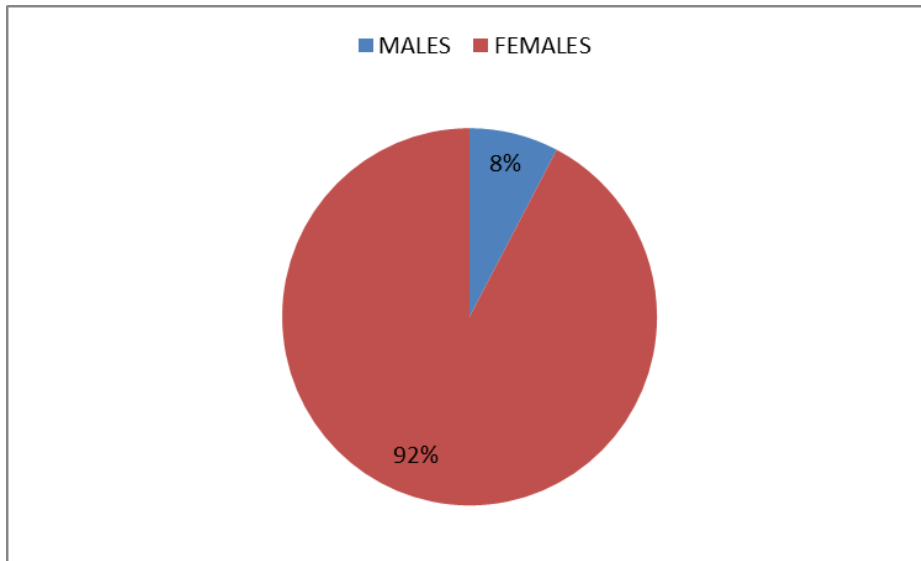
The demographical profile of the participants will be discussed in terms of the following variables: gender, home language, type of industry, position within the company, commencement date, and involvement with training presented. A summary of the mentioned variables is given in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1: The demographical profile of the participants**

NUM.	PARTICIPANT	GENDER	HOME LANG.	TYPE OF INDUSTRY	POSITION	COMMENCEMENT DATE
1	Company A Participant 1	Female	Afr & Eng	Production	Quality Control	1993
2	Company A Participant 2	Female	Afr	Production	Capacity Building Manager	1994
3	Company A Participant 3	Female	Afr &Eng	Production	EAP Social Worker	2014
4	Company A Participant 4	Female	Xhosa & Afr	Production	Team Leader	1995
5	Company B Participant 1	Female	Afr	Service Delivery	Learning & Development Facilitator	1991
6	Company B Participant 2	Female	Eng	Service Delivery	Training Officer	2003
7	Company B Participant 3	Female	Eng	Service Delivery	Learning & Development Facilitator	2005
8	Company B Participant 4	Female	Eng	Service Delivery	Training & Development Consultant	1991
9	Company C Participant 1	Female	Afr	Service Delivery	Assistant Director Employee Wellness, HIV and Occupational health and safety	2009
10	Company C Participant 2	Male	Xhosa & Eng	Service Delivery	HR Officer - Skills development	2005
11	Company D Participant 1	Female	Afr	Food & Beverage	Occupational Health Sister	2007
12	Company D Participant 2	Female	Afr	Food & Beverage	Training Officer	2010
13	Company D Participant 3	Female	Afr	Food & Beverage	HR Officer	2008

The following graphical presentations and descriptions resulted from the information presented in Table 3.1.

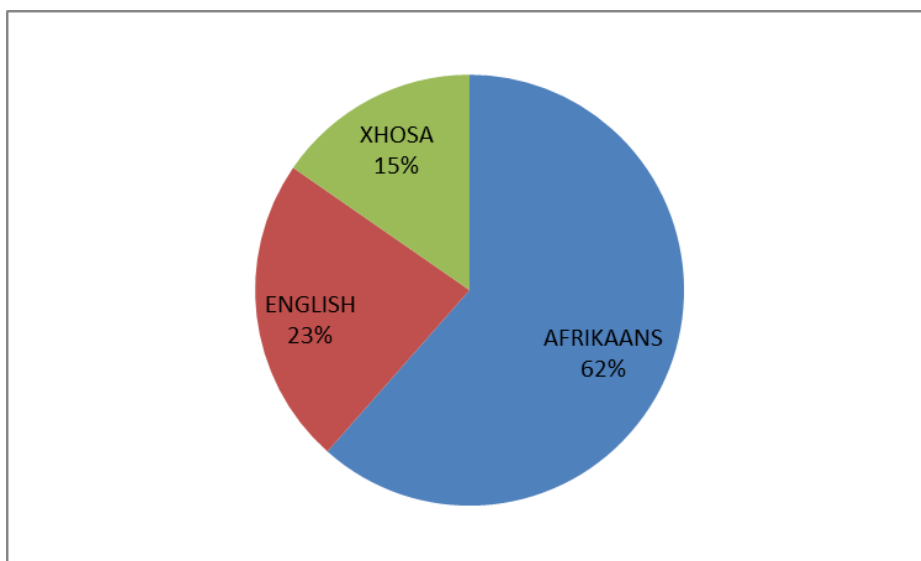
### 3.5.1.1 Gender of participants



**Figure 3.1: Gender of participants**

Figure 3.1 illustrates that 12 (92%) of the participants were female and only one participant (8%) was a male.

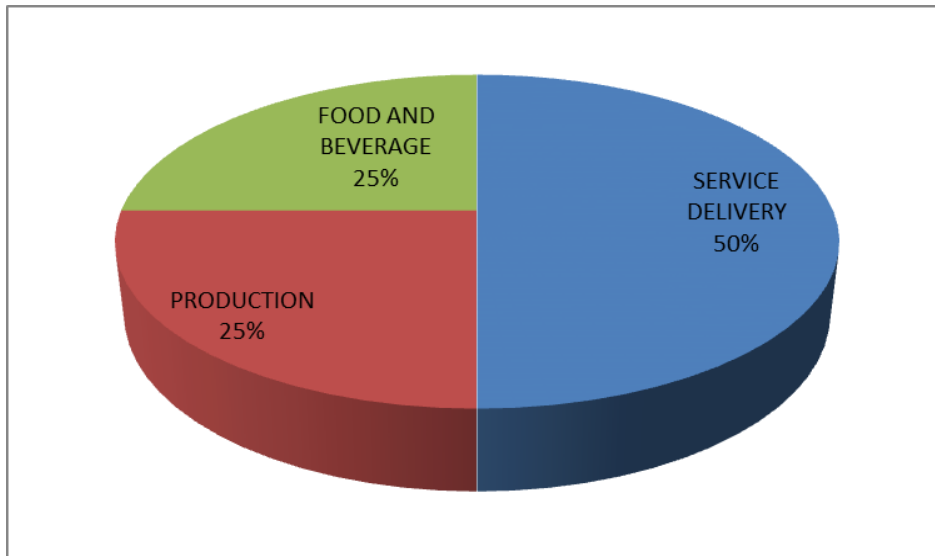
### 3.5.1.2 Home language of participants



**Figure 3.2: Home language of participants**

Figure 3.2 illustrates that 62% of the participants were Afrikaans speaking, 23% English speaking and 15% Xhosa speaking. South African info (2015) confirms that “most Afrikaans speakers live in the Western Cape, where it is the language of just less than half (48.4%) of the provincial population.”

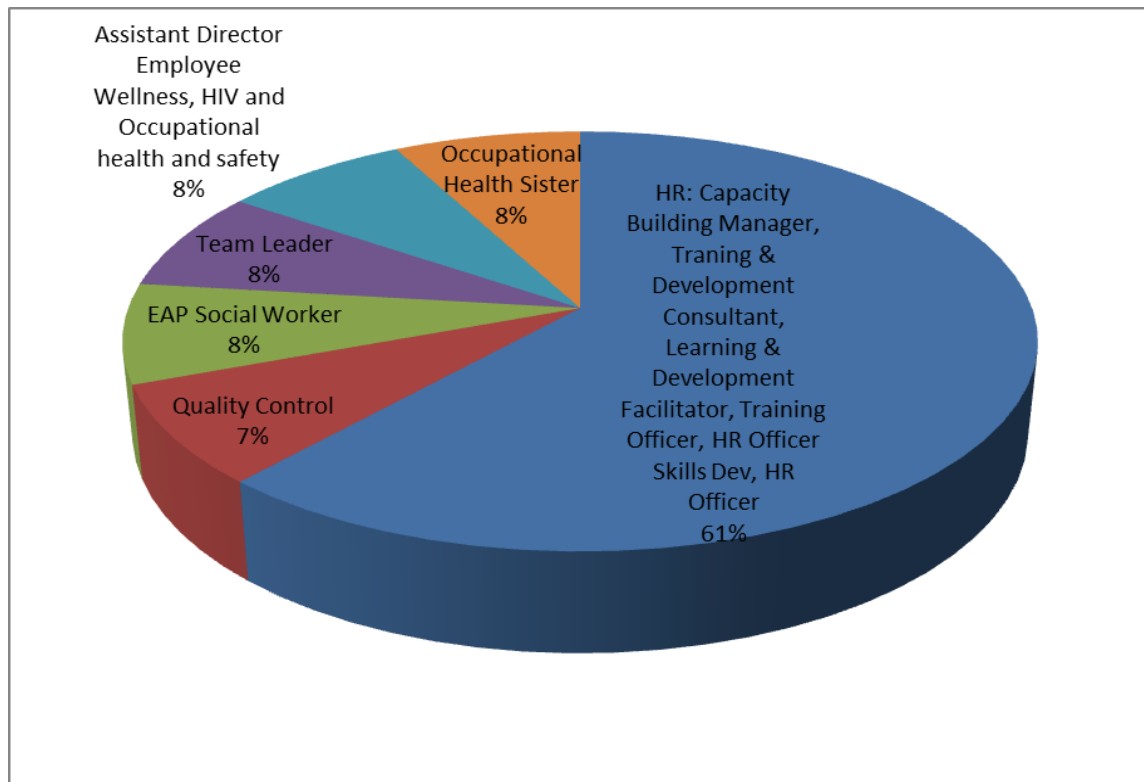
### 3.5.1.3 Type of industry



**Figure 3.3: Type of industry**

The study was conducted in the Western Cape area at four different companies; two (50%) represented the service delivery sector, one (25%) the food and beverage sector, including a production plant, and one (25%) a clothing production company. It can be concluded that 50% of the study was done in a production environment and 50% in a service delivery environment. The researcher explored different sectors to get a broader overview, because EAP related training practices and needs differ due to the fact that each company operates in a unique environment and is challenged with unique problems and opportunities.

### 3.5.1.4 Position of participants within the company



**Figure 3.4: Position of participant within the company**

From Table 3.1 the following positions can be grouped together under the Human Resource (HR) department: Capacity Building Manager, Training & Development Consultant, Learning & Development Facilitator, Training Officer, Human Resource (HR) Officer - Skills Development and HR Officer.

Figure 3.4 highlights that, 61% of the participants interviewed represented the HR department and 39% other departments. The other departments represented included a Quality Control Officer (7%), an EAP Social Worker (8%), a Team Leader (8%), an Assistant Director of Employee Wellness (8%) and an Occupational Health sister (8%).

Matlhape (2003:35) notes that, “one of the key functional areas of the HR strategy for the 21st century is EAP, and therefore active collaborating of EAP and HR is essential.” Coppersmith (1995:30), as cited in Matlhape (2003:35), suggests that “the EAP should position itself as a *central* theme within HR, influencing all HR functions in the organisation.”

### 3.5.1.5 Commencement date

Participants ranged from the minimum of 5 years in their current positions to a maximum of 24 years' duty, except for one person who started in 2014. The researcher still included this employee because she has a broken service record; she used to work for the company before and taking that into account meets the criteria for inclusion. Taking into account that 92% of the participants have between 5 and 24 years' experience, the assumption can be made that the researcher interviewed employees with extensive experience.

### 3.5.1.6 Participant's involvement with EAP related training

Table 3.2 below gives an overview of the participants' involvement with EAP related training.

Eleven (85%) of the 13 participants are directly involved in arranging, overseeing or presenting EAP related training at their companies. One participant (8%) is more involved in the EAP programme making referrals and following up, and one participant (8%) serves on the care committee arranging events on-site.

**Table 3.2: Participants' involvement with EAP related training.**

NUM.	PARTICIPANT	INVOLVEMENT WITH EAP RELATED TRAINING
1	Company A Participant 1	The participant is a member of the Care Committee, and the aim of the committee is to organise and implement programmes at the company.
2	Company A Participant 2	Within the Human Resource department the participant is the allocated training manager with the important role of monitoring the budget.
3	Company A Participant 3	The participant presented some of the EAP related training topics at the company.
4	Company A Participant 4	The participant is a member of the Care Committee, and the aim of the committee is to organise and implement programmes at the company.
5	Company B Participant 1	The participant guides 75+ formal students, acts as their line manager, and oversees all their training and training presented within the company. When the students have social problems this participant refers them to EAP for counselling and follows up on their wellbeing.
6	Company B Participant 2	The main role of the participant is to assist and coordinates the skills plan for a specific group of employees and then also assists with developing and facilitating training.
7	Company B Participant 3	The participant is involved in all training that takes place in the company whether arranging it, supporting the facilitator, or facilitating it
8	Company B Participant 4	All training is planned and facilitators arranged or material developed and presented by the participant. The participant plans the training and then arranges a facilitator or develops and presents training herself.
9	Company C Participant 1	The participant manages every aspect of the EAP.

10	Company C Participant 2	The participant is the training coordinator.
11	Company D Participant 1	As part of a multidisciplinary health team the participant is responsible to ensure the wellbeing of employees at the company.
12	Company D Participant 2	The participant is responsible for organising the training on-site, specifically the logistical arrangements.
13	Company D Participant 3	Being employed in the training department the participant arranges, coordinates and promotes attendance of training programmes.

### 3.5.2 Qualitative information according to themes and sub-themes

Section 3.5.2 focusses on the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the process of data analysis. Table 3.3 displays a summary of the identified themes and sub-themes in this study.

**Table 3.3: Themes and Sub-Themes**

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
<b>Theme 1:</b> EAP related training programmes.	1.1 Content of existing EAP related training programmes. 1.2 The structure of sessions and presentation methods of EAP related training programmes.
<b>Theme 2:</b> EAP related training and the goals set by the EAP Standards.	2.1 Identification of appropriate EAP related training topics. 2.2 The link between EAP related training and the vision, mission and goals of companies. 2.3 Efficacy of existing EAP related training. 2.4 Implementation of the training skills in the workplace. 2.5 Supervisory training.
<b>Theme 3:</b> Optimal EAP related training themes/topics presented and recommendations for future presentations.	3.1 The most beneficial EAP related training presented. 3.2 Outstanding training needs.
<b>Theme 4:</b> Challenges regarding EAP related training.	4.1 Challenges relating to the execution of training programmes. 4.2 Lack of follow-up support. 4.3 Lack of knowledge regarding skills plans and levies.
<b>Theme 5</b> Recommendations regarding more effective training practices	



### **3.5.2.1 Theme 1: EAP related training programmes**

According to Shenge (2014:51) effective training can raise performance, improve morale, and increase an organisation's potential. This is also confirmed by a participant from company A, who remarked as follows:

- *“I think for me in my opinion, EAP training is very important within the company because it promotes bonding between people, especially if you are in the same situation. It promotes a sense of support that you have with one another and also a sense of I'm not alone in a specific position in terms of having for example HIV. So it creates a support structure within a support structure itself.”*

Theme 1 focusses on the nature of EAP related training programmes currently being presented and the structure of and methods used during EAP related training sessions. In this regard the researcher identified two sub-themes from the participants' responses, namely the content of existing EAP related training programmes within the four companies in the Western Cape Province of South Africa and the structure of and methods used during the presentation of EAP related training programmes. Each of these sub-themes will briefly be discussed:

#### **3.5.2.1.1 SUB-THEME 1.1: CONTENT OF EXISTING EAP RELATED TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

Table 3.4 displays a summary of the content of existing EAP related training topics currently presented at the four different companies consulted in this study.

The information in Table 3.4 is grouped according to training topics presented and not according to priority or benefit to the company. The researcher grouped it to make it easier to see at a glance which of the companies currently present the same EAP related training themes/topics. Lower down in the table it becomes clear that some topics were only presented at specific companies.

**Table 3.4: EAP related training programmes currently being presented at the four companies included in this study.**

<b>COMPANY A</b>	<b>COMPANY B</b>	<b>COMPANY C</b>	<b>COMPANY D</b>
<b>Production</b>	<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Food &amp; Beverage</b>
Healthy Relationships – Relationship Killers/Builders, Conflict Management, Positive <b>Communication</b>	Project Panacea – Work/Life Balance, Stress, Burnout, Time Management, Finances, Team Work, <b>Communication</b> , Conflict Resolution, Emotional Intelligence	Supervisory training – teach managers to refer and make use of EAP – to identify a troubled employee & <b>constructive confrontation</b>	
	Patient Journey – <b>Communication</b> Skills & Body Language		
	Workplace Etiquette – life skills including: <b>Communication</b> , Telephone Etiquette and Personal Hygiene, Integrity & Respect		
	Compassion in action - Listening Skills and <b>Communication</b>		
	<b>HIV Counsellors</b> – formal course – several life skills that they can take back to community. General and then site specific training	<b>HIV Awareness</b>	<b>HIV awareness</b>
<b>Anxiety and stress</b>		<b>Stress Management</b>	<b>Stress Management</b>
	Money wisdom	Financial programmes	Financial management and budgeting
<b>Drug training</b>		<b>Substance awareness &amp; prevention – as well as drugs</b>	<b>Substance abuse - Drugs and Alcohol</b>
<b>Healthy Living Drive</b> – healthy mind body and soul, blood pressure, diabetes, weight control, gratitude within the company		<b>Wellness clinics</b> - Blood pressure, stress levels, cholesterol, HIV screening	<b>Healthy Living</b> – healthy eating habits
<b>Mental Health Awareness</b>			<b>Mental Illness</b>
	<b>Emotional intelligence</b>	<b>Emotional intelligence</b>	<b>Emotional intelligence</b>
Safeguarding our children	Diversity		
Woman of the year	Dare to care – how we differ but can work together	Time management	Peer Educators – Confidentiality, Listening, building relationships
16 Days of Activism against abuse	Leadership and management development skills - specifically management supervisory skills	Project Management	
Parenting	Mentorship	Business writing	
Spring day & traditional day	Free to grow	Computer courses	
Cancer Awareness	Complaints resolution	Sexual Harassment	
Talent show	Soft touch therapy – life skills that can be used outside work organisation		

As illustrated in Table 3.4 it is clear that training in **communication skills** plays a vital role as four of the current EAP training programmes presented at company B include communications skills, as well as one programme at company A and one programme at company C. As clearly indicated in Chapter 2, point 2.5.1 communication skills are indeed the most needed soft skill, but unfortunately also the most lacking (Schulz, 2008:149). It is clear that company A, B and C have identified the need to improve communication and are addressing the challenge.

Regarding **HIV**, company B sent some of their employees on an HIV counsellor course with a follow-up session when they return to their site to make it site specific. Both company C and D have also presented HIV awareness programmes. One participant from company B stated that:

- *“The HIV counselling course is the course that is to the biggest benefit to the company of all the EAP related training, it includes once again, listening...”*

Other prominent EAP related training programmes mentioned by the participants are the following:

- Company A presented anxiety and **stress programmes** and company C and D stress management programmes.
- Company C, D and E presented money wisdom, **financial** management and budgeting programmes.
- **Substance abuse** and drug training programmes are presented at company A, C and D.
- **Healthy living** programmes and wellness programmes are presented at company A and D, and from the feedback they play a vital role when it comes to EAP. A participant at company A reported that the healthy living drive is the programme that is to the biggest benefit of the company and a participant from company C elaborated as follows:
  - *“I try to do every 6 months, wellness clinics where blood pressure and stress levels and cholesterol all those things, all the HCT screening are being done. I do get reports back, so that it gives me an indication, what is the typical problems that is going on, so further pro-active work...”*
- **Mental health**/wellness programmes are presented at company A and C.
- **Emotional intelligence** programmes are presented at company B, C and D; thus in three of the four companies. According to Caudron (2011:2) “emotions are an

intrinsic part of our biological makeup, and every morning they march into the office with us and influence our behaviour.” Caudron (2011:2) elaborates that to understand, monitor, manage and capitalise on our emotions can help us make better decisions, cope with setbacks, and interact with others more effectively”. Caudron (2011:2) highlights further that “studies of close to 500 organisations worldwide indicated that people who score highest on EQ measures rise to the top of corporations.”

By exploring the information at the bottom of the table it is clear that each company also presents company specific training. In this regard the participants highlighted the topics of **time management**, **negotiation** (complaints resolution), understanding **organisational culture** (diversity), and **leadership** training.

From the information above it can be concluded that the EAP related training currently being presented at the four companies at stake represents most of the soft skills categorised in the four soft skill groups identified by the ASTD as discussed in point 2.5 (Carnevale, 1991 in Conrad, 1999:10). It is also clear that the service delivery sector places more emphasis on soft skill training to empower their staff to deal with customers compared to the training programmes presented at company A, a production site, and company D, which is linked to the food and beverage industry.

Kemp (2013:3) stated that in the social sciences, ecological theories, research, and intervention models focus on the complex, dynamic, and reciprocal relationships between human organisms and a range of environmental contexts, from family and immediate milieus to larger sociocultural, political, and institutional arrangements. For that reason EAP related training practices and needs differ due to the fact that each company operates in a unique environment and is challenged with unique problems and opportunities.

#### *3.5.2.1.2 SUB-THEME 1.2: THE STRUCTURE OF SESSIONS AND PRESENTATION METHODS OF EAP RELATED TRAINING PROGRAMMES*

Due to each company operating in a unique environment facing different challenges the structure of sessions and methods of training presented differ from company to company.

The diverse responses indicated that training can take on many forms, for instance full-time enrolment, long distance learning, one day or one week workshops, a one-off talk, or distribution of pamphlets. From the responses it is clear that there is no standard guideline for the content, duration or number of attendees when it comes to EAP related training, but a general guideline could be drafted from the various responses as illustrated below:

- EAP related training programmes should vary from 30 minute talks to half day training programmes. The following quotes illustrate this:
  - *“Half an hour talks, anybody can attend voluntarily.”*
  - *“1.5 hours...”*
  - *“Head office driven courses full day – half day is more practical... to buy in staff, cost also plays a role...”*
- Ideally the smallest group should consist of at least seven people but the majority of participants were of the opinion that an ideal group size for EAP related training is 30-40 people. Two participants remarked as follows:
  - *“Smallest seven people biggest group 30 people...”*
  - *“30-40 people”*
- In regard of the methods most participants highlighted that EAP related training should have a practical and theoretical component and one participant mentioned that visual aids should be used during training. Below are two quotes to support this:
  - *“Training should include practical and theoretical components...”*
  - *“Training should be interactive, PowerPoint presentation...”*

This is only a general guideline outlining the structure and methods of current EAP related programmes presented, grounded in the responses gathered during this study. No literature was identified in this regard to support or address the general guideline.

Against the background of what themes/topics are currently being presented and the general structure of sessions and methods used when presenting EAP related training the following theme will focus on the goals set by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15) for EAP related training and if current practices meet these expectations.

### **3.5.2.2 Theme 2: EAP related training and the goals set by the EAP Standards**

The goal set by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15) for EAP training as an intervention is to provide training that enhances employee and organisational resilience, in other words to increase the employees' and organisations' 'strength' and 'flexibility'. Furthermore, in order to obtain this goal the following objectives are formulated:

- “To provide targeted interventions in response to commonly identified trends and business risks” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15).
- “To build and strengthen individual and organisational skills and competencies” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15).

In the context of the first objective above, the majority of participants stated that they use informal needs assessment processes when planning or deciding on an EAP related training topic/theme to be presented but the majority of the participants responded very positively confirming that their companies link their training to their vision, mission and goals. The following sub-themes were identified in this regard:

- Identification of appropriate EAP related training topics
- The link between EAP related training and the vision, mission and goals of the companies

In regard of the objective, “to build and strengthen individual and organisational skills and competencies” the first important aspect is that the training should be appropriate and addressing that specific company's need and the participants responded very positively confirming that current topics presented is seen as very appropriate. Some of the participants raised the issue that the timing of presenting a specific training topic is very important. If the training is presented at a time when that specific skill is needed, the impact thereof and the implementation of that skill will be positively influenced. Furthermore, it was mentioned that the trainees are normally very motivated initially to implement the new skills learned, but due to a lack of support the newly learnt skills does tail off. The majority of participants thus emphasised the importance of supervisory training to reach this objective, but they also mentioned that such training is not being presented. The following three sub-themes were identified:

- Efficacy of existing EAP related training;
- implementation of the training skills in the workplace; and
- supervisory training.

Each of the five identified sub-themes will be briefly discussed.

### 3.5.2.2.1 SUB-THEME 2.1: IDENTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE EAP RELATED TRAINING TOPICS

In terms of targeted interventions or in other words identifying and deciding on what EAP related training to present the participants remarked that they use the National Health Calendar, feedback from the production floor, personal interviews with staff or following an instruction from Head Office or the EAP provider.

Feedback from the production floor includes talking to employees, injuries reported and, crucially, taking note of questions raised by managers. Identifying the need behind their questions is a great way to determine what type of training is needed on a site. The following responses from participants confirm how important it is to be in regular contact with employees and management when it comes to deciding on training themes/topics:

- *“...Feedback from different channels/areas stating they have seen a need in a specific area – need identified due to feedback or maybe a lot of injuries on duty.”*
- *“...From incidents that happen in the workplace or high absenteeism raise concern.”*
- *“Line managers have made a few suggestions...”*
- *“I like to be involved with managers, what are the typical questions coming to you... from that, then decide on training.”*

One participant from company A, C and D indicated that the decision on what training to present is determined by the clinic or social work (EAP) trends or the EAP provider and HR. The three participants reported as follows:

- *“Social work trends from the EAP social worker’s case load or employer insist on a topic.”*
- *“Referrals (case load), led to substance abuse training.”*
- *“Health topics identified from trends in the clinic.”*
- *“HR and EAP provider decide on the soft skill topics.”*

Company B and D referred to their performance management process/discussions as a source for identifying training needs. The following quotes reflect on this:

- *“Via performance management process twice a year – needs identified and raised.”*



- *“Every manager interview his staff to do their personal development portfolio... during this process the learning needs are identified. I receive then all the requests and following a discussion with the managers and HR draws up a budget and skills plan based on the needs identified... taking in account the values and goals of the company.”*
- *“In your performance agreement there is a section Personal development plan (PDP) where you will highlight as to what kind of training you will need. Specific training to assist you in your work. I put all the PDPs together and then identify what training is needed and then arrange it or arrange for an individual to go on the course.”*

Only one participant from company B commented that their company identified a new core value and that training resulted from that. Cascio and Aguinis (2005:382) emphasise that the defining characteristic of companies with effective training practices is that their training is tied to business strategies and objectives and linked to bottom-line results.

None of the participants referred to a formal needs assessment process when planning or deciding on an EAP related training topic/theme to be presented. Company B and C referred to a performance management process where managers interview individuals to determine their training needs. The individual's need is then fed back to the training department to be accommodated, but this does not equate to a needs assessment of the training needed at the company to ensure that the most effective training is being presented.

Cascio and Aguinis (2005:380) raise the concern that if a company would calculate the amount of time, money and effort devoted to training activities it might be wise to make serious considerations before implementing training and development of programmes. Wright (1999:91) elaborates by stating the following:

To base your training on what you think is important or useful may fail if not taking into account the needs and goals of the organisation or the needs of individual work roles within it. Such provision may not be considered a good return on investment.

An aspect to consider during the process of identifying a topic/theme or implementing training is to link training to a company's vision, mission and goals to ensure cost-effective and targeted interventions.



### 3.5.2.2.2 SUB-THEME 2.2: THE LINK BETWEEN EAP RELATED TRAINING AND THE VISION, MISSION AND GOALS OF THE COMPANIES

Following the identification of training themes/topics a sub-theme that emerged to ensure targeted interventions was for training to be link to the companies' vision, mission and goals and the majority of the participants responded very positively confirming that their companies link their training to their vision, mission and goals.

The participants did not elaborate on any process to ensure that their training is tied to their vision, mission or goals. The following responses, one from company A and one from company D, raised some concern in this regard:

- *“Yes, but I can't tell you the exact vision or mission; it used to be on the walls.”*
- *“I would think so, if you look at the topics they present it would at some point relate to the values we have.”*

From the responses above it is clear that although the participants believe their training is linked, they don't even know their vision, mission and goals. So how can they be sure that it is linked? And the second response is an indication that it was not a prerequisite to link them during the planning phase.

Only one participant from company B responded as follows:

- *“The company has added a new core value and training resulted from that.”*

According to Cascio and Aquinis (2005:382) the defining characteristic of companies with effective training practices is that their training is tied to business strategies and objectives and linked to bottom-line results. To be able to tie an organisation's training programmes to its business strategies and objectives, the organisation needs to clarify its strategies and objectives and then evaluate each to determine 'growth areas'.

### 3.5.2.2.3 SUB-THEME 2.3: EFFICACY OF EXISTING EAP RELATED TRAINING PROGRAMMES

To meet one of the objectives of the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:15) namely, “to build and strengthen individual and organisational skills and competencies”, it is important to present appropriate and relevant training that will meet the company's needs. In this regard all the participants from company A were very confident that the

current topics presented address the needs of the company. Some of the participants from company B and D were positive, but raised some concerns.

The following statements illustrate the participants' experiences of the relevance and efficacy of EAP related training programmes being presented:

### **Company A**

- *“Programmes are very relevant... address relevant things that people are struggling with.”*
- *“To a large degree. Most of our projects that we do help the community, not in work itself but also in the home environment.”*

### **Company B**

- *“Current programmes address part of the need not 100%.”*
- *“I think at this stage, it is efficient, but there are always need for growth.”*

### **Company D**

- *“Definitely...”*
- *“Yes to some extent especially the money management and healthy living programmes”.*

Two participants agreed that the themes/topics are relevant, but lack of cooperation, attendance and participation affects the impact of the training. The following quotes illustrate their opinions:

- *“I think the things that we do present is beneficial, it’s the lack of cooperation and attendance that makes it a little bit more problematic because then you can’t really say does it have an impact on a person.”*
- *“The topics are relevant, biggest problem is participation...”*

The issue of attendance and participation raised above is of great concern, because companies invest a lot of money in training and might be presenting appropriate training. However, if the attendance is poor it has an impact on the team and consequently the company as well.

Cascio and Aguinis (2005:387) noted that “pre-training motivation is an important determinant of training success.” If adults perceive the training as relevant to their daily activities their motivation increases. Attendance is one of the big challenges when it comes to EAP related training and will be further explored under sub-theme 3.5.2.4.1.

Referring to the responses above the researcher would like to elaborate that the responses are subjective, as they are the personal opinions of employees interviewed at four different companies. Furthermore, even though they are very good indicators of current practices and challenges, they can't be used to generalise as the sample is too small.

Mcnamara ([sa]) advises researchers to liaise with employees or members of the organisation, because often they have some image in their minds of how the organisation should be working when things are going well. But to ensure effective training practices an assessment of the current 'state of affairs' within the company is needed. Training will thus be workable if it is grounded on an assessment of what is in place and what is needed to meet the specific company's business strategies and objectives.

#### 3.5.2.2.4 SUB-THEME 2.4: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAINING SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

To build and strengthen individual and organisational skills and competencies you must present appropriate training but employees also need to implement and practice what they have learned. Lancaster et al. (2013:15) emphasise that to have the opportunity to use new skills is regarded as critical to reinforce learning.

- The first aspect that the majority of participants have highlighted regarding the implementation of the skills taught during training is the fact that it is very important to provide relevant training at the appropriate time. In this regard one participant from company A stated: “*Yes, if the topic was relevant to that person at that time*”. A participant from company D also confirmed this: “*Well to some extent... for example the healthy living was presented at the right time...*”

If an employee needs a specific skill at a specific time the chance might increase that he is going to use the skill after training in the workplace. Identifying training needs and objectives is a big challenge when it comes to soft skills training, due to the uncertainty involved in exactly what the trainee needs to know and in what

context he/she needs to apply that learning. This has implications both in terms of training design and in terms of the evaluation and measurement of training (Laker & Powell, 2011:116).

- Another important concern raised by the participants when exploring the implementation of new skills is the difference between the training environment and the work environment, and the impact thereof when implementing newly trained skills. Two participants noted as follows:
- *“They want to... very motivated after training, but then return to same work conditions”*
  - *“Training environment is the ideal environment... work place... not enough time and manpower to complete tasks then, it is difficult to implement new skills.”*

From the responses above it is clear that the topics presented were relevant and that the employees at the companies were motivated, but challenges in the work environment sometimes prevented the implementation of newly trained skills. Lancaster et al. (2013:15) referred to the fact that the organisational culture can influence the implementation of newly trained skills. In this regard Lancaster et al. (2013:15) described organisational culture as follows:

...punitive, focussed on tasks rather than people, bureaucratic and slow to change, the majority of the participants reported policies as an issue, describing them as too restrictive, not reflective of the pace of change in the organisation and too numerous to remember.

Laker and Powell (2011:115) also emphasise that to change soft skill behaviours successfully, the organisational forces that maintain those behaviours must also change.

- Laker and Powell (2011:119) further note that “the mastery of soft skills usually requires continued instruction or guidance post training, which is rarely forthcoming.” The majority of the participants’ responses confirmed the lack of guidance after training. Two remarks identified in this regard are as follows:
- *“I think that at the beginning yes, they do what is being taught to them, the only problem is that it is not being constantly monitored and therefore people only start out with doing it, but does not keep doing it. Nobody asks ‘have you implemented it, how is it going?’”*

- *“Lack of policing... training department are relying on management to know content of workshop and to make sure his staff implement it in practice and to monitor, but there may be a lack of policing.”*

Lancaster et al. (2013:15) emphasise that to have the opportunity to use new skills is regarded as critical to reinforce learning. Supportive supervisors should facilitate practice opportunities by including participants in planning and decision-making, allowing them to chair meetings, broadening their roles, and encouraging them to develop and try new ideas. Heathfield (2014) proposes creating situations in which practice is immediate and frequent to help participants retain what they have learnt. The opportunity or need to apply knowledge and skills immediately to trainees' jobs has been repeatedly emphasised in several studies. When trainees lack the opportunity to use what they have learned in training, it is unlikely that a high degree of transfer will occur (Heathfield, 2014).

It is thus clear from the participants' responses and the literature that the role of supervisors regarding the monitoring of implementation of skills taught during training are of utmost importance, but it can be concluded that at the end of the day it is a personal decision to use what you have learnt or not. Two responses from company B confirmed this:

- *“You can teach somebody something, but it's their choice if they gonna use it...”*
- *“I feel here we start off well but it is not lasting... I think there is no management buy-in... the person will be sent on it as part of remediation or part of a disciplinary aspect, and it shouldn't be, it should be the person sees the need of it.”*

Schulz (2008:150) refers to the debate about whether it is possible to enhance soft skills in a few hours of training. He concludes, though, “that whether or not it is possible a professional who wants to achieve success has no choice but to acquire and improve his/her soft skills.” As a German proverb states: “Self-recognition is the first step towards improvement”.

### 3.5.2.2.5 SUB-THEME 2.5: SUPERVISORY TRAINING

Following the emphasis in the previous section, section 3.5.2.2.4 on the important role of supervisors this section will highlight the importance of educating and training a company's leaders and supervisors with regard to EAP and EAP related training.

In this regard the International Standards for EAPs (Employee Assistance Professionals Association, 2010:27) emphasises leadership training - educating leaders about their roles in the programme that will enable them to communicate to employees' programme objectives and procedures. When your managers are well informed it is easier to get their buy-in and then for them to convey a positive message about the EAP and EAP related training due to be presented. For the use of this study educating leaders and supervisors will be referred to as supervisory training.

Of the four companies in the study, only company C has a formal supervisory training programme. Company B and D have induction or orientation programmes for new managers and it includes an explanation of the EAP. One participant at company A and one at company D mentioned that they do not have a formal supervisory training programme, but they admitted that supervisory training is needed. The following responses illustrate this:

- *"No supervisory training but it is needed."*
- *"No but I think it would be very beneficial."*

It is very important that managers/supervisors are trained or well-informed about the training themes being presented, and that they either attend or already been well-equipped in the specific training skills, because "when it comes to soft skills it is very likely that the trainee will look to the manager as a role model or coach for subsequent reinforcement in the workplace" (Laker & Powell, 2011:116).

### 3.5.2.3 **Theme 3: Optimal EAP related training themes/topics presented and recommendations for future presentations.**

Companies function in different environments and face different challenges and expectations with regard to EAP related training. Optimal or in other words the most beneficial training will differ from company to company and site to site. From the responses received in this regard the following sub-themes were identified and will be discussed in the following sub-sections:

- The most beneficial EAP related training presented,
- Outstanding training needs.

### 3.5.2.3.1 SUB-THEME 3.1: THE MOST BENEFICIAL EAP RELATED TRAINING PRESENTED

It was clear from the participants' responses that they have different opinions regarding themes/topics presented and the impact thereof. However, before elaborating on the most beneficial EAP related training presented at the four companies included in this study according to the participants, the researcher would like to emphasise that in principle to invite somebody to training already has a positive impact on that person and indirectly on the company. In this regard Lancaster et al. (2013:16) concluded that "all participants felt motivated as a result of being nominated to attend training courses." It signalled to the participants that the organisation considered them as playing a key role in its goal to become more competitive. A participant from company A confirmed this by stating that:

- *"The biggest benefit of training is the feeling it gives to people of being attended to, that they are important to the company and the company are looking after them, the company recognising their need and showing that the company care."*

Following the above-mentioned benefit of just inviting someone to any training presented, the researcher further explored more specifically from the list in Table 3.4 what EAP related training currently being presented was experienced by the 13 participants as the most beneficial to their company. From the responses the most beneficial programmes included healthy relationships, drug awareness, healthy living drive, HIV, diversity, workplace etiquette, mentorship, stress management, substance abuse and debt counselling programmes. The direct quotations and in-depth discussions below illustrate the participants' opinions.

Participants at company A highlighted the following EAP related training programmes listed in Table 3.4 as the most beneficial:

- *"Healthy relationships training..."*
- *"Relationships and then drug training..."*
- *"Healthy living drive – lifestyle diseases are keeping people out of work, for example high blood pressure and diabetes and then anxiety and stress also contributes."*



Participants from company B stressed the following as beneficial:

- *“HIV counselling...”*
- *“Diversity is a nice to have, nice ‘upbeat’ course, but there is no visible big problem with diversity at the moment.”*
- *“Diversity receives positive feedback and I would like to see them develop a little bit more-in-depth on that.”*
- *“Workplace etiquette: covers diversity, listening and communication skills...”*

The researcher would like to highlight the discrepancy between two participants’ feedback at company B about diversity training when asked: “What training is to the biggest benefit to your organisation?” One participant stated:

- *“Diversity is a nice to have, nice ‘upbeat’ course but there is no visible big problem with diversity at the moment...”*

The other participant stated:

- *“Diversity receives positive feedback and I would like to see them develop a little bit more-in-depth on that.”*

One participant experienced that there are no diversity challenges and that it is a nice programme, but was not needed at that stage. Another participant at the same site would like the programme to be expanded.

This confirms again that the responses are subjective opinions of individuals. The sample is too small to use the information to make generalisations, but it is a good indicator of how employees experience EAP related training and the impact thereof.

Another participant at company B highlighted mentorship as the most beneficial EAP related training programme currently being presented:

- *“Mentorship, you must be the example... for example I am the role model for the students under me, role model.”*

Heathfield (2014) is also of the opinion as the participant above that, “it is especially effective if trainees see their managers trying out new skills learned”.



The statement from one participant at company C clearly indicates that she could not confirm what training is the most beneficial to their specific company when questioned directly:

- *“Stress management is new... regarding finances, I received individual feedback, but bigger picture problems still exist... it’s not that visible to example to see who stopped misuse... so yeah it’s at this stage a little bit difficult to determine.”*

It is very important for organisations and managers to understand, plan and critically evaluate training, because poor, inappropriate or inadequate training can be a source of frustration for everyone involved and can also be costly (Shenge, 2014:50).

The following responses were received by participants at company D:

- *“Stress management...”*
- *“Drug and alcohol and healthy living...”*
- *“Substance abuse and debt counselling, not financial management or budgeting.”*

According to Table 3.4 there is some correlation between programmes being presented at the four companies included in this study in general, but it is clear from the above-mentioned responses that the four companies identified totally different EAP related training programmes as the most beneficial to them. EAP related training practices and needs differ due to the fact that each company operates in a unique environment and is challenged with unique problems and opportunities. Although there is some correlation between programmes presented in general, skills needed at a specific time to impact the effectiveness of a company will vary from sector to sector and from site to site.

#### 3.5.2.3.2 SUB-THEME 3.2: OUTSTANDING TRAINING NEEDS

In Table 3.4 the researcher summarised training themes presented at the four companies included in this study. The majority of the participants mentioned that the training topics were relevant and appropriate and the most beneficial themes were highlighted above. However, some of the participants identified themes that are not currently being presented but should be considered in the future as they feel they will be beneficial to the company and these themes includes, HIV education and training, language proficiency, conflict and time management programmes.

The following responses reflect EAP related training deemed as needed by the participants:

- *“HIV education and training...”*
- *“Conflict management...”*
- *“Communication, language skills... English is some of the employees’ third language.”*
- *“Time management and how that can influence your employee relations, your stress levels, because it has an impact on everything.”*

Training in terms of communication (language skills) and time management are confirmed by different scholars. For example Schulz (2008:149) emphasises communication consists of language proficiency. Furthermore, Robinson and Robinson’s (1989:35) mention that training in time management is important due to the fact that it seems to be the cure for many performance ills and Blair (1992:7) is of the opinion that time management promotes efficient work practices.

The researcher experienced it as a constructive sign that the participants were all very positive about the current EAP related programmes and that they really had to think what else was needed or could be to the benefit of the company.

#### **3.5.2.4 Theme 4: Challenges regarding EAP related training**

The most prominent challenges expressed by the majority of the participants centred around the execution of EAP related training programmes. In this regard they identified the following challenges, ‘to get people to attend’, budget constraints, to get the buy-in/support from managers, motivation, creativity, national programmes, language, and the setting/venue. Some of the participants also referred to the impact of the lack of follow-up support after training and the lack of knowledge about skills plans and levies.

Each of these aspects will be discussed under the following sub-themes:

- Challenges relating to the execution of training programmes
- Lack of follow-up support
- Lack of knowledge regarding Skills Plan and Levies

#### 3.5.2.4.1 SUB-THEME 4.1: CHALLENGES RELATING TO THE EXECUTION OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The researcher has noticed more pressure on EAPs to expand their training practices and is of the opinion that it is very important to explore the current challenges when it comes to EAP related training before considering expanding practices. The current challenges faced by companies concerning the execution of EAP related training are attendance of trainees, budget constraints, support from managers, motivation, creativity, national programmes, language, and the setting/venue. Each challenge will be discussed in more detail below.

##### ***Attendance of trainees***

At three of the four companies included in the study the main challenge identified, as bluntly indicated by a participant from company B, is *“to get people to attend...”* Participants mentioned that production or operations at companies need to continue and managers can't release their staff to attend training planned during working hours.

The significance of this challenge is highlighted by the following responses:

- *“Production environment chasing targets, just the thought of having to send that person for half an hour sets her target astray.”*
- *“The time out for training has not been factored in; it is perceived as lost to the company. Pressure is on team leaders to meet their targets... don't want to release people.”*
- *“To get people to attend... production is the main priority.... So if it is not something to do directly with production then they don't always motivate people to go.”*
- *“A manager will plan, but on the day something will happen and due to shortage of staff, can't send staff to training sessions. Operations need to continue; it is operationally difficult for employees to attend as service delivery needs to continue.”*

From the above-mentioned responses it is clear that to release one or two employees to attend training sessions is a challenge, but a participant from company B further explained that an even bigger challenge is when you need the whole team to attend the training:

- *“Some soft skills you need the team to promote team effectiveness and then it does not help if you have mixed groups or just one or two people from a team at a time. Soft skills training often have a team building effect and it affects the success if you can’t have the whole team in one session.”*

A participant from company A admitted that *“if a substitute worker is available it is usually not an issue to be relieved for training from the production line, but if no substitute it is a problem and team leaders are reluctant to send people.”* A participant from company B directly stated that *“to buy in staff, cost also plays a role...”* The cost-effectiveness of training will then be calculated by adding the cost of the training presented to the cost of buying in staff members and the result might be that it is to costly.

Company D tried to address the attendance matter by presenting more training sessions over a longer period to give employees more opportunities to attend the training. The outcome is however also challenging as asserted by a participant as follows:

- *“There is three or four different shift patterns... to get all of those people to attend we need to arrange about six sessions over a three week period. But on the day he must attend the person is sick and the next session is not on his shift and then we lose that person.”*

### ***Budget constraints***

The second biggest challenge stressed by all four companies that directly links to attendance was budget constraints / cost to company. The following quote serves as an illustration:

- *“In a production environment every minute counts or get counted for in rand value so it is difficult in terms of releasing people from the production floor. So the challenge is to be creative in your planning...”*

Budget constraints included the cost to company as mentioned above to release the people from the service delivery or production floor, but also the cost of the programme presented.

With regard to training programmes one participant raised the concern that hard skills are still deemed more important than soft skills training during budget discussions. The following comment confirms this statement:

- *“Budget.... hard skills takes priority over soft skills.”*

Although Carnevale et al. (1988:13) are of the opinion “that employers want employees who can think on their feet (problem solving), who can come up with innovative solutions when needed (creative thinking), who have pride in themselves and their potential to be successful (self-esteem), who know how to get things done (goal setting/motivation), and who have some sense of the skills needed to perform well in the workplace (personal and career development)”, in practice the statement above proves that some companies still focus primarily on hard skill training and is more willing to include that in their budgets.

A participant from company B supported the concern above by further elaborating that:

- *“CPD or specifically in this company referred to as ‘map’ points... people drive after map points, and you get map points more easy from doing clinical (hard skills) than when you are doing Money Wisdom (soft skill), you are not going to get points for that.”*

The researcher is of the opinion that ‘map points’ or CPD points are a requirement for most professions at this stage and if it is true that employees mostly receive their points via clinical courses this is a research gap that needs further exploration, because the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 deems soft skills just as important. Schulz (2008:150) supports this argument by emphasising that “to be successful in this challenging environment, candidates for jobs have to possess a ‘competitive edge’ that distinguishes them from other candidates... the competitive edge refers to additional knowledge and skills made up of convincing personal traits and habits, in other words soft skills”.

With regard to an allocated training budget, a participant from company C remarked that:

- *“The head office receives levies, but money do not filter through to Cape Town office....we have no training budget.”*

Not having an allocated training budget can make it very complicated but being a government department Company C is also forced to explore courses at the National School of Government when considering training programmes for employees. If the National School of Government don't present the course they are interested in they explore private programmes and presenters and that can be very costly. The following remark illustrates this challenge:

- *“then we are forced to go private and that is costly”.*

### ***Management support***

As mentioned above, to attend training programmes in a production environment is a big challenge due to the cost involved if a person is removed from production or operations and it was further discussed under issues due to budget constraints. Adding to this challenge the participants highlighted the problem of managers who verbally assures you that they are supporting the training planned, but then they don't attend the training themselves. The following quotes illustrate a participant's experience in this regard:

- *“Deciding on a training topic is not difficult, but the implementation is the problem. Managers will tell you they support you, but then they don't attend and if a manager does not attend the rest of the workforce will say but why must I attend.”*
- *“Run up 7 floors call on people individually to attend, but they don't.... I won't say they don't attend because the managers don't, but I do think they have got an impact because the manager that sees the training as important will come and attend and motivate his people...”*

The importance of managers' support is emphasised by Laker and Powell (2011:116) who postulate that with soft skills it is very likely that the trainee will look to the manager as a role model / coach in view of new behaviours or the implementation of the behaviours. In a study completed by Lancaster et al. (2013:15) all participants believed it was essential that supervisors first complete the training course so that they could act as coaches and reinforce new behaviours.

Additional aspects that emerged while discussing management support or attendance as a challenge when executing EAP related training included the 'lack of corporation of managers', managers not communicating their needs, not getting back to trainers to

give the final permission to execute the training and managers conveying the feeling that they don't value training that might be to the benefit of their employees.

The additional aspects can be illustrated by the following quotes:

- *“When I did the need assessment only five of the 25 managers completed the 10 minute online questionnaire, difficult to determine the needs of the management.”*
- *“Offer to arrange everything after need was identified managers just need to return with dates and times... then they just don't come back to me... this is important they just don't come back to you.... ‘Problem left in space’.”*
- *“Sometimes I think the managers don't value some of the things that much or don't see the need of their people attending...”*

### **Motivation**

An individual employee has limited power to address the challenges discussed above with regard to attending training programmes due to budget constraints. However, internal motivation is within their power, but participants' identified lack of motivation as a challenge when it comes to the execution of EAP related training. It was indicated that employees don't want to attend in their own time, or when it will result in extra costs, or when they don't receive an incentive.

The following responses revealed that motivation is a serious challenge:

- *“Poor attendance especially during lunch time, more willing during working hours.”*
- *“Will not come in on off days, extra cost travelling fees...”*
- *“Some people do not want to be involved and then only if there is something that's going for free... If they are doing something and then you gonna say they gonna get something.”*

Motivation to attend is also affected by the reason behind the enrolment for a specific programme. The following quote illustrates how training as a result of remedial action can affect an employee's motivation:

- *“I feel here we start off well, but it is not lasting. Reason: I think there is no management buy-in... The person will be sent on it as part of remediation or part of a disciplinary aspect, and it shouldn't be. It should be the person sees the need of it.”*



Schulz (2008:150) refers to the debate about whether it is possible to enhance soft skills in a few hours of training. He concludes, though, that whether or not it is possible a professional who wants to achieve success has no choice but to acquire and improve his/her soft skills. In other words it is the individual's own responsibility.

A very important challenge to be explored further resulted from a statement by a participant from company B who referred to the fact that if a person is hungry or stressed it affects their motivation to attend and the impact of the training presented. This challenge is articulated as follows:

- *“Most of the people are not internally motivated to better themselves, because of their basic needs that are not being met. ‘Why should I spend time and energy trying to learn this new skill while I’m so hungry I wanna faint?’ or ‘I’m worried my child doesn’t have food tonight’ or ‘I don’t have taxi or transport money’.”*

From the statement above the assumption can be made that if your basic needs are not met it does play a role when it comes to motivation and training transfer. It is an on-going debate to what extent or if at all a company has a responsibility to provide in an individual's basic needs, for example, food, clothing and shelter, because it has an influence on employees' level of productivity and, in the context of this study as indicated by the statement above, on their motivation to attend training. Moir (2001:1) comments on this as follows:

The need for companies to undertake activity that might be regarded as socially responsible has been discussed in the literature and has been a topic of academic study for decades (Heald, 1957, cited in Ullmann, 1985). Cannon (1992) identifies that the primary role of business is to produce goods and services that society wants and needs, however there is an inter-dependence between business and society in the need for a stable environment with an educated workforce. Cannon, (1992:33) quotes Lord Sieff, the former chairman of Marks and Spencer PLC: 'Business only contributes fully to a society if it is efficient, profitable and socially responsible'. Similarly, Wood (1991) states that, 'the basic idea of corporate social responsibility is that business and society are interwoven rather than distinct entities'.

How to address this challenge and the cost and impact thereof is a topic to be further explored.



## **Creativity**

It transpired that at some of the companies the same programmes are repeated, as they feel the topics are relevant. The following quotes illustrate that one of the challenges is to present the same message more creatively:

- *“To adapt training to suit the current work force so that they would find it interesting, that they can relate to it, challenge is to keep it ‘fresh and interesting’.”*
- *“To be creative with conveying the same message...”*

The *Collins English Dictionary* (2015) defines creative as, “designed to or tending to stimulate the imagination” and *Dictionary.com* (2012) defines it as, “resulting from originality of thought, expression, etc...” in other words to process / transform the current material to ensure originality and to stimulate imagination. A participant was of the opinion that the presenter should include examples of current business challenges to make the same message more interesting and appropriate when themes are repeated.

## **National programmes**

Some of the participants highlighted that it is very challenging for them if head office identifies training topics/themes and then it needs to be implemented nationally, on grass root level. In this regard the following quote as expressed by a participant in company B illustrates that although identified by head office it might not be needed on a specific site at that stage:

- *“Some of them (training themes) are initiated by head office, for example diversity and work place etiquette. Diversity is a nice to have – nice ‘upbeat’ course, but there is no visible big problem with diversity at the moment.”*

## **Language**

A few participants stressed language as a challenge affecting the success of EAP related training. From the verbatim quotes below the assumption can be made that most programmes are presented in English. The following quotes emphasise the challenge with regard to language:

- *“I think sometimes it’s language... for most of the older people who does not attend... but all the people who doesn’t have school really... they will never*

*attend... they just say no, no, no we don't understand... you speak in deep English."*

- *"Communication of the pamphlets, it's a lot of English maybe if it was also written in Xhosa... then they will take their opportunity to read it..."*

According to South African info (2015) South Africa's second-largest language is, isiXhosa and it is spoken by 16% of all South Africans (8 million people). South African info (2015) further elaborates that it is, "a regional language, with a third of its speakers living in the Eastern Cape, where it is the language of almost 78% of the provincial population. It's also strong in the bordering Western Cape, where 17% of all isiXhosa speakers live, making up nearly a quarter (24%) of the provincial population". This needs to be taken into account as highlighted above by the participants.

### **Venue**

Another general challenge stressed especially by one participant from Company B was the size of the venue. As discussed in point 3.5.2.2.1, sub-theme 2.1 there is no regulations for EAP related training sessions, but from the information received by participants as discussed the assumption can be made that a group of 7-12 people is the minimum to ensure a successful training session. A participant at company B felt very strongly about big groups and that at that specific site lack of facilities and size of facilities is a big challenge:

- *"Training facilities, lack of facilities/size, you want a group of 20-30 not one or two. At this specific company lack of facilities is a big challenge."*

To conclude, the above-mentioned challenges were identified at the four companies included in this study. Different challenges were identified at each of the companies with the one significant challenge being 'attendance'. Mcnamara ([sa]) advises researchers to liaise with employees or members of the organisation, because often they have some image in their minds of how the organisation should be working when things are going well but to ensure effective training an assessment of the current 'state of affairs' within the company is needed.

#### 3.5.2.4.2 SUB-THEME 4.2: LACK OF FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

All the participants in all four companies stressed that there are no follow-up support programmes, guidelines or structures in place, confirming Laker and Powell's (2011:119) statement that "mastery with soft skills usually requires continued instruction or guidance post training, which is rarely forthcoming". The following quotations verify the challenge of lack of follow-up support:

- *"No formal follow up, type of employees will immediately provide feedback if they found session insightful or not."*
- *"No formal follow up by the training department for soft skills. Only a change commitment form handed out at the end of the course, you take it home and hand it in later."*
- *"Managers to a certain point follow up separate to us (HR)... we can't say for sure that they are doing it or not...."*
- *"Not officially.... There is never a formal kind of follow up..."*

Contrary to the above-mentioned, one participant from company B and one from company C stated that they do individual follow ups, but the participant from company C admits that she needs to develop a better way of doing it. The following quotes serve as a confirmation:

- *"Yes definitely follow up at this site, yes I will personally follow up a few weeks later. Some will give feedback via email."*
- *"Travel a lot I like to do follow ups one on one... I know I must actually get some better way of doing follow up and evaluation."*

Another very interesting response noted with regard to follow-up support was a participant from company D who stated the following: *"With soft skills not so much but with technical skills yes..."* This again is proof that a new era is dawning in EAP related training, but companies still view technical training (hard skills) in a different light as soft skills/EAP related training.

The majority of the participants at three of the four companies identified the need for follow-up support after training and stressed the importance that it should be addressed. The following comment illustrates this need:

- *“There is scope for formal follow up – you leave very motivated, but if there is no following up then it’s easy to forget about the training received. No... is an area we need to focus on.”*

Lancaster et al. (2013:15) confirm in their study that participants valued timely feedback from supervisors ‘along the way’, because it developed self-awareness, confidence, and the opportunity to correct undesired behaviours.

As discussed above, follow up support is to ensure that employees implement the training or new skills learnt, but it also includes to follow up if the training was beneficial to the company. Did it have a positive impact? In other words, was it cost-effective?

Company A, C and D confirmed that they have no measurements in place to determine if EAP related training presented on their sites, as indicated in Table 3.4, is cost-effective and/or if it has a positive impact on the work environment. See quotes below to illustrate this:

- *“No measurement in place.”*
- *“In house presenter, on pay roll... difficult to calculate cost.”*
- *“No poll done difficult to say.”*

The only exception was a participant from company B highlighting that they *“explore injuries/risks and if that has gone down they see it as a positive”*.

One participant at company A mentioned that, *“absenteeism can be monitored”* Using the choice of words “can be” indicates that there is no formal process in place, but it is possible to monitor absenteeism.

There is a lot of emphasis on training and a lot of money is spent on training, but the question needs to be asked: “Is it worth it?” As most companies are in favour of investing in their staff, scepticism often highlights that training fails to have an impact on practice (Wright, 1999:91). For that reason the researcher wanted to determine if companies have measurements in place to assess or determine the impact and whether EAP related training is cost-effective. From the quotations above it can be stressed that this area is another gap for further research. If companies are spending a lot of money

on training, as is clear from Table 3.4, why is nothing in place to determine if it is worth it?

#### **3.5.2.4.3 SUB-THEME 4.3: LACK OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING SKILLS PLANS AND LEVIES**

The third theme regarding challenges identified is linked with the lack of knowledge about skills plans and levies. The South African Government is promoting training via the Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999, allowing companies to claim back some of the levies paid as an incentive for training provided. If there is a lack of knowledge in this regard, it can be a challenge but also a financial loss for the company. At this stage most EAP related training is claimed or included in the WSP and ATR (Thomas, 2014) or in other words claimed under the mandatory grant.

Three participants in total, one from company A, B and C confirmed that they completed a skills plan and claimed 20% levies under the mandatory grant.

The following four responses illustrate that some of the participants were not very well informed/educated about the matter of their company's specific policy and procedures when it came to the Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999:

- *“Not sure – unfamiliar with that”*
- *“We put it in the skills plan, I don't know if we get money back from the levy, but I presume so... you will have to ask head office.”*
- *“I don't know.”*
- *“No I'm not sure about the EAP related training.”*

The researcher is of the opinion that it is very important for the key role players who manage and implement EAPs to have knowledge of this legislation and how levies can be claimed back, so that they are able to advise companies or to align their training to the benefit of the company.

#### **3.5.2.5 Theme 5: Recommendations regarding more effective training practices**

Following the challenges discussed concerning EAP related training under theme 4, the researcher would like to emphasise some of the participants' recommendations to ensure more effective training practices. The recommendations included management involvement, supervisory training, linking EAP related training to performance appraisals or to individuals' needs, knowledgeable speakers, improving how the training product is

sold, and general recommendations. Below is an in-depth discussion of the recommendations made.

A central theme identified during the discussion on how to ensure more effective training practices was to get the support of management, to get their 'buy-in'. The following quotes illustrate how important the majority of participants rated **management involvement**:

- *“The mind-set of managers, if managers sees training as a priority, as a must have, then everything will fall in place. Money/budget plays a role, but you need commitment from management saying training is a priority in my company.”*
- *“Management must buy in to send the person so that they don't make them feel guilty to come, and when they come back again they enable them to utilise their new training skills.”*
- *“If your management is more involved in the training sessions and motivate the people and also reinforce how important it is for them to have the skills and also attend.... It will be of good benefit, because if management goes with something the rest will follow.”*

A participant from company B further elaborated on this matter stressing a *“bigger facility, buy-in from management, support from management, and support from higher up. On site level they buy in, but not on regional level.”* This comment emphasises the importance of management on all levels to support training planned.

A participant from company B shared her solution on how to get management's support: *“I talk to the managers a lot, I inform them of the workshops due to be presented. I emphasise who were identified to attend and then ask who is available on a certain date. Then I also regularly inform them who have attended and who still need to attend. I think the big thing is how we communicate with each other and I live on my skills plan, because if I don't it's not gonna be done.”*

A participant from company A supported this solution by recommending to *“train the management and then your middle management, your team leaders so that they can really understand what the benefit is.”* Training management in EAP refers to **supervisory training** as highlighted in point 3.5.2.2.4. The International Standards for EAPs (Employee Assistance Professionals Association, 2010:27) emphasise that the

EAP should promote leadership training that will educate leaders about their roles in the programme and that will enable them to communicate programme objectives and procedures to employees.

Another recommendation identified by a few participants was to **link EAP related training to performance appraisals or to individual's needs**. In this regard the following comments reflected the participants' ideas:

- *"I think your EAP should be specifically driven on individuals that require specific interventions."*
- *"Training needs to be linked to your performance... I think if you have your performance review and you have been assessed on how well you doing, you should also be assessed on what are you putting into your own development."*
- *"To move the focus from just operational to development... to develop yourself and the first point of call would be for the managers to discuss development with the employees..."*

Another recommendation to enhance effective training is to give attention to the selection of a knowledgeable speaker or training facilitator. A participant from company A stressed that a **speaker must know his subject**:

- *"Sometimes people from outside and sometimes people in the company, there are people who have gone through really tough times, we use them also, because sometimes you relate better when you are actually talking to a person who's been through what you are currently going through."*

Heathfield (2014) emphasises that trainees react more favourably to trainers who have experience in their industry. They appreciate facilitators who have experienced and addressed the issues and situations highlighted in the training, for example a CEO in the same industry who has been on ground level and who displays the soft skills he learned or needed to reach the 'top'.

Another important recommendation was linked to the facilitator's ability to 'sell his/her product' and to motivate trainees to 'buy his/her training product'. A participant from company B commented that, *"it is important **how you sell your product**. As a facilitator you need to be enthusiastic yourself, well-read."* Heathfield (2014) is of the opinion that the opening should stress 'what is in it for me?' and if that is clarified it will determine the



trainees' participation. The opening should emphasise what's in it for the trainee and the value of the session, and throughout the course the value should be reviewed and highlighted.

Following very specific recommendations the researcher would like to highlight **general recommendations** that should also be considered. It included a more practical and interactive training method, to spread information articles, a bursary system and enhancing career pathing. The following responses include general recommendations to ensure effective EAP related training practices:

- *“How they present the sessions, more practical and that you interact with the audience a bit more.”*
- *“Can't reach everybody... Information articles that will circulate and spread...”*
- *“A bursary system – when considering formal courses you sometimes need to consider a pay cut if you enrol as a student. Bursary system.”*
- *“To enhance career pathing – Company B got the policy ‘the company will only fund training that support what you do in your current position’ for example you are at reception, but would like to study for HR – there is scope to move to an HR position in the company, but that course will not enhance your abilities in your current position – then they don't fund. Career pathing will broaden the scope...”*

Effective training can raise performance, improve morale, and increase an organisation's potential according to Shenge (2014:51). But it is very important to have processes in place, as highlighted by a participant from company A: *“to distinguish between what people need in regards of training and what is a nice to have.”*

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher described the research methodology and ethical aspects, as well as the most important empirical findings referring to EAP related training currently being presented, whether it meet the goals set by The Standards, the challenges of implementing and presenting EAP related training and recommendations made by participants to enhance more effective training.

The next chapter will focus on a discussion of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations.



# CHAPTER 4

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study revealed that companies with an established EAP which includes a significant training component are presenting a wide variety of and, according to the feedback from participants, appropriate EAP related training programmes. However due to challenges, especially with regard to poor attendance, the ability of these training programmes to increase a company's effectiveness are jeopardised.

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The goal of the study was to explore the nature of EAP related training practices at companies in the Western Cape. It is therefore important to restate the objectives of the study and the research question in order to describe whether the study achieved the objectives it set out to meet.

#### **The objectives of this research study were as follows:**

- To explore the content of EAP related training currently being presented at companies in the Western Cape.
- To explore if the current EAP related training is meeting the goals as set out by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010).
- To explore the most beneficial EAP related training presented at companies in the Western.
- To explore the current challenges that companies in the Western Cape experience regarding EAP related training.
- To make recommendations regarding EAP related training practices in order to improve training practices and to proactively address training challenges.

Against this background the following research question guided this study: What is the nature of EAP related training practices in companies in the Western Cape?

## 4.2 KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the empirical data, key findings and conclusions regarding each objective as stated above, will be the outlined below.

### 4.2.1 Objective 1

The first objective was to explore the content of EAP related training currently being presented at companies in the Western Cape. The following key findings and conclusions based on the literature review and responses from the participants are relevant:

- As illustrated in Table 3.4, it is clear that the four companies included in this study presented a variety of EAP related (soft skill) training themes/topics. Laker and Powell (2011:113) remark that there is an increasing awareness that technical skills, even for technical positions, are insufficient for success beyond entry-level positions, let alone for professional fields. “Subsequent success beyond these initial levels usually requires proficiency in soft skill areas: leadership, self-management, conflict resolution, communication, emotional intelligence etc.” (Laker & Powell, 2011:113).
- The following topics/themes were presented at most of the four companies (see table 3.4): communication, HIV awareness, anxiety and stress management, financial management, drug and substance abuse training, wellness/healthy living drives, mental health, and emotional intelligence. Each company also presented company specific themes/topics and these included: time management, negotiation (complaints resolution), understanding organisational culture (diversity), and leadership training.
- The empirical results confirmed that many of the training programmes presented at three of the companies included communication skills. Schulz (2008:149) deems communication skills as essential, as they are a prerequisite for a range of other soft skills, such as moderating discussions or conflict management.
- Healthy living and wellness programmes are presented at three of the four companies included in the study and from the feedback it is clear that it played a vital role with regard to EAP. It is reported that the healthy living drive is one of the programmes that is to the biggest benefit of the companies.

- From the research results the assumption can be made that the EAP related training currently being presented at the four companies at stake represent most of the soft skills categorised in the four soft skill groups identified by the ASTD as the soft skills required to give an employee a ‘competitive edge’ and to increase a company’s effectiveness (Carnevale, 1991 in Conrad, 1999:10). The soft skill groups identified were the following:
  - “Communication and adaptability skills (speaking, listening, problem solving and thinking creatively);
  - development skills (self-esteem, motivation and goal setting, career planning/development);
  - group effectiveness skills (interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation); and
  - influencing skills (understanding organisational culture, sharing leadership)” (Conrad, 1999:10).
- With regard to the structure of sessions and the presentation methods for EAP related training the following guidelines were identified:
  - EAP related training programmes should vary from 30 minute talks to half day training programmes.
  - Ideally the smallest group should consist of at least 7 people but the majority of participants were of the opinion that an ideal group size for EAP related training is 30-40 people.
  - With regard to the methods most participants highlighted that EAP related training should have a practical and theoretical component and that visual aids should be used during training.

#### **4.2.2 Objective 2**

The second objective was to explore if the current EAP related training was meeting the goals as set out by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010).

- The goal set for EAP training as an intervention is to provide training that enhances employee and organisational resilience (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15). The researcher would like to highlight the following objectives to reach this goal:
  - “To provide targeted interventions in response to commonly identified trends and business risks” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:15).

- “To build and strengthen individual and organisational skills and competencies” (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1).

Exploring the effectiveness of current themes/topics presented with regard to the above-mentioned goal and objective, most participants responded positively. The participants stated that if the EAP related training does not meet the company’s need fully, it definitely meets the company’s need in some way. The majority of participants responded that the themes presented are very effective, but cooperation and attendance affects the impact thereof.

- In the context of ensuring targeted interventions attention were given to how companies decide on what topics/themes to present at their sites. The participants remarked that they use informal methods, for example the National Health Calendar, feedback from the production floor, injuries at work, personal interviews with staff and EAP provider decided on topics. None of the participants referred to a formal needs assessment process when planning or deciding on EAP related training topics/themes to present. Wright (1999:91) emphasises the following: “to base your training on what you think is important or useful may fail if not taking into account the needs and goals of the organisation or the needs of individual work roles within it.”
- With regard to linking training to the company’s vision, mission and goals the participants did not elaborate on any process to ensure that their training was tied to the companies’ vision, mission or goals. Only one company stated that the company has added a new core value and training resulted from the company’s goal. According to Cascio and Aquinis (2005:382) the defining characteristic of companies with effective training practices is that their training is tied to business strategies and objectives and linked to bottom-line results.
- To build and strengthen individual and organisational skills and competencies people need to implement and practice what they have learned. Lancaster et al. (2013:15) emphasise that to have the opportunity to use new skills is regarded as critical to reinforce learning. The primer response was that employees implement what they have learned when the themes/topics are presented at the appropriate time and if the work environment is conducive to the implementation of new skills learnt. It was also raised that a ‘lack of policing’ affects the implementation of soft skills learnt. Laker and Powell (2011:119) confirm that “the mastery of soft skills usually requires continued instruction or guidance post training, which is rarely forthcoming.”

- Supervisory training can be seen as a tool to get managers' buy-in with the goal to educate leaders about their roles in the EAP and to enable them to communicate the programme objectives and procedures to employees. Of the four companies included in the study, only company C has a formal supervisory training programme. Company B and D have induction or orientation programmes for new managers and an explanation of the EAP is included in that session. The empirical results identified the need for supervisory training.

### 4.2.3 Objective 3

The third objective was to explore the most beneficial EAP related training presented at companies in the Western Cape.

- The research study identified that a general expectation exists for companies to provide training and/or to invite employees to training sessions. To invite employees to training conveys the message that they are important and that the company cares. This is confirmed by Lancaster et al. (2013:16) who conclude that “all participants felt motivated as a result of being nominated to attend training courses.”
- From the responses the most beneficial programmes included healthy relationships, drug awareness, healthy living drive, HIV, diversity, workplace etiquette, mentorship, stress management, substance abuse, and debt counselling programmes.
- It is clear from the responses that the four companies identified totally different EAP related training programmes as the most beneficial to them. EAP related training practices and needs differ due to the fact that each company operates in a unique environment and is faced with unique problems and opportunities. Although there is some correlation between programmes presented in general, skills needed at a specific time to impact the effectiveness of a company will vary from sector to sector and from site to site.
- Some participants could not indicate what training is the most beneficial to their specific company. It is very important for organisations and managers to understand, plan and critically evaluate training, because poor, inappropriate or inadequate training can be a source of frustration for everyone involved and can also be costly (Shenge, 2014:50).

- The general opinion was that the EAP related training topics presented were appropriate and beneficial. Only a few participants identified other themes that were not being presented, but that were needed. These themes included: HIV education and training, language proficiency, conflict resolution and time management programmes. With regard to language proficiency, Schulz (2008:149) emphasises that communication consists of language proficiency, behaviour, conversation and presentation. This highlights again that communication is the most needed soft skill of all.

#### 4.2.4 Objective 4

The fourth objective was to explore the current challenges that companies in the Western Cape experienced regarding EAP related training.

- The majority of the participants highlighted the following challenges with regard to EAP related training:
  - The main challenge identified was training **attendance**. Appropriate training was presented, but due to production or operations of companies that needed to continue or a shortage of staff, the employees were not released to attend training programmes.
  - The second biggest challenge identified was **budget constraints**. Budget constraints included that every production minute gets counted for in rand value and due to the production cost implication managers does not always release people to attend training. Companies still give priority for employees to attend hard/technical skill training when considering costs. Participants argued that it is easier to obtain CPD points from technical/clinical skill courses compared to soft skill training courses. Lastly it was mentioned that not having an allocated training budget plays a significant role in the effectiveness of EAP related training programmes.
  - The overall opinion was that **management supports** the training presented in principle, but don't attend the training themselves and then employees argue: "why, should I attend?" Laker and Powell (2011:116) point out that with soft skills it is very likely that the trainee will look to the manager as a role model / coach in view of new behaviours or the implementation of the behaviours. In a study completed by Lancaster et al. (2013:15) all participants believed it was essential that supervisors first complete the

training course so that they could act as coaches and reinforce new behaviours. Another aspect in this regard was that management did not follow up on arrangements to ensure training would take place, leaving participants questioning if management really valued what they were trying to do or implement.

- A very serious challenge identified was the **motivation** of employees. The participants highlighted different reasons for the lack of motivation to attend training programmes. Some of the most prominent reasons were that employees were not willing to come to training sessions in their lunch times and refused to come in on off days. Some did not attend if they did not receive an incentive. Yet others were sent as part of remedial action and lastly some were not motivated due to stress or their basics needs not being met, such as being hungry or worried about their children. Schulz (2008:150) refers to the debate about whether it is possible to enhance soft skills in a few hours of training. He concludes “whether or not it is possible a professional who wants to achieve success has no choice but to acquire and improve his/her soft skills”, implicating it is the individual’s own responsibility.
- A very interesting challenge identified was to be ‘very **creative**’ when you repeat the same programme on a specific site. Some of these creative ideas include ensuring that you have incorporated the most recent literature and information with regard to the topic you are repeating; to change the way you will present the same programme; to include current trends and issues within the business; and to consider a more interactive approach to captivate your audience’s attention.
- The researcher identified that **national companies** had to be very careful making decisions at head office and then rolling it out to their operational sites, as needs might differ from site to site and one training programme needed on one site might not be needed on another.
- Another challenge indicated by participants was **language** used in presenting a training programme. At the four companies at stake training was mostly presented in English and the need was raised to accommodate the appropriate official languages for that area when advertising training on posters and presenting the training.



- Regarding the **size of the venue**, as discussed in point 3.5.2.2.1, sub-theme 2.1 there was no regulation for the content, size or structure of EAP related training sessions, but from the information received by participants the assumption could be made that a group of 7 - 30 people is the recommended minimum to ensure a successful training session. In some instances the lack of facilities and size of facilities were big challenges.
- General challenges included:
  - **Follow-up support** after training was identified as lacking, but needed. The ideal would be support from management, but even support from the trainer was not in place. Lancaster et al. (2013:15) elaborated in their study that participants valued timely feedback from supervisors 'along the way', because it developed self-awareness, confidence, and the opportunity to correct undesired behaviours.
  - **Lack of evaluation** was identified as another challenge. With regard to cost-effectiveness three of the four companies had no systems or processes in place to evaluate if the training presented was cost-effective or not.
- Another challenge was the lack of knowledge regarding legislation about skills plans and levies. Half of the participants confirmed that they complete a skills plan and claim 20% levies under the mandatory grant. But the other half indicated that they were not very well informed/educated on the matter of their company's specific policy and procedures when it comes to the Skills Development Levy Act, No. 9 of 1999. The researcher is of the opinion that it is very important for the key role players who manage and implement EAPs to have knowledge of this legislation and how levies can be claimed back so that they are able to advise companies or to align their training to the benefit of the company.

### 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- EAP related training practices and needs differ due to the fact that each company operates in a unique environment and is challenged with unique problems and opportunities. The researcher would like to recommend that to ensure effective training, an assessment of the current 'state of affairs' within companies, should



always be completed. Cascio and Aguinis (2005:384) refer to the initial phase of programme development as the **needs assessment** phase or planning phase. Training will thus be more effective if it is grounded on a formal assessment of what is in place and what is needed to meet the specific company's business strategies and objectives.

- A needs assessment should form the groundwork to link the training programmes to the company's **vision, mission and goals**. Rothwell et al. (2003:25) identified the key aspect of training as “understanding the mission of the business and then to develop programmes in an organised fashion that will facilitate the accomplishment of that mission.”
- As part of the needs assessment and evaluating of training the researcher would strongly recommend systems and processes to be implemented to determine the **cost-effectiveness** of training presented. The researcher does acknowledge that it is very difficult to determine the impact and return on investment of soft skill training, but further research is needed and recommended in this regard.
- The researcher would like to recommend that formal EAP related **supervisory training** should be compulsory on an on-going basis.
  - The focus of EAP related supervisory training should be on educating leaders about their roles in the EAP and to enable them to communicate the programme objectives and procedures to employees.
  - EAP related supervisory training should be seen as a tool to get the managers' buy-in and to educate them on the process how to refer employees to the EAP as well as to training programmes that will be presented.
  - Supervisors should be well-informed and even trained in the skills that the employees are due to be trained in. If managers are well-informed about the benefit of the training to the employee and directly then to their department, it might increase their insight, leading to their buy-in and addressing the attendance issue. It might even affect the atmosphere back in the workplace when the employees return from the training.
- EAPs in the Western Cape need to consider advertising and presenting training in Xhosa, the **official language** identified for this area in South Africa. The current official business language is English and most courses are presented in English, but it is clear from the research that this still excludes some of the employees.

- Education is needed with regard to the **national skills plan**. The researcher has a very strong opinion that EAPs will have to be better informed about SETAs, ETDP SETAs and the sector requirements with regard to training and the Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999 to take on an advisory role in this regard.
- One or two companies reported that they discussed training needs during performance appraisals, but the researcher would like to recommend priority to be given to **identifying training needs** during performance discussions. The skills learnt and implemented should then be reviewed and employees should be rated with the aim to increase motivation to implement new skills.
- With regard to performance appraisals and promoting the betterment of self, companies should explore bursaries and career pathing for their employees.
- When it comes to the training sessions the following is recommended:
  - It is very important to identify an appropriate trainer, who knows his subject and is able to sell his product.
  - Practical sessions on the level of the employees attending and to be creative, including current trends to ensure originality and to stimulate imagination when repeating a specific training theme/topic.
  - Pamphlets to enforce what was learnt and also to share the information with those employees who did not attend, but maybe wanted to.

#### 4.4 ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

**The goal of the study:** To explore the nature of EAP related training practices at companies in the Western Cape.

Table 4.1 below focuses on how the above goal and objectives of the study were accomplished.

**Table 4.1: Accomplishment of the study objectives**

NR	OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVES ACHIEVEMENT
1.	To explore the content of EAP related training currently being presented at companies in the Western Cape.	This objective was achieved as reflected in the discussion in Chapter 3.
2.	To explore if the current EAP related training is meeting the goals as set out by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010).	This objective was achieved as reflected in the discussion in Chapter 3.

3.	To explore the expectations of companies in the Western Cape regarding EAP related training.	This objective was achieved as reflected in the discussion in Chapter 3.
4.	To explore the current challenges that companies in the Western Cape experience regarding EAP related training.	This objective was achieved as reflected in the discussion in Chapter 3.
5.	To make recommendations regarding EAP related training practices in order to improve training practices and to proactively address training challenges.	The objective was achieved through a summarised presentation of findings and recommendations in Chapter 4.

## 4.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study aimed to explore the nature of EAP related training practices at companies in the Western Cape. The research study has revealed that the four companies present a variety of soft skill training and the feedback was very positive about the appropriateness of the training topics/themes presented, but attendance is affecting the impact thereof.

The most important challenge identified was to get employees to attend training presented and the recommendation made was to get management's buy-in, to educate and involve them with the main goal to better their understanding of the benefits of training and in doing so to address the challenge of poor attendance.

To conclude Shenge (2014:51) elaborates that effective training can raise performance, improve morale, and increase an organisation's potential. Training is a management tool and EAPs must locate themselves in the centre of the business to assist management to decide on appropriate training and to ensure effective EAP related training practices, as recommended above.

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## ANNEXURE A: Interview Schedule

### Semi-structured interview schedule

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#### Main Themes based on objectives:

Note: The questions under each theme will be asked and where it is necessary to explore or gather more information, the more specific probing questions (bulleted) will be used.

#### **Organisational Profile:**

Type of Industry: Retail / Food & Beverage / Service Delivery / Production

#### **Personal Profile:**

Position:

Commencement date at this organisation:

Gender:

Home Language:

Explain your involvement with the organisation's Employee Assistance Programme:

#### **1. To explore the content of EAP training currently being presented at work organisations in the Western Cape.**

- 1.1 What EAP related training themes/topics (soft skills) are currently being presented at your work organisation?
- 1.2 How did your work organisation make a decision to present these themes/topics and/or who made the decision to present these themes/topics?
  - Was a needs assessment done to determine common trends and business risks to guide the process to decide on themes/topics?
  - Has any consideration been given to the company's vision, mission and goals and have the themes and/or topics been aligned with the vision, mission and goals of the company?

#### **2. To explore if the current EAP related training is meeting the goals as set out by the Standards of EAPs for South Africa.**

- 2.1 Do you feel the EAP related training presented on your site addressed the needs of your work organisation? If not, why not and what topics/themes do you think would be more appropriate?

2.2 Do the topics currently being presented build and strengthen individual and organisational skills and competencies?

- Do the employees implement the skills back in the workplace? If not, why not?

2.3 Does the provided training enhance the functioning of the EAP in the organisation?

- Do you specifically present 'supervisory training'; training for managers to understand and utilise the EAP programme?

**3. To explore the most beneficial EAP related training presented at companies in the Western.**

3.1 What training, currently being presented, is of the biggest benefit to your work organisation?

3.2 What training could your work organisation benefit from?

3.3 Can you include the current EAP related training in your skills plan and levy claims?

**4. To explore the current challenges that work organisations in the Western Cape experience regarding EAP related training of employees.**

4.1 Do you experience any challenges when deciding on an EAP related (soft skills) topic/theme and when arranging and implementing EAP related training?

4.2 What would a typical presentation / soft skill training programme include / consist of?

- What is the duration of a general soft skill training programme / presentation?
- How many employees will attend?
- Is the training / presentation theoretical and / or practical, or both?

4.3 Have you raised a need for other training topics? If yes, why have they not been presented?

4.4 What challenges do you experience when arranging, implementing and presenting EAP / soft skills training?

4.5 Is there any follow up support or evaluation with management or trainees following soft skills training?

- How do you know or determine that money spent on soft skills training was worth it or that the training was to the benefit of the organisation?

4.6 What do you think will contribute to more effective training practices in your specific work organisation?

**5. Is there anything else that you wish to share about EAP related training practices?**

## ANNEXURE B: Informed Consent form



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Social Work & Criminology

Researcher: Anke Hofmeyr  
Tel: 0761 7333 11  
Email: [anke@decco.co.za](mailto:anke@decco.co.za)

40 Cape Bay  
Fairmead Drive  
Helena Heights  
Somerset-West  
7130

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Title of the study:** The nature of Employee Assistance Programme training practices within work organisations in the Western Cape.

**Purpose of the study:** To explore the current nature/content of EAP training practices in the Western Cape, South Africa, to determine if it meets the goal and objectives set out by the Standards for EAPs in South Africa (2010:15). If not, the researcher will determine what challenges play a role.

**Procedures:** I understand that I will be interviewed by the researcher and a semi-structured interview schedule will be used to guide the interview.

**Risks and Discomfort:** I understand that there are no known risks or discomfort that I may be exposed to while in participating in this study. If I experience any discomfort at any time during the research study, I will inform the researcher.

**Benefits:** I understand that there is no direct financial benefit to me for participating in this study. However my participation in this research study may assist the researcher to make recommendations based on the results with regard to the goal and/or objectives set by the Standards of EAPs for South Africa, as well as recommendations for EAP providers to improve training practices and to proactively address training challenges.

**Participants' rights:** My participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw my participation at any time without any negative consequences.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:** My identity will be known to the researcher, but it will not be documented in the research findings. The information received from me through the semi-structured interview will be treated confidentially and my identity will not be revealed. Should I withdraw from the study, my data will be destroyed. The results of this study may be published in the researcher's

dissertation and professional journals, and/or presented at professional conferences. However, my identifying details will not be revealed unless required by law.

**Data Storage:** The data that is collected through this study will be stored by the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years. If anyone wishes to use the data, it will only be allowed with my informed consent.

**Person to contact:** If I have any queries or concerns, I understand that I can contact Mrs Anke Hofmeyr, 0761733311 at any time.

I understand my rights as a research participant and I voluntarily give my consent to participate in this study. I also understand what the study is about, and how and why it is being done. I have received a copy of this consent form.

### Declaration

I, ..... (full names), hereby voluntarily give my consent to participate in this study. I also declare that I understand what the study is about, and how and why it is being conducted.

-----

Date

Place

Participant's signature

-----

Date

Place

Researcher's signature

## ANNEXURE C: Permission A

## ANNEXURE D: Permission B



MEDICLINIC OFFICES  
STRAND ROAD  
STELLENBOSCH  
7600

PO BOX 456  
STELLENBOSCH  
7599

T +27 21 809 6500  
F +27 21 809 6756  
ETHICS LINE 0800 005 316

[www.mediclinic.co.za](http://www.mediclinic.co.za)

25 September 2014

Att: Anke Hofmeyr

Dear Anke,

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EMPLOYEE INTERVIEWS FOR STUDY PROJECT**

I have reviewed your study proposal and I am comfortable that you proceed with conducting interviews with the following Human Resources Managers / Training Managers.

- |                               |   |                  |   |              |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------|---|--------------|
| • Mediclinic Panorama         | - | Christine Taylor | - | 021 938 2111 |
| • Mediclinic Milnerton        | - | Roxanne Hoare    | - | 021 529 9000 |
| • Mediclinic Louis Leipoldt   | - | Karin Swart      | - | 021 957 6000 |
| • Mediclinic Vergelegen       | - | Elisma Bothma    | - | 021 850 9000 |
| • Mediclinic Tygepark Offices | - | Isabel Heigan    | - | 021 943 6000 |

Please contact the HR Managers directly on the numbers provided to arrange interview sessions.

Please keep the interview sessions to approximately 1 hour taking into account operational requirements of the hospital.

Should you require any further information, please contact me directly.

Kind regards

**Dewald de Lange**  
Employee Relations Manager



## ANNEXURE E: Permission C

15 September 2014

**Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries**

Dear Madam/Sir

I am currently enrolled at the University of Pretoria to complete my Master's degree in Employee Assistance Programmes.

Please see attached my research proposal and confirmation from the university for me to continue.

**My research theme: THE NATURE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME TRAINING PRACTICES WITHIN WORK ORGANISATIONS IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

The objectives is to explore what soft skills training are currently being presented by your Employee Wellness team and how they go about choosing topics and what are the challenges presenting training within your department. Logistics, language etc.

I will profile your company and only refer to company C in my study. The department will not be known. I am aiming to get approval at 4 different companies/industries to get a good representation in my study.

I hereby would like to ask permission to conduct my study within your department it will consist of 1 hour interviews with 2 to 4 employees involved in training. It will consist of Semi-structured interviews to explore current practices and challenges and it will be recorded.

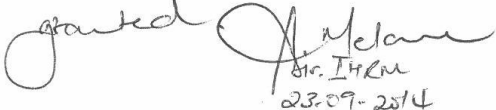
If you do agree it will be highly appreciated and I would like to ask and apologise for any extra inconvenience but I need your approval to continue in letter form on your letterhead.

Please confirm if you need anything else from me. I am planning to conduct above mentioned interviews in November.

I am really looking forward to hear from you.



Kind Regards  
Anke Hofmeyr  
Social Worker in private practice  
0716733311

Permission granted  
  
Mr. I. H. M.  
23.09.2014

## ANNEXURE F: Permission D



HEAD OFFICE / HOOFKANTOOR: AAN-DE-WAGENWEG, PO BOX / POSBUS 184, STELLENBOSCH 7599, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
TEL: +27 (0)21 809 7000 • FAX / FAKS +27 (0) 21 886 4611 • www.distell.co.za

27 August 2014

### To Who It May Concern

I the undersigned, hereby authorize Anke Hofmeyr to obtain data during the course of her study. All parties involved in this research, including the focus group members confirm that all information obtains will be highly confidential and participating is entirely voluntary.

**Title:** The Nature of Employee Assistance Programme Training Practises within work organizations in the Western Cape

**Researcher:** Ms Anke Hofmeyr, MSW –EAP, Department of Social Work & Criminology

The extent to which confidentiality will be maintained:

- That the participant may withdraw from the study at any time;
- Distell's name will be kept confidential;
- Shayne Roux will authorize any written notices on behalf of Distell

Yours Sincerely,

**Shayne Roux**

Group Manager: Talent and Organisation Development | Distell Corporate Head Office

Tel: +27 21 809 7579 | Fax: 086 765 9591 | Mobile: 082 443 4888

I/O Psychologist (PS 0110973)

HOLDING COMPANY / BEHERENDE MAATSKAPPY

**DISTELL GROUP LTD. / DISTELL GROEP BPK.**

Directors / Direkteure: DM Nurek (Chairperson / Voorsitter), RM Rushton (Managing Director / Besturende Direkteur), PE Beyers, MJ Botha, JG Carinus, GP Dingaan, JJ Durand, E de la H Hertzog, MJ Madungandaba, LM Mojela, CA Otto, AC Parker, CE Sevellano-Barredo, BJ van der Ross, LC Verwey.

Company Secretary / Maatskappysekretaris: L Malan

Company Registration No. / Maatskappy Registrasie No. 1988/005698/08

OPERATING COMPANY / BEDRYFSMAATSKAPPY

**DISTELL LIMITED / DISTELL BEPERK**

Directors / Direkteure: RM Rushton (Managing Director / Besturende Direkteur), MJ Botha, W Bührmann, PF Carolin, VC de Vries, DJ Gallow, C Gous, DM Hegland, SW Klopper, MG Lambrechts, NT Moodley, K Pillay, CLC Snyman, JJ Venter.

Company Secretary / Maatskappysekretaris: L Malan

Company Registration No. / Maatskappy Registrasie No. 1963/001333/08

## ANNEXURE G: Ethical Clearance



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities  
Research Ethics Committee

03 November 2014

Dear Prof Lombard

**Project:** The nature of Employee Assistance Programme training practices within work organisations in the Western Cape  
**Researcher:** A Hofmeyr  
**Supervisor:** Prof CSL Delport  
**Department:** Social Work and Criminology  
**Reference numbers:** 11297591

Thank you for the application that was submitted for ethical consideration.

I am pleased to inform you that the above application was **approved** by the **Research Ethics Committee** on 30 October 2014. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

The Committee requests you to convey this approval to the researcher.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

**Prof Karen Harris**  
**Acting Chair: Research Ethics Committee**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**  
**e-mail: Karen.harris@up.ac.za**

Research Ethics Committee Members: Dr L Blokland; Prof Prof M-H Coetzee; Dr JEH Grobler; Prof KL Harris (Acting Chair); Ms H Klopper; Dr C Panebianco-Warrens; Dr Charles Puttergill; Prof GM Spies; Dr Y Spies; Prof E Taljard; Dr P Wood

## **ANNEXURE H: Editor's statement**